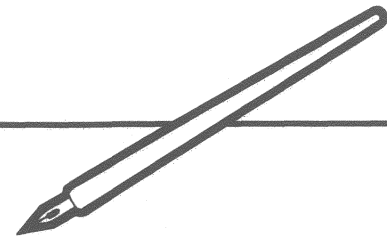




**Clarion**  
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By J. Geertsema



## The Natural Law Party

The election of 1993 in Canada belongs to the past. The Canadians spoke their mind with their vote. They sent both the Conservatives and the Socialists home. However, it is not this point but something else that I would like to ask your attention for. A very new political party participated in the election, the Natural Law Party. This party got very few votes, as was expected. But the fact that it presented itself was the important thing. Important was also the manner in which they did this.

About a week before the election, I received with my newspaper a copy of the 44 page "Platform of the Natural Law Party." It provided the reader with quite a bit of information. This included the names and almost all the pictures of the two hundred and twenty-eight (yes, 228) candidates. The occupation of these candidates was mentioned, too. Remarkable was, in my opinion, that fifty-seven of the two hundred and twenty-eight candidates are involved in education. This means that one in four is involved in teaching and educating Canadian youth. Another large number of the candidates belong to the business world. This might indicate where this philosophy has its greatest influence.

What they stand for is New Age thinking. The leader of the party, Dr. Neil Paterson, originally from Edmonton, received a doctor's degree "from Maharishi European Research University in Switzerland." He is "a teacher and researcher in the field of *consciousness*. His doctoral degree is in the Science of Creative Intelligence – the systematic study of the origin, range, and development of creative intelligence in man and nature which includes practical technologies for the development of the full *creative potential of human consciousness*" (emphases are added, J.G.).

This Dr. Paterson occupies an important position in what we call, with a broad term, the New Age movement, with its roots to a large extent in Eastern religions and philosophy and psychology. The paper says further that he is "Governor-General of the Age of Enlightenment for North America, the leader of Maharishi's movement of consciousness for the North American continent." He is also "a world expert on programs to create harmony and positivity in society through the group practice of Yogic Flying. . . ."

The Senior Vice-President of the party is Doug Henning. He is originally from Winnipeg. He, too, got a doctorate in the Science of Creative Intelligence from the same Maharishi university. Today he "is acclaimed as one of the greatest magicians of modern times. . . . Recently, Dr. Henning has put all his *magical* expertise into Maharishi Veda Land, the world class theme park with the themes of enlightenment, knowledge, and entertainment, which forms part of a \$1.5

billion project that Dr. Henning and his team are developing in Ontario," in the Niagara Falls region.

Who is Maharishi? Maharishi is a Hindu, born in 1911 in India. He studied physics while also practising yoga. After the Second World War he devoted himself full-time to meditating. In 1959 he became a public teacher of Transcendental Meditation, first in India and, then, in England where he met and influenced the Beatles, Shirley MacLaine, and other people in the world of show business. He moved to the United States, went back to India because of a fading success, but later returned to the United States. After a few years he left again when an "inquiry into his financial affairs seemed to become embarrassingly unbearable" (These data are taken from *Those Curious New Cults* by William J. Petersen [New Canaan: Keats, 1973, pp. 163 ff.]).

Maharishi is the father of Transcendental Meditation. This form of Eastern religious (Hindu) meditation makes use of a mantra, a one-syllable word that is repeated over and over in one's mind, a few minutes twice every day. "In no time at all, your life will be changed. You will become more efficient, more alive, less negative, healthier and happier." Through this meditation "you simply put your mind in neutral, then let your thoughts rush in and finally sic your mantra onto your thoughts. Now if you have the proper mantra, this process 'expands the conscious mind and . . . brings it in contact with the creative intelligence that gives rise to every thought.' Then once you are in tune with the universe, your inner conflicts lessen, you become happier and easier to get along with and all personal problems vanish" (Petersen, pp. 165 ff.).

We have here obviously to do with a form of pantheism. The impersonal god of this system is called "creative intelligence." It (not He) is "in man and nature" we re (cf. above). The whole universe and this "god," this rational, all-permeating power-god are basically one or the One. On the first page of the Platform of the Natural Law Party we read a number of statements of Dr. Neil Paterson. I mention the following:

Natural Law governs all life from the galaxies to our solar system to our planet Earth; and certainly our individual lives are also governed by Natural Law.

Our dear Canada was founded on "principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law."

The Natural Law Party is the only party that has proven scientifically its ability to fulfill this supreme aspiration and create a government that functions in accord with Natural Law, which is the Will of God.

The reader understands that the god of the Natural Law party has nothing to do with the God of the Bible. The "supremacy of God" (a term that seems to have been taken

from our Canadian Constitution) is not the supremacy of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And "the rule of law" is not the Law of the true God of the Bible, nor is it the law of Canada. It is the "Natural Law" of the Natural Law party, that so-called all-permeating, all-governing impersonal, rational force, that these people call their God, this "creative intelligence." Since this Divine Force is also in us, rational beings, especially in our mind, we must become conscious of ourselves, of our inner power, our own potential, the potential of our having-god-in-us. In the way of this consciousness of being part of this "god," of having divine "Natural Law" in ourselves, we are able, so is the claim, to solve all our problems. Educate the Canadian nation, teach them *this* consciousness and Canada can soon close its prisons. All Canadians are basically good people, and will together become a happy and prosperous nation.

It is evident that in this system there is no place for the biblical doctrine of human depravity with which we are born, of sinfulness and repentance. On the contrary, if we are (part of) god, and if we, through our increasing consciousness of it, consider ourselves good people with great natural potential to solve all the problems, why and of what should we repent, even how can we repent?

We read that Mr. Doug Henning is "one of the greatest magicians of modern times." This can sound quite innocent. A magician is for many a man who is able to perform seemingly incredible tricks. However, we are told that Mr. Henning is "completely committed to making all Canada's problems magically vanish by bringing the support of Natural Law to the nation." It is clear that this "magic" must be explained in the light of human ability and potential to work with the "divine" powers of Natural Law, that "divine" creative intelligence that he has in himself and makes his own through the technique of Transcendental Meditation.

Let Canada be on the alert. Let us, Christian believers, spread the truth of the Bible. We know this truth through revelation. The only true God has given it to us. It is the truth that this God has given His Son, Christ Jesus, to become sin in order that we might become righteousness as God's free and sovereign gift of pure grace through Christ. Let us continue to tell that any form of this old doctrine or philosophy of self-redemption is deceit. There is only salvation in Christ Jesus and through faith in Him. Let us abide by God's Word exerting our mind to work and think in humble submission to it.

Transcendental Meditation tells us to put our mind in neutral in order to open it for "our thoughts" to enter. "Our thoughts," coming from our inner self, are then claimed to be inspired by this "Natural Law," this universal "Creative Intelligence," in us.

This purely humanistic "religion" in which man is his own "god" promises an earthly paradise that man can build himself. It will fail as all idolatry has failed and will fail. Paul warns in 1 Cor. 10 that, although idols are nothing, they are linked to demons. And demons, evil spirits, like their master Satan, are deceivers and murderers from the beginning. The true God says: love Me with all your heart and soul, and with *all your mind*. Christ puts His claim on us: I bought you for Myself and for My Father. You are Mine, body and soul, body and mind. May this comfort continue to be our treasure. May it also become the treasure of many who are caught up in modern darkness. **C**



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# Bibby's Sketch of Church-life Today

By T. Lodder

*"Churches are in crisis, new book says." So writes Jack Kapica, religion reporter for the Globe and Mail, commenting on Reginald W. Bibby's new book Unknown Gods: The Ongoing Story of Religion in Canada, published a few months ago by Stoddard Publishing. In this new book Bibby, a sociologist at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta, asks the question why so many people are not going to church anymore and why church-going is even generally despised in our nation.*

Bibby is the author of the best-selling 1987 book *Fragmented Gods* which has been used extensively in universities and colleges across the nation. In this most recent book Bibby suggests that if churches ever want to become effective in the lives of Canadians again, reorganization is required. Writing from a sociological perspective, he has a deep affection for national surveys, Gallup polls and all the other types of studies which sociologists love, an affection which I do not envy. The reader immediately notices, though, that in the latter part of his book the terminology becomes more that of a marketing strategist than of a sociologist. The author is also blatantly polytheistic.

Why, then, would we be interested in studying this book? We can hardly deny that churches are in crisis. For most people church-going just doesn't make the list of "101 Things to Do on the Weekend." In the middle of this critical situation we, as citizens of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, should ask ourselves what we are doing to be a salt and light in this world as Jesus Christ commanded us. Jesus, Himself, teaches about how the believer must be a salt and a light in this decaying and dark world when he says after the beatitudes, *"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men. You are the*

*light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* (Matt. 5:13-16)

How are we to be a salt and a light? Among Reformed people the answers will generally vary. Some will say, "The church doors are always open. They know where we are!" Others will say, "If we want to spread the gospel, we've got to start knocking on people's doors to tell them about ourselves and to invite them to church." Still others will lament, "I would never bring an unbeliever to church with me, because people will stare them down, especially if they are dressed strangely. On top of that they will get nothing out of the service: the songs are unfamiliar to them, and the sermon will go way over their heads." So the question remains: how are we going to be a salt and light? Are we really effective as churches, or is it time for us to do some brain-storming to come up with some brilliant evangelism strategies? Bibby has some suggestions. My intention is to give you a survey and biblical evaluation of some of his main observations and solutions, particularly in Part III of the book.

## Why are churches failing?

In the preface Bibby proposes, "The times call for honesty and directness; churches are dying at a time when the culture needs what they historically have had to offer." We would hasten to agree that many churches are experiencing a phenomenal death blow in our culture. The question that Bibby wants to address in Part III of his book is: "Why are churches failing?" (181 ff.) To answer this question Bibby identifies four problems in the churches. Chapter nine deals with the *structural problems*, the next chapter with *prod-*

*uct problems*, chapter eleven with *promotion problems* and the last chapter with *distribution problems*.

## Structural problems

At the outset, he comments that "(w)hereas American religious groups aggressively compete with each other in their pursuit for the truth, Canadian groups essentially exist to service their regular and new customers. They aren't particularly encouraged to recruit affiliates of other groups, for that sort of thing smacks of bigotry and exploitation, especially if the people involved are immigrants, aboriginals, members of disadvantaged groups, children, or the elderly. Aggressive proselytizing of such people conceivably might be seen by some critics as a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms." Canadians, being the cautious, considerate citizens that they are, with a typical "don't rock the boat" attitude, are at distinct disadvantage compared to their American competitors. Free Trade doesn't help us with this one.

Further, Bibby points to the weakness of churches because of their heavy dependence on the volunteer workers, who "are neither hired after careful screening, nor fired when they perform ineptly." He writes, "The 'priesthood of all believers' might be a virtuous theological concept. But operating in religious-group situations, it has the potential to make ministry anything but easy."

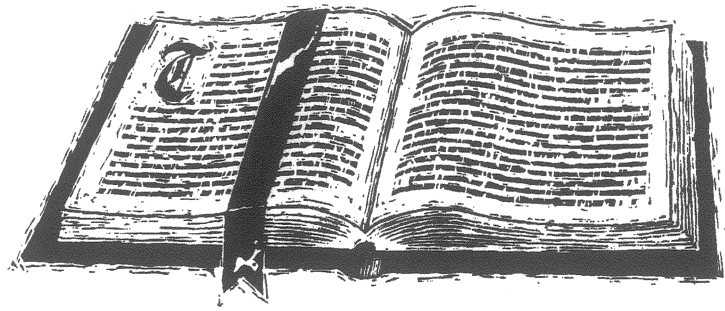
Another structural problem is the autonomy of the local congregation, for which according to him either the Protestant Reformation or accelerated individualism is to blame. Again, he says that although this concept of local autonomy may be theologically admirable, "in practice it frequently translates into an organizational nightmare." Bibby writes that a common organizational problem that results is that local churches withhold financial support when they don't agree with the pro-

grams and pronouncements of the national bodies. Thus, the efficient operation of the church is often paralyzed.

Then there is the flexibility problem. Writes Bibby, "Successful organizations must constantly change, update themselves to stay in touch with the times. They ignore new demographic patterns, new technologies, and new cultural trends at their peril. At best, organizations that disregard change become peripheral; at worst, they disappear altogether. Religious groups are no exception." The inflexibility of churches is obvious in their inability to follow suit. "When change is endorsed by our major idea-instilling institutions, namely, the media, education, and government, and further supported by business, many people expect their religious groups to fall in line." In other words, according to Bibby churches must be flexible, otherwise their demise is certain. For what will happen is that those who are inflexible and don't want to change with the times will inevitably cause division from the more progressive ones. "The ongoing arrival of new issues produced by a changing culture serves to keep religious groups in a perpetual state of tension and division. This makes them ineffective."

Furthermore, Bibby finds that going to church is just no fun anymore. "For a good time," he writes, "don't phone the churches." As I mentioned before sociologist Bibby has a deep affection for surveys; and what do the surveys tell us? Bibby informs us that "survey after survey documents what we all know well: first and foremost people want to enjoy life. What's up for debate is how they can find happiness. Here's where religion does not come in." In the PROJECT CAN90 and PROJECT TEEN CANADA 92 surveys on the "Enjoyment Scale" "your religious group" is right at the bottom, even below "your pet." Well-known Presbyterian Tony Plomp agrees: "Most of our congregations have not discovered how to appeal effectively to contemporary youth. Our music is not particularly attractive to the Much Music generation. Our messages from the pulpit require concentration and thought and the discipline of listening, a skill few develop as they watch easy-to-absorb, flashy, fast-paced television shows."

Bibby is not satisfied with the Westminster Confession's definition of enjoyment. He quotes Dr. Arthur VanSeters of Knox Theological College in Toronto: "Enjoying God doesn't exactly have



a Presbyterian ring to it – at first. But the Westminster Catechism does say, in fact, that our chief purpose in life is to 'glorify and enjoy' God. That is more than knowing; it is a feeling, an emotional expression out of a deeply personal relationship." Bibby concludes that people like Van Seters have a major public relations job in front of them.

Reginald prefers Malcolm Muggeridge's perspective on humour. The Muggeridge mentality is that "there is a close connection between clowns and mystics. Laughter is indeed God's therapy."

Finally, Bibby identifies the marginalization of women as another one of the structural problems that is menacing the church. Many women who feel alienated are represented by Bibby's quotation of a certain Ann Adrian who describes her feelings of discouragement: "I am tired of church services led exclusively by men; I'm tired of hymns, readings and sermons which exclude over half the congregation because we are female. . . ." He further notes that women are having a difficult enough time to claim power in national life; let alone bothering with trying the same in the male-dominated churches.

In summary, in the view of Bibby, the demise of the church can be attributed to the following structural problems: reliance on volunteers, independentization, inflexibility to change with the culture, and image problems both in the areas of fun and feminism.

Now my intention is not just to make a laughingstock of some "out-to-lunch" sociologist in order to appease any guilt we might have for being ineffective in this world. That would only amount to going from one extreme to the other. It is painfully obvious, though, that the structural problems which Bibby posits are really problems which he, himself, has created. With respect to the "idea-instilling institutions" that Bibby proposes churches to follow

I need not mention the text that we all know so well in Rom. 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Also, we all know that the mirth and humour of the world is of a different sort than the joy of living in the ways of the LORD. The laughter we derive from the humour of this world is clearly inferior to the heartfelt, eternal joy that we may experience in Christ. Real joy comes from Christ, not clowns. The Spirit also testifies to us in Scripture that, although woman is not given a leading role in the government of the church, she certainly has been given an honourable role in the history of redemption and still plays a key role in the life of the Christian church (although it should be granted that this is something that too many men often forget). Finally, the volunteer work force problem ceases to be one in the light of Paul's exhortation that we offer our whole lives completely as a sacrifice to Christ and to His service. Then comes Bibby's chapter on the *product problems* of the church.

### Product problems

The major problem here, says Bibby, is that churches have not done a particularly good job at getting in touch with people's wants and needs. Gordon Turner, former head of evangelism and new church development in the United Church has put it this way: "Right now, we're just not scratching where they're itching." Well, perhaps Mr. Turner is a little behind in the times, because the apostle Paul anticipated this itching problem already some 1900 years ago. That is why, Paul gives this advice to Timothy: "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season

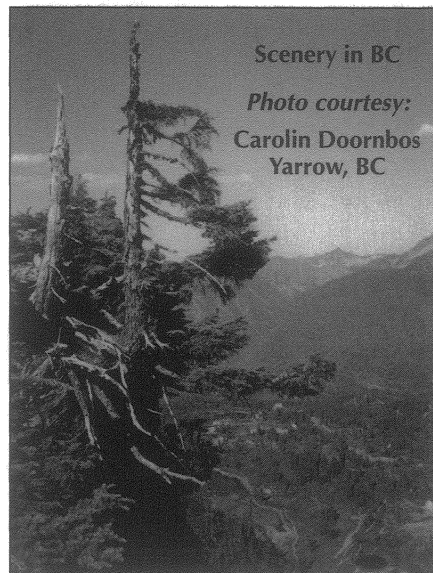
and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry. (2 Tim. 4:1-5) Notice how Paul isn't so sensitive to the church-going market. His principle is: preach the same word under all circumstances. He doesn't tell Timothy to distribute a market survey every once in a while, or to consult the latest Gallup poles to monitor the success of his ministry. Rather, he says, "be urgent in season and out of season." To put it loosely: when times get tough, the faithful get preaching. Then the preaching must become even more urgent so that the hearers do not "turn away from listening and wander into myths." The word of the cross which is folly to those who are perishing must then be preached even more urgently. Thus God's plan of destroying the wisdom of the wise and of thwarting the cleverness of the clever will come into effect. (compare 1 Cor. 1 and 2)

Bibby, although he shows some chronically polytheistic strains throughout his book, makes at least one good point. Too many churches are trying to play down God. I find it rather intriguing that Bibby quotes Margaret Ogilvie, a law professor at Carleton, because the point that she makes contradicts a lot of the market sensitivity rubbish that Bibby is proposing. Ogilvie makes this cognizant observation: "Where a barbecue attracts 60 members and a Bible study group only six there are one too many activities offered and the barbecue must go. Nor, I hasten to add, is the purpose of Bible study 'to have a great time and meet new people' as announced by an elder recently. . . . We must restore the sense that a Christian community is Christian first and last; otherwise community activities are simply secular gatherings – the congregation as social club." She continues that the social concerns to which the church gives its attention need to be "determined strategically in accordance with doctrinal identity. Jumping on every politically correct bandwagon should be avoided." What Ogilvie is basically saying is: churches, do your job and don't start doing the job of the Lions Clubs. Start Bible study programs

and get down to the real "business" that you claim to be in! Jesus Christ, when He sent out His disciples did not advise them to invite people to cozy little camp fire gatherings for a nice social chat. No! I hardly have to remind you of what He commanded them: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:19, 20) This commission is a serious one. The disciples didn't need degrees in sociology or marketing in order to be effective messengers of the gospel. All they had to do was be faithful to the call of Jesus Christ.

My excitement about Bibby's cognizance on this point soon abated when I read the following: "it's not easy to be an active part of a Protestant group that stresses self-denial, citing such role model biblical verses as 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.' " (Gal. 2:20) What an insult to the Triune God! What Bibby is doing here is ripping the very heart out of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The self-denying language of the Bible is too much for Bibby's 20th century politically correct conscience. If this message of crucifixion of the flesh and life in Christ alone is not preached from the pulpits of the churches the church buildings might as well be converted into office buildings, for then they will at least serve a useful function.

## OUR COVER



Scenery in BC

Photo courtesy:  
Carolyn Doornbos  
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## Distribution problems

Now I do think that Bibby's last chapter on distribution problems would cause most of us Reformed people to blush. He perceives that "evangelicals don't take the gospel outside their buildings. They proclaim the good news from the safety of their sanctuaries." "Evangelicals," he later writes, "Have a good book. But often it doesn't leave their warehouses." We, too, are guilty of not seeking more opportunities to spread the good news of the Gospel to those who are perishing. Let us tell them of how we Gentiles, who were once separated from Christ, "have been brought near in the blood of Christ." If it had not been for the missionary work by which our ancestors received the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ, we, too, would have been alienated from Christ. Just imagine! Remember what Paul writes: "Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands – remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:11, 12) To use the expression coined by Rev. VanDooren in his book on evangelism: lest we forget how the cross of Christ has set us free, let's "Get Out!"

## From failure to fruitfulness

Our conclusion is that Bibby is not biblical. We must not kick up our legs, though, satisfied with the thought that most of what he says is sociological hot air. Some of his hot air ought to make us sweat a little with embarrassment, realizing that we too have failed in many ways to effectively spread the Gospel. If Bibby has not come with any solutions, he has reminded us that there is a problem. We Reformed believers must be ready to admit it and prepared to address it. We've wasted enough time. If we are indeed clothed with the whole armour of God, what is there for us to fear? If God is for us, who is against us? God does not clothe us with armour and then tell us to stay in the barracks. He does not give the Great Commission and then tell us to keep quiet about His great works of salvation. Let's take up the challenge of developing radically biblical principles for effective, fruitful evangelism – and let's use them to spread this great and precious Gospel of Peace! **C**

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# To Be Or Not To Be (Present)

By W.W. J. VanOene

The matter of the American Reformed Church at Denver, Colorado has been occupying the hearts and minds of many church members, besides requiring much time and labour from our ecclesiastical assemblies.

Until now I have refrained from writing much about the whole matter, and this for obvious reasons.

No, I am not afraid to "speak my mind" or to "stick out my neck." It is not because of that that I have not said much about it. I still abide by my conviction, expressed in the form of a question posed in a newsmedley in Vol. 41, No. 3: It is not our obligation to tell a church which requests affiliation with our federation to go and join a federation with which we have no sister-church relationship. All that belongs to our responsibility is: judge the reasons why it wants to belong to our federation.

The reason why I have not written more about it is that I no longer receive official documents, and must have my information from kindly souls that take pity on me, and from what is published.

It is from the latter source that I gleaned the latest developments. And it is these developments that prompt me to discuss a few things.

Let me first pass on what I found in the *Church News* of the churches of Coaldale and Taber.

Under the heading "Classis Report" the Rev. J.D. Wielenga wrote the following.

"Tuesday night was filled with discussions whether the deputies of Regional Synod were needed to deal with the request of the CARC at Denver for affiliation with our Federation. Classis decided they were needed, on the ground of the decision of Synod Burlington 1986, Art. 85.

"Wednesday evening and a good part of Thursday, the two reports of the Denver Committee (majority and minority report) were discussed. The rec-

ommendations of the majority report (to grant Denver's request for affiliation) were adopted. However, the Deputies of Regional Synod advised against granting the request, so that the matter has to be decided by a Regional Synod."

## Why?

Why did deputies advise against? Rev. G. VanPopta shed more light on this.

"The majority of the delegates was, now, in favour of admitting Denver; however, Classis needed the concurring advice of two deputies of Regional Synod . . . This is one of the excellent checks built into Reformed Church polity. Whenever a Classis needs to make a judgment on something which will affect the whole federation e.g. the admission of a minister or a church, the concurring advice of such deputies . . . needs to be obtained. In fact, these two ministers were not able to concur with the judgment of Classis. They were convinced that the investigation committee did not bring any new grounds which would warrant overturning the previous decision regarding the Denver request."

## Two matters

Two matters require our attention here: the presence of deputies and their advice.

We turn to their presence in the first place.

These brothers had no business being there.

Understand me well: It was not up to them to accede or not to accede to the classical request to come over. When a classis requests deputies to come and advise in a difficulty that arose, they simply have to comply with such a request. See Art. 48 C.O.

Upon arriving, however, and upon learning that there was no difficulty, they should have left.

This classis did not have any difficulty in which it required advice. A decision had been made when the majority conclusions were adopted and no further advice was needed.

That some of the members of that classis had difficulties with the decision reached did not mean at all that now *classis* had a difficulty in which deputies were to advise.

Thus the brothers had no business being there.

## No decision

Yes, we read that the brothers were asked to come "on the ground of the decision of Synod Burlington 1986, Art. 85."

What decision?

Let's see what Burlington 1986 decided.

"Not to accede to the request of the Church at Ottawa to review the rules for admission to the federation."

That's all.

Which rules? I know of none.

Where is here the decision that the concurring advice of Deputies of Regional Synod is required?

I cannot find it.

O yes, I know that one of the *considerations* of that Synod was: "The procedure for admitting other churches to the federation has always been a matter of local churches with the judgment of classis and the concurring advice of deputies of Regional Synod."

But since when is a *consideration* a *decision* by which the churches are bound? It is conceivable that an ecclesiastical assembly arrives at a correct decision even though one or more of its considerations are wrong.

Such is the case here: It was correct that no rules were drawn up for admission of churches that want to join the federation, even though at least the above-quoted consideration was false.

I do not know which clairvoyant came with the motion mention in *Acts*

1986, Art. 85 Sub A. **Material**, but the statement is false.

For forty-one of the forty-three years that have passed since the institution of the first Canadian Reformed Church I have paid rather close attention to all that went on in the churches, but I do not recall ever to have read that a church was admitted into the federation and that this was done with "the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod." Perhaps my memory fails me here, and I shall gladly pass on to our readers any proof that I was wrong here.

### Classical decisions

I did read in the Press Release of Classis Ontario South of September 11, 12, 1985, that *classis* decided "to request the deputies to remain and to give their advice on the matter of the report and recommendation of the committee appointed by Classis June 12th for contact with the Reformed Church at Blue Bell PA. Deputies are invited to take part in the discussions."

If "the procedure for admitting other churches to the federation has always been a matter of local churches with the judgment of *classis* and the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod," as Synod 1986 asserted, why was no one at Classis Ontario South of Sept. 11, 12, 1985, aware of that, and why did that *classis* have to take a special decision requesting deputies (who were at *classis* for a peremptory examination) to remain? Because it was something *new*, and *classis* considered it wise to ask for their input.

In the Press Release of Classis Ontario South of March 25, 26, and April 1, 1987, we read:

- "a. Classis rejects a motion reading: Classis decides to ask the concurring advice of the Deputies of Regional Synod in the matter of admitting the Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel. Ground: This is in harmony with the conclusions of Synod 1986 given in Art. 85 of the *Acts* of this Synod.
- "b. Classis adopts the following motion: In accordance with Art. 48 C.O. Classis decides to ask advice of the Deputies Regional Synod in the matter of receiving the Tri-County Church at Laurel MD.
- "c. Classis decides to add to the decision to ask for advice rather than concurring advice the following grounds:
1. It is not explicitly stated in the Church Order that concurring

advice of Deputies Regional Synod is required.

2. Synod 1986, in *Acts* Art. 85 has not proven that it has always been a practice in the Canadian Reformed Churches to ask concurring advice of Deputies Regional Synod in case of receiving a Church into the federation.
3. Classis judges that Art. 85 III, B 1, is a consideration and not a synodical decision."

We can be thankful for the above classical decision. Once again, deputies of regional synod were present anyway for a peremptory examination and with a view to the colloquium with Laurel's minister. But why would it have been necessary to have a classical decision about asking advice at all if the synodical claim had been correct?

The synodical consideration was false also in another respect: Admission into the federation is *never* a matter of local churches but always of a *classis*, for that's where the federation starts.

Perhaps, perhaps the one who introduced the relevant motion at Synod 1986 was thinking of ecclesiastical practice in the Netherlands.

But in the first place: Although, of course, we should not act as if we had to re-invent the wheel, yet we are in no way bound by either synodical decisions or ecclesiastical practice in our Dutch sister churches.

And in the second place: Although my library is not very extensive, I do have some works dealing with the Church Order. But neither in the writings of Dr. F.L. Rutgers nor in those of Dr. H. Bouwman that are at my disposal have I found anything to support the claim of Synod 1986's assertion.

- Our conclusion can be no other than that this Classis Alberta/Manitoba was wrong in asking the deputies of Regional Synod to come and advise, for
- a. this *classis* had no difficulty that should be solved, as a decision had been reached, and
  - b. it wrongly assumed that there was a general-synodical decision requiring concurring advice of deputies of Regional Synod.

### The advice

Now we come to point 2: the advice that deputies gave.

Let me repeat what Rev. G. VanPopta wrote: "These two ministers were not able to concur with the judgment of Classis. They were convinced that the investigation Committee did not

bring any new grounds which would warrant overturning the previous decision regarding the Denver request."

Give me a break!

Since when do deputies of regional synod have the right to act as if they were a committee that has to scrutinize classical decisions and to determine whether these perhaps are contrary to a previously taken stand either by this same *classis* or by an earlier one? Or since when do deputies have the right to see whether sufficient "new grounds" have been produced? Since when do deputies have the right to tell a *classis* that it does not have sufficiently good reasons for choosing a course different from the one followed thus far?

When a proposal reaches a *classis* this *classis* is to judge whether any new grounds have been adduced to even discuss the proposal, let alone to adopt it, thereby "overturning" a decision by a previous *classis*. But it is beyond me that deputies assumed this right, seeing that this *classis* had arrived at a conclusion.

From the first mistake (not leaving when it became apparent that this *classis* did not have any difficulty in which it required advice) the brothers fell into a second one: comparing classical decisions instead of judging whether in the decision arrived at there was anything that conflicted with the adopted Church Order or anything that would be detrimental to the churches, which would compel them to differ with *classis*.

Their advice was not needed. It would have been needed if Denver's minister had been there as a result of the decision to admit "his" church, requesting to receive all the rights and privileges of a minister of the Word within the Canadian Reformed Churches and their American counterparts. This, however, was not the case.

Admission of a church into the federation does not "affect the whole federation," as Rev. VanPopta claimed. Admission of a minister does. For the latter the deputies' concurring advice is needed; for the former it is not.

It is my sincere wish that matters be kept pure and simple.

It is also my wish that ecclesiastical assemblies refrain from making bold and blanket statements without any proof whatsoever. From such statements only accidents result.

I am afraid that, if the churches go in the way I have shown above to be wrong, the ultimate question will not be

To be or not to be present, but:

To be or not to be. C



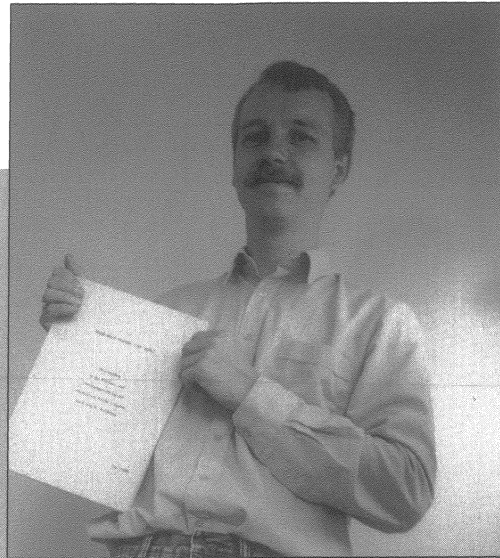
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# Reformed Work in the Ukraine

By C. Van Dam

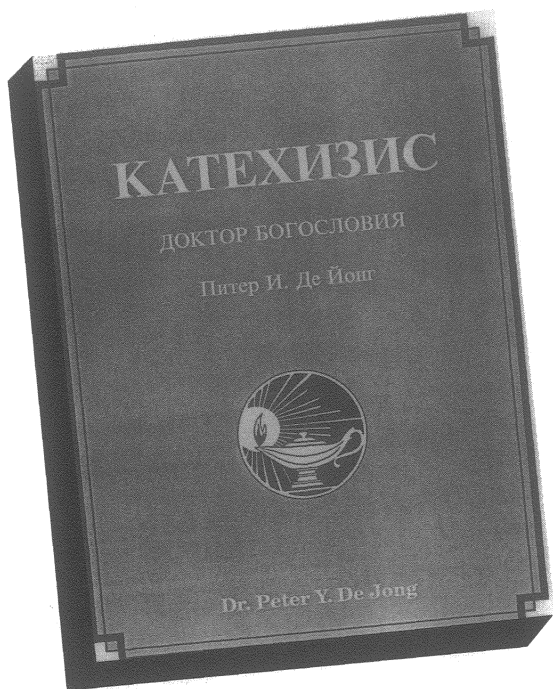
In the June 4 issue of *Clarion* of this year, an extensive report was given on efforts by our Dutch sister churches as well as the American organization, Christ for Russia, to seize the opportunities that now exist for helping the revitalization of the Reformed faith in the Ukraine. As then reported, an important means was strengthening the teaching of Reformed theology in Hungary and the Ukraine, an effort in which the Dutch and Americans are cooperating. More information can now be shared, especially in the form of pictures. (Taken by Rev. N. Vogelzang.)

*Drs. J.A. Colijn was sent by Fundament (in close consultation with the Theological University of Kampen) to teach dogmatics at the Theological Academy of the Hungarian Reformed Churches in Debrecen. He will also assist in Catechetical instruction in the Carpatho-Ukraine region where many Hungarian Reformed Churches are found.*



*Views of the Reformed University of Debrecen. The sign in the picture on the left means "by praying and working." The Reformed Church is the state church of Hungary. After years of domination by the Communists, it is hoped that the Reformed character of this church and its institutions can be strengthened.*

*continued on next page*



Besides an existing Ukrainian edition of the Heidelberg Catechism (which has been found recently), there is now also available a twenty page Catechism prepared by a committee of ten, headed by Dr. P.Y. De Jong which has been translated into Russian. This aid has been very enthusiastically received and it will be used also in the Ukraine for those who speak Russian.

Part of Camp Balazser (Built 1812). The signs were used for the Reformed Summer Youth Camp. It is here where the first Calvinist Ukrainian Bible School is to be started. There are at present only 25 ministers for an estimated 130,000 Reformed Hungarians. There is thus a desperate need to train ministers. For that reason our sister churches in Gelderland, the Netherlands, have adopted this area as their new mission field. Rev. M. Nap has been ordained as missionary and the search is on for a second one. →



Building a new church building on the heights of Akli in the Ukraine. From left to right, a woman labourer, Dr. S. Daniel, interpreter and guide for Rev. Vogelzang, Dr. G. Warmink, and Rev. O. Pal who preaches to five churches and is literally the architect and designer of them all. Although the communist regime is gone, the present government is in no hurry to return Reformed Church buildings to their rightful owners.



(On the right) Rev. N. Vogelzang, the enthusiastic founder and executive director of Christ for Russia. (On the left) Bishop F. Pol, an 80-year-old highly esteemed minister of 6000 Reformed Church members in the Beregovo area of the Ukraine. He was in Siberia for "1128 days," the name of his book on the ordeal. During the communist rule, 40,000 Reformed leaders from the Hungarian population in the Ukraine were deported to Siberia.



At present there is a window of opportunity to make a difference in the Ukraine for the Reformed faith. If interested in more information or in giving a gift contact:

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

Christ for Russia  
14152 E. Linvale Pl., #303  
Aurora, CO  
80014 U.S.A.



# “Build on Higher Ground”



On the evening of June 24, 1993, eleven beaming young adults entered the auditorium to begin the “first” grade twelve graduation in the history of Dufferin Christian School. Our principal, Mr. Sjoerd Nap, after a few words of welcome, opened the festive ceremony with Scripture reading from Psalm 25: “All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep His covenant and testimonies.” He then thanked our heavenly Father for His loving care and faithfulness shown to us again this year. God has again equipped us with all that was necessary to complete this school year and make this first graduation exercise possible. Together we sang Hymn 48: 1, 4

If you but let the Father guide you,  
Relying on His faithfulness,  
He will be evermore beside you  
In all your sorrow and distress . . .  
For God will never those disown  
Who put their trust in Him alone.

Mr. Fred DeWit, chairman of the school board, in his speech to the graduates, dwelt on the meaning of the theme that the graduates have chosen: “Build on Higher Ground.” One can interpret these words in many different ways, but the true meaning comes from Jesus’ words found in Matthew 7: 24: “For everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Christ is our sure foundation. If we put our trust in Him alone and expect all help from Him, we can also depend on His blessing in all we plan to do, whether it be in the work force or in pursuing a college diploma or a university degree.

Mr. Nap congratulated the graduates on behalf of the staff. He pointed out that the diploma they will receive is to be “shared” with their teachers and parents. He then presented a diploma to each graduand for completing twelve years of education at Dufferin Christian School. Mr. DeWit, on behalf of the school board, presented each student with a NIV Study Bible.



*The graduands: (front row, left to right): Joanne Visscher, Carla Veenendaal, Mark Vanderveen (second row): Matthew Vandermeulen, Hanneke Nap, Alex Borst, Betty Bergsma (third row): Richard Vandersluis, Merika Linde, Vern DeWit, James Bergsma*

Vern DeWit, in his valedictory address, reminisced on their years at Dufferin Christian School. As a close-knit group, they “learned to stick up for each other” and help each other. He first of all thanked God, for “without His help and guidance we would have been without comfort in sad times and without confidence when faced with tough times. Basically, without His help I wouldn’t be here tonight speaking, and there wouldn’t even be a graduation.” He also thanked his classmates, teachers, and parents who all played a role in their education.

Guest speaker for this evening was Mr. Bram Verhoeff. “It is my sincere hope that you will look back on your D.C.S. years as having prepared you to meet and deal with the challenges that life will present. Now, you graduands, chose a powerful metaphor: “Build on

Higher Ground”; one of the most powerful images of Jesus Christ. There is richness in it; meaning flows out of it. It sounds daring, solid, secure, confident. Yes, it seems to provide a sense of direction, filled with vitality. It looks like you are *not* wondering nervously what you might do. In your choice of theme, I sense commitment to the words of our Saviour, commitment to work and to work together, to seek for a solid foundation, to develop the right characteristics of a builder, a construction worker in Christ’s kingdom. This requires an assurance of calling, a clarity on what to do, rejecting rubbish of falsehood and vain tradition, perseverance, diligence, prayerfulness, and a total dependence on God.” James Bergsma then thanked Mr. Verhoeff and gave him a painting to show their appreciation.

A humorous class history was presented by Matthew Vandermeulen and Rich Vandersluis. Some secrets were also revealed, much to the embarrassment of the graduands concerned. All their teachers, from Miss Wilma Vanwoudenberg in grade one to Mr. Vanderhoek, Mr. P. Groenwold, Mr. K. Jagersma, Mr. Jack Boersma, Mr. H. Ludwig and their present teachers, Mr. B. Lindhout, Mr. B. Verhoeff, Mr. R. Van Spronsen, and Mr. S. Nap were remembered from a student's point of view. Their school years could not have been all that bad, for "if we had a chance, we would do it all over again."

Alex Borst presented a composite picture of the graduating class to the staff representative, Mr. B. Lindhout. The picture now adorns the hallways of D.C.S.

The last part of the evening was devoted to awards. Subject awards for academic achievement were presented to Vern DeWit for Math 300, English 300, Reformed Studies 305, and Chemistry 300; to Joanne Visscher for Math 301 and Social Studies 300; and to Carla Veenendaal for Keyboarding 302. The Premier School Agenda Scholarship for continuing education went to Vern DeWit and the NewmanHall Scholarship for those intending to pursue a degree in education went to Betty Bergsma.

Mr. B.A. Van Ruiten, consulate of the Netherlands in Manitoba, shared a congratulatory message with the graduates. He also congratulated our Canadian Reformed community in establishing a Christian school and being able to celebrate its first grade twelve graduation.

Thanksgiving and praise was voiced by the audience when they sang Hymn 65: 1, 2, 3: "All praise and thanks to God, the Father, now be given. . . ." Rev. DeBoer officially closed the evening with thanksgiving prayer after which everybody rose and sang "O Canada."

Mrs. F. Veenendaal 

## And Brampton Rejoices . . .

### Prologue:

In the week leading up to August 22, several people from other congregations remarked to me: "It's going to be a beautiful day for you in Brampton coming Sunday, isn't it?"

Indeed there was considerable interest in the congregations around us. After only a "short" vacancy (at least compared to the previous vacancies) Brampton is to receive its own minister once again.

### 22 August 9:55 a.m.

The organist finishes his last prelude, Ps. 136 . . . "O give thanks unto the LORD. . . . For His steadfast love is sure. . . ." and as the organ sounds the chorale it is hard to imagine that there is anyone present that does not sing the words along in his or her mind!

### 22 August 10:00 a.m.

The consistory enters, among them the new minister, Revered Berends. The little ones stretch their necks to get a better look and satisfy their curiosity. They see him sit down with the elders at the front of the church.



Reverend Kok mounts the pulpit and delivers the salutation. The congregation sings and their anticipation is noticeable in the singing. Reverend Kok has as text Ephesians 6:10-20 and as theme: "Christ equips His priests for Holy war:

1. by conferring on them His glory;

2. by guarding the boundaries of His church, and

3. by the church's new life."

He goes on to show that the armour described in Ephesians is not a description of the Roman soldier's attire, but is based on the priestly garments. This is shown from the context and passages

from Isaiah. The church does not wage holy war to destroy God's enemies. We fight the spiritual forces of wickedness. God devotes Himself to the salvation of His people. The pure preaching of the apostolic gospel is the sovereign God speaking, addressing His people. The preaching of the Word is the first form of the Glory of God.

It was also the priest's task to guard God's holy boundaries. In the Old Testament access to God was limited. God, through His priests, holds back His people from apostasy. By the preaching the church is transfigured; in Jesus Christ the temple and the assembly of God's people are combined.

Paul ends with prayer. That's how we enter the sanctuary, come into God's presence. Through prayer we can put demons to flight. Also we should know our priorities. For example, discussion about the Trinity should be more important than about anything Kim Campbell decides. There must be a willingness to suffer reproach for the proclamation of the Word. This is the holy warfare that is central to the church's new life.

And finally Reverend Berends speaks his "I do with all my heart." The moment that we have our own pastor and teacher is finally here. The congregation responds with Ps. 134:3 realizing that also a servant of God is dependent on the Lord's blessing.

After the service time is given for a message of congratulations brought by Rev. P. Aasman on behalf of the churches of Classis Ontario North. Also the neighbouring church at Orangeville speaks via the representative br. H. Kottelenberg. Numerous letters of congratulation were received. The final word belongs to the chairman br. J. Tenhage who speaks some fitting words and request all to rise and sing of Ps. 122. A fitting conclusion to this beautiful service.

### 22 August 12 noon

It was indeed a beautiful service, but we were also blessed with the most beautiful weather we could wish for. Had it been different we could not possibly have fitted everyone, including the many guests, into our basement. As it was we could have coffee, cake and offer personal congratulations outside.

### 22 August 2:30 p.m.

Due to the festivities after the morning service many arrived home quite a bit

later than usual. As a result a number of midday naps were missed. But, no matter, as Reverend Berends climbs the pulpit, all eyes are wide open and there are no traces of sleepiness. The opening song was sung powerfully by the relatively small congregation, anxious to hear the inaugural sermon on Ezekiel 34: 23-27. The theme: "There is to be one shepherd, one flock, which guarantees

1. the Unity,
2. the Safety, and
3. the Well-being of the flock."

A warning is sounded to the office-bearers to not come in between the Great Shepherd and the flock. The flock belongs to Jesus Christ. As long as the message of the Good Shepherd is maintained, unity is guaranteed. But as soon as the congregation gives in to the spirit of compromise, unity is broken. Something to remember in these days of ecumenism: never to compromise. "Abide in me and I in you." The flock is nothing without Him.

We have a Shepherd that feeds and defends His flock. Also now, when the most vile abominations sweep across the land. Also this shall not prevail against the church as long as the Shepherd is followed.

The Lord has the well-being at heart for all His people. He is the new David, therefore we shall not want. He wants His treasures distributed among His flock so that all are satisfied. Let us receive each other in Him so that also here there may be one flock under the One Shepherd.

### 24 August 8:00 p.m.

The *Credo* school auditorium is packed. One would be hard pressed to add one more table with chairs. It appears indeed as if everyone that could come, has come. And for a good reason. After a two-year wait we again may "boast" of our own minister. Even though during this waiting period the Word continued to be preached and catechism instruction did not stop, there was a void. That void is now filled, that gives us much joy and therefore we have come together in celebration. For this reason this evening is to be one of fellowship and fun, and this report attempts to give you a glimpse of the gladness we feel.

The first thing that strikes us is the fact that the young people of the congregation have undertaken to serve the rest of us. It is a great idea of them to make themselves so useful.

### Act 1

"The *Credo* Singers." All the students of *Credo* that belong to the Brampton congregation, including the Kindergarten pupils, march in wearing their *Credo* "uniforms." No matter that some have the shirt tucked in their pants and others wear it "miniskirt" style. No matter that some are seen to make mischievous faces. What matters is that the *Credo* emblem is clearly visible in orange across their chests. An impressive sight, no less. Together they sing some beautiful songs, clearly expressing God's goodness and mercy and our response in praise to Him. They receive a well deserved applause.

### Act 2

The Women's Society presents, in impressive poetic form, (according to Rev. Berends one rivaling Shakespeare) a list of the activities that go on within the congregation. A presentation is made of a picture book containing all the families and members of the congregation. This book will certainly be treasured by the Berends.

### Act 3

The Young Peoples Society invites Rev. and Mrs. Berends to try and match them with their respective parents. To us, insiders, some of the matches made by the Berends are hilarious. Nevertheless it is an excellent exercise for them to begin to learn the right combinations.

### Act 4

Another Matching game: This time the Berends are to match the husbands with their wives. Fortunately, and miraculously, all the couples are properly reunited. This is a good omen and a feat that not many marriage counselors can boast about.

### Final act

Many other things are done to entertain us, including the reading of a Special Edition of the *Messenger* that has the catechism students coming to class at 7 a.m. on Saturdays. There were no takers; Rev. Berends is game, so he says.

Throughout the evening we sang much to the praise of our Covenant God. This evening is Brampton's way of telling Rev. and Mrs. Berends: "we're thankful that you've come to us; we thank the Lord for His goodness and mercy."

Great is His faithfulness!!

Bert Boersema 

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# 40th Anniversary Celebration, 1953-1993

## Canadian Reformed Church at Watford, Ontario

On March 15, 1953, the Canadian Reformed Church at Watford was instituted. We had the opportunity to celebrate this event on May 28, 1993, at the Watford Centennial Hall.

The chairman of the consistory, br. M. Smid, opened the evening with Scripture reading taken from Ps. 95. To this psalm of praise, the Lord adds a reminder of Israel's sinfulness during the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness and a serious warning to obey His voice "today."

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Watford church, we are reminded of the urgency of knowing God's Word, of using the gift of the preaching of the Word, of singing praises, to celebrate the many gifts of the Lord's goodness to His congregation here.

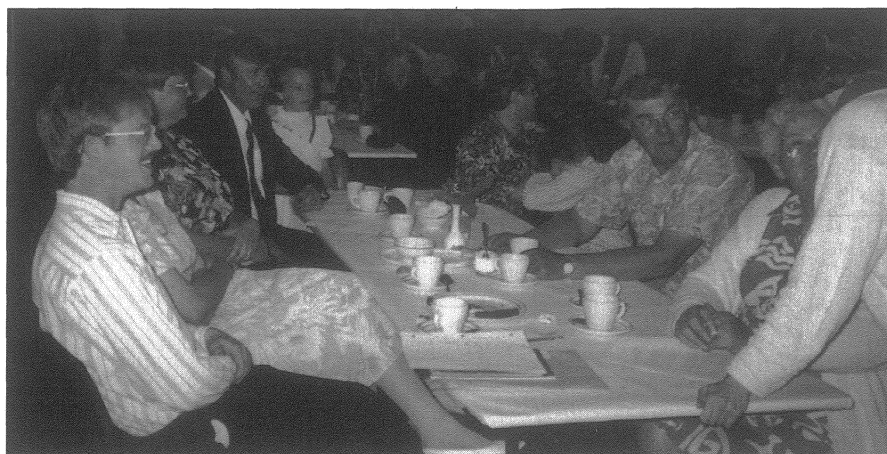
"Watford's resident poet," sr. Phyllis Tamminga, then presented her poem about the history of the Watford church, as compiled by br. G. Tamminga. This poem highlighted many interesting events and memories. Br. Talo Tamminga also read some facts and figures of interest from the past. Br. Alan Janssens came forward on behalf of the Young Peoples Society, and read some interesting anecdotes from the young peoples' minute books over years gone by.

Srs. Carolyn Haan and Ebelien Watel gave a musical interlude, after which br. Rick Lenting presented slides for all to enjoy.

All the members of the Watford church that were present at the institution in 1953 then came forward for a cake-cutting ceremony, and posed for pictures.

Watford's choir, under the direction of sr. Linda Dokter with sr. Julia Dokter at the piano, then presented "Jubilate Deo" by Agostino Agazzari (Make a Joyful Noise to God).

Congratulatory messages were conveyed to the gathering from former



*40th Anniversary celebration of Watford Church*



*Members present at institution in 1953 from left to right: G. Tamminga, T. Tamminga, B. Tamminga, R. Lenting, E. Boesema, J. Bork, G. Kok, J. Janssens, A. Janssens*

ministers Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, Rev. M. VanLuik, and Rev. D. Moes. Br. A. Smid spoke on behalf of the neighbouring church at Chatham. Br. C. Hoff of London came forward as a former member of Watford, and reminisced with us about the years he spent in our midst.

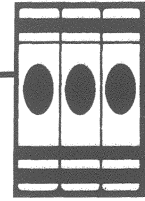
Before closing prayer, led by br. B. Dokter, thanks were expressed to all

who participated in the program, especially to the members of the "Anniversary Committee," sr. A. Janssens, br. M. Smid, and br. G. Tamminga.

The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and throughout the program, mention was often made of the faithfulness of God to the church of our Lord Jesus Christ at Watford. **C**

# BOOK REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



William D. Gairdner, *The War Against the Family*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1992, 2nd printing 1993; 655 pages, \$ 32.95.

In many subtle and not so subtle ways we experience the erosion of the family in our society. Here is a book that confirms one's worst fears and documents in a most thorough way what is really happening in Canada today to this tremendous gift of God, the family.

Gairdner (who has a Ph.D. from Stanford University in literature and philosophy and was a successful Olympic athlete) approaches his subject with zest and verve and he clearly has the talent for making what could be a complicated undertaking very accessible and interesting. This gift combined with his emotional involvement as a parent makes him well equipped to write this exposé of what is going on in our country with respect to the family unit. As the subtitle suggests, political, economic, and social policies are all tilted against the family and thus these policies threaten us all.

## An exposé

Gairdner begins by mapping out the terrain and then in the second and largest part goes into the specific issues that we are confronted with today; the education system, sex education, feminism, day-care, the gay lobby, abortion, euthanasia, liberal churches involvement in the general decay of society, and modern charter law of rights. Everything he states is documented!

One of the many strengths of this book is that Gairdner takes time to explain the origin of ideas that many now take for granted, such as the welfare state and the idea that everyone must be the same. It is most encouraging and noteworthy, e.g., that in order to understand the present, he reaches back (e.g., on p. 98) to the work of the likes of Alexis de Tocqueville (his 1840 essay "Despotism in Democratic Nations") who was of considerable influence on Groen van Prinsterer. It is important to know the origins, for then the current

and sometimes subtle changes that now take place can be readily understood. (For example, the desire for state control over the lives and minds of its citizens is a potent factor in the suggestion that compulsory school-age should be lowered to four, and even to two; cf. p. 219.)

Unfortunately (for Gairdner has so many good things to say), a review is not a place to recount all the contents of a book. Let me give you some examples of items that may surprise you and then go into more detail on three topics, the decline of education, abortion, and the role of the "mainline" churches.

Did you know that the official Ontario Ministry of Education's definition for its "family studies" course is "a social unit of interacting persons who make commitments, assume responsibilities, nurture each other, become socialized, transmit cultural and religious values, and share resources over time" (p. 133)? This official definition which is to filter down through courses to school children makes no mention of marriage or even of the requirement for the presence of a male and female. There is no mention of children nor any legal framework. And this definition comes from 1987, before the present NDP government!

Did you know that statistics show that the government "is taxing the life out of legal marriages and economically penalizing child-bearing by its own citizens"? Did you know that at the same time it tries to offset the falling fertility rate "by immigration from foreign nations that are increasingly alien to Canada's cultural ethos" (p. 185, also pp. 175-186)?

Did you know that what is taught to boys and girls in so-called sex education classes in public schools respecting alternate forms of sex and how to get familiar with sex organs (e.g., pp. 240-245) is not fit to be printed in *Clarion*?

## Education

In his chapter on education, Gairdner makes the point that although it costs us three times as much (in real

terms) to educate a child today compared to 1960, and although we spend more on education than anywhere else in the world (with the exception of Sweden which is slightly higher) our students routinely perform last or second last in standardized international testing. Our dropout rate of 30% is among the worst of developed nations. North Americans were more literate before 1840 than now. After that date, public schools were established. Public education has tended to eradicate all social and moral hierarchies, is a key factor in social decline, and with its child centred education the goal is not to teach content, but to restructure the child's thinking and behaviour. The desire to restructure society through the education of the children is blatantly obvious in the sex education programs where (to paraphrase Gairdner in my own way) a so-called moral free emphasis conditions students not to feel bad about sinning and going contrary to God's explicit demands in His Word. It is Gairdner's thesis that the stress on free sex is intentional. "You can easily relieve a man of his freedoms and property if you give him more and 'freer' sexual 'rights' in exchange; sexual freedom anaesthetizes our desire for political freedom" (p. 245). The evidence Gairdner brings to bear on this point indicates that this thesis is not the product of his imagination. He also shows that the consequences of this program have been devastating in terms of promiscuity, teen pregnancies, abortion, emotional problems, and related adolescent identity problems (pp. 258 ff.).

What should be done about it? Give the education back to the parents and let them choose what school their child should go to. In other words, end the monopoly position of the public schools. He proposes a voucher system whereby the education tax dollar follows the child and the parents can choose the school they want (pp. 287 ff.). Interestingly enough he uses the Dutch system as an example. True freedom of education is found there for the

constitution ensures that any responsible group may start a school and receive public funding without discrimination via a voucher system. It may be noted here that this situation was the result of a long hard struggle waged first by Groen van Prinsterer and later by Abraham Kuyper for freedom of education for Christian parents, a struggle won with the adoption of the constitution of 1917.

### Abortion

Gairdner's chapters on abortion are to the point, the horrible truth needs to be told again and again. In this context he notes that the lights dim on our civilization which owes its greatness, and also its compassion for the defenseless, to Christianity (p. 417). However, even pagan societies condemned abortion! (pp. 418 ff.) Although polls indicate that the vast majority of the public opposes abortion on demand, the media are heavily biased in favour of it. Abortion is convenience killing and justified solely by the woman's assumed right to make a choice depending on what suits her (pp. 431 ff.) Gairdner shows that such a rationale must logically mean that the mother must also have the choice to kill the baby after birth (pp. 433-436). Although it is not "nice," to his credit Gairdner tells about abortion as it is and reminds us again of the gruesome reality of ending a human life with, e.g., saline injection or chopping up the unborn piecemeal to extract the child from what should be the safety of the mother, sometimes at an incredibly late stage of pregnancy. Evidence of abortion in free standing clinics is disposed of as quickly as possible. Says one "nurse," "We basically put them (aborted babies) down the garbage disposal (garburetor)" (pp. 453 ff.). May Gairdner's chapters on abortion help the pro-life movement and help in an eventual change of legislation protecting the unborn! As he indicates in his book, we are all becoming participants of this "invisible holocaust" which corrupts our nation for through our taxes we are paying for them. There should be much more protest than there is.

### The mainline "church"

Gairdner has some important things to say about the "church's" role (chapter 17). Although the "mainstream Christian church" should be pro-family, it is anti-family and most churches have been captured by the radical left. Economics and the environment are

among the favourite topics of these "church" men, but with few exceptions, virtually nothing is said against abortion, euthanasia, the erosion of the family, and the promotion of homosexuality; instead many are actively supporting these causes.

New Age thinking, which is based on a combination of Eastern mysticism and Western occultism is filling the void left by abandoning the God of the Scriptures. One consequence is the now famous words of Shirley MacLaine, "You must never worship anyone or anything other than self. For you are God." (p. 522). As Gairdner puts it, there is no more "outer God," by which he means the Creator who is separate from His creation and who provides the necessary moral law. Gairdner is rightly alarmed by the fact that one's subjective feelings must be determinative. "Do you not wonder where it is all leading?" (p. 527). Reading through some answers to that question, makes one aware what a privilege it is to be a Christian, but also what a burden is on us as faithful churches to spread the light in a world that is fast becoming a very dark place.

### Conclusion

This is a rich book and it deserves to be widely read, also in our circles. His analysis of the problems will find widespread agreement among us and his call for action (in the last chapter) helps to direct the attention where the real problems are. Consider, for example, to what the appetite, a solution he proposes: "legally married couples with children should be allowed to deduct mortgage interest on their homes until their last child is 10 years of age. . . . I can think of few economic incentives as powerful for encouraging and rewarding intact family to stay together and to have a lot of children over a long period of time" (p. 594).

One thing is too bad. Although Gairdner, to his credit, does say we need moral absolutes and that "we should restore our Judeo-Christian roots" (p. 597), he does not write from a specifically Christian perspective and his solutions do not include a clear call to return to the God of Scripture. That would be the beginning of a real and lasting solution. As children of light, living in a world of darkness, our task is clear, also in this respect. And precisely as Christians we can ill afford to miss this important book.



CALLED AND DECLINED to Edmonton, AB

**Rev. R.A. Schouten**  
of Calgary AB

\*\*\*

CALLED to Abbotsford, BC

**Rev. J. Huijgen**  
of Fergus, ON

\*\*\*

### AMERICAN REFORMED FELLOWSHIP

The American Reformed Fellowship invites you to worship with us in Florida. Each Sunday from December 5, 1993, to April 1994, we meet at Palmview First Baptist Church, 49th Street at U.S. 41 across from Skyway Village in Palmetto. Our public gatherings are at 11:15 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and enjoy a social hour between the services.

During January, February, and March 1994, Rev. J. VanRietschoten, Prof. Dr. J. Faber, and Rev. Cl. Stam will be our "guest ministers" for shorter or longer periods. If no minister is available from one of the American or Canadian Reformed Churches, we will listen to taped services or have a reading service. A collection is held for general expenses.

For information in Florida please call (813) 955-4497 or (813) 729-4863 even before December 5, 1993. In Ontario, please call (905) 563-8383. Our mailing address is c/o Mr. M. Vandervelde, 4219 Mountainview Road, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2, Canada.





By Aunt Betty



## Dear Busy Beavers,

We have had some snow already!  
 It looked so wintry!  
 Busy Beaver *Carolyn Vis* has a fall poem for us.  
 To me it brings back happy memories  
 of yellow and red maples!  
 Did you have a lovely fall, too?  
 Here's Carolyn's poem.

### Autumn

A is for autumn, so colourful and bright.  
 Use its beauty for it's quite a sight!  
 To God we will give the praise  
 Until the end of all our days.  
 Make autumn a happy season,  
 Now, with no other reason.

Busy Beaver *Jodi Wemekamp*, too, has a poem about the seasons and God's praise.  
 Here it is:

I love the spring time, summer, winter and fall,  
 Thanks be to God who created them all.  
 We love Him all you know,  
 So to His house we go,  
 And worship every Sunday.  
 We love Him and worship Him every Sunday.



## Quiz Time!

### Can you break the CODE?

by Busy Beaver *Bonita Feenstra*

Find out these sentences by writing the letter that comes before the one that's written.

CLUE: F= E  
 Q= P

1. Fmfqibout bsf cjh.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Dmpxot bsf grooz.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Nz zpvohtu cspuifs jt pof.










\_\_\_\_\_

4. Cbcjft bsf dvuf.

\_\_\_\_\_

### PICTURE CODE

by Busy Beaver *Heather Grit*

A = □	E = Y	S = 
O = 	T = 	V = 
U = 	B = 	L = 
N = 	Y = 	

□ ▮ ⊙ ☙ ☽ ☺ ☻ ☼ ☽ ☼  
 ☼ ☼ ☼ ☺ ☽ ☼ ☼ ☼ ☼



## SURPRISES!

The Lord is never surprised by anything. These Bible people were. Can you name them?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ were surprised to hear themselves speaking in strange tongues.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ were surprised by an act of the Lord Jesus in a crowded house.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ were surprised at night on the Sea of Galilee.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ were surprised by a 12-year-old boy.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ was surprised by an angel with a drawn sword.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ was surprised by a serpent.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ received a great surprise while watching sheep on a mountainside.
8. These three men got a great surprise on a mountain top. \_\_\_\_\_
9. The seating arrangement at a table was a great surprise to these men. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Even the Lord Jesus was surprised at the faith of this man. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_ were greatly surprised by a fig tree.
12. This priest was greatly surprised in the holy of holies. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_ were surprised beyond measure to see Peter at the door.

(answers on next page)

## New Contest!

*I always like seeing the pictures you make, Busy Beavers.*

*I enjoy seeing the fun things you think of.*

*I think it's time for a new contest. And I think it should be a **picture contest** with a real **prize!***

*Please send your pictures to:*

### Picture Contest

c/o Aunt Betty

Premier Printing Ltd.

One Beghin Avenue

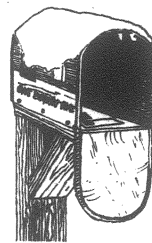
Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5



## December Birthdays

Kristi Viher	1	David DeBoer	16
Heidi DeBoer	7	Richard Feenstra	16
Harold Sikkema	7	Jacqueline Bikker	19
Russell Werkman	7	Aileen Feenstra	20
Jolena DeHaas	8	Hilmer Jagersma	23
Heather Grit	9	Joni Dekker	24
Sarah Hovius	9	Monica Bartels	26
Leanne Beukema	10	Charlene Veldman	27
Brian Janzen	11	Alice Van Bostelen	28
Sarah Bouwman	12	Daniel De Gelder	29
Alana Bergsma	13	Tamara Dejong	29
Lisa Burger	16	Miranda Hulst	29

*We wish you all a very happy birthday and the Lord's blessing in the year ahead. Have an excellent day celebrating with your family and friends!*



## FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Carolyn Vis*. How is your little niece doing? And how did you enjoy the wedding? I think the Busy Beavers would enjoy hearing about your fort, Carolyn.

Welcome to the Club, *Corinne Vis*. I can understand you are excited about that wedding! I hope you will join in all our Busy Beaver activities, Corinne. We are happy to have you join us.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Adena Feenstra*. I really like your picture of your family! Keep up the good work, Adena. I hope you will write again soon.

Of course you may join the Busy Beaver Club, *Reuel Feenstra*. We are happy to have you join us. What did you like best at the plowing match, Reuel?

Welcome to the Club, *Jeremy Feenstra*. How are your pets doing, Jeremy? Are you responsible for them? Maybe you could tell us about your pets sometime.

Hello, *Jodi Wemekamp*. It was good to hear from you again. Thank you for your poem, Jodi. I enjoyed it.