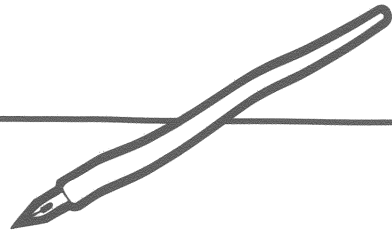


A black and white photograph of a valley with a river, mountains, and clouds. The river flows through the center of the valley, reflecting the surrounding landscape. The mountains are covered in dense forest, and the sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

**Clarion**  
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 43, No. 13

July 1, 1994



## Where have all the parents gone?

**Item** – Young mother knifed to death in own Edmonton home by three teenage burglars after being awakened in the middle of night by sounds she mistook for one of her children sleep-walking in the hall.

**Item** – 10-year-old boy stabs 14-year-old with a pair of scissors during a soccer game on Medicine Hat playing field.

**Item** – 15-year-old fires on RCMP as they chase him and some friends who had stolen a truck.

**Item** – Two 18-year-olds and one 14-year-old beat a 16-year-old disabled boy, “just for the fun of it.”

### Young offenders

Canadian society is seeing an escalation of youth crime. During the last decade, the percentage of all crime committed by youths (12- to 17-year-olds) has risen out of proportion to their share of the population. The statistics for young males is especially staggering. In 1992 they accounted for just 3.9% of the population, but were responsible for 12.6% of all crimes and 27.6% of all property crime.

Many conservative commentators point at the Young Offenders Act (YOA) as the source of the problem. We have Mr. Pierre Trudeau and his social engineers to thank for the YOA. It is the brainchild of Trudeau’s solicitor-general Robert Kaplan. When Mr. Kaplan introduced the bill in the House of Commons in 1984, he stated that he had purposefully rejected the old notion that punishment should fit the crime. Instead, he wanted the punishment “to fit the offender.” The historic preference in Canada has been that of retribution. The punishment should fit the crime. The prisoner should get what he deserves although not more than he deserves. This was based upon the Biblical principle of “an eye for an eye, and life for life.”

Trudeau and his social planners thought this too harsh. The young offenders will end up with low self-esteem. And low self-esteem, say the psychologists, is why people commit crimes. And so we were burdened with the liberal YOA which demands a soft touch for youthful murderers, rapists and thieves. *Statistics Canada* reveals that under the restrictions of the YOA, the average sentence length for young murderers in the years 1990-91 was 2.5 years. For sexual assault the average sentence was a half year. Youthful robbers were also confined for no more than a half year.

For the last decade, and even longer, the youth of this country have been taught that they can pretty well do as they please. They need not worry about the consequences. Corporal punishment is out. It is cruel and unusual punishment. The young vandals know that the YOA is their salva-

tion. If caught, they will suffer little, if at all. In January of this year some young people broke into a motorhome in Calgary. After stealing what could be stolen they spray-painted the words “Thank God for the YOA” on the dashboard.

### Angry Canadians

Canadians are angry. They are demanding that the Liberal government tighten up the YOA. People are screaming for tougher penalties for 15- to 17-year-old offenders to be tried in adult court rather than be mollycoddled under the YOA. Daily the federal Justice Minister Allan Rock is besieged by questions in the House of Commons demanding to know what he is going to do about toughening the YOA. Especially the Reform party has been insisting on action although the noise is heard even from within the Liberal caucus. So far Mr. Rock has shown himself to be anything but. Considering how a significant portion of the Liberal government consists of re-run Trudeau hacks, there is no reason to hold your breath.

The YOA needs to be repealed or “toughened.” There is no question about that. And we would do well to address our Members of Parliament on it. However, we would also do well to ask whose fault it is that many of Canada’s youth are running wild. Today’s problem was enhanced but not created by the YOA. Trudeau and his social engineers made the problem worse, but they did not produce it. The root of the problem is the permissive climate generated by society in the 1960s and which is choking us to death.

### Who is to blame?

Bob DeMoss of Focus on the Family says that the cause of burgeoning youth crime and violence is the social decay set in motion 30 years ago. DeMoss gives five reasons for teen delinquency.

1. *Parental neglect.* Parents no longer tell their children what is right or wrong.
2. *The entertainment industry.* In the absence of parental input this industry is defining the moral blueprints young people copy.
3. *Canadian tax law.* Because of allowable deductions for child care expenses, a family where both parents are working and earning a combined income of \$60,000 has a \$7,000 advantage over a family where father earns \$60,000 and mother stays at home. Canadian tax law drives both parents out of the home encouraging greater parental neglect.
4. *Peer pressure.* It’s cool to be violent.
5. *Lack of moral teaching in public schools.* Students are taught that there are no absolute rights and wrongs. You

must determine what is good and bad. The student can decide that robbery is allowed as long as he has thought about it carefully.

We can scream at the rebellious youth, but who has let them become rebels? Does it make sense to get suddenly harsh with the youth while society has been soft on them for 30 years? Today we are reaping the benefits of 30 years of permissiveness. The blame lies at the feet of the parents. Today's youth is largely dysfunctional because the parents have not given them a sense of what is right and wrong. The parents have abrogated their responsibility to the public schools and the government both of which have been in the hands of the extreme liberal social engineers for the past three decades.

### Where's dad? Where's mom?

Recently my family and I were at a nearby Provincial Park. Our younger children were playing on the play structures. A young lad of 4 or 5 years old was playing there as well. He had a ghetto blaster with him polluting the air with heavy metal cranked up about as high as it would go. His mother wandered away, leaving the youngster and the music. When asked whether he would please bring his ghetto blaster to his campsite he said insolently: "Why don't you leave?"

Where have all the parents gone?

We can grieve for the lad we met at the Provincial Park. We can weep for the generation of young people today who are headed for destruction. We ought to bewail the amoral legacy we have handed down to today's youth. We ought to speak up for change. But we should also realize that beefing up the YOA is only a band-aid.

As Christians, we must make sure that our homes and families are different. As we confess in Lord's Day 27, our children are distinguished from the children of unbelievers. Let us realize what kind of society we are raising families in. Let us not be guilty of parental neglect. Let us rather give our children clear guidance on what is right and wrong, and the difference between good and bad. The Word of God is clear on how we must live. Let us do our children the favour of teaching them what the Word says about how they are to live before the face of God. **C**

## SUMMER ISSUE

*Clarion*, Volume 43, No. 15, 16 will be a combined issue. Advertisements for August should be in by July 15, 1994.

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Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

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MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.

One Beghin Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5  
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202

SUBSCRIPTION RATES	FOR 1993	
	Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada*	\$32.00*	\$57.25*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds	\$35.00	\$50.00
International	\$46.25	\$78.00

\* Including 7% GST - No. R104293055

Advertisements: \$6.50 per column inch

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Publications Mail Registration No. 1025

ISSN 0383-0438

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# Two or Three? A Look at the Reformed View of Office<sub>2</sub>

By J. De Jong

## The Confessions

One may wonder whether the question concerning the number and functions of offices is a moot question with little or no significance for practical life of the churches. After all, does it make any difference which label is applied to which office? Is there anything wrong in seeing a minister as an elder, or in seeing an elder as qualified to teach? Are not these indifferent matters in the church?

An examination of the Reformed confessions will immediately make clear that in the time of the Reformation this was not considered to be an indifferent matter. The 'three-office' view is firmly embedded not only in our confessions, but in most of the confessions of the Reformation. In this article we will consider some of these confessions, focussing in particular on the task of the minister of the Word, and then draw some conclusions with respect to the practice of the office of the ministry and that of the elders today.

## The French Confession, 1559

This confession forms the blueprint for the Belgic Confession of 1561. In Art. 29 it confesses three offices: "We believe that there should be pastors, elders and deacons."<sup>1</sup> In art. 30 it says: "We believe that all true pastors, wherever they may be, have the same authority and equal power under one head, one only sovereign and universal bishop Jesus Christ; and consequently no church shall claim any authority or dominion over another." In Art. 31 this confession says: ". . . all pastors, elders and deacons should have evidence of their being called to office."

Noteworthy in this confession – which also forms a sort of blueprint for later credal statements on this point – is that the office of the minister of the Word is identified as: pastor, (French: des pasteurs). The First Helvetic Confession of

1536 speaks of pastors and teachers, with a direct link to Eph. 4:11-12.<sup>2</sup> Hence we see early in the Reformation the name **pastors** being given to the preachers or ministers of the Word.

## The Scottish Confession, 1560

This confession makes a reference to the ministers of the Word when dealing with the sacraments. In Art. 22, it says: "That Sacramentis be richtlie ministrat, we judge twa things requisite: The ane, that they be ministrat be lauchful Ministers, whome we affirme to be only they that are appoynted to the preaching of the Word, into quhais mouthes God has put sum Sermon of exhortation, they being men lauchful lie chosen thereto be sum Kirk."<sup>3</sup> The ministers are also to be active in the task of guarding the table of the Lord, as stated in Art. 23: "And therefore it is, that in our Kirk our Ministers tak publick & particular examination, of the Knowledge and conversation of sik as are to be admitted to the Table of the Lord Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

Remarkably, this confession makes no reference to the other offices. Indeed, it shows – in the line of Calvin – a certain priority on the office of the minister of the Word. The pastors were considered to be the leaders of the church, and the elders were specifically charged with the government and discipline of the flock *with* the ministers.

## The Belgic Confession, 1561

Our own confession follows the pattern set out in the previous confessions. It also uses the name **pastors** specifically for the ministers. In Art. 30 we read: "We believe that this true church must be governed by the spiritual polity which the Lord has taught us in His Word – namely, that there must be Ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God, and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons who together with the pastors form the

council of the church. . . ."<sup>5</sup> These three offices are mentioned again in Art. 31, where, following the French confession, equality is enjoined upon all the ministers. With this confession, as in the previous ones, one notices the predominance of Eph. 4:11-12 as the guiding passage of Scripture in the credal formulations concerning the offices.

Our confession also makes clear that the Ministers are charged with the task of administering the sacraments. This was not regarded as an indifferent matter. We read in Art. 35: "Therefore, the Ministers, on their part, administer the Sacrament, and that which is visible, but our Lord gives that which is signified by the Sacrament, namely, the gifts and invisible grace. . . ."<sup>6</sup> While the matter of the administration is not presented as a disputed point, the confession is clear that the task of administering the sacraments is reserved for the ministers of the Word. The confession reflects the close relationship between the Word and the sacraments as taught in Scripture. After all, without the Word the sacraments have no meaning! They only find meaning coupled with the Word.

## The Heidelberg Catechism, 1563

The catechism also makes a clear statement on the different tasks of the officers in the church. The ministers of the Word are those charged with the dispensing of the sacraments. Lord's Day 28, Q. and A. 75 says in the second part, ". . . and further, that with his crucified body and shed blood he himself feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, as certainly as I receive from the hand of the minister, and taste with my mouth, the bread and the cup of the Lord, which are given me as certain tokens of the body and blood of Christ."<sup>7</sup> This statement clearly asserts the role of the *minister* as the one charged with the administration of the sacraments.

## The Second Helvetic Confession, 1562

This confession was written by Heinrich Bullinger, the successor of Zwingli in Zurich. He had a good working relationship with Calvin, and maintained good relations with Geneva. Calvin's influence is evident in this confession. The office of the ministers is treated in Art. 18. The term **minister** is used both in a general sense, and in the more specific sense of the one charged with the task of preaching of the Word.<sup>8</sup> In the more general sense, the term is applied to all who had or have an office in the church, i.e. from the apostles and other extraordinary officers to the more permanent offices of bishops, elders, pastors and teachers. Remarkably, this confession does not mention the office of the deacon.

With regard to the ministers in the more specific sense, the confession makes use of the texts that we have considered in the previous article. Drawing on Hebrews 9:10-11, the confession says that Christ did not appoint priests in the church, "but ministers, who may teach and administer the sacraments." Upon asserting that the ministers must be wholly dedicated in their life and work to the Lord, the confession says: "He (i.e. Paul, JDJ), adds further that the ministers of the church are 'stewards and dispensers of the mysteries of God' (1 Cor. 4:1). Now the mysteries of God, Paul in many places, and especially in Eph. 3:4, does call 'the Gospel of Christ.' And the sacraments of Christ are also called mysteries by the ancient writers. Therefore for this purpose are the ministers called – namely, to preach the Gospel of Christ unto the faithful, and to administer the sacraments."<sup>9</sup>

## The Westminster Standards, 1647

The churches of the Presbyterian tradition also maintain three offices, and limit the administration of the sacraments to the office of the minister. In Art. 27/4 of the Westminster Confession we read: "There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of our Lord: neither of which may be dispensed by any but a minister of the Word lawfully ordained."<sup>10</sup>

The Larger Catechism, speaking of the sacraments says that "both are seals of the same covenant, are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and none other, and to be continued in the church of Christ until his second com-

ing."<sup>11</sup> This is clear indication that the Presbyterian tradition, too, does not see the matter of the administration of the sacraments as indifferent.

## Other Confessions

The pattern sketched above can be found in many more confessions of the Reformation. The close connection between the Word and the sacraments, and the restriction of the administration of the sacraments to the ministers is also brought out in Art. 7 of the Augsburg Confession, in Art. 5 of the English Confession of Jewell, 1562, and in the confession of Wirttemberg, 1552.<sup>12</sup> A similar approach is found in Art. 23 of the Thirty-Nine Articles, 1571.<sup>13</sup> The same theme carries over in Articles 70, 71, and 74 of the Irish Articles of 1615.<sup>14</sup>

Another interesting confession with regard to the number of the offices is the Hungarian Confession of 1562. This confession was originally written by Theodore Beza, who wrote it as an apology of his faith to his aging father. Many of Beza's opponents maligned him to his father, labelling him as a heretic and godless man.<sup>15</sup> Despite this limited purpose in composition, the confession was soon published in many languages, and became widely known. In 1562, the Synod of Tarszal in Hungary adopted this confession with some changes. The changes center primarily on the offices and the government of the church, but we will limit ourselves to a look at the offices in this confession.

In Articles 25 and 26 of his confession, Beza defends Calvin's view of Eph. 4:11-12, namely that this points to two distinct offices, pastors and doctors. The office of the Doctors is more restricted than that of the pastors. The office of the Doctor was to preach the word of God in a simple way, that the true sense be uncovered, and especially to establish the catechumens. The pastors had a broader office, and were concerned in their sermons with the application of the doctrine of the Word to the church. In prayers, exhortations, rebukes and consolations they were to guard the church night and day, for to them God committed the congregation to pastor it with the Word of life.<sup>16</sup> So Beza saw the pastors as ministers, in the specific sense of the word, and doctors as a more specialized teaching office.

However, when the Hungarians took over this confession, they identified the Doctors with *ministers*, thus giving them the more restricted task of

teaching the congregations and training the catechumens. The pastors were seen as a broader category, most likely a broader form of the office of the ministry. This at least indicates that some churches were not entirely comfortable with the approach of Calvin and Beza to Eph. 4:11-12. It also indicates that among these churches, even though in terms of rank and essence the offices of pastor and teacher were identical, there was a difference of function implicit in the terms "pastors and teachers."

## The Confessions: a Three – Office View

In all these confessions we find a common theme: the church recognizes a plurality of terms used for offices in the Scriptures, but distinguished between three offices or functions as instituted by Christ: ministers who taught and preached, elders who ruled and deacons to whom was entrusted the material care and well-being of the flock.<sup>17</sup> Only the Second Helvetic Confession lacks the reference to the deacons. Furthermore, the confessions clearly restrict the administration of the sacraments to the ministers of the Word.

## The present situation

As I stated, it is not my intention to discuss extensively the developments in our sister churches in the Netherlands. Suffice it to say that on the basis of new exegesis, the Synod of Ommen has moved closer to the "two-office" view.<sup>18</sup> This in itself is no reason for alarm. Indeed, if there was no new exegesis in the church, that would be troublesome! Continued reflection on the data of Scripture is always required.

One must also admit that, from the point of view of exegesis, one can make a case for a two-office view.<sup>19</sup> However, the confessional stand outlined above should at least make one open to a word of caution. A new exegesis should not directly lead to a host of practical changes in the life of the church. Indeed, as I have tried to show, there are also substantial arguments in favour of retaining our present practice and division of labour of the offices. Even if any one reason may not carry sufficient weight in itself to defend the office of the minister as we know it today, the sum of the arguments, as well as the confessional reflection on this matter in the Reformed tradition, should remind us that changes should not be made lightly.

## The Blessing?

The reader will understand that I have looked at the offices particularly from the point of view of the distinction between the offices, concentrating specifically on the administration of the sacraments as a duty restricted to the ministers. I believe the Reformed confession here reflects the line of Scripture, and that changes in this area – for example – by permitting elders to administer the sacraments on a regular basis – would not be a step forward. However, the matter of the *blessing* is perhaps a more disputed point. Why has this always been restricted to the ministers?

In my view, the letter to the Hebrews (as discussed in the first article) forms the primary guiding Scripture behind this custom in the Reformed churches. As noted in the previous article, in this letter the Old Testament ministry of the priests is compared to the richer ministry of Christ in the New Testament. Now it was precisely the priests who were the primary ministers of blessing under the old covenant. As we read in Numbers 6:22ff., they blessed the gathered assembly in the name of God. It was then only understandable that the ministers of Christ in the new covenant became the ambassadors of his blessing.<sup>20</sup> He is the minister of a better covenant, and as eternal high priest, His hands remain raised in blessing over His people, Lk. 24:50. This ever present blessing is reflected in what His *ministers* do as the assembly is gathered together.

The line of argumentation of the Second Helvetic Confession gives us a good example of the Reformed approach to this matter. Article 18 of this Confession says: "The ministry then and the priesthood are things far different one from the other. For the priesthood, as we have said even now, is common to all Christians; no so the ministry."<sup>21</sup> The confession then speaks of a general priesthood of all believers, but also of a ministry which specifically portrays the priestly intercession of Christ in the gathered congregation. And this the confession restricts to the ministers. As I see it, this reflects the line of Scripture, which uses *diakonos* specifically for those who labour in the Word and doctrine.

## Conclusion

Even these brief comments above make clear that the matter of the blessing deserves more attention and discussion.

It is also understandable that churches have raised the question concerning the exact formulation of the words, i.e. whether to change the words of Scripture or not. While these discussions are to be commended, my aim here has been to reiterate the distinction between the offices, to show how firmly this distinction is rooted in the Reformed tradition, and how this tradition, too, has strong Scriptural roots. About one hundred years ago H. Bavinck concluded his treatment of the offices in his *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* with the words: "But this much may safely be said that the Reformed most purely understood the thought of Scripture and most powerfully acknowledged the rights of the congregation by restoring the office of the elder and the deacon next to that of the minister of the Word."<sup>22</sup> Without discounting the need for continued study and reflection on the Scriptural guidelines of the offices, we can say that these words are still true today.

<sup>1</sup>This and the following quotations are from P. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Vol. 3, (4th ed., Harper and Brothers, New York, 1897) pp. 336, 337.

<sup>2</sup>See E.F.K. Muller, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Reformierte Kirche*, (reprint of 1903 ed., Theologische Buchhandlung, Zurich, 1987), p. 105.

<sup>3</sup>Schaff, p. 471. In today's English this says: "That sacraments be rightly administered, we judge two things to be required: the one, that they be administered by lawful Ministers, whom we affirm to be only those who are appointed to the preaching of the Word, into whose mouths God has put some sermon of exhortation, they being lawfully chosen thereto by some church."

<sup>4</sup>Schaff, p. 474. In today's English: "And so it is that in our church the Ministers take a public and particular examination of the knowledge and conduct of such as are to be admitted to the table of the Lord."

<sup>5</sup>I am quoting from Schaff, p. 421.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Schaff, p. 426.

<sup>7</sup>Schaff, 332.

<sup>8</sup>The use of the term "Minister" in a general and in a more specific sense is characteristic of several of the confessions of the Reformation, see P. Hall, (ed.) *The Harmony of the Protestant Confessions*, (reprint of 1842 edition, Still Waters Revival Books, Edmonton, 1992), pp. 243-282.

<sup>9</sup>Schaff, p. 880.

<sup>10</sup>Schaff, p. 661.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Muller, p. 639.

<sup>12</sup>Hall, p. 266, 272, 279.

<sup>13</sup>Schaff, p. 501. See also Art. 36, p. 503.

<sup>14</sup>Schaff, pp. 538-539.

<sup>15</sup>L. Doekes, *Credo. Handboek voor de Gereformeerde Symboliek*, (T. Bolland, Amsterdam, 1975), p. 94.



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Classis has also decided to declare

**Br. John David Louwerse**

eligible for call within the Canadian/American Reformed Churches for the period of one year.

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Classis Ontario South has granted

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<sup>16</sup>Müller, p. 434.

<sup>17</sup>For further material on this point, see M. te Velde, "De afbakening van de ambten" in *De Reformatie*, Vol. 69, no. 8 (and following issues, Nov. 20, 1993), pp. 140ff.

<sup>18</sup>This is only partly the standpoint of the Advisory Committee, cf *Acta van de Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Ommen 1993*, p. 391: "The elders are together the pastors of the congregation. . . . The minister is one of them, a pastor among pastors." The report of the discussion makes a distinction between "full time" and "part time" workers, p. 76.

<sup>19</sup>See the article by George W. Knight III and the response by Robert S. Rayburn as reprinted in *Diakonia*, Vol. 7, #4, (March, 1994), pp. 64-76.

<sup>20</sup>See B.J. Oosterhoff, *Christelijke Encyclopaedie*, Vol. 6, p. 672: sub zegen: "This blessing (of Numbers 6:22ff.) carried over in the liturgy of the New Testament church," [my translation].

<sup>21</sup>Schaff, p. 879.

<sup>22</sup>H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek IV*, (4th ed. Kok, Kampen 1930) p. 371. **C**

# REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

## No other gods

*In my last article I addressed the theme of the antithesis. Man attempted synthesis with the devil and his kingdom. God destroyed the synthesis and replaced it with antithesis. God placed us in His kingdom. The kingdom of God is as opposed to the empire of Satan as white is opposite of black. We are called to antithetical living. The ten commandments are the norm for that lifestyle.*

### The first commandment

The first commandment is: *You shall have no other gods before me.* Immediately after God had proclaimed Himself to be the LORD God who brought Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, He said: *You shall have no other gods before me.* Thankfully our churches still read the ten commandments every Sunday morning. We know that they are completely relevant for 20th century believers. We submit ourselves to the law of God. The law serves as a mirror. It shows us our sins. At the same time it serves as a standard for thankful living. We have not bought the silly thought that the law should no longer be read Sunday morning – that we have moved beyond it. We want to keep the reading of the ten commandments as a key part of our liturgy. But do we live by them?

The LORD God has saved us. We are not to have another god instead of or in addition to the only true God. You either serve only the one true God or you do not serve Him at all. You cannot “kind of” serve God. You cannot serve Him some of the time. Either you serve Him or you don’t. You serve God or you serve a god.

### Molech

God’s people often placed a god beside or in front of the only true God. At times they worshiped Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. King Solomon even built a shrine for Molech in Jerusalem to please his Ammonite wife.

Molech was a particularly demanding god in that he insisted on child sacrifice. One of the rabbinic writers described what Molech looked like. He was represented by a bronze statue, human in form but with an ox’s head. His belly was hollow and heated from below. Children were placed inside his belly while drums drowned out their cries.

The thought horrifies us. How barbaric! How primitive! But the barbarism continues to this day. It continues in the abortuaries of the land. Daily thousands of inconvenient children are sacrificed to the god convenience. They are not burned in the belly of a bronze statue; they are burned out of the wombs of their mothers. They are cut up and vacuumed out as so much garbage. Even respectable “Christian” women give up their babies as sacrifices to the god convenience. After all, the career is more important, isn’t it? Do you hear the cries of the children? Or are we beating the drums loud enough?

### Baal

Baal was another god that God’s people placed beside or before the LORD. Baal was a fertility god. He was thought to have power over rain, wind, clouds, and therefore over all fertility. Sometimes he appears as a bull. Other times he is seen as a man with the horns of a bull on his head and a bolt of lightning in one hand.

During the reign of King Ahab, temples to Baal were erected at Samaria and Jerusalem. Queen Jezebel, Ahab’s Tyrian wife, master-minded a reform which synthesized Baalism with the worship of the LORD God who had brought Israel out of Egypt. A new state religion! Baal, being a fertility god, insisted on very sensuous worship. The New Year festival, connected with the desired fertility of land, herd and flock, culminated in orgiastic rites both heterosexual and homosexual. Ritual pros-

titution of both sexes was a prominent feature of this religion.

Is it a wonder that Baalism disgusted the LORD God? Is it surprising that God called Israel a whore when she went after other gods, especially gods whose worship included sexual perversion?

The gods of sexual perversion are actively promoted today. The idea that sex belongs to marriage, defined as a life-long commitment between a man and a woman, is considered hopelessly antiquated. Teenagers are said to have the right to sexual expression. We’re not allowed to teach chastity; we must teach the children and young people how to have “safe sex” – as if there were such a thing outside of the marriage bed! Madame Justice Anne Russell has read homosexual rights into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Ontario Attorney-General Marion Boyd is pushing the most accommodating gay rights legislation ever seen in Canada. What she has called the “jewel in my crown” would change the definition of marriage so that it would apply to same-sex couples, giving them the same rights to social and employment benefits as heteros, and grant them the right to adopt children. Queens Park is becoming a “queen’s park.” There is nothing new under the sun. Twentieth century Baalism!

### Mammon

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke about another god in Matthew 6:24. He told us that we cannot serve both God and Mammon. It is impossible to serve two masters. If you love one master, you will hate the other; if you love the second, you will hate the first. Mammon is an Aramaic word which refers to wealth of any kind. It is related to the word Amen. As we know from our catechism, Amen means: It is true and certain. Mammon is any earthly wealth which one considers true and certain, trustworthy and reliable. Someone who

trusts in his money, who places his trust in earthly possessions, has put a god in front of God.

### Limping

Let us as sons and daughters of God not put a god beside or in front of God. I have mentioned some rather extreme examples above. You might say: "I'm alright. I would never have an abortion. I live a chaste life. I don't worship my wallet." But it can happen so easily. We can compromise our worship of the one true God so quickly. For example, if you miss the afternoon worship service in order to watch the Grey Cup game, then a pigskin has taken the place of

the Lord your God who brought you out of the house of slavery. You might think such a view of things to be radical and extreme. Well, the antithesis between the kingdom of God and the empire of Satan calls us to radical and consistent living. The first commandment calls us to place God first always – not usually, but always.

When Israel tried to synthesize the worship of Baal with the worship of the LORD, then God sent them a prophet. Elijah called the people to make a choice. He said: "How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." We too must know

whom we would serve. Would we serve a god of our own devising? Or would we serve the only true God? God and gods are mutually exclusive. The worship of God and of Baal cannot be synthesized. Let us not try. Let us say with the apostle Paul:

*For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth – as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords" – yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist (1 Corinthians 8:5,6).*



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# Preaching about the Prayer

By N.H. Gootjes

*Every minister preaching through the Heidelberg Catechism will end with the beautiful Lord's Days on the Lord's Prayer. This section of the Catechism is, however, not only beautiful, it is also very original. In my opinion the preaching on these Lord's Days will have to follow the pattern set by the Catechism.*

*I dealt with this topic as a part of my speech at the Ministers' Workshop, held on May 30. The full text of this speech will be published, the Lord willing, in Koinoonia.*

### The unique approach of the Heidelberg Catechism

Let us use the explanation of the first petition in the Heidelberg Catechism as an example:

Q. What is the first petition?

A. Hallowed be Thy Name

That is: Grant us first of all that we may rightly know Thee . . . Grant us also that we may so direct our whole life . . . that Thy name is not blasphemed because of us but always honoured and praised. (122)

The remarkable thing in the answer is that God is addressed. The Catechism does not teach us how to speak about God, but how to pray to God. The an-

swers of the Heidelberg Catechism are in the form of prayers.

This is exceptional within the Heidelberg Catechism itself. Usually God is referred to in the third person. That happens in the explanation of the Creed:

Q. Since there is only one God, why do you speak of three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

A. Because God has so revealed Himself in His Word that these three distinct persons are the one, true, eternal God. (25)

Here we learn to speak about God, not to speak to God.

This happens in the explanation of the Ten Commandments, too:

Q. What does God require in the second commandment?

A. We are not to make an image of God in any way nor to worship Him in any other manner than He has commanded in His Word. (96)

The commandments teach us how to obey God. The Catechism speaks about God and teaches us how to live before Him. In the explanation of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, however, the Heidelberg Catechism uses the second person for God: Thee, Thy work, Thy name.

This way of explaining is even more remarkable when it is compared to the catechisms of Luther and Calvin. Luther, in dealing with the first petition, mixes explanation and address. I translate the second question and answer from the first petition:

Q. How does this happen?

A. When the Word of God is taught honestly and purely and we, as the children of God, live holy according to it; help us for this, dear Father in heaven!

But he who teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches, profanes the name of God among us. Keep us from this, heavenly Father!

In the explanation of the other petitions, however, God is not addressed.

Calvin's explanation is all in the third person. His first question and answer on the first petition is:

Teacher: Repeat to me the substance of the first petition.

Student: By the name of God, Scripture understands the acknowledgment and fame with which He is honored among men. We ask therefore that His glory may be promoted everywhere and in all things.



Neither is the second person used for the explanation of the Lord's Prayer in other catechisms that are traditionally seen as the background of the Heidelberg Catechism, those of Zürich and London. The Heidelberg Catechism, on the contrary, is so consistent in its addressing God in the explanation of the Prayer, that we must assume that this was done on purpose.

### Explanations on the Heidelberg Catechism

This approach is not consistently followed in explanations on the Heidelberg Catechism, however. Several books on the Heidelberg Catechism begin to speak about our prayer but end with a different kind of explanation. Here follow three examples.

1. Rev. J. Van Bruggen's final remark on the first petition is:

Finally, we ourselves must live in such a manner, that is, we must so order our lives (all our thoughts, words and actions must be so directed) that God's name is not blasphemed because of us, but is honoured and praised instead.

We notice some subtle changes. Instead of "Thy name" he uses "the name of God" and instead of "Grant that we. . ." "We ourselves must. . ." These are slight changes, but they indicate that the character of this sentence has changed from petition to command. The Lord's Prayer is explained as if it were the Ten Commandments! Rev. Van Bruggen is not the only one who does this.

2. O. Thelemann, a theologian from the last century, wrote that God's name must be hallowed, first, by us, and second, through us. In the first part he speaks particularly about the knowledge of God's name. In the second part he explains that all our thoughts, words, and works are to be an act of praise to God, that through us His name may be hallowed.

We must, therefore, "so order and direct our lives:"

a) That the name of God may never be blasphemed on our account, which would happen if we confess the name of the Lord and do not live according to His Word . . .

b) That through our conversation and life others also may be incited to turn to God, and thereby to honor and to praise him . . .

Striking is that the words "so order and direct our lives" are given as a quotation but the preceding words are not. This is a giveaway for the change from petition to command: "Grant us" of the Heidelberg Catechism has been changed to "We must."

Thelemann makes the same transition in the explanation of the third petition. The third section speaks about the fulfilment of our calling. He says here, among other things:

We are not to think that we are to do God's will only in particular acts. . . . Every one is to be contented in his station and calling . . . He is to perform willingly, cheerfully, faithfully and carefully.

This is different from what the Catechism says: "Grant that everyone may carry out his duties as willingly . . ."

3. This was an example from the last century. A fairly recent example can be found in the explanation of Dr. F. Klooster on the Heidelberg Catechism, published under the title *A Mighty Comfort*. He notices a striking relation between the catechism's explanation of the Ten Commandments and of the requests of the Lord's Prayer. He makes a correct observation when he adds: "What God commands for our life of gratitude should be echoed in our prayers so that he may equip us for the obedience of thanks."

In his explanation of the second petition, however, Klooster speaks sometimes differently:

- Any "good" that we do must conform to God's law.
- Not only ministers and missionaries and Christian school teachers but all of us are called to do Christ's work.
- Praying for the kingdom means that we must labour in the kingdom every one of us."

We see, then, that the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are often explained as if they are commands.

If the same approach is followed in the preaching of the Lord's Prayer, this will mean that the sermon begins with telling us how to pray but ends by telling us what we should do. A command is tacked on to the sermon on one of the petitions.

### Prayer, a category in its own right

We should, however, not deal with the petitions as if they were commandments. I would like to continue in the line of the "redemptive historical ap-

proach." One of the main things that this method of preaching taught us is that we should not paint all of Biblical revelation with the same moralistic brush. The Bible contains different types of texts which each require a different approach. The proponents of the redemptive historical method concentrated on the historical sections of the Bible. They noted the fact that events were often used for giving ethical directions: You must do as Abraham did here, and: You should not do as Isaac did there. History is, however, not the same as a commandment. History should be treated as a category in its own right. When the text shows what God is doing, and how He moves history forward, that should be central in the preaching.

I would like to see the same principle applied to prayer. A petition is neither a commandment nor a part of history. Prayer is again a different matter. A petition is not something we do but something we ask. We should, therefore, not preach on a petition as if it is a commandment. The Heidelberg Catechism already recognized the fundamental difference between a commandment and a petition. Even though it deals with the Lord's Prayer, together with the Ten Commandments, in the section on our thankfulness, it clearly distinguishes the prayer from the preceding commandments. It calls the prayer the most important part of our thankfulness. And it uses the command form for the Ten Commandments but the prayer form for the Lord's Prayer.

There is good reason for the preaching to pay specific attention to prayer. Thankfulness does not come automatically to us, sinners. If we were left on our own, we would not even pray correctly. God, knowing our needs, has not only included many prayers in Scripture, He has also given us a specific model for prayer, in the Lord's Prayer. Through this prayer we have to learn how to pray. That means, we have to learn how to address God, what to pray for, etc. To overcome our own limitations, our sloppiness, our selfishness in praying we need separate instruction in prayer.

The preaching on the section on the Lord's Prayer in the Catechism should not be used to teach the congregation how to live, rather, to teach them how to pray. The preaching on the Lord's Days 45-52 should be used to help the congregation to live closer to God in their daily prayers. The Heidelberg Catechism shows us the way by explaining the petitions as prayers to God. **C**

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# Speaking out of two sides of our mouth

By Rev. E. Kampen

With great interest I read the recent editorial by Rev. J. Geertsema welcoming Denver and the accompanying article in which he gives his evaluation of various issues in connection with its admission into the federation. I was intrigued by the argumentation to justify accepting Denver into the federation and the vision of how churches of Reformed and Presbyterian background should be able to co-exist, mutually recognizing one another as true churches, while at the same time allowing for peaceful transfers of churches into the respective federations.

In that argumentation, however, there is an internal contradiction. First of all it is said that both federations of churches are true, that is, faithful churches. Then it is said that, if upon further study and reflection it is felt that the other federation has a more scriptural confession and church government, then we should not bind anyone's conscience, but let them switch.

This reasoning has the flavour of relativism, where the final authority is not the Word of God, but human conscience. It would be very helpful if someone could explain such reasoning in light of what we confess concerning the church in Articles 27ff. of the Belgic Confession about the church. We confess clearly in Article 28 that we are called and obliged to join the church of Christ wherever He has established it. How can we say then on the one hand: yes, you are a true church (not a perfect, but a true church), while on the other hand we say: but, I don't feel obliged to join it, but I will seek fellowship elsewhere.

This brings me to the next point, which is really the heart of the matter. It is rather disturbing that Rev. Geertsema does not touch the real issue, with the consequence that the comments about transfers is really beside the point. For, the point is that Denver did not seek to join the federation of Canadian Re-

formed churches out of preference, thinking it is more pure than the OPC. Rather, it has sought to join the federation because it is convinced that the OPC is an unfaithful church, and therefore one may not join it (see Press Release, Reg. Synod West, Dec. 8,9, 1993, consideration 3. *Clarion*, Vol. 43, p.16). The OPC is considered unfaithful not only because of certain practices but by the very fact that it has the Westminster Standards, and the Presbyterian form of government.

By accepting Denver, knowing full well its reason for refusing to join the OPC, the various broader assemblies involved nullify and undermine the decision we have made as churches in 1977, and consistently maintained throughout the years that the OPC is a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. This amounts to speaking out of two sides of our mouth at the same time. One may argue that the recognition of 1977 was premature, but the decision stands. It disturbs me greatly to say "Yes" to the OPC on the one hand, and then to turn around and say, "No" on the other hand. We may have painted ourselves into a corner by acknowledging the OPC as a true church and not entering into a sister church relationship with them. The fact is: the decision is there. Then we should honour our word (cf. Ps. 15:4) and live up to our confession (e.g. B.C. 28). By accepting Denver, on the ground that we may not bind their conscience, in effect breaks our official word as churches, and we implicitly join in their judgment of the OPC. You could say, speaking of conscience, that by accepting Denver we have compromised our own integrity, and Denver has bound our conscience as federation of churches to their viewpoint (compare consideration 4 of Regional Synod West, Dec. 8, 9, 1993).

The argumentation in the articles referred to earlier is indeed disturbing. In the end it seems to suggest: Yes, there is

what can be called the pluriformity of the church, and the Westminster Confession is right in speaking about churches as more or less pure. How else can one say that it is within the freedom we have in Christ to simply join the type of federation we think is best, giving as basis that we should not bind anyone's conscience. It seems that here we open the door to federation shopping and hopping! Further, if you can place Reformed over against Presbyterian, who is to say that federation hopping is going to stop there, and will not spill over to Baptist, or Pentecostal federation of churches?

When we thus evaluate the argumentation, then it appears that there is a capitulation to the idea of the pluriformity of the church, with its attendant relativism, where the highest authority is not the Word of God but human conscience. Somehow the confession that we are obligated to join the church where Christ has established it is robbed of its power by arguing that we are not yet churches in full ecclesiastical fellowship, and even if we were, we could change federations at will. Somehow it has become more important to be a sister church than to be a true church, though the confessions speak of a true church, not a sister church. Further, somehow it has come to the point that we can ignore the obligation put upon us by the confession concerning the communion of saints, namely, that we are obliged to join the church to ". . . serve the edification of the brothers and sisters, according to the talents which God has given them as members of the same body." (B.C. 28) Now it is O.K. to form a separate little communion, and rob others of the gifts we have received. On top of that we give the impression to the world that we are divided, because we must form a separate Reformed and Presbyterian community. In the process we make the work of the Lord extra ex-

pensive (think of all the air fares to visit classis, and the added expense of many very small congregations).

What bothers me the most, however, is that at bottom there is somehow the conviction that the OPC is not a true church, by the very fact it is Presbyterian, but we are not honest enough to say so straight out. So, we say: Yes you

are true. But, we will gladly take in anyone who finally has seen the Reformed light. In effect we say: yes, we are sisters, but I will gladly take in your children, and basically, they should all come to me, because in my house it is better. It is my wish that as churches we would speak clearly, and that the decisions of major assemblies be hon-

oured. I fear that now our honesty is very much under question. Let our Yes be Yes and our No, No. In the end, it is not our integrity that is at stake, but the Lord's honour. And in the end, we should realize that we confess not the Canadian Reformed churches but the Catholic church of Christ, with all its attendant consequences. **C**

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## News from Support MERF Committee

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### Continuing support

Contributions continue to come in regularly, for which we are very thankful. A special thank you to the Fraser Valley Young People's League for a donation of \$245. Your continuing support has made it possible for us to send \$7,500 in May to help cover the costs of radio broadcasting by MERF.

### Instruction by Rev. C. Stam at the Study Centre

Throughout 1994 about twenty visiting instructors from North America, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand will join the staff in the training programs at the Study Center in Larnaca, Cyprus. We are very happy that one of those instructors will be Rev. C. Stam who has been found willing to teach at the Study Center in Larnaca during the study term of July 25 to August 5, 1994. He will be sharing teaching responsibilities with Rev. Ronald C. Christie from Glasgow, Scotland. Together they will teach a group of about 12 teachers (at the high school level) from Egypt who teach the Christian religion in public schools to those of Christian background. Rev. Stam will be expected to give 12-14 one-hour sessions. There will be an interpreter who will translate from English into Arabic. Rev. Stam and Rev. Christie have been asked to present a clear summary of the Christian faith, which the school teachers can in turn teach to others. We pray that the work of Rev. Stam may be blessed and we also look forward to reading his report of his teaching term in Cyprus.

### Reports by Dr. P. Van Gulp and Rev. J. Klamer

During the past year two ministers of our sister churches in the Netherlands had the opportunity to be instructors at the Study Center in Cyprus. Both wrote about their experiences in Cyprus in the Dutch press.

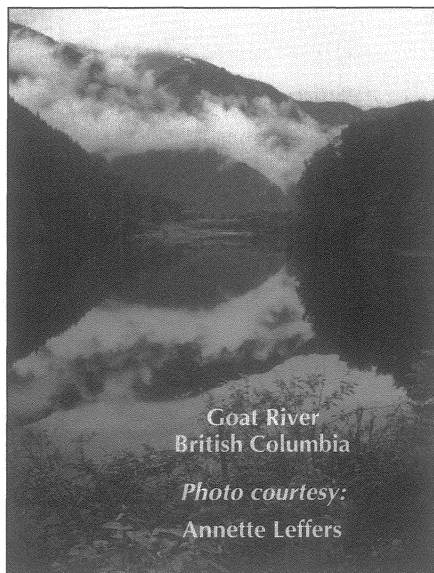
In October 1993, Dr. Van Gulp gave a short report of his trip to Larnaca in *Reformanda*. He showed that the purpose of MERF is to bring a Reformed witness to the Arab world and to strengthen these churches and show them the way which the Lord has given in his Word. And further to bring the

gospel to the Muslim Middle East. MERF has chosen very consciously for the Reformed doctrine. This shows itself time and again in all aspects of their work.

In *Nederlands Dagblad* at the beginning of this year Rev. Klamer wrote that two week courses are held regularly in the Study Center. Groups of about 12 ministers, elders or other persons in leadership roles come to Cyprus from one of the Presbyterian churches in the Middle East. Courses are given to enhance knowledge of the Scriptures and Reformed doctrine. The purpose is to build up the congregations. For that reason different groups are continually coming. Rev. Klamer gave instruction to 12 elders from Egypt. His lessons touched on the question — How are you according to God's Word called to the office of elder and what is your task? He also discussed at length the covenant of grace and the meaning of church discipline. Only one elder understood English. An interpreter translated into Arabic. Despite the language differences there was much good discussion. From the discussions it became clear that there are many shortcomings in their church life. But the Word of the Lord was the final authority for these elders. The teaching is done in pairs and together with Rev. Klamer was Rev. Wilson from the United States.

Rev. Klamer further explains how MERF was started about 20 years ago in Lebanon, but the continuing conflicts made it impossible to continue to do evangelism there. In 1984 the OPC reorganized the mission work in the Middle East with Cyprus as center. Cyprus is very suitable because of the good con-

### OUR COVER



Goat River  
British Columbia

Photo courtesy:  
Annette Leffers

tacts and good connections between Cyprus and the Arab nations. And in Cyprus there is also freedom to set up a study center.

From Cyprus radio broadcasts are sent out with the message of the gospel to the Arabic-speaking countries. In this way, everything is being done to strengthen the Biblical and confessional nature of the Presbyterian churches in the Middle East. These churches are the fruits of the mission work started in Egypt in the mid-19th century by Scottish and American missionaries. The leaders of the Presbyterian churches are well aware that much still needs to be learned by the church members, and that is why they are so eager to continue to send groups to take courses in Cyprus.

In response to the radio broadcasts MERF receives many letters. These letters are answered and if possible these respondents are put in contact with believers in their own city or town.

### Developments in the Middle East

The number of Iraqis responding to MERF's Arabic Gospel broadcasts is steadily increasing. More than 70% of the Iraqis who are writing for the first time are of Muslim backgrounds. Most

are under 30 years of age. Iraqi authorities do not discriminate against Christians; families and neighbours, however, usually view defectors from Islam as traitors who must be severely punished.

Recently the Sudanese minister of education declared that the goal of completely Islamizing his country must continue. However, there are indications that the Sudanese authorities have not made any significant gains. One local pastor commented that despite the efforts of many well-financed Muslim missionaries in his area, there had been few long lasting conversions.

### New Coordinator of Training for MERF

Rev. D.M. Poundstone, an OPC minister from the United States, has been installed as Coordinator of Training at MERF's Evangelical Study Center to assist Rev. Atallah in what has become an increasingly demanding workload. As well as his administrative and teaching duties at the Study Center, Rev. Poundstone serves as pastor of the English-speaking local outreach which Rev. Atallah established, alongside the Arabic-speaking congregation.

The staff of MERF is very thankful for the financial support which they may receive. This support enables them to continue to proclaim the gospel to those who have not yet heard of the glorious gospel of redemption through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Above all, they request your prayers so that they may be strengthened and guided in their beautiful calling. May our heavenly Father also bless the training sessions so that the young churches may become stronger in faith and richer in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

### By way of reminder

If you would like to make a personal donation please make out your cheque payable to "Support MERF Committee" and send it to

Support MERF Committee  
1225 Highway 5, R.R. #1  
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

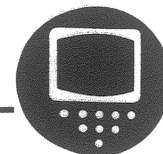
Unfortunately, we are not able to give a tax receipt at this time because we are not a registered charity.

On behalf of the Support MERF Committee of the "Rehoboth" Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington-West,

J. Mulder, Chairman  
J. Van Dam, Secretary



## PRESS RELEASE



### Classis Ontario-South, held at Lincoln, Ontario, June 8, 1994.

#### 1. Opening

On behalf of the convening church at Ancaster, the Rev. H. M. van Essen calls the meeting to order and opens it in a Christian fashion. As memorabilia, he mentions that Rev. B. R. Hofford has been installed as minister of the church at Grand Rapids, and that the church at Laurel is now vacant.

#### 2. Constitution

All churches are duly and lawfully represented. Classis is constituted. The following brethren serve as executive:

Chairman: Rev. J. vanWoudenberg;  
Vice-chairman: Rev. Cl. Stam;  
Clerk: Rev. H. M. van Essen.

#### 3. Agenda

The agenda is adopted. It is noted that there are two instructions regarding the situation of the church at Laurel.

#### 4. Edifying Word.

Br. M. Hoogerdiijk of Hamilton has requested to be permitted to speak an edifying word in the churches. The proper documents are available and the examination can proceed.

Br. Hoogerdiijk delivers a sermon proposal on Isaiah 33: 20-22. In closed session, this proposal is evaluated, and it is decided that the examination can proceed.

Rev. Cl. Stam examines in doctrine and creeds.

In closed session, Classis discusses the results of the examination, and decides to grant Br. M. Hoogerdiijk the right to speak an edifying word in the churches for the period of one year.

Br. Hoogerdiijk is informed of and congratulated with this decision. He promises faithfulness to the Word of God, as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. The members of Classis receive the opportunity to congratulate Br.

Hoogerdiijk. (Br. M. Hoogerdiijk can be reached at the following telephone number: 905-387-2172.)

#### 5. Question period ad Art. 44 Church Order

The churches do not have any questions to put forward to Classis.

#### 6. Correspondence

- a) a letter from the church at Laurel MD, requesting to cease its independent existence and to become a house congregation under the oversight and care of the American Reformed Church at Blue Bell, PA, is read. This request is granted. In this connection two instructions are read: one from the church at Laurel (regarding the practical implications of being a house congregation) and from the church at Blue Bell (seeking advice on re-

ceiving a house congregation). Advice is given.

The chairman wishes the congregation at Laurel and the church at Blue Bell the Lord's blessing in this new situation, and expresses the wish that all may go harmoniously.

- b) letter from the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic (Orthodox Presbyterian Church) informing Classis that this Presbytery will appeal to Regional Synod regarding the decision of Classis Ontario-South of March, 1994 to declare their appeal (re. statements of Rev. B. R. Hofford) inadmissible. Classis receives this letter for information.

#### 7. Reports

- a) the treasurer, Br. D. van Amerongen, presents his report covering the period of June 1993 - June 1994. This report is gratefully received.
- b) the church at Lincoln presents an audit of the books of the treasurer. All was found to be in good order. The treasurer is thanked and discharged for this period of time.
- c) the church at Watford reports on the state of the archives. Some missing pieces have been located and the archives are up to date.
- d) the church of Chatham presents its report on the Fund for Needy

Students. This report is gratefully received.

- e) reports are read of the visitations to the churches at Ancaster, Hamilton, London, Chatham, Attercliffe, Watford, Rockway, Lincoln, and Smithville. Classis expresses gratitude for these reports.

#### 8. Appointments

- a) convening church, next Classis: Attercliffe, September 7, 1994, at London, Ontario. Suggested officers: Rev. G. Wieske, chairman; Rev. H. M. van Essen, vice-chairman; Rev. J. vanWoudenberg, clerk.
- b) treasurer: Br. D. Van Amerongen is reappointed.
- c) Church to audit the books of the treasurer: the church at Lincoln.
- d) archives: the church at London
- e) inspection archives: the church at Watford
- f) Needy Students: the church at Chatham
- g) church visitors:  
Ancaster: Rev. K. Kok and Rev. J. vanWoudenberg  
Blue Bell: Rev. D.G.J. Agema and Rev. H.M. van Essen  
Grand Rapids: Rev. G. Wieske and Rev. J. Ludwig  
London: Rev. G. Wieske and Rev. J. vanWoudenberg

Attercliffe: Rev. G.A. Snip and Rev. Cl. Stam

Chatham: Rev. B.R. Hofford and Rev. H.M. van Essen

Hamilton: Rev. B.R. Hofford and Rev. T. Hoogsteen

Rockway: Rev. J. Ludwig and Rev. Cl. Stam

Lincoln: Rev. K. Kok and Rev. J. de Gelder

Smithville: Rev. G. Wieske and Rev. D.G.J. Agema

Watford: Rev. J. de Gelder and Rev. T. Hoogsteen.

- h) deputies for examinations: Rev. J. de Gelder and Rev. Cl. Stam. All the current examiners are reappointed.

#### 9. Personal Question Period.

Rev. H.M. van Essen hands out a copy of the report of the Fund for Needy Churches.

10. Censure, Art. 34 C.O. Censure is not necessary.

11. The Acts are adopted and the Press Release is approved.

#### 12. Closing.

Rev. J. vanWoudenberg requests the meeting to sing Psalm 125: 1, 2, after which Rev. Cl. Stam leads in thanksgiving and prayer.

Classis is closed.

For Classis Ontario-South  
Cl. Stam, vice-chairman e.t.



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# Welcome Evening

By W. Weidenhammer

Exactly two years to the day after the church building for the Elora congregation was set on its foundation, the brothers and sisters assembled to officially welcome Rev. James and Mariam Slaa.

Great joy and thankfulness were evident as the congregation was gathered together on October 15 to present a program of skits and introductions amid songs and words of gratitude. The evening was led by the chairman of the consistory, Brother Jerry Hutten. Special guests invited and present for the occa-

sion were the den Hollander family from Orangeville.

We began with singing and reading from Ps. 146 after which various groups were invited to the front.

The children sang together "Let the children come to Me" and Hymn 45 under the direction of Mrs. Shirley Broekema.

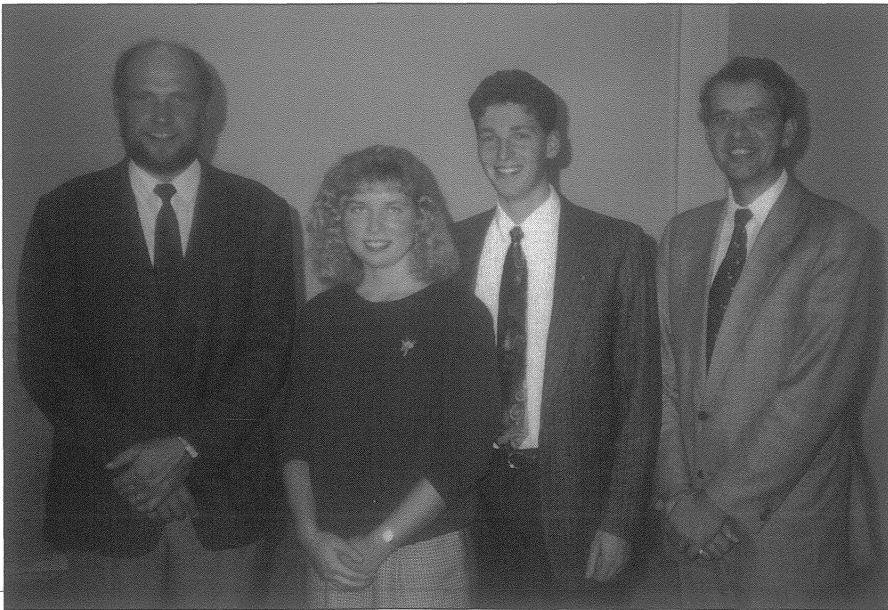
The catechism students acted out their idea of what the ideal catechism session should be like under the leadership of their new teacher, Rev. Slaa. However, their idea and Rev. Slaa's idea conflicted somewhat, for in his closing

remarks our minister stated, "if this is how things are, you're in trouble!"

Our young people presented a trivia quiz to the congregation covering church history, family life, Canadian history, etc. It became clear who really needed schooling again!

The men and women societies gave many gifts and groceries (including the inevitable "slaa"). By the end of the evening Rev. & Mrs. Slaa had enough food, painkillers and pot cleaners to last them a month or more.

Our very enthusiastic choir, formed 'specially for the occasion sang to the



L-R: Mr. Jerry Hutten, Mrs. and Rev. Slaa, Rev. W. den Hollander

praise of our God, directed and accompanied by Mrs. Marna Weidenhammer.

On behalf of the congregation, Mr. Jerry Hutten presented a painting of the famous Elora "Tooth of Time" on the Grand River.

The evening ended with closing remarks from Rev. Slaa. He spoke words of appreciation and thankfulness for the gifts and warm welcome. He also mentioned the enthusiasm the congregation had shown throughout the past weeks of contact. But the enthusiasm has been mutual and we at Elora certainly look forward to a blessed time, D.V., of Christ's church building work with true living stones! Welcome indeed, Rev. and Mrs. Slaa!

### ELORA REJOICES!

Ordination and Installation of Reverend J. Slaa

*"With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (Is. 12:3)*

### The services

On Sunday, October 10, 1993 the Lord blessed the federation, and in particular the congregation of Elora, with another minister of the Word. This day was a moving and memorable one for the congregation since she received her first shepherd, and for candidate James Slaa since he was ordained as minister and received his first flock.

1. Whose celebration it is?
2. Who are the celebrants?

What we see expressed by Paul in the text is that the knowledge of Christ, compared to a sweet fragrance being spread by Paul and other preachers, is always triumphal. Amid the many other blessings we receive, the success of the Gospel of salvation is our focus and starting point for all our thanksgiving. Despite Paul's hardship and apparent setbacks, he can still proclaim in vs. 14 that God in Christ always leads in triumph, the emphasis being God does it with His Word. Preachers, as with Paul, are weak and lacking, having nothing in themselves whereas the Word conveyed alone does the work. This Word will either be a sweet fragrance to those who believe or an unpleasant odour to those perishing.

God leads the triumphal celebration and those who believe join in the celebration. Christ has captured candidate J. Slaa and leads him, as He led Paul, in triumph to spread that fragrance of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Though the question of sufficiency for the task may arise, in our hearts, yet it is God's triumph and God's celebration.

In the afternoon we were gathered again to listen to the proclamation of the Gospel from Rev. Slaa. He chose as his text Colossians 2:6.

We began again with thankfulness, especially for the gift of a minister in our midst. But that is not an end in itself. There is a reason for having a minister: "to lead you in God's Word, to apply God's Word in order to lead you in lives of

Rev. W. den Hollander had the honour of conducting the service. He delivered a beautiful sermon on how the Gospel always leads in triumph. The text was taken from 2 Cor 2:14-16. Since it was the time of year to celebrate Thanksgiving, thanksgiving was certainly the order of the day! But exactly how we are to be thankful is another matter. With this introduction, Rev. den Hollander entered into the sermon with the theme:

The glorious proclamation of the Gospel is celebrated in its triumphal victory:



The children sing some songs on the welcome evening

thanksgiving." That is our real goal and reason for gratitude: we now have a shepherd to instruct us in the ways of the Lord. With that comes responsibility. In the form of a command, Rev. Slaa stated his theme:

Believers, live in Christ Jesus your Lord.

1. such living involves solid construction and,

2. abundant thanksgiving

Paul points out it is one thing to receive Christ in the proper way (as Colossae had through Epaphras), but it is quite another to remain in Christ. This is the essence of Paul's admonition in the text.

Living in Jesus Christ involves solid construction and Paul uses two well understood examples to clearly portray the necessity and effectiveness of being properly grounded in Christ. Outside of this foundation there is no hope. But the text does not stop at a good foun-

ation. Rev. Slaa pointed to the growth aspect of the admonition – to continue in the way once established as you have been taught.

In this way our thankfulness can be expressed. A life of holiness and godliness – fearing God and walking in His ways is in itself an expression of thankfulness. The act of living – thinking, speaking, doing all things in a way which befits Christians is showing gratitude and honour to God who has called us to live in this way.

So our thankfulness of that day was not empty. It spoke of anticipation to learn the Lord's ways through his servant. Rev. Slaa illustrated this in a way which shows the beautiful relationship that can exist between a shepherd and his flock: when prayers are said on behalf of the minister for sermon preparation, the sincerity of those prayers will be apparent in the response of the congregation to the

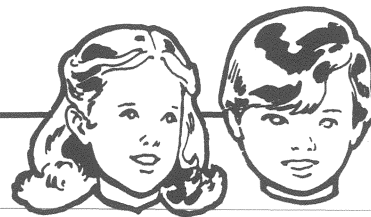
preaching. Prayers for the minister are prayers for the congregation.

### A word of thankfulness

Since instituting 7 years ago, we have been looking forward to calling our own minister. We could begin this procedure, with the gracious help of Classis, in the summer of 1993. In the meantime our pulpit has been filled with the professors and professors emeritus of the Theological College, minister of the Ontario Classis North region, and vacationing ministers from as far away as B.C. We have been greatly enriched by the preaching and also by the pastoral care freely given in the times of joy and grief we experienced during our vacancy. It has also been a great honour and privilege to host these ministers in our homes between services. For this we are very thankful to our heavenly Father for providing so richly the sweet fragrance over the years. C

## OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



### Dear Busy Beavers,

Here is a poem sent in by Busy Beaver *Francine Van-Woudenberg*.

I thought it was a good poem about summer in Canada.

#### LANDSCAPES

Green grass sprawled over distant hills,  
Pastures rolling, the stream fills,  
With rushing water, clean and bright,  
In a forest of delight.

Jagged rocks cut the sky,  
With zig-zags reaching very high  
Mountains in the distance rise,  
Their snow capped heights reach the skies.

Waving wheat and barley too,  
Sway gently in the fields, calling to you.  
It bows before you, reaches behind,  
Quite a peaceful scene, you will find.

Rushing, soaring, foaming high  
The tide washes in and hurries by,  
Then gently falls back to the sea,  
Rushes in again; what a sight to see.

In a field or forest,  
mountains or by the sea,  
There's a peaceful beauty when you're alone,  
discovered by you and me.

And now it's time for the Super Summer Quiz Contest!  
There's lots of Bible Puzzles, and a few puzzles by Busy Beavers.

Enjoy doing these puzzles, and send me your answers!  
Every *completely correct* Quiz will receive a reward! So be really careful with your answers!

And, most of all,

★ HAVE FUN! ★

## Quiz Time!

#### PLACES

Where are the following biblical places located today? Use a world atlas and Bible maps to match the biblical place in the left column with the modern location in the right column.

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Antioch of Pisidia | a. Asia                  |
| 2. Bethlehem          | b. Turkey                |
| 3. Rome               | c. Syria                 |
| 4. Damascus           | d. Jordan                |
| 5. Jerusalem          | e. Greece                |
| 6. Macedonia          | f. Yugoslavia and Greece |
| 7. Ur                 | g. Israel and Jordan     |
| 8. Thessalonica       | h. Iraq                  |
| 9. Goshen             | i. Italy                 |
| 10. Ephesus           | j. Egypt                 |

### SCRAMBLED MAMMALS

by Busy Beaver Sarah Nobel

1. RABE = \_\_\_\_\_
2. NUSKK = \_\_\_\_\_
3. BRBATI = \_\_\_\_\_
4. EOMSU = \_\_\_\_\_
5. ERDE = \_\_\_\_\_
6. KTETIN = \_\_\_\_\_
7. UHOSER = \_\_\_\_\_
8. HICCK = \_\_\_\_\_
9. GPI = \_\_\_\_\_
10. AMTHSRE = \_\_\_\_\_

### FIND THE MESSAGE!

○ \* X ÷ = + ♀ □ △ ▲ ◎ ÷ □  
A B C D E F G H I J K L M

◎ ♀ ♀ ♀ . W Δ see λ ◇ ☹ \*  
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y

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\* ÷ = W W ○ ◎ ÷

◎ = = Δ \* ♀ see

### PEOPLE JESUS HELPED

Everywhere Jesus went he found people with needs, and he responded in a helping way. Match the need with the appropriate scripture reference.

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. The hungry   | a. John 11:43-44  |
| 2. The thirsty  | b. John 3:1-3     |
| 3. The naked    | c. Mark 1:34      |
| 4. The sick     | d. Mark 10:51-52  |
| 5. The prisoner | e. Luke 9:13-17   |
| 6. The blind    | f. Luke 8:27, 35  |
| 7. The thief    | g. John 11:21-27  |
| 8. The dead     | h. Luke 23:39-43  |
| 9. The bereaved | i. John 4:10      |
| 10. The lost    | j. Matthew 11:2-4 |

### ANOTHER FIND THE MESSAGE!

by Busy Beaver Tamara Vander Bruggen

A \* F □ K ◎ P # U ☹  
B \* G ■ L ○ Q △ V ◎  
C ◇ H ☹ M □ R ▷ W ☹  
D ◎ I ◎ N ◎ S △ X φ  
E # J ♀ O \* T ☹ Y □  
Z □

T  
☹ ☹ ◎ △ ◎ △ ☹ ☹ #

☹ \* □ ☹ ☹ ◎ ◇ ☹ ☹ ☹ #

○ ◎ ▷ ◎ ☹ \* △ □ \* ◎ #

○ # ☹ ☹ △ ▷ # ♀ \* ◎ ◇ #

\* ○ ◎ \* # ■ \* \* ◎ ◎ ◎ ◎

### BOWS AND ARROWS

Fill in each blank with the person associated with bows and arrows.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was an archer, Genesis 16:15, 21:20.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ was wounded by archers, and he asked his armourbearer to kill him with a sword, 1 Samuel 31:3-4?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ shot an arrow to warn David to flee from Saul, 1 Samuel 20:33-42.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ was hit by an arrow shot at random, and the king died, 1 Kings 22:34.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ was hit by archers and died in Jerusalem, 2 Chronicles 35:23-24.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ likened his condition to being compassed round about by archers, Job 16:13.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ was angry when Joash struck the ground only three times with an arrow, 2 Kings 13:17-19.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ prophesied that the king of Assyria would not shoot an arrow in Jerusalem, Isaiah 37:33.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ lamented over Saul and Jonathan and taught the children of Judah to use the bow, 2 Samuel 1:17-18.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ sent his son with his bow to get venison, Genesis 27:1-3.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ reminded the people assembled at Shechem that hornets, not bows, had defeated their enemies, Joshua 24:2,12.



## BODIES OF WATER

Water is a major source of recreation for many people today. It is also necessary for human beings to live. Match the bodies of water with the proper statement about water:

- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| 1. A blind man washed in this pool and received sight, John 9:6-7.                       | a. Marah      |
| 2. Naaman "dipped" in this river and was healed of leprosy, 2 Kings 5:14.                | b. Gennesaret |
| 3. Daniel saw a vision of a ram in the river, Daniel 8:2-3.                              | c. Kishon     |
| 4. Ezekiel saw visions of God here, Ezekiel 1:3.   | d. Tiberias   |
| 5. Elijah slew the prophets of Baal near this brook, 1 Kings 18:40.                      | e. Euphrates  |
| 6. Moses led the Israelites through dry land at this sea, Exodus 14:16.                  | f. Pison      |
| 7. Another name for the Sea of Galilee, John 6:1.  | g. Red        |
| 8. A river which flows out of Eden, Genesis 2:10-11.                                     | h. Siloam     |
| 9. The water at this place was bitter, Exodus 15:23.                                     | i. Chebar     |
| 10. Seraiah was commanded to read a book and cast it into this river, Jeremiah 51:60-63. | j. Jordan     |
| 11. Jesus taught in a ship in this body of water, Luke 5:1-3.                            | k. Ulai       |

## PAUL'S ASSOCIATES

The following people were associated with Paul. Match the proper statement with the person.

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:25-30                          | a. Felix            |
| 2. Said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," Acts 26:28             | b. Julius           |
| 3. Led the silversmiths in protest against Paul, Acts 19:24-25                 | c. Barnabas         |
| 4. Left Paul in prison in an effort to gain favor with the Jews, Acts 24:26-27 | d. Tertullus        |
| 5. Sent Paul to Caesar, Acts 25:12   | e. a nephew         |
| 6. Sent with Paul to settle a dispute in Jerusalem, Acts 15:2                  | f. jailer           |
| 7. Arrested for harboring Paul, Acts 17:5                                      | g. Publius's father |
| 8. Guarded Paul on trip to Jerusalem for trial, Acts 27:1                      | h. Demetrius        |
| 9. Told Paul of a plot to kill him, Acts 23:16                                 | i. Festus           |
| 10. Paul healed him of a fever, Acts 28:8                                      | j. Jason            |
| 11. An orator who accused Paul before Felix, Acts 24:1-3                       | k. Agrippa          |



## OIL

Answer each question with the person involved with oil.

- 1. Who asked the wise virgins for oil for their lamps, Matthew 25:7-8?
- 2. Who used oil on the wounds of a man beaten by robbers, Luke 10:33-34?
- 3. Who multiplied the oil of a widow so she could pay her debts, 2 Kings 4:2-7?
- 4. What tribe received this blessing: "Let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil," Deuteronomy 33:24?
- 5. To whom did Jesus say, "My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment," Luke 7:43,46?
- 6. Who poured oil on a pillar of stone and named the place Bethel, Genesis 35:14-15?
- 7. Who asked a woman to pretend to be a mourner and not anoint herself with oil, 2 Samuel 14:2?
- 8. Who was anointed with oil by Zadok, 1 Kings 1:39?
- 9. To whom did Solomon give twenty thousand measures of pure oil in exchange for cedar trees, 1 Kings 5:11?
- 10. Who told a woman to make him a cake of her last meal and oil and her supply of oil and meal would not run out, 1 Kings 17:12-16?

## SEND YOUR ANSWERS TO:

SUPER SUMMER QUIZ CONTEST  
C/O AUNT BETTY  
ONE BEGHIN AVENUE  
WINNIPEG, MB  
R2J 3X5

Love,  
Aunt Betty

