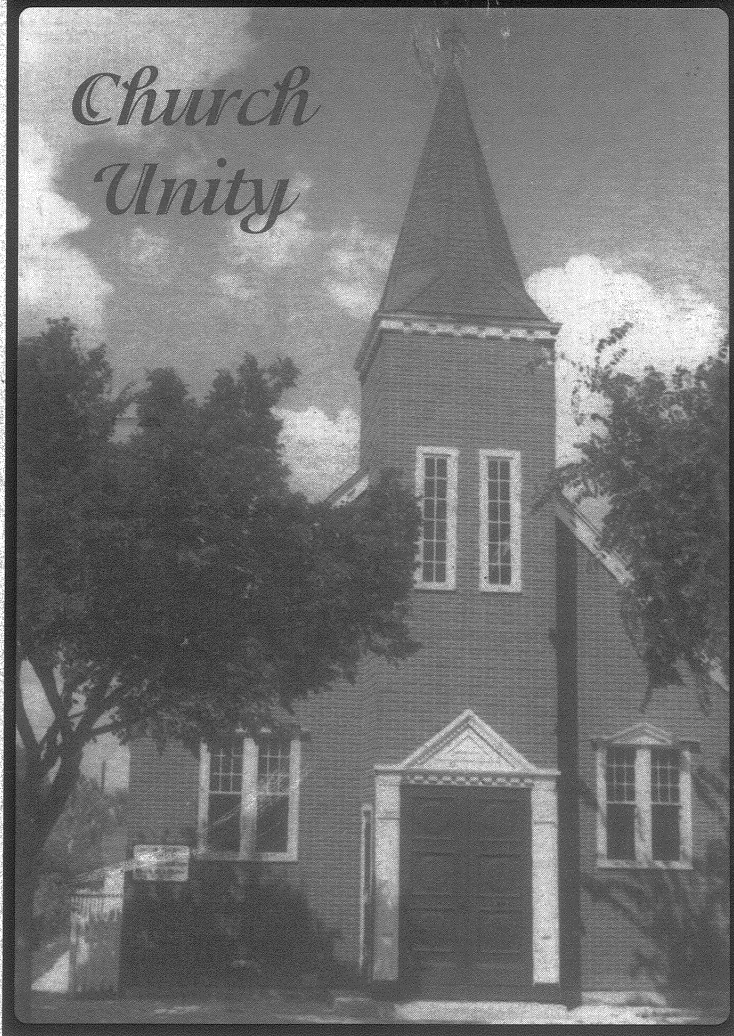




Clarion

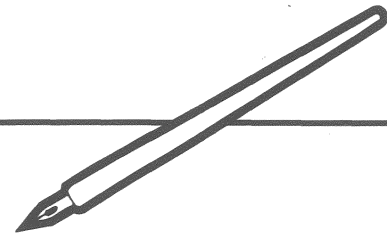
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
VOLUME 44, NO.9

MAY 5, 1995



*Church
Unity*

By J. De Jong



Local or National?

Introduction

Several of our churches are presently engaged in discussions with other Reformed churches outside our federation with a view to pursuing ecclesiastical unity. This is a noble task and high calling, and we can be very thankful for the kind of discussions that are going on, and for the spirit of harmony and cooperation which – at least according to what I have heard – characterizes the meetings. Most of the discussions concern the Independent churches which have recently seceded from the CRC.

A recurring question in these discussions concerns what steps ought to be followed once a level of recognition has been reached. If you have come to recognize each other as true churches of Jesus Christ, can you automatically implement cooperative programs, pulpit exchanges, combined services, and so on? Recently a Ministers' Conference was held at the Theological College in Hamilton dealing with this matter. Several ministers from the Independent churches were present and a lively discussion took place on the various aspects of the issue of local discussions, and on what steps should be followed to pursue ecclesiastical union. There were no fixed conclusions from the discussion; however, they set a lot of us thinking, and I would like to use this opportunity to summarize my view on how these discussions should proceed.

Local beginnings

It is only natural and proper that discussion regarding ecclesiastical unity begin on the local level. After all, that is where people can get to know each other, and even meet each other informally in their day to day affairs. Especially in a country with large distances, one can only encourage the avenue of *local* discussions to come to unity. This applies not only to Independent churches, but also to churches of another federation. After all, in another federation as, for example, the Free Reformed Churches, one can meet churches of quite a different character from place to place.

The object of local discussions is to come to mutual recognition. As far as I know there are a number of churches in our federation in which this local recognition has been established. The question is: what next? A local church can err in its judgment concerning a neighbouring church with which it has discussions. Therefore, the church is obligated to seek the approbation of classis before proceeding to any specific programs of cooperation resulting from the mutually established recognition, e.g. pulpit exchanges, combined worship services, and so on. This does not mean that classis has the authority over any given local process of discussion.

It simply means that the churches together should ascertain to the best of their ability whether the course of action adopted by the local church in question is correct.

The role of the federation

It would be entirely wrong if one would see the federation as an impediment to the pursuit of ecclesiastical unity. It is rather to be seen as a safeguard for promoting a *genuine* unity, rather than one which is haphazard and ill-defined. Joining the federation incorporates a commitment that churches will not establish a third party relationship without the consent and approbation of the immediate parties to whom we owe our first allegiance, namely, the other churches in the federation. The approbation of classis is then an essential ingredient in bringing the process of established recognition to a sound conclusion.

What rule should be followed in these discussions? There is obviously not a fixed rule to which we can point. However, the Synod of Ommen 1993 set a guideline from which we all can learn. It suggests that local activities and programs based on mutual recognition should only be implemented in the final phase of the unification process, i.e. once a specific step by step program towards full federation and ecclesiastical unity has been adopted.¹ In this way, the various programs one implements form stepping stones towards the goal that was already inherent in the declaration of mutual recognition, and function meaningfully only in the measure that all parties hold to the established arrangement to come to full ecclesiastical unity.

There is a difference between discussions with a locally federated church and a local church that is not federated. The requirement to bring matters to the broadest assembly is more acute in the first case than in the second. But in general the line of the Synod of Ommen – which concerns for the most part federated churches – can be applied in the situations we face in Canada as well. That rule is simply this: in pursuing ecclesiastical discussions on the local level, the demands of the federation cannot be overlooked. Indeed, those demands form the essential safeguards contributing to the genuine character of the unity for which we strive.

The lesson of history

History teaches that full ecclesiastical union does not come easily. Already in 1888 the Seceded churches acknowledged the "Dolerende" churches as true churches of Jesus Christ. But it still took four years before the Union was a fact! And the essential point of dispute was the *form* the

continued on page 204

Meditation

By G.Ph. van Popta

Read Acts 8:1-25:

"... he offered them money, saying, 'Give me also this power...'"

SIMONY

Article 72 of our *Church Order* makes a particular reference to simony as being one of the serious and gross sins which are grounds for the suspension and deposition of office-bearers.

Simony refers to either the buying or selling of anything sacred. It especially refers to the purchase or sale of ecclesiastical offices. During the Middle Ages, it was a common practice. The offices of bishop and priest were up for sale, often to the highest bidder. Those with special gifts from God were not sought for the various offices in the church; rather, those with money and power filled the offices. During the Middle Ages, godly reformers tried to put a stop to simony, but it did not end until the Reformation.

The roots of simony lie in Acts 8. Simon the Magician has the dubious honour of having given his name to this serious and gross sin.

After the mob had stoned deacon Stephen to death, a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem under the capable leadership of Saul of Tarsus. Saul had zeal. He ravaged the church. He entered house after house, dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. The Spanish Inquisition had nothing over Saul.

The church was scattered. Deacon Philip ended up in Samaria. He preached the gospel there. Everyone believed when they heard Philip and saw the mighty signs he did. He cast out demons and healed the paralyzed and the lame.

There was a famous magician in that city called Simon. He claimed to be someone great. Simon had lots of magic. The people praised him as being the Great Power of God. But now the people were turning away from magic to Jesus Christ. Simon himself believed and was baptized.

Peter and John came down when they heard that Samaria had received the Word of God. They prayed that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit. When they laid their hands upon the Samaritans the Holy Spirit fell upon them. This confirmed to everyone that Jesus Christ was gathering the Samaritans into His one holy catholic church as well.

When Simon saw this he offered the apostles money for the ability to dispense the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. He tried to bribe them. Simon wanted to buy this office. He thought it would enhance his reputation. Peter rebuked him sharply in words that would make anyone shudder. The Rock of the church had no patience for someone who thought he "... could obtain the gift of God with money."

And so we have the sin called simony. Probably, this is not a very common sin nowadays. There is little danger that many try to secure for themselves the office of minister, elder or deacon by means of bribery. However, the church must always examine itself when it comes to choosing men to serve in the offices. Do we pay strict attention to the requirements set down in the scriptures (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1)? Or have we added some extra-biblical criteria? For example, if the slate for elder consists of a successful businessman who is well-known and popular in the community, and a labourer, do we keep the Biblical standards in view?

The sin of simony is not prominent. However, let us realize that money, power, and popularity do not qualify one to serve in church offices. The Holy Spirit qualifies.

What's inside?

This issue has a number of contributions dealing with the unity of the church and how that ought to be striven for and maintained by groups of churches, local congregations, and the individual believer.

In his editorial, Dr. J. De Jong, professor of, among other things, Church Polity, addresses the very current matter of what steps ought to be taken once two local churches from different federations have mutually recognized each other as true churches.

In "Church Membership and the Bible," Mike Wagner writes about whether joining a local true church is an option or a requirement for a believer.

Dr. R. Faber, professor of Classics and Ancient History at the University of New Brunswick, tells us something about Calvin's teaching and advice on preserving church unity.

Other than these you will find a few other items.

May we all work faithfully at enhancing and preserving the unity of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

GvP

union would take. Would it be a loose denominational union, allowing for all kinds of undefined relationships with other parties, in particular, in this case, with the state church? This the churches of the Secession were unwilling to accept. They wanted a true union, not one of iron and clay, but of gold with gold. To achieve such a union a radical break with the state church was required.

The dramatic history surrounding the Union of 1892 should at least alert us to walk circumspectly in order to reach the goal of a lasting unity. Still today the easy road of a loose, denominationally-qualified unity threatens to hamper true Reformed ecumenicity. For the road of a loose, denominational unity only lead churches into the treacherous waters of independentism.

The role of the Church Order

In all negotiations one should not overlook the important role of the Church Order of Dort. Local churches cannot and should not put the Church Order on the table as a negotiable document. In fact, churches of a common Reformed background should do everything in their power to

hold on to the Church Order of Dort! It has proven to be a time-honoured vehicle to promote the harmony and the peace of the churches.

Within the context of the commitment to the common church order of Dort churches can allow concessions on non-fundamental points, i.e. points of liturgy, customs and usages. We can even live side by side with different practices for some time. But the essential prerequisite to the concessions should be a mutual allegiance to the Church Order of Dort. After all, why should a group of *Reformed* churches give up such essential elements from their heritage? And – as others have already pointed out – why reinvent the wheel? Let us make use of what we have, and avoid the pretensions of developing a new ‘hybrid’ church order to suit the needs of our ‘unique’ situation. Then we are faithful to the past, and so can build a strong and lasting unity for the future!

¹Acta of the Synod of Ommen, Article 96, p. 146. The Dutch of Art 66 (3) 3 reads: “in een eindfase zullen de kerken aan de hand van een beleidsplan vormen van nadere kennismaking en nauwer samenleven bezien en benutten.” C

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By R. Schouten

Young People Know Best

In his important and widely-praised 1992 book entitled, *Hollywood Vs. America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers), Michael Medved includes a chapter entitled “Kids Know Best.” After demonstrating in earlier chapters the relentless anti-marriage and pro-promiscuity messages of the film industry, Medved goes on in this chapter to show how popular culture also helps to poison the relationship between parents and children.

Medved writes: “No notion has been more aggressively and ubiquitously promoted in films, popular music, and television than the idea that children know best – that parents are corrupt, hypocritical clowns who must learn decency and integrity from their enlightened offspring” (p. 147).

He continues by stating that “Teenagers in particular are portrayed as the ultimate source of all wisdom, sanity, and sensitivity and our one hope

for redeeming the world from the terrible mistakes of the benighted generations that preceded them” (p. 147). The basic idea of many contemporary productions is that while parents may be well-intentioned, their opinions and advice are usually useless and irrelevant. Parents come across as “bumblers and bozos” (p. 148).

In other productions, parents are portrayed in a far more sinister light. Nightmarishly dysfunctional families become the norm for the entertainment of the youth. Abusive fathers and disinterested mothers in film after film create the impression that nearly all children are saints martyred at the hands of evil adults (pg. 149). The persistent message that comes through is that Dad and Mom are at fault for the problems of the youth and the world.

Medved asserts that in “film after film, children assume the task of improving the character and correcting

the defects in their often pathetic progenitors” (parents). It is the children and the young people who get the older generation back on the right track. About one film, *Back to the Future*, we read: “In the peculiar universe of this motion picture, adults have everything to learn from childhood, but kids can gain nothing of value from their parents” (p. 151).

According to Medved, Hollywood’s infatuation with super kids and superfluous adults shows up even in the best-crafted and most-loved “family films.” (p. 153). “The top-grossing film in movie history offers a classic expression of the kids-know-best theme: in *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial* (1982), adults are all insensitive or cruel to the visitor from outer space, and the children must band together to rescue the peaceful emissary from the Great Beyond”. . . . *The Little Mermaid* (1990) won well-deserved praise for its glorious animation



and irresistible music, but the story line effectively encouraged children to disregard the values and opinions of their parents" (p. 153).

Let me conclude this summary of "Kids Know Best" with the following quotation: *The portrayal of parents as irrelevant – or outright evil – has become so pervasive in every corner of our popular culture that we have begun to take for granted as a harmless convention of mass entertainment. We blithely assume that our children can absorb innumerable images of inept and idiotic parents in movies, television, and popular songs, while remembering at all times that their own mother and father are completely different. We dangerously underestimate the impact of an omnipresent popular culture that repeatedly reassures our kids that they instinctively know better than the tired losers of the older generation*" (p. 154-155).

Lighten up!

My advice to the youth of today is: "Lighten up!" What a heavy burden popular culture lays upon you! Instead of being able to rely on the sound advice and counsel of your parents, you have to be the way-showers for the older generation. It's hard enough to grow up without the extra burden of having to correct and save wayward members of the older generation from their own folly. According to popular culture, there is no traditional truth and wisdom for you to consult. You are on your own. No signposts, no guidelines, but only your own instincts to guide you. The Church and society depend

on the purity of your heart and your innate wisdom to overcome the follies of your parents.

Medved doesn't discuss the impact of the "kids know best" philosophy on observance of the fifth commandment. However, the overall drift of popular culture leads to the conclusion that it is best to dishonour and disrespect your parents instead of honouring them. Since parents are ignorant buffoons,

why submit to their instruction and discipline, much less bear patiently with their weaknesses and shortcomings (Lord's Day 39)?

The truth of Scripture is that young people do not know best. While Hollywood tries to show that children are pure and naturally good (until corrupted by the adult world), the Bible teaches that children are born in sin; they enter the world with a bias against God and against His law; built right into young people's unsaved nature is a defiance toward divine wisdom. Instead of being sources of wisdom and purity and direction for society, the Bible says that folly is wrapped up in the heart of a youth (Pro. 22:15). Rather than leading the church and society into paradise, the unchecked impulses of youth will lead to anarchy.

In Scripture, wisdom and knowledge is associated with the age. Normal and correct behaviour is for young people to show respect and mildness toward the older generation. When the prophets brought gloomy messages about the future, one of the indications of social and spiritual decay was that "the youth will be insolent to the elder" (Isa. 3:5). Proverbs has an unsentimental view of youthful rebellion: "The eye that mocks a

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

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ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE 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 1995	Regular	Air
	Mail	Mail
Canada*	\$33.00*	\$59.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds	\$37.00	\$50.00
International	\$50.00	\$80.00

* Including 7% GST – No. R104293055
Advertisements: \$7.00 per column inch

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Publications Mail Registration No. 1025
ISSN 0383-0438

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father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures" (30:17). Similar is the ominous message of Prov. 20:20, "If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness."

We should not forget the blessing associated with the fifth commandment: Honour your father and your mother, *that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.*" This promise is repeated in NT terms in Eph. 6, verse three: "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." These verses indicate that a key for success and happiness in life is submission to parental authority and instruction. Rebellion is always destructive; it never fails to rob young people of happiness.


Contrary to the message of Hollywood and much of popular culture,

young people do not know best. God knows best and He has put parents in authority over young people. It is the task of parents to instruct and discipline. It is the task of young people to submit and show reverence. Only in this way are blessings in store for church and society.

Does this mean that young people can never criticize the ways of the older generation? Does the fifth commandment prohibit any constructive ideas about how church and society can do things better? Not at all. However, a prerequisite for a positive contribution is a willingness to first learn the wisdom of the past. He who wants to fix and improve a building has to know how the building was put together to begin with. To improve on the plan, you first need to know the original. When young people have not yet gained a wide knowledge of Scripture and of the

Christian ethic and of history, they are in no position to attack and criticize or to reinvent church and society. Save yourself the burden! Lighten up!

A challenge

Here's a challenge for youth: learn all you can from your parents and from all in authority over you. Earn your stripes in church and society by showing your respect for the ways of the older generation. After that, the older ones will be glad to hear your suggestions for improvement. In other words, keep your idealism, but let it be tempered by the wisdom of the past. The traditions need the close scrutiny of your youthful minds, but your youthful desires and ideals need the structure and restraint of the traditions. In this way, we in the Church can avoid the everywhere present "generation gap." 

Preserving Church Unity: Calvin and the Believers in Wesel

By R. Faber

Introduction

Increasingly, the character of the Canadian and American Reformed churches is becoming diverse. Believers whose cultural, religious, and social backgrounds differ, are joined together in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. The union of true believers, however, is not easily achieved or maintained, for the customs, liturgies, and other ecclesiastical practices produced by different histories or theological issues are frequently deemed precious inheritances. The danger exists that matters of secondary significance are elevated to the status of doctrinal principle. It is important, therefore, to distinguish between fundamental and non-fundamental articles of the Christian faith. Churches

must guard the principles of the faith jealously, for when the doctrine of the church is overturned "the death of the church follows." However, raising non-fundamental matters to primary status may lead towards sectarianism or may result in schism.

The history of Reformed churches has witnessed many opportunities to evaluate teaching and practice; this article will discuss only one of them, namely the opportunity of the French Reformed believers in the church at Wesel in the sixteenth century. Consisting of Reformed believers who had been assumed into a town of predominantly Lutheran citizens and councillors, the Reformed congregation at Wesel experienced difficulties arising from the en-

forced union of Protestants whose doctrines and manner of worship were not identical in every respect. Especially differences in the teaching and ceremony of the Lord's Supper distinguished Lutherans from Calvinists.

It was concerning the celebration of the Lord's Supper that the French congregation at Wesel requested the advice of John Calvin. Calvin's letter of reply to the Reformed congregation teaches believers that there are indeed matters of the Reformed faith which are not worthy of the status of primary doctrine or necessary practice. In fact, as shall be noted, Calvin argues that there are certain circumstances in which even improper practices of secondary significance must be tolerated.

In order to appreciate the intent of Calvin's letter, we shall first note the history and situation of the French Reformed believers in the town of Wesel. Thereupon we shall consider the issue which prompted them to consult Calvin, and Calvin's letter in response. Lastly, we shall consider how relevant Calvin's advice may be to Reformed churches today.

The "Stranger" churches in London

It is thought that some of the believers who joined the congregation at Wesel in 1553 came from the so-called "stranger" churches in London. Members of these churches were continental Europeans of the Reformed faith who had emigrated to England in order to avoid religious persecution in their native lands. During his reign from 1547 until 1553 Edward VI promoted the reform of the church in England, and the country became a safe haven for exiled Protestants. Edward's accession to the throne had occurred not a moment too soon, for by 1548 actual or expected persecution of Protestants in the Low Countries was forcing a growing number of believers to emigrate to London.¹ During the Spanish occupation of the Netherlands, Protestants living there were sought out and punished. Even Germany, which was considered a bastion of the Reformation, came under the threat of religious suppression after emperor Charles V had defeated the league of Protestant princes in 1547. Thus in 1547 groups of especially Dutch, German and French-speaking believers settled in London to practise the Reformed faith in freedom. It is estimated that nearly 10,000 Protestants moved from the continent to England during the reign of King Edward.

In 1548 the Dutch-German community in London formed into a congregation and instituted regular worship services. There was also a French Protestant community in the city, but it maintained a lower profile, since in the middle of the sixteenth century England was at war with France. Nevertheless, according to one church register, by 1550 the French Protestant congregation in London numbered about 350 adult males. From 1548 until its demise in 1553, the community of French Protestants was guided by two ministers, Francis Perussel and Richard Vauville. Both men were des-



John Calvin

tinued to leave London when Mary Tudor's Roman Catholic reign would force the Protestants to go underground. In 1553 Perussel moved to Wesel, whence he would travel to Frankfurt. Richard Vauville remained in London to serve the remaining French believers until 1555, when he, too, moved to Frankfurt.

The most prominent figure associated with the establishment of the stranger churches in England was the Polish theologian John à Lasco (or John Lasky). With the assistance of Jan Utenhove, à Lasco provided the two congregations with a church order, liturgies, forms for the administration of the sacraments, and a Confession of Faith. The Lord's Supper was celebrated monthly; the location for it alternated between the church of the Dutch and the meeting-place of the French. The Dutch-German community was also served by two ministers. It is estimated that by 1553 the Dutch and French churches together numbered more than three thousand persons.

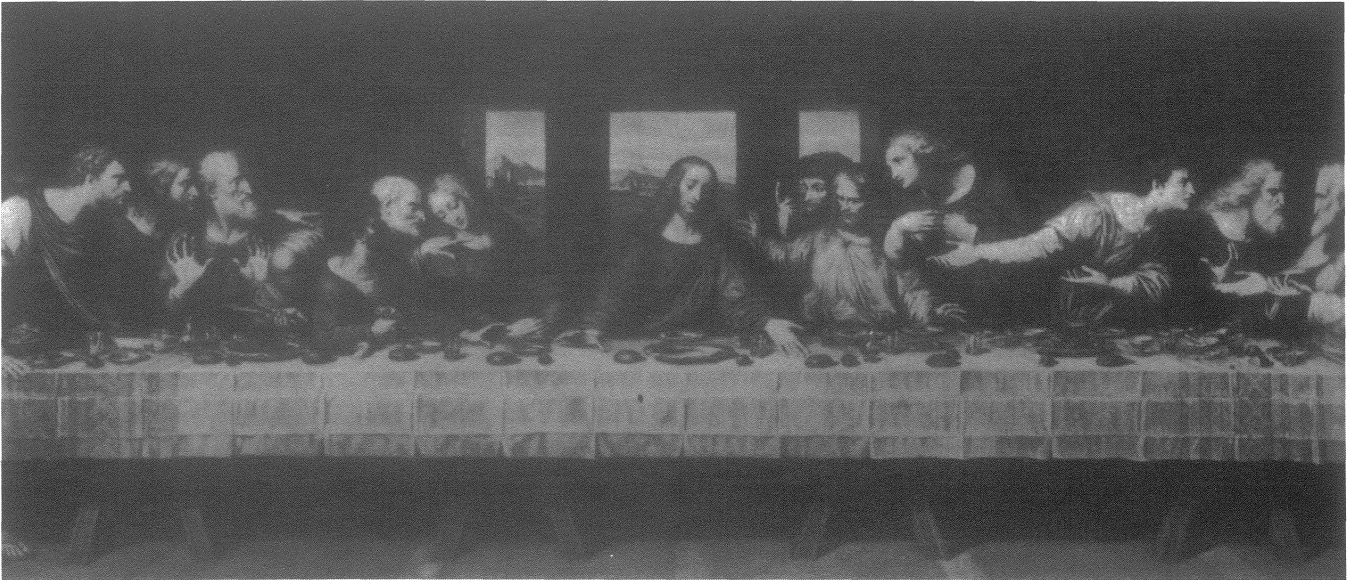
It seems likely that Calvin's increasing authority influenced especially the French community in London, so that it developed practices on the model of the church at Geneva rather than that of the Dutch Reformed churches. Calvin followed the progress of the stranger churches with interest, and on occasion admonished and exhorted the French community. It is not surprising that the stranger churches, consisting of believers from diverse cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds,

should advocate divergent ideas and customs.

The death of Edward VI in 1553 came as a shock to the stranger churches which had prospered under a king who supported reformation. When Mary Tudor succeeded Edward VI, she moved quickly to revert the official religion to Roman Catholicism. In August 1553 "Bloody Mary" ordered the ministers of the stranger churches to stop preaching, viewing them as potential opponents to the restoration of the Roman church. By autumn of the same year, the Dutch and French churches had disappeared, their members going underground. In December 1553, Mary rescinded the pro-Reformation laws of Edward and reinstated the Romanist Mass. While many of the Dutch and German believers returned to the Low Countries and to Denmark, the French believers headed to their native land via Dover; it was assumed that many would head for Geneva.² Those members of the stranger church who remained in London were destined to resurface in 1559, when the accession of Elizabeth to the throne would provide a return to Protestantism.

The refugee centres

There were three European cities which acted as refugee centres for the exiled members of the stranger churches: Emden (in east Friesland), Frankfurt and Wesel (both in Germany). Unfortunately, no church records survive which might indicate the number of refugees who came to Wesel from the French stranger church in London. Whereas previously scholars thought that the influx of French-speaking believers from London to Wesel was considerable, recent estimates are very modest. Two facts suggest, however, that at least some of the members of the London church settled in the German town. As early as 1545 Wesel had accepted religious refugees from the Low Countries: Walloons had been permitted to conduct Reformed worship services in French alongside the Lutheran services.³ Thus the town had gained the reputation of being kindly disposed towards fleeing Protestants; the French-speaking exiles from London would have been attracted to Wesel. More important is the fact that the church at Wesel elected Francis Perussel as its minister. The choice of this man suggests that there were not a few who



The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci

knew the former minister of the stranger church in London. At any rate, one may suppose that the group at Wesel chose a pastor whose teaching and practice was in accord with their own. Furthermore, the Calvinist tenor of the Reformed community in Wesel must have been similar to that of the French stranger church in London.

The town's council, however, consisted of Lutheran members, and both the doctrines and the practices of the town church differed from those which the French believers exercised. The well-being of the French Reformed group in Wesel depended upon its good relations with the Lutheran leaders. Unfortunately, the relations between Calvinists and Lutherans had deteriorated throughout Europe by the time the exiles settled into Wesel. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper continued to be the main issue separating the Swiss, German and French reformers. Already after the Marburg Colloquy of 1529, the doctrine concerning the mode of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the sacrament divided Zwinglians from Lutherans, while those associated with Calvin strove to bring the camps together.⁴ The so-called Zurich Accord of 1549, in which Calvin played no small role, was one of the attempts at compromise.⁵ But John à Lasco, whose name was associated with the refugees of the stranger churches, had published a series of sermons in which he denounced the Lutheran practice of the Lord's Supper.

Disagreement over the sacramental doctrine had become bitter, and the

exiles could expect a less than warm reception by the coucillors of Wesel. For, as A. Pettegree observes, "a narrow Lutheran orthodoxy was . . . being imposed in many cities which had previously offered a generous welcome to Reformed communities."⁶ Given these circumstances, the Reformed exiles needed to be sensitive to the Lutheran position.

Upon arriving in the town, the exiles first presented the town council with a Confession of Faith, which was deemed sound. The French-speaking believers were permitted to conduct worship services separate from the town church, but under certain conditions. Given the religious climate of the day, these were generous concessions. Shortly after he arrived in 1554, Francis Perussel requested that his flock be permitted to celebrate also the Lord's Supper apart. This request was denied, however, and the members were asked to participate in the Lutheran celebration. It seemed only a matter of time before the town council would request the exiles to subscribe to the Lutheran doctrine of the physical presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the sacrament. To the Reformed believers, however, this would be unacceptable; they thought that the Lutheran exercise of the sacrament retained vestiges of the Roman Catholic mass. For them the use of figured bread, the candles on the table, and the wearing of special vestments, called chasubles, by the celebrants, was altogether too ornate. The exiles began to consider

moving to another town where they might practise their Reformed faith freely. Late in 1553, or early in the new year 1554, leaders of the exiles requested Calvin's advice. The letter sent to him is not extant, but Calvin's reply, written in French and signed by "the Ministers of the Church of Geneva" on 13 March 1554, survives.⁷

Calvin's letter of advice

Calvin begins his letter with an encouragement to the exiles in their circumstances, exhorting them to remain constant in the Reformed faith.⁸ He reminds them to be thankful to God, who "has granted you a place of refuge in which you are at liberty to serve and worship Him (30)." Calvin points out that such liberty is "no slight favour at a time when the world is turned upside down (30)." Thereupon he turns to the matter of immediate concern, the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the church at Wesel. He notes that the members of the congregation are rightly concerned about the administration of this sacrament, and that he shares their conviction that the supper should be celebrated only according to its institution as described in the New Testament and as practised in the apostolic church. Calvin agrees that any addition to the scriptural prescriptions for the rite "cannot fail to be a corruption." Calvin's attitude toward the more ornate Lutheran practice at Wesel is clear. He calls the ceremonies "unmeaning mummeries – which are, as it were, the residue of Popish superstitions, the recollection of which we

should strive as much as in us lies to exterminate (30)." Calvin appreciates the concern of the believers in Wesel, and supports them in their efforts to correct the improper exercise of the sacrament. Indeed, Calvin states, if the church in *Geneva* should be confronted with "such ceremonies, we should hold ourselves bound according to the position in which God has placed us, to admit of no compromise in resisting their introduction (30-31)." The exile community in Wesel is rightly concerned about the manner in which the Supper was celebrated.

Improper administration of the sacrament, however, is for Calvin not sufficient reason to disband the body of Christ as it is manifested in Wesel. Ceremonies "do not affect the substance of our faith" (31), states Calvin, and it would be wrong if anyone who, "from spite against a candle or chasuble would consent to separate himself from the body of the church (31)." From these words in Calvin's reply the impression is gained that the exiles in Wesel deem the mal-administration of the sacrament of such significance that it warrants their withdrawal from the community.⁹ To this the reformer replies that "it would be for us a matter of deep regret if the French church which might be erected there should be broken up, because we could not accommodate ourselves to some ceremonies (31)." Calvin feared not merely for the unity of the church in Wesel, but for its very survival.

According to Calvin another reason why the Reformed believers in Wesel should not quit the town over the issue of the manner in which the sacrament is administered, is to avoid causing a scandal among the Lutherans who in weakness might take offence at the objections raised by the exiles to the figured bread, candles, and chasubles. To quote Calvin: "We must be on our guard not to scandalize those who are already subject to such infirmities, which we should certainly do by rejecting them from too frivolous motives (31)." The reformer even writes, "it is perfectly lawful for the children of God to submit to many things of which they do not approve," hastening to add that the "main point of consideration is how far such liberty should extend (31)." From these words, and from several other passages in Calvin's works, it is clear that the ceremonies and rites of

the church are not deemed fundamental elements of the Christian faith. Objections to the manner in which a ceremony is conducted is for Calvin not sufficient reason to "abandon the advantage of having a christian church in that place (31)."

The principle which supports Calvin's advice to tolerate the Lutheran practice of the Lord's Supper is that there are fundamental and non-fundamental articles of the Christian faith. In *Institutes* 4.1.12, in a discussion of capricious withdrawal from the body of Christ, Calvin writes: "Some fault may creep into the administration of either doctrine or sacraments, but this ought not to estrange us from communion with the church. For not all the articles of true doctrine are of the same sort. Some are so necessary to know that they should be certain and unquestioned by all men as the principles of the religion. . . . Among the churches there are other articles of doctrine disputed which still do not break the unity of faith. . . . A difference of opinion over these non-fundamental matters should in no wise be the basis of schism among Christians."¹⁰ Especially the outward rites of our religion, that is the customs, practices, and external orders, do not deserve to be counted as fundamental principles. In his *Commentary* on 1 Corinthians 14:40, Calvin writes: "The Lord allows us freedom in regard to outward rites, in order that we may not think that His worship is confined to those things. At the same time, however . . . He has restricted the freedom, which He has given us, in such a way that it is only from His Word that we can make up our minds about what is right."¹¹ It is Scripture, the Word of God, which acts as the norm for fundamental and non-fundamental elements of the faith. The traditions and the teachings of humans and human institutions are of no value in assessing the ceremonies and rites of a church.

Applying the rule of distinguishing between fundamental and non-fundamental articles to the situation of the believers in Wesel, Calvin invites his readers to agree to the premise that "we ought to make mutual concessions in all ceremonies, that do not involve any prejudice to the confession of our faith (31)." Especially for the sake of the unity of the church at Wesel, the exiles ought to "support and suffer such abuses as it is not in your power to correct

(30)."¹² The Geneva reformer even admonishes the believers that "the unity of the church be not destroyed by our excessive rigour or moroseness (31)." It is important for believers to distinguish between fundamental and non-fundamental matters of the faith, for it would be a grave mistake if a matter not of primary significance is the cause of schism or lack of unity. Calvin is aware of the temptation to abuse this advice, and therefore balances it with the exhortation "that you do not yield to a faulty pliancy in the confession of your faith, and that you make no compromise as to doctrine (31)." Ending the letter with an encouragement to enjoy the benefits of partaking in the Lord's Supper, Calvin restates the essence of the Reformed confession of the sacrament: "we are only made partakers of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and . . . our souls are fully nourished by them (31)." The brethren at Wesel should be on guard against any belief which would "go farther than that confession (32)." Thus Calvin concludes his pastoral letter on a note of caution: while bearing with the weaknesses which attend the ceremony of the sacrament in Wesel, the Reformed believers ought to be wary of any transgression of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as taught in the Bible.

Conclusion

Readers may be tempted to draw certain parallels between the situation of the Reformed congregation in Wesel and that of some modern Reformed churches. However many similarities there may appear to exist, it may be inappropriate to draw hard conclusions from them. The social, political, and especially theological issues affecting both the Lutheran and the Reformed congregations at Wesel have no counterparts in North America of the twentieth century. One must appreciate history. The relations between church and state were much closer in Calvin's day than they are now, and politics played a role in the matters which separated the exiles from the Lutherans in Wesel. What is more, in the sixteenth century the Reformation was still in its most formative phase, and Calvin's personal authority, and the authority of other figures, played an important role in the case of the Reformed exiles. The Reformed churches of today, however, have been influenced by a Calvinism

which continued to develop long after John Calvin.

In addition to acknowledging the general differences which exist between the Reformed churches of today and those of the past, one must appreciate the specific nature of the issue facing the exiles at Wesel. Calvin was not so much concerned about the unity of a Reformed church, he was concerned about the relations between Lutheran and Reformed believers. The exiles had been admitted by citizens and councillors of a town which was hardening in its Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Wesel was one town where the sacramentarian controversy was real; Calvin was keenly aware of the role which the exiles played in the sensitive relations between Calvinists and Lutherans. Yet Calvin's immediate concern regarding the exiles was the very existence of a French Reformed Church in Wesel rather than the harmony within one congregation. Moreover, Calvin was giving advice to a definite group of believers whose circumstances and history he knew were abnormal. Identification of the situation of the Wesel exiles and a current one would, therefore, be inappropriate.

As was suggested above, Calvin's letter should not be read out of the context of worsening relations between Lutherans and Reformed. When the Lutheran party made demands from Reformed believers that would force them to compromise in *doctrine*, the Reformed believers could not acquiesce. K. Schilder reminds us that Calvin's attitude changed towards the Lutherans in general and towards the situation of the Reformed believers in Wesel and Frankfurt in particular. Schilder warned those who advocated the notion of the pluriformity of the church by adducing Calvin's assessment of the relations between Calvinists and Lutherans in the 1550s, that they should read Calvin's advice to the Reformed believers in the two Lutheran cities in a broader historical context.¹³ For by 1561 the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper diverged more and more from Reformed teaching, and Calvin then advised the Reformed believers against participating in the sacrament as it was taught and administered by Lutherans. Moreover, Calvin had observed that there were radical Lutherans, "apes of Luther," whose party-spirit was harming the del-

icate relations between the Calvinists and Lutherans.

It is worthy of note that Calvin did seek unity between Lutherans and Calvinists. He had signed the Augsburg Confession of 1540 (the "varied" version in which the article concerning the Lord's Supper was modified), and at no point in the discussions between Lutherans and Reformed did Calvin describe the emerging Lutheran church as a false church.¹⁴ It was not until 1577 – after Calvin's death in 1564 – when the orthodox Lutheran Formula of Concord was published, that the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence and the two natures of Jesus Christ became official and so led to a formal break between Calvinists and Lutherans. Calvin's letter of advice in 1554 is one document of an ultimately unsuccessful process between parties which, in the end, did not possess a common doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless, Calvin's ongoing attempts to seek unity with Lutherans should be seen today as an example for bringing together that which belongs together. More importantly, perhaps, current deliberations among Reformed churches should focus upon the unity which exists in doctrine; common adherence to the doctrines taught in Scripture should lead to unity in practice.

In conclusion, some general observations may be made about the principles underlying Calvin's advice, and their relevance to modern Reformed churches. First, one may consider the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental articles of the faith. The premise according to which Calvin assigns differing values to matters which are essential to the doctrine of the faith and to matters which do not affect it is Scripture. The Bible, and not tradition, customs or practices of human origin should be acknowledged as the sole guide in making such distinctions. The advice that outward rites and ceremonies should not be placed on a par with the doctrine contained in Scripture is one which should be acknowledged today. Appreciation for the manner in which Reformed churches worship and exercise the sacraments should be tempered by the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental articles of the faith. The fact that a certain form of worship has characterised a particular congregation is not in itself sufficient reason to maintain

that form. This principle is particularly relevant in a time when Reformed churches seek to strengthen the ties which the unity of the faith provides. Reformed churches would be well-advised to distinguish carefully between those matters which form the very heart of the Christian faith and those which do not affect the doctrine as revealed in Scripture.

¹The most complete English treatment of the stranger churches in London is A. Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth-Century London* (Oxford, 1986).

²For an account which traces the fortunes of the London exiles, see A. Pettegree, "The London Exile Community and the Second Sacramentarian Controversy, 1553-1560," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 16 (1987) 223-251.

³W. Nijenhuis, *Ecclesia Reformata* (Leiden, 1994), 103.

⁴For the differences and similarities between Calvin's and Luther's teaching of the sacrament, see now B.A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude. The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Minneapolis, 1994).

⁵The most recent discussion of the Zurich Accord is by P. Rorem, "The *Consensus Tigurinus* (1549): Did Calvin Compromise?" in W. Neuser, ed., *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor* (Grand Rapids, 1994), 72-90.

⁶Pettegree, *Protestant Communities*, 121.

⁷It appears as Letter 346 in the collation of J. Bonnet, *Letters of John Calvin*. Vol. III. (tr. M. Gilchrist. New York, 1972 [rep.]), 29-33.

⁸Calvin's letter to the Reformed believers in Wesel is treated by W. Neuser, "Die Aufnahme der Flüchtlinge auf England in Wesel (1553) und ihre Ausweisung trotz der Vermittlung Calvin und Melanchthons," in *Weseler Konvent 1568-1968. Eine Jubiläumsschrift* (Düsseldorf, 1968), 28-49.

⁹In fact, upon receiving Calvin's letter, Perussel sought a second opinion from John à Lasco, who reckoned the council's demands to be too inflexible and the matter of ceremonies so fundamental as to warrant the group's departure from the city.

¹⁰J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 2., tr. F.L. Battles (Philadelphia, 1967), 1025-1026; further quotations derive from this edition.

¹¹*Calvin's Commentaries. The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (tr. J. Fraser. Grand Rapids, 1960), 310.

¹²Cf. *Institutes* 4.1.12, where Calvin argues that we should opt to "condone delusion in those matters which can go unknown without harm to the sum of religion and without loss of salvation (p. 1026)."

¹³K. Schilder, *Verzamelde Werken. Vol. III. De Kerk*. Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1960, 69-71.

¹⁴Thus L. Doekes, "Om de ware kerk," *Reformatie* 55 (1979-80), 453. C

Church Membership and the Bible

By Michael Wagner

One view that is rather prevalent among some groups of evangelicals is that church membership is unscriptural and unnecessary. Since the Bible does not have an explicit command, "thou shalt join a local church," adherents of this view suggest that the requirement of church membership is man-made and therefore not a Christian obligation. I am quite familiar with this view since I held to it before coming to a Reformed understanding of the Bible. Is church membership Biblical? Absolutely. The Bible teaches that all believers are to be members of local churches (i.e., members of the visible church) and all those who forsake church membership are in very serious spiritual danger, to say the least.

Anabaptism

Opposition to church membership is common in North American evangelical circles today. Kevin Reed, in his Introductory Essay to John Knox's *A Warning Against the Anabaptists* (Dallas: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1984), traces the idea back to the Anabaptists. In discussing the Reformation period, he notes that due to "their perfectionist leanings, the Anabaptists began to expect a perfect Church. These unrealistic expectations gave birth to their extreme separatism" (p. 6). As a result, the "Anabaptists withdrew from the Protestant churches to form their own private assemblies. They were simply 'too spiritual' to join any regular congregation" (p. 6). These extreme separatist tendencies are common among some evangelicals today.

Some persons do not join any church, because they see too many problems in the churches, and do not wish to associate with such congregations. Some even assert that their separation requires a greater spirituality on their part, since they must walk with God apart from ties to a regular church. These are nothing but modern manifestations of Anabaptist perfectionism (p. 8).



This Anabaptist theology seems to be one root of the anti-church membership position.

Revivalism

A different explanation has been offered by Peter Leithart in his article "Revivalism and American Protestantism" (found in *The Reconstruction of the Church*, ed. James B. Jordan. Tyler, Texas: Geneva Ministries, 1985). Leithart suggests that the evangelical revivalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the United States resulted in a very low view of the visible church. One of the rea-

sons for this was that "[m]any of the preachers in the first revivals were itinerants (i.e., travelling preachers without a home church), a method of evangelism that puts minimal emphasis on the local church" (p. 82). In the end, revivalism led to "a voluntaristic view of the church."

The church came to be viewed as an assembly of individuals, democratically controlled, and undemanding. That membership in a church requires submission to authority and a permanent and serious commitment surprises, even angers many American Christians. The medieval

and Reformation idea that church membership is not optional and that the church is not a voluntary body but an organic community established by God with ties of faith and fellowship that may be dissolved only in the most extreme case, is anathema (pp. 82-83).

It appears, then, that American "revivalism" also contributes to the denigration of church membership.

Dispensationalism

One last explanation that I will point to is dispensationalism. This is the explanation offered by Iain Murray in his book *The Puritan Hope* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1971). Dispensationalism, an evangelical system of theology that heavily emphasizes eschatology, generally places a low emphasis on the church. In dispensationalism, the organized church is seen as falling away before the return of Christ, and therefore believers need to be wary of it. Murray suggests that "of all the tendencies of (dispensationalism) none was worse than the effect which it had in belittling the importance of the visible Church" (p. 205). Before the advent of dispensationalism, the church had generally been important in the theology of evangelicals (i.e., conservative Protestants). But after the spread of dispensationalism,

the Church was regarded as an institution without a future, and disengagement of church ties and duties affected the thinking of many evangelicals. . . . Whatever Christian work remained to be done before the Advent belonged to new groups, or simply to earnest individuals, who often professed no connection with the Church in her historic past. Even the pastoral office was viewed as no longer necessary and the trained ministry was accordingly set aside. The study of the Church's teachers in former ages was discounted as turning 'to human traditions' and each Christian was not only supposed to grasp all scriptural truth without such aids but also to be able to fulfil the role hitherto expected of those appointed to the preacher's office (p. 205).

The role of dispensationalism in denigrating the visible church is very clear.

The Biblical teaching on church membership

Having looked at the theological pedigree of the anti-church member-

ship ideas, it is now possible to turn to God's Word for the truth on this issue. The view that a Christian does not need to be a member of a local church finds no support in the Bible. Satan is the great enemy of the church, and only Satan benefits when professing Christians oppose church membership. He is the ultimate source of that idea.

The Bible clearly teaches that all Christians are to be members of the visible church. A good place to find biblical teaching on this issue is a taped message by Rev. Al Martin (a "Reformed Baptist" minister in the U.S.) entitled "The Local Church: A Recognizable Group." Martin's main point is that if the local churches in the New Testament had "recognizable, definable" congregations, then churches today must also have "recognizable, definable" congregations. That the churches of the New Testament era had clearly defined congregations is clear from Scripture. Just to use two of the many examples, it can be seen that this is so. In Acts 4:23 (KJV), Peter and John, after being released from custody, "went to *their own company*, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them" (emphasis added). The phrase "their own company" reveals that there was a *specific group* of people to whom they returned. It was a recognizable, definable group. Similarly, in Acts 6:3 (KJV), the disciples are told to select deacons: "look ye out *among you seven* men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (emphasis added). Again, the deacons were selected from a *specific*, defined group of people.

The point of showing that the congregations consisted of specific people is to demonstrate that they were clearly distinguished from the community at large. There was a clear line between those who were *in* the church and those who were *out*. There was no confusion about who was in the congregation and who was out. The church had a definite membership.

This point is further strengthened by verses that show that people had to *join* the visible church. In Acts 5:13 (KJV) we are told that "of the rest durst no man *join himself to them*" (emphasis added) referring to the Christians. That is, they had to join. Clearer yet is Acts 9:26 where it is said "when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to *join himself to the disciples*" (emphasis added). Saul was already a believer, yet he still had to

join. Clearly, churches in the New Testament era were recognizable, definable congregations that had to be joined.

Even without the evidence just offered, the Bible clearly teaches the necessity of church membership. Matthew 18:15-17 alone is conclusive on this issue. We are told that after an erring brother has been admonished by an individual (v. 15) and then again with two or three witnesses (v. 16), the issue must be taken to the church (v. 17). How could the church have any role in this at all unless it had jurisdiction over the people involved? And how could it have jurisdiction unless those people were members of the church? The point is clear. And it becomes even more clear when we look at 1 Corinthians 5:13 where the church is told to "put away from among yourselves that wicked person." How could the church "put someone away from among themselves" unless that person was "among" them to begin with? Clearly he would have to be a church member!

Another important concept in this issue has to do with Christ being the "Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4) of the church. This argument is mentioned by Rev. Greg Bahnsen of the OPC in his taped message "Church Membership: The Biblical Concept." Christ is the Chief Shepherd of the church, and by His authority he has placed "undershepherds" (elders and ministers) over it (1 Peter 5:1-2). There are undershepherds ruling over all of Christ's flock. Anyone who does not recognize an undershepherd over him is, in effect, not recognizing Christ as over him. Christ has chosen certain men to rule over His people (Acts 20:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, Hebrews 13: 7,17), and those who spurn the rulers spurn Christ. The only way to be ruled by Christ's undershepherds is to be a member of a local church. Clearly, then, any Christian who wants to submit to his Lord must be a member of a church. There are no other options. The Bible is clear.

All Christians who truly want to serve God do what the Bible says and join a true church. All others are, at best, living in a sinful state. I say "at best" because "Christians" who have no love for the church are spurious Christians indeed. The Bible teaches church membership.

Michael Wagner is a member of the Canadian Reformed Church in Calgary, AB.



Church Membership and Baptism

Response to questions

By C. Van Dam

In the Issue of *Clarion* preceding this one, br. W.H. Chase raises a number of concerns and questions in a letter to the editor with respect to my article "OPC and Canadian Reformed - a response to criticism" (*Clarion*, March 10). He basically questioned whether it was really true that according to our Reformed tradition one who errs in a point of doctrine (the example was infant baptism) could, by way of exception, be admitted into the Reformed congregation. Due to the nature of the topic, and because questions were addressed to me, I would like to note the following as briefly as possible:

1. The decisions of the OPC in 1967 and the Regional Synod of Gouda (1620) which dealt with this matter are identical in insisting that those who are to be admitted to the church are to submit themselves to the Reformed doctrine. Those joining the OPC have to answer sincerely and affirmatively the questions asked of those being admitted to communicant membership. This includes assenting to the Reformed doctrine, as I showed in *Clarion* Year end issue, 1994. It is therefore not correct when br. Chase writes that in the OPC members are admitted who condemn infant baptism. Rather, as the 1967 OPC decision puts it, it concerns those "who cannot at that time in good conscience present their children for baptism."

2. Furthermore the exceptional nature of such an admission was emphasized in the OPC decision. The exceptional character of what we are talking about is, rather unfairly, not recognized by br. Chase who also frames a question to me in terms of a church admitting someone who condemns the doctrine of infant baptism. Neither the

OPC nor our Dutch sister churches have ever suggested that those who actively condemn infant baptism should be admitted into church membership. Such people would also not want to be a member of a consistently Reformed church. Why should they be interested? The exception deals with situations where in the opinion of the local session or consistory someone who does not see one point of Reformed doctrine correctly as yet (such as infant baptism) but is willing to be instructed and thus to submit himself to Reformed teaching, should be admitted into the church. Also in this respect there is thus no difference between our Reformed heritage and the OPC decision. Rereading my articles (in the Year End, 1994 and March 19, 1995 issues) will make that clear.

3. Br. Chase asked about the nature of the decision of the 1914 Synod of The Hague which declared that toleration can be exercised to a brother who in good conscience errs in a point of doctrine. The background of this decision is that Regional Synod Friesland South asked whether someone who agrees with the Reformed confessions except on the point of infant baptism can be admitted into the church. Such a person would promise not to make propaganda for his deviating views and exhibit a godly walk of life. In response to this questions, Synod responded as follows.

i. Synod did not want to make a decision for the consistory in this question because it did not know all the facts and it was not capable of doing what the consistory should do.

ii. Synod declared that the Reformed Churches, following the example of the apostolic church, have al-

ways judged that toleration should be exercised towards those who in good conscience err in some point of doctrine as long as they do not propagate the error and are prepared to be instructed in the Reformed doctrine. It stands to reason that such a person cannot be an office bearer.

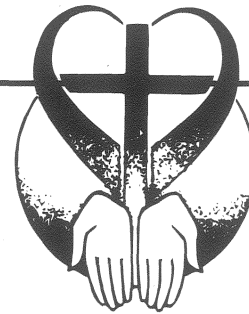
iii. The local consistory should make the decision regarding such toleration for admission, if need be with the advice of classis.

When the Synod of The Hague referred to the example of the apostolic church, it alluded to the report submitted to this Synod on this matter. There reference was made to the apostle's command to welcome those weak in the faith (Rom. 14:1) and to bear with the failings of the weak (Rom. 15:1).

These Biblical principles reflect the mercy of our God and are part of the total picture that should be borne in mind if the situation should arise that a consistory received a sincere request for membership from someone who leads a godly life and desires to join the congregation, even though he or she cannot assent to a particular point of doctrine but is willing to be instructed. Such a person may, for example, have been evangelized by a member of the congregation. The Biblical principles this synod referred to and which point to the possibility of admitting such applicants as members in certain circumstances are more compassionate and pastoral than the position of br. Chase. We do well to remember this.

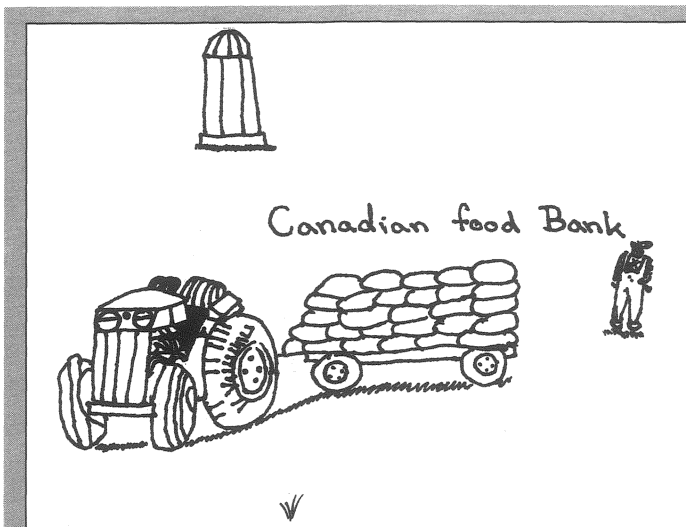


KIDS' PAGE

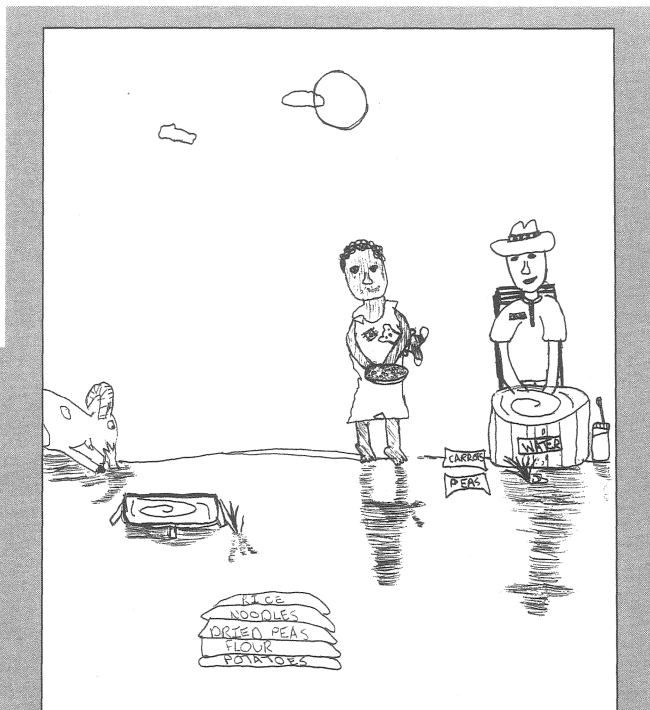


Our Fall Annual Report included a KIDS' PAGE which challenged YOU to send us a drawing showing something of our efforts to help the poor. We received many responses and thank EVERYONE who sent a drawing. Your interest and efforts were really appreciated! Keep up the good work, and let us all remember to pray and do what we can on behalf of the poor and needy.

The following four drawings were selected for publication in *Clarion*. We congratulate Lynda Krabbendam, Tracey Krabbendam, Allan Vanderveen, and Margaretha Ysselstein for their fine work.



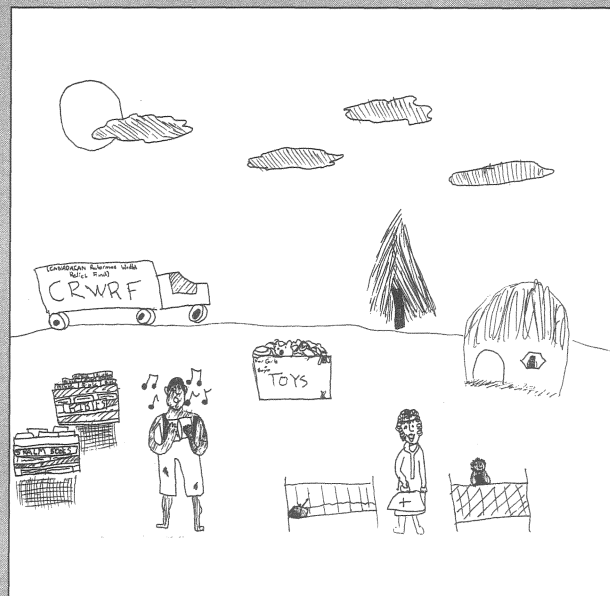
By Allan Vanderveen



By Lynda Krabbendam



By Margaretha Ysselstein



By Tracey Krabbendam

We challenge you to

SHARE WITH A SMILE 😊

When you're hungry, you just ask your Mom or Dad and usually they will offer you something (unless perhaps it's almost mealtime), right? When your clothes get too small for you or wear out, your parents make sure you have something nice to wear. But you know, there are many, many children in the world who don't know if they'll even get supper tonight and who don't have decent clothes to wear or a nice house to live in.

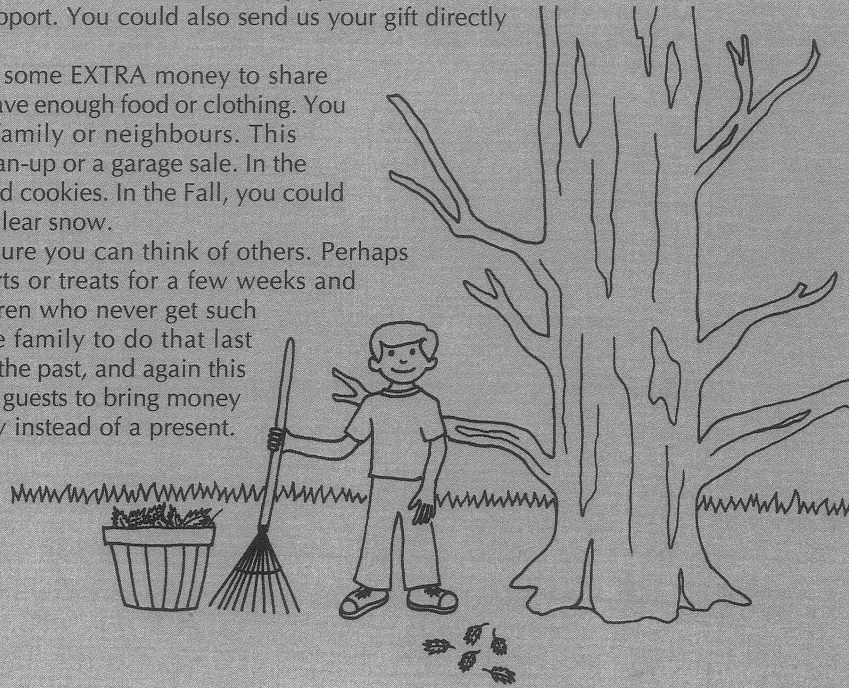
God commands us to help those less fortunate and that is what we at C.R.W.R.F. try to do. Will you do your part too? If you receive an allowance or are able to earn money, remember to give some in your church's collection for C.R.W.R.F. or at school to help sponsor a child at one of the Children's Homes we support. You could also send us your gift directly (see address below).

Or why not see if you can raise some EXTRA money to share with children elsewhere who don't have enough food or clothing. You could do an extra job for friends, family or neighbours. This Spring, you could help with yard clean-up or a garage sale. In the summer, you could sell lemonade and cookies. In the Fall, you could rake leaves, and in the winter, help clear snow.

Those are just a few ideas. I'm sure you can think of others. Perhaps you could choose to give up desserts or treats for a few weeks and send the money saved to help children who never get such goodies. Some kids got their whole family to do that last year and then sent us the cheque. In the past, and again this year, other children have asked their guests to bring money for C.R.W.R.F. to their birthday party instead of a present. What a great idea!

If you are able to save or earn extra money, please write and tell us about it. Thanks so much! And don't forget to smile. 😊 Remember, God loves a cheerful giver.

(2 Corinthians 9:7)



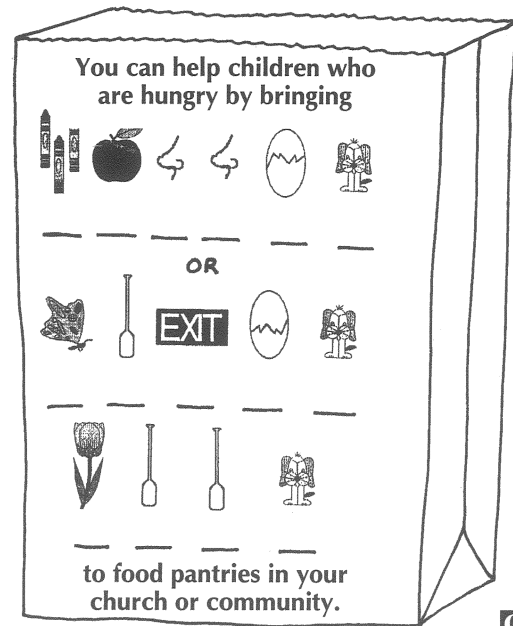
BAG PUZZLE

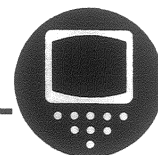
You can also help hungry people right in your own city or area. To find out how, solve the puzzle, writing the first letter of the picture in each blank. Then read the sentence.

Gifts for the works of CRWRF may be directed to:

Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund
PO Box 85225
Burlington, ON L7R 4K4

All gifts are gladly received. Donors of \$10.00 or more will be issued a receipt for tax deduction.





Meeting of the Administration Committee with the Inter-League Publication Board on Friday, March 24, 1995 at the Canadian Reformed Church building, London, ON

Present from the I.L.P.B.:

- from the Men's League: George Helder and Keith Sikkema
- from the Women's League: Jane Oosterhoff and Joanne van Middelkoop
- from the Young People's League: John Smid and John Smith

Present from the Administration Committee:

Pete Engbers, Elaine Spriensma, Irene Boeringa, Rennie Pieterman, Lynda Schouten.

The meeting was opened with the singing of Ps. 43:3, and the chairman, George Helder, read Ps. 43, prayed and welcomed everyone present.

The agenda was amended and adopted.

The minutes of the meeting of the I.L.P.B., March 10, 1995, were corrected and adopted.

Discussion of Proposed Projects

1. The I.L.P.B. continues tentative discussion of whether to translate *Korte Verklaring*, since Zondervan has abandoned this project.

2. A proposal to translate *Klank en Weerklank* by C. Trimp is discussed.

A policy change was announced: from now on the term "I.L.P.B." will refer to the entire organization, and the term "directors" to the 6 representatives on the Board.

Administration Committee Reports

1. *Progress*

- *Call Upon Me* by H. Westerink is now in stock

- *Christ in the Family* by W. Meijer is now at the printers

- *Luke* by C. Hagens will be ready in early 1996

- we aim to have outlines on Job by P. de Jong ready in Autumn, 1995.

2. *Sales* - sales are going well.


3. *Marketing* - letters are being sent to contact persons in the Independent Christian Reformed Churches.

4. *Financial* - expenses are comparable to last year and income has increased.

The next combined meeting is scheduled for Friday June 9, 1995, in London.

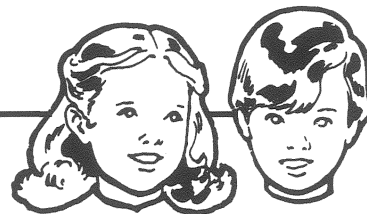
John Smid closed in prayer, and the chairman adjourned the meeting.

on behalf of the I.L.P.B.

John Smith 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

*The LORD ascended up on high,
The LORD has triumphed gloriously,
In power and might excelling.
The grave and hell are captive led.
Lo, He went up our glorious Head,
To His eternal dwelling.*

After Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself to His eleven disciples. He taught them about the Kingdom of God. They had to learn a lot because Jesus would not stay on earth. He would go back to Heaven, to be with God, His Father.

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, He took His disciples to a mountain near Jerusalem. He told them that the Holy Spirit would come upon them, and He would make them witnesses for Jesus. So later, they had to go, tell people everywhere about Jesus and what He had done to save His People.

When Jesus was still talking to them, He was lifted up right in front of the disciples! They watched in wonder. Then a cloud hid Jesus from them.

They stood still, staring at the sky. All of a sudden, two men in white clothes were beside them! They asked the disciples, "Why are you still looking into the sky? Jesus will come back in the same way you saw Him go."

We are still waiting for Jesus to come back. But we know He is in Heaven, beside God, His Father. And there He asks God to have mercy on those who believe in Him, because they belong to Him.

Quiz Time!

SCRAMBLED BIBLE NAMES

By Busy Beaver Eritia Smit

Who are these people?

1. hrbamaa _____
2. arulzas _____
3. ossme _____
4. jboca _____
5. srteeh _____
6. hjleia _____
7. rhdoe _____
8. wetmtha _____

SEVEN

Seven means complete in the Bible. Match each statement about seven with the proper person.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Had seven locks of hair. | a. Solomon, 1 Ki 6:38 |
| 2. Laboured seven years for a wife | b. Naomi, Ruth 4:15 |
| 3. Judged Israel for seven years | c. Mary Magdalene, Mark 16:9 |
| 4. Ate grass seven times | d. Samson, Judges 16:13 |
| 5. Possessed by seven devils | e. Pharaoh, Genesis 41:2,3 |
| 6. Dreamed of seven fat and seven lean cows | f. Ibzan, Judges 12:8,9 |
| 7. Built the Temple in seven years. | g. Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 4:25,33 |
| 8. Was condemned by seven princes | h. Vashti, Esther 1:14,15,19 |
| 9. Women said her daughter-in-law was better than seven sons | i. Jehoash, 2Ki 11:21 |
| 10. Became king at age seven | j. Jacob, Gen 29:20 |

BIBLE CODE

By Busy Beaver *Danielle Ostermeier*

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

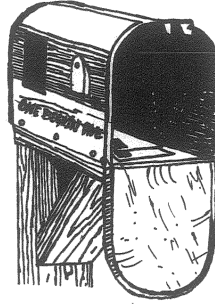
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| <u>2</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>16</u> | <u>18</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>5</u> |
| <u>20</u> | <u>8</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>18</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>7</u> | |
| <u>1</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>25</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>21</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>22</u> | <u>5</u> | | | | | |

PEN PALS WANTED!

These two Busy Beavers would like to have pen pals. Their names and addresses are:

Laura Kanis
1000 Day St.
Winnipeg, MB
R2C 1C3

Candace Schuurman
4201 Mountain St.
Beamsville, ON
L0R 1B0



FROM THE MAILBOX

Hi, *Laura Kanis*. How are your flute lessons going? Do you practice a lot? Thanks for the interesting story you wrote. Do you have any younger brothers? Bye, Laura

Hi, *Emily Boot*. How are you doing? Thanks for the puzzle you sent in. Do you like animals? Bye, Emily.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Stefanie DeBoer*. Thank you for the neat letter. Do you like working on the computer? How did your move go? Please send me your new address and your birthday, so I can put your name on the birthday list. Bye, Stefanie.

Hi, *Shaun Smeding*. Thank you for the word search puzzle. How are you and your family doing? Hope to hear from you soon. Bye, Shaun.

Hi, *Candace Schuurman*. Wow, it must be neat to have a butterfly for a pet! How long was it in the cocoon? What kind of butterfly is it? Hope your stamp-collecting is going well. Bye, Candace.

Hi, *Alisa Krabbendam*. Thanks for your letter. Do your rabbits like to hop on your lawn and eat the new grass? Or would they rather not be held? Bye, Alisa.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Twyla Vanleeuwen*. Would you like to share one of your stories with the other Busy Beavers? If you would, send me one, and I'll put it in the *Clarion*. Bye, Twyla.

Bye, everyone! Love to you all,

Aunt Betty **C**

*A new joy, a new love . . .
a new daughter.*

We give thanks to our heavenly Father for blessing us with the precious gift of another daughter

MIKAYLA CHANTELE

Born March 27, 1995

A sister for *Adrienne*

Art and Sharon Teitsma

1186 Pandora Avenue West
Winnipeg, MB R2C 3B7

With thankfulness to the Lord,
we announce the birth of

TYSON MICHAEL

Born March 18, 1995

Henry and Judy Slaa

Crystal

Darcie

Sheldon

Erin

Box 41, Grp. 606 S.S.6
Winnipeg, MB R2C 2Z3

Psalm 105:8

We thank the Lord for richly blessing our marriage with another daughter

ALYSSA JENELLE

Born on March 29, 1995

A little sister for *Kimberly*

Bill and Jean Devries

RR 1 Site 29, Comp. 19
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0