

Clarion

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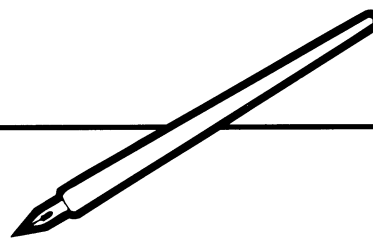


Technology Tools

Numbers

10:1-10

By G.Ph. van Popta



Another General Synod passes into Church History

A small General Synod of a small federation of churches has completed its work. Sixteen men, delegated by the two Regional Synods of the 14,205 member strong federation of Canadian Reformed Churches, have worked their way through the agenda. The churches, church members, and various committees had put about eight inches of overtures, appeals and reports on Synod's table. After two weeks of committee work and plenary sessions, another Synod is part of ecclesiastical history.

A small General Synod – sixteen men. A small federation of churches – just over 14,000 members. If we all went to an average sized NHL hockey stadium, we would fit with seats to spare. We would be *lost* in BC Place Stadium or the Toronto SkyDome.

The pages of Church History are filled with the stories of synods and councils. Can General Synod Abbotsford, 1995, be added to this Church History? Would it be presumptuous to add Synod 95 of the Canadian Reformed Churches to the annals of the history of church synods and councils? Can it be placed in the same list as the Synod of Dort? If we begin with the ecumenical councils of Nicea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, can we get to Abbotsford without torturing history? Does the Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15 lead to the General Synod of 1995?

Time will tell. The highly esteemed ecclesiastical assemblies mentioned above were concerned with maintaining the church's confession and with preserving the unity of the church. The Acts of Synod will reveal whether General Synod Abbotsford, 1995, stands in historical continuity with the ancient assemblies.

The **Jerusalem conference**, the acts of which are recorded in Acts 15, had to make a judgment on the question whether Gentiles had to be circumcised according to the custom of Moses in order to be saved. The church was about to split apart on the question. The Lord used the Jerusalem conference to make a decision which maintained the church's confession of salvation by grace alone, and so preserved the unity of the church.

In 325, Emperor Constantine called together the **Council of Nicea** to deal with the disturbance Arianism had caused in the church. Arius taught that there was a time when the Son of God did not exist and that He was a creature. The unity of the church was threatened. The church was tearing apart on this issue. The Council of Nicea declared Arius a heretic and stated that there had never been a time when the Son of God was not. He was not made. He is of the same being as the Father. The biblical confession that the Son of God was God's Son from eternity was maintained.

Once the church had settled the question of the divinity of the Son, its unity was threatened by those who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. An ecclesiastical assembly was called to settle this conflict – **the Council of Constantinople, 381**. This council maintained the church's confes-

sion of the deity of the Holy Spirit and so preserved the unity of the true church.

Then a British monk named Pelagius began disrupting the church with his teachings about man's will. He said that man had an incorruptible created capacity for freedom from sin. The **Council of Ephesus, 431**, condemned Pelagianism. The church's confession of the total depravity of man and his need for the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, as clearly taught by the Scriptures, was preserved by this council. The catholic church was preserved.

In the meantime, various ideas about the two natures of Christ were being propagated by Eutychus and Nestorius. The **Council of Chalcedon, 451**, convened to settle the problem, affirmed the church's scriptural confession of the two natures of Christ in the one person of Christ.

In the 1500s, after God had led the church out of a millennium of darkness, Church History records some great ecclesiastical gatherings in Germany and the Netherlands – Wesel (1568), Emden (1571), Dordrecht (1574 & 1578), Middelburg (1581), 's Gravenhage (1586), and Dordrecht (1618-19). These assemblies maintained the confession of the Catholic Church – salvation by grace alone, only through faith. The decrees of man were set aside and the Scriptures were embraced as the only means of creating faith. The great Synod of Dort condemned Arminianism, held on to the confession that God is sovereign in His decree of election, and in that way the Synod preserved the unity of the church.

General Synod Abbotsford, 1995, of the Canadian Reformed Churches is over. Does it stand in the same league as these councils and synods? Does it have a place in the same list? It has a place if it has stood for the same things which synods and councils past have stood for. The test will be whether it maintained the doctrine entrusted to us. Has it followed the pattern of sound words which we have heard from Christ's apostles? Has it guarded the truth entrusted to the church? If it has maintained every aspect of the church's biblical confession of the work which the Lord Jesus Christ is doing in the world, then it deserves a place on the roll of faithful synods and councils. If it has not allowed the wisdom of man to outshout the Word of God, then it may stand among the church assemblies we rightfully esteem so highly. And if it has been faithful to every aspect of the Word of God and the church's confession of that Word, then it will go down in history as an assembly which strove for the unity of the church – a striving which, at the same time, preserves the unity of the church.

A small General Synod of a small federation of churches. The Lord Jesus Christ can use it. If we have been faithful to Him and His Word, then He *will* use it for His work in the world. The Lord uses that which is small, weak and foolish in the eyes of men as a powerful weapon for His cause.

May the decisions and actions of the past General Synod be approved of by the Head of the church. May He be pleased to use Abbotsford as He used Dort . . . Middelburg . . . Chalcedon. . . .



Meditation

By G.Ph. van Popta

Read Acts 11:1-18:

“ . . . the circumcision party criticized him. . . .”

THE DEATH KNELL OF DENOMINATIONALISM

In Acts 11:1-18 we hear Peter giving a brief version of what had all happened in chapter 10. The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem had heard that Peter had eaten with Gentiles. They had a problem with that. They challenged Peter. Peter told the amazing story.

While he was in Joppa, the Lord had given him a vision. He had seen a large sheet descending full of what the Old Testament had declared to be unclean animals. The Lord had told him to eat. Peter had resisted. He had never eaten anything unclean and was not about to start now. The Lord told him that what He had cleansed Peter was not to call unclean.

Once the vision had ended, three men arrived at the house calling for Peter. Cornelius, a Roman centurion stationed in Caesarea, had sent them. Cornelius was a Gentile who worshipped the God of the Jews. An angel had appeared to him and had told him to call for Simon Peter who would proclaim to him and his household a message by which they would be saved.

When Peter began to tell them about the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and his people. Peter and those who had travelled with him were astonished. They saw that God was gathering the Gentiles into the church as well. So they baptized the Gentiles. Clearly God had granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles too. The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were stunned at the thought that God should cleanse Gentiles. They glorified God.

Until then, the Gentiles had been unclean, *“ . . . separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world”* (Eph. 2:12). But

Christ broke down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile. Christ took the two and made one. Both have access to God the Father through the one Spirit of Christ. Jews and Gentiles are both built upon one foundation. There is one temple, one house, one body, one flock, one holy nation.

The Lord Jesus had broken down the most obvious barrier that ever existed – the barrier between Jews and Gentiles. For ages the Jews alone had been the people of God. The Gentiles had been excluded. No more! Christ grafted the Gentiles into the tree (Rom. 11:17). There is one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all (Eph. 4:4-6). That there may be only one church made up of both Jews and Gentiles was well understood in Antioch, as Acts 11:19-22 shows.

The world divides. Nations are disintegrating. Quebecois discuss the merits of leaving the fold of Canadian provinces. Many Australians want to leave the British Commonwealth. Families split apart. Marriages break up.

The church must stand firm in the midst of this division and breakup. If the church splinters and fragments, it loses credibility. When it erects walls of separation, it gives up its right to speak to the world. It must stand as a living testimony to the Lord's gathering, uniting, and unifying work.

Denominationalism hinders and obstructs this work of Christ. Denominationalism says: “You can be a Paul denomination; we want to be a Peter denomination; they can be an Apollos denomination.”

Setting up walls Christ broke down long ago!

Peter's vision sounded the death knell of denominationalism. Do we hear it ring?

What's inside?

A wise uncle of mine, who in his more than eight decades of life has seen rather a lot of technological change, remarked recently that computers are a step towards heaven and a step towards hell. How true. Computer technology can be used unto good and unto evil. In this issue we have included several articles about technology and its impact on the church. Sarah Vandergugten writes about the inevitable use of computer technology at the past General Synod and in disseminating information about the proceedings. Arie Hordyk writes about the use of video technology to bring the worship service to those who are unable to attend. Aren Van Dyke writes about some negative aspects of technological progress.

This issue also contains the official Press Release of General Synod Abbotsford. Since it was released so quickly, thanks to computer technology, we decided not to publish a part two of the unofficial News Clips (see *Clarion* no. 11 for part 1).

GvP

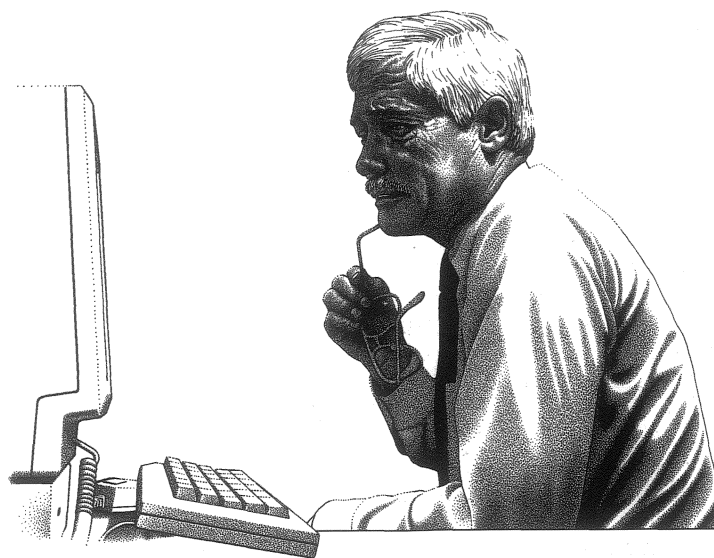
Technology and Synods

By Sarah Vandergugten

Synods are the same as ever and yet different than they used to be. We still have only sixteen men sitting around the table. We still have only eight elders, and only eight ministers. Synod in the West means a chairman from the East. We still have the eloquent speakers, and those who in a word or two can say more than another does in five sentences. Each delegate still finds his own spot at the table, and over the weeks it becomes unique to him, with particular books and previous Acts of Synods standing at attention directly in front of him. As usual, some men remain rather formal, always wearing suit and tie; others shed their jackets at even the most moderate rise in temperature.

Yet there is a difference that is rapidly becoming normal; and that is the presence of computers. The recording clerk now sits at Synod and types all motions, amendments and recommendation directly into his lap-top. Each committee room has a computer available. There is a certain format that everyone must follow. The photocopier stands patiently in the hall, waiting to spit out 16 copies of the latest revisions. For the first time, informal and unofficial daily summaries about Synod proceedings and decisions have gone out via electronic mail on the INTERNET before the official press release is published. E-mail and fax technology have allowed interested people around the globe, from Canada and the United States to Australia, Europe and South Africa, to read about proceedings which were only hours old.

This provides a sharp contrast to the synods of several decades ago. I particularly remember Synod 1965 in Edmonton. (Synod and classes were always a special time in our home. Our house on 66th Street would be bursting at the seams. Two and sometimes three or four ministers and occasionally all six from Western Canada [DeHaan, Mulder, Pieffers, Stel, VanderBoom and VanOene], would stay at our place. All



us kids [six of us] would be crowded into one bedroom to make room for our “adopted” uncles. What fun we had around the dinner table. Ministers know a lot of good jokes and stories.) Technology in those days consisted of a couple of old manual Smith-Corona and Remington type writers.

At this time, there were a lot of appeals from Winnipeg area concerning difficulties with their (former) minister. An appeal in those days consisted of a hand-written letter – no copies. These letters would sometimes arrive with the delegates. My sister Joanna (now Mrs. W. Vanderpol) and I were pressed into service since we “knew” how to type. There we sat, one at each end of the dining room table pounding energetically through layers and layers of flimsy onion skin paper that alternated with sheets of carbon paper. We did our best not to make any errors. Corrections were a laborious task. We certainly did not understand everything, since most of the material was still in Dutch. In one instance our efforts provided the Synod with a good laugh. Rev. J. Mulder was reading the letter as convener of his committee. He read from the original.

The other members of Synod were amazed at his ability to interpret. Each delegate saw only gobbledy-gook for 5 or 6 lines – lines which the amazing Rev. Mulder was apparently reading without any difficulty. What had happened, of course, was that Joanna or I had merrily typed these lines with her fingers on the wrong keys.

Now any person or church sending material to Synod is expected to provide twenty-two copies. Committees submit their reports on disk. Advances in technology increase efficiency, but also expectations. We have no desire to return to manual typewriters and carbon paper, but does our insistence on efficiency perhaps also filter over into an insistence that Synod be done in two weeks? Perhaps there is something to be said for the slower more deliberate pace, where there seemed to be enough time taken to form a consensus with which every delegate could feel at ease. After all, three weeks every three years is not too much to ask, is it?

Sarah Vandergugten is a member of Cloverdale Canadian Reformed Church and a teacher at Credo Christian High School. ©

Video in the Church

By Arie J. Hordyk

Since the number of our churches where video recordings are made of the services instead of or in addition to the audio cassette system is increasing, I would like to share some of our experiences with you.

First of all, we should not have any hang-ups over whether the Video medium can be used. We do not quit taking family pictures because Playboy and other pornography magazines abuse the wonderful invention of photography. Nor do we throw the radio out of the house because of rock music stations. You really don't need a TV set to watch a video tape. There are sets available without a tuner. They are called monitors. In addition, most VCR's (video tape recorders) now have input and output connectors that by-pass the tuner.

In Ebenezer Church in Burlington, the video system was donated to us about 4 years ago. Our audio system is manned during the services to assure that the proper microphone is switched on during singing to prevent the minister becoming the soloist! It may be a good idea to borrow a cassette to listen to this. After all, a minister likes to sing too! During the singing we switch to another microphone that picks up the congregational singing and the organ. The operator, who controls the system inside the Church, can make the required level adjustments for the speaker system and the various recorders linked up to the amplifier/mixer. In addition we have live audio via a telephone line to the local sixty-two unit Maranatha Home. The four volunteer operators are scheduled to assure that everything functions properly. This should not be left up to one man, and never automatically given to the caretaker.

Thus, when the video came in, this was not a very big deal for the operator. He was there anyway. When our new Church was built after we lost our building to fire, provisions for conduit were made for a sound and video system, as

well as for speaker and microphone locations. We have conduit running to the back wall and to one side wall to accommodate two video cameras although we use only one. It is mounted on the rear wall (opposite the pulpit) about 10 feet high, and is remote controlled by the operator. For the church services we use two positions: a wide angle one during the singing, and a telephoto for the pulpit and minister during the preaching, etc. We do not "pan" or swing the camera left or right. The only members in the pew shown during the singing are those in the first seven rows – and then only their backs. When the sermon starts, the operator does not have to "work" any more, and can listen to the sermon in a relaxed

way. Although we have provisions for a second camera, I do not really see the need of it for our church services. After all, none of the church members move around during the service. They sit down, and see the congregation and the minister only from his or her pew. And a one camera system does exactly the same. There is no need to make a "production" out of it. The key is to keep it simple, but of good quality.

Over the last four years we made some adjustments – most importantly, to the lighting of the pulpit area. I have been in churches where the pulpit location is dark and drab. The background is made of nice hardwood, and nobody wants to cover it with a coat of light paint! So, you sit there and keep



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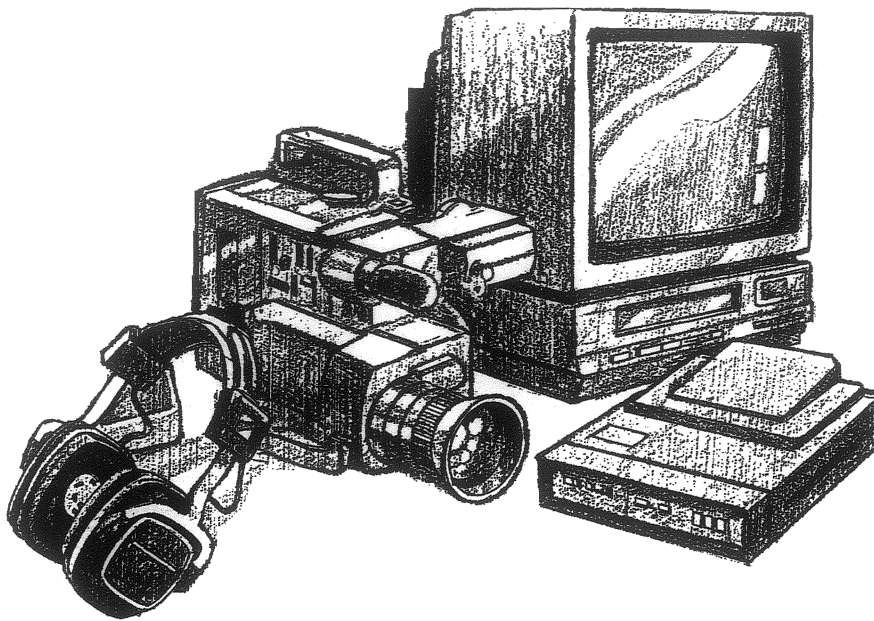
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looking at a dark hole with a small spotlight trained on the minister. But if we want to make a good video tape for our senior citizen homes, or nursing home, and most importantly for the sick and shut-ins in our own congregation, we must consider the quality aspect. In Ebenezer, where we do have a light pulpit background, we installed an extra two narrow-flood 75 watt halogen spotlights. When that was not sufficient,


we added some track with another two lights. These are now about three feet apart on a straight track. Our video recording has improved, the minister has more light on his papers, and the pulpit has become the "focal point" in the church auditorium, as it should be.

We have a brother who looks after the distribution of video and audio tapes during the first week to the sick and shut-ins, and then turns them over

to our library where they are kept on file for a minimum of six months. The video tapes are borrowed extensively for various purposes. Maranatha Homes uses our video sermons every Wednesday evening for every apartment. At least half the residents watch regularly.

A final note: All equipment needs regular service. The camera needs dusting, the lens cleaning. The recording heads must be kept clean. Don't use cheap tape from a department store. Buy brand names like Sony or Fuji. You will save your equipment in the long run. Before you re-use a recycled cassette, use a high power tape eraser. You will get a better recording on a blank tape. Bear in mind that the VHS mode is only used because of consumer acceptance. It has a very low resolution, so we need all the help we can get to enable our sick and shut-in members to feel that they are part of the congregation when they view and listen to the tape.

I hope that I have been of some help to our readers. If anyone has any questions about this subject, please contact me at 3386 Regal Rd., Burlington, ON L7N 1L8.

Arie Hordyk is a member of Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, Burlington, ON. 

Return to Babel via the Computer?

By Aren Van Dyke

One of the most beautiful and unique gifts that the Creator gave to His human handiwork was the gift of language. Adam could communicate with God, later with Eve, and to a lesser degree, with the animals. The ultimate end of this gift was the praise of God. But after the Fall also this gift was corrupted. Imagine the pain and sorrow Adam experienced, seeing corruption all around him and hearing the language gift used to curse God. In spite of this, fallen man still attained a high level of technological and social development before the Flood. (Gen. 4:20-22)

Shortly after the Flood the descendants of Noah again rebelled against their Creator. Mighty Nimrod was busy forging a world empire. God had commanded to go forth and develop the earth, but Nimrod convinced the people to settle around the city state of Babel. In that time all the earth had one common language, which enabled the people to achieve rapid advancement in all areas they set their minds to. Unfortunately sinful man's mind always seeks to rebel against God. The building of Babel's tower, as well as the desire to be powerful and self-reliant, show man's hatred against his Creator. Sinful

man, like the Devil, is able to become very powerful in his rebellious efforts.

God intervened directly at Babel, by confusing the language into many tongues. He stopped the empire dead in its tracks and mankind is scattered into many tribes, always warring and mistrusting each other. Amidst this turmoil the church could survive. It is only when men are united in evil purpose that they will ultimately turn their attention to destroying the faithful.

The idea of a world dominated by one language was, however, not forgotten. History's parade of empires all show the stubborn human ambition to

return to Babel. Under the "Pax Romana" the dream of Babel lived again under one rule, law and language. The power of the Anti-Christ surged against the power of the Gospel. Communication skills flourished. These skills were used to advance the Gospel, but also for persecuting the church. Even though Rome collapsed, its ruthless ambition still flourishes. Daniel and Revelation prophesy that a greater power than Rome shall one day unite against God's people.

Communication is still a powerful tool in the rebellion against God. In our day it is especially the computer that plays a key role in this struggle.

Our world today seems as fractured as ever. The old USSR has fallen apart.



The Middle East is still boiling. Canada is close to a split. This appearance may, however, be deceptive. We are called upon by our Lord to discern the times. Quietly a globe-girdling revolution is taking place. Multi-national corporations, scientists, governments, and ordinary citizens are communicating globally at the speed of light through the internet network. The language barrier is being overcome by computers. The UN employs computer translators that can convert simple words from one language to many others at the turn of a dial. Satellites permit voice and video communication. At the heart of this revolution sits the computer which is still only in its infancy.

Many fear the computer. Some even view it as a devil's machine. This fear does not recognize that it is a tool with marvelous potential for good. It is an example of the intricate complexity our Creator has placed in His creation.


I am happy that also in our schools the computer is becoming familiar to the covenant students.

Nevertheless, history teaches that new inventions with powerful applications are often used to rebel against God. The computer's ability to store and retrieve unlimited information make it extremely useful in design and architecture, advance mathematics, even in ditch-digging.

We are surrounded by the technology of rather simple computers – ones that slavishly obey input commands. But already the next generation of computers is being developed, referred to as Artificial Intelligence, or Fifth Generation Computers. Here we see a great potential for evil and the return of Babel.

We use the term "Artificial Intelligence" to describe machines programmed to make choices or decisions. They would emulate human behaviour by observing with sensors and use this material to arrive at informed decision and actions. Such a computer could reach decisions that no one could predict.

If man cannot create, you may ask, how can he make a machine that can think for itself? God knew the power of man. "Nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them." (Gen. 11:6) Today such nations as France, Britain, Japan and America are all engaged in developing a simulated intelligence computer. The aim is to produce a computer so simple to use that even illiterate people can activate it through voice and visual commands. Scientists are even contemplating the merger of silicon chips to brain tissue – a bionic computer.



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If successful, our world will change more dramatically than by any technology invented before. Voices are heard promoting sensor implants in babies at birth which will always locate and identify every human. A scary thought for God's people who live in the last days. The computer will classify and sort people into the most suitable job. It could become the idol of a "New Age Religion."

What does all this speculation mean for us, the children of God? Should we fear this invention and not be involved? Did our spiritual forefathers vacate the field of writing, printing and scientific research? I would urge those among us with talent in programming to strive for excellence in this field.

"There is nothing new under the sun," says the preacher in Ecclesiastes. This is also true in regard to man's inventions. Only if God allows man will he be able to copy in an inferior way the marvellous works of God. We, the children of God, are already in possession of wonderful gifts that often we do not use. The new life in Christ gives us immortality. A communication system faster than light connects us to our Creator. The miracle of regeneration and the power of prayer will unite us in perfect communication with our Lord.

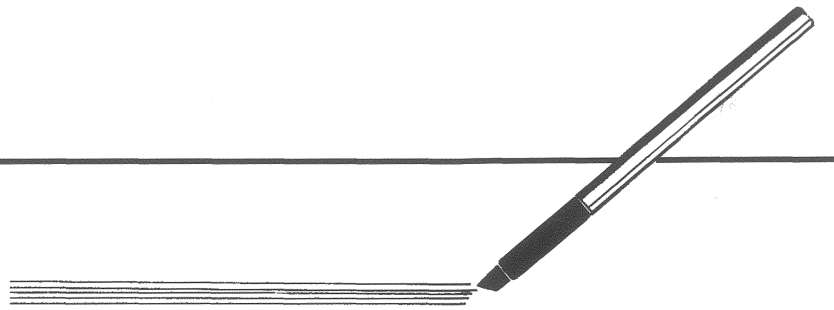
Aren Van Dyke is a member of the Canadian Reformed Church in Cloverdale, BC.

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THE HI-LITER

By C. Van Spronsen



Rev. Huizinga of Armadale (W.A.) makes us curious about his pulpit. "I wish to invite you after the service to see the new look on the pulpit from my side! Some birthday presents have improved the look. The look on the UNA SANCTA has been duplicated on the pulpit. So while the side you look at unfortunately stays the same, my side at least is dressed up. Come and have a look."

In Australia they regularly receive "apologies" at the beginning of a Consistory meeting. It appears that these are absentees with notification. Correct?

Most churches have their nominations for officebearers in Spring. The following quote from a bulletin appears to be a common refrain: "Last Monday council had a special meeting for nominating brothers deemed fit for office. The input from the congregation was minimal this time. While in previous years we had as many as 14 or 15 letters, only four letters were received. I hope this is not a sign of the times."

Rev. H. Versteeg's stay in Irian Jaya is coming to an end. The Toronto bulletin tells us that they expect the Versteegs to arrive in Toronto by the end of August. "The churches are asked to approve an increase of up to \$40 in case agreement is reached on a new mission field. This increase to become effective after a minister accepts a call while Rev. Versteeg is still with us."

Further Bulletins gives us more information on the visa predicaments: "Despite the special meetings with the Minister of religion and the Director General . . . more missionaries in Irian Jaya have received word that their visa will not be extended." After two months only one missionary will be left, Rev. D. Mak. However, a positive development in the documentation may have the result that three more missionaries from the Netherlands may be allowed in before the end of the year.

In Chatham, ON, "the consistory and the deacons will meet with their counterparts from the Free Reformed Church at Chatham." This was upon invitation of the Canadian Reformed Church at Chatham. They are to discuss what keeps them apart.

The Watford congregation may in due time have a new location since the Consistory decided to buy a property for a future building site in Kerwood. We also read that this Church has contact with the Covenant Christian Church at Wyoming.

We are reminded of the nationwide efforts of the Women's Savings Action as in many Bulletins we read that the collection time has arrived again. A great contribution is made to the College by these combined efforts of our ladies!

Also in Orangeville there are fruitful contacts with an Orthodox Reformed Church. "Council enjoyed a very fruitful and informative meeting with the Council of the Grace Orthodox Reformed church of Simcoe County. . . . From all the discussions the distinct impression appeared that we share a strong common desire to be faithful Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. The general conclusion at the close of the meeting was a sincere hope for more meetings of this nature, in which certain topics of common interest can be discussed for further orientation."

The church at Watford is host to many summer guests. In order to accommodate them other facilities are rented. "Watford United Church is rented for nine Sundays at \$135.00 per Sunday (beginning on Sunday July 2). The times will be 11:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m." We hope the visitors contribute towards the extra cost!

In Chatham a joined meeting was held of the Consistories of the Free Reformed and Canadian Reformed churches. "It became clear from this discussion that all present shared the conviction that seeking ecclesiastical unity is not an option but a divine mandate for those who claim to believe the same, as John 17 makes very clear."

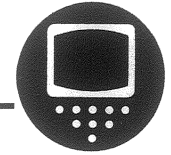
Plans for calling a second minister in Burlington West are progressing. "It was decided to strike a committee which will investigate how to split the congregation and make recommendations as to the sequence of events: whether we should call a minister first and then split, or vice versa."

The Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington came out with a special Bulletin on May 7th commemorating the 40th Anniversary of its institution of May 1, 1955. Inserted was an overview of the history written by one of the older sisters.

The matter of Bible translation is frequently on the agenda of the churches in Australia as well. In Legana, Tasmania, the consistory "proposed at the congregational meeting that we have a trial period of 6 months for the NIV. At the end of that period to have a congregational meeting to review the use of the NIV and to consider whether we need to try the NKJV." In Armadale, we read, "that the evaluation period for NKJV expires at the end of May." In Bedfordale "the consistory has agreed in principle to the final adoption of the NKJV, to allow ministers and elders to use "You" when addressing God in prayer and to sing Hymn 1A in the worship service from time to time."

Synod Abbotsford 1995 belongs to the past as it closed on Tuesday, May 22. A Press Release and the Acts will tell us what was all accomplished. May it honour the Lord and build up His Church!





General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches Abbotsford, British Columbia, May 9-23, 1995

1. Opening

A prayer service was held in the Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church building on the evening of May 8. The chairman of Synod Lincoln 1992, Rev. J. Visscher, delivered a sermon on John 11:14-16.

The next morning, Rev. M. VanderWel called the meeting to order on behalf of the convening church, the Church at Abbotsford. He requested the singing of Psalm 122, read Micah 6:1-8 and led in prayer. He welcomed the delegates and addressed them with some fitting remarks in connection with verse 8 of Micah 6.

The credentials were examined by the convening church and found to be in good order.

Present as delegates to Synod were:
From Regional Synod East:

Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. J. DeGelder, Rev. W. den Hollander, Rev. P.G. Feenstra, elder J. Boot, elder G.J. Nordeman, elder A. Ruggi and elder G. VanWoudenberg.

From Regional Synod West:

Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. E. Kampen, Rev. J. Visscher, Rev. J.D. Wielenga, elder H.A. Berends, elder L. Stam, elder T. VanPopta and elder I. Veurink.

All delegates signed the attendance list.

2. Constitution of Synod

The following officers were elected:

Chairman: Rev. J. DeGelder

Vice-chairman: Rev. R. Aasman

First Clerk: Rev. D.G.J. Agema

Second Clerk: Rev. J. Visscher

Synod was declared constituted and the executive took its place. The chairman, Rev. J. DeGelder, thanked Synod for the confidence placed in the officers. He thanked Rev. VanderWel for opening the meeting and the Church at Abbotsford for all the preparations made for Synod.

3. Time Schedule and Procedures

Synod adopted the following:

The final date for incoming material for Synod was set for Tuesday, May 9, at 6:00 p.m. PST. Time schedule for meeting of Synod: Monday to Friday 9-12, 2-5 and 7-9; Synod was not scheduled for the first Saturday in order to allow for a meeting of the Foundation for Superannuation.

Rev. M. VanderWel was seated as an advisor to Synod. Due to the large amount of material which was presented to the delegates at the opening of Synod, the rest of the first day was set aside for studying this material.

4. Agenda and Advisory Committees

The agenda was finalized and adopted. The following advisory committees were appointed:

Committee 1: Rev. J. DeGelder, Rev. E. Kampen (convenor), elder L. Stam and elder G. VanWoudenberg.

Committee 2: Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. J.D. Wielenga (convenor), elder G.J. Nordeman and elder I. Veurink.

Committee 3: Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. W. den Hollander (convenor), elder A. Ruggi and elder T. VanPopta.

Committee 4: Rev. P.G. Feenstra (convenor), Rev. J. Visscher, elder H.A. Berends and elder J. Boot.

5. Relations with Churches Abroad

a. Synod dealt with the Report of the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CRCA). It was noted with thankfulness that both the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church in Korea accepted the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. Synod decided to continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN), the Free Reformed Churches in

South Africa (FRCSA), the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) and the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK).

The CRCA was requested to convey appreciation to the FRCA for the support given to the Theological College. The CRCA was mandated to discuss with the Dutch deputies the decision of the RCN to permit elders to give the blessing in the worship service, and to question whether this has possible consequences regarding the distinction between the offices of elder and minister.

At the request of the PCK, Synod decided to mandate the CRCA to investigate the suggested exchange of professors between Hamilton and Pusan.

b. The CRCA reported that there has been an exchange of observers between our churches and the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS). Synod renewed the mandate of the CRCA to investigate the RCUS with a view to entering into a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

c. A report on the meeting of the ICRC in Zwolle gave a positive evaluation of this meeting. It was made clear that the ICRC provided an excellent forum for sharing experience and knowledge. Synod decided that the Canadian Reformed Churches should continue to participate in the ICRC. Rev. C. VanSpronsen and Dr. N.H. Gootjes were delegated to the next meeting of the ICRC in Korea, 1997.

6. Book of Praise

Synod dealt with the Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*. An introduction to the Church Order was adopted. On the recommendation of the Committee, the historical prefaces to the Canons of Dort and the Heidelberg Catechism were not adopted because they are not readily understandable to one who is not familiar with their historical context. Synod adopted provisionally a

GENERAL SYNOD 1995 DELEGATES



picture courtesy Sixten Koat

Rev. D.G.J. Agema,
Rev. R. Aasman,
Dr. J. Visscher

Photographs in the previous and
present Clarion courtesy
Renee Vanoene

revised text of the Nicene Creed, to be tested by the churches and to have comments on this revision evaluated by the Committee for the *Book of Praise*. The text is as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father; through whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and our salvation, came down from heaven and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He arose, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; who spoke through the prophets.

And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins; and we look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

7. Bible Translations

The extensive Report of the Committee on Bible Translations concluded that the New International Version should be recommended by Synod for use in the churches. The NIV was found to be a faithful and readable translation of the Scriptures. It is also noteworthy that the NIV Translation Centre welcomes comments and suggestions for improvements in future translations. Synod recommended the NIV for use within the churches, but also leaves it in the freedom of the churches if they feel compelled to use another translation. It was decided to continue the Committee on Bible Translations in order to receive comments from churches and/or members about passages in the NIV, and pass on valid concerns to the NIV Translation Centre. It is to be appreciated that the decision regarding the recommendation of the NIV was made with the greatest possible majority.

8. *l'Église Réformée du Québec*

A report prepared by the Church at Ottawa and approved by Classis Ontario North of December 9, 1994 requested Synod to respond to the request of *l'Église Réformée du Québec* (ERQ) by mandating the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad to intensify and confirm the contact initiated by the Church at Ottawa with a view to entering a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. A request was also submitted by the ERQ for Ecclesiastical Fellowship. It was decided to appoint deputies to take up contact with the ERQ to discuss the differences in confession, church polity and worship which exist between our two federations. The deputies are

also to investigate whether it is possible to have the CanRC and the ERQ become one federation. Synod recommended that the financial needs of ERQ be responded to in a positive manner by the churches.

9. *Deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity*

Synod discussed the Report of the Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity. In this report the Committee requested Synod to adopt its discussion paper on Pursuing Ecclesiastical Unity. Synod considered that since Synod 1992 did not give the Committee the mandate to produce such a discussion paper, it need not be altered (as some churches requested) nor adopted by Synod. The deputies were thanked for their work and given the following mandate:

1. to make their presence known for the purpose of information and consultation wherever necessary;
2. to make themselves available to consistories for advice on local developments;
3. to represent the churches, whenever invited, at assemblies or meetings held for the purpose of pursuing ecclesiastical unity;
4. to report on its activities to the churches and to the next General Synod.

10. *Theological College*

Synod appointed as Governors of the Theological College the following ministers:

From Eastern Canada: D.G.J. Agema, W. den Hollander, P.G. Feenstra; alternates (in order): G. Nederveen, P. Aasman and C. Bosch.

From Western Canada: R. Aasman, C. VanSpronsen, J. Visscher; alternates (in order): J. Moesker, P.K.A. DeBoer and R.A. Schouten.

The following non-ministers were appointed: M. Kampen and J. VanderWoude (nine years); H.J. Sloots (six years); K.J. Veldkamp and A. VanEgmond (three years).

Synod expressed its sincere gratitude for the fact that the work of the Theological College continued without interruption and that all instruction given is in harmony with the Word of God and in agreement with the Confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Thankfulness was also given for the work done by Prof. L. Selles who passed away on Mar. 4, 1993.

Synod recommended to appoint Prof. N.H. Gootjes as Principal for the period of September 1996 to September 1999, and to designate Prof. J. DeJong as Principal for the period of 1999 to 2002. A Tenure Policy for professors was adopted by Synod.

One matter brought by the Board of Governors to Synod regarded a possible expansion to the Theological College which will give more library facilities, and possibly other facilities as well. Synod recognized the need for expansion and therefore directed the Board to study and prepare a more detailed and definite proposal for the expansion of College facilities, and seek the possibility of financing this project without increasing the assessment to the churches.

11. Fraternal Delegates

Several fraternal delegates attended Synod for several days each: Rev. A. DeJager and Rev. H. VanVeen from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Rev. J.J. Peterson from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Rev. K. Stewart from the Free Church of Scotland. Rev. A. DeJager, Rev. J.J. Peterson and Rev. K. Stewart addressed Synod and relayed some information about matters taking place within their respective churches. Some of the more informal discussions which took place between members of Synod and the fraternal delegates proved to be enlightening and built up the bond between our churches.

12. Orthodox Presbyterian Church

In addition to the Report of the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Synod received many submissions from the churches regarding relations with the OPC. Synod expressed gratitude for the commitment of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to be faithful to the Scriptures and to de-

fend the Reformed heritage. Gratitude was also expressed for the OPC's continued warnings against the unscriptural course taken by the Christian Reformed Church in North America. It was decided to continue the Committee for Contact with the OPC with the following mandate:

a. to work towards formalizing a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules by using the statement of Synod Lincoln 1992 (Acts 1992, Art. 72, IV.A.1.e.i,ii) as a guideline to arrive at an agreement with the OPC on the matters of the fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership.

b. to communicate to the OPC the discomfort in our churches with respect to their continued relationship with the Christian Reformed Church.

c. to communicate that there is a need to continue to discuss the differences in confession and church polity in accordance with the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Rule 1).

d. to serve the churches with regular reports of the work of the Committee, and to serve General Synod 1998 with a report, to be sent to the churches at least six months prior to the beginning of Synod.

Synod also expresses the hope that in this way the protracted discussions between the CanRC and the OPC can be concluded by the establishment of a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship within the next three years so that, the Lord willing, it can be finalized by Synod 1998.

Readers will discern that this is a definite development and focusing of our relationship with the OPC.

13. Church at Denver

A number of churches and individual church members appealed the decision of Regional Synod West, 1993, which gave the concurring advice to Classis AB/MB to admit the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver into our federation. The appeals pointed out, among other things, that the decision of Regional Synod West ignored Articles 27, 28 and 29 of the Belgic Confession, and is undermined by its own considerations. Synod considered that Regional Synod did not ignore the above mentioned articles or undermine its own considerations. The appeals were denied.

14. Admissibility

The matter of admissibility in regards to a number of submissions was closely considered by Synod. It is good

to take notice of the following decision made in connection with the question of admissibility: "Several letters are from individuals and not from churches. This raises the question whether individual members have the right to address their concerns and views about a report directly to a General Synod, without first addressing them to their local consistory/council for consideration. However it would be unfair to declare the personal submissions mentioned above invalid for this Synod because past Synods have been inconsistent on this."

Synod decided to make the following change to its Guidelines: "All material for Synod should be received by the convening Church (in twenty-two copies) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable."

Synod also dealt with overtures from individual members and churches regarding matters such as changes to articles 32 and 39 of the Church Order, the appointment of a committee to investigate women's participation in the election of office bearers and a committee to take up contact with the Free Reformed Churches of North America. These were declared inadmissible on the ground that new matters should be dealt with by the minor assemblies before they are brought to a Synod (article 30 Church Order).

15. Appointments

Synod made the following appointments, in addition to the ones mentioned above (the numbers between brackets indicate the year when the committee member is to retire from the committee):

- a. Committee of Relations with Churches Abroad:
Rev. J. Visscher (1998) (Convener),
Rev. E. Kampen (2001), Rev. J. Moesker (2004), Rev. C. VanSpronsen (2001), H.A. Berends (2001), S.H. DeBoer (2001), A. Nap (1998), J. VanderStoep (1998).
- b. Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity:
East: Dr. J. DeJong (2004) (Convener),
Rev. W. den Hollander (2001),
H.T. VanderVelde (1998),
West: Rev. R. Aasman (2001), Rev. J.D. Wielenga (1998), P. VanWoudenberg (2004).
- c. Standing Committee for the Book of Praise:
Rev. G. Nederveen (1998) (convener),
Rev. B.J. Berends (2001),

- L. Kingma (2001), C. VanHalén-Faber (2004).
- d. Committee for Contact with the OPC:
Rev. J. DeGelder (convener), Rev. P.G. Feenstra, Dr. N.H. Gootjes, G.J. Nordeman, G. VanWoudenberg.
- e. Committee for Contact with the ERQ
Rev. G.H. Visscher (convener), Rev. J.L. VanPopta, John Boot, W. Oostdyk.
- f. Bible Translation
Rev. P. Aasman (2001) (convener), Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. C. VanDam, W. Smouter (1998).

- g. General Fund: the Church at Carman
- h. Archives: the Church at Burlington-East
- i. Inspection of Archives: the Church at Burlington-West
- j. Audit Finances of Synod 1995: the Church at Yarrow
- k. Address Church
Canada: the Church at Burlington East
US: the Church at Grand Rapids
- l. Committee for Printing the Acts: the clerks of Synod 1995
- m. Convening church for next Synod: Fergus (May 1998)

16. Closing

At the end of Synod, the chairman, Rev. J. DeGelder thanked the brothers for the good cooperation throughout the entire Synod.

The vice-chairman, Rev. R. Aasman, thanked the chairman for his able leadership. He requested the brothers to sing Hymn 63:1 and 2, and led in thanksgiving and prayer.

On Tuesday, May 23, at approximately 8 p.m., General Synod Abbotsford 1995 was closed.

R. Aasman 

Press Release of Classis Pacific meeting in Langley on April 18, 1995.

On behalf of the convening church, the Church at Smithers, Elder W. Selles asked the brothers to sing from Psalm 37 and read from Psalm 106. He welcomed all of the delegates and made mention of some highlights that have taken place among the churches and ministers of Classis.

The Church at Port Kells reported on the credentials, and stated that they were found to be in good order. A number of churches had instructions.

Classis was declared constituted and the following officers were appointed to act as executive:

Chairman – Rev. C.J. VanderVelde
Vice-Chairman – Rev. J. Visscher
Clerk – Rev. J. Moesker

The agenda was updated and adopted.

The Church at Vernon requested Classis Pacific to appoint a committee to investigate the matter of their contact with the Orthodox Reformed Church of Kelowna. Classis agreed with this request and decided to appoint a Committee (a) to investigate and study the request of the Church at Vernon; (b) to serve the Fall 1995 Classis with a detailed report; (c) to take up contact with the Deputies for Ecclesiastical Unity and to take into account the decisions of General Synod 1995. Classis also requested the Church at Vernon to refrain from pulpit exchange and admission to the Lord's Supper until the Committee's report has been received and acted upon by Classis Pacific.

The Church Visitors reported on their visits to the churches at Abbotsford, Aldergrove, Chilliwack, Cloverdale, Houston, Langley, Lynden, Port Kells, Smithers, Surrey (Maranatha), and Yarrow.

A brother and sister from one of the churches appealed to Classis. Classis responded to their appeal.

The Church at Smithers requested pulpit supply for one Sunday every month and this was agreed to. It also requested the approval of Classis in the matter of extending a second call to the Rev. J. Huijgen of Fergus, Ontario. Classis granted this request. The Church at Abbotsford made the same request with regard to a second call to the Rev. R. Schouten of Calgary, Alberta. This too was granted.

The Church at Surrey informed Classis Pacific about the status of the Rev. P.K. Meijer. He has moved from Brazil to the Netherlands, where he will be doing literature work for one year and then will be declared eligible for call.

The Churches at Aldergrove and Langley asked advice from the Classis about preaching exchange with the Free Reformed Church at Abbotsford. Classis advised the Churches at Aldergrove and Langley on this matter.


The Treasurer of Classis proposed to close and transfer monies from the Needy Church Fund to the General Fund.

The Church at Houston inspected the Archives and found them to be in good order.

Arrangements were made for the next Classis. The Convening Church will be the Church at Surrey and the date will be June 6 in Langley or October 3 in Smithers. The suggested officers: Rev. J. Visscher, chairman, Rev. J. Moesker, vice-chairman, Rev. H. Boersma, clerk.

The following appointments were made:

Committee for Examinations – Rev. C. VanSpronsen and Rev. J. Visscher.
The Subjects and the Examiners:
Exegesis OT – Rev. E. Kampen
Exegesis NT – Rev. M.H. VanLuik
Doctrine and Creeds –
Rev. J. Visscher

Knowledge of Holy Scripture – Rev. W.M. Wielenga
Ethics – Rev. J. Moesker
Church History – Rev. C.J. VanderVelde
Church Polity – Rev. D. Moes
Diaconology – Rev. C. VanSpronsen;
Church Visitors – Rev. C. VanSpronsen (convener), Rev. E. Kampen, Rev. D. Moes, Rev. J. Moesker, Rev. M.H. VanLuik, Rev. J. Visscher. Alternates: Rev. W.M. Wielenga and Rev. C.J. VanderVelde;
Archive Church – Church at Smithers;
Archive Inspection Church – Church at Houston;
Treasurer – Mr. A.H. Lubbers;
Audit Committee – Church at Vernon;
Committee for Financial Aid to Students – Mr. K.F. Huttema, Rev. J. Moesker, Rev. M.H. VanLuik (convener);
Committee for Needy Churches – Mr. E.C. Baartman, Mr. H.A. Berends, Mr. G. Boeve (convener);
Deputies for Preaching Arrangements – Rev. C. VanSpronsen and Rev. J. Visscher;
Committee on OCR Contact – Rev. C. VanSpronsen (convener), Rev. H. Boersma, Mr. H.J. Leyenhorst, Mr. P. VanWoudenberg, Rev. W.M. Wielenga.
Rev. J. Louwse signed the Classisical Subscription Form.
Question Period was held.
Censure ad Article 44 C.O. was not necessary.
The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved.
The Vice-Chairman thanked the Rev. C.J. VanderVelde for his leadership and requested the brothers to sing Psalm 87: 1,5 and led in prayer.
The Classis was closed.
For the Classis,
J. Visscher 

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please mail, e-mail or fax letters for publication to the editorial address.
They should be 300 words or less. Those published may be edited for style or length.

Dear Mr. Editor,

The last couple of days we have been enjoying extensive CBC reports about the the festivities in the Netherlands regarding V.E. day and the Liberation of Holland. It was touching to see those veterans, who were in that campaign as young men 50 years ago, wiping their eyes when talking about their visit to the cemeteries, or even sometimes being unable to finish the sentence. It was also touching to see the enthusiastic expression of gratitude by young and old Dutch men and women and the welcome they extended to these veterans.

Among the crowds we also saw somebody carrying a sign that read: "God gave us peace and freedom, but/and you brought it."

Today we received the *Clarion* of May 5, 1995. Alas our copy was short a couple of pages. The only thing left about the liberation of our old country by the youth of our new country (and at what price) was an ad from Premier Printing about "The Liberation" Causes and Consequences" and one from Vanderheide Publishing Co. Ltd. "Lest we forget."

I would be very much obliged to receive the missing pages as yet.

Yours sincerely,

H. Metzlar
Guelph, ON

Editor's Comment: *We left it up to our "sister" magazine, Reformed Perspective, to cover the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands – and a fine job they did in their April 1995 issue. GvP*

Dear Editor,

It is not easy to overcome my natural dislike of participating in a discussion via letters to the editor, but sometimes you cannot avoid it. In *Clarion* 44, No. 10, page 232, a letter was published from br. Terry M. Veenendaal, addressing that is called by this brother the lack of leadership in our churches. And this in contrast with the firm stand taken by Rev. VanOene.

Now it is not my intention to interfere with the discussion about the value of the leadership given in the "News

Medley." But I take issue with one statement in br. Veenendaal's letter. He wrote: "Synods and classes have reduced some of their leadership to decisionless pastoral talks. And Classis Ontario South of March 8, 9 has become an advisory body, a "take it or ignore it" verdict.

The point is that sometimes a classis is indeed an advisory body, but I protest against this disdainful qualification of Classis Ontario South of March 8, 9. The author is probably referring to the Press Release of this Classis, published in *Clarion* 44, No. 7, on page 167, but he did not read it very carefully.

It is true – a lot of advice was given at that particular classis. Now you may agree with this advice nor not; you may like it or you may dislike it, but that's beside the point. The reality is that classis did exactly what classis was supposed to do: advice was asked and advice was given. What else do we expect from our major assemblies than that they deal with the matters on the agenda in accordance with our own Church Order?

It was especially amazing to find that the above mentioned statement in a letter, that has the intention to defend and to honour the Rev. VanOene. Was it not he, who has stressed all his life that major assemblies are not to lord it over the local churches?

Let us be very careful in what we say and write. The churches are not served by throwing around suggestive, but unsubstantiated allegations.

J. DeGelder
Smithville, ON

Dear Editor,

Re: Dual Church Membership and the allowance of errors in doctrine.

Dr. Van Dam's response to questions from br. Chase (*Clarion*, May 5) evokes many more questions.

Are we going to have dual church membership in the Canadian Reformed Churches?

Is the doctrine of infant baptism, which according to Lord's Day 25, was instituted by God, not part of the Doctrine of the Word of God, as summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian Church?

Does Romans 14:1 speak about errors in doctrine, or does it speak about opinions, as to food and drink, and days of feasting?

Will we have to change the form for the profession of faith to accommodate those who want to be admitted to the Lord's Table but do not believe all that is taught here in this Christian Church?

Prof. Van Dam makes a distinction between "the O.P.C. members who condemn infant baptism" (a statement by br. Chase) and "those who cannot at that time in good conscience present their children for baptism." Is the latter statement not a euphemism for the first one? Do they not say in effect the same thing? What does "at that time" mean? Will they ever be ready to present their children for baptism? Are they not effectively denying their children this beautiful gift of the Lord? Are they not actively promoting their error?

Prof. Van Dam states that such people (those who actively condemn infant baptism) would also not want to be a member of a consistently Reformed church. Is a church where this would be allowed consistently reformed?

The consequences of Prof. Van Dam's stand, if they were ever accepted in the Canadian Reformed Churches, could be far reaching. What other errors in doctrine would be allowed, at least for a time, in the churches? Would this then not be a precedent for other errors, such as not agreeing with the Lord's Supper?

Prof. Van Dam did not come to grips with statements in br. Chase's article, such as: "Thus, to be perfectly clear, a person who condemns or neglects infant baptism is simply incapable of honestly answering the first question in the "Form for the Public Profession of Faith" in the Canadian Reformed Churches."

Yul Krikke
Burlington, ON

Dear Editor:

It was with dismay that I read the press release of Classis Ontario South of March 8-9, held at Smithville, ON. (*Clarion*, p. 167)

Previously, I had heard the good news that the Hamilton Independent Christian Reformed Church and the

Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton had ratified the agreement that their respective committees had formulated, recognizing each other as true churches and also recognizing each others preaching, sacraments and discipline. We can all agree that churches which carry the marks of a true church, are true churches. We can see here the ongoing work of Christ gathering those who are His.

With this classis we can then agree with the decision to express joy over the relationship which has grown to bring forth this confession. It is a beautiful thing when we find each other in the Lord. But now Hamilton Cornerstone wants to begin practising this relationship with Hamilton Independent and is turned down. Two churches with a common Father. Don't eat together. Don't worship together. Don't drink together. Don't preach in My house. And lastly, don't tell the world about our Saviour together. People may think that we have the same faith.

That is why I was saddened by this advice as documented by Classis. The message that comes across loud and clear was, "We are happy that you recognize each other as true churches according to Article 29, but don't make that confession a reality."

The mark of the preaching was not acknowledged. Neither was the mark of the sacraments, nor of the discipline. It would have been more honest to say to Cornerstone, "We don't believe

Hamilton Independent to be a true church with the same three marks that we have."

Peter Vandergugten
Cloverdale, BC

Dear Editor:

It is with much interest that I've followed our synodical reports and decisions regarding the OPC churches. Our family has worshiped with them each winter for the last ten years. Please allow me to shed a different light on the OPC (based on our personal experiences).

Their preaching has always been Christ-centered and in agreement with their Confessions. Every Sunday, prior to the evening sermon, the pastor reads from the Westminster Confession and explains it.

The main difference between the OPC and us is not "doctrine" or the teaching thereof; instead, it is the actual make up of the membership itself. Therefore the situations will also be different. Their membership consists of people from various backgrounds; that is why their study societies, adult Sunday school, and prayer meetings are well-attended, to give further instruction in the joys of being a "reformed Christian."

Since our denomination is made up of "seasoned reformed Christians," wouldn't it be beautiful also to be blessed with growth from outside our

reformed circles? For example, via home mission, etc.?

Mr. Bikker's article in the April 21 issue regarding admitting former OPC churches into our federation couldn't be more accurate.

May the Lord continue to bless our efforts to join with them in true ecclesiastical union, for we need each other! Their "weaknesses" could be our strengths and vice-versa.

Sincerely,

Fred VanGorkum
Chatham, ON

Dear Editor,

As a long-time reader of *Clarion* I would like to submit a public **THANK YOU**-note to Rev. VanOene for the warnings he has given in his News Medley. His voice was a clear trumpet sound when the churches tended to go off-track. Once I heard explained in a sermon that "Peace on Earth" means "Order on Earth" – order restored between God and man. Christ came, and He was not a Lord of chaos, but of order. Thus we also have rules in the church, a "Church-Order." And Rev. VanOene has been a promoter of this order. Thank you, Rev. VanOene, for warning us not to deviate from it. Sometimes your words did hurt, but that can be healthy! Enjoy your retirement from News Medley!

Yours in Christ,
W. Kanis
Smithers, BC 

Inter-League Publication Board Update

May 1995

As another Bible study season has come to a close, many societies will be in need of new study material. The I.L.P.B. would like to remind you that we have many outlines available. Please contact your local representative for information and assistance.

The I.L.P.B. consists of delegates from the Men's, Women's and Young People's Leagues, and our mandate is to publish reliable reformed Bible study material. This is accomplished mainly by translating Dutch outlines and topical books into English.

Even though a large part of the work is done by volunteers, it remains

a costly and time-consuming undertaking, and we would like to urge all societies to support us in this most important work.

It is beneficial for the churches when the members use the proper tools when studying God's Word, in order to remain faithful and to be equipped to teach the next generation.

Because of popular demand, two books have been reprinted this year. *Call Upon Me* by H. Westerink and *Christ in the Family* by W. Meyer.

The Perseverance of Job, by P. DeJong will be ready by September, 1995 and the *Gospel of Luke*, by C. Hagens

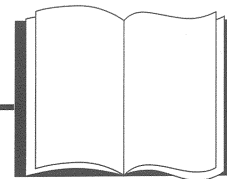
should be ready in the beginning of 1996 D.V.

Currently we are working on *Acts* by Dr. C. Van den Berg, *I and II Corinthians* by Prof. L. Selles and *Believe and Confess* by C.G. Bos, but these will not be available for some time yet.

May the Lord continue to bless our endeavours and we request that you remember this important work in your prayers.

Wishing the societies God's blessing on their studies.

for the I.L.P.B.
Jo Anne Van Middelkoop 



Recognition of other churches

By Richard Eikelboom

The views expressed in Reader's Forum are not necessarily those of the editorial committee or the publisher. Submissions should not exceed 900 words. Those published may be edited for style or length.

From his survey of "Reformed and Presbyterian Contacts in Historic Perspective" (*Clarion*, 24 Feb), Rev. Kampen draws two important conclusions: 1. The seceded churches and the churches of the union were open to dealings with Presbyterians; 2. The churches after the liberation, both in Holland and Canada, continued on in the same vein.

I suggest that Rev. Kampen comes to these conclusions because he ignores several facts.

a) The churches of the secession had no rules for correspondence. Consequently they did not distinguish between "recognized" and "unrecognized" churches when it came to attestations, calling ministers, or pulpit exchange, so that *correspondence with other churches had no impact!* When Rev. Kampen says that "the water of the North Sea was not too deep for Reformed and Presbyterians to recognize each other as the work of Jesus Christ," he should consider that this recognition was inconsequential.

b) in 1896 this approach was rejected by the synodal deputies for contact with other churches. In their report to synod they characterized this approach as "exchange of greetings, bringing polite visits, so some formalities." Deputies argued that our confessions indicate that if there is correspondence, then differences must be discussed so that we (or other churches) may get rid of elements that are not reformed. In other words the proposal was: *Make correspondence meaningful!* (Acts, Synod of Middelburg 1896, article 126.)

c) in 1948 the synod of the liberated churches dealt with an invitation to join the RES. The synodal committee reported that the *basis* of this assembly was inconsistent: "The Westminster Confession speaks differently about the covenant and the government of the Church than our Dutch confessions. . . . Because of this divergence from each other in the confessions, having a common founda-

tion is already an illusion." The following paragraph speaks of "contradictions" in the confessions, so that the confessions cannot be binding upon all the members (Acts, 1948, Appendix 19, p.120). The synod adopted the statement about contradiction in confessions in its decision to refuse to join the RES.

d) Rev. Kampen refers to the decision of the synod of Amersfoort-West which characterized the Westminster Confession as a fully Reformed confession. Although Dr. Douma agreed with this decision, he criticized the way in which this decision was taken, because this *change of direction* in the churches was made as if it were inconsequential. (*De Reformatie*, vol. 54, no. 49, 29/9/79, p.778). So according to Dr. Douma recognizing the Westminster Confession was a change in direction!

The judgment that the Westminster Standards were fully reformed was made in the context of the Dutch churches' recognition of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK). Dr. Faber wrote of the Canadian Reformed Churches' disappointment about the fact that our Dutch sister churches had not involved us in their discussions with the PCK: such discussions could have been helpful for our discussions with the OPC. (Dr. Faber referred to *Acts*, Orangeville, Article 79, sub. 5). Dr. Faber added his own criticism because "we now know that these discussions have never taken place. *Our corresponding churches in the Netherlands take these differences lightly.*" (*Clarion*, vol. 28, no. 10, 19/5/79; my emphasis, RE.) Both Dr. Douma and Dr. Faber were critical of the casual nature of Amersfoort-West's decision that the Westminster Confession is a fully Reformed confession.

e) With respect to Canada, Rev. Kampen makes a number of comments about our contact with the OPC. Although he obviously cannot say everything, he would have given a more complete and balanced picture if he had mentioned the fact that the General Syn-

od of New Westminster concluded, even against the advice of deputies (p. 66), that "divergencies in confession and in Church polity are serious enough to remain the subject of further and frank discussion" (art. 92, conclusion 7).

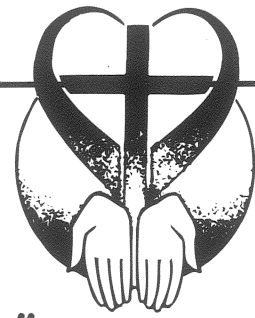
The conclusion that I draw from these facts is rather different than the conclusion which Rev. Kampen draws:

1. The contact which the seceded churches had with Presbyterian churches was superficial and should not serve as a blueprint for our contacts with Presbyterian churches.

2. After World War II the Liberated church in Canada, Australia and The Netherlands took a rather critical stance towards the Westminster Standards.

3. Where discussions with Presbyterians about the Westminster Standards have occurred in different forums, the outstanding issues have never been satisfactorily resolved. Rev. Kampen seems to be rewriting the history of our churches since the liberation so that the outstanding issues can be laid aside as irrelevant instead of resolved. (That may not be his aim, but it seems to be a logical consequence of his historical analysis!)

4. The Reformed approach, which Rev. Kampen speaks of, does not exist. Instead there are (at least) two approaches: the broader, shallower approach of the 19th Century, where correspondence meant little more than sending greetings and other formalities, and our narrow approach since World War II which basically rejected the Westminster Standards. We are certainly confronted with several alternatives. May our heavenly Father guard His church in Canada so that we may proceed in obedience, making the right choices. With that prayer in mind, our churches would be well-served by a discussion that addresses the fundamental issues of the motivation and consequences of recognition of other churches. C



Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund

Introduction to "A Day in the Life . . ."

The media report ongoing confusion and trouble in and around Rwanda. Peace and reconciliation seem a long way off. . . . So while remembering with great thankfulness the end of conflict in Europe half a century ago, let us not forget to pray for Rwanda and other areas enduring conflict and its devastating consequences today.

Aid agencies encounter numerous difficulties working in this country plagued by a crumbling infrastructure and ongoing insecurity. Yet in spite of problems, much help has been given, also through your caring. Past articles have outlined more fully the avenues your gifts took. We have been able to support food and emergency aid, the distribution of seeds and hoes and a project matching unaccompanied children (most orphaned during the atrocities last year) with foster families.

The latter effort will continue for some time to come. The seed and hoe distribution is scheduled to run until the end of August, and the food aid, given primarily in Tanzania, is now a fait accompli. Future aid, depending on the situation in Rwanda, will hopefully focus more on long-term development.

The following article describes the food aid your gifts helped fund in Tanzania late last year. When hundreds of thousands of refugees flooded that country, passing through border villages, the local people met the immediate food needs. They were generous to the point of depleting their own re-

sources and putting themselves at risk of starvation. Our aid, channelled through the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, met a very real need, enabling these people to survive until the new harvest.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A RELIEF SHIPMENT

by Ray Elgersma,
CRWRC Director

It was an old schoolhouse in Tanzania. The rooms were filled to the ceiling with bags full of white beans with the saying "A Christian Response to Hunger" inscribed on the side.

These bags were part of a Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) shipment to villages in the Karagwe region of Tanzania. CRWRC was the lead partner in this shipment, managing the distribution for CRWRC and a number of other groups. Over 6,000 bags were stacked high in the schoolhouse which was guarded against theft by local villagers. 1,800 bags had already been distributed in neighbouring villages to Tanzanians. So how did the distribution work?

When the refugees came from Rwanda across the border into Tanzania, the first to feed the refugees were the local Tanzanian farmers, who were very poor themselves. Now the food of these generous farm families was almost gone. Their bananas had been taken and their beans were finished. Seed had been planted but there was little to eat until the harvest. They were not eligible to receive relief shipments coming for refugees. But our staff saw this need and responded with a food shipment.

We visited some of these farm families in a village called Ahikishaka and asked about the sack of grain that each family had received. Without fail, the families showed us their sack of grain, which was being used sparingly to supplement what little of their own food had been left after helping the refugees. The farmers explained that the sack of grain would keep their families fed until the harvest in January. We were grateful to see that the food sent from Canada would keep families alive until they would once again be able to support themselves.

Then on our way back to a local hotel, we passed a refugee camp of 37,000. In this camp a shortage of food meant that each family was receiving a daily food ration of only 800 calories per person per day (the average person needs 2,000 calories or more a day to maintain health!). Pregnant women and children were allowed a little more. The need in the camp astounded us. As a result, staff member, Stan Yntema decided to distribute some of CRWRC's food to the camp, hoping that additional food would alleviate some of the difficulties these refugees were experiencing.

These are the realities of food distribution at the field level. Too little food. Too many people! In times like these, we often ask, "How can we be stewards of the gifts we receive from God? How can we maintain the dignity of the people we serve? How do we prevent dependency?" As I experienced on my recent trip to Africa, the Lord is helping us to find answers to these questions.

I was impressed by what I saw. Our staff showed me that they had systems in place to ensure careful monitoring of how the food was being used, security to ensure the right people received the food, and certainty that the food donated by Canadians like you was actually reaching those who needed it most. **C**

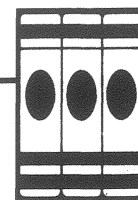
Gifts for the works of CRWRF may be directed to:

**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.

BOOK REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



Sermons of Geerhardus Vos

Grace and Glory, Geerhardus Vos. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994 (276 pages; \$ 15.95 US)

Reading this volume of sermons by Geerhardus Vos was a most edifying experience! But, before getting to some particulars about this book, let us first set the context by noting that Vos was a son of the Secession. He was born in Friesland, the Netherlands, in 1862, but when his father accepted a call to a Christian Reformed congregation in Grand Rapids, the family, including Geerhardus, crossed the ocean in 1881. After his theological education in Grand Rapids and Princeton was finished and he received a doctorate in Arabic studies from Strassburg, Vos was invited to become the first Professor of Old Testament Theology at the Free University in Amsterdam. In spite of the urging of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck to accept this post, Vos bowed to the wishes of his parents and stayed in America. He taught at the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids until 1893

when he accepted the appointment to become Professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary where he served until his retirement in 1932. When he came to Princeton, this school was the bulwark of Presbyterian orthodoxy. It is here that he wrote his famous *Biblical Theology* and his wife Catherine wrote the well-known *Child's Story Bible*. Geerhardus Vos died in 1949. Among those who studied under Dr. Vos were John Murray and Cornelius Van Til.

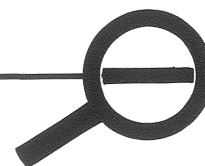
The sermons that comprise *Grace and Glory* were preached in the chapel at Princeton Theological Seminary for faculty and students. Vos' sermons are not superficial but mine deeply the gold of Scripture. Although not all are equally easy to follow, they all richly repay careful study. Vos typically sets his text in the broad context of Scripture and fully integrates exegetical, doctrinal, and other aspects into one unified sermon. Most of the sermons are on passages of Scripture that are familiar, such as Hebrews 12:1-3 ("Running the Race") or Luke 19:10 ("Seeking and Saving the Lost"); other sermons deal with less fa-

miliar texts such as Hosea 14:8 ("The Wonderful Tree"). It should be stressed though that even when Vos deals with a text that is "familiar" the riches of God's revelation that he draws out are both most instructive and comforting. This is a volume to be read, reflected on, and savoured. One will marvel anew at God's sovereignty, holiness, and unfathomable love in Christ.

Besides its great value as expositions of the Word of God, this collection of sermons is also noteworthy because of its historic interest. Besides the six sermons that originally constituted the first edition of *Grace and Glory* in 1922, an additional nine sermons, as well as an exposition of Ephesians 2:4-5, translated from the Dutch, have been included. This additional material was discovered in manuscript form in the Heritage Hall Archive of Calvin Theological Seminary by James T. Dennison, the Librarian of Westminster Theological Seminary in California and appears here in book form for the first time. Sinclair B. Ferguson has written a useful introduction. C

PRESS REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



Roman Colosseum Financed with Temple Treasures

After over nineteen hundred years, the famous Roman colosseum still rises proudly, be it in ruins. This huge stone amphitheatre, the place where many Christians were martyred for the entertainment of the Roman mobs, was built between 72-80 AD. Emperor Vespasian used 12,000 Jewish slaves for its construction. They had been brought to

Rome by his son Titus who had quelled the Jewish rebellion by attacking and laying waste the city of Jerusalem in the year 70 AD.

It now appears that not only Jewish slave labour was involved in the building of the colosseum, but also the treasures from their temple to finance this project. What follows is taken and

freely translated from the March 1995 newsletter of "Ex oriente Lux", a Dutch society for the study of the ancient middle east.

The treasures of the temple of Jerusalem which had been destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD paid for the cost of building the colosseum which was inaugurated

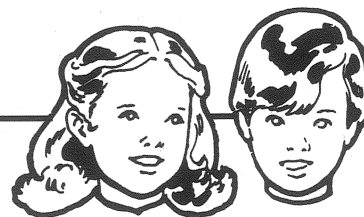
ten years later. This is the conclusion that the classical scholar Géza Alföldy has come to on the basis of studying the texts on the walls of the colosseum last year. A large block of grey marble which in all likelihood originally came from the arch above the gate on the inside of the arena where it would have been visible to the 70,000 spectators contains an inscription announcing that the colosseum was restored in the year 444 by order of the prefect of Rome, senator Rufius Lampadius. Below this inscription are the remnants of an older text which had not been cut into the stone but had been fastened on it. Letters of important Roman inscriptions were often cast or cut in gold or bronze and then secured to the marble, with pins, for example. The metal has long disappeared, but the holes of the pins

are still visible and so Alföldy was able to reconstruct the following text. IMP(ERATOR) CAES(AR) T(ITUS) VESPASIANUS AUG(USTUS) AMPHITHEATRUM NOVUM EX MANUBIS FIERI IUSSIT, or "Caesar Titus Vespasianus has ordered this new amphitheatre to be made with the proceeds of the spoils of war." It seems certain that the "spoils of war" refer to the temple at Jerusalem. The historian Flavius Josephus mentions in his eyewitness account of the Jewish war that when Titus entered the Holy of Holies, "the eye was blinded by the heaped up precious metals." Presumably the temple also contained objects from the First Temple which had been destroyed in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar. Nothing of all these treasures which are so important for the Jewish people has ever been found

again. On the contrary, the plundering of the temple ushered in the diaspora for the Jews. When reflecting on this, who cannot but be moved? Clearly God's judgment of the nation which had rejected the Christ was far-reaching (cf., e.g., Matt. 23:29-24:2). Descendants of Abraham were forced to build a monstrous pagan entertainment centre in Rome, and to make matters worse the temple treasures were used to finance the enterprise. With the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians in the days of Zedekiah, God had seen to it that the treasures of the temple were for a part safeguarded and eventually returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:7-11; cf. vv. 3-6). But the destruction of everything relating to the Second Temple was complete. The coming of Christ had rendered the temple and also all its treasures obsolete and thus dispensable. C

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

Soon you will all be done school for the year – maybe even when you read this. Did you have a good school year? I hope you learned a lot. Not just about things, other people, places, and how to do things; but also about how you can be nice to others in your class, and how you can help your family. Most of all I hope you learned more about God.

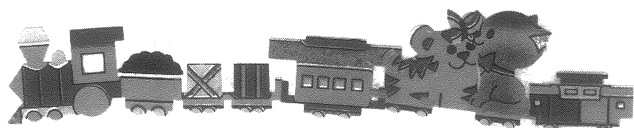
How He takes care of His people; how He cares for *you!* Wherever you are, whatever you do, the LORD is there.

If you go to a Christian school, then you have heard how the LORD is always near to His people. And they must obey Him and do what He says in His Word, the Bible.

Do you know the Ten Commandments the minister reads every Sunday morning? In Psalm 119, the poet talks about these commandments. God has given them to His people to help them live the way He wants them to.

He thanks the LORD for giving the laws, and at the end he says, "seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments." Ps. 119:176.

The LORD will look after everyone who lives in His ways. Isn't that a wonderful thing to know? Wherever we are, whatever we do during our holidays, the LORD will be near.



Quiz Time!

KINGS

Match each king with the proper statement about him.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Built an altar, asking that a plague end | a. Jeroboam, 1 Kings 13:4 |
| 2. Carried Judah and Jerusalem into exile | b. Ahaziah, 2 Kings 1:2 |
| 3. Built the Temple | c. Solomon, 2 Chron. 7:11 |
| 4. Reigned three months | d. Darius, Ezra 6:1,8 |
| 5. Had fifteen years added to his life | e. David, 2 Samuel 24:25 |
| 6. His hand "dried up" | f. Hezekiah, 2 Kings 20:5-6 |
| 7. Made a covenant before the LORD | g. Josiah, 2 Chronicles 34:31 |
| 8. Had youngest children of Bethlehem slain | h. Saul, 1 Samuel 18:10-11 |
| 9. Fell through his upper chamber | i. Nebuchadnezzar, 1 Chron. 6:15 |
| 10. Gave decree to rebuild Temple | j. Jehoiachin, 2 Kings 24:8 |
| 11. Threw a javelin at David | k. Herod, Matthew 2:16 |

SOLVE THE BIBLE CODE

by Busy Beaver *Margriet Snip*

A ♡	G 🍄	M ~~~~~	S ★	Y 📺
B X	H 🍂	N ≡	T ?	Z 🍷
C +	I 🍂	O ∞	U !	
D -	J 📺	P —	V :	
E 🍄	K ...	Q ▲	W !!!	
F *	L W	R ○	X	

+ ∞ ~~~~~ 🍄 X M 🍄 ★ ★ ? 🍂 🍄 W ∞ ○ -

♡ W M 📺 ∞ ! ★ 🍄 ○ : ♡ ≡ ? ★ ∞ *

? 🍂 🍄 W ∞ ○ - !

(Answer at the end of the column!)

TWO PUZZLES

from Busy Beaver *Erin Buitenwerf*

Go through the letters P-E-T-E-R over and over to find your way through the maze. Begin and end at the letters with the lines underneath and travel across or down.

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P E E P E E R
E T R T P P T
P E R P E T E
P E E T P P R
E P T P E E T
T P E T P R E
    
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FOUR SQUARE WORD SEARCH

Find these four-letter words. Each is in a square like the one circled.

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WILD  B Q R S A R O M P T U
FAST  W I F A L D A W Z A B
SONG  D L T S N O G L K C D
ROAD  P L R I D Y E U C E M
HERO  S O C H E V O B U N I
EVER  G N L O R E O S S H N
BEAT  O B E A I T R P P I A
ATOM  A T A I M E E E D E P
GLUE  M C S A D V A Y R A D
TREE  U N S W L K I D S R L
    
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ITEM
BOSS
SHIP



BRAIN-BENDERS

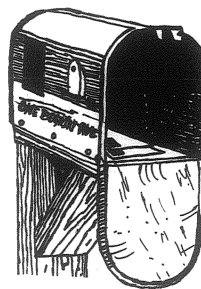
from Busy Beaver *Tamara VanLeeuwen*

1. What kind of fish do you find in a bird cage?
 2. What kind of nightmare do you call it when animals attack you?
 3. How many buckets of water are in the sea?
- (Answers at the end)

WE HAVE A MYSTERY BUSY BEAVER.

He or she sent in this picture and a Code Puzzle. If it's you, why don't you write and tell me your name?

A frog sitting on a lily pad.



FROM THE MAILBOX

Hi, *Tamara VanLeeuwen*. It was good to hear from you again. Thanks for the riddles. So you like to write stories. If you would like, you could send one to me, to put in the column. Have a good vacation, Tamara. Bye.

Hello, *Jacqueline Post*. So you would like to have a penpal. Well, you can write to someone who wanted a penpal, and had his or her name printed in this column, (like Katherine Wiersema). Write her a letter and ask her if she wants to be penpals with you. All the best! Bye Jacqueline.

Hello, *Jacque Selles*. Does your dad teach you? What do you like about living in Smithers? Thanks for sending the puzzle. Bye!

Answers to Bible Code: LORD. COME BLESS THE LORD ALL YOU SERVANTS OF THE

Answers to the Brain-Benders:

1. Perch, 2. Bitemare, 3. One! If it is big enough.
Bye for now! Love to you all,
Aunt Betty