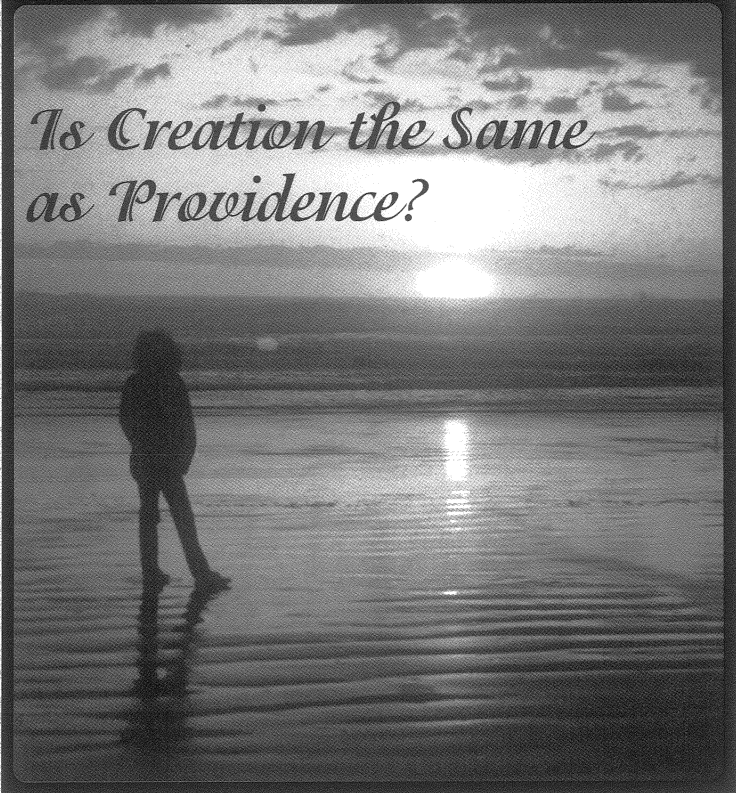




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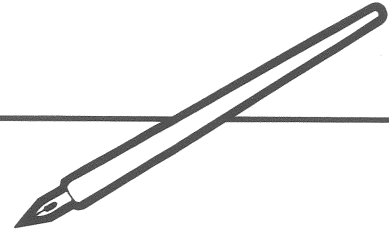
*Is Creation the Same
as Providence?*

Numbers

10:1-10

EDITORIAL

By J. Geertsema



Response to “The rest of the story”

Br. DeHaan’s negative response in the previous issue of *Clarion* to the article of Dr. Douma contains this positive aspect that it presents us with a number of facts and also gives us a different weighing of what happened in the history of and after the Liberation – different from the critical views which Dr. Douma describes. For instance, I agree with the picture Br. DeHaan gives of what happened in Groningen around the Rev. A. van der Ziel. However, this negative response of Br. DeHaan with his “many objections” needs a reply.

The first one of Br. DeHaan’s many objections is stated in his second paragraph. Here Dr. Douma writes that “for many it became unpleasant to remain ‘liberated’.” In contrast with this view, Br. DeHaan adds, in the third paragraph, that Rev. B.A. Bos and others “were turned off by the **faithfulness** of the church members who would not go back with him under the synodocratic yoke.” However, for a good reader of Dr. Douma’s article it is clear that he himself was not one of those who found it “unpleasant to remain ‘liberated’.” On the contrary, he fully disagreed and still disagrees with those who went back and wanted to lead others back with them to the synodical Reformed churches. Dr. Douma stayed because he wanted to remain faithful to his public profession of faith in a truly Reformed church and to the confession of the Reformed churches.

In the following paragraphs, Br. DeHaan describes what happened around the so-called “Open Letter.” He mentions pronouncements and decisions of a number of synods of our sister churches in connection with this letter. As I said, I can appreciate that Br. DeHaan has provided these data, showing with them what was at stake in the struggle in our sister churches in the years around 1967. It is clear that the basic issue was the matter of remaining faithful to the Reformed confession and Church Order as the churches had adopted them.

However, Dr. Douma shows again very clearly in his article that he still today agrees with the necessity of this struggle in 1966 and following years. This is why he himself also did not go along with those outside but stayed inside the federation. He wanted to remain Reformed. Dr. Douma shows (p. 350, 2nd column, p. 351, 3rd column) that he finds teachings and actions which are in conflict with the confession and the Subscription Form “unacceptable.” Reformed churches cannot allow room for such things. He makes clear that he still stands fully behind his rejection of the “Open Letter” of 1966 and the ideas and actions of the Rev. A. van der Ziel.¹ Dr. Douma himself wrote the report on this issue for the 1969 General Synod of Hoogeveen.

Agreement on the basic points leaves room for disagreement on other points. Quite a few people stepped outside the federation in the late sixties, not because they wanted freedom from abiding by the confessions and the Church Order, but because they disagreed with certain decisions and actions of the churches in the federation. Douma says that he understands this now even better than in the sixties. For that reason he is thankful for the decision of the latest synod to appoint a committee for contact with these churches.

Because of the things going on in the Netherlands Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Br. DeHaan finds this decision wrong. But can we not leave a synod the freedom to make such a decision? It all depends on what will be discussed. If our sister churches make it clear from the beginning that further speaking toward unity can only take place on the basis of an honest adherence to the Reformed confessions and Church Order, there will be gain. In the discussions it will become clear whether the Netherlands Reformed churches (and our sister churches) want this basis or not.

We have to ask what Dr. Douma wanted to do in his article that was translated for our magazine. He wrote it for *Bij de Tijd* (Up to Date). This magazine reaches in particular those members of our sister churches who have a somewhat critical attitude toward the Liberation and/or certain “liberated” ideas. Dr. Douma wrote a careful article in which he deals with such criticisms, as they already came up in the first years after the Liberation and later in the sixties, and now in the nineties. With cautious care, Douma maintains over against this criticism the right of the Liberation as well as of the rejection of the “Open Letter” and what it implied. By doing this cautiously, Dr. Douma tries to hold on to his brothers with their criticism and, at the same time, break their criticism down and lead them to a different and more positive thinking about the Liberation and the struggle in the sixties. In other words, in this article is the hand of a brother who reaches out and tries to correct and build up his brothers in the hope that he and they can continue together on the Reformed path (which is the path of the Liberation) of faithful adherence to Scripture and confession, while holding on to the Reformed Church Order.

How does Br. DeHaan react? He reacts in an entirely negative way. He has only “many objections.” He does not notice any of the positive aspects. The result is that he gives a totally negative impression of what his brother, Dr. Douma, writes. It also makes him write down a hard judgment on Br. Hordijk: he “has done a bad service to the readers of *Clarion*.” What can be the result of this only negative, and obviously unjustified approach? The result can be that Br. Hordijk jumps into this fight with Br. DeHaan. Brother opposes brother. In other words, such an incorrect, negative approach and attitude, doing injustice, alienates brothers and, when continued, can split the church. In such cases, it is then not the Word of God that brings separation, but it is an unjustified, entirely negative approach and method that breaks the church apart.

In the second last paragraph of his letter, the concern of Br. DeHaan switches from the Netherlands to Canada. Here he expresses his worry regarding the situation in our own churches. He is “very concerned about the situation in our federation which more and more becomes ‘liberated’ from the Reformed confessions and Church Order.”

Also what Br. DeHaan writes here and the manner and method in which he wants to make us all know his concern show the same approach. He comes with a very bold

statement holding a very grave accusation. Something that "professors and ministers" in our federation are doing is presented as proof that our (whole) federation "more and more becomes 'liberated' from the Reformed confessions and Church Order." This is very serious. Dr. Douma calls such a "becoming 'liberated' from the Reformed confessions and Church Order" "unacceptable in a reformed minister." (p. 351, 3rd. column). If we take this accusation with what it implies serious, it means that we have to do here with things worthy of suspension and, if there is no repentance, of deposition.

For the basis for the accusation of this "unacceptable" (!) "more and more 'liberating' ourselves from the Reformed confession and Church Order" is the following: "it seems that it becomes easier also among us for professors and ministers to speak an 'edifying word' in independent churches without first resolving divergencies."

Ground for declaring this wrong is that "Rev. VanOene, in *With Common Consent*, writes about Art. 15 of the Church Order: 'Ministers are not allowed at all to conduct services in another 'denomination' whether with or without permission of a consistory or board within that 'denomination'."

Is this sufficient proof for Br. DeHaan's accusation? I think it is not. In the first place, in the eighties (if I am not mistaken 1985) a minister of the Langley church received the request to help an independent Christian Reformed congregation in California for a number of months with administering Word and sacraments to them. This minister did not want to do this (and correctly so) on his own authority. He went to his consistory. The consistory was willing to give him permission only for a short period, and not without the concurring advice of the sister churches in the classis. The classis considered the matter and concurred in its advice with the decision of the consistory. Also this classis saw the situation as very special. A congregation that declared to have the same basis as we have had separated itself from a denomination that it considered unfaithful to God's Word and the Reformed confessions. This congregation was without the care of a minister and asked for the help of a Reformed minister. Thus, this classis decided that in this special case an exception could be made. I am still convinced that this decision and advice was correct and that neither the Church Order nor the confession forbid the making of such an exception.

What Br. DeHaan refers to ("Professors and ministers speak an 'edifying word' in independent churches without first resolving divergencies")

is, in the view of those professors and ministers, and of the consistories of whom they asked permission, of the same exceptional and provisional nature and not forbidden by confession or Church Order.

The exceptional character is maintained in the fact that they do not want to preach officially (that is, in their office of minister) in a church with which no relationship is established. For they are called to the ministry in their own local church while they can also preach in the sister churches with which this local church forms a federation. They are aware of it that they cannot, in their office as minister, preach in churches with which there is no official (recognized) relation.


The exceptional character is evident further in the fact that this permission deals with separated, independent churches which stand on the basis of the Reformed confessions. We seek unity with them as our calling according to our confession. Moreover, such a speaking of an edifying word is done only for the time being, provisionally. It is meant to make clear to the independent churches that we do seek ecclesiastical unity with them.

There is obviously a difference of opinion on this point. However, Br. DeHaan has no solid ground for accusing (churches in) our federation that al-

low their ministers, in an exceptional situation, to speak such an edifying word in an independent congregation and professors and ministers who do so, that they are "more and more 'liberating' (themselves) from the Reformed confessions and Church Order" which means, per consequence, that they are committing an act that is worthy of suspension and deposition.

Also here the method of Br. DeHaan is negative, unjustified, and has the potential of driving brothers apart and of fracturing the church. I do not say that Br. DeHaan wants to do this. I believe that he, just as Dr. Douma in the Netherlands and churches and ministers in our federation, seeks the gathering, the defense, and preservation of the church. But exactly because we deal here with the church as the work of our Lord, we have to watch our manner and method of building just as much as the material with which we build. We all so easily go wrong in spite of good intentions. These lines are written with the intention to help each other in building the church of the Lord not only with material but also in a manner and with a method that accord with the Word of the Lord.

¹Compare, for instance, *Het vuur blijft branden*, by P. Jongeling, J.P. de Vries, prof. Dr. J. Douma, Kampen: Kok, 1979, p. 113. **C**



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MEDITATION

By G.Ph. van Popta

Read Acts 17:1-10 and
1 Thessalonians 2:17 - 3:13

"The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night. . . ."

SATAN TRIED BUT HE FAILED

Leaving Philippi, Paul and Silas traveled west 160 kilometres to the capital city of Macedonia. Thessalonica was not only the administrative centre for the province; with Corinth, it was one of the two most important commercial trade centres in Greece. It was a harbour city and it had major trade routes passing through it. In the time of Paul, 200,000 people lived in Thessalonica.

For its loyalty to Rome in the campaign against Brutus and Cassius, it had gained the status of a free city. It was allowed to conduct its own affairs with little interference from Rome. Such freedom was a greatly coveted commodity.

To this city came the gospel preachers. There was a synagogue in Thessalonica. Three Sabbaths in a row, Paul went to synagogue and argued with the Jews, explaining and proving from the scriptures that the Messiah had to suffer, die, and rise from the dead. Then he told them that the Jesus he proclaimed was the Messiah spoken of in the Old Testament.

Paul persuaded some. They joined Paul and Silas. So did many of the believing Greeks and some wealthy women. The Jews became jealous of Paul's and Silas' success. They enlisted the local rabble rousers and got a riot going. They attacked the house of a man called Jason. That's where Paul and Silas were staying. They could not find the men they were looking for. Instead, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city authori-

ties. They charged Jason with having sheltered the men who had turned the world upside down and who had said that there was another king above Caesar – a king called Jesus.

These charges were correct. The gospel turns the world upside down. Just when man thinks he's got the whole world in his hands, the gospel turns the world upside down. And they proclaimed Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords. The citizens and the authorities of Thessalonica were disturbed when they heard this. If news of this got back to Rome, the city would be in trouble. Caesar would not be happy. They would run the risk of losing their status of a free city. The authorities made Jason post a bond and then let him go. They held Jason responsible for making sure that Paul and Silas cleared out.

Because of the danger to life and limb, Paul and Silas fled. They had only spent three Sabbaths in Thessalonica. Only three weeks – not much time for the gospel to take hold!

Soon after his flight from Thessalonica, Paul wrote them a letter (1 Thessalonians). He wrote about how he had been torn away from them. He was concerned about them. He had wanted to go back to them again and again, but Satan had stopped him (1 Thessalonians 2:18). Satan had prevented Paul from being able to return to Thessalonica to encourage the believers among whom Paul had laboured for only three weeks. He was scared that, perhaps,

somehow the tempter had tempted them and that his work in their midst had been in vain (1 Thessalonians 3:5).

Paul had sent Timothy to check things out. Timothy had brought back a good report. The Thessalonians were remaining firm in the faith! God was preserving them! They were standing fast in the Lord!

Satan tried to destroy the work Paul had done, but he failed. Satan thought that the people among whom Paul had worked for only three weeks were easy pickings. Somehow, Satan had been able to prevent Paul's return to build up the church. And the tempter worked hard to lead the young church astray. But he failed. He failed because the Lord who had ransomed the Thessalonians body and soul with His precious blood had freed them from all the power of the devil and had made them His own possession.

Today the tempter still tries, as hard as ever. He tries to make you fall away from the Lord. Hold on to your Lord. Hold on to the One who owns you body and soul, who has bought you not with silver or gold, but with His precious blood. Hold on to the One who will never let you go.

Satan tried but he failed. The tempter continues to try, but he will continue to fail. For the Son of God has come and has destroyed the works of Satan. Hold on to the gospel. Hold on to the Lord. The tempter will fail. **C**

What's Inside

Scripture and confession speak of a clear distinction between God's works of creation and providence. Lately, some academics have blurred this distinction and said that God brought about "creation" by way of the same forces present today in "providence." Not only is this teaching against scripture; it is very tendentious at best. The purpose is to promote the idea that God used evolutionary processes to bring about "creation." Dr. N.H. Gootjes examines this matter under the light of the Holy Scripture and, as it used to say in the old Church Order, article 18, ". . . vindicate[s] the sound doctrine against heresies and errors."

In the lead editorial, Prof. Geertsema responds to something written in the last issue.

The Rev. VanOene reminds us of the original *and yet current* purpose of the Superannuation fund.

The Rev. J.L. Van Popta sheds some light on the history of the use of English pronouns from the KJV to the contemporary translations.

GvP

Is Creation the Same as Providence? (Part 1¹)

By N.H. Gootjes

Introduction

We confess with the church of all ages that God is the Creator of heaven and earth. This confession elicits our admiration and trust in God. The more we know about His creation work the more we admire and trust the Creator. It boggles the mind to think that God made everything on earth, as well as everything that can be seen and perceived outside the earth. The more we contemplate that God, as with His hand, upholds and governs heaven and earth and all creatures, the more we are filled with awe. In these articles we want to investigate only one aspect of this glorious work of God. The question concerns specifically the relation between creation and providence.

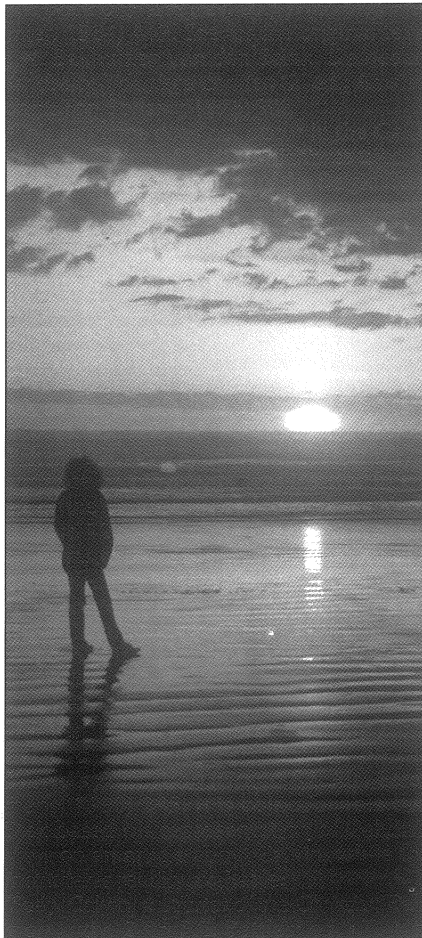
Traditionally, creation and providence have been seen as two distinct works of God. Creation is the unique work of God whereby at the beginning of history He made everything – the heaven and the earth, the dry land and the sea, sun, moon and stars, the plants and all kinds of animals, and finally man. Creation was followed by a different work of God, namely, providence. Under God's providence no new things came into being; rather, God upholds and governs the created things from day to day.

Today, however, not everyone agrees that creation and providence are to be kept apart. Under the weight which the grand scheme of evolution has accumulated in the past century, creation and providence are now often identified. H.J. Van Till describes the advantages of the evolutionary model in the following way:

To accept the concept of evolutionary processes does not require the introduction of phenomena that go beyond the ordinary pattern of material behavior. Rather, the concept of evolution represents an extension of our present experience

of continuity into the indefinite past (and future?). Furthermore, the concept of evolution removes the arbitrary imposition of discontinuity and incoherence that is demanded by the notion of instantaneous inception.²

The unusual term "instantaneous inception" must be understood as what used to be called "creation." This is rejected by the writer as an arbitrary way of explaining the world. Much to be preferred is the evolutionary explanation of the world based on the patterns that can be observed today.



This identification of creation and providence has two results. The first can be seen in the past. It is said that God created the world by means of processes which we still today observe in the world. The processes which still take place today, however, belong to God's providence. In other words, then, the creation of the past took place by way of providence. But there is another result with respect to the future. It is quite possible that today's processes will lead to new types of creatures. In other words, providence leads to new creations. There is no real distinction between creation and providence.

We are, therefore, called to reconsider the traditional distinction between creation and providence. Can this distinction be maintained? Why was this distinction made? What are the arguments brought in against it? The most important question of all is whether Scripture itself makes a distinction between creation and providence.

The Belgic Confession

First of all, the distinction between creation and providence is firmly established in the Reformed confessions. There are many confessions, of course, but a look in the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism will suffice.

The Belgic Confession discusses creation in art. 12 and providence in art. 13. Particularly art. 13 clearly states the difference between the two:

We believe that this good God, after He had created all things, did not abandon them or give them up to fortune or chance, but that according to His holy will He so rules and governs them that in this world nothing happens without His direction.³

Two differences are mentioned here between creation and providence. There is, first of all, a temporal difference. First God created, and providence comes "after" creation. The second difference concerns the way God acts. Providence

is described as different from creating; it is regarded as ruling and governing things previously created.

At first glance art. 12 is not so clear. This article combines creation and providence:

We believe that the Father through the Word, that is, through His Son, has created out of nothing heaven and earth and all creatures, when it seemed good to Him, and that He has given to every creature its being, shape and form, and to each its specific task and function to serve its Creator. He also continues to sustain and govern them according to His eternal providence and by His infinite power in order to serve man, to the end that man may serve his God.

Does this tying together of creation and providence not imply that art. 12 identifies the two?

It is, indeed, remarkable that this article on creation contains a sentence concerning providence.⁴ On closer inspection, however, art. 12 makes the same distinction as art. 13. Creation is mentioned as an act of God in the past – “When it seemed good to Him.” Providence, however, is presented as God’s continuous work: “He continues to sustain and govern them.” Moreover, when Art. 12 says, “He also continues . . .,” it indicates that providence is a different work, in addition to creation.⁵ There can be no doubt that the Belgic Confession teaches a distinction between creation and providence.

Calvin

Calvin may be considered the theological grandfather of the Belgic Confession and a champion of the Reformed approach. An attempt has been made to show that Calvin did not distinguish sharply between creation and providence. J.H. Stek, using a summarizing article by the famous B.B. Warfield, states:

But the main thrust of his summary of Calvin suggests that the Reformer’s distinction between creation and providence was significantly less sharp than that of the later theologians noted above.⁶

Is it true that Calvin is much different from the Belgic Confession?

In his most comprehensive work, the *Institutes*, the same distinction between creation and providence can be found. This appears first of all in the fact that Calvin discusses creation in book 1, chapter 14, and providence two

LORD’S DAY 9

26. Q. What do you believe when you say:
*I believe in God the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?*

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them,¹ and who still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence² is, for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father.³

In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul,⁴ and will also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this life of sorrow.⁵

He is able to do so as almighty God,⁶ and willing also as a faithful Father.⁷

¹ Gen. 1 and 2; Ex. 20:11; Job 38 and 39; Ps. 33:6; Is. 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15.

² Ps. 104:27-30; Matt. 6:30; 10:29; Eph. 1:11.

³ John 1:12, 13; Rom. 8:15, 16; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:5.

⁴ Ps. 55:22; Matt. 6:25, 26; Luke 12:22-31.

⁵ Rom. 8:28.

⁶ Gen. 18:14; Rom. 8:31-39.

⁷ Matt. 6:32, 33; 7:9-11.

chapters later. In his discussion of creation Calvin warns against speculation. We have to stick to what God revealed about creation. One of his examples is the creation in six days. He writes:

With the same intent Moses relates that God’s work was completed not in a moment but in six days. For by this circumstance we are drawn away from all fictions to the one God who distributed His work into six days that we might not find it irksome to occupy our whole life in contemplating it.⁷

Calvin is obviously of the opinion that we have to take the creation story of Genesis 1 as an accurate description of what happened.

In the chapter regarding providence, Calvin clearly distinguishes between creation and providence. He writes:

Moreover, to make God a momentary Creator, who once for all finished his work would be cold and barren, and we must differ from profane men especially in that we see the presence of divine power shining as much in the continuing state of the universe as in its inception.⁸

Calvin is obviously reacting against a kind of Deistic view that God having

created the world left it alone. For Calvin it is not even enough to recognize a continuous divine energy which upholds everything, God himself must be recognized as the Upholder: “But faith ought to penetrate more deeply, namely, having found Him Creator of all, forthwith to conclude He is also everlasting Governor and Preserver.” This is supported by a quotation from Psalm 33: “Thus David, having briefly stated that the universe was created by God, immediately descends to the uninterrupted course of His providence.”⁹ Providence, although closely connected with creation, is for Calvin distinguished from this.

The differences are the same as indicated in the Belgic Confession. There is a difference in time: creation is momentary, while providence is continuing. In addition, there is a difference in action: creating is not the same as governing and preserving.¹⁰

Heidelberg Catechism

The Heidelberg Catechism speaks about creation and providence in its explanation of the Apostles’ Creed. At first glance, the questions give the impression that L.D. 9 discusses creation and

L.D. 10 providence. That is not completely correct, however. The answer of L.D. 9 already deals with providence (“and who still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence”) and L.D. 10 comes back to creation (q. 28: “What does it benefit to us to know that God has created all things. . .”). L.D. 9 and 10 could be taken as a unity, in which it is emphasized that I can fully rely on God the Father, since He is the God of creation and providence. The Heidelberg Catechism does not allow us to separate God’s daily providence from his creation work.

The fact that creation and providence are taken together does not mean, however, that the two are not distinguished. Creation is presented as something in the past (a. 26: “who out of nothing created heaven and earth;” q. 28: “that God has created all things”) but providence is presented as something that continues today (a. 26: “who still upholds and governs them;” a. 27: “He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures;” q. 28: “and still upholds them by His providence”).¹¹ Even more importantly, God’s actions are described in different words. Creating is not the same as upholding and governing.

Ursinus

Z. Ursinus, the defender of the Heidelberg Catechism, mentions as one of the characteristics of God’s creation work, that He “created the world, not suddenly, nor in a moment of time, but in six days.” There is a clear end to God’s work of creation, as Ursinus indicates in his translation of Gen. 2:2: “On the seventh day, God ended all His works.”¹²

When Ursinus discusses providence he emphasizes the fact that creation and providence belong together as works of the same God. He contrasts God’s work for the world with the building of a ship. The builder transfers the care of a ship to its navigator as soon as it is completed. The Creator, on the other hand, does not leave the world alone but continues to take care of it. At the same time, Ursinus distinguishes the two: “We must hold this as a most certain truth, that as nothing could ever have existed except by the creating power of God, so it is impossible that any thing should exist, even for a moment, without His government and preservation.”¹³

We may conclude that the distinction between creation, as an act of God establishing the world in the beginning, and government, as a continuous act of

God upholding and leading the world from that moment onward, is firmly entrenched in the Reformed Confessions.

¹¹In three instalments I hope to publish the full text of a speech given for the “Burlington Reformed Study Centre” on November 25, 1993.

¹²See H.J. Van Till, *The Fourth Day: What the Bible and the Heavens Are Telling Us about the Creation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 252f. Van Till thinks that this only makes our admiration of God the Creator greater: “Would it not require far greater creativity to design and direct the dynamic processes that constitute cosmic evolution than simply to mandate the existence of the end product alone?”, see p. 255. Van Till explained some ideas of his book in a more accessible way in two articles in *The Banner* Sept. 28 and Oct. 5, 1987. The conclusion shows the same identification of creation and providence: “Personally, I am convinced that when we have rightly learned to see God at work as *Creator* in a winter snowstorm, we will then be prepared to see God as work as *Creator* in the multibillion-year formative history of the universe, which is His handiwork, His creation.” (emphasis added). A very critical reaction to Van Till’s book was published by L. DeKoster, in *Christian Renewal* 5, 13ff (March 23, 1987ff).

¹³I follow the linguistically updated version in use by the Canadian Reformed Churches, see *Book of Praise* (rev. ed.; Winnipeg, Premier, 1984) 449. See for the original texts J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *De nederlandse belijdenisgeschriften* (2. ed.; Amsterdam: Ton Bolland, 1976) 90f.

¹⁴This sentence does not occur in the Gallican Confession of 1559, which was used as an example in the making of the Belgic Confession. The Gallican Confession clearly separates creation from providence. Creation, with special mention of the angels, is discussed in art. 7, and providence, with special emphasis on its relation with evil, is discussed in art. 8; see for the text of this confession J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *De Nederlandse belijdenisgeschriften*, 88, 90, or Ph. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (6. ed.; rev. D.S. Schaff; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990) vol. 3, 363f. The reason why a sentence on providence was inserted in art. 12 of the Belgic Confession appears to be that art. 12 speaks about the function of the creatures to serve the Creator. That led to a brief reference to providence.

¹⁵The French has for “also”: “even now” (“maintenant mesmes”) see J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *De Nederlandse Belijdenisgeschriften*, 12.

¹⁶See J.H. Stek, “What says the Scripture” in H.J. Van Till ed. *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World’s Formation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 245. It is objectionable that Stek based his representation of Calvin’s view on an article about Calvin, while the *Institutes* is readily available.

¹⁷See J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* I, xiv, 2 (tr. F.L. Battles; ed. J.T. Mc-

Neill; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) vol. 1, 161. When Calvin rejects that the world was created in one moment, he goes against a very influential teaching of Augustine, a teacher he greatly admired and even quoted with approval just before this passage. The fact that Augustine considered creation as a momentary action of God may well be the reason why the creation in six days cannot be found in the reformed confessions of the 16th Century. Calvin’s opposition to Augustine’s view was accepted in Reformed theology, as can be seen in Z. Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* (tr. G.W. Williard; repr. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, n.d.) 145; *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* X,3 (ed. H. Bavinck; Leiden: Donner, 1881) 83 and F. Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (tr. G.M. Giger; ed. J.T. Dennison, jr.; Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992), 444ff. When this view was established in the 16th C., the six days were confessed in the 17th C. It was included in the Irish Articles of 1615, art. 18, and in the Westminster Confession, which stated in ch. 4,1 that God created the world “in the space of six days” (using the same expression as the Irish Articles and the *Synopsis*: “sex dierum spatio”). This expression can therefore be taken as a rejection of the spiritualizing exegesis of Augustine.

¹⁸J. Calvin, *Institutes* I, xvi, 1.

¹⁹J. Calvin, op.cit; Calvin quotes v. 6 for creation and for providence he refers to v. 13f.

²⁰See also Calvin’s commentary on Genesis, e.g. his comments on Gen. 1:31: “Once more, at the conclusion of the creation, Moses declares that God approved of everything which He had made,” and on Gen. 2:1 “Moses summarily repeats that in six days the fabric of the heaven and the earth was completed. . . God, therefore, did not cease from the work of the creation of the world till He had completed it in every part, so that nothing should be wanting to its suitable abundance,” J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis* (tr. J. King; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 100, 103, emphasis added.

²¹See *Book of Praise*, 483f. The difference between creation as concluded action in the past and providence as continued action in the present is underlined by the repeated use of “still” in connection with providence. The original German text uses “still” (“noch”) in a. 26 and a. 27, but it is not repeated in q. 28. The English text follows the early Dutch translation which has “still” in the three instances, see J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, *De Nederlandse Belijdenisgeschriften*, 164ff. Whatever text is used, there is no doubt that the Heidelberg Catechism makes a clear distinction between creation and providence.

²²*The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 145. Again, the point that is discussed is not whether creation took six days or longer, but whether it took six days or was completed in a moment; see above, footnote 7.

²³*The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus*, 147.

Pension Fund or Piggybank?

By W.W.J. VanOene

Some time ago the suggestion was made in a "Letter to the Editor" to "expand the Superannuation Fund . . . to cover a retired minister's shelter allowance. As it stands, smaller congregations cannot call an older minister, knowing that in the future they may not have the funds to cover this extra expense. On the other hand, older ministers may appreciate a call to a smaller congregation, in order to have a lighter workload. An increase in the fund would be advantageous for all parties."

This is a sympathetic suggestion and, if it were possible within the framework of Reformed church polity, much could be said in favour of it.

I am afraid, however, that the character and function of the Fund is being misunderstood. When it comes to the point, the Superannuation Fund has *nothing at all* to do with what a retired minister receives from the church whose minister he is and remains.

There still appears to be a serious misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of the fund. This misunderstanding is found not only with individual members but even with consistories.

In evidence of this I quote from what Rev. J. Boersma wrote in *Church News* of October 8, 1995:

It was decided to send a letter to the Foundation expressing as our opinion that all ministers should be entitled to some form of a "pension," whether they retire or leave the ministry in some other way.

If the position of Aldergrove's consistory is related correctly in the above, I am wondering what sort of church polity the brothers there are adhering to. A *Reformed* church polity it certainly is *not*.

In the first place, retired ministers did not "leave the ministry." They are and they remain the minister of the church they served last. Article 13 of our Church Order is sufficiently clear, also in this respect.

Another thing that is clear is that a retired minister does not receive "some

form of a pension," but that the church he served last provides honourably for his support.

No pension

A pension, I have always been taught, is actually nothing else than "deferred wages." The employer withholds part of the wages and the employee contributes some of his wages, so that the latter can live off his previous earnings once he is no longer working after his 60th or 65th year.

Ministers, however, do not receive wages. The churches simply provide for their needs. See Article 10 of the Church Order. They are under the obligation to do so for as long as a minister is their minister. As soon as he ceases being the minister of church A., this church has no longer any obligation towards him either for the present or for the future.

When I left the church at New Westminster to serve the church at Fergus, every obligation of New Westminster towards me or my family ceased.

This is the reason why two churches agree precisely at which moment (e.g. January 5, 1996, at 12:01 a.m.) a minister who has accepted a call is no longer the responsibility of the church he leaves and becomes the sole responsibility of the church whose call he accepted.

And when I retired from active service, only the church at Fergus remained responsible for "providing honourably" for us. Neither the churches I served in the Netherlands nor the one at New Westminster (now: Surrey) has anything to do with providing for our needs.

As soon as one ceases being a minister of a certain church all and any obligation towards him ceases for this church. There are no "wages" that were deferred. To which he now is supposed to have a right, and which have to be paid out later on. Ministers are not ministers of the *federation*, but only of one church in particular. (See Article 6 of the Church Order.)

The set-up of the Foundation

When the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches was formed, no one worried about retirement or whether it would be possible for the churches to call another minister in addition to providing for the needs of a retired minister. Retirement age was still far off for those who came to serve the churches in Canada, although disability as a result of illness or accident was always possible. The Lord, however, did not put the trust of all of us to shame.

Yet it was realized that measures should be taken to provide for the future.

From the outset, however, two things were made clear.

There was in the first place this, that any organization or form of cooperation should *not* become a pseudo-federation. Even if all churches should cooperate in providing for the future, this should strictly remain a business partnership.

If churches could not afford the yearly contribution deemed necessary, the way to enable them to be a member of the partnership and to fulfil their obligations would definitely not be to treat them as a needy church and to lower the amount demanded of them. If they could not afford the "premium," they should ask the church federation to come to their aid as a needy church in the regular way. The Fund should not act as a pseudo-federation.

Secondly, it was stressed and maintained that the fund was *not* a "pension fund" for ministers, but a "piggybank of the churches."

Voices from early days

In 1957, a brother wrote a few articles about the care for retired minister in our churches. He disapproved of it when a church took out an insurance policy on the minister, but named itself as the beneficiary instead of the minister. "On the basis of such a policy a minister therefore has no claim whatever on the moneys that results from it



and has to be satisfied with an oral promise. This promise in fact amounts to this, that it will be the consistory as it is composed during the last active year of the minister that determines the amount of his pension."

The Rev. G. VanDooren reacted to this suggestion and showed that it was not in accordance with Reformed church polity. A minister, he wrote, does not have to be satisfied with just an "oral promise," for he has the letter of call in which this promise was made. "The consistory takes care of the support of the minister, regardless whether he still can do his work or not."

I also wrote a few articles under the heading "Pension or Piggybank of the Churches?" From these articles I quote the following:

When a church takes measures today for the "old age" of her minister, she does not do this for her minister but *for herself*. Then she takes measures in order to be able to call a second minister and to provide for his needs and those of his family besides taking care of her retired minister. . . . A minister does not have any ground at all on which to claim the moneys that a church puts together for his retirement years. He and his family have only one right:

. . . that he and his family shall be provided for honourably.

Anyone who has access to the *Canadian Reformed Magazine* of August, September, October 1957 will be able to read the whole discussion.

Still valid

The above-mentioned two basic arguments are the underlying principle of the Foundation for Superannuation.

In order to enable smaller churches fully to participate in the Fund it was decided later on to change the way in which the contributions for the Fund were calculated. Each member church had to pay a fixed amount, irrespective of its size. The rest of the contribution was to be determined by the number of communicant members.

Let us say that each church pays \$500.00 per year, and \$15.00 per communicant member. I do not know what the real figures are, but that does not matter. It is clear that a church with 50 communicant members contributes far less than one with 200 communicant members. In this way some help is extended to the smaller churches without the Foundation becoming a pseudo-federation on which aid is given to needy churches.

The amount the Fund pays to a church when its minister retires is the

same for every church. The same applies in the case of a minister's widow.

Payment to the church

Then there is another point at which there is much misunderstanding.

Many church members seem to be of the opinion that "retired ministers are paid by the Fund."

This is totally incorrect.

Active minister as well as retired ministers are provided for by the *church* whose minister they are. The consistory of this church determines every year how much will be needed to acquit themselves of their obligations towards their minister(s). The amount determined by the consistory has **nothing to do** with what the church receives from the Superannuation Fund.

The churches have saved money in the Fund and are contributing every year to the Fund, so that they themselves (and *not* the minister) can draw from it when they have to support an active minister besides their retired minister.

"Shelter Allowance?"

It will be clear that, however sympathetic the suggestion may be, the Fund cannot be "expanded to cover a retired minister's shelter allowance." The Fund has nothing to do with this whatsoever. Nor has the Fund anything to do with the support a church gives to its retired minister.

The only way in which a retired minister's income can be increased to cover either the purchase or the rental of a home is when a consistory gives such an allowance over and above or included in the retirement stipend.

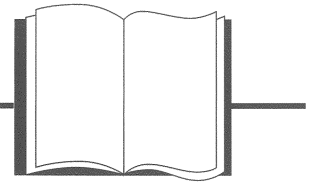
If the consistories consider such an allowance necessary and want to "cover" themselves (*not* the minister) for this financially, their only option is to increase the yearly contributions to their "piggybank," so that they can receive a larger amount when the need arises, without endangering the balance or future operation of the Fund.

It is of utmost importance that the principles underlying the Foundation not be changed, but adhered to faithfully and diligently.

For those who are not aware of these principles it is good to be told about them.

For those who are aware of them it is good to be reminded of them.

Lest a course is chosen and initiated that will lead away from the Reformed path. C



By J.L. Van Popta

The Use of "You, Your, Yours" in the Language of Prayer

The recent General Synod has followed the advice of the Committee on Bible Translations and recommended the use of the NIV in the worship services.¹ With the implementation of that recommendation likely will come a parallel change in the language of prayer. Following the language of the NIV, many will now address God with "you, your, yours" instead of "thee, thou, thy, thine."² In the past months a discussion concerning this change has appeared in the *Letters to the Editor* of this magazine.³ This contribution to the discussion is to point out that this change in the language of prayer is not due to lack of respect towards God, nor to a lack of dignity of language; rather, it is simply because of change and development of the English language.

The defense for using "thee, thou, thy, thine" is rooted in the use of the KJV of 1611.⁴ In that translation, especially when we read the Psalms, we notice that God is addressed in this way. It may sound to our ears as a *respectful form*; one properly used for the persons of the Trinity. We should note, however, that in the English of the KJV the LORD God addresses even the serpent with "thee," "thy," and "thou" in Genesis 3:15. In an other place (2 Samuel 16:7-8) we can read that Shimei, when he curses David by calling him a man of the devil [Belial], addresses David with "thou" and "thee." Yet in the following verses, when David speaks to his nephews (who want to vindicate their King and maintain his honour) he addresses them with "ye," and "you." In Genesis 9 when God speaks to Noah and his sons and makes his covenant with them he addresses them as "you" and "your." Compare this to God using "thee" in Genesis 17:2-4, when he makes his covenant with Abram.

This difference is not based on a distinction of either familiarity or honour; rather, it is a difference in number. "Thee, thou, thy, thine" in the KJV are the singular forms. They apply to God, to the devil, to an enemy, to a friend. "Ye,

you, your, yours," are the plural forms and are also used for all kinds of persons. This difference because of number is apparent, for example, in Genesis 45:17 ff. Pharaoh addresses Joseph with "thy" [i.e. singular] whereas he tells Joseph to speak to his father and brothers with "your" and "ye" and "yours" [i.e. plural]. This plural "you" and singular "thou" can also readily be seen in Psalm 82. In verse 6 we read, "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High." In verse 8 we read, "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations." In the New Testament, in Acts 5, Peter addresses Ananias with "thine" and "thou" even though he says that Satan has filled his heart. Yet Paul says to the Church in 1 Corinthians 6:19 (using the plural form), "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

It was in 1952 that the RSV [and the NASB in 1960] introduced a new distinction.⁵ In these translations "thee, thou, thy, thine" were used for the persons of the Trinity, whereas "you, your, yours" were used for all other persons, plural and *singular*. The use of "you, your, yours" in the RSV and the NASB simply followed modern English, which had lost the singular-plural distinction between "thou" and "you." The singular-plural distinction of Elizabethan English was dropped. The forms, however, were now used to indicate a *divine-human* distinction. [But see 1 Corinthians 15:55 in the RSV!] In these translations, this retention of "thee, thou, thy, thine" to make a divine-human distinction was a completely new convention not ever seen before in the nearly 600 year history of English Bible translation since Wycliffe's work of 1380.

We need not impose something first formalized in a Bible translation in 1952 as the only proper way to address God. Neither should we fight to maintain old forms and language, thinking

that they are more pious and dignified; rather, we should recognize that language goes through transformation and change. The churches of the Reformation, following Wycliffe, Hus, Luther, and Beza, have always desired to have the Bible available in the language of the people. It was the church of Rome that wanted to keep a dignified holy liturgical language [Latin] and did so till the 1960s. The RSV and the NASB are faithful translations that bridged the gap from the Elizabethan language of 1611 to the international English of the 21st Century.⁷ Though they have a legitimate place in the history of Bible translation, we need also to recognize that the gospel must be presented to the Church and in the world in the language of the day. There should be no ecclesiastical language that is separated from the life of God's people nor from the life of the people in the world.

This change to modern usage in contemporary Bible translations or in prayer language is not a matter of disrespect or dishonour to God, nor is it a "sign of the times." It is just an acknowledgment that English is a living language and that over the past 400 years it has adopted new forms. The gospel of salvation can and must be proclaimed to all peoples, in all languages, in all times. People everywhere must also be able to pray to God in their own language. We need not be overly attached to the language of 400 years ago, ascribing more dignity to it. Neither should we bind the churches to a form of English that first appeared in a printed Bible less than 50 years ago.

All this, however, does not mean that using the old forms is wrong. No one should force others to change from the old way to the more contemporary. But neither should we rigidly maintain that the only way for Reformed believers to address God is with "thee, thou, thy, and thine." Maintaining this as the only norm and to insist that others do the same would be to impose a burden that goes much beyond Scripture and confession.

¹Acts of General Synod Abbotsford, 1995, Article 72.


²This change has already be welcomed in several Canadian Reformed Churches.

³*Clarion* vol. 44.17 (p. 385-86); vol. 44.19 (p. 441).

⁴The discussion that follows refers to the KJV.

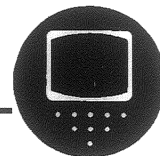
⁵F.F. Bruce. *The English Bible*. rev. ed. Oxford UP, Oxford: 1970. p. 187 ff.

⁶"Ye," having dropped from use altogether.

⁷The RSV has been replaced by the New RSV [NRSV] which, along with the 1995 edition of the NASB, no longer uses the old forms. 

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.

PRESS RELEASES



Press Release of Classis Pacific, October 3, 1995 at Smithers, BC

1. On behalf of the convening church, the Maranatha Church of Surrey, Rev. C. Van Spronsen opened the meeting. He requested all to sing Psalm 126:1, 2, read Jer. 31:1-14, and led in prayer.

2. Rev. Van Spronsen touched on some recent memorabilia. These included congratulations for the church at Abbotsford, for receiving Rev. R. Schouten as minister of the Word, and for the church at Smithers for receiving Rev. J. Huijgen as minister of the Word. Rev. W. Wielenga received and declined a call to the church at West Albany, Australia, and Rev. J. Moesker received a call to the church at Calgary. The death of Rev. G. VanDooren in Ontario was remembered.

3. The credentials were examined by the delegates of the church at Smithers. All churches were properly represented.

4. Classis was constituted with these officers: chairman, Rev. J. Visscher; vice-chairman, Rev. J. Moesker; clerk, Rev. H. Boersma.

5. The chairman read the classical form for subscription, which was duly signed by Rev. J. Huijgen.

6. The agenda was adopted.

7. An appeal from a consistory of the classical region was dealt with in closed session.

8. The church at Vernon submitted an audit report concerning the fund needy churches and the classis fund for the year 1994.

9. Question period ad. Art. 44 C.O. was held. The church at Smithers requested advice concerning keeping of the classis archives. Vernon requested advice about a church discipline matter.

10. Classis appointed the church at Vernon as convening church for next classis. Date for next classis was set for Dec. 12, 1995, with an alternative date of April 16, 1996. Place of classis will

be Langley church. Officers for next classis: chairman, Rev. J. Moesker; vice-chairman, Rev. H. Boersma; clerk, Rev. J. Louwerse.

11. The following brothers were chosen as delegates for next regional synod: Primi elder: D. Bandstra, H. Hoogstra, J. Siebenga, G. VandeBurgt; Secundi elder: H. Berends, A. Meintz, W. Meester, G. Leffers; Primi minister: Revs. J. Huijgen, E. Kampen, J. Moesker, J. Visscher; Secundi minister: Revs. C. Van Spronsen, M. VanLuik, W. Wielenga, H. Boersma.

12. Question period was held. Advice was requested and given concerning changes to the church order. Rev. Huijgen expressed appreciation for the welcome he received. Rev. Van Spronsen made it known that the committee examining the Okanagan Accord will present its report at the next classis.

13. It was noted with thankfulness that censure according to Art. 44 C.O. was not necessary.

14. The acts were adopted and the press review was approved.

15. The chairman thanked the brothers for their work as delegates, the church at Surrey for the preparation for classis and the church at Smithers for the good hospitality provided. Hymn 40:1, 2 was sung and the chairman led in closing prayer.

For Classis Pacific
J. Moesker

Press Release of Classis Ontario-South, August 23, 24 and October 11, 1995 in Attercliffe

1. On behalf of the convening church of Grand Rapids the Rev. B.R. Hofferford called the meeting to order. He read 1 Corinthians 1, requested to sing Ps. 146:1, 2, 3 and opened with prayer. The delegates, as well as the visitors, were welcomed and some items of memorabilia were mentioned.

2. The credentials were examined and found to be in good order, with

all the churches duly represented. The church at Blue Bell could send only one delegate.

3. Classis was then constituted and the following officers were appointed: Rev. B.R. Hofferford, chairman, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, clerk and Rev. J. DeGelder, vice-chairman.

4. The agenda was adopted, after the addition of some letters and appeals pertaining to the request of the church at Rockway re: Art. 11 C.O.

5. Br. R. Eikelboom was then examined in view of his request to receive permission to speak an edifying word. The relevant documents were scrutinized and found to be in good order. The candidate presented his sermon proposal on Joshua 24:14,15, which was discussed in closed session and judged to be sufficient to continue the examination. Rev. Stam examined in doctrine. After discussion in closed session classis decided to grant Br. Eikelboom permission to speak an edifying word in the churches for the period of one year, according to the adopted regulations.

6. Classis entered into closed session to have a first discussion about the request of the Rockway Canadian Reformed Church to receive the approbation of classis as required in Art. 11 C.O.

7. Classis was reopened after lunch with singing of Ps. 104:1. Roll call was held, showing that all brothers were present.

8. Br. J. VanVliet was then examined in view of his request to receive permission to speak an edifying word. The relevant documents were scrutinized and found to be in good order. The candidate presented his sermon proposal on Genesis 32:22-31, which was discussed in closed session and judged to be sufficient for the continuation of the examination.

- Rev. Stam examined in doctrine. After discussion in closed session classis decided to grant Br. Van-Vliet permission to speak an edifying word in the churches for the period of one year according to the adopted regulations.
9. The question period ad Art. 44 C.O. was held, and it could be noted with thankfulness, that in all the churches the ministry of the office-bearers is continued, the decisions of the major assemblies are honoured, and that none of the churches needed the advice of classis.
 10. Upon recommendation of a committee appointed by the previous classis, classis appointed:
 - a. as church visitors for the 1995-1996 the Rev. Cl. Stam, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. J. DeGelder and Rev. G. Wieske.
 - b. the following examiners:
Deputies ad Examina:
Rev. J. DeGelder and Rev. Cl. Stam; alternate: Rev. J. Ludwig
Exegesis Old Testament:
Rev. D.G.J. Agema; alternate: Rev. G. Wieske
Exegesis New Testament:
Rev. B.R. Hofford; alternate: Rev. J. VanWoudenberg
Doctrine of Scripture:
Rev. Cl. Stam; alternate: Rev. K.A. Kok
Church History: Rev. K.A. Kok
Knowledge of Holy Scripture:
Rev. T. Hoogsteen
Ethics: Rev. J. Ludwig
Diaconology: Rev. G. Wieske
Church Polity:
Rev. H.M. VanEssen
 11. In closed session a report was read of a church visitation in the church at Lincoln.
 12. Classis was then adjourned to give the delegates time to acquaint themselves with the letters and appeals that were not distributed before.
 13. After supper classis was re-opened. The stanzas 1 and 2 of Psalm 40 were sung, and roll call was held with everyone present. The deputies of Regional Synod East, Rev. W. DenHollander and Rev. P.G. Feenstra were welcomed.
 14. Classis continued to meet during the evening in closed session to deal with the request of the Church at Rockway.
 15. The chairman requested to sing Psalm 145:1, Rev. H.M. VanEssen led in thanksgiving and the chairman adjourned the meeting until the next morning.
 16. On Thursday, August 24, 1995 at 9:30 a.m. the chairman re-opened the meeting. He read Isaiah 40, requested to sing Psalm 62:1, 4 and led in prayer.
Roll call was held and showed that all delegates were present again.
 17. Classis continued to meet in closed session.
 18. After a break for lunch Psalm 139:1,10 was sung and roll call was held.
Classis continued to meet in closed session.
In closed setting Classis decided to appoint a committee of investigation with the mandate to talk to the council, the minister and the congregation, in order to facilitate a responsible decision regarding Rockway's request.
Classis decided to reconvene D.V. on October 11, 1995, to deal with the report of this committee.
 19. In closed session Classis dealt with some of the appeals.
 20. Appointments:
 - the committee of investigation regarding the request of Rockway: J. DeGelder, B.R. Hofford, H.F. Stoffels, A. Koster and J. VanWoudenberg.
 - convening church for the next classis: the church at Hamilton.
 - date and place for the next classis: Wednesday, December 13, 1995 in Hamilton.
 - suggested officers for the next classis: Rev. T. Hoogsteen, chairman, Rev. B.R. Hofford, clerk, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, vice-chairman.
 - delegates to Regional Synod East, to be held on November 15, 1995.
ministers:
Rev. D.G.J. Agema
J. DeGelder
B.R. Hofford
G. Wieske
elders:
Br. H. DeVries
R. Jager
A. Koster
G. VanWoudenberg
alternates in this order:
ministers:
Rev. Cl. Stam
J. Ludwig
K.A. Kok
J. VanWoudenberg
elders:
Br. G. Bartels
J. Koster
J. Hutten
J. VandenBos
 21. Censure according to Art. 34 C.O. was not needed.
 22. The Acts of the August 23 and 24 meetings were read and adopted and the Press Release of these meetings was read and approved.
 23. The chairman requested to sing Psalm 99:1, 2, 3, led in thanksgiving, and adjourned Classis till October 11, 1995.
 24. On Wednesday, October 11, 1995, Classis was re-opened. The chairman read 1 Thessalonians 2-2:12 and led in prayer. He then requested all present to sing Psalm 67:1, 2 and welcomed the delegates, as well as the Deputies of Regional Synod.
 25. Roll call was held. The same brothers were present as in the previous meetings of this classis, except Rev. Kok, who could not attend because of illness. Consequently there was not delegation from the Church at Blue Bell. Upon request of the church at Chatham Rev. G. Wieske, who was not delegated in August because of holidays, was seated as an advisor.
 26. Classis entered into closed session to deal with the report of the committee of investigation with regard to the request of the Rockway Canadian Reformed Church to receive the approbation of classis as required in Art. 11 C.O.
 27. After lunch the chairman re-opened the meeting. Psalm 101:1, 2, 3 was sung and roll call was held. Classis continued to meet in closed session.
 28. In closed session the following motion was tabled, duly seconded, discussed and adopted:
Having received the request from the consistory with the deacons from the church at Rockway to approbate their decision to dismiss Rev. Hoogsteen according to Art. 11 C.O., and upon receiving the report from the committee ad hoc. Classis observes the following:
 1. The large majority of the congregation of Rockway has problems understanding the preaching of Rev. Hoogsteen. This problem has been there from the beginning (see committee-report, p. 8, B.2 and p. 9, 2nd par.).
 2. Rev. Hoogsteen does not see himself as the cause, but blames the polarization as being rooted in a reformed versus evangelical division, which he believes his preaching exposes. But he fails to prove this

allegation (see committee-report p. 9, point 4).

3. Rev. Hoogsteen is unable to feed the congregation with his sermons (see committee-report p. 8, B.2.).
4. The situation in Rockway cannot be resolved with such a perspective as displayed by Rev. Hoogsteen (committee report, p. 10, C. recommendation #1).

In conclusion:

Keeping in mind the well-being of the congregation of Christ in Rockway, Classis judges that Rev. Hoogsteen is unfit and incapable of serving the congregation fruitfully and to its edification, and therefore classis approbates the decision of the consistory with the deacons

of the church in Rockway in accordance with Art. 11 C.O.

29. The deputies of Regional Synod East declared that they could not give the concurring advice to this decision, as required in Art. 11 C.O. Classis then decided to present this matter for judgment to the upcoming Regional Synod East to be held on November 15, 1995.
30. Classis decided to answer the appeals by sending to all the appellant the decision of classis, together with the report of the committee ad hoc. The Appellants will also be informed that the deputies of Regional Synod could not give the necessary concurring advice, and that therefore the matter has to be dealt with at Regional Synod East.

31. In the personal question period some advise was given to the delegates of the church at Rockway, as to how to proceed from here.

32. The chairman judged that also in this meeting censure according to Art. 34 C.O. was not necessary.

33. The Acts of the October 11 meeting were read and adopted, and the Press Release of this meeting was read and approved.

34. After Psalm 122:1, 3 was sung, the vice-chairman Rev. DeGelder led in thanksgiving prayer and the chairman Rev. Hofford closed classis.

For Classis Ontario-South
August 23, 24 and
October 11, 1995

Rev. J. DeGelder, vice-chairman e.t. ©

Guido De Brès High School Commencement

by Petra Douma

At Guido's first commencement, eighteen years ago, who could have imagined that on October 13 of this year, 72 young men and women would form the largest graduating class ever? With expected future growth, later commencement ceremonies will likely be even larger, but according to valedictorian John Ludwig, this class was special.

The uniqueness of each student was emphasized by a series of slides presented during the dinner in the Guido gymnasium. Many students were surprised to see their faces affixed to appropriately stylish or ridiculous models in magazine advertisements. Certain combinations proved particularly amusing as the physique of several male students was significantly improved!

But the individuality didn't stop there; a wide range of characters and personalities was reflected in the graduates' attire. And let's admit it, the most interesting part of a high school graduation, for much of the audience, is not the main address or even the valedictorian's speech, but rather what everyone is wearing! The most popular colour for the girls appeared to be black, with dresses ranging from ankle-grazing to mid-thigh. Hair deserves a special mention of its own. Upswept styles with cascading rivers of ringlets was in vogue for

the females while the colour purple made a surprising appearance in the male section.

The formal ceremony, which took place at the Bethel Gospel Tabernacle, was opened by Mr. H. VanderHoeven, Chairman of the Board, with Scripture reading and a few words of welcome. Mr. J. G. VanDooren then advised his former students to "Go and grow!" He challenged the graduands to look back to the past and remember not only the misdemeanors they had gotten away with, but also the things that they had gained. Under God's care, during their high school career, they had grown in maturity, relationships, and faith.

After a few selections sung by the Guido Girls' Choir, the diplomas were presented. Finally, it was official. These former Guido students became Guido alumni.

The main address was given by Rev. Agema, who advised the graduates that in order to face the uncertainty of the future with confidence they must look back to their baptisms. With the knowledge that we are ingrafted into the body of Christ and that to God belongs the kingdom, the power and the glory, we have the basis on which to do our daily work. We can look back to the past and recognize the hand of our Father

in our lives and we can look ahead to the final day when we lay before Him all that we have done.

John Ludwig began his valedictory address by graciously complimenting Sandy Hoeksema on her solo rendition of "Walk On" (Carroll). He then proceeded to inform the audience of the various quirks and idiosyncrasies of his class which had so endeared them to the staff at Guido de Brès. His speech proved that going to school is much more than writing essays, conjugating verbs, and calculating formulas. The class of '95 will remember favourite teachers, school plays and practical jokes for years to come but more importantly they will remember, with thankfulness, that their parents believed strongly in the need for Reformed education.

Although the clothing and hairstyles of this year's graduates were quite different from those of Guido's first graduates, the two classes have this in common: they had the privilege of attending an academic institution whose entire curriculum is based on the perspective of the Word of God. This brings us back to the Principal's reference to the theme of the 1994/95 yearbook: It's inside that counts!"

Ontario Secondary School Diplomas

John Aikema
Andries Alkema
Edie Alkema
Adrian Bartels
Dan Bartels
Philip Bartels
Shanna Bartels
Annette Bax
Laura Blokker
Brenda Bos
Darryl Bos
Kim Bos
Evan Bosscher
Mary-Lynn DeBoer
Mieke DeGelder
Ryan DeGelder
Shawn DeJager
Jodi DeJonge

Bill Dekker
Stephanie Diek
Jeff Donker
Kelly Douma
Sharon Driegen
Andrew Dykstra
Geraldine Feenstra
Henk Gootjes
Matt Harsevoort
Mike Harsevoort
Trish Heemsker
Sandy Hoeksema
Kerri Hofsink
John Homan
Esther Hordyk
Dan Huizing
Dan Hulleman
Dave Jagt

Patricia Jansema
Trix Jongmsa
Ben Knegt
Kristen Kottelenberg
Christopher Linde
Sheryl Linde
John Ludwig
Rachel Ludwig
Stephen Mans
Alice Plug
Mark Postma
Vicki Roodzant
Diana Scholtens
Elisabeth Scholtens
Harry Scholtens
Jennifer Scholtens
Tracy Scholtens
Angelina Schutten

Cathy Sijkema
Wendy Smeding
Janice Spithoff
Jacqueline Stegenga
Julie Stieva
Koos Torenvliet
Scott VanDam
Jolene VanderVelde
Suzanne VanderVelde
Tony VanEs
Helena VanEs
John VanIperen
Richard VanPykeren
Julie VanSydenborgh
James Wanders
Adrian Zeldenrust
Julia Zeldenrust
James Zietsma

AWARDS

The Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff Student-of-the-Year Award

Sandy Hoeksema

The Guido de Brès Alumni Scholarships

Mieke DeGelder Henk Gootjes
Alicea Plug Vicki Roodzant
Janice Spithoff

The George DeBoer Memorial Scholarship

Mary-Lynn DeBoer

The Harry Aasman Memorial Scholarship

Kristen Kottelenberg

The Edward M. Stam Memorial Scholarship

Stephanie Diek

The Premier Agendas Ltd. Scholarships

Edie Alkema Geraldine Feenstra

The Guido de Brès High School Participation Awards

Jodi DeJonge Kerri Hofsink
Alice Plug Mark Postma
Harry Scholtens Tracy Scholtens
Janice Spithoff

The Governor-General's Bronze Medal

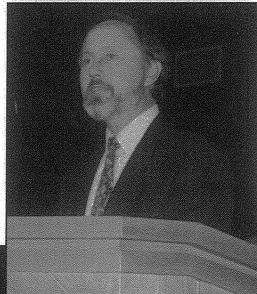
Kristen Kottelenberg

Dinner Guests.

Prior to the formal ceremony, grads Adrian Bartels, Kerri Hofsink, and Trish Heemsker enjoy dinner, prepared, as tradition has it, by the mothers of next year's graduating students.



Words of Welcome. Availing himself of the last formal opportunity to address the Class of '95, the school Principal, Mr. J.G. Van Dooren, speaks words of welcome to the guests, and encouragement to the departing students. Growth in spiritual maturity, he reminded them, is a gift of God.



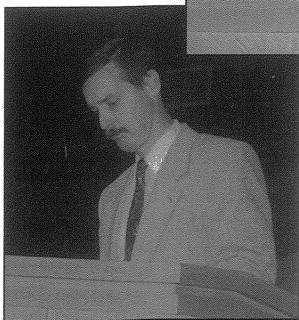
Farewell Melody.

Sandy Hoeksema, recipient of the Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff Student-of-the Year Award, entertains audience and classmates with a song of farewell. Appropriately titled "Walk On," it reminded her friends that they need never walk alone.



Guest Speaker.

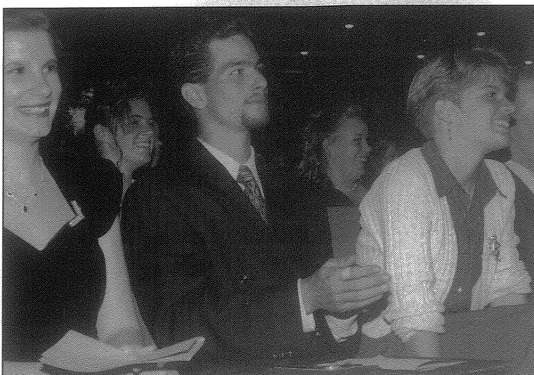
With the last lines of the Lord's Prayer as his focus, the Reverend Agema urges the graduates to be ever mindful that to God belongs the kingdom, the power and the glory.



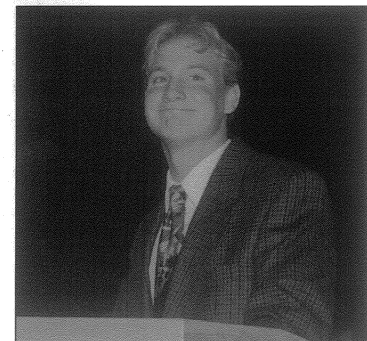
Congratulations! Kristen Kottelenberg accepts the Harry Aasman Memorial Scholarship from Board Chairman, Mr. J. VanderHoeven, for her exceptional achievement in science and mathematics. Kristen was also awarded the Governor-General's Bronze medal for the highest academic average in her final year.



Yes, We Remember! Graduates smile their applause as they reminisce with valedictorian, John Ludwig. Graduation night is a joyful affair, and yet it is tinged with sadness and regret because it marks the end of a four-year era.



Good-bye, and God Bless. The final speaker of the evening, valedictorian John Ludwig, reminds his fellow grads of the best of times they experienced together, and wishes friends and teachers an affectionate farewell.



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

Do you have a baby brother or sister? Do you remember watching him or her being baptized?

Or maybe you are the youngest. Your probably remember seeing a baby in the church being baptized.

Do you know why our babies are baptized? It is because the Lord Jesus tells us to in the Bible.

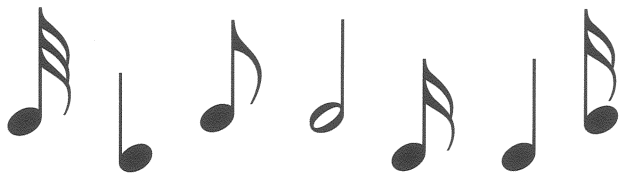
When a baby is baptized, God promises to take care of the baby, and says to the baby, "You are mine."

The Lord Jesus promises to forgive all his sins. And the Holy Spirit promises to live in his heart and help him live as Jesus wants him to. Your were baptized, too.

So all these promises are yours! Isn't that wonderful?

And all that God wants us to do for Him is this. Believe in Him, and live as He tells us.

He has done so much for us. Let's show our thankfulness to Him!



BIRTHDAY TIME!

Happy Birthday to all Busy Beavers celebrating a December birthday. May the LORD bless and keep you in the coming year!

Alicia Janssens	5	David DeBoer	16
Russell Werkman	7	Aileen Feenstra	20
Harold Sikkema	7	Heidi Kingma	22
Tarissa Koopmans	7	Hilmer Jagersma	23
Jolena DeHaas	8	Justin Broekema	24
Sarah Hovius	9	Monica Bartels	26
Heather Grit	9	Charlene Veldman	27
Ashley Vanderploeg	9	Miranda Hulst	29
Sarah Bouwman	12	Tamara Dejong	29
Jolene Lootens	13	Nathaniel DeBoer	29

Quiz Time!

SCRAMBLED BIBLE NAMES

by Busy Beaver Anna Kampen

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. necoh | 9. baah |
| 2. ehmtusleah | 10. shaile |
| 3. hlae | 11. zeebjel |
| 4. nlaab | 12. jsepoh |
| 5. asue | 13. bdoaiha |
| 6. amda | 14. vee |
| 7. ooolnms | 15. maos |
| 8. bseaahthb | |

(See Answers)

PROPHECIES FULFILLED

Using the proof texts in your Bible, find the prophecy that was fulfilled. (Answers at end of column)

Example:

- _____ 1. Paul wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus would be born of the "seed" of "woman." Galatians 4:4

(Look up Gal. 4:4 Then look at the texts in the margin. One of them should be the right one: Genesis 3:15. If you need more help, ask a parent.)

- _____ 2. Luke wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus was to be from Abraham. Acts 3:25
- _____ 3. Matthew wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of the flight into Egypt, Matthew 2:14-15
- _____ 4. John wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy about the rejection of Jesus, John 1:11
- _____ 5. Matthew wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus' suffering for us. Matthew 8:17
- _____ 6. John wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus' bones not being broken, John 19:33
- _____ 7. The writer of Hebrews wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of a new covenant, Hebrews 8:8-12.
- _____ 8. Paul wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of those God called "not my people" becoming children of God, Romans 9:26
- _____ 9. Matthew wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy of the "stone rejected by the builders," Matthew 21:42
- _____ 10. Luke wrote of the fulfillment of the prophecy about kings and rulers gathering against Christ, Acts 4:25-26

C Z Q B A R F W M E

WORD SCRAMBLE

P by Busy Beaver Chelsea Kampen O

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. pipho | 6. yzrgilz |
| 2. eanatetr | 7. rgocua |
| 3. efirgaf | 8. olmhcaeen |
| 4. egebal | 9. oalialgr |
| 5. aajugr | 10. Idmrlaiao |

(See Answers)