



# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
VOLUME 45, NO.8      APRIL 19, 1996



*... He parted from them and was  
carried up into heaven.      Luke 24:51b*

# EDITORIAL

By C. Van Dam



## Look Up!!

It can be exhilarating to live as Christians in this the final age before the glorious return of our Saviour Jesus Christ. At His ascension the promise was given that He would return (Acts 1:11). Our life may now be orientated to Him who is enthroned on high! God's Word exhorts us to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Col. 3:1).

That can be exhilarating for such an upward orientation is a constant reminder that our life may be lived within the liberating framework and context of our Redeemer who makes all things new. We may know that the purpose and goal of our life are ultimately not set by the things of this world, but by our triumphant Lord! That gives us freedom, freedom to say no to the things of this world which can estrange us from the living God. After all, our Saviour has won the battle over sin, evil, and Satan. We have no obligations to the world, to dance to their tune (Rom. 8:12). As those raised to a new life in Christ, we are free to live the life of the new creation, to be different, to be holy in an unholy world!

These are not just platitudes. That is the constant challenge today. Our world drips sin and iniquity unprecedented in recent history. There is no longer such a thing as a commonly accepted code of ethics governing matters of marriage, pornography, abortion, the value of human life, and gambling. Decent new video releases are so few and far between that one reviewer gave up. Calvin Demmon of *Western Report* simply could not take another video. The video releases were either "viciously mindless" (the so-called "family" videos) or they were full of violence or explicit sex. His final advice: "If you have any doubts about any particular video, just skip it. It won't teach you anything worthwhile. It will waste your time, and may fill your head with indelible images or attitudes that will lessen the quality of your days" (*Western Report*, Jan 8, 1996). TV's bad influence is even worse than previously believed. A recent survey showed that "television has a more profound impact on the lives, values, ethics and morals of the young than perhaps even television's greatest critics thought" (*Outlook*, Nov. 1995). Many new literary offerings are not far behind. Small wonder that the notion of sin is all but gone from our society. Among teenagers attending secular schools going to bed for sex is more or less normal. "More than a quarter of Grade 9 students in Canada have had sexual intercourse, federal and provincial studies show; by Grade 11 the number is almost half" (*The Globe and Mail*, March 5, 1996).

As those living in such a godless world, but ultimately not belonging to it, the question arises how much one can or should participate in the cultural smorgasbord of the day with its seemingly never absent leaning for evil. Where do we draw the line between what those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ can engage in and what they should stay away from?

Christ has set us free from all sorts of rules and regulations by which God had once hemmed in the lives of His Old Testament people. We should therefore not burden each other with all types of rules and regulations. However, we are not to use the freedom as an occasion for indulging in evil; rather, we are to encourage each other to holiness (Gal. 5).

The downward suction of the ever lowering of the lowest common denominator of what is acceptable in the media is a powerful force that also the children of God do not entirely escape. Newscasts on national radio will sometimes describe sexual sin in quite some (unnecessary) detail thereby lowering the threshold again and again as to what is tolerable. We have now reached the point where virtually everything goes. And if you can talk about it (as if it is sort of normal) you can also do it. You can also "enjoy" the Satanic depths of sin in our civilization via videos or TV programs. Children of God must resist this ever lowering standards of what is acceptable, whether it be in literature, films or music. We are children of God who look up to the risen Lord for inspiration and direction and values for life. Small wonder that God's Word exhorts us that we must hate sin, "hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh" (Jude 23). We must have nothing to do with the sin of this age. "Whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things" (Phil. 4:8).

While the direction of the world is downward, ours must be upward. Our concern must not be to see how far down we can go to the depths of Satan (cf. Rev. 2:24) but how far we can go to orientate our life more and more around our risen Lord and cultivate communion of life with Him by His Spirit.

I am not suggesting a semi-monastic withdrawal from this world in order to enjoy the contemplative life with God. No, our upward orientation as children of the kingdom of God means that we realize all the more the pressing obligations we have as children of light in a world of darkness. We will for instance support all efforts directed against the evils of the day. But let us also remember that every family with a distinctively Christian lifestyle is a powerful witness of the redeeming love of God. Every Christian who lives and works as a child of the risen Lord is a momentous testimony of the power of the risen Saviour who has raised him up to a new life in the midst of an evil world. Every parent who says no firmly and in love to children wanting to get in on some of the world's sinful action are prophets in the kingdom who rule their families according to the command of Christ. It is exhilarating to be a Christian! Not the world, but our risen and ascended Lord must set our agenda and goals! Seek Him and live, that is truly enjoy life as the Creator intended it!





By H.J.J. Feenstra

## BE WISE WITH WISDOM!

### Christian education – basic training in wisdom

Originally published as  
*Wees wijs met de wijsheid*,  
Woord en Wereld # 11  
Uitgeverij Woord en Wereld,  
Ermelo 1989  
Translated by T.M.P. VanderVen

#### First Lesson

*Hear, my son, your father's  
instruction,  
and reject not your mother's  
teaching;  
for they are a fair garland for your  
head,  
and pendants for your neck.*

Here speaks the wisdom teacher, the man who in Israel became more and more prominent as the teacher of the youth and as writer and collector of proverbs. One commentator writes:

*Especially in the time of Hezekiah and following years, the wise men occupied themselves with the teaching of the youth and with the literature of the Jews by formulating and passing on the practical wisdom for every day life. . . . These men were known for their piety, which was apparent also from their close adherence to the Torah, the Pentateuch. After the exile these wise men in Israel became known as the Scribes.* (Dr. W.H. Gispén in

*De Wijze in Israel* (The Wise Men in Israel).

The wise man, then, was the teacher of the youth, at least in palace circles. Such a man is speaking here in the first chapter of Proverbs. He addresses his students with *my son*. Also in the New Testament do we find this same custom that teachers and scribes were addressed as *father*.

Proverbs 1:8 - 9 summarizes the first lesson in the school of wisdom, and it is an incredibly important lesson. The wisdom teacher gently introduces the youth of the church to wisdom, he teaches them the art of living. No, he does not say, "I will teach you what life is all about, how you ought to go about it and what is best for you. It is good that you came to me, because I am obviously able to teach you a few things. Together we will build something nice. Forget everything you have learned so far in your life, we will make a new start." Instead, he says,

*Hear, my son, your father's  
instruction,  
and reject not your mother's  
teaching. . . .*

In other words, if you want to be wise, if you want to learn how to give your life shape and content, then point one is: do not forget your upbringing, your christian upbringing – hold fast to what

you have learned at home. We will not ignore your upbringing, let alone undo it. We are not going to start again. On the contrary, in the school of wisdom we will continue to build on the basis of your christian upbringing. The foundations have been laid, and we will make thankful use of them. We will now begin with the superstructure, building on top of what has been put into place by the discipline of your father and the teaching of your mother during those first years of your life.

From Scripture

Proverbs 1:8-9  
Matthew 23:7-9

#### The ABCs of Wisdom

Let's have another look at Proverbs 1:8 and 9, and note especially the place of these words. That is important. The Holy Spirit has given this book of wisdom to the church of all ages; He inspired it and He gave it form. We know already that chapters 1 through 9 of Proverbs form the introduction, and that the real study starts with chapter 10.

With this in mind, consider 1:8-9. We have read verses 1-7 which summarize the content and purpose of this book: to teach wisdom to the youth and to the older people. The starting point and theme can only be the fear and awe for the Lord. That is the introduction.

## What's inside?

This issue features two contributions on the theme of the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. Van Dam exhorts us to "look up" to where the Lord is, and to seek the heavenly things. Rev. J.L. Van Popta of Ottawa writes about the majesty of Christ who rode and will ride again upon the clouds of heaven.

The discussion on the Acts of Synod Abbotsford continues. Dr. J. Faber comments upon some of the decisions; undersigned does as well.

In these pages we give the church at Calgary space for some flag-waving.

Yolanda DeBoersap reviews *After you say "I do"* . . . , a video series meant to help strengthen Christian marriages. It sounds like a very worthwhile series. At the same time, I would remind those who plan to enter the blessed matrimonial state not to forget to read *Marriage in honour* by Dr. W.G. de Vries (Winnipeg: Premier, 1976).

Debbie de Boer reports on a Teachers' Convention held in Hamilton.

Finally, stapled in the middle you will find an *Outreach*. May it encourage you to be a light where you live, work and play.

GvP

Then comes the introductory lesson, verses 8 and 9 – remember, we are still busy with the introduction of Proverbs, and more precisely, within that section with the introduction to the introduction!


Well, these then are the ABCs of the school of wisdom, the absolute ABC, the first introductory lesson. This is the way the Holy Spirit has put this book together. This also means that you will not even get to the rest of the book if you already trip over these two verses. How can you learn wisdom if you would fail already at this point? If you were to wipe these ABCs off the table,

you might as well forget the rest. These verses, therefore, throw a remarkable light on the irreplaceable, unique and fundamental importance of family life and a christian upbringing. Young people do well to remember that.

Do not let your christian upbringing embarrass you. Put even more strongly, you are not allowed to let it embarrass you. You should be proud of it and show that it is your ornament which you like to show to everyone. It makes you look good. *They are a fair garland for your head, and pendants for your neck.* Many young people, boys as well as girls, wear a necklace.

If you wear such a necklace, but you ignore what you have learned at home, than you have an ornament, but it is not the ornament which the Holy Spirit would like to see you wear. Do not drop your parents as hopelessly old-fashioned, unable to understand the times in which you live.

When you start your first job, or when you go to college, or when you leave home and move into your own apartment, or when you become independent, never throw away your christian upbringing. That would be terribly unwise.

From Scripture    Ephesians 6:1-3 

---

# The Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ

By J.L. Van Popta

Luke 24:50,51: *Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands He blessed them. While He blessed them He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.*

Acts 1:9b,11b: *. . . as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. . . . "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."*

Ascension day is almost ignored in the church year. Seldom do we read of a Reformed Church having a service on Ascension Day, a Thursday night. In our *Church Order* the churches agree to commemorate the birth, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as the pouring out of his Holy Spirit. Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost are important days in the church year. We commemorate these important moments in the life of our Lord Jesus. Ascension Day, however is somewhat of an orphan. It is almost ignored. It seems unimportant and not much attention is given to it. Why is this? Is it perhaps because the story is rather undramatic and unsentimental when compared to the other

high points in the redemptive history of the Lord Jesus?

## The other four

The Christmas story is so gripping! The child is born in a rough stable and laid in a manger. The Lord of glory has an animal's feeding crib as His. The story of the shepherds grabs our attention. The poverty of Mary and Joseph and the Child is accented by the glory of the heavenly hosts singing in the fields of Ephrathah. The Magi come and worship. Herod murders the infants. The Passion narrative is also full of tension. First comes Good Friday and the suffering and death of the Lord. We read of His betrayal and arrest, His trial and the beating and the mockery. He was crucified. Darkness descends on Jerusalem and an earthquake shakes Mt. Zion. His foremost friends abandoned him and so He was buried by two secret followers, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Again at the Lord's resurrection there is an earthquake. We know the story of the soldiers who fall down as if dead. An angel descends like lightning! The gospels tell us of the women at the tomb and of the miraculous appearances of our Lord. Pentecost also is attended by great signs,

tongues as of fire and the sound of a mighty rushing wind. People, filled with the Holy Spirit began speaking all sorts of languages. These four moments of redemptive history are packed with great excitement and emotion.

## Not noteworthy?

In comparison the ascension story does not seem very noteworthy at all. The Lord Jesus and His disciples were walking along. They headed out of Jerusalem and came to the Mount of Olives. There as their master spoke to them He was taken up into heaven. It doesn't seem to fit the pattern. It is just a quiet, gentle story. The ascension however, is one of the great high points in the history of redemption. This is a tremendous moment. There right before the eyes of His disciples the Lord Jesus Christ ascended up into the heavens. With His hands outstretched He blessed them. The churches are right in placing this along with the other four high points of redemptive history in the Lord Jesus' life.

## He blessed them

Those outstretched hands must have left a great impression on the dis-

cles. It is not just incidental information that the Lord was blessing the disciples as He left. The Lord did not turn His back on the disciples. No, as He departed He blessed them. Blessings streamed from His hands – rivers of blessing. By ascending in the sight of His disciples He showed that His task here was completed. He did not just disappear. Rather, in full view of the church He returned to His Father as He said He must. He went to His Father in heaven so that He might apply His benefits to his people – to all those whom the Father had given Him. Here everything was completed. The Lord would not have left if His task on earth was unfinished. He went to heaven not to abandon His church but for the benefit of His church. He testified to this by raising His hands in blessing over the disciples as He left them.

### His exaltation

Leaving the earth also meant that for the Lord Jesus all His humiliation had come to an end. His humiliation began with His incarnation, His holy conception and birth. All His life was one of humiliation. He was beset with all our weaknesses. He took upon Himself our sins. He who had no sin became sin for us. Throughout His life He suffered. On the cross He suffered under the wrath of God. His humiliation reached its lowest point in the grave. There He was dead, a cold corpse. But then He rose! He rose with a glorious body. His exaltation began. But that exaltation could not be fulfilled here on the earth with its sin. For those 40 days from His resurrection to His ascension He had a glorified body, but yet He lived among sinners. He had to be raised up above the earth. He had to pass through the heavens.

### Upon the clouds

When we read in Acts 1 that a cloud took Him out of their sight we should not think that as the disciples were looking up into heaven watching Him go up, a cloud got in the way, as if the cloud blocked the view. No, not at all. A cloud took Him away. He rode upon the clouds of heaven. In the Old Testament it is God who rides upon the clouds. Think of Psalm 68:2 in the *Book of Praise*. *Lift up your voice and sing aloud / To Him who rides upon the clouds*. Again we sing in Psalm 68:12: *Unto the Lord sing praises, / To Him who in the heavens rides, / Who in the*

*ancient skies resides, / From whence His voice He raises*. And in Psalm 18:4<sup>2</sup> we sing: *On wings of storm and wind the Lord descended*. In Psalm 104:1<sup>3</sup> *Clouds are thy chariot, storms lend thee their pinions*. Isaiah 19:1 says the same: *Behold the Lord is riding on a swift cloud*.<sup>4</sup>

The ascension is amazing testimony to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God, the Lord God, of the Old Testament. He is the one and same God. He is the one who comes to the help of His people. He is the one who rides in judgment on the enemies and oppressors of His people. Jesus Christ is God alone! And His ascension points up that fact. There is no humiliation here. Only exaltation.

### The Son of Man

Speaking to His disciples He is taken up with hands outstretched; blessing them He rides the clouds like a chariot. A cloud took Him out of their sight. This is the picture of Dan 7:13:

*I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like the Son of Man and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And*

*to Him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*

This is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Son of Man. (That is the Lord's favourite title for himself – the Son of Man.) And He rode the clouds and was presented to the Ancient of Days. He is presented to His Father and He received the kingdom.

### He will return

This is the comfort of the Lord Jesus Christ's ascension. The Old Testament points to this day. The Lord went up to heaven, riding on the clouds for He is God of God, Lord of Lords, King of Kings. From there He will return again – riding upon the clouds of heaven. He will ride them as His chariot when His kingdom is completed. And He shall reign forever and ever.

<sup>1</sup>Verse 33 in the Bible.

<sup>2</sup>Verse 10 in the Bible.

<sup>3</sup>Verse 3 in the Bible.

<sup>4</sup>See also Deuteronomy 33:26.



Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

#### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Geertsema  
Coeditors: J. De Jong, R.A. Schouten,  
C. Van Dam, G.Ph. van Popta

#### ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION  
5621 - 51 Street  
Taber, AB T1G 1K6  
Fax: (403) 223-0149  
E-Mail: 74124.1377@CompuServe.COM

#### ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES		Regular	Air
FOR 1995		Mail	Mail
Canada*		\$33.00*	\$59.00*
U.S.A.	U.S. Funds	\$38.00	\$52.00
	International	\$53.00	\$84.00

\* Including 7% GST – No. R104293055

Advertisements: \$11.25 per column inch

Unless a written subscription cancellation is received we assume you wish to continue to subscribe. You will be invoiced prior to the subscription renewal date.

Publications Mail Registration No. 1025  
ISSN 0383-0438

### IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial – Look Up!! — C. Van Dam .....	170
Meditation – Be Wise with Wisdom — H.J.J. Feenstra .....	171
The Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ — J.L. Van Popta .....	172
Some reflections on Synod Abbotsford — J. Faber.....	174
Contradictory Acts — G.Ph. van Popta .....	175
Campaign Calgary .....	178
The Hi-Liter — C. Van Spronsen.....	179
After You Say "I DO" . . . — Yolanda DeBoersap .....	180
1996 Teachers' Convention C.R.T.A. East – Hamilton, ON — Debbie deBoer .....	182
Anchor Home — A.M. Wanders.....	184
Press Release .....	185



---

# Some reflections on Synod Abbotsford

By J. Faber

Now that the Acts of General Synod Abbotsford 1995 have been distributed and in some councils and congregational meetings are discussed, I would like to comment on the following issues:

1. Book of Praise (Art. 44)
2. Theological College (Art. 97)
3. Contact with the O.P.C. (Art. 108)

## 1. Book of Praise (art. 44)

### a. Nicene Creed, etc.

Synod adopted provisionally a revised edition of the Nicene Creed requesting the churches to test it.

With respect to this decision I would like to suggest that the Canadian Reformed churches should not try to adopt a specific Canadian Reformed text of this ecumenical creed but adopt the International Consultation Text or stick with the present text for the time being. I prefer the last option and would like to defend the position that the Canadian Reformed churches should return to or maintain the text of the ecumenical creeds that they used since the fifties of this century.

If I am not mistaken, several members feel a certain frustration with the attempts of our churches to establish their own peculiar and particular texts of such historic documents as the ecumenical creeds and the Reformed liturgical forms.

The first synods of the Canadian Reformed churches acted wisely when they simply left it in the freedom of the churches to use as English text the so-called C-text, the text in use in the Christian Reformed Church, "with whom our sister churches in the Netherlands had ecclesiastical fellowship until the Liberation" (see e.g. Acts Synode Homewood-Carman 1958, Art. 190). Therefore for decades we used the same doctrinal and liturgical texts as the Christian Reformed Church and the Free Reformed churches, texts that were in line with the Reformed tradition on the American continent since the es-

tablishing of the Reformed Church in North America in 1628.

As far as the texts of ecumenical creeds go, we should never forget that there are millions and millions English speaking Christians, If necessary – and alas, it is often necessary –, we should fight with them about the *contents* of these creeds but as much as possible we should try to use the same *words*. I would at least keep the present text of the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds for the time being. If – what God graciously grants – we come to ecclesiastical union with the Independent Christian Reformed churches or the Free Reformed churches, let us simply start together with the doctrinal and liturgical forms and the church order in the *Psalter Hymnal 1934*. In the meantime, the Canadian Reformed churches do wise not to put any possible roadblocks in the way of consultations about ecclesiastical union. Our present text of the Nicene Creed is that of the *Psalter Hymnal 1934*. Would it not be wise simply to stick to this text for the time being?

In this line of thinking also a return to the old text of the Apostles' Creed is desirable. Since the eighties the Canadian Reformed churches have their special text of the Apostles' Creed in which they, for instance, added the word "Christian" to the authentic and original text of the clause concerning the "holy catholic church." They now form an exception among millions and millions of English speaking Christians with respect to what we have always called an *ecumenical* creed and precisely in the clause in which we profess the *catholicity* of God's church.

Let the Canadian Reformed churches at least in the text of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds the mistake they made in the Apostles' Creed.

But since nobody can be sure whether the Canadian Reformed churches will maintain the present text of the Nicene Creed, I make one remark about the proposed peculiar Cana-

dian Reformed version. At the end of the second paragraph a hasty reader will forget the semi-colon and easily say "not made of one substance with the Father." Is the present text not better? It reads: "not made, *being* of one substance with the Father."

With respect to the liturgical forms I may refer to a previous letter to the editor in which I pleaded for a return to the concrete classical expression "the articles of the Christian faith" (which means "the Apostles' Creed"). We have now changed it into the vague term "the confessions" and created another roadblock for union among Reformed confessors in North America.

### b. Hymn 1A

From the foregoing it will be clear that I would have voted for the recommendation "That the matter of an alternate melody for Hymn 1A be put to rest and no longer be added to the Committee's mandate." Synod, however, decided to give "the alternate melody (Zwart) a "test period" in the churches as also the Strasbourg melody (Bucer) of 1539.

I will not go into the musical aspects of this decision. But is it necessary to have a melody which allows for singing the Apostles' Creed in the form newly adopted by the churches? Can we not continue to sing it in the form that the churches used during their first three decades? Psalms and hymns more often use former Bible versions. Does the King James Version not resonate in certain psalms and hymns that are sung in churches that now use the Revised Standard Version, the New International Version or the New English Bible? Why can we then not maintain the old version of the Apostles' creed in a hymn? It happens, e.g. at funerals, that Christian Reformed or Free Reformed relatives or friends sing along with Hymn 1A, because they know the words of the old version. Why should we exclude such possibility?

Or is it necessary to add to Hymn 1A and Hymn 1B a new Hymn 1C? Does this not become a little bit too much? If I am not mistaken, even the children in church, school and home love to sing the melody of Hymn 1A and Hymn 1B.

I regard the text of Hymn 1A the best one we have and I do not foster any objections against the text of the paraphrase in Hymn 1B. Therefore I do not see the need of a test period for melodies of the newfangled text.

## 2. Theological College (Art. 97)

Under the material, presented to Synod is not only the Report of the Board of Governors but also a "Report of the Board of Governors (Finance and Property Committee) to General Synod 1995." I realize that this report has been sent to the consistories and I appreciate the desire to keep the Acts as short as possible. But as far as I know, it is the first time that the Financial Report of the Theological College is not printed in the Acts. I regret this, for the Theological College is the one and only school of the Canadian Reformed churches and all members of these churches should

be able to scan its financial data. Now one cannot even see how much the churches contributed for the College, how large the contributions of our Australian sister churches have been, or how high or low and for what reasons the quorum for the Theological College has been set during the last three years. Lively interest in the affairs of "the school of the churches" can be stimulated also by publication of the financial report. Should the next General Synod not return to the old good custom?

## 3. Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Art. 106)

Synod mandated the Committee for Contact with the O.P.C. ". . . to arrive at an agreement with the OPC on the matters of the fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership" and "to communicate that there is a need to continue to discuss the differences in confession and church polity. . . ."

My question is: How long has this yet to go on after the decision of 1977 in which the OPC was recognized as a true church of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The International Conference of Reformed Churches accepted with ap-

preciation a report regarding "an agreed statement as to what constitutes a 'true church' and the consequences of such a statement for intercommunion, etc." This report concluded: "Recognizing one another as true churches has consequences with respect to admission to the pulpit, admission in the celebration of the Lord's Supper and acceptance of attestations or certificates of consistories or sessions." The Conference referred the report to the member churches for their consideration (*Proceedings I.C.R.C. Zwolle 1993*, Art. 44). Did our last synod consider this report, its conclusion and its significance for our relationship with the O.P.C.?

Let us at least in the present local contacts with Independent Christian Reformed churches and Free Reformed churches do everything possible to enable the congregations to learn to know one another. And may Christ the Lord who has reconciled us to God the Father, gather us out of our present dispersion into the fellowship of His body, that so, through His one Word and Spirit, we might join together with one heart and soul.

---

# Contradictory Acts

By G.Ph. van Popta

In the last issue of *Clarion*, the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene concluded his review of the Acts of General Synod Abbotsford, 1995. He quoted something I had written him in a personal letter regarding the Synod's decisions on the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and on the Denver matter. Rev. VanOene said that he had received the letter from "a brother." It was proper for him to leave me anonymous since it was a personal letter, but I gladly state that I was his correspondent since I have no embarrassment about my position in the matter I wrote him about.

It had to do with a contradiction between two decisions of the Synod. Rev. VanOene quoted me and then disagreed with me.

In my letter, I pointed out a very regrettable contradiction within the Acts. On page 71, article 106 – the OPC de-

cision – Synod said: "*The argument that recognizing a church as a true church implies having full Ecclesiastical Fellowship is confessionally warranted. . . .*" I observed that if this consideration of Synod is correct, then it is also correct to say: "Recognizing a church as a true church but not entering into ecclesiastical fellowship with it is not confessionally warranted." Thus to proceed on two tracks: "True church but no ecclesiastical fellowship" is an unconfessional position. I then went on to note that on p. 81 (article 115 – the Denver decision) what had been admitted in article 106 to be an unconfessional position is used to deny six appeals. What had been admitted to be unwarranted by the confession is used to perpetuate and justify saying: "True church but no ecclesiastical fellowship."

Rev. VanOene said that the conclusions I drew were unwarranted. Further, he did not think that logically it is permitted to jump from "A+B is confessionally warranted" to "Having A but not B is therefore *not* confessionally warranted." (If I understand Rev. VanOene well, then "A" is "true church" while "B" is "ecclesiastical fellowship.")

Rev. VanOene misunderstands the point. I did not say: "If A+B is confessionally warranted, then to have A but not B is not confessionally warranted." I said: "If to say 'A (the recognition of a church as true church) *implies* B (having ecclesiastical fellowship) is a position warranted by the confession,' then to say that 'A (true church) *does not* imply B (ecclesiastical fellowship)' *cannot* be warranted by the confession." Since Rev. VanOene brought in the matter of logic, I would remind him

that the Principle of (Non)contradiction does not allow a statement to be both true and false. In terms of logic, General Synod has violated this principle. Perhaps to violate a principle of logic is not thought to be so bad; however, for a General Synod to suspend the confessional norms in order to reach a decision is bad. That is what this past Synod did.

I had no intention to open up this matter again on the pages of *Clarion*, but since Rev. VanOene addressed the issue, the matter is open and needs to be further addressed.

### “True church” implies “ecclesiastical fellowship”

Three churches, Coaldale, Surrey and Grand Rapids, made the point that recognizing another federation of churches as true according to article 29 of the Belgic Confession implies entering into a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship. The Confessions demand that. As churches, we had already clearly taken that position in 1992. At the same time that we recognized the Free Church of Scotland as a true church, we extended to it the offer of ecclesiastical fellowship. Synod 1992 (article 128, p. 93) decided:

To recognize with gratitude the Free Church of Scotland as a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To offer the Free Church of Scotland, including the Free Church of Scotland congregations in Canada, a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship under the adopted rules.

We have come to the recognition that A implies B. To say, “You are a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ” is to say, “You are a sister church.” Of course! How could it be otherwise? How could a (recognized) true church not be a sister church? We did not *make* the Free Church of Scotland a sister church; we *recognized* the Free Church of Scotland as a sister church. It is the work of the Son of God in Scotland, as much “church” as the Canadian Reformed churches are “church.” And so it cannot but be a sister church.

Synod 1992 recognized that another true church *is* a sister church. The churches at Grand Rapids, Surrey and Coaldale made the point at Synod 1995. This synod agreed with the three churches. So far, so good. Synod 1995 was speaking sound confessional language. It was being guided by what we

confess to be the ordinances of God about the gathering of the church of Christ, specifically in articles 27-32 of the Belgic Confession.

Because Synod 1995 spoke such clear and confessional language in article 106, it is the more confusing and disconcerting to read article 115 of Synod 1995. There the clear confessional language of the earlier decision falls by the wayside. Instead, we get to hear about “interim situations” and “two tracks.”

### “Two-tracks”

Article 115 has to do with the admission of the American Reformed Church at Denver into the federation. It needs to be stated that it was not and is not the goal of those who brought this matter to General Synod to have this church expelled from the federation. They realize that the church at Denver is in. There is no way to undo what has been done. The dissenting churches in Alberta recognize its *de facto* existence in the federation and at the Classis table. For the American Reformed Church of Denver to go back to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is hardly possible. Everyone understands that. Too much has happened. The situation can be compared to people who have divorced and remarried – the way back is closed. However, the way in which the American Reformed Church at Denver was brought into the federation and the advice and guidance which the congregation and minister received from us was not right. On a personal level, the whole affair leaves me feeling sorry for both the congregation and the Rev. M. Pollock for their troubled entry into the federation. We have not served them well. The problem which lingers is not as much with them as it is with us – with *our* decisions.

In March of 1992 when Denver originally requested to join our federation, Classis AB/MB made this very clear and confessional decision.

Classis decides:

1. not to grant the request of the Denver Church to be admitted as sister church to Classis AB/MB of the Canadian Reformed churches, and to advise this church to seek affiliation with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, which Presbytery received the Denver Church’s initial request for membership in the OPC Regional Church.
2. to inform the POD of this decision.



**CHURCH NEWS**

ACCEPTED to Toronto, ON  
**Rev. W. den Hollander**  
of Orangeville, ON

Grounds:

1. the Canadian Reformed churches have recognized the OPC as a true church.
2. the Reformed Confession states that those who draw away from the church or fail to join it wherever God has established it act contrary to the ordinance of God (BC art. 28).
3. the recognized divergencies between the Reformed and Presbyterian Confession and Church Government have been judged by the Canadian Reformed churches to be no impediment to the recognition of the OPC as true church, and therefore are not allowed to undermine and nullify the confessed ordinance of God concerning maintaining the unity of the Church.

In time, the request came to the table again (Oct. 1993). Although no new grounds were put forward to propose again admitting Denver, the matter was proposed again (in violation of article 33 of the Church Order). This Classis voted to admit Denver. The deputies of Regional Synod present at that Classis could not give their concurring advice. They said that admitting Denver would put us in violation of our confession about the church and in violation of article 33 of the Church Order. Regional Synod 1993 overturned the non-concurring advice of the deputies, although it acknowledged that there were no new grounds to re-propose the admission of Denver and that we were running the risk of violating our own integrity *vis-a-vis* the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Four churches and several individual members appealed to General Synod 1995 to declare the Regional Synod decision to be wrong in the light of the Confession and the Church Order, and because it was so self-contradictory that it could not be implemented with integrity.



General Synod 1995 was obligated to scrutinize this whole matter in the light of the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, and the Church Order.

Unfortunately, Synod did not do so. In this case, for some reason, the agreed upon norms were suspended, and norms of a different sort were applied. That makes it difficult. The agreed upon criteria for judging a matter at an ecclesiastical assembly are the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, and the Church Order. These standards were replaced with others. The standards used were: "interim situation" and "two tracks."

First the appellants were told they failed to recognize that the relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is in an interim situation. It is true that we are in an interim situation with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church – a situation we have recognized is not correct (see above). However, to leave this "interim situation" unqualified is dangerous. This situation must be subjected to the scrutiny of the agreed upon norms, as any other situation confronting an ecclesiastical assembly.

In addition to the consideration of an "interim situation," General Synod 1995 introduced a new expression. The appellants were told to keep *"in mind that the relationship between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed churches has proceeded on two tracks during the last 15 years,"* the two tracks being: true church (1st track) but no ecclesiastical fellowship (2nd track). In article 106, we say that such a situation is not warranted by the Confession; in article 115 we say that such a situation is all right. Contradictory acts. This is what happens when the agreed upon norms are suspended and we work with other norms – "historical realities" or unqualified "interim situations."

### **If only . . .**

If only General Synod had acknowledged that, although it cannot be undone, the way the American Reformed Church at Denver had been admitted into the federation was not right when the matter is judged in the light of the Confessions and the Church Order, the dissenting churches in Alberta could let it rest. It bears repeating: No one is seeking to have the church at Denver nor its minister expelled, despite what some seem to think. What the appellants were seeking at General Synod 1995 was an acknowledgment that the

confessional and church orderly norms had been violated in the process of Denver being admitted. It seems, however, that Synod was loathe to admit that our assemblies had erred. But what is more important: That we maintain integrity in the light of the Word of God and the Confessions? Or that we maintain the integrity of past decisions of assemblies – decisions we are beginning to admit were not very good decisions – in order to save face?

Some have said that the dissenting churches and the appellants are too picky. Is simply holding one another to our agreed upon norms "too picky?" Someone else told me that I ought to

give up on my "extreme *Vrijgemaakt* view of the church" (that the Confession does not allow two true churches to sit beside each other in one place ignoring one another). I have not yet been convinced that I ought to give up that position.

Hopefully General Synod 1998 will be more consistent in applying the norms under which we are bound together. The only way for us to preserve unity is to apply consistently the norms. Once we throw them overboard to try sail around a difficult situation, we end up in dangerous waters and find ourselves headed for the reef.



---

# Campaign Calgary

What does the name Calgary bring to mind? The nearby Rocky Mountains and their magnificent scenery, awesome ski slopes and hiking trails? Perhaps a city of boom and bust, of jobs and employment tied to the ups and downs of oil and gas prices? Or maybe it makes you think of the Canadian Reformed Church, also caught in the ups and downs of the economy.

Well, certainly the part about the Rocky Mountains hasn't changed. However the instability and transience caused by the energy sector belong to bygone years. Oil and gas organizations, markets and pricing have stabilized somewhat over the last decade. Furthermore the number and variety of industries in Calgary have increased. The City now boasts the second largest number of head offices in Canada. The current political and economic environment has made Calgary an attractive alternative for organizations who are either relocating or starting up. The latest to relocate is CP Rail, creating 850 jobs in Calgary.

This stability has come to the Canadian Reformed Church as well. To be sure there still are people moving in and out, just as any other congregation experiences, and we are still not large compared to most other Canadian Reformed churches; however, things have changed considerably from a decade ago.

The Canadian Reformed Church at Calgary was instituted in 1964. Abundantly blessed, there has always been faithful proclamation of the Word, a place for worship, catechism instruction and other church functions and activities. However the facilities have always been rented for these functions. A decade or so ago the congregation realized it would be more prudent to own the house of the minister, and to own its place of worship, since the amount of money paid to landlords was quite substantial. A school society was formed at about the same time. The objective was to provide education for the children of the church, with content and methods consistent with Biblical teaching, taught in a Reformed manner. One of the first steps taken was to start "Saturday" school.

We see today the rich blessings and mercies the LORD has showered upon us who are so undeserving of them. We do own a manse (well, we don't but we now fill a small bank account with the money the manse was sold for); we own twenty acres of property a couple of miles outside of Calgary (with the much appreciated help of our sister churches), upon which we intend on building a church, school, and a new manse (we are eagerly waiting for the excuse to begin building it!); and Tyndale Christian School is now in its second year of operation. Indeed much to be thankful for.

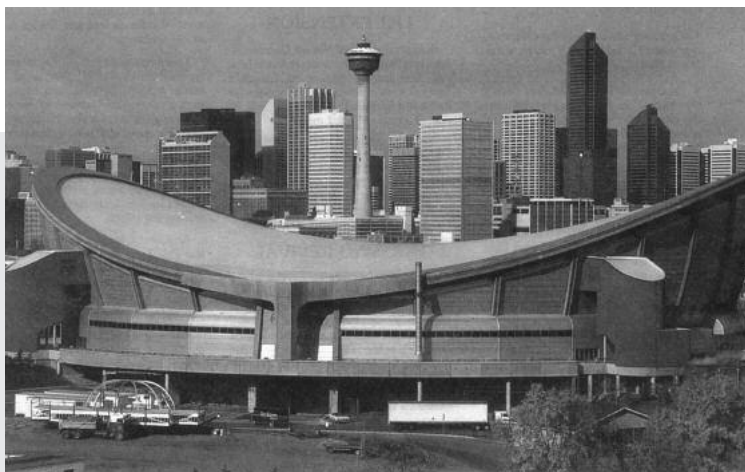
The church and school are presently in the process of erecting a multi-functional facility for both church and school. In addition to an auditorium and classroom space, the building plans include shared space for such things as bathroom, foyer, and kitchen areas. Currently we are working on an application to rezone the land, conducting internal and external fundraising drives, and developing an agreement under which the church and school will work together.

It is clear the LORD continues to bless and gather His church in Calgary. For those of you considering or looking for a new place of residence, or locating a business, we urge you to think about Calgary. The cost of living is quite attractive compared to most other major urban centers. As an important agriculture and industrial distribution hub, a major energy and financial center, Calgary offers employment in a wide variety of fields. These include the building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical trades, and professions such as sales, marketing, engineering, software development, network operations, and many other areas. If you would like further information please contact any one of the following:

Mr. Harry deBoer  
(403) 285-7075  
OR

Mr. John Hoogerdijk  
(403) 590-0751

Or if you prefer send an e-mail message to: [calgary@le-bres.cuug.ab.ca](mailto:calgary@le-bres.cuug.ab.ca)

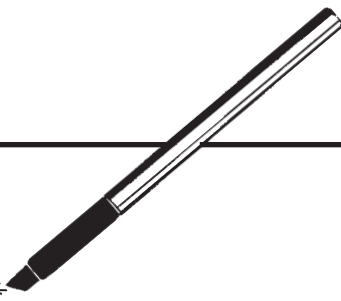


# THE HI-LITER

---

## News from Here and There

By C. Van Spronsen



In Burlington South it was decided that on the Sunday of preparation for the Holy Supper the first half of the Form will be read. On the Sunday of celebration the second half.

\*\*\*

The Church in Albany, WA is contributing to quite a variety of causes. We read: "This week a new set of boxes has been installed at the entrance of the church. There are now 8 boxes for different purposes. PLEASE be extra careful that you place the right bag in the right box."

\*\*\*

There are plans to have a "Family and Community Psalm Singing" for the two churches in the Albany area. The intention is not to start a choir, but to sing psalms together on a Sunday evening for the enjoyment of young and old and above all to the praise of our Father.

\*\*\*

A new magazine has appeared on the Australian scene: *Contender: magazine of the youth of the free reformed churches of australia*. This attractively done publication targets "all those who fit within the loose parameters of 16 to 30 years of age." The name comes from Jude 3: ". . . contending earnestly for the faith. . . ." We wish you success and a good reception!

\*\*\*

In Watford the consistory discussed various matters pertaining to the liturgy as a result of its meeting with the congregation. They will propose to the next General Synod that the committee for the *Book of Praise* be instructed to find music for the Nicene Creed and the Votum as well as a suitable responsive Amen put to music that can be used at the end of the worship service.

\*\*\*

The Church Online! Information on Providence Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton, AB, was added to the Edmonton FreeNet. It is claimed that they are the first Canadian Reformed Church available on the Internet! Curious? The E-mail address is:

URL:gopher://freenet.edmonton.ab.ca/h/i/provcrc/providence.html. (Where have the simple addresses gone like "P.O. Box 10?")

\*\*\*

We note an increasingly changing attitude towards smoking. In Burlington-West the question was even raised

". . . whether people who smoke should be considered as possible candidates for office in the church."

\*\*\*

At a congregational meeting of the Church in Houston, BC, it was agreed upon to move toward the planning and construction of a new church building in the spring of 1997. A property was already purchased some time ago.

\*\*\*

Mission in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is taking on a new dimension as we read in the bulletin of Albany (WA). Two local brothers from PNG, brs. Bouway and Fario, are following a study plan to become ministers or evangelists. They will study English at the University in PNG till July 1996 and then come to Australia where they will further their theological studies till December 1996. From there they return to PNG for some practical experience.

\*\*\*

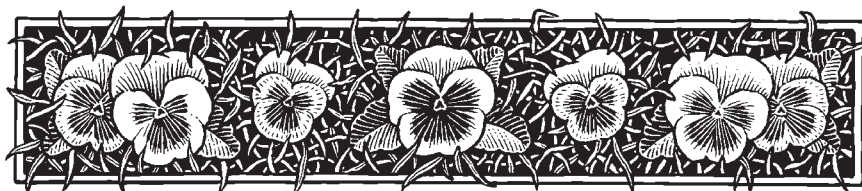
The Australian journal *Una Sancta* has undergone a major editorial upheaval with the resignation from the editorial staff of Rev. W. Huizinga, Rev. G. Van Rongen and J. VanderRos. We quote from the letter of resignation as published in *Una Sancta*: "The main reason for our combined resignation is the imbalance in the editorial direction. There is a preoccupation with the doctrine of the church and interchurch relations. These subjects are approached from one perspective which we find extreme (anti-ICRC and opposition against relations with presbyterian churches). Articles from the other perspective are left aside, not allowed or are heavily attacked. This is done in spite of and against the recent synodical decisions on these matters. We disagree with that editorial direction and agenda."

\*\*\*

The Council of the Langley Church decided that in principle it was in favour of offering the minister a sabbatical of six months in connection with his 25th anniversary in the ministry coming up in 1997, D.V. The minister was requested to submit to Council a concrete proposal of study and writing plans for that period. Very considerate!

\*\*\*

Just a gentle reminder: Do not let your bulletins get any older than a month before sending them for perusal in this column. Items of interest usually are too old by then to pass them on!





---

# After You Say “I DO” . . .

By Yolanda DeBoersap

A video series with accompanying workbook on the foundational issues of marriage for couples of all ages.

With: H. Norman Wright  
Tim and Beverly LaHaye  
Larry Burkett

Publisher: Grace Products  
1761 International Pkwy  
St. 135  
Richardson, TX 75081  
1-800-527-4014  
(214) 437-6575

Reviewed and summarized by:  
Mrs. Yolanda DeBoersap

The fall and winter seasons are always taken up with many activities and meetings. One of those is often the Post Confession class, instructed by the minister of the congregation. This past fall was no different, and Rev. Moes had chosen a very timely topic – Marriage. Today’s society seems to be undermining one of the basic supports for our families, and that is a wholesome marriage. Unfortunately this is also becoming more prevalent among Christians, even though they have the Bible as their guide for a proper marital relationship.

Naturally “prevention is better than cure.” So also in our marriage should we be on guard for signs of problems and correct them before they become so large that the marriage suffers.

The video series, “AFTER YOU SAY “I DO” . . . deals with marriage from a Christian perspective, and is meant for those who are just into marriage, married for some or many years, or those who want to improve an already good marriage.

The video (and study guide) is divided into 12 chapters, dealing with 3 particular topics:

1. Communication
2. Financial Matters
3. Love and Intimacy

## Communication

Communication is the key to your marriage. It is important that we learn to listen and understand both verbal and nonverbal communications. Trying to understand and speak the “language” your mate is speaking should be an important goal in our marriages. All this will help avoid and resolve marital conflicts.

Attitude is always a major factor. Do you look at your relationship in a positive or negative way? Are you always looking at your partner’s weaknesses, and do you focus on failure? One exercise recommended by Dr. Wright is to list (on paper) as many positive aspects of your marriage as you can. Often, if there is a problem we tend to focus in on the problem (which may only be 10%) and tend to overshadow the positive (which would make up 90%).

Dr. Wright recommends goal setting. It is done in many other aspects of life (such as business goals – where are you hoping to be 5 years from now), and should be done in a marriage as well (one who doesn’t aim will never hit anything!) Short and long term goals should be discussed and reviewed as time passes. Some practical suggestions offered by Dr. Wright can help us in establishing some short term goals.

- establish a positive atmosphere in the first few minutes of the day and again when husband arrives home in the evening.
  - prayer life as a Christian – is there time for individual time with God, time as a couple for prayer?
  - solving of disagreements before going to bed (don’t let the sun go down on your anger)
  - regular dates, time for just the two of you away from the daily routines.
- Once goals have been set, and time has passed, it is necessary to evaluate the results. Have you achieved what you set out to do? Is it time to adjust, change, or add new goals?

When we communicate with one another do we know how to listen? Are we already thinking about what we are going to say in response? Do we interrupt, or show by our posture that we are not really interested? Dr. Wright stresses the importance of being a good listener. One should be able to repeat what has been said, and to express what the other person is feeling. Is this how we listen to our partner? Or do we read the paper and say “uhuh” when a pause arises. When a person speaks, three ways of communication are used, content (7%), tone of voice (38%), and non-verbal (55%)

It is necessary to tune in to the “language” your partner speaks. Men and women tend to speak with different intent or meaning. Have you ever noticed that with you and your spouse? There are different levels of communication as well; maybe that is what is why there are misunderstandings between the two of you – one is on level two while the other is only using level five. The levels listed by Dr. Wright are:

Level 5 – On the surface (Hi, how are you?)

Level 4 – reporting facts (The mall was crowded)

Level 3 – expressing beliefs (I think that we . . . )

Level 2 – expressing feelings (You hurt me when . . . )

Level 1 – peak communication; feelings and emotions are together

Nagging !! How many of us have been guilty of this fault! An excellent definition of what nagging really is, is given by Dr. Wright – Nagging is reminding someone of something he/she has not forgotten. A suggestion given by Dr. Wright is to agree to a 15 day time period – don’t mention the item again until 15 days have passed in which the other person should have completed the task. If not done, the other has the right to “remind” him/her.

Any marriage is bound to have conflicts. How to resolve them. Dr. Wright gives six steps.



- listen
  - collect your thoughts
  - define the problem (write it out)
  - define areas of agreement and disagreement
  - define your own contribution to the problem
  - how can this be implemented
- No one said it was going to be easy!

### Financial matters

Setting up a family budget is a must for all couples. There are many economic signs of danger in a marriage which can be prevented if we learn to read our "money barometer." It is important to establish long range goals and to actually plan for the unforeseen.

Mr. Larry Burkett deals with the financial matters in a down to earth and sensible manner. Credit cards, he strongly suggests, need to be controlled. Three practical rules one should follow are given by him:

- use them for budgeted items only
- pay them off monthly
- vow to destroy the cards if they can't be paid off monthly

Another sensible suggestion by Mr. Burkett is to set up a three-fold "debt reduction plan."

- make out a workable budget
- make a list of all creditors with amounts owed
- calculate monthly payments

Wouldn't it be nice to be debt free? Maybe such a plan as given here would make an excellent long term goal for your marriage! Imagine! Debt free in two years, own your own car in another year, and maybe even your house in seven years! Wouldn't the Lord be pleased with such stewardship if we could discipline ourselves to carrying out such long term goals.

Mr. Burkett warns us to keep a close eye on our "money barometer." He

says that there are definite signs of danger in the area of financial matters that could put our marriages out of balance. He lists six:

- his money-her money attitude
- poor communication in discussing financial matters
- parents giving money to bail out husband/wife
- when a wife has to work as a result of failure to live within one's means
- thinking you don't make enough money to give to the Lord
- income barely equals output – no savings plan

Planning for the future is also something that should become one of your long range goals. This could include the education for your children, to be debt free in \_\_\_ years, retirement, death or loss of earning power, and maybe you can add some of your own to the list.

God expects us to be good stewards of all that He has entrusted to us. We should never forget that really we stand here empty handed. All that we have comes from Him in the first place. How are we now handling all that responsibility? To the honour and glory of His name? or to our own detriment.

### Love and intimacy

A loving relationship needs to be cultivated, and will take a great deal of effort if it is to grow and mature. Sexual adjustments also have to be made – marriage doesn't automatically make for a good and wholesome sex life.

These sessions were discussed by a husband and wife, Dr. and Mrs. Tim LaHaye. It was appreciated that they dealt with this topic together. After all, what does a man know about a woman's feelings and vice versa?! (I've read recently that "Men are from Mars, and Women are from Venus" – now that explains it, don't you think?!)

By now you have probably discovered that your mate is not perfect. Are you trying to perfect him/her through criticism? How does one harmonize the real and the ideal of his/her partner now that you are married. What are our reactions to criticism? Anger? Fear?

It is good that God was the first one to show forgiveness, and that in such a grand way. Christ told us to forgive, even to forgive those who had not apologized. We must learn to do that in our marriages as well.

Minor irritations can turn into major battles. The LaHayes strongly suggest that you discuss these minor matters before major problems arise.

In the last sessions the LaHayes frankly discuss some rather delicate subjects of marital relationships. Since this is a family magazine I will refrain from reviewing this particular section. Let me just state that this is well worth viewing the videos on this topic whether you are preparing for marriage, just into marriage, or celebrating 50 years of marriage. An other excellent tool related to the intimacy of marriage, is the book "The Act of Marriage," written by Tim and Beverly LaHaye. Having read this book, I would strongly recommend that all those preparing for marriage, and anyone already married, read this book. Parents guiding their children can't provide all the details and a book like this nicely completes what parents have started. Many of us think that the area of sexual intimacy somehow will just fall into place. Not so, as the book will help you discover and correct.

Communication – created by God so that we could converse with one another and with our Creator. Financial matters – we are instructed by our heavenly Father to be good stewards in all areas of life. And our love relationship as husband and wife – a gift from our Lord to make us one in our marriages. If we use the tools given to us by building our lives together on that One Foundation, we can truly say that our marriages are made in Heaven.

(For those who are preparing for marriage, there is a video series and workbook called BEFORE YOU SAY "I DO . . ." This series also consists of 12 video lessons, dealing with the three topics of Communication, Finances, and Love and Intimacy, which are presented by the same authors. If this series is used as a guide before marriage, the series AFTER YOU SAY "I DO . . ." is meant as a follow up.)

---

# 1996 Teachers' Convention C.R.T.A. East

## Hamilton, ON

With a fresh dusting of snow on the ground, and cooler temperatures, teachers came from various directions to attend the annual two-day convention in Southern Ontario. Educators from Owen Sound, Chatham, Grand Rapids, Attercliffe and various places between converged on Guido de Bres High School in Hamilton. The gym had been decorated with the theme of "Exalt His Name." Tulips on the table reminded us that spring is definitely on the way.

At 8:45 the chairman of the CRTA, P. deBruin began the convention and welcomed everyone. The teachers then joined in singing the theme song, "O Magnify the Lord." The song expressed the theme through the words, "And let us exalt His Name together." Thus, began the 1996 Teachers' Convention.

Mrs. C. VanHalen-Faber and the students of the Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers' College put us into the mind set for the main address by performing Psalm 100 in two parts. Rev. Agema then spoke concerning the psalms sung by the students in our school. His speech was divided into three parts: a) Exalting b) the name of the Lord c) Doing it together. With an historical background Rev. Agema showed us how the psalms have become our sacrifice of thanksgiving today. Paul in the New Testament and Calvin during the Reformation both saw the psalms as extremely important in our regular worship. Therefore, the memorization of the psalms is crucial in the Reformed education of our covenant children. Through them they can also see God's involvement in their life. In this way we can truly call ourselves a singing church. Between each point Mrs. VanHalen-Faber shared musical examples to emphasize the universal character of our Genevan tunes.

After a short break the teachers spread through the school to attend various workshops of their choice. A selection of cross-curriculum topics was available to the teachers. After an hour and a half we reconvened in the gym for lunch. At a gathering of more than

*Theme of convention  
- Poster on wall*




a hundred educators, it is very likely that people do not know each other. In years past, principals would introduce their staff, but this year each staff was requested to introduce themselves in an interesting manner. Some staffs read poems, others sang songs about themselves, but in all cases a laugh followed the presentation. Between the entertainment we could enjoy a delicious meal. Then it was back to the classrooms for another workshop. Those who wanted could remain after the workshop to interact with other teachers or join them on the volleyball court.

In the evening we met in the Cornerstone Hamilton Church building to listen to a panel discussion. Dr. Oosterhoff stressed the trend of anti-intellectualism we find in society today. It is also creeping into the schools and we should ensure that curriculum remains a major concern in our schools. The knowledge of God's work in creation and history is extremely important and also the knowledge of human experience and achievement which gives us a rich history to build on. Dr. Gootjes spoke next. He reminded us of the hazards to the Christian mind. The media flood us with information. Most of it is visual, and because of that we no longer search for information ourselves and expect all ideas to be visualized. We serve the Lord with our mind. The third panelist was Rev. Sikkema. He stressed the role of the

media in the corruption of the Christian mind. The mind set promoted by the media is not one based on morals but focuses on entertainment. People do not believe thinking is important anymore. All three panelists showed that we have to be extremely aware and vigilant, because falling into a secular mind set is so easy.

On Friday, some of us returned to Guido earlier than others. Representatives of each school were requested to attend the breakfast business meeting. By the time the meal and meeting were over the others had also made their way to school. Isaac Smit led the morning devotions. He read Job 28 and explained how this passage reminds us of God's glory. After a solo by Darlene Flokstra we could begin our second day. This day also included two workshop sessions. A lengthy lunch break recharged us for the Friday afternoon session.

Before we knew it the chairman was giving his "thank yous" to the organizers. We gave Jake Ruggi, Darlene Flokstra and the many helpers that helped them a hearty applause for the work they did. By now the tulips were drooping, and the tablecloths were a little askew on the tables, but our minds were busy with all the new ideas and information we had gleaned over the last two days. Now we had to wait till Monday to try them out in our classrooms.

*Debbie deBoer*  
Secretary, CRTA 





Rev. D.G.J. Agema  
- Inspirational Speech.  
Exalt His Name Together  
Thursday morning.

Workshop Attendance: Creative Writing



Timothy School - Hamilton  
- introducing staff at lunch.  
All the school did  
something like this.

---

# Anchor Home

As a board member of Anchor Home I would like to use this means of a letter to the editor to generate interest and support among your readership for this important institution of mercy in the midst of the Canadian Reformed churches. As you know it has been established to help physically and mentally handicapped members in our midst reach their full potential, and to help them reach this in the Name of the Lord. At the same time I see Anchor Home as an important means to assist parents and relatives in carrying out their God-given responsibility towards them.

At present Anchor Home has seven full-time residents. They are looked after by full-time staff members who in turn are assisted by a number of part-timers and volunteers. The Society does not only run this home on a daily basis but also takes a supervisory position over handicapped persons who are able to live independently.

In my humble opinion I do not think that we have reached our full potential in looking after all the disabled brothers and sisters in our midst. Thus far we have only one home for them while there is a call for a second if not for a third home. In fact, I often wonder how many among us are aware of the special needs of these brothers and sisters and how an Anchor Home tries to meet those needs.

The residents of Anchor Home are not capable of making the daily routine choices we all make. When they get up in the morning they need assistance and/or supervision in the use of the toilet, in washing themselves, brushing their teeth, in taking showers, in dressing themselves, in making and eating breakfast.

Once all this has been accomplished by a dedicated staff then it is off to work. Unlike us, they are not able to leave on an individual basis but are transported by a special bus to Arc Industries, where they take part in assembling and packaging small-size steel products, something they are able to do quite well, and which allows them to contribute towards the overall support they receive.

On their return home they are assisted in washing up and in eating a well-deserved dinner. Unlike us, they are not able to pick up a phone to call a friend, go out for a visit or attend a meeting. They are completely dependent on the initiative and guidance of the staff and of those among us who take a special interest in them. The staff, with the assistance of volunteers, must accompany and supervise all their outings: shopping, visiting, church-services, etc.

In meeting all these challenges the staff is making Anchor Home a real home for these special members of God's Household. They go all out, especially in the evenings, to help them exercise the communion of saints, pursue with them the art of education (training), the importance of communication and other survival skills. All these challenging activities are borne by a lot of Psalm and Hymn singing.

A facility like Anchor Home sees light to heavy use. Various areas show obvious signs of wear and tear. These need our attention in the near future. In order to give its residents the quality of life they are entitled to various changes and renovations are called for, specifi-

cally with a view to the kind of work in which they are presently engaged.

At the time of writing this appeal for your support we have been informed that Arc Industries will be closed due to a shortage in government funds. As a result the Board is considering the possibility of making out of Anchor Home's existing garage an assembling facility, the cost of which is estimated at a minimum of \$20,000.

Therefore, this appeal for your support has become even more urgent. Please, consider signing up as members of the Anchor Home Society or of making regular contributions on an annual basis. Be assured that the monies will be put to good use, for the benefit and well-being of these "royal" children the Lord has entrusted to our care.

A.M. Wanders, Brampton, ON  
Secretary Anchor Home:

Mrs. J. Jans  
2081 Leighland Rd.  
Burlington, ON L7N 3S4

Treasurer Anchor Home:

Mr. A. Jans  
589 Mohawk Rd. W.  
Ancaster, ON L9C 1X5

