



Clarion

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*Education
Shattered Consensus?*



Shattered Consensus?

By the time this edition of *Clarion* arrives in your home, young people of our Reformed homes will have returned to classes for another year of schooling. Opening assemblies are history, and the jitters of the first day have been replaced by the steady routines of the classroom. Young minds are being shaped by teachers and curricula into readiness for mature service of God in His creation.

As a Reformed community, we have long worked for Christian education. Many of our schools have already been able to observe 25 year or even 35 or 40 year anniversaries. For a long time, then, there has been a strong consensus that Reformed education in Reformed schools was the right choice for believing parents of covenant youth. These Reformed schools were supported at a near-universal level in the Reformed community. Great sacrifices were made to establish these schools and to keep them operating.

Now, however, there are a few signs that the fabric of our Reformed educational system has some significant tears. The consensus is not as strong as it once was. Home-schooling continues to attract some families. Other families are opting for public education. Sure enough, the general agreement remains strong enough to allow for the continued operation of many schools. But since consensus is a fragile reality, we do well to look at the tears. As far as I can tell, the tears are caused by both philosophical and economic factors. Let's look at the latter first.

Economic factors

We hear many complaints about the cost of private, Reformed education. These complaints are heard throughout the country, both in ON, where there is no provincial funding, as well as in provinces like B.C. where there is substantial governmental support. Evaluating these economic complaints is no easy task.

When school boards determine tuition fees, they are working within severe constraints. They work with a number of budget factors that don't leave a lot of flexibility: so many students requiring so many teachers and so many textbooks and so many classrooms. It seems to me that not many of our schools have a lot of fat to trim. It is true that some programs in some schools might be examined more critically. Some might think it would be a very fine thing indeed if our Reformed Schools would offer German and Latin classes – as offered in some public schools. Other parents and students may well desire more course selections in the areas of music, the fine arts, electronics, hair-dressing, metalworking and computer science. But since our schools do

not receive full funding, we need to look at our programs in a careful way so that funds are used in the most profitable way for the majority of students. At this time, we simply can't afford the degree of specialization available in many public schools. Christian schools typically will focus their energies and dollars on core subjects. Not only is this fiscally responsible, but it also makes good academic sense. Fewer options in school, as someone has said, translates into more options after graduation!

So there is a clear need for school societies and school boards to keep Christian education affordable for the great majority of Reformed families. On the other hand, we might ask: what does "affordable" mean? Does "affordable" mean that the school fees must be kept so low that they do not interfere with our chosen and established lifestyles? Does "affordable" mean that we must be able to own our own home, drive a modern vehicle, own a pentium computer, wear new and fashionable clothing and dine out of home twice a month?

Not long ago, I read about a family which was new to the faith. As they matured in Christian understanding, they became convinced that it was wrong to send their children to the public school in their town, since that system promoted anti-Christian values and was staffed by ungodly teachers. However, there was a problem: the Christian school was located 40 miles away and cost a lot of money. What was the solution? The solution was obvious to these convicted parents: sell their beautiful home, move into a mobile home within walking distance of the school and have Dad commute 80 miles per day to work. I think that anyone suggesting such things in the Ref. community today would meet a great deal of scepticism, if not hostility. It sounds like a message from another planet. But that's only because convictions have changed. Where Christian education is a conviction, parents will explore every option to make it a possibility for their children.

But what about those folks who already do live in a mobile home (to use this example) or a townhouse, or who are renting and are cost-cutting in every department of their family life but still don't have a hope of coming up with the needed \$400.00 or \$800.00 per month? For them, Christian education doesn't seem possible. But where there is a conviction, there is usually a way, especially when believing people join together in prayer and work. Let's look at some factors in this problem (I invite readers to respond with their own solutions and reflections on this matter – let's get a discussion going on this important topic).

Deaconal aid for tuition fees?

Frequently, people in this difficult situation will be advised to seek help from the deacons in their church. Indeed, in not a few churches, the regular deaconal fund is used to assist families in obtaining Christian education for their children. Nonetheless, there are problems with this solution. The task of the deacons has to do with those who live under the pressure of sickness, loneliness and poverty. However, many families which cannot afford Christian education are hardly needy. They have food, clothing, shelter, transportation and a regular if modest income. Such people often find it difficult to approach the deacons for assistance. Their reluctance arises from the Biblical insight that the deaconate exists to support the poor and afflicted – a category to which they don't feel they belong at all.

Even if the deaconal-assistance route is not the way to go, it cannot be denied that education of covenant youth is a corporate responsibility. Even secular society understands that the nurture of the youth is a task for which all must give their share. Hence, all ratepayers, whether young or old, with children or without, must also pay the education tax. In the Christian community, with its covenantal bonds, this collective responsibility must be felt very keenly. Therefore, we can only register our profound disappointment when parents opt out of the school societies the moment their last child graduates – feeling that they have done their duty and that now it is time to take a break from the onerous fees. Similarly, we can't admire the mentality which allows for extravagant weddings and expensive honeymoons followed by years of non-support of the local Christian school society. These kind of behaviours don't reflect strong convictions about Christian education. Universal support of the Reformed schools would go a long way to keeping tuition fees at a reasonable level. The whole community has a responsibility for our covenant children.

Other strategies might include the idea of an income-based tuition fee, including free tuition for those under a certain income. At least one large Can. Ref. School Society follows a practice along these lines with good success. We could also examine the idea of a tuition-assistance fund managed by an outside committee and funded by donations and even estates. Such a committee would have to follow stringent guidelines, since God does not permit us to subsidize irresponsible people.

Philosophical factors

The loss of consensus about Reformed education arises in part from economic factors. Of course, economics is also philosophical. The way we make money and spend money is determined by our deepest heart commitments. By "philosophical factors," I mean different views about the value and necessity of Christian education.

Some people have lost a sense of the need for Christian education because they don't understand the nature of education. They feel that schooling is just a matter of acquiring some factual knowledge. In their view, these "facts" can be acquired at a public school just as conveniently and suitably as at a Reformed school. We do not deny that some young people travel through the public system and emerge as mature believers who are fully committed to serving Christ in all areas of their life. But they do so, of



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course, despite the system and not because of it. The real question here is not whether some young people survive or do not survive. The real question is: how would God have us educate covenant youth? What method of education honours Him?

Posing the question in this way leads to better insights. How could it be pleasing to God to subject immature and vulnerable young people to a God-hating institution of learning? Many parents feel, of course, that the public school is neutral and not anti-Christian at all. The truth, however, is that the Name of the Living God is not welcome in the public school. The system is not neutral toward God but rather bans Him. You may bring the Name of the Living God to the front steps of the public school, but not inside the front door. Entry is prohibited for the Lord. The public school does not mind if you are a Christian, as long as you keep your Christian faith life to the privacy of your own house. In other words, secular schools and secular society tolerate God as long as He is an irrelevant God without any claims on them or their work and study.

Thus, the continuous message of public education to impressionable youth is that God is irrelevant to the facts. The problem is not that the public system lacks faith. The problem is rather that the faith of the public system is misplaced: its faith is in humanity! Through its bureaucracy, its teachers and above all its curriculum, the public system promotes the idea that humanity can build a culture and a civilization – apart from God. This basic assumption permeates the entire enterprise. There is no fear of God and hence no wisdom.

Home schooling


Another philosophical factor is reflected especially in the home-schooling moment. The right of parents to home school their children should be defended. Families which follow this course should not be ostracized. Instead, let's give them room to do what they feel is best for their children, and seek to involve them as much as possible in our communities. In some cases, they have decided to home-school because the Christian school proved to be an intolerable or unworkable environment for their own children.

While they do complain at times about being ostracized, home-schooling families can themselves fall into the grip of

an insular mentality which leads to self-isolation. We may sometimes notice an absolutizing of the family as if this is the only legitimate educational institution before God. In this thinking, the family becomes a kingdom unto itself, oblivious to the broader covenantal community. It's no accident that in some circles the home school movement is paired with the home-church movement, in which the family worships on its own or with at most one or two other families and holds itself apart from the local church. What we see, then, in some cases, is a kind of idolatry of the family.

Against this absolutizing of the family, we need to emphasize the legitimate concerns and interests of the whole community in each and every covenant child. After all, a child of believing parents belongs to God's church and congregation! Yes, parents have a great responsibility to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord. But the children belong in the first place to God and His covenant, which is to say, also to His church and congregation – his covenantal family. Hence, Christian education should as much as possible reflect this covenantal identity of the child. It's somewhat ironic that the best home-schools soon comes to resemble regular Christian schools, for home-schooling parents soon band together to provide opportunities for music instruction, choirs, sports activities and foreign language learning. What we have in the best home-schooling situations is a Christian School on a very small scale with a great deal of parental involvement. Perhaps the gap between homeschooling and Christian day schools is in some cases not so much philosophical as pragmatic, a difference of methods rather than principles.

A suggestion

The tears in the education consensus need not lead to panic. They do indicate, however, that we cannot take this consensus for granted. Each generation must commit itself anew to the vision of Reformed education. We must know why we have our Christian schools and what we are trying to accomplish with them. To that end, would it not be a good thing for local boards and societies to hold periodic "education rallies" to celebrate what the Lord has given in our schools and to promote necessary insight into the educational enterprise? If the members lack a sharp sense of the rationale for the schools, the schools will perish. 



What's inside?

In this issue, we conclude Dr. Van Dam's two part article on Bible Translations.

We also include a short article by Rev. John Van Popta about a shift in the abortion debate. The pro-death activists used to try have us believe that a child in the womb was just "tissue." No one believes that anymore and the abortionists admit that the "tissue" is a real human being – that an abortion is the taking of human life. But now they say: "So what? What's your point?" Chilling.

And then we play catch up. We have had a number of reports of meetings, letters and book reviews pile up while we had to publish various other more pressing articles. You will find them in this issue.

GvP

By H.J.J. Feenstra

BE WISE WITH WISDOM!

The wise enjoyment of sexuality – Proverbs 5, 6, 7

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Wees wijs met de wijsheid,
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Translated by T.M.P. VanderVen

Marriage, sexuality, adultery – these matters are not dealt with in a few proverbs at the end. They receive broad attention in these introductory chapters. That indicates the important role which sexuality plays in the lives of all people. You are a person, a man or a woman, with your own feelings and thoughts. Daily you see other men and women, or boys and girls around you. You interact with each other, you talk to one another, you work together. The daily reality simply assumes that sexuality exists. It would be naive to think that undesirable intimacies arise all of a sudden. Of course not, something is already going on well before others may notice.

Sexuality exists, with all its tensions and problems which may be healthy or unhealthy. Even during a church service you may notice the opposite sex, and this may distract your attention from the proclamation of God's Word and the songs of praise which we sing to the Lord. Sexual tension may surface in other ways. It could even happen that such tensions form the real background for, e.g., church problems. Indeed, these tensions must be released somehow. Sexuality influences all relationships, it is there when contacts are made – often without mention in the background. At times it can generate a rather unhealthy atmosphere.

And then, in today's world people are in such a hurry to have sex. The media is full of it, and it influences all of us also. Many people cannot wait to satisfy their own desires. After knowing each other for few hours only, couples rush to the bedroom. People have little regard for each other

in their rush to satisfy their sexual appetite. The government attempts to combat the AIDS epidemic by advertising *safe sex*, and provides ample information about it. However, many are not even aware of a Christian alternative. No, making love is necessary, sex is a right. Those who suppress such drives turn themselves into abnormal, frustrated individuals.

The stories are becoming sadly familiar: a party at a camp ground which ends together in the one sleeping bag. The next morning: the partner has disappeared, but left behind a note with the message, "Welcome to the AIDS club."

At another camping site, two Reformed boys meet two girls. The girls are interested, but the boys refuse. They explain that they do not believe in free sex, because they are Reformed and such behaviour is against their principles. The next morning the whole camping site has heard the story that these boys are homosexual. Such principles are simply incredible, obviously an excuse, and therefore. . . .

The Holy Spirit found it necessary to deal extensively with sexuality and adultery in three chapters. Those who ignore these chapters in a misplaced sense of prudishness are not wise. Let us be glad that we have a God who does not let us mess around with these things. He wants to teach us how to deal with sexuality in a controlled and wise manner, in order that we may advance in the art of true living, and may learn to enjoy also this aspect of human life.

Openness and clarity

First of all, these chapters teach us openness and clarity; they do not teach shamelessness but frankness. And also in these things God's Word is the norm. Proverbs 5 - 7 do not contain some abstract considerations, contemplations, or arguments.


We see the loose woman before us. She presents herself to advantage, even with fluttering eyelashes. We hear her talking seductively as she tries to capture her prey between the evening meal and dusk. We are told how she lures a man into her perfumed den.

These are not unsavory descriptions; they are designed to impress upon us the fact that sexuality is real, a fact of life, a matter of people of flesh and blood. Sexuality concerns all of us. It is not merely a *thing*, an object. Sexuality exists, it lives, it works, it throbs, it seethes. These proverbs say, "Be realistic". We fall far short when we get stuck in some generalities such as, "We should not muddle with the sources of life," or "The Lord also sees us in our bedrooms." Certainly, these things are true, yet parents sell their children short with such general statements.

When parents do not speak with their children about these things clearly and on time, then they will have had their information from somewhere else. And the chances are high that they will have heard true things in a bad context, and therefore have been given false information.

"Be realistic," the proverbs admonish. We are right in the middle of it all. Every one has a TV; the beaches and swimming pools are public places. The newspapers are full of advertisements of friendly ladies and enjoyable places. The telephone service has sex numbers available.

Those who believe that Reformed boys and girls do not see these things, are being unrealistic and naive. Not without reason are we told every Sunday, *Do not commit adultery*, and *Do not covet your neighbour's wife*.

Be realistic, open, sober, and clear. Remain in all of this truly Christian, faithful, refined, sensitive. Then you will live wisely and sensibly. 

The Changing Terrain of the Abortion Debate

By J.L. Van Popta

On Saturday, June 17, in *The Globe and Mail* [p. D1, 5] there was an article titled *The Issue That Won't Go Away*. It concerned the new debate about "the rights of the fetus." This debate has gained prominence because of a number of high profile cases worldwide. A judge in Winnipeg places a pregnant woman into a drug treatment center by court order, because of her solvent sniffing addiction. The judge rules that the law does not protect her fetus, but common sense does. A woman in England discovers she is carrying twins. She has her doctor terminate the life of one by having him insert a needle into the heart of one so that it will wither and die, while she brings the other to full term. Then she will deliver both the live child and the *mummified* one. A mother, after having taken fertility drugs, learns that she is carrying eight fetuses in her womb. She sells her story to a British tabloid. The more live births, the more money the tabloid will pay. "There is a clash of values here," the paper suggests. People think, "Something, surely, should be done about it."

When we read of these things, we agree. Perhaps, as Christians strongly opposed to abortion, we think that we have a new window of opportunity. The government surely must do something now. I agree. Canada is the only Western nation without any abortion law at all. Technically, a woman could abort her child one day before delivery and be free from prosecution. Something must be done. I fear, however, that this debate is moving to a new and more frightening stage. *The Globe and Mail* article reports of an essay written by an American feminist, Naomi Wolf (published last Oct. 18, in *The New Republic*). She argues that


by arguing so vociferously that a fetus is not a person, and that a woman's autonomy [is] always paramount, many pro-choice activists [have] lost credibility with average women. "Say what you will," wrote

Ms. Wolf, "pregnancy confounds Western philosophy's idea of the autonomous self: The pregnant woman is in fact both, a person in her body, and a vessel. Rather than seeing both beings as alive and interdependent – seeing the life within life – and acknowledging that sometimes nonetheless, the woman must choose her life over the fetus's, Second wave feminists have reacted to the dehumanization of women by dehumanizing the creatures within them.

She continues on this appalling road. Listen to Naomi Wolf:

There is no easy way to deny the powerful argument that a woman's equality in society must give her some irreducible rights unique to her biology, *including the right to take the life within her life. But we don't have to lie to ourselves about what we are doing.* [Emphasis added.]

Naomi Wolf is raising the stakes. She wants pregnant women not to dehumanize that new life within themselves. They are not to deny that what they carry is a person, a human life. Rather, they are to acknowledge that they do carry new human life, but that a woman has the right to take that life. "Abortion is the killing of human life." Ms. Wolf will acknowledge that. "We don't have to lie to ourselves about it anymore." And then she insists that a woman has the right to take that life, if she wants to. Naomi Wolf's pro-choice position acknowledges that "the fetus is a human life," and then turns around and argues that the mother has the irreducible right to kill her child. This is the first step on the road to infanticide. If you would say to Naomi Wolf, "The fetus is a human child," she might respond, "Yes? Well? So what?"

The terrain of the debate is changing. We certainly must be ready for a new and alarming battle for the sanctity of life. 



The poem below is by Totius, a theological professor in Potchefstroom, South Africa, who has translated the Bible into South Afrikaan, and who is also a noted poet. It was written following the death of his two little daughters, lost during a three month span, one to lightning, and one to meningitis. Included below is first the Dutch Afrikaans, and then the English translation, provided to us by Ralph Winkel, who sent in the poem and provided the explanation and translation.

Hul moes na die hemel
en niks kon hun hou nie
Geen wag van die vader
geen noeder so trou nie
Ek het baaie gesoek
gevra om een teken
Ek het baaie gepeins
geraai en gereken
maar niks wat vir my
die raastel ontwar nie
Hul moes naar de hemel
en niks kon hun hou nie.

They had to go to heaven
and nothing could keep them
no watch by the father
no mother so trusting
I have sought much
asked for a sign
I have pondered much
guessed and figured
but nothing what for me
can unravel this riddle
They had to go to heaven
and nothing could keep them.

(Winkel notes that the Afrikaans poem "has much more feeling and hidden emotions" which are lost in the translation.)



Which Bible translation? (second of two parts)

By C. Van Dam

What about the NIV?

The last time we considered how the matter of Bible translations was dealt with in our churches in the past.¹ We also saw that all things considered the RSV was not really an attractive option in the present situation, given the repeated justified concerns that have been raised against it. Also, the NASB and NKJV were not very attractive options in spite of the conservative background of these translations. This leaves the NIV which also has a theologically conservative background. This translation has become very popular, also in our circles. When concerns are expressed, they deal with the manner of translation. Could the NIV not be too free? Is it literal enough? Now in this introduction it is not possible to go into all kinds of important aspects about the art of translating. Let me only make some general comments and then go directly to the NIV, and, for the sake of comparison, the other translations.

Goal of translating

In discussing the matter of translating we must be careful of false dilemmas. One such dilemma is reducing the norm for a good translation to whether it is a literal or not. Anyone who is in any way involved in translating knows that it is not that simple.

What is the intent of a translation? The goal of a translation must be to convey accurately and clearly the meaning of the original.² The question of literalness, while very important, must always be subservient to the overriding goal of clarity and faithfulness to the original. Two simple examples can suffice to illustrate this point. The Dutch expression "daarmee is de kous af" literally translates "with that the stocking is finished"; but it means "that is the end of the matter." The Dutch expression: "ze zijn er uit" literally renders "they are out of it"; but it means "they have solved the problem"! Anyone with a knowledge of more than one modern

Indo-European language can multiply such examples. But now imagine the even greater difficulty of translating a language from one family of tongues like Semitic (e.g. Hebrew), into another language family like Indo-European (e.g. English). In the struggle of trying to communicate accurately the one language in another we are ultimately confronted by God's judgment at the Tower of Babel. We must never underestimate the depth and wide-ranging implications of that curse. Not just words were changed, but also mind sets, ways of looking at things, and the manner of expression. This is obvious when one compares languages from different language families. For these reasons the task of translating is exceedingly difficult and can never be reduced to the equation: if it is literal it is accurate.³

This point can be demonstrated with some examples from the NASB and NKJV which generally wish to be as literal as possible, but which are not therefore necessarily accurate or clear. For example, in John 14 the Lord Jesus speaks of His going to the Father and in that context says "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in me" (NASB). The NKJV is almost exactly the same. Now this may be literal, but what does it mean that the ruler of the world "has nothing in me"? Such a translation does not do the task of translation which is to make the original clear and therefore it is a poor rendering. The NIV is better. It has "I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me." (The RSV is similar.) In Psalm 16:9 the NASB and NKJV translate word for word "Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices." But what does "my glory rejoices" mean? As it stands that segment of the translation says nothing. The NIV translates that part with clarity: "my tongue rejoices," in the line with the ancient Greek translation of the passage and the

rendering used in Acts 2:26. More examples could be given, but the point is obvious. Literal translations can be less than clear and even meaningless.

Literal or not?

In light of the above it is not surprising that with all their expressed emphasis on literal translation, both the NASB and NKJV quietly translate in a considerable less than literal way as well. There is often simply no other way to get the meaning across. For example, in Num. 15:30, the Hebrew: "with raised hand" is rendered by the NASB: "defiantly" (with no note indicating what the literal translation is). Similarly, on the same passage, the NKJV has "presumptuously." These translations get the meaning across, but they are hardly literal. The NIV also translates "defiantly."

Another example, in Amos 6:10, the Hebrew reads: "hush! For not to cause to remember in the name of Yahweh" which can probably be rendered most literally in understandable English, (while retaining the ambiguity of the original), by "Keep quiet. For the name of the LORD is not to be mentioned" (NASB). The NKJV has the freer "Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the LORD" (The KJV is very similar). The NIV has "Hush! We must not mention the name of the LORD." In view of the criticisms that are sometimes voiced, it is ironic that the NIV has actually less interpretation here than the NKJV.

There is, understandably, sometimes disagreement on whether a word should be translated literally or not. In Job 16:13 the Hebrew reads: "my kidneys" (as inmost part of man). The NKJV has: "my heart [with a note: literally *kidney*]." On the other hand the NASB and NIV retain the literal "my kidneys." One can justify the choice of the NKJV, but again it is ironic that a translation priding itself on complete equivalence is the only one not giving

a literal translation on this passage. A similar problem with "kidneys" in Ps 7:9 is justifiably, but nevertheless non-literally translated "minds" by the NKJV. The NASB and NIV do this as well.⁴

All this illustrates how difficult translation can be and that we should be careful with too easily saying that one Bible translation is literal and the other is not. It is a matter of degrees.⁵ The overriding concern should be for accuracy and clarity. All translation involves interpretation. Happily, the NASB, NIV, and NKJV all share conservative presuppositions and the translation decisions that are made are usually acceptable.

The NIV

This does not however exclude the fact that every translation has weaknesses and remains the work of human beings. This is also true of the NIV. There are instances in the NIV where a more literal translation would have been quite clear and thus preferable. For example, in Job 31:1, the NIV has "look lustfully at" a girl, whereas the NASB has "gaze at" and the NKJV "look upon." The Hebrew in question indicates "to give careful attention to." The NIV "lustfully," although justifiable from the context, is not necessary and should have been left out to retain the ambiguity of the original. Where a translation that is as literal as possible is clear for the understanding, there is no need to "improve" on the original. Another example: In John 21:5, the NIV has "friends" while the Greek indicates a child. Now the NIV rendering can be justified by noting that when Christ so addresses his disciples he does not focus on their age, but on the affection and endearment he has for them.⁶ Yet it would have been better in my opinion to render "children." Indeed, the NIV's translation here is surprising because it is inconsistent. Elsewhere, where adults are addressed with a Greek term meaning "child," the NIV renders "children" (1 John 2:13, 18, 28; 3:7).

On the other hand, the NIV greatly enhances our understanding of the original by not always translating in a slavishly literal way. An example is the NIV rendering of 1 Cor. 4:9. Let us first read the passage. The NIV version follows that of the NASB in order to allow for easy comparison. Words that translate the same Greek words are coded similarly.⁷

NASB: For, I think, God has *exhibited* us apostles *last of all*, as men

condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

NIV: For it seems to me that God has *put us apostles on display at the end of the procession*, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.

If one compares the coded passages, the differences are obvious. The NIV explains the meaning of the Greek by supplying words not specifically mentioned in the original so that the modern reader can know immediately what the flavour of the Greek vocabulary is. Now one has to be very careful with this sort of rendering so that one does not go beyond what is in the original passage. But, given our distance from the world of the New Testament, if a Bible translation wants to protect itself against possible misunderstanding, it has little choice but to give some explanation in the translation. Now in the case at hand, there is to our knowledge no argument about the correctness of the NIV's rendition. Indeed, a procession and arena are in view here and the Greek vocabulary indicates that.⁸ One cannot know that from the NASB and NKJV. Only those who know the Greek language well will know the connotations associated with the vocabulary used, connotations which the NIV brings out in its translation. This makes the translation more accurate and prevents to some degree at least the creation of wrong impressions as to the meaning of the text. Technically no additional meaning is really added. The NIV is thus to be commended for this. Its great clarity is a great asset to the faithful transmission of this part of the Word.⁹

Another example – in this case one in which the original allows for more room for interpretation – is 1 John 5:18. The NIV renders the first part of this passage: "We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin." Where the NIV translated "does not continue to sin," the NASB simply renders the negative with the verb "sins." (Similarly 1 John 3:6, 9). From a grammatical point of view it is difficult to say that the one is right and the other is wrong. The NIV rendering is consistent with a long standing Reformed interpretation of this passage, but those who think that believers never fall into sin again and hold to a form of perfectionism will disagree with this rendering.¹⁰

AMERICAN REFORMED FELLOWSHIP

The American Reformed Fellowship invites you to worship with us in Florida. Each Sunday from November 17, 1996 to April 1997, we meet at Palmview First Baptist Church, 49th Street at U.S. 41 across from Skyway Village in Palmetto. Our public gatherings are at 11:15 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Bring your lunch and enjoy a social hour between the services.

If no minister is available from one of the American or Canadian Reformed Churches, we will use videotaped services on a large screen. A collection is held for general expenses.

For information in Florida, please call (813) 729-4863 or (813) 739-1306. In Canada, please call (905) 563-8383. Our mailing address is c/o Mr. M. VanderVelde, 4219 Mountainview Road, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2, Canada.

Conclusions

Many more examples could be given,¹¹ but we must come to a conclusion. The Committee that recommended the NIV to Synod Abbotsford noted in its report that, when compared with the NASB and the NKJV, the NIV is simply the finest translation when all the criteria and the relative importance of the different factors are taken into consideration. Furthermore, this translation takes all of Scripture into account and is true to the Word of God.

The clarity and readability of the NIV may spark a renewed interest in personal Bible reading and study among young and old and stimulate anew the exploring the treasures of God's Word. It is somehow difficult to imagine the English of the NASB and NKJV sparking that kind of response.

I wholeheartedly support this assessment. The Synod Abbotsford after considering the whole matter was also able to recommend the NIV to the churches. The NIV indeed deserves a place in our midst and is now being adopted in churches.

The Synod Abbotsford also continued the Committee on Bible Translation to pass suggestions or concerns about the NIV to the NIV Translation Centre. A revision of the NIV is being worked

on and the Bible Translation Centre has informed the committee that our input is welcome. One can be sure that this committee will be vigilant in sending in comments for improvement and will also be watchful for the continued good future development of the NIV.¹²

¹This second and last installment continues the publication of a speech held for the Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students in Burlington on March 22, 1996.

²See on this point the position of B. Holwerda as related in the excerpt from the report of the Bible Translations Committee, "Faithfulness in Translating," *Clarion* 44:6 (1995) 136.

³For these issues, also see Committee on Bible Translations, *Report to Synod Abbotsford 1995*, 6-10, 75-77.

⁴See further Committee on Bible Translations, *Report to Synod Abbotsford 1995*, 65-77.

⁵One can, for example, also point to places where the NIV is more literal than the RSV. See for instance, 1 Sam. 2:1, 10 where the NIV renders literally "horn" and the RSV more freely "power" and in 1 Kgs. 4:24 where the NIV has the literal rendering "-river" and the RSV translates "Euphrates."

⁶See on this point, J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Vol. 1 (1989) 110.

⁷See on this example The Committee on Bible Translations, *Report to Synod Abbotsford 1995*, 82-83.

⁸See, e.g., on this passage the notes to the Dutch Staten Vertaling, Calvin, and L. Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (TNCT 7; 1958), 80.

⁹This principle (that a mere literal translation may not be good enough to accurately convey the meaning) is one that has also been defended in our own Reformed heritage by, e.g., Prof. B. Holwerda. For this reason, Holwerda wanted to see official notes attached to a Bible translation, as was done with the Dutch States General Bible (Staten Vertaling), although Holwerda did not want something quite that extensive. Holwerda insisted that with the translation of Scripture we must avoid creating misrepresentations. (Holwerda in his *Populair wetenschappelijke bijdragen*, 83). Today we are in no position to have official notes added to the Scriptures. The approach of the NIV in attempting to convey the exact flavour of the original is therefore to be applauded.


¹⁰Cf. for the Reformed understanding, e.g., the note in the Dutch Staten Vertaling. See further Committee on Bible Translations, *Report to Synod Abbotsford 1995*, 158-159.

¹¹See further Committee on Bible Translations, *Report to Synod Abbotsford 1995*, passim and, e.g., H. M. Wolf, "When Literal is not Accurate" in K. L. Barker, ed., *The NIV. The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (1991), 127-136.

CHURCH NEWS 

CHANGE OF CONTACT PERSON:
Ministers wishing authorization to solemnize marriage in Ontario are requested to contact from now on

Mr. C. Lindhout
16 Northcliffe Blvd.
Toronto, ON M6H 3H1
Tel. (416) 653-3073

¹²Recently concerns have been raised with a view to the NIV revision work that is currently underway. However, until firm information is available about future revisions from the International Bible Society it is very difficult to discuss these issues in any meaningful way. The Committee on Bible Translation is in the process of gathering information. Of course, any assessment of possible future changes does not change the work done on the NIV now used in the church. 

THE HI-LITER

News from Here and There

By C. Van Spronsen

Sometimes announcements in bulletins can make you rather curious. For example the following from London, ON: "The issue of proper musical accompaniment during the worship services is discussed. After review of past discussions on this topic in *Clarion* it is decided that future accompaniment will be in the "Traditional" manner." What was non-traditional and what is traditional??

The Church at Ottawa maintains regular contact with the Reformed Churches in Quebec. We quote Rev. J.L. Van-Popta: "Last week I spent 3 days in Quebec city visiting the churches there. We had fruitful meetings and discussions. It was good to worship with the congregation there and to enjoy Christian fellowship across linguistic boundaries. A missionary from the Netherlands led the service. There is a very real sense we saw that the Pentecost gospel reaches across language boundaries."

The bulletin of Burlington-West informs us that at a meeting on June 13 it was decided by a large majority to proceed and continue with the work toward instituting a new church in Flamborough on January 1, 1997, D.V. This would involve about 330 members living north and west of Waterdown.

In Chatham, ON a couple challenged the congregation to give up television for one month, namely July. "To encourage each other in this and to build each other up, and to ensure that this is going to happen, we request that all T.V.'s be brought to the church in the room beside the consistory room. Delivery can be arranged!" Success!

The congregation at Taber, AB could start meeting in its own new building on Sunday, June 30. "With few regrets" they said farewell to the Elks Hall. "It served us well, but

we're not sad to leave it." The inauguration of the new building was set for September 6.

In his newsletter, Mr. James Baartse, Bible translator in Mexico passes on the following true anecdote from which we can learn as well. "It seems growing up on the mission field might give kids a different perspective about a few things. For example the following was heard as two children (of one of the translators here) were playing together . . . "Let's play *Cowboys and Indians*. You be the Indian and I'll come and learn your language."

In Carman the church community is proceeding with the construction of a seniors' residence. It is expected that the building will be completed by the end of this year.

In Launceston, Tasmania, a "Congregation Development Committee" was established following the example of the Netherlands where over the last years "Gemeente Opbouw" (Congregational development) receives much attention. This committee will analyze problems but also recommend and seek to implement ways to deal with them for the building up of the congregation for the greater glory of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The "Singing in the Park" outreach program in Burlington, ON again drew good crowds and displayed a variety of talents. It is indeed a privilege to live in a country where all this is possible!

The Churches in Irian Jaya suffered a great loss in the death of Rev. Isai Dombon, 38 years, a native minister who meant so much to the mission congregations and the building up of churchlife in that part of the world. It was the Lord's will, as Rev. H. Versteeg wrote in an "In Memoriam" inserted

in the bulletin of the Toronto Church. "It was His timing. His servant has sown the seed. He will bring it to fruition. And He has other servants as well. Praise be to God!"

The Church at Smithers clarified its "travel attestation policy." "Visiting members of sister churches who desire to attend the table of the Lord as a rule shall submit a written declaration from the local consistory (if no written declaration is available, a verbal declaration will be accepted)."

The mission conducted by the Australian Churches in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is not going well due to lack of workers. They were unable to call a missionary while the mission workers of one location had to return to Australia due to illness. At a meeting of the cooperating churches a proposal to scale down the Mission work in PNG was to be discussed. It is to be hoped that workers will be found!

The Council of the Maranatha Church at Surrey, BC with regret granted Rev. R.F. Boersema's request to retire as missionary due to his failing eyesight. Subject to concurring advice of Classis this would take effect as of July 1, 1997.

The Langley Church decided to invite "all of the churches belonging to the following federations in BC and Washington to be present at a meeting to be convened on Sept. 27, 1996, in Langley: the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Fellowship of Uniting Reformed Churches, the Free Reformed Churches, and the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the feasibility and advisability of overturing the synods of these churches to create an organization called the Association of Reformed Churches (ARCH). Such an Association would function as a means to further the cause of ecclesiastical unity between these churches."

The Validity of Denver's Place Within Our Federation

By K. Jonker

In *Clarion* Volume 45 # 10 (May 17, 1996) I wrote a letter to the editor responding to Rev.G.Ph. Van Popta's article: Contradictory Acts. I did not touch the issue about which VanPopta wrote but focussed on some of his feelings. I received some gentle encouragement from within our churches to write about my own view regarding this issue, in particular about the validity of Denver's place within our federation. In response to appeals this admission by Classis Al-

berta/Manitoba caused recent Synods 1992 and 1995 to qualify our relation with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) as being in an "interim situation" or being on "two tracks." In writing about this matter I make generous use of an appeal the Church of Winnipeg sent to General Synod Abbotsford 1995 (see Acts 1995 Art. 67).

From the outset I have always been of the opinion that the initial refusal to admit Denver on the mere grounds that

"the Canadian Reformed Churches have recognized the OPC as a true church" was illegitimate. Recognizing a church as true church is one thing. Putting that recognition into effect is another thing. The confession mentions the marks of the true church. The confession does not make stipulations how such recognition must be put into practice. Sometimes the recognition can be immediately realized; on other occasions this effectuation of a recognition takes more time.

Therefore, regarding the decision of General Synod of Coaldale in 1977 (in what follows General Synods are identified as Coaldale 1977, Smithville 1980 etc) one should not only look at the "confessional" aspect but also to the ecclesiastical and practical difficulties. The latter aspect prevented Coaldale 1977 from establishing a sister church relationship with the OPC.

Thus Classis March 1992, supported by Regional Synod 1992, made an illegitimate use of Synod Coaldale 1977's decision (Coaldale 1977) regarding OPC. Coaldale 1977 did not only recognize the OPC, it also considered that "further discussion on divergencies in confession and church polity is desirable." Because of this situation Coaldale 1977 also decided to instruct deputies "to inform the Churches from time to time about the progress made (e.g. by press releases of combined Committee meetings)." Thus, the WHOLE Article 91 of the Acts of 1977 shows that something still had to be cleared up and taken away before a full sister church relationship could be established!

Since 1977 every Synod, dealing with appeals and Deputies' reports, applied Coaldale 1977 in this way. The recognition of the OPC as a true Church was not rescinded, nor did thus far any Synod draw the consequences from this recognition. Our churches continued on the once chosen way: progress toward full ecclesiastical unity. Therefore I agree with Lincoln 1992 and Abbotsford 1995 which considered that our relationship with the OPC is a temporary one. It is undoubtedly an important relationship which tells our churches on the one hand that the OPC should not be ignored, and on the other hand it impresses upon us that full ecclesiastical union (sister church relationship) has not yet been reached (see further Acts 1980, 1983, 1986 regarding contact with OPC).

Abbotsford 1995 calls our contact with the OPC being on "two tracks." These two tracks are not an invention of Synod 1995 but an accurate observation that those two tracks were already laid in 1977. The dissenting churches also co-operated in the laying of these two tracks by receiving the Synods 1977 through to 1989 decisions! Thus, since 1977 our churches *honestly and sincerely* (!) moved on those tracks to come to the end: full sister church relationship with one another, hopefully at Synod 1998 (see Acts 1995, Art.106 VI D 4, p.75). I wholeheartedly

emphasize and endorse this longing of our churches that the implication of the first part of Coaldale 1977 decision can be realized in 1998!

The difficulties pertaining to the "divergencies" and the contact with the Christian Reformed Church, have been the reason that our churches have not yet established the "full correspondence" Coaldale 1977 was aiming at. Article 31 Church Order requires *all* of our churches to go along on this way, making progress (!) to full unity with the OPC. I underline: *all* of our churches; I think of the dissenting churches in Alberta, as well as the churches which repeatedly come with requests to rescind 1977. When you study those repeated requests to stop contact with the OPC, you see how difficult it is to appreciate different church practices even though you cannot deny that those churches display the three marks of the true Church of our Lord!

In these circumstances much patience is called for. Yes, the "interim" situation with the OPC requires patience, and also compassion, understanding, in short, scriptural wisdom. Pushing our own views by making rigorous claims of either rescinding Coaldale 1977 or denying Denver's place within our federation bring us further apart from the OPC as well as from one another as Canadian (and American) Reformed churches. The decision of Coaldale 1977, recognizing the OPC as a true Church, can only be fully practiced when "full correspondence" (Acts 1977. Art.91, p.42) has been established. As long as this relationship is not established it is not legitimate to approach the OPC as if they are our sister churches. None of our *General Synods* have followed that approach. On the contrary our churches gave approval to the admittance of two former OPC churches into our federation.

To a certain extent all the churches became involved in those admittances through an appeal to Synod Winnipeg 1989. This appeal concerned the admittance of Blue Bell (see Acts 1989 Art. 143). Synod Winnipeg did not grant that appeal. Thus, since no other church appealed Winnipeg 1989 our churches agreed on the possibility of admitting a former OPC congregation into our federation, without violating "Coaldale 1977". Our churches judged that in the "interim" it is not in conflict with the confession to admit a former OPC-congregation!

Therefore on the basis of all previous synodical judgments we must conclude that Denver has a valid place with us. Receiving this congregation into our federation did not "undermine or nullify the confessed ordinance of God concerning maintaining the unity of the Church." Lincoln 1992 was of the same view (see Acts 1992, Art. 72 IV A.2.c. ii).

To refuse Denver (which came out of the PCA and which initially sought admittance to the OPC, but broke off that contact, and meanwhile accepted our Reformed standards!) its place among us on the grounds that the OPC is a true church and that affiliation should take place with the OPC with reference to the confession, is applying our confession in a wrong situation. If that application of our Reformed Confession on the Church would be right, then our churches as a whole must be accused of unfaithfulness to its confessions as they have lingered in putting Coaldale 1977 into full effect! The three dissenting churches might think this way, yet they haven't been able to convince all the churches.

I for myself would be very careful in pressing the recognition of a church as true and faithful to such a rigid consequence that such recognition immediately implies having a full relationship. Several historical, cultural and practical (often closely related!) differences (and sensitivities) might hinder such a full union for a long time! Should you in such situations then refrain from an official recognition as the Australian Churches do in relation to the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia? That would be the safe and easy way for us, but certainly not in agreement with our confession on the catholicity of the Church! Therefore, when we witness Christ's gathering work in other churches, then we thankfully recognize them as true churches according to our confession. We, then, also work towards full union: towards a federative union, or towards a sister church relationship.

To a certain extent, the relationship between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the OPC can be compared with a situation in the Netherlands. Our Dutch sister churches recognize the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken as true churches. However, we do not know of any instance that our Dutch sister churches refer (new) members to those churches since they have no ecclesiastical unity (as yet) with the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken. Nor


do we do that. Imagine that one of our members leaves for a place in Holland, where a true Church (a Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk) is present and with a sister church of the Canadian Reformed Churches at a distance of 50 km., would we urge such a leaving member to join the local Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk? No, we give that member an attestation to our distant sister church!

What about the recognition of a local secession church from the Christian Reformed Churches as a true and faithful church by one of our Churches like it happened in Hamilton ON and Vernon BC? Should they have waited with such a recognition until all their (ecclesiastical, practical/cultural and human) hurdles were solved? No, with the eye of faith, you observe the work of God, you recognize this by saying according to your confession: there the true church of the Lord is revealed. We do not make a church true. We must recognize God's work in gathering His people. Such recognition gives us a lot of hard but beautiful work to do! Our responsibility, then, is to be faithful in trying to understand each other in the manner we give expression to the true faith. We must be welcoming and loving to each other, living with each other in peace. Adhering to our accepted church practice we establish a sister-church relationship. In this way we indeed "make" a sisterchurch!

In the light of the above it is clear that I disagree with the three churches mentioned by VanPopta, with Coaldale, Surrey and Grand Rapids. I find their approach aggressive, intimidating and rationalistic. This is clearly evidenced by VanPopta's logical reasoning: "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." A little earlier he stated: "The confessions demand that." It all seems to be water-tight, but is it really? Is there not a difference between what we confess as truth and next how we ecclesiastically practice this truth? What would Coaldale, Surrey and Grand Rapids do in this situation: someone, who has been recognized to be a true believer but is a member of a Reformed church outside of our federation, comes to their church on a Sunday that the Lord's Supper is celebrated. On the basis of our confession Lord's Day 7 and 30 he is a true believer. Does the confession demand that he be admitted to the Lord's Supper? No, our church practice is different!

Let's stay closer to home. A 16 year old member of the congregation loves the Lord. His faith is attested to by the elders. He comes to them with the demand of the confession: I must celebrate the Lord's Supper. In this situation his request could be granted, but in most of such cases the consistory

would say: wait some time, you must first follow the pre-confession class and then come back to us. Does not the confession demand differently? No, in *peace* (that is in good order! 1Cor.14) and in Christian love the confession is practiced in the churches! Please, do not intimidate us with logic and demands. The reformed principle is here: *peace!*

I hope to have shown that Denver's place in our federation is valid. In our ecclesiastical situation since Coaldale 1977 the objections of the dissenting churches against receiving Denver are illegitimate. Their (continued) refusal to accept Denver is totally incorrect. If our churches would ignore the OPC then they would have a valid and strong point. But our churches didn't neglect the OPC. We moved on in "the interim" and on "two tracks" towards the hoped for and prayed for(!) end. This contact was maintained and is exercised still today. Let us humbly and loyally admit that this "hard labour" regarding our contact with the OPC was carried out with shortcomings and weaknesses, may be even inadvertently giving the impression of contradicting ourselves, – who can deny that? Yet, in our difficulties regarding OPC and Denver I discover a struggle – not to save face, but to work (*that's hard labour!*) for the peace in the Church of our exalted Lord. 

I.L.P.B. Update September 1996

Another summer has come and gone and after a time of relaxation comes a time to get back into the regular routine. The children will be back in school, catechism classes will begin again, the Men's, Women's and Young People's Societies will again study the Word of God D.V.

The I.L.P.B. is an undertaking of the Bible Study Societies and we urge you to support our endeavours by using our Reformed Bible Study Material, so this important work may continue.

This is a good time to stock up your personal library since we are having

an inventory reduction sale on a limited number of books, so don't delay, order TODAY!! The I.L.P.B. representative in your congregation will be happy to assist you and fill your orders promptly.

A new outline on 1 Corinthians by the late Prof. Selles is just off the press. He also started an outline on 2 Corinthians, which Prof. Geertsema is finishing and hopes to complete in the near future.

We are also working on Luke, Acts, Wat is Hierop Uw Antwoord, Believe and Confess, Schetsen, Jozua, Een Kon-

ing naar God's Wil and Jona Profet van God. We are revising and reprinting James and 1 and 2 Peter.

As you can tell, we have not been idle but are steadily working to fulfill our mandate to publish Reformed Bible Study Material and we ask that you also remember this work in your prayers.

May the Lord grant us all another fruitful Bible Study season.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Smoking: A few comments

In response to the February 9 1996 article by the professor Van Dam entitled 'A BURNING ISSUE' I would like to make the following comments:

1. Professor Van Dam should be commended for bringing our attention to a very serious problem in our circles. Smoking is clearly wrong and should be seen as such by all members of our church.

2. However we should view smoking within the larger context of the proper use of the talents that God has given us. Just as smoking is sinful; so is for example alcoholism obesity and workaholism. The problem in dealing with each of these issues is how to identify the point at which a lifestyle becomes sin. For example when does a person become obese? Clearly no two persons could identify and agree on a particular point, i.e., a specific weight. Clearly then, the suggestion from Professor Van Dam to ban smokers from the special office is out of place. For example is a 70 year old man placing his life at risk by smoking and so sinning against the sixth commandment? Moreover, if this man is to be barred from the special office, he should logically be placed under church discipline.

3. A more constructive approach to this problem lies in the education of our youth. Children should be taught the dangers involved in smoking at an early age, and this lesson should be reinforced throughout the child's school years. The application of this lesson should then ultimately be left up to the individual, as a nonthreatening approach towards education is always the most effective. In this respect, I would then like to encourage further discussion/education on this issue via *Clarion*, local speeches school presentations, or other means.

*Mrs. Nancy Van Halteren
Toronto, ON*

To the Editor:

Re: "The Value of Fasting" by br. Wes Bredenhof, *Clarion* Volume 45, No. 13, June 28, 1996.

When I read "... to bring glory to God's Name through the mortification of sin," and "Fasting is a means of sanctification, a way to holiness," I become very uncomfortable.

In the 1971 printing of the Book of Praise we can find the word mortification back in Lord's Day 33 or the H.C. "... mortification of the old nature," (Q&A 88, 89) and in the form for Public Profession of faith: "... to mortify your old nature." Lord's Day 20 has as heading: "God the Holy Spirit and our Sanctification," (also Lord's Day 8, Q&A 24); not "sanctification by fasting."

I sense here an undermining of Christ's perfect sacrifice and a human invention of pious substitution for the work of the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ sent as Comforter after his Ascension. When Jesus spoke in Matthew 6:16 He was still addressing the Old Testament dispensation, His work was not yet complete. He therefore spoke on the basis of the prevailing law, which as yet was to be fulfilled by Himself. The purpose for Jesus' rebuke was that God's people served Him with their lips while their heart was not in it.

Referring to 1 Corinthians 7:5, we find the word fasting only in the King James version, all the other versions (also the Dutch Nieuwe Vertaling) use "prayer."

No justice to the interpretation is done when a passage such as Luke 5:34, 35 is taken out of context of what follows in verses 36-39. When speaking to the church of the old dispensation, Christ admonishes from the spirit and demand of the law. He however continues by saying that this old garment cannot be patched because it would create greater problems. The old wine, having lost its living activity in the process of fermentation has become nice and pleasant to the senses; how-

ever, the church has not arrived yet! The process of activity was going to take a more dramatic process which would have to be contained and directed by the new revelation of God's truth in His word.

Therefore to say in brief, the New Testament form of fasting has become an abstaining from the works of sin in the study of God's Word and the Communion of the Saints (Hebrews 10:19-25). Please do not put water in the wine or reconstruct scaffolding which the Architect and Builder of God's Church does not deem necessary for the ongoing construction. The first stage is complete and does not require the supporting scaffolding any longer. Every member of Christ's church, be they healthy or otherwise, is a living member involved in all aspects of spiritual life, not like in the Old Testament on the outer fringes, Lev. 21:16-24; 35:1-6; Jer. 31:7-9, etc.

Yours in Christ
*Adrian L. Hamoen,
Vega, AB*

Dear Editor,

In the April 19, 1996 issue of your magazine your Hi-liter (as did br. J. L. van Burgel in his Letter-to-the-Editor, published in the May 31 issue) correctly quoted a few sentences from the letter of resignation sent to the Una Sancta Foundation by Rev. W. Huizinga, br. J. VanderRos and the undersigned. Following in the Foundation's footsteps, Rev. C. Bouwman, in his letter, bases his "added information" on one sentence only, as does br. Van Burgel in his comment. They all suggest that we have objections against the publication of articles on the Church. That this is definitely not the case may be proved by the fact that from our side three series on that topic were sent in but, indeed, "left aside, not allowed" or "heavily attacked" before publication. Proof of this has been presented in an-

other letter to the Foundation, dated 12 March 1996, which, however, has never been published in *Una Sancta*. In the same letter we emphatically deny to be supporters of "pluriformity and interdenominationalism," and repeat that the fundamental reason for our resignation is the change in editorial policy, which from the early fifties had the same basis as our churches: the Scriptures as confessed in the subordinate standards, the Three Forms of Unity, which create room for discussion. This room is no longer allowed. So your Hi-liter has already given the "better picture." The "added information" and commenting by Rev. C. Bouwman and br. Van Burgel are beside the point and therefore incorrect.

Yours in Christ,
 Rev. G. van Rongen,
 Kelmscott, Western Australia
 Rev W. Huizinga,
 Armadale, Western Australia
 Br. J. VanderRos,
 Launceston, Tasmania



BOOK REVIEW

By C. Bosch



Whom Shall I Marry?

Swanson, Andrew, *Whom Shall I Marry?* The Banner of Truth Trust; 30 pages; paper; \$2.00 US

All who are maturing will admit the importance of primary education. In order to mature in knowledge you just can't do without the basics! Swanson's little booklet offers wholesome, primary instruction to those who would court and marry.

The Christian author who spent many years in the Middle East has witnessed first hand the tragedy of mixed marriage. He also knows the blessings of marrying, "in the Lord." Taking His starting point in Scripture he writes under the conviction of 1 Sam. 2:30: "them that honor me I will honor." Swanson is convinced this must mean that no one is free to choose a partner for life according to his or her own desire. If we have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, a Christian must submit to Christ's prior claims and will.

Swanson does not say all there is to say about the marriage covenant. Primers, however, lay a foundation and in this the booklet receives more than a passing grade. The author gives sound reasons why God forbids Christians to marry an unbeliever. In these he honors the antithesis which God placed between the seed of the serpent and that of the woman. He is sensitive to the need of marriage partners to give true spiritual assistance to each other. He is convinced that this can only be done if both partners serve the same Lord and Savior. Although the author does not say that a common faith is *all* that really matters, he believes it to be the essential qualification.

There are some excellent "touches" in this booklet. After discussing the

meaning of Eph. 5:22-33 for marriage Swanson also reminds us that "Christian marriage is the witness of a Christian home to the world" (p.21). God may be pleased to use Christian marriage as an instrument to win our neighbors for Christ! Says Swanson: "Unless the believer is willing to make God's purpose for marriage his or her own, he or she will not be able to glorify God in marriage" (p.22).

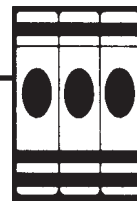
The author is well aware that God's clear injunction against mixed marriage does not go over well with many today. Often Christians would take a chance. "It might turn out all right," is not infrequently heard. Yet that may never be a Christian's starting point. A lifetime of trouble and grief could result and we would invite God's wrath. Only those who fear the Lord and seek to honor Him may ask for His blessing. Only that blessing can ensure our happiness.

What Swanson writes is right! We just can't do without the biblical foundation for marriage. We need to teach it to our children, and pray that they may take it to heart. Here is an easy-to-read booklet that will be of help. I recommend you order a copy or three to give to your teenagers. Church libraries might consider ordering some as well. Though it costs a (British) pound it has more than a few ounces of wholesome reading!

(There are some twenty-eight other titles in the series. For your free illustrated catalogue you could write to

The Banner of Truth Trust
 PO Box 621
 Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013, USA
 or see your local Christian Book Store.)





Gateway to the Old Testament

Noel Weeks, *Gateway to the Old Testament*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust 1995. 308 pages. Paperback. \$11.95 US


For many Christians the Old Testament is a closed, unknown and somewhat mysterious book. Noel Weeks has put in print notes of speeches and sermons to make this part of Scripture more accessible. Although the title may suggest more than the book actually delivers, this is a useful publication.

The first part, entitled "The Progressive Message of the Old Testament," takes one on a whirlwind tour of the history and key ideas related in the Old Testament. Weeks would probably be the first to acknowledge that this section is far too brief (67 pages) with the danger of superficiality, but the advantage is that he is able to highlight key points

such as the progress of the history of revelation and thus indeed make the Old Testament more comprehensible for the uninitiated.

The rest of the book contains selective studies of Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy. These can be used with profit on the high school level in a Bible course or within the context of a Bible Study Club. As a matter of fact, each small section ends with questions for discussion and the material is presented in such a way that Weeks tries to bring it close to the modern reader in terms of comprehensibility and relevance. This book is not a commentary on the parts he deals with, but rather a discussion on certain aspects. One can question some of the emphases and applications, but he always provides food for thought and discussion. It is most encouraging to see how he seeks in everything to

bow to the clear message of Scripture. There is a healthy reverence here for the authoritative Word of God.

Throughout the book there are insights into the Bible that will not only benefit the beginning student of Scripture, but also those who may think they are familiar with it already. I think for example of his comments on the place of strangers in Israel (pp. 27f., 36, 252-258,) and on law and grace at the Sinai (pp. 202-210). I did not always agree. For example, can one say that "the curse [as a result of sin in paradise] causes not just pain in labour, but frequency of conception as well"? (p. 91). However, examples such as this one do not take away my overall appreciation and hearty recommendation of this book. It should help the study of the Old Testament and stimulate discussion on important passages. 



The Board of Governors and the Senate
of the Theological College
extend their congratulations to

DR. AND MRS. C. VAN DAM

on the occasion of their

25TH ANNIVERSARY

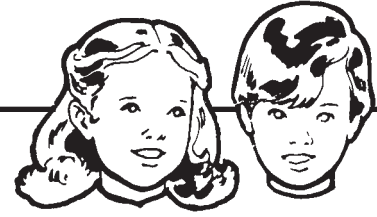
in the
Ministry of the Word of God.

The Board of Governors and the Senate
invite you to an Open House
on Saturday, October 12, 1996
at Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church
Burlington, Ontario
from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

Did you know that hummingbirds are hitchhikers? They will tuck themselves in the feathers of migrating Canada Geese, and 'hitch a ride' north!

Did you know a porcupine once ate a steering wheel? A forest ranger once left his car window open, and came back to find his steering wheel eaten, except for the spokes! Porcupines crave salt, and this one must have been sweated on 'to perfection.'

Did you know how much baby blue whales drink? They can drink more than ONE TON of milk in a day!

Pretty amazing animals, don't you think?

God *made* every kind of animal that has ever lived. The Bible tells us that on the fifth day of the world, God created all water animals, and birds. On the sixth day, He formed the land animals.

When God looked at all His work, this is what the Bible says about it, "and behold, it was very good." (Gen. 1:31)

When we look at the animals around us, or find out about ones far away, they can remind us how great God is, He *made* them all, and looks after them every day.

More wonderful still, God made us, and looks after us every day. He even gave up His Son to die for us, so we can live forever. Let us praise Him today for this!

(Do you want to find out more far-out facts about animals? Here are two books you might find in the non-fiction part of your library.

Extremely Weird Frogs by Sarah Lovett, John Muir Publications, 1991

World's Strangest Animal Facts, by Jocelyn Little, New York. Sterling Pub. Co. 1994.

If you can't find these, I'm sure you'll find some other books like them.)

Quiz Time!

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to all Busy Beavers who celebrate their birthday in October. May our Lord bless you in the coming year. I hope you have an enjoyable day celebrating with friends and family.

Crystal Dekker	October 2	Kristina Fennema	17
Richelle Kruisselbrink	3	Amy VanderHorst	18
Laura Kanis	4	Leo Knol	20
Katherine Wiersema	7	Colette VandenBos	25
Marja Vandekamp	8	Suzanna Vegter	27
Florence Bouma	10	Alisha Dokter	28
Amanda Jager	11	Michael Janssens	28
Joel Jelsma	13	Michelle Dekker	29
Byron Tuininga	17		

Here's a quiz for you to solve on the same topic as the story. Write your answers on a piece of paper and send it to me. Then I'll send you a bookmark!

ANIMALS IN THE BIBLE

Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

- "Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an _____." Zeph. 9:9
- "The high mountains are for the wild _____; the rocks are a refuge for the _____." Ps. 104:18
- "Dan shall be a _____ in the way, a _____ by the path." Gen. 49:17
- "Even the _____ finds a home, and the _____ a nest for herself, where she may lay her young." Ps. 84:3
- "So Samson went and caught three hundred _____..." Judges 15:4
- "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on _____ Isaiah 31:1
- "You shall also make curtains of _____ for a tent over the tabernacle..." Exodus 26:7
- ". . . and he had sheep, _____, he-asses, men-servants, maid-servants, she-asses, and _____.
- "Now Abel was a keeper of _____..." Gen. 4:2
- "Solomon's provision for one day was... ten fat oxen, and twenty pasture fed _____, a hundred sheep, besides harts, _____, roebucks, and fatted fowl." 1 Kings 4:22,23.

WORD SEARCH

ANIMALS OF THE BIBLE

L	B	V	E	G	O	H	E	G	D	E	H	Find: hare weasel gazelle mouse hedgehog adder hyena jackal ostrich sheep vulture eagle goat ram bull bear lamb
G	A	T	D	N	L	R	M	A	R	B	V	
G	S	M	K	C	T	M	O	B	A	I	Y	
A	E	T	B	V	A	O	U	A	E	E	H	
Z	V	H	S	U	O	H	S	E	B	O	Y	
E	A	C	E	L	G	A	E	R	M	P	E	
L	A	I	K	T	L	U	Q	A	L	T	N	
L	E	R	B	U	L	L	F	H	G	R	A	
E	M	T	R	R	N	I	A	P	A	E	N	
T	J	S	H	E	E	P	L	K	M	D	O	
N	E	O	K	A	G	E	N	B	C	D	T	
M	K	I	H	A	P	S	S	S	P	A	M	
W	E	A	S	E	L	N	E	K	S	R	J	



CODE

by Busy Beaver *Kristen Schoon*

A X	F ◇	K ♡	P ⚡	U ☽	Z m
B ⊙	G ○	L †	Q ▯	V ⊥	
C □	H ✕	M •	R √	W ∩	
D ⊥	I ∩	N *	S λ	X ■	
E ⊞	J ⊞	O ↓	T ⊞	Y ⊞	

⊞ ⊞ ∩ λ ∩ λ • ⊞ ⊙ ⊞ † ↓ ⊥ ⊞ ⊞

λ ↓ * ∩ ∩ ⊞ ⊞ ∩ ⊞ ↓ • ∩

x • ∩ ⊞ † † ⊞ † ⊞ x λ ⊞ ⊞

POEM

Here's a favourite poem of one of the Busy Beavers, *Pauline Boeve*.

*What is poetry? Who knows?
 Not the rose, but the scent of a rose;
 Not the sky, but the light of the sky;
 Not the fly, but the gleam of a fly,
 Not the sea, but the sound of the sea;
 Not myself, but something that makes me
 See, hear, and feel something that prose
 Cannot; what is it? Who knows.*

By Eleanor Farjeon



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Kristen Schoon*! It's a good thing you like word searches, I hope you like the one today about animals! Do you make word search puzzles, too? When you went to VBS, did you sing a lot, too? Hope to hear from you soon, Kristen. Bye.

Hi, *Danielle deJong*. Why are you moving back to Holland? Will you still be a Busy Beaver? Thanks for the poem, too! I hope your kitten turns out to be a good pet. Bye, Danielle.

That's all for this time, Busy Beavers,

Love to you all,
 Aunt Betty

