

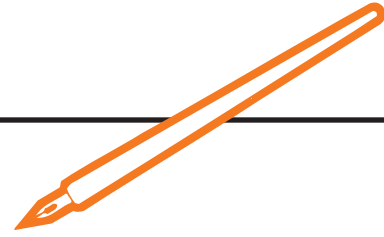
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
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*Martin Luther
Justified by Faith*





What is a Reformed Church? *Sola scriptura! Tota scriptura!*

There is a confusing array of churches in the world. The *Handbook of Denominations*, by Mead and Hill, gives information on more than 225 religious bodies. A typical religion page in a typical Saturday newspaper will advertise about 50 churches. Amidst the ads for the Lutheran, Baptist and United churches, someone will see the ad for the local Canadian Reformed Church. Someone sees it and asks you: "What is your church all about? What do you mean when you say that your church is *Reformed*? How is it different from the Roman Catholic, or the Mennonite, or the Pentecostal churches?"

What would you say? How would you describe the church of which you are a member? How should we characterize a Reformed Church? When we do the work of evangelism, when we talk with our neighbours and colleagues about Christ and His Church, what do we say about the Reformed Church? What is distinctive about it?

In this and the next editorial, I would like to work out what I see as several distinctives of a Reformed Church.

A Reformed Church embraces the Word of God as the divine authority for doctrine and life

We believe that God has made himself known to us, clearly and fully, through His holy and divine Word. In His Word God has revealed to us the things we need to know and every thing we need to know for our salvation and life. It gives us all the indicatives and all the imperatives. The Word treats exhaustively both doctrine and life.

Think, for example, of the letters of the apostle Paul. Typically, he starts off with doctrine, the indicatives. Then, somewhere in the letter, he says: "Therefore," and then follow the imperatives, the practical applications for how we are to live (see, e.g., Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:17, 22, 25).

Doctrine

A Reformed church embraces the Word of God as the divine authority for *doctrine* because it understands that this Word did not come by the impulse, the will, or the fancy of man, but that men moved by Holy Spirit spoke from God. The Word of God has authority because of whose word it is. The authority of the Word derives from its divine inspiration. The classic text is 2 Tim. 3:16,17.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Paul said something here about all of Scripture, OT and NT. All of the writings are God-breathed words. It is the *Scripture* which is God-breathed. He didn't say that the *author* was inspired. Inspiration is not something that refers to the human author or to the general "message" or the main "thrust" of the Bible. No, the Scriptures themselves, the words themselves have been breathed out by God. This is important for a Reformed church. Because the Scriptures are God-breathed, because they are the words of the Holy Spirit of God, therefore they have authority. They have *authority* because of who the *author* is. Because the God-breathed Scriptures have authority, therefore they are "useful for teaching." A Reformed church embraces the Scriptures as authoritative and useful for teaching. The teaching, the doctrine, of a Reformed church, as it has been summarized in the Reformed Confessions, is based only upon the Scriptures and upon *all* of the Scriptures.

We say that we are to teach the full counsel of God. A Reformed church teaches the OT and the NT. It speaks of the promises of God and of the wrath of God. It proclaims forgiveness to those who believe in Christ. It holds out God's threat to those who turn their backs on Christ.

A Reformed church teaches the sound doctrine, all of it. It will not compromise the sound doctrine in order to tickle the ears of the masses. We live in a time like Paul described in 2 Tim. 4:3, 4. Many do not want to hear the sound teaching of the scriptures. They want to hear something new. They will find teachers who will give them what they want. And so they turn away from the truth and get lost in myths. A Reformed church will hold on to the true doctrine and teach it faithfully and boldly, for it knows that faith comes only through the preaching of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

We will tell our inquiring friend that. We will tell him that a Reformed church focuses upon teaching the Word of God and proclaiming the Christ spoken of in the Word.

But a Reformed church will not only *teach* the true and complete doctrine of salvation. It is not concerned only with purity of *doctrine*. It is also concerned with the purity of the *lives* of the members of the church.

Life

Because the Scriptures are the very breath of God, they are also useful for *rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work* (as Paul adds in 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

This has to do with how we live, with the imperatives of the Word of God. The Word calls us to godly and pious living. A knowledge of the true doctrine will not help anyone unless it is translated into godly and thankful living. Sitting under the faithful preaching of the Word of God will not help anyone unless it spurs him on to live a thankful life in response to the gospel of Christ.

The members of a Reformed church will live pious lives. The piety of Reformed church members is a Word-centred piety. Not only is the teaching of a Reformed church centred upon the Word. The daily lives of its members are also centred upon the inspired Word of God.

The members of a Reformed church will take seriously what Paul wrote in Eph. 5:15f:

Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

They realize they live in evil days (days of stress, as described by Paul in 2 Tim. 3:1ff), days which require wisdom. And they realize that wisdom is not found in their hearts nor their heads. It is not found inside of them but outside of them, in the Word of God. It is the Word which shows us how to live.

We are not scared to talk about the utilitarian value of the word. It is *useful* in that, as we strive to walk wisely, it will rebuke us, correct us, and train us in righteousness, so that we, men and women of God, may be well equipped to live lives of good works out of thankfulness to Christ.

In the typical home of Reformed church members, you will find that the Word plays a central role. It is read. It is referred to. It is taken seriously. It is treated with awe and reverence. It is used as the authoritative guide for holy living.

That's the second thing we will tell our inquiring friend. The members of a Reformed church work hard at applying the Word of God to their lives. The Bible is not just a "church book" but a divine book which governs our daily living with supreme authority.

Let us in both doctrine and life continue to maintain the Reformation mottoes: *Sola scriptura! Tota scriptura!*

(Next time: "The worship service in a Reformed Church.")



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dr. J. De Jong was willing to take over the column "Press Review" from Dr. C. Van Dam at the latter's request. Dr. Van Dam would like to be able to spend all his time on his sabbatical project. Moreover, he is of the opinion that, since he has taken care of this column for many years now, someone else should take care of it. We thank Dr. De Jong for his willingness.

J. Geertsema



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By R. Aasman

CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER SATAN

Luke 10:17-20

On Reformation Day we commemorate with gratitude to the Lord our God the return to the Scriptures as the sole source of authority for faith and life. One thing that we remember in particular is that on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed on the church door at Wittenberg his Ninety-Nine Theses as a challenge to debate the abuse of indulgences and other Roman Catholic doctrines. The struggle of Martin Luther and other Reformers to return to the sole authority of Scripture was not an easy one: it led to severe persecution. Remember how Guido de Bres was martyred simply because he wanted to preach from the Bible to God's people. Did this terrible life and death struggle discourage the Church of the Reformation? We see the answer in Martin Luther's well-known hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*. As God's people struggle for faithfulness to His Word, even amidst great hardships, they develop the unwavering assurance that nothing would be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord.

Our Lord Jesus Christ demonstrates how he protects and defends His Church in the passage of Luke 10:17-20. In Luke 9:51 we read, *When the days drew near for Him to be received up,*

he set His face to go to Jerusalem. Our Saviour was entering into the final phase of His earthly ministry where He set His face firmly on Jerusalem and His death on the cross. Knowing that His time was short, and burning in love for the lost sheep of Israel, our Saviour appointed seventy additional disciples to go out two by two, into the towns and villages where Christ wanted to come, to preach the good news of the kingdom of heaven. After the seventy have carried out their ministry, they return to Jesus Christ with a full report of what had happened. We read their report and the response of the Lord Jesus in Luke 10:17-20: *The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

The seventy were able to cast out demons in the name of Jesus Christ. The implications of this are profound, as Christ explained, *I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven*. There is quite some debate among commentators of

this gospel as to the meaning of Satan falling like lightning from heaven. But one of the obvious conclusions must be how sudden or precipitous is Satan's fall from heaven. Even as lightning can suddenly and unexpectedly flash down from the heavens, so Satan had his footing jerked from under him, and he came tumbling down from heaven.

One wonders, what was Satan doing in heaven at this point in time? After the original rebellion in heaven, Satan and his fallen angels were cast out. And yet, Satan does still have access to God in heaven as we read, for instance, in the example of Job. In the words of Rev. 12:10, he comes there as the accuser of the brethren. Satan can come to God and demand that God abandon or release sinners into the hands of Satan. After all, God has made clear that he will not have communion with sinners. Satan outlines a man's sins and demands that God surrender all sinners into his dark dominion. Therefore in the fullness of time when God sent His Son to be born of woman, Satan became desperate to do everything he could to consume and destroy this child. He tried to have the child killed in Bethlehem; he tempted Jesus when He started His public ministry; he tried to counter Jesus' ministry by sending his

What's inside?

Four hundred and fifty years ago, in his 63rd year, Dr. Martin Luther went to be with Christ. In his life time, Luther was an Augustinian monk, a doctor of theology, university lecturer, a skilled debater, Bible translator, musician, prolific writer, outlaw, excommunicate, church reformer. Above all, we know and love him as a church reformer. The Lord Jesus Christ powerfully used Dr. Luther to bring about the reformation of His church. In 1520, he published three works. After publishing these, there was no turning back. In the first of these tracts, he set forth the famous doctrine that every Christian is a priest, thereby attacking the Roman Catholic notion of priesthood. In the second, he accused the papacy of having led the people of God away from the scriptures to enslavement to the seven sacraments – he called this the "Babylonian Captivity of the Church." In the third tract, he explained the essence of the freedom we have in Christ. He sent it with an open letter to Pope Leo X as a last effort to defend himself. Although this tract was the most conciliatory of the three, it was not well received. Leo excommunicated Luther in 1521.

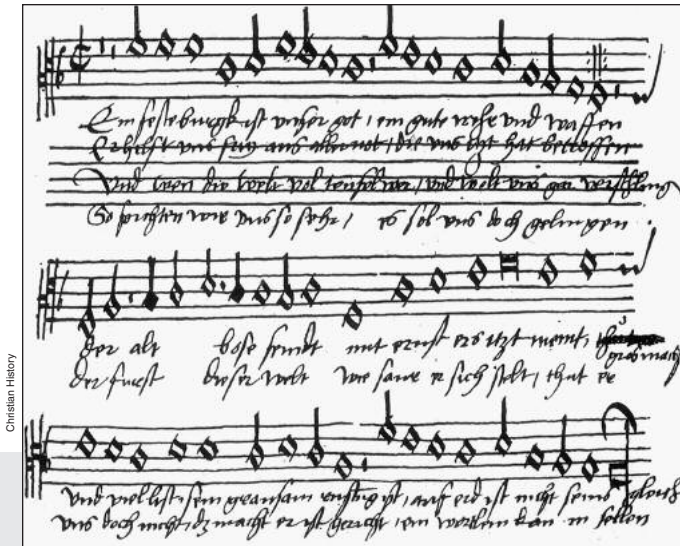
In this Reformation Day issue, Dr. J. De Jong writes about this third tract.

Dr. J. Faber writes about the great Reformation theme, *Justified by Faith*.

Rev. R. Aasman contributes the meditation – about Jesus Christ, our Mighty Fortress against the attacks of the devil.

We also include the second part of Dr. De Jong's convocation address.

GvP



A Mighty Hymn: A draft of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" in Luther's handwriting. Luther composed both the words, based on Psalm 46, and the tune.

demons to possess more people than ever before; indeed Satan did everything he could to stop Jesus Christ from going obediently to the cross and laying down His life for sinners. However Christ triumphed by remaining faithful to the will of His Father and making atonement for the sins of His people. Thus we read in Rev. 12:7-9: *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.* This is symbolic language but the message is clear: the war which Satan loses is the war with Jesus Christ; once Jesus Christ completed substitutionary atonement on the cross, Satan has lost his case, he can no longer accuse the brethren of deserving death; they now belong to Christ and His Father; and so Satan is cast out of heaven as the decisive proof of Christ's victory. Satan fell like lightning from heaven.

Therefore when Jesus Christ announces to the seventy that he saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, that is tantamount to saying that the kingdom has come and salvation has dawned upon the people of God. It is in the casting out of demons by the seventy that Christ's final victory is particularly demonstrated. For what does it mean to cast out demons? Think of what Christ said in Luke 11:20: *But if it is by the*

finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. And also Matthew 12:29: *Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.* The casting out of demons demonstrates the powerlessness of Satan before Jesus Christ. Satan is the "strong man" who is bound by the power of Christ. Now Jesus Christ can freely move about what was once Satan's domain, He can take sinners who were enslaved by Satan and wash them by His blood and Spirit, and so make them obedient citizens of His kingdom. There they will live to the praise and glory of God in their new found joy and liberty! Therefore as the seventy are casting out demons in Christ's name it became clear that Satan's doom is sure. He had a sudden and spectacular fall from heaven. His kingdom is crumbling and the kingdom of heaven rises gloriously.

However, no one should think that with Satan's fall from heaven he is entirely finished off. He is with us till the last day. We read for instance in Rev. 12:12 after Satan is cast down from heaven: *Rejoice then, O heaven and you that dwell therein! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!* Similarly when Jesus Christ says to the seventy that He sees Satan fall like lightning from heaven, there is in this a sense of great danger: when lightning strikes the earth, it can do great damage. Now Satan prowls the earth like a roaring lion

seeking some one to devour and he mounts a scorching campaign against all men, in particular, those in the Church of Jesus Christ who want to remain faithful to their Lord. Satan knows that his time is short and therefore he is very aggressive to do whatever he can to sabotage Christ's church gathering work. One would be very foolish to ignore the attacks of Satan. Just as no one would walk carelessly through a field of poisonous snakes and scorpions, so no one should walk carelessly and ignorantly through a life where the flaming darts of the evil one are continually being cast.

Satan's work is evident everywhere in daily life. Through his demons, Satan is active in the temptations of alcohol and drugs, the pursuit of material possessions as the highest good, the destruction of the traditional family, sexual promiscuity, violence, rape, murder, disrespect for authority, and so on. Much of our society has been caught up in this dark dominion of Satan. And sadly, Satan and his demons have also made inroads into the Church of Jesus Christ by seducing members with these ungodly desires and practices. In addition to the temptation, there are also the persecutions of Satan, the ridicule and oppression of the world against those who want to see their faith and life governed solely by the infallible Word of God. Satan is on the prowl; his demons are busy; the smoke of his scorching campaign fills the air; the evidence is everywhere.


Does this mean we have no hope when Satan attacks? Now that would make no sense in the light of redemptive-history: Christ is the victor and that should have positive benefits for his Church. And it does. Christ says to the seventy, quoting from Ps. 91: *Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you.* Again this does not mean that Satan can never attack the Christians, that there will be no serious temptations and persecutions. Think only of the time of the Reformation: people lost their families, possessions and lives because they clung in faith to Jesus Christ and His Word! But ultimately Satan cannot really hurt God's people. He can no longer act as accuser of the brethren for we have a defender of the brethren seated at the right hand of God. Who or what can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord? Since God has loved from before the foundation of

the world and since Jesus Christ has laid down His life for us, there is no longer condemnation or everlasting danger for those who believe in Him. Christians fall from time to time because of the temptations or persecutions of Satan, but through the Spirit of Jesus Christ they will be led to confess their sin, to receive forgiveness, and to be strengthened by the Spirit and Word to a renewed warfare against Satan. And so the body of Christ will be preserved by Word and Spirit, and will actually be able to offer strong resistance, treading upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.

In this context Christ says to the seventy, *rejoice that your names are written in heaven*. He is referring here to the Book of Life which is God's heavenly register containing the names of the citizens of the New Jerusalem. He is saying: understand the implications of my victory over Satan. This means I have saved you and confirmed your name in the Book of Life. Your names have been written there in the ink which is my blood. Rejoice that there is no more an accuser of the brethren who can separate you from the love of God. For those who believe in me and walk in my ways

are more than conquerors over Satan and his power.

Thus the Church of Jesus Christ can continue to sing with assurance the words of Martin Luther, *A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing*. Of course, our brothers and sisters have been singing these words throughout the ages, as we see in Psalm 46, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. . . . The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge*.

Rev. R. Aasman is minister of Providence Canadian Reformed Church, Edmonton, AB. 

Justified by Faith

By J. Faber

In September 1992 a remarkable group of tourists arrived in Rome. Forty-five persons had made the long hike of more than seventeen hundred kilometers from Southern Germany over the Alps to what is called the Eternal City.

They re-enacted the much more difficult journey that two Augustinian monks had undertaken, when they had set out from Nuremberg through the western part of Switzerland in the middle of November of the year 1510.

Martin Luther was one of those two monks who were sent to Rome as advocates for one of the parties in an internal strife between Augustinian monasteries.

The modern pilgrims of 1992 also were advocates. They went to Rome in order to seek rehabilitation for Luther. They wanted to ask Pope John Paul II to revoke Luther's excommunication. It became a disillusion. Cardinal Willebrands made it clear to them that their request met with great difficulties. Their hike over the Alps had been in vain.

The event reminded me of Luther's evaluation of his own journey: "Like a fool, I carried onions to Rome and brought back garlic."¹

In Rome Luther crawled up the twenty-eight steps of the so-called Scala Sancta, kissed each step piously and on all those twenty-eight steps prayed a Pater Noster for his grandfather Heine Luder. For it was said that one could "free a soul from purgatory by going up on one's knees."

But Luther had hardly reached the top when a doubt occurred to him: "Who knows whether it is true?"²

In Luther's development this was a *negative* experience; there was doubt. Luther struggled with his sins and longed to behold God's friendly countenance. But he could not find rest in the semi-pelagian system of the Middle Ages with its combination of God's grace and human works.

There was also an important *positive* experience in Luther's life. I think of the time, when he pondered the words of another visitor to Rome, the theme of Paul's letter to the Romans in Chapter 1:16 and 17. Let us for a moment meditate about those words of the apostle who was also eager to visit Rome, then the capital of the world, the power-house of the Roman empire.

Even in Rome Paul will not be ashamed of the gospel, the good tiding. It is the gospel of God (v.1). It is the gospel of His Son (v.3 and v.9) and you know that in his letter to the Galatians Paul had written: the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

This gospel of the Son of God is no dead letter or mere word; the Holy Spirit is Lord and Giver of life; therefore His gospel is dynamite; it is not a theory and it is not a system; it is the power of God for salvation. And in Paul's letters salvation stands over against wrath

(1 Thess. 5:9), and over against death (2 Cor. 7:10), and destruction (Phil. 1:28). Salvation means God's grace; it means life, light, and freedom.

And why is the good tiding the power of God for salvation? Well, in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith (v. 17a). There you have the words that played such an important role in Luther's rediscovery of the gospel. For at first Luther did not understand Paul's words at all. Luther had in mind the distinction of God's law and God's gospel. For him this distinction even became a contrast. God's *law* speaks of God's righteousness and in His righteousness God punishes the sinner and Luther knew himself to be a miserable sinner. How is it possible then that Paul speaks of the righteousness of God as manifest in the *gospel*?

In 1545, a year before his death, Luther described his experience as follows:

"I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans. But up till then it was not the cold blood about the heart, but a single word in Chapter 1, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed," that had stood in my way. For I hated that word "righteousness of God," which, according to the use and custom of all the teachers, I had taught to understand philosophically regarding the formal or active right-



Christian History

Rome in Luther's day offered many sites for religious pilgrims. St. Peter's, its dome still unfinished, stands in the foreground.

eousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner.

Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that He was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, "As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the *gospel* and also by the *gospel* threatening us with His righteousness and wrath!" Thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall

live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates."³

Later in his Wartburg translation of the New Testament Luther renders the words about the righteousness of God as "the righteousness which avails before God."⁴ And we may add: It is the righteousness which comes from God as His gift.

In the same letter to the Romans, Paul places *God's* righteousness over against *man's* self-righteousness. For he writes in Ch. 10:3 that the Jews were ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God. Seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Thus God's righteousness is the righteousness that comes from God and it stands over against our own righteousness.

In the same vein Paul says also in his letter to the Philippians: I count everything for loss, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith (3:8ff). Therefore, it is God's righteousness over against man's righteousness. In order to be saved man needs this righteousness that comes from God.

And to turn back to Luther's beloved letter to the Romans, we heard in 3:21: it is the righteousness of God through faith in *Jesus Christ*. God put Jesus Christ forward as an expiation by His blood. The gospel is the good tidings concerning the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. For here is a wonderful exchange: Christ who knew no sin was made to be sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). In Christ our sin is exchanged against God's righteousness.

And in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed through *faith* and for *faith*. It is *through* faith, for faith is the only way to receive it. Faith is the instrument by which we embraced Christ and all His benefits. And it is *for* faith: everyone who believes, shall receive God's righteousness.



Luther and a monastic colleague were sent to Rome in 1510 to appeal an administrative matter. They walked all the way from Nuremberg, about 500 miles. Seeing the city, Luther declared, "Hail, Holy Rome!" The pope was probably not in Rome at the time, however, despite this artist's depiction.

It is *through* faith: You receive it without cost; it is God's gift; also the obedience of faith about which Paul writes in Romans 1:5, is not our achievement but God's free gift. He who boasts, let him boast of the Lord. And is *for* faith: if you believe, you will surely receive it. He who believes will not be ashamed. And it is for *everyone* who has faith: no believer is excluded.

It is this catholic gospel, this universal good tiding that we as children of the Reformation may profess. May I simply remind you of our Heidelberg Catechism? What will I quote and where will I begin? Lord's Day 1? My faithful Saviour has fully satisfied for all my sins. With His precious blood He bought me, and He delivered me from all the power of the devil. Justified through faith in Jesus Christ.

Or will I quote Lord's Day 7? True faith is also a firm confidence which the Holy Spirit works in my heart, that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits. Justified through faith in Jesus Christ.

Or let me, in a direct connection with our topic, remind you of Lord's Day 23. How are you righteous before God? Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ.

You know of that threefold accusation of your conscience – at least I hope that you know of it with your heart – I have grievously sinned

against all the commandments of God and kept none of them, and I am still inclined to all evil.

But if you know this threefold accusation with your heart, you must also know of the threefold promise of the gospel. It speaks of the perfect *satisfaction* of Christ who cancelled the bond that stood against you. The gospel speaks further of the perfect *righteousness* of Christ, who kept all God's commandments; it was His food to do the will of His Father. And the gospel proclaims the perfect *holiness* of Christ. For while you are still inclined to all evil, God of mere grace, grants and imputes to you Christ's perfection also. In Christ you are righteous and holy for 100%; if only you accept such benefit with a believing heart. For you are in the right with God only by *faith*.

Our Catechism often uses the plural when it speaks about our Lord Jesus Christ and about the benefits He obtained for us. But the answers I quoted from Lord's Day 1, seven and twenty-three are in the singular. The catechism teaches us to speak personally. For faith and experience are personal. Faith is first and experience follows. Christian experience is experience of faith.

Faith and experience are never individualistic. We live in a communion of saints. Nevertheless, faith and experience are always personal. God goes His own way with every child of His within the assembly of His people.

CHURCH NEWS



CALLED by the Church at Coaldale, AB

Rev. Cl. Stam

of Hamilton, ON

CALLED by the Church at Ancaster, ON

Rev. Cl. Stam

of Hamilton, ON

ACCEPTED the call received from the Church at Lincoln, ON

Candidate J.C. Van Vliet

Your and my way is different from Luther's or Calvin's for that matter. But a commemoration of the Reformation within the church of God puts this question anew before you and me: What is *your* only comfort in life and death? How are *you* righteous before God? And may every one of us in the choir of believers sing along of God's faithfulness and His righteousness, of His free and sovereign grace in Jesus Christ. We are on the way to the really eternal city, the New Jerusalem.


Do not come to rest, brother or sister, before by the grace of God you can say very personally: Not only others but even I. Even I justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

Glory be to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

¹Heinrich Boehmer, *Martin Luther: Road to Reformation*, tr. J.W. Doberstein and Th. G. Tappert (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1957), 80.

²Boehmer, *o.c.* 63

³John Dillenberger ed., *Martin Luther: Selections from his writings* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961) 10f., repr. from *Luther's Works*, vol. 34, tr. L.W. Spitz (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 327-38. See for the original the *Weimarer Ausgabe*, vol. 54, 179 ff. Some place this "tower experience" early, e.g. in the year 1513 (H. Boehmer, *o.c.*, 109). Others argue for a late dating of Luther's "reformation breakthrough," e.g. 1518. See J. Wicks, *Luther's reform: Studies on conversion and the church* (Mainz: Verlag Phillip von Zabern, 1992).

⁴F. Lau, *Luther*, tr. R.H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963) 66. 

Luther's Little Jewel

By J. De Jong

The year 1996 is another "Luther year," a year commemorating the great reformer's death in 1546. All over Germany many tours and commemorative events are being held to remember the reformer and his work. Of course, much of it is simply a ruse to promote tourism, and any actual confrontation with what Luther really stood for is not on the agenda for many people. Yet as we commemorate the reformation in the month of October, we do well to give attention to the life of the great reformer and his significance for the church to this very day.

One way to remember Luther is by a consideration of what has been called Luther's little jewel. After the Reformation began in 1517 Luther wrote a number of short tracts outlining the new position he and others in the reformational movement were defending. This was not really a new position, but a return to the order and calling of life as demanded by the Scriptures. Now the last of these tracts, called *The Freedom of the Christian Man* is known as Luther's little jewel. It is perhaps one of the most beautiful tracts Luther ever wrote – and he wrote a good deal of them. Even Luther himself – who was normally gruff and diffident with regard to his own work, spoke favourably of this little booklet. All the more reason for us to review its content, and draw our benefits from it.

Background

The booklet on the liberty of the Christian is one of three tracts written in 1520, the smallest of the three. George Rupp, a noted British scholar on Luther, says that this tract evokes the peace and rest of the certainty of the gospel. After the devouring fire of the *Address to the Christian Nobility* and the earthquake of the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* was ended, there followed the soft and still voice of the *Freedom of the Christian Man* – a voice kinder than anyone might have expected – the voice of Christ himself. Indeed, this was Luther's genius! He could show forth many moods and colours in his writing, and so he struck a cord in the hearts of the people. This brochure represents a simple and lucid statement of the practical side of the gospel: how to live the Christian life.

In some ways the tract represents a completion to and repetition of ideas which Luther published earlier in his *Sermon on Good Works*.¹ For those of a Calvinist persuasion this is a very important sermon of Luther's to read, since it shows Luther as a staunch defender of the life of new obedience. It was only later Lutherans that so radically severed gospel and law that there was no room for good works. The theme of the necessity of a life of obedience and good works dominates both the sermon and the tract on the liberty of the Christian. And the ideas presented here become Luther's bulwark of defense against the antinomian practices and attitudes of the enthusiasts who drifted into the waters of radicalism and Anabaptist thinking.

Luther wrote the tract as a last effort to defend his position over against the Roman church. By this time the division with Rome was almost complete. In fact, Luther saw no hope for a return. He had been threatened with excommunication, with the bull of excommunication published by Luther's opponent John Eck in September of 1520. Luther had consistently refused to recant unless he was proven wrong on the basis of the Word of God. The steady stream of reformatory language coming from Wittenberg finally led to the extreme anger of the curia. The well-known bull, called *Exsurge Domine*, represents an appeal to the Lord to destroy the foxes and the wild boar presently destroying the vineyard of the Lord.

However, one of the mediators sent by the pope to mediate in the dispute with the Germans, the papal nuncio Carl von Miltitz, was still trying to work for a reconciliation between Luther and Rome. The pope had more or less forgotten him, but he sought to placate Luther and was prepared to offer some concessions if Luther himself would remain silent, and be generally more agreeable in dealing with other monks and clerics. It was under his influence that this last tract was written. It is prefaced by a letter to the pope, Leo X, in which Luther not only defends his case, but urges the pope to renounce the wolves of Rome, and act as a true shepherd among the flock. Although we cannot gauge his motivations, Luther saw the pope as the only honourable



A radical document – Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation. In it, a scholar has said, "Luther laid the ax to the . . . ideas upon which the social, political, legal, and religious thought of the Western world had been developing for nearly a thousand years."

man in the midst of a den of thieves and robbers. Hence his tone is conciliatory, just as he had promised to Miltitz, and he speaks of Leo as the "most blessed father" and "pious Leo." At the same time, Luther holds to the fundamental rule which he maintained throughout the reformatory process: he would not recant anything he taught and maintained unless proven wrong by the testimony of Scripture.

Thus we have in this tract a last call to reformation. Yet at the same time the tract shows that the breach is imminent and cannot be avoided. The note of the triumph of the gospel rings through the entire booklet and its special note is joy: the joyful life of the Christian as he is redeemed by the blood of Christ through mere grace alone.



Title page of On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. In the work, Luther not only attacked abuses of the sacraments, but totally redefined them. He called the book a "little song about Rome and the Romanists. If their ears are itching to hear it, I will sing and pitch it in the highest key!"

Content

Let me now turn briefly to the contents of the brochure. Luther sets out to defend two theses which form the basis on which the entire argument of the booklet turns: 1. the Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, and subject to none. And 2. the Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

These two propositions sound contradictory, as Luther knew and confessed. But then he proceeds to show how these two propositions are not really contradictory, but are based on Scripture, and make sense only in the light of the message of the gospel. He makes the following points to show this.

1. Luther starts with the inner man, and the way we are made according to the inner man. How do you receive true freedom, righteousness, life and every blessing with God on high? The answer is: only by *faith*. We are healed to life and good works only by the Word of God, as Psalm 119 says. Here Luther thinks particularly of the promises of the gospel as they are revealed in the Word of God. He says: the Word has laws and commands. But it also has gospel and promises, and they give life!

When one by faith accepts the promises of the gospel, then the yoke of the law is broken, and the law is ful-

filled! Christ is your righteousness, your life, your blessing! So through faith we share Christ *for* us, and Christ in us. This yields three blessings for the Christian. First, he may be justified before God, and may be assured of the Holy Spirit, who works sanctification. Second, he may live in honour to God with his whole life, and third, he may live in union with Christ.

It is especially in this last point, the union of Christ, that the tract reaches its climax. It speaks of the nuptial relationship between Christ and the believer. It is like a marriage. What takes place is a joyful exchange! Christ takes over the sins of the "poor harlot" and takes them to himself. He at the same time gives His blessings: righteousness and life to the believer.² Therefore with the gifts of Christ's righteousness, the Christian is a free man. The Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. Christ is the only Master, and essentially there is no other Master besides Him. All earthly masters are subject to Him, and they all must be seen in the light of His rule.

2. Next Luther turns to the outer man, that is for him, life in the body as we share it today in an imperfect world. We are justified by God through Christ, and so free in Him. But we only have a small beginning of the new obedience. Our best works are strained with sin. We must daily contend with sin, the devil and the lust of our flesh. The body actually hinders the growth of the inner man. Therefore, says Luther, we are directed to works in order to please God, and to grow in faith. Works serve to train the body, and hold the mind in the love of God. We must not be idle as redeemed people, but must do works in order to resist sin, and apply ourselves to repentance. We must also do works for our neighbour's benefit. We are not here on our own and we are not to live for our own benefit. We live for the well-being of our neighbour.

Here Luther extends the analogy of his first point. As Christ has joined in a joyful exchange with us, we are to join in a joyful exchange with our neighbour. We must "become a Christ" to the neighbour, especially helping those in need. Our life must be one of constant service.

Therefore, says Luther, the Christian is at the same time a perfectly dutiful servant, subject to all. We need works to purify ourselves from sin, to discipline ourselves in the way of righteousness as members of Christ. Luther says:

The inner man who by faith is created in the image of God is both joyful and happy because Christ in whom so many benefits are conferred on him; and therefore it is his

new occupation to serve God joyfully and without thought of gain, in love that is not constrained.³

How do we serve God in a life of good works? We are to live for our neighbour. Faith makes us right with God; works keep us right with our neighbour. We do not live for ourselves, we live for our neighbour. So we must be to our neighbour what Christ is to us. We live to serve in order that we might inherit a blessing!

Luther introduces what he calls the middle course as the way for the Christian to follow. Some want to bind the conscience to all kinds of rules and regulations, as if they figure in obtaining righteousness with God. But this is a rejection of Christian freedom. Others despise all ceremonies, traditions and human laws, and actually see it as the duty of Christians to do so. Their freedom is one without any restraint. The apostle Paul takes a middle course. His conscience is free but he submits to ceremonies and traditions for the sake of the gospel, and only in the context of the gospel. We are all still bound by the needs of the bodily life. We must therefore observe due order and restraint, honour ceremonies and works, and also obey the civil authorities. Ceremonies are a temporary structure serving to assist the believer on the road to the kingdom of God. "When the structure is complete, the models and plans are laid aside." So Luther also saw the end of ceremonies and works in the fulfilment of the Christian life.

This is then a brief summary of Luther's little jewel, or, as he himself called it: my best little book! I think it gives an accurate summary of what is required of us. Of course, you can find weaknesses in it, just as you can find weaknesses in any human book. Still it represents a remarkable and insightful summary of the teaching of the gospel with respect to the life of faith.

Some commentary

There are a few things one could criticize and comment on in Luther's "little jewel." For example, it is remarkable, that Luther ties the inner life to faith, and the outer life to works. It is also remarkable that Luther ties the inner life to God, and the outer life to the neighbour.⁴ We would normally tie the whole life, both inner and outer, to both faith and works – faith as the source, works as the fruit. And we would not see works in our life as focussed primarily on our relation to the neighbour. Later the reformation came to see that although there were two tables of the law, the life of works must be directed both to the glory of God and to

the well-being of the neighbour. The life of gratitude covers both tables of the law, and both aspects of life, the inner and outer! In fact this is probably what Luther meant, for he knew the summary of the law. Yet he operates with distinctions from a medieval background.⁵

Probably the most central weakness in the early Luther is that he did not see the all-encompassing significance of the *covenant* as the central element in the Christian's life, and the central notion through which it must be approached. Yet he did have an open eye for the promises of God! He was also conscious of the fact that we live under the obligations of God. But to adequately bring these together, and to present them in a holistic way – that remained for later reformers.

Nevertheless one can say: Luther gives valuable instruction still for the church today. He reproduces in a colourful way what the guidelines of Scripture are. In that sense, Luther is timeless, for he was a prophet of God. The gospel of God never changes. With Luther's little jewel at hand, we must say: every year is a Luther year, and one can only benefit from seeking to apply the principles of Scripture to the Christ-

ian life as he sets them forth. To be sure, he like others, needed the correction which the Lord gave through Calvin and other Reformers. But the foundation laid still stands, also through the work of God's servant Martin Luther: saved by grace alone, through faith!

"Works serve the neighbour and supply the proof that faith is living." (Hy. 24: 6)

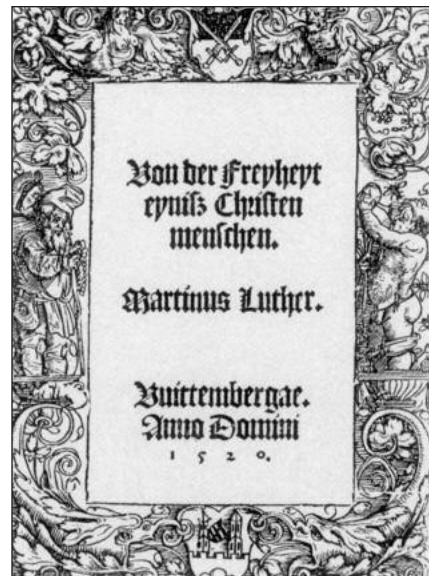
¹Many of the ideas also return in the so-called Invocavit sermons which Luther preached in Wittenberg in 1521, see *Luther's Works* 51, 67-100.

²The ideas here come from the nuptial mysticism of Bernard of Clairvaux. The new element in Luther is that Christ does this without any preconditions and without previous actions by man, thus, by grace alone! See M. Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation, 1483-1521*, Translated by J.L. Schaaf, (E.T: Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 408.

³*Luther's Works*, Vol 1, 359.

⁴Brecht notes that the distinction between inner and outer man comes from German mysticism. Luther basically identified the distinction of German mysticism with Pauline anthropology, see M. Brecht, 408.

⁵Luther makes the same distinction in his tract "On the Councils and the Churches" (1539), see *Luther's Works*, Vol. 41, 145-147. In this tract the "First Table of Moses"



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is used by the Holy Spirit to give new holy life in the soul, and to impart the three chief virtues of Christians: faith, hope and love. The second table, which Luther associates with the body, is used by the Spirit to work sanctification in the life of the believer. Speaking loosely, one might say that Luther ties the first table of the law to justification, and the second to sanctification.

Even So I Send You – Some Reflections on the Current Missionary Task of the Church¹⁽²⁾

By J. De Jong

Unchanging Principles

In part 1 of his speech, Dr. De Jong wrote about the changing nature of the missionary task of the church. Missionaries no longer work in very primitive areas among illiterate people totally cut off from the world. Most of the world has, in one way or another, been confronted by the gospel. Often, men are sent out to teach and train indigenous people to be missionaries and pastors to their own people. Dr. De Jong then examined the modernistic perspective of mainstream churches and the World Council of Churches who no longer want to speak about the church bringing the light of the gospel to a people trapped in darkness; rather, they speak of a "dialogue between men of living faiths." In what follows, Dr. De Jong writes about how the Reformed Churches have historically understood the missionary task, and how this view

is based upon the unchanging principles of Scripture.

Now we would also like to say something about the unchanging principles with regard to Reformed missiology. For even though we recognize that we live in changing times, we all realize that God's Word does not change, and His norms for mission still apply. Therefore a Reformed missiology will be antithetical in character to many of the perspectives that dominate modern missiology. At the same time, in the process of interaction with modern missiological themes, it will seek to apply the unchanging norms to the current situation facing the church today in its missiological task.

We have another reason for going back to the Reformed principles of mission this evening. One might say that the basic principles of Reformed missiology were set forth at the Synod of Middelburg in 1896, thus one hundred

years ago. And the speech this evening is also commemorative of the work of this synod. Allow me to tell you something about the work of this synod as it relates to our topic.²

Middelburg 1896

The synod of Dordrecht held in 1893 appointed deputies to report to the Synod of Middelburg 1896 concerning the structure and method of the work of mission according to Reformed principles. The report brought out a very important principle: mission is not the task of private societies, but of the church of Christ. Christ gathers His church, and He uses the means of the preaching of the word. However, this report said that for practical reasons it would be better that mission was governed by deputies of the General Synod, and that these deputies be appointed to coordinate the work for the various churches. For this

position they had a number of compelling arguments.

The deputies suggested that there were no direct Scriptural givens with regard to what method should be followed, i.e. the more centralized, or the more decentralized method. They also felt that a decentralized approach – as they termed it – would be irregular and poorly structured. By way of example they mention a possible mission meeting held with delegates from all kinds of different bodies: the church of Rotterdam, the classis of Amsterdam, the combined classes of De Hague and Leiden, the province of Friesland, and the combined provinces of Overijssel and Drente. This would result, according to the brothers, in inequality in leadership, methods, correspondence and approaches, in ease of work and in perspectives. The Deputies then postulated a marked difference between the order of churches in a federation, and the order of church life on the mission field.

Further, the brothers argued on the basis of Art. 30 C.O. that mission matters could well be conducted by an agency appointed by the churches in their broadest assembly, since many questions in the area of mission were matters of the churches in common. For this they gave many arguments, of which I mention only a few. They held that a missionary to a certain extent occupies a general office. The relation of the churches to the mission churches is a matter of the churches in common. Many matters the church had to deal with – liturgy, doctrine and so on – concerned the churches in common. A fourth argument concerned the relation to the authorities. Since this was regulated by the General Synod according to the Church Order, the relationship between the mission churches and the government could best be regulated by a synod. And finally the brothers argued that where each local church was not able to fulfil its calling independently it was the duty of the churches in common to deal collectively with these matters in major assemblies.

A number of other arguments were added to solidify the position of the reporting deputies, and one must commend them for expending every effort to bolster their position. They stated that the decentralized approach would seriously effect the unity of the churches. There should not be any competition between churches; indeed, cooperation in the financial arrangements was necessary. Leaving these matters to local churches would also damage the unity and continuity of the mission effort since consistories change their make-up

from year to year. And with every difference of opinion among member churches there would be a long process of appeals, blocking the forward thrust needed to get things done. Next they maintained that the spiritual strength of the churches was too small to support the decentralized approach. For example, interest in mission was not the same everywhere. Many churches lacked the expertise to maintain a mission project, or even to adequately assist in maintaining it. Some churches were simply too busy to handle mission affairs on their agendas. And some churches did not have the means to properly train and examine their missionaries. Here, too, expertise was lacking. The young and weak mission churches could not do with a haphazard and at times conflicting support system. They needed strong centralized leadership. Hence the deputies opted for what they called a more “centralized” approach.

When this report was considered by synod, the deputies appointed by synod to deal with the matter came with a different approach. They were critical of the report that has been submitted, and specifically of the reasons given for the so-called centralized position as opposed to the decentralized one. Although they had a greater affinity with the tenor of the minority report, they also could not accept its conclusions. They found the recommendations of the minority report premature, and not sufficiently based on Scriptural principles. They suggested that mission be considered in accordance with the principles set forth in Holy Scripture. Pragmatic considerations were not to be permitted to hinder the implementation of sound Scriptural principles. And the fundamental principle here was: mission is the task of the local church.

Let us consider some of the synod committee’s arguments as they opposed the formidable looking construction of the deputies’ report. First, appealing to Acts 13, 14 and 16 they stated that Scripture is clear with regard to the demand that mission be conducted by the local church. They insisted that the church order does apply to the mission situation as well, that is, in those areas of the church order which reflect confessional principles. They stated that there were insufficient grounds presented to prove that mission was a matter of the churches in common ad Art 30 of the Church Order. There were also insufficient grounds adduced to justify the conclusion that these were matters which could not be finished in the minor assemblies. The deputies argued that it was not proven that the centralized approach is the ide-

al way to ensure sufficient funds for mission work. And finally they stated that a strong centralized leadership as defended by the reporting deputies would be more of a hindrance than a help to the progress of the mission.

After a good deal of debate, the position of the synodical deputies was adopted. Thus Middelburg 1896 gave a strong impetus for making mission a matter of the local church. David Bosch can say that one of the chief elements of the emerging paradigm in mission is the discovery of the local church.³ Yet he was mistaken on this point! The priority of the local church was discovered long before the seventies and eighties of our century. It was already promoted at the synod of 1896!

This is not to say that Middelburg 1896 provided us with a complete list of missiological principles which we can just adopt today. On the contrary, much work needed to be done. If I may be brief at this point, one can say that the thread of 1896 was really picked up again after the Liberation of 1944. The next major synod dealing with missions in a more comprehensive way was the Synod of Amersfoort 1948. This synod pushed missiological developments in a continued Scriptural line.

Amersfoort 1948

The key point in 1948, in opposition to the growing climate of the day, was that the essential task of the church with regard to mission is the preaching of the gospel. Under pressure of modern missiological views, many held that the church had a comprehensive task with regard to mission. The so-called comprehensive approach, introduced at the meeting of the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem in 1928, was winning converts among Reformed proponents as well. But the Synod of Amersfoort said that the primary task of the church is the preaching of the gospel.⁴ The auxiliary functions are indeed a part of the task of the church, but are required in the measure that they foster and promote the missionary task. The work of providing necessary assistance is also a task given to the church as a whole, that is, it is not a task of the special offices, but a task to be initiated by the office of all believers. It was seen as a diaconal task given to the whole congregation. It was also argued that the help provided must be adapted as much as possible to the needs and circumstances of the people.

On this point Amersfoort 1948 brought in a correction to the line of Synod Middelburg 1896. For although Middelburg gave the task of mission to

the local church, it also promoted a strong comprehensive position with respect to the various auxiliary services that need to be provided in mission work. The argument on which this position was based was the notion of prevenient, or preparatory grace.⁵ This theory held that through various temporal and physical auxiliary means, the hearts of people are prepared by God in order to receive the spiritual blessings of His Word. This theory of preparatory grace has its roots in Abraham Kuyper's theory of common grace, which he, in turn, adapted from Reformed scholasticism.⁶ In rejecting the comprehensive approach, Amersfoort also opposed this aspect of the line of Middelburg 1896.

One sees since 1896 a two fold line: decentralization of the mission mandate, and a specification of the mandate to the matter of preaching the gospel, with an added provision for necessary auxiliary services. The task of the church concerns those auxiliary services necessary to advance the preaching of the gospel. Further work, such as the building of schools and hospitals fall outside of the immediate task of the church. And as we remember Middelburg 1896, we do not mean to boast in ourselves. We may thank the Lord that He opened the eyes of His servants so that the church took up its missionary task. And we may thank the Lord that He led the synod of Amersfoort 1948 to set its demarcation line against the modernistic ideal in mission. For the comprehensive approach ultimately ends in the promotion of liberation theology, and a horizontal gospel which brings no lasting peace to people.

Holy Scripture

At this point we would submit that this historical line as indicated by the Reformed synods treated above follows the line of Holy Scripture itself. To be sure, we must keep a trinitarian perspective.⁷ However, mission cannot adequately be treated with the notion of *missio Dei*. In fact this notion tends to blur the specific mandate given by Christ to His church. One cannot say: the Father sends His church. It is more accurate to assert that Christ is the author of mission. This is the import of John 20:21, the text from which our title has been taken this evening: "As the Father has sent me even so I send you." To be sure, all mission begins with the decree of the Father. But historically the execution of the mission mandate begins with mandate given by the Son.

The text of John 20 implies that although there is an analogy between the sending of the Son and the sending of

the apostles, this is not a direct identity.⁸ Christ was sent for a specific task. He now sends His apostles in the power of the Spirit in order to gather the harvest, that is to bring forth the fruits of His task. Christ gathers His church, in accordance with the confession of Lords Day 21.⁹ He sends the Spirit into the world to work with the Word for the completion and fruit of His work.

The apostles serve as His ambassadors, and the apostolic mission means being agents for God and agents for Christ, 2 Cor. 5: 18ff. Only in this oblique sense can one speak of a *missio Dei*. And just as the apostles were sent out in their task by local churches (Acts 13:1,2) so the local church sends ministers of the Word who are especially set apart for the gathering of the converts from the nations. Jesus sent His disciples into the world with the promise of His care and protection, (Mt. 28:18,19; John 17:22). As these disciples were sent, so all those whom they appointed to succeed them through the generations carry on the one *missio Christi*, the mission of Christ to all the world.¹⁰

The method of mission remains: the preaching of the gospel, and its goal: the planting of the church.¹¹ The apostle Paul preached the good news to bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles, Rom. 1:5; he then sent fellow workers and evangelists to solidify the initial gathering of the churches, Tit. 1:5, Phil. 2: 19.

Once this planting has taken effect, the sending churches can provide additional support, but only as a gesture of support from a sister church. This is not mission in the technical sense of the term, but, as Amersfoort 1948 said, a matter of post-mission, or follow-up care. The *Form for the Missionaries of the Gospel* calls the missionary to preach the gospel, to administer the sacraments, and to institute the offices. Once this point is reached, a new dimension of labour must be initiated, a dimension which cannot be termed mission in the proper sense.¹²

Just as the Son suffered in the flesh in accordance with the mission given Him by the Father, so His servants are called to suffer in the flesh in their missionary task, bearing abuse for the sake of the gospel. Here again the relation is one of analogy, not identity. Yet, as Bosch has pointed out, while compassion is one of the great motivating factors of mission, but *marturia* – witnessing and suffering – is one of its chief characteristics.¹³ The apostles had to "complete what was lacking in Christ's sufferings" – i.e. bring the supplement which would ennoble the whole, Col.

1:24. So the church is called to offer that sacrifice which shows that its compassion is not only spoken, but also felt. Our compassion for the lost must result in a willing sacrifice for the gospel. It must be proclaimed first among Jews and Moslems, but then also among all peoples – and especially those who have not heard it before, (Rom. 15:20).

¹Text of the address given at the Twenty-second Convocation of the Theological College, September 6, 1996, at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario. Elements not included in the address have been incorporated in this revision.

²The Synod of Middelburg is rightly called the mission synod where the *magna charta* of Reformed missions was set forth. The Report of the Deputies appointed by Synod 1893 is found in the Acts of 1896, see *Rapport van de Deputaten tot de Zending aan de General Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland bijeengeroepen tegen 11 augustus 1896 naar Middelburg*, (Leiden: D. Donner, 1896) 1-100. The report covers the pages 1-66, the appendices 67-87. Also included is a minority *Nota* with an alternative proposal re the regulation of mission, 88-99. Deputies who wrote the minority statement (N.A. De Gaay Fortman and L.H. Wagenaar) defended the priority of the local church in mission. The missionary must be sent out by a local church, see p. 91.

The Synod dealt with mission in Articles 62, 75, 116. A Committee was appointed by Synod (reporter: Dr A. Kuyper) which essentially drafted a whole new report, which was eventually adopted by the Synod, cf. Article 118, p. 80.

³Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 379-379.

⁴See the *2de Rapport:de verhouding van den zendingsarbeid tot medischen - en onderwijs - arbeid op de zendingsterreinen (over de kwestie "hoofd"- en "hulp"- diensten)* drafted by the deputies for mission matters as appointed by the General Synod of Groningen 1946. The Synod of Amersfoort 1948 followed the lines as recommended in the majority report, see *Acta van de Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland gehouden te Amersfoort van 19 October to 18 November 1948* (Kampen: Ph. Zalsman, 1949), Article 129, 49; see also the report of the deputies appointed by synod, Appendix 40, 171-178.

⁵See *Acta Middelburg 1896*, 72.

⁶A. Kuyper, *De Gemeene Gratie* (2nd. ed. Kampen: Kok, 1911) II, 203-207.

⁷See, for example, C. Graafland, "Theologische Hoofdlijnen" in C.A. Tukker, et al. *Gij die eertijds verre waart... Een overzicht van de geschiedenis en taken van de zending* (Utrecht, De Banier, 1978), 71-119.

⁸The contracted conjunction is used here with *kathos* in a comparative way, see S.G. Green, *Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek Testament* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1912) 342.

⁹D.K. Weilenga, "De Zendingarbeid" *De Reformatie* Vol. 21, #5 (November 3, 1945) 36.

¹⁰The view often ascribed to the Reformers, viz., that the mandate of Mt. 28:18, 19 was limited to the apostles, must be rejected. It cannot even be maintained that the Reformers en masse held to this view. Beza wrote in

this vein, but he did not gain any support for his view. See J. Van de Berg, *Waarom Zending?* (Kampen: Kok, 1959), 10. See also L.J. Joose, *Reformatie en zending. Bucer en Valaeus: vaders van de Gereformeerde zending* (Goes: Oosterbaan en Le Cointre, 1988), 16-37.

¹¹C. VanderWaal, "Zending – kerkplanting" in *De Reformatie* Vol. 33 no. 15 (May 17, 1958) 262f. The *plantatio ecclesiae* was a key element in the mission theology of G. Voetius, see H.A. Van Andel, *De zendingsleer van Gisbertus Voetius*, (Kampen: Kok, 1912), 19, 70ff., 148-149.

¹²This view also goes back to Voetius, who was far ahead of his time in his stress on the freedom and autonomy of the local church, see H.A. Van Andel, 79, 186.

¹³D. J. Bosch, "Reflections on Biblical Models for Mission" in James M. Phillips and P.T. Coote, 182ff.

PRESS RELEASE



Press Release of Classis Ontario North, September 20, 1996

On behalf of the convening church at Burlington East the Rev. G. Nederveen called the meeting to order. He read Ezekiel 1, led in prayer, after which he requested the brothers to sing Psalm 89:3, 4. He spoke a word of welcome.

The credentials were examined by the delegates of Brampton. They were found to be in good order.

Classis was constituted. The appointed officers were: Rev. W. den Hollander, chairman; Rev. B.J. Berends, vice-chairman; Rev. C. Bosch, clerk.

Memorabilia: The chairman thanked the convening church of Burlington East for preparing this classis. He mentioned Rev. and Mrs. J. VanPopta of Ottawa in view of the serious illness of their son Julien, as well as Elder A.K. Keep, delegate of Brampton, who has to cope with a serious disease. He wished them the blessing of the Lord. He mentioned the passing away of sr. VanBeveren, wife of Rev. M. VanBeveren, former minister of the churches of Burlington East and Fergus, the passing away of Rev. P. Kingma, former minister of the church of Fergus, and the passing away of Rev. Dombon of the Mission field in Irian Jaya. He entrusted the bereaved widower and widows to the care of the Lord. He also mentioned that Rev. R. Aasman declined his call to the church of Orangeville and that candidate R. Eikelboom declined his call to the church of Fergus. He addressed the treasurer, J.J. Poort, on his forty-fifth wedding anniversary. He wished him and his wife good health and much happiness. Classis also took note of the fact that the church of Toronto received its new minister, Rev. W. den Hollander.

After the agenda was adopted, Classis proceeded with the *examination of student D. Poppe*, who sought permission to speak an edifying word in the churches. After checking the documents which showed that he has successfully completed three years of his theological studies and that he is a member in good standing in the church

of Guelph, he delivered his sermon on Revelation 4. Classis decided in closed session to go on with his examination on doctrine and confession and decided, again in closed session, to grant his request of speaking an edifying word for a period of one year. The chairman informed br. Poppe of its decision and wished him the Lord's blessing on his work in the midst of the churches and with his studies at the Theological College. The form of subscription was read and was signed. Opportunity was given to congratulate br. Poppe and to wish him the blessing of the Lord.

The reports on the *church visitations* to Elora, Burlington West, Ottawa and Chatsworth, were read and received with gratitude.

After lunch, the meeting was reopened with the singing of Psalm 99:1,2,3. The roll-call showed that everyone was present.

Classis received the report from the church at Burlington South that the Archives of Classis were found to be in "excellent" order. It received the treasurer's report from br. J.J. Poort, as well as an audit of his books by the church at Burlington West. The delegates of Fergus promised that an audit of the books for Financial Aid to students for the ministry would be presented at the next classis. Fergus did present an audit of the books for the support of needy churches, and found them to be in good order.

Question Period according to art. 44 C.O. The chairman asked the three necessary questions. All the churches, via their representative, answered the first two questions in the affirmative, and not one of them needed to make use of the third. This was taken note of with gratitude.

The report from the committee for *Needy Churches* was received and discussed. Classis decided:

i. in principle, to recommend that the churches budget the requested amount of \$32.50 per communicant member in support of Needy Churches for 1997.

ii. that at the Dec. '96 classis the committee table the necessary information as grounds for the committee's recommendations, to enable this classis to make the final decision on the requested amount.

The overture from Burlington East on the *Classical Regulations* was discussed. Classis decided to add the following to art. of its Classical regulations: 7.1.2 Documents: A. Preaching Consent 1. proof from the Theological College that the student has successfully completed three years of study; 2. attestation from the church where the student is a member.

Appointments: Convening church for the next classis: Burlington South. Date and place: December 13, 1996 at 9:00 a.m. at Burlington East church building. Suggested officers: chairman: Rev. P.G. Feenstra; clerk: Rev. W. den Hollander; vice-chairman: Rev. C. Bosch; Committee Needy Churches: br. W. Oostdyk; Observers Free Church of Scotland in Canada: Rev. P.G. Feenstra, with Rev. G. Nederveen as alternate; Delegates to regional Synod: 1. Ministers: primi delegates: W. den Hollander, G. Nederveen, A.J. Pol, G.H. Visscher. As alternates: P. Aasman, C. Bosch, P.G. Feenstra, B.J. Berends, in that order; 2. Elders: primi delegates: H. Faber, L. Jagt, C. Lindhout, F. Westrik. As alternates: G.J. Nordeman, A. Smouter, H. Kampen, J. Kottelenberg, in that order.

Personal Question period: Some of the brothers made use of the opportunity to ask personal questions. Fergus asked for and received pulpit supply for the period Nov. '96 - Sept. '97.

Closing: Censure according to art. 34 C.O. was not necessary; The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved; The chairman requested the brothers to sing Hymn 2:1,4 and led in thanksgiving and prayer, after which he closed Classis September 20, 1996.

For Classis Ontario North
September 20, 1996
B.J. Berends

Orangeville

July 16, 1989 - June 30, 1996

Farewell, Reverend W. den Hollander

After seven years of serving as minister in Orangeville, Ontario, Reverend W. den Hollander accepted the call extended to him by the Church at Toronto. Both the den Hollander family and the Orangeville congregation had developed strong ties to each other. Rev. den Hollander gave Orangeville a tremendous amount of guidance in all his pastoral activities. The family had actively enhanced the congregational life. The den Hollanders leave behind many friends, both young and old, in Orangeville.

Rev. den Hollander preached his farewell sermon in Orangeville on June 23, 1996. The text he chose was 1 Corinthians 1:4-9, where Paul gives thanks to God for His church at Corinth because of riches, hope, and faithfulness found there only through the miracle of God's grace which makes poor sinners rich. Likewise, riches can be found in Orangeville. Clearly God has been faithful in the experiences between Rev. den Hollander and the Orangeville congregation for the past seven years.

After the service Br. J.W. Van Ommen expressed the congregation's gratitude to Rev. and Mrs. den Hollander for their years of faithful work. He also thanked the den Hollander children for their use of their talents in the congregation, especially among the young people. He wished the entire family God's blessing in continuing their fruitful work in their new congregation in Toronto.

The Orangeville congregation held a farewell evening for the den Hollanders on June 28, 1996. After Rev. den Hollander had expressed his thanks to the congregation and had prayed, there was opportunity for personal farewells and words of mutual encouragement.

Andrew Kieft 



The den Hollanders enjoying the evening

Fun gifts



Arjen den Hollander at the piano

Delicious gifts



Toronto welcomes Rev. den Hollander and his family

Sunday July 7, 1996, was a happy day for the members of the Bethel Canadian Reformed Church of Toronto, as we welcomed Rev. W. den Hollander who was installed as our pastor and teacher in a service conducted by Rev. J. Mulder, a former minister of the congregation.

Rev. Mulder chose as his text Hebrews 12:25, *See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.* He showed us how serious it is to meet the living God speaking to us, and elaborated on the greater glory of God's speaking, our greater responsibility to hear, and our greater punishment if we do not listen, as compared to the Old Testament times.

In today's world with its lawlessness and refusal to publicly acknowledge God's power, we should be thankful that every Sunday we can hear again of the great power of God that is behind everything.

It is the custom in Toronto for newly installed ministers and office-bearers to sign the form of subscription before the whole congregation, and at the end of the service, Rev. den Hollander added his signature to those of the other ministers and office-bearers in the record book. After that, Brother H. Kampen, Chair of the Consistory, welcomed the guests who wished congregation and minister God's blessing.

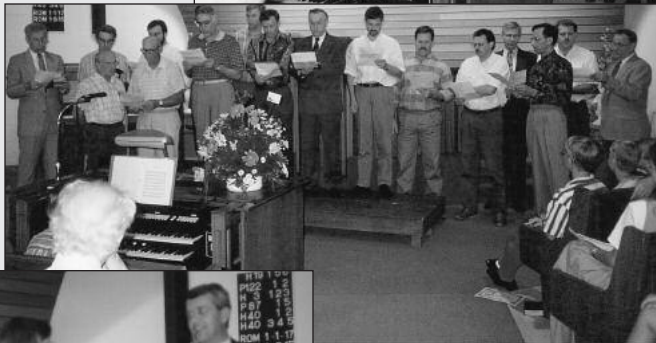
As the text for his inaugural sermon, Rev. den Hollander chose Romans 1:8-15 in which Paul expresses his longing to come to Rome. Rev. den Hollander expressed his wish to model himself on Paul. Just as Paul in his introductory prayer in these verses lays the groundwork for the doctrine of our faith which he will teach in the rest of his letter, so Rev. den Hollander saw his sermon as an introduction to the work he hopes to do in Toronto.

Paul prays for fruitful service in the metropolis. He seeks spiritual gratification; he desires mutual edification; and expresses pastoral obligation. He starts by thanking God that there is a church in Rome, and praying for the continuing spiritual well-being of that



Rev. den Hollander introduces his family

The children's choir under the direction of Mrs. Evelyn Vanderee



The Council of the Bethel Canadian Reformed Church of Toronto sings the report.



Mrs. Trudy Heres presents album of photographs of members of the congregation to Rev. den Hollander.

Mrs. Lisa Gleason and Mrs. Melanie Datema



church and for its restoration in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the purpose of the Church.

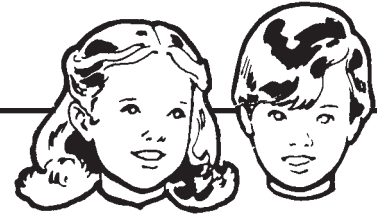
The following evening, the congregation welcomed Rev. den Hollander and his family with a special and de-

lightful program. Rev. den Hollander responded with thanks and repeated what he had said in his inaugural sermon that we might work together in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Julie Lindhout 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

What do you do to keep yourself busy in your free time? Maybe you like to read, or play outside with brothers and sisters. Or, do you like to make things?

If you like to make things, this activity is for you. It's very simple and doesn't need a lot of fancy stuff.

UNCOOKED SALT PLAY DOUGH

You will need:

- 1 cup white flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tsp. cooking oil
- 1/2 cup water
- a few drops of food colouring
- bowl
- spoons

How to make it:

- (1) Mix flour and salt together in a bowl.
- (2) Mix oil, water and food colouring in another bowl.
- (3) Add water mixture to the flour mixture.
- (4) Knead well until it's smooth.
- (5) Use cookie cutters, toothpicks, garlic press, forks to make things with the dough.
Small shapes can be baked in a 350°F oven for 45 minutes to make them hard.

Hints:

- (1) Don't wash play dough down the drain as it will plug the drain.
- (2) Clean spoons, cookie cutters, and so on soon so dough doesn't dry on them.
- (3) Keep extra dough in the fridge in a plastic bag.
- (4) Add more flour if the dough is too sticky.

HAVE FUN MAKING THINGS!!

Quiz Time!

WORD SEARCH

Women in the Bible

Q E O N M C I H E J Z S B
S E N A I F G I V Y K M X
R J D Q R A C H E L G N C
F M C P I F B R X L H A E
M D B S A B E H S H T A B
L L T O M E P N M R U O Z
G U K A D R W J S A R A H
H K E C V I Q T P K O X A
K X T A M A R A B A H D K
U T U X V L A E R Y B W E
H I R B Q Y H K D O Z Y B
L I A G I B A X M N X A E
A J H X D E B O R A H Y R

Find these names:

Sarah
Eve
Ruth
Rahab
Abigail
Keturah
Rebekah
Bathsheba
Miriam
Rachel
Deborah
Tamar

What Happened Where?

Each of the following places meant something special in Jesus' life. Match the place with what happened there.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Bethlehem, Matt. 2:1 | a. Attended a wedding; first miracle |
| 2. Nazareth, Matt. 2:23 | b. Ascended from here |
| 3. Jerusalem, Luke 2:42 | c. Center of ministry |
| 4. Jordan River, Matt. 3:13 | d. Stilled a storm |
| 5. Sea of Galilee, Luke 8:23-25 | e. Celebrated Passover at age twelve |
| 6. Calvary, Luke 23:33 | f. Birthplace |
| 7. Capernaum, Matt. 4:13 | g. Home |
| 8. Gethsemane, Mark 14:32 | h. Baptized |
| 9. Cana, John 2:1 | i. Crucified |
| 10. Bethesda, John 5:2-9 | j. Prayed |
| 11. Bethany, Luke 24:50-51 | k. Healed a man |

WHO'S THERE?

Which persons in the Bible are usually connected with the following places?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1. Nazareth | 6. Jericho |
| 2. Ur of the Chaldees | 7. Cyrene |
| 3. Arimathea | 8. Bethany |
| 4. Gath | 9. Ramah |
| 5. Tarsus | 10. Nineveh |
- (answers at end)

RIGHT RELATIONS!

What relation was

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Jethro to Moses? | 8. Enoch to Noah? |
| 2. Rebekah to Laban? | 9. Naomi to Ruth? |
| 3. Lot to Abraham? | 10. Lois to Timothy? |
| 4. Jonathan to Saul? | 11. Esther to Mordecai? |
| 5. Jesse to Boaz? | 12. Elisabeth to John the Baptist? |
| 6. Andrew to Simon Peter? | (answers at end) |
| 7. Ahab to Jehoram? | |

Answers to Who's There? 1. Jesus or Joseph 2. Abram 3. Joseph 4. Goliath 5. Saul 6. Joshua or Zaccchaus 7. Simon 8. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus 9. Samuel 10. Jonah

Answers to Right Relations! 1. Father-in-law 2. Sister 3. Nephew 4. Son 5. Grandson 6. Brother 7. Father 8. Great-grandfather 9. Mother-in-law 10. Grandmother 11. Cousin 12. Mother

I hope you enjoy doing the puzzles, and – send some letters!!!

Love to all of you,
Aunt Betty

