



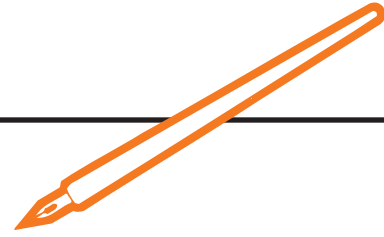
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
VOLUME 46, NO. 19 SEPTEMBER 19, 1997



*John Calvin Centre
Larnaca, Cyprus*

By J. Geertsema



Again: So many accidents! Why?

In the previous issue we considered accidents from the perspective of the glorification of God's Name and the coming of His kingdom. In what follows we pay attention to another perspective, namely, that they be considered as a warning for all of us. In this respect we have to be careful not to go in the wrong direction when we see here a warning. Here, too, we have to let ourselves be guided by the Word of God. In other words, the question "Why?," placed in the title, has to receive an answer again from the Scriptures.

Accidents are not to be seen as punishment for specific sins

When things go "wrong" the thought can arise: Is God punishing me? Is He punishing us? Is He angry with us because of our sins? Although this is possible in clear-cut cases of an obviously sinful life without God, the Lord Himself teaches us to be very careful on this point and to watch out for concluding from misery to sin as the reason. Job's friends drew such a conclusion when they saw his misery. God showed how wrong these so-called friends were.

Another example of this wrong thinking and conclusion is the doctrine of the Pharisees in the time of the New Testament. When the Lord met a man born blind, the disciples asked Him the question: Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? (John 9:2). The disciples, taught by the teachers of the law, saw the man's blindness from birth as God's punishment for grave sins. On this point they had no questions. The Pharisees did not either. Later on that day they said to the man: "You were wholly born in sin" (9:34). But the disciples did have this question: Who sinned, the man or his parents? A baby cannot sin so badly before he is born, can he? So, did the parents sin? But, then, God teaches that a child will not be punished for the sin of the parents. Ezekiel 18:20 is very clear on this point. *With* the parents, but not *for* the parents. Each will be punished for his own sins. Christ answered that the disciples' problem was based on a false premise. This blindness was not at all the consequence of and punishment for specific sins. On the contrary, this misery, endured for years by both the man and his parents, had to be seen in the perspective of the coming of God's kingdom and the glory of the Name of God and of His Son. The man was blind from birth in order "that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). God's saving work through Christ was to be made manifest in the healing of the man. This healing was a clear testimony to the people and their leaders that the Lord Jesus was doing God's work, and could not be a sinner.

A third word of Christ with the same lesson is given us in Luke 13. In the preceding chapter we read how, at a certain time, the Lord warned for God's anger and judgment against disobedience. Most likely in connection with this

serious warning, some people in the audience told Him about a terrible event, probably suggesting that in it one could see such a punishing judgment of God. They told this story: When some Galileans were in the process of bringing sacrifices to God, the Roman governor Pontius Pilate mixed their own blood with that of their sacrifices. Here again is the same linking of misery to sin as its cause. The Lord said in response, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no!" And Christ added another example of misery, one that happened not to "those Galileans" – who, as Galileans, were considered very sinful anyway – but to the "better" people in Jerusalem. Moreover, this second example was even more "an act of God" since there was no human hand involved. The Lord asked, "Or those eighteen who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them, do you think that they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?" And again the warning was added, "But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

The first teaching from these passages is clearly that we must not conclude from illness or accident to greater sinfulness and God's special anger. Such a conclusion would be just as wrong today as in the days of Job and of the disciples. Making such a link would do wrong to those who hurt already and would go against God's Word.

Accidents can be taken as a call for *all* to repentance

However, the second teaching from the passage in Luke 13 is that Christ added to both events the exhortation for all of His listeners to repent. The Lord came with the call for self-examination to all: "If you do not repent. . . ." Thus, we may say that accidents also function in underlining the call to repentance from sin to which the Scriptures call all of us. They exhort us to examine our lives. Do we live for the LORD with an undivided heart? Do we seek to serve Him with all our mind and might? Do we live not just according to some but according to all His commandments?

Hebrews 12:1-12 comes to mind here. This passage speaks about the difficult hardships in the life of the believers addressed in this letter. These hardships are called the "discipline of the LORD." We are reminded of the Scripture's "word of encouragement" addressing us "as sons," namely in Proverbs 3:11-12. Part of this text reads: "For the LORD disciplines him whom He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives."

Peter gives the same message in his first epistle when he writes that God's purpose with our life is not our (eternal) death but that we reach our destination of the eternal inheritance "kept in heaven for you who by God's power are guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:4-5). It is through faith that we reach

this destination. And it is this guarding power of God that builds our faith, writes Peter, when God leads us through "various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold . . . may redound to praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

In the last part of chapter 4 of this same letter, the verses 12-19, we read the following words: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you (the painful trial you are suffering [NIV]), as though something strange were happening to you" (v 12). In verse 17 Peter adds, "For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? And 'If the righteous man is scarcely saved, where will the impious and sinner appear?'"

In *Brief Annotations* (Korte Verklaring) on this passage (esp. v 17-19), Dr. S. Greijdanus writes:

For it is the time . . . that the judgment of purification (1 Cor. 11:19) and cleansing (1 Pet. 1:6-7) begins from the house of God. The Lord's congregation, the believers, for whom there will be no judgment in eternity for the sake of the sacrifice of Christ, and who, therefore already in this temporal, earthly life have to suffer the judgment which is necessary for them and is determined for them, even though it is not as a punishment or a payment of debt, because the Lord Christ has taken away all their debts. . . . When already those who believe the gospel and have accepted the Lord Christ and possess Him as their Saviour, nevertheless, cannot remain free from affliction and oppression, which, however, have to serve their salvation, how terrible must, then, be the judgment which is coming on those who reject the message of salvation of God and His Christ with His atoning sacrifice?

Greijdanus refers to 1 Cor. 11:19. Also important is what Paul writes in the same context about a lack of proper self-examination for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Sitting at the table of the Lord was not matched by a holy life in obedience of faith to the Lord's commandment of love for the brotherhood. After the call for this proper self-examination with the result of true repentance from sin in verse 28, Paul writes the following in verses 29-32:

For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the

Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves (examined ourselves), we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.


Here, too, the call goes out to all for self-examination. We are to examine our lives to see whether we lack in faithfulness to God with an undivided devotion and commitment. We have to look at ourselves and see whether we allow unfaithfulness on certain points to continue in our lives. Do we live for ourselves and our own interests? Or do we show with word and deed that we love one another as members of the Lord's congregation? In 1 Cor. 11, as in the entire letter, Paul uncovers a lack of true love within the congregation. In 1 Pet. 4:7-12 Peter, as well, emphasizes the calling to show love and care for each other. Especially when there is suffering, such a need for love from others is so necessary.

Concluding remark

Accidents happen. Some die. Some become handicapped. Some are healed. But – and not only those in-

volved, but we all – do we examine ourselves whether there are sins we have to repent for and turn away from and fight against? People suffer. It is so important that loving support of fellow believers in the communion of saints is shown for those hurting and for those taking care. We have to show that we are a congregation, a Family of Christian brothers and sisters. Those who suffer are a calling of God for the congregation as a whole, for the communion of saints, to show themselves to be instruments of help sent by God. Coming back to the first question, we ask again: Do accidents and other forms of suffering make sense? In the light of God's revelation we answer again: Yes, they do. In God's hand they are means of discipline for His people in order to keep them in, or make them return to, the way of faith and love on the way to the eternal inheritance.

God is serious in calling us all to repentance. Let us be serious in showing repentance, listening to Peter, once more (1 Pet. 5:6-7):

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God (leading all things in life), that in due time He may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you. 



Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

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

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION
46 Sulphur Springs Road
Ancaster, ON L9G 1L8
Fax: (905) 304-4951
E-Mail: clarion@compuserve.com

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

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202
Email: premier@premier.mb.ca
World Wide Web address:
<http://www.cuug.ab.ca:8001/~hoogerdj/clarion/>

SUBSCRIPTION RATES		Regular	Air
FOR 1997		Mail	Mail
Canada*	U.S. Funds	\$34.00*	\$59.00*
U.S.A.	U.S. Funds	\$39.00	\$52.00
International		\$55.00	\$85.00

* Including 7% GST – No. R104293055
Advertisements: \$11.25 per column inch

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

Publications Mail Registration No. 1025
ISSN 0383-0438

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial – Again: So many accidents! Why? — J. Geertsema.....	410
Meditation – The LORD – A rock of refuge for young and old — D.G.J. Agema	412
A Revision Revised — W.W.J. VanOene	413
Poem – Lead, Holy Shepherd, lead us — Clement of Alexandria translated by H.M. McGill	416
News from the Middle East Reformed Fellowship	417
Canadian Reformed Broadcast Association – Small Mission, Big Purpose — Neil van Weerden	419
Women's League Day – June 24, 1997 – Suman, Washington U.S.A. — Sheryl Bisschop	422
Book Notice – Calvin on Galatians in a New Translation — C. Van Dam	424
Book Review – <i>The Bondage Breaker</i> Neil T. Anderson — Karlo Janssen	425
I.L.P.B. Update September 1997 — Jo Anne Van Middelkoop	426
Press Release	426

By D.G.J. Agema

The LORD – A rock of refuge for young and old

*¹⁷ Since my youth, O God, you have taught me,
and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.*

*¹⁸ Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, O God,
till I declare your power to the next generation,
your might to all who are to come.*

*¹⁹ Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God,
you who have done great things.
Who, O God, is like you?*

Psalm 71:17-19

Psalm 71 is a prayer for help in difficult circumstances. It starts with a cry for help and refuge. We do not know who wrote it, but this child of God is in great trouble. Verse 2: "Rescue me and deliver me . . ." In itself this is not unique in the book of the Psalms. There are many Psalms in which God's people cry out to the LORD for help and strength. What is special in this Psalm is that this child of God combines this cry for help with his age. He speaks about his age – his old age. Verse 9, "Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone." He comes back to this in verse 18, "Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God."

Not only does he speak about being old and gray; he also speaks about the beginning of his life. In verse 5 he says that the LORD has been his confidence since his youth. From his birth

he has relied on the LORD. He acknowledges that the LORD brought him forth from his mother's womb. In verse 17 he says that the LORD has taught him from his youth.

When we look at the way he speaks about the dawn and the twilight of life, then we see two lines. There is a line that runs from young to old. There is also a line that runs from old to young. The Psalmist shows us a road with two-way traffic. And what combines these two lines? The answer is: the righteousness of the LORD, His mighty and marvelous deeds. The beginning and the end of his life are secure in the mighty deeds of the Lord. The LORD who carried Him when he was born and was carried in his mother's arms, is the LORD who upholds him in old age.

This involves a lesson. He says, since my youth you have taught me. That line from young to old, the line that

shows the righteousness and the mighty deeds of the LORD, teaches him that his life is in the LORD's hand. It teaches him to rely on the LORD. Let's not forget that this child of God is in great distress. As he calls out for the LORD for help he looks back in his own life and sees the wonderful work of God.

That is an important lesson. Life has its troubles and can be difficult. But we should not be so involved in our difficulties that we forget to look back in our lives and see the work and the hand of our Lord. Since my birth I have relied on you, says the Psalmist. I have not been put to shame. And in my old age I may confess the same. We believe that our lives are guided by the providence of our God. Looking back we see many difficulties and human concerns, but we may also see the steady hand of our God. When we study the history of the church, we see many human shortcomings, but

What's inside?

This past summer, quite a number of our people in both the East and the West were involved in serious accidents. Lives were taken. Others were injured. In the last issue, Prof. Geertsema broached the painful and often confusing topic of accidents. He continues his Biblical reflections on the subject in the current editorial.

In less than a year, D.V., General Synod Fergus, 1998, will convene. Expect some articles in light of this upcoming event in the life of our churches! The first one is by one of our ministers who has been at many synods – the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene. He writes about revisions of the Nicene Creed.

Some thirty years ago, a group of courageous brothers "went on air" for the first time as *The Voice of the Church*. The broadcasting of the seed of the Word continues via this medium. Neil van Weerden of Guelph tells us about the work.

Not only do we support the work of evangelism "in our back yard;" we also support the work of mission throughout the world including the Middle East. Rev. J. Mulder and Mrs. C. (Joanne) Van Dam inform us about some joyful happenings at MERF. May the work done by MERF be richly blessed, so that many more Muslims – children of Abraham according to the flesh – and many others in the Middle East might come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour.

GvP

also the continual care of our God. This teaches us to entrust ourselves into His care.


There is the other line as well, from old to young. Also this line involves instruction. Verse 18: "Even when I am old and gray do not forsake me, O, God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come." Why does the Psalmist ask for the LORD's continual care? Why does he ask the LORD not to forsake him? So that he can speak about this work of God to the next generation. He wants to teach the youth about this wonderful care of the LORD that he has experienced in his life. Isn't this remarkable? He asks for life so that he can continue to teach the youth. This is a line from old

to young. The old requesting time and help so that he can teach the youth.

Keep in mind again that the Psalmist is in a difficult situation. That explains his desire to teach the youth. For he knows that the next generation will face trials as well. They will have to deal with many questions and go through struggles. He wants to help them in this by telling the next generation about the faithfulness of the Lord in his own life, in the history of the church.

Older members have an important function in the congregation. Grandparents can mean so much for the next generation. They may teach the next generation about the faithfulness of the LORD and so help the next generation to put their hope in the LORD. As

younger members we may therefore not ignore the older members. Just because they know little about computers and are not up-to-date with the latest, that does not mean that they cannot teach us an important lesson. On the contrary, they may declare to the youth the wonderful power of God.

The result is that from old and young together the praise of the LORD may resound. Verse 19: "Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you have done great things." The church's song of praise is endangered when young members ignore the elderly, or elderly do not teach the young. But when old and young see their place and task, then the church will continue to find shelter in the mighty deeds of God. 

A Revision Revised

By W.W.J. VanOene

Since our next general synod is less than one year away, it is prudent to pay some attention to what will have to be dealt with at it and by it.

Up until now I have not read much about any preparation for the forthcoming broadest assembly. I fervently hope that things are not put off till the proverbial last minute as this would give the churches very little time to reflect on the matters to be presented. And, if they consider it necessary to come with proposals regarding those matters, to do so indeed, and such after a thorough study and without having to improvise. Too much is at stake! Being pressed for time and having to improvise would not be to the benefit of the churches, since also brothers who will be delegated to synod need much time to study the various matters that will require their serious attention.

True, we do not know as yet the brothers who will be delegated, but every office-bearer should prepare himself in such a manner that he is acquainted with the matters to be decided upon. Even if he himself is not delegated, he can make a responsible choice as to who is most suited to be entrusted with the responsibility of taking decisions at the broadest assembly.

One of the points that will certainly draw the attention is the new proposed translation of the Nicene Creed.

At the Synod of Burlington 1986, the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* received the mandate "to see to the linguistic (sic!) revision of the Nicene Creed."

Some doubt

In the course of the years I have begun to doubt the need for and the wisdom of a decision to have our own translation and text of various ecclesiastical documents that are not the exclusive "property" of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

We already have our own text of some confessions that are the "common property" of various Reformed communities; we have our own text of the Apostles' Creed, a confessional form that has been accepted by many in the English-speaking ecclesiastical world. Now we are also going to have our own version of the Nicene Creed.

I wonder why this is necessary and what is wrong with the old text.

Yes, I am aware of it that also others work at a "modernization" of this creed, and that in that "modernization" there are some elements that are unacceptable. But is it really necessary to

have an exclusively Canadian Reformed Nicene Creed?

I am wondering.

But, whatever the desirability or non-desirability of such an undertaking may be, we have to count with the reality that a mandate was given, that a new translation has been presented and even was "provisionally adopted."

Synod Abbotsford 1995 requested "the churches to test it and to send their comments (if any) to the Standing Committee of the *Book of Praise* for evaluation." (Acts Abbotsford, Art. 44, IV.F.)

It is in order to help the churches with their testing that this article has been written. It will become clear that the provisionally adopted revision should be revised.

A wrong move

Note what synod decided.

It did *not* decide that this translation was the definitive text.

It requested the churches to send comments (if any) to the Committee, evidently in order to enable this Committee to come to the next synod with final recommendations.

Try to picture my surprise and annoyance when I saw that the Committee had instructed the Printer to have this

provisionally adopted version inserted in the *Book of Praise* to replace the old, adopted version.

This is totally wrong and presumptuous action. The Committee had no right to do so, and has caused confusion by this very act.

Now we are going to have three different versions in our *Book of Praise*: the printing with the old text, one printing with a provisionally adopted text, and a printing with the definitive text which, I am convinced, should remove some inaccuracies from the provisionally adopted one.

The very same synod that took the above-quoted decision also decided to give two "alternate melodies" for the singing of the Apostles' Creed to the churches for a "test period."

In not one of the hundreds of local bulletins that I have read during the past couple of years have I found even one consistory decision to recommend either one. On the contrary, several consistories came to the conclusion that neither of these two was suitable for us or that there is no need to have another melody on which the Apostles' Creed can be sung beside the two we have had for many years.

Imagine that the Committee had also decided to have these two "test-melodies" inserted in our *Book of Praise*! What chaos would have resulted from that!

I hope sincerely that a mistake such as the present one will not be repeated at any time. It only causes expensive confusion.

Why a revision of the revision?

You may be wondering on what ground I judged that various inaccuracies in the provisionally adopted translation of the Nicene Creed should be corrected.

I did not make that statement on the basis of any assumed wisdom of my own. I am "going to plough with someone else's calf," to use the terms Samson used.

When a copy of the "Report to General Synod Abbotsford 1995" by the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* reached the consistory of the Langley church, this consistory gave it into the hands of one of its members for advice. The consistory did not ask for a volunteer, nor did it appoint the first one who opened his mouth to say something about it, as is frequently the case on those occasions. This consistory commissioned one of its members who was well qualified for the task. It ap-

pointed brother Rienk Koat, a certified translator and interpreter, in possession of a Secondary B.Ed. and of a M.A. degree (English Major). Before his retirement as such, this brother was head of the English department at the Aldergrove B.C. High School. He had the credentials for the assignment, I should say.

Having accepted the task reluctantly, our brother dedicated some 250 hours to this demanding task and submitted a thirty-page report in which he scrutinized the Committee's report, including the "Report for a Linguistic Revision of the Nicene Creed, for the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*," submitted by Dr. N.H. Gootjes.

Of this thirty-page report the Director of Graduate Programs in Biblical Studies at Trinity Western University, Dr. Craig Evans, declared that it was a "sound scholarly document," giving a translation that was "fair to the original Greek."

Yet, surprisingly, neither the Committee, nor Dr. Gootjes, to whom a copy was sent, ever acknowledged receipt of it, nor did I see it being mentioned anywhere. Such neglect is not very conducive to encouraging church members to take an active part in the affairs of the churches.

Having read this report and having become convinced of the validity of almost all of its recommendations, I requested the author's permission to use the report for a few articles, so that our church members would be informed about it and be alerted to the need to change a few things in the provisionally adopted translation of the Nicene Creed.

This permission was readily given. It should, therefore, be kept in mind that I am not passing on my own alleged wisdom, although I'll make some personal remarks, but that I pass on a condensed version of what brother Koat wrote in his report. His own words will be clearly marked by quotation marks.

A comparison

I noticed that the text adopted by Synod Abbotsford 1995 differs in some respects from the one the Committee proposed, and this for the better. For this reason we'll go by the provisionally adopted version as found in Acts Abbotsford 1995, Art. 44, IV.F.

Following this translation, we arrive at the following comparison.

1. S(synod): "of all things visible and invisible"
K(oat): "and of all things visible and invisible"

Here I personally side with Synod's version, although I would suggest an even slightly different translation, namely: "of all things, visible as well as invisible."

Meanwhile, brother Koat agreed with my proposal and incorporated it in the second report to the consistory of the Langley church.

2. S: only begotten
K: only-begotten
The hyphen is necessary here, since without a hyphen the word "only" could be taken in the meaning of "merely."

3. S: of one substance
K: being of one substance.

It is regrettable that the participle "being" was deleted in synod's version. Br. Koat gives the following arguments for his proposed version, and I agree with him.

K: "The English participle 'being' tends to reinforce the 'of one substance.' In our idiom 'being of' conveys: to have a quality (How could she do that being of such a gentle nature?) But more powerful yet (for our case): 'to agree completely' e.g. The couple was happy, being of one mind. See Php. 2:2 'being of one accord, of one mind.'

My emphatic recommendation is to retain the present version: 'being of one substance.'"

4. S: through Whom
K: by Whom

In my opinion br. Koat's argumentation cannot be refuted. Here it comes.

K: "First of all, we are to consider what the English idiom would prefer in this instance. The various uses of 'through' express the idea of *penetration*: e.g. through the ceiling; penetration by the senses (through the trees); by way of (through the air); route: from A through B to C; by way of: through the city centre.

Further, by way of: through a friend; using as a medium: through a microscope; from the beginning to the end of a period of time: through the night; to express cause: she became ill through overwork.

None of the above usages comes as close to expressing the idea under consideration as the use of 'by,' denoting an agent (i.e. someone or something that performs an activity). In this sense it is most often found after the passive voice of a verb: e.g. all things were made by Him. Thus: *By Whom* all things were made (as the English version reads)."

5. S: Who for us men and our salvation
K: Who for us men and for our salvation

The latter reads much better, flows much better, and is more emphatic, for which reasons it is to be preferred.

6. S: and became incarnate

K: and was incarnate

The translation "became incarnate" apparently was prompted by the consideration that the tense used in Greek (aorist) points to a single action in the past, but since it is clear that the incarnation took place only once, it is not necessary at all to replace "was" by "became." This is brother Koat's argument:

"If we agree that we are talking about a tense of the verb denoting that the action or occurrence took place in unspecified past time, *without* implication or continuance or repetition, *then* the simple third person *past* indicative 'was' will do just fine here, since it meets all the prerequisites mentioned above.

Thus: 'and was incarnate' as the English version has it, simple and powerful. Quoted usages of the verb 'become' *lack* the immediacy and directness of the simple 'was' in this context."

7. S: He was crucified

K: and was also crucified

In the present text the word "also" places the emphasis on the wrong end. It gives the impression that the Lord was crucified not only for others but for us as well. This is not the intention. Therefore, if it is retained, it should be put before "crucified." Granted, it is not found in the original Greek text, but yet there is no compelling reason to delete it. Brother Koat's reasoning:

"In this (ancient) ecclesiastical document we are involved in a summing up of attributes, inherent qualities of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . the inclusion of 'also' . . . will only *enhance* the flow of thought, the coherence, the dynamics of the statement."

8. S: He arose

K: rose again

We find the same change of "rose again" to "arose" (and for the same reason?) also in our new text of the Apostles' Creed. Apparently this change was prompted by the (wrong) impression as if "rose again" meant that the Lord rose for the second or third time from the grave.

K: "Etymologically we have here 're + surgere', thus resurrection is a rising *again*. 'Again' (adv) was formerly used as prefix, as in 'again-buy' or 'again-say'; the modern locution would be 'buy again' or 'say again.' So, 'again-rose = 'rose

again.' I do not in the least subscribe to your suggestion that it seems 'to imply that Jesus Christ has risen before this,' as if this notion might ever find a foothold in orthodox Reformed theology,"

9. S: at the right hand

K: on the right hand

What are we referring to when confessing that the Lord Jesus Christ is seated 'at' or 'on' the right hand of God? Are we confessing that our Saviour is not sitting "beside" the Father? Or is there something else that is being stressed?

When one is said to sit "on the board of directors" or "on the Senate," this does not refer to a certain place one occupies but to a certain position one has, to a certain authority with which one is vested.

K: "And this idea is precisely what the original translator(s) had in mind when this phrase was rendered as 'on the right hand.' In this context we are referring to the concept of 'authority,' are we not?

To 'sit' with the construction 'on' or 'upon' . . . has also metaphorical values as in: 'to sit on the throne.' We are dealing here with *synecdoche* (= a figure of speech in which a part or individual is used for a whole or class, VO) e.g. 'give us this daily our daily bread' in which the 'bread' stands for our daily sustenance. We find it also in expressions as 'the stage' for the theatrical profession, 'the bench' for the judiciary, 'the Crown' for the monarchy, 'the throne' for the supreme authority.

So what do the above-mentioned choices of 'on the right hand of God' allude to? They all have in common that they express Christ's position in authority and His *reign*. I most *emphatically recommend*, therefore, that the original locution: 'and sits *on* the right hand of the Father' be retained . . . I would like to see it stand as a tribute to the sensitivity of the original translator(s), but primarily as a recognition of the deeper semantic level which betokens a position of authority and a reigning Christ."

10. S: and He will come again

K: and He shall come again

The "He shall come again" expresses not only that the Lord's return is something of the future, but also that, based on His promise, it is a *certainty*. By "He *shall* come again" we express our faith that there is no doubt about it.

Thus "shall come again" is the proper wording.

K: "'He shall' can connote His promise, warning, resolve."

11. S: come again with glory

K: come again, with glory,

Hereby the manner in which the Lord Jesus will come again is describe. The words "with glory" should be between commas, as without commas it could be understood as 'accompanied by glory' instead of, as is the intention, "in glory, in a glorious manner, being all glorious."

12. S: Who spoke through the prophets

K: Who spoke by the prophets

K: "The preposition used in the Greek text occurs in the KJV 235 times as 'by' and only 87 times as 'through' cf Heb. 1:1: 'spoke unto the fathers by the prophets. 'Obviously the translator(s) used 'by' to denote an agent that performs an activity."

The translation "through" does not necessarily imply any personal activity on the part of the prophets. As we still uphold the thesis of "organical inspiration," the preposition "by" is the proper one to be used here.

13. S: And we believe one holy . . .

K: And we believe in one holy . . .

It has to be stated that the Greek text of the Nicene Creed does read "in one, holy, catholic church." That the Apostles' Creed makes a distinction by adding "in" only to the triune God, not to the last part of the creed, is no reason why the text of the Nicene Creed should not be taken as it has come to us from seventeen hundred years ago.

Although it may foster wrong conclusions by one not understanding the meaning of "believe in the church," yet preserving the integrity of the original text demands that we keep "believe in" also here.

The arguments adduced by the Standing Committee, and even more so those given by Dr. Gootjes, appear convincing. Let me repeat the latter's argumentation as found in Acts Abbotsford 1995, p.148.

Dr. Gootjes: "The Greek text shows that the verb "to believe" is used in all cases (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, church) with three preposition 'in.' The Apostles' Creed, however, makes a distinction, by adding 'in' only to the triune God, not to the last part of the creed. The result was that via Augustine the difference between 'to believe in' and 'to believe' became part of western theology. The Nicene Creed, on the other hand, does not use the preposition to express the difference

between believing God and believing something."

The obvious choice is, therefore: "Follow the Greek text and maintain 'believe in' in connection with the church. This would show that we know ourselves to be heirs of the Council of Nicea, Constantinople and of Athanasius. The difference between believing God and believing the church is so obvious that it does not need a terminological distinction."

14. S: acknowledge one baptism

K: confess one baptism

It is not clear what the "stylistic reasons" were why the Standing Committee suggested to read "acknowledge." The Greek original uses a verb which can be translated both by "confess" and "acknowledge." We, therefore, have to make a choice for solid reasons and not on the basis of vague "stylistic reasons."

K: "S.I. Hayakawa (semanticist) has this to say about 'acknowledge' in *Modern Guide to Synonyms and Related Words*: 'one *acknowledges* something embarrassing or awkward, and usually not voluntarily; more often, the acknowledgement is extracted from one more or less unwillingly: The general *acknowledged* that the war had not been going as well as expected, but he affirmed that a shift in strategy would enhance the prospects of victory.'" It is clear that we do not (reluctantly) "acknowledge" one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, but that we gladly confess it.

15: S: look forward to

K: await

Synod did not follow the Standing Committee's recommendation to read "await" and we do not know why synod, rejecting the Committee's recommendation, opted for "look forward to." The Committee's recommendation is to be preferred. This will also become clear from the following.

K: "a) Await from Middle English: *awaiten*: a = to; *waitier* = watch. Thus: to watch for, to wait for, to expect, as in "Gabriel sat, chief of the angelic guard, awaiting night" (Milton). All these usages have a somewhat archaic flavour.

b) Look for = hope to get. This is good idiom in the following sentence: What results are you looking for? It's no good looking for help from that direction.

c) Look forward to = to expect and usually hope to enjoy something or doing something; e.g. We are looking forward to seeing you again

soon. The children look forward to the holidays coming.

I prefer a) because it expresses *all* the nuances we are looking for. Besides we sing "Our soul *awaits* the great Redeemer" (Psalm 33: 6). The slightly dated nuance of this verb fits in well with the overall conservative tone of this important document.

'And we await the resurrection of the dead.' (Nice alliterative assonance here as well: 'we await')."

In conclusion

Hopefully our readers were not bored by the above. Especially since it concerns a document of the *church*, this matter should enjoy the interest of all the members.

I also express the wish that all who have become convinced by what has been presented in this article will approach their consistory with concrete proposals to bring about those changes in the provisionally adopted text which are deemed necessary. Ecclesiastical assemblies do not read periodicals or articles. The action must come from the members. And the members must address the proper assembly, which is: their consistory, so that the consistories can present proposals to the broader assemblies.

Individual members certainly have the right to make their views known to broader assemblies, but they do not have the right to come with proposals on which the broader assemblies may act. Proposals must come from the minor assemblies, for the agenda of the broader assemblies is composed by the churches, not the church members.

Also for this reason I presented the above well in advance, so that action can be taken.

For clarity's sake I close with what I am convinced should be the definitive text of the Nicene Creed.

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

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages;

God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God;

Who, for us men and our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was also crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;

He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;

and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end. And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life; Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets. And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins; and we await the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen. **C**

Lead, Holy Shepherd, lead us

'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me'

Lead, Holy Shepherd, lead us,
Thy feeble dock, we pray.
Thou King of little pilgrims,
Safe lead us all the way.

In Thy blest footprints guide us
Along the heavenward road;
Thine age fills all the ages,
Undying Wold of God!

That life O Christ is noblest,
Which praises God the best –
A life celestial, nourished
At Wisdom's holy breast.

By her good nurture let us,
Thy little ones be fed,
And by her guidance gentle
Our wandering steps be led.

O fill us with Thy Spirit.
Like morning dew shed down;
So with our praises loyal,
King Jesus we shall crown.

O be our lives our tribute,
The meed of praise we bring,
When thus we join to honour
Our Teacher and our King. Amen.

*Clement of Alexandria
translated by H.M. McGill*

from *The Presbyterian Book of Praise*, 1902 edition

Middle East Reformed Fellowship

The official opening of MERF's "John Calvin Centre"

"The job has been completed. We can all rejoice with Rev. and Mrs. Atallah and the many others who helped to realize this wonderful project. The material building has been completed but the spiritual one has only started." These were the words of Dr. Abdel-Masih Istafanous, MERF's Chairman during the dedication service which took place on Sunday morning, May 11, 1997 in the Trinity Chapel of the John Calvin Centre.

About 100 MERF leaders, staff members, representatives, supporters and other guests from the Middle East and many other parts of the world gathered together in Larnaca for the occasion. The Centre was officially opened the evening of Saturday, May 10 by the Mayor of Larnaca. The Mayor, addressing the international and local guests at the entrance steps of Trinity Chapel, welcomed MERF's foreign guests and spoke of the importance of Cyprus as a free and open nation which upholds Christian values in a region dominated by Islamic religious and political fervour.

Following the symbolic cutting of the ribbon, the participants joined the Mayor and the other officials inside the chapel. Rev. V. Atallah addressed the gathering with brief words of welcome and thanks to all the guests, especially the engineer, the contractors, the sub-contractors, the volunteers and those who provided the funds necessary for the project. He expressed the hope and prayer that the John Calvin Centre will be used of God for the blessing of many in Cyprus and throughout the region. He pointed out that true biblical Calvinism has had a marked impact on multitudes of people in the region for the last 150 years. He declared that "Calvinism is not a dying sectarian intrusion, but an active and constructive world and life view rooted in God's work in Christ for the completion of the New Humanity."

Later that evening, Mr. E. Van Middekoop, a prominent Christian member of the Dutch Parliament and a friend of MERF, delivered a public



The new facilities of the John Calvin Centre.



Dr. and Mrs. W. G. De Vries presenting a portrait of Prof. K. Schilder for the new library.

lecture on "Christian Perspectives on Politics." He emphasized the need to distinguish between this-world issue-oriented activism and the consistent, sacrificial and responsible propagation of the Christian world and life view. He pointed out that concepts such as freedom and pluralism mean different things to different people, warning his audience against the amoral and unchristian basis of today's humanistic modern political theory and practice.

The day before, Friday, May 9, Dr. T. Brienen, a well-known Dutch Calvin scholar, presented the opening lecture of the programme on "John Calvin's View and Practice of Biblical Worship."

The gathering was reminded of the freshness and warmth of Calvin's outlook on public worship. The programme also included two other lectures. Rev. Donald Buchanan, former OPC missionary in Egypt, spoke on "The Doctrine of Election and the Great Commission." He reminded his audience of the fact that it is the Lord's will for the elect to be gathered through the preaching of the Gospel among all nations. Dr. Istafanous lectured on "The Significance of the Survival of the Christian Faith in the Middle East." Several international guests commented on how surprised and moved they were to see the power of God at work in preserving the truth



From left to right. Rev. and Mrs. Victor Atallah, Dr. and Mrs. Abdel-Masih Istafanous.

of the Gospel in the Middle East, against all the attempts of the powers of darkness. Copies of most lectures will be made available on video or as printed texts in a few months for MERF supporters through the local or national MERF Committees.

The most moving and memorable session of the programme took place when for more than two hours, the participants were introduced to each other and heard of the work of the Lord in countries like Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Kuwait and the rest of the 22 nations of the Arab League and beyond to other Muslim nations. The closing programme was dominated by prayers of thanksgiving and intercession on behalf of the Lord's people and work throughout the Muslim world.

The attractive new worship facility, Trinity Chapel, is decorated on the outside with seven arched stained glass windows with Bible texts in both Greek and English of Christ's seven-fold "I AM" as recorded in John's gospel. Many have come from all over Larnaca and other parts of Cyprus to have a look. Cypriots, who are used to adorning religious icons, are not used to seeing Bible texts on church buildings. Until recently, many confused the local Reformed community with cults such as Jehovah Witnesses.

The K. Schilder Library of the John Calvin Centre was officially opened by Mrs. E. de Vries-Schilder, a daughter of Prof. K. Schilder, who also presented a portrait of her father for the library.

Gospel broadcasting staff to be expanded

MERF's Board of Directors, meeting in Cairo during the first week of

May, decided that the Gospel broadcasting efforts of the Fellowship are to be expanded. Rev. Atallah asked the Board to help him enlist several Arabic-speaking staff members with gifts for writing, producing and voicing Gospel broadcasts suitable to the needs and levels of the Muslim listeners. The Board also decided that beginning in 1998, at least one of the weekly broadcasts will be produced to meet the ever-growing needs of converts in closed lands to understand the Biblical views on worship and church-membership. It was also decided to expand the efforts needed for training local volunteers for the follow-up of responding listeners.

Spreading the Gospel in Larnaca

People from all over Europe as well as Middle Easterners, Asians and Africans can be seen in Cyprus throughout the year. This includes large numbers of Asian domestic workers and East European labourers. In addition, there are the Russian owners and operators of wealthy offshore companies. So many of those coming through Larnaca International Airport have never read a Bible text in their own language. We have been stocking and distributing Bibles, New Testaments, Scripture portions and sound Christian literature in about 20 languages. The fastest moving items are, of course, in the Greek language.

Thank you for your continued support!

MERF thanks the Lord for the sacrificial hard work of dedicated professional volunteers from supporting churches in Australia, New Zealand,

the Netherlands, Scotland and England. The completion of the building process was realized on time for the most part due to their faithful and competent labours. The Lord has generously provided all needed funds through the designated giving of anonymous Reformed businessmen.

MERF-Canada sent a letter of congratulations for the official opening. We received the following response. "Thank you so much for your encouraging letter on the occasion of the opening of the new John Calvin Centre. We missed your presence with us but knew that you were with us in spirit. Thank you for all your prayers throughout the challenges and trials of the building process and for your continuous support of the work. We are glad to be able to turn back to the main task of which the new building is a tool and are excited about the new potential for service to Christ."

We marvel every time again at the work of the Lord! He has richly blessed MERF with the building of this beautiful new functional facility. May He also greatly bless the new opportunities for outreach and training. Please continue to support MERF with your prayers and financial support and so promote the Lord's church gathering work!

If you would like to make a personal donation please make your cheque payable to MERF-Canada and send it to

MERF-Canada
1225 Highway 5, R.R. #1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

On behalf of MERF-Canada,

Rev. J. Mulder, chairman
Mrs. J. Van Dam, secretary



Canadian Reformed Broadcast Association

Small Mission, Big Purpose

By Neil van Weerden

The commission

Almost two thousand years have passed since Christ gave his disciples the great commission: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." Since that day, the Christian church has worked unceasingly to carry the gospel to all corners of the earth. While Christ's message to mankind has remained unchanged throughout the centuries, the methods of communicating it have varied greatly with the times. During the early years of the Christian Church the news of a risen Saviour was distributed almost exclusively via verbal communication. When addressing individuals, such as the Ethiopian eunuch by Phillip, or large assemblies, such as the entire Jewish Sanhedrin by Stephen, the by and large illiterate disciples used the means they had to garner Christ's Church. With the calling of educated persons like Paul into apostolic service the spoken word received the added support of written testimony. Although less personal than direct interaction, written words could be sent in many directions at once and reach people who otherwise might be inaccessible. Over the next nineteen hundred years these two methods were the principle means of spreading and teaching of the Gospel. As God's creation progressed beyond the industrial revolution and through the two World Wars that sparked the development of much of today's technology, a new media of communication has been placed at our disposal: airwaves.

The beginning

Webster's Dictionary defines radio as "the transmission and reception of messages by electromagnetic waves." Transmitting the news of a Risen Saviour electromagnetically was the reason for the Canadian Reformed Broadcast Association's inception. Founded originally as "the Broadcasting Committee repre-

senting the Canadian Reformed Churches in the Fraser Valley," this highly motivated group pioneered the use of radio waves for evangelistic purposes within the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. On Sunday, May 4, 1968, their first dispatch was carried to radio audiences across western Canada and northwestern United States. The program has persevered on a weekly basis over the past 19 years with a Saturday broadcast being added several years ago. During the mid 1970s, a home mission committee in Ontario developed a broadcast similar to British Columbia's and on September 4, 1977, Rev. Cl. Stam's voice was presented to radio listeners across south central Ontario. Out of these two committees blossomed the Canadian Reformed Broadcast Association (CRBA) with its mandate "to promote the message of the gospel through the radio broadcast entitled VOICE OF THE CHURCH."

Since the churches of the Fraser Valley, and subsequently the church of Burlington West, implemented their broadcasts, it has become apparent that radio waves have the capacity to reach both individuals, just as Phillip did, and large assemblies as Stephen did. Like the letters of Paul, airwaves travel in all directions and can reach people who might otherwise have no access to the Good News. Based on these criteria, radio broadcasting is well-suited to help us in our commission to preach the Word.

Operation

The primary function of the CRBA is the development of broadcasts for distribution to home mission committees. This function is coordinated by a board comprising a chairman, secretary, treasurer, producer and representatives from local evangelism committees. Bi-monthly meetings are held to co-ordinate programming and discuss listener-ship response. Supporting churches are

Is Christianity The Only True Religion?

Author: Rev. G. Ph. van Popta



Published by the
Canadian Reformed Broadcasting
Association

kept abreast of the CRBA's activities via a short report after each meeting. Input and feedback from sanctioning consistories and evangelism committees are welcomed.

The preparation of a broadcast starts by soliciting ministers to supply material suitable for radio evangelism. When preparing these transcripts the author must assume he is addressing an audience with little or no Biblical knowledge. Simple themes and titles are vital for capturing and holding people's attention.

“Sure Hope”

by Rev. C. Bosch

Published by
VOICE OF THE CHURCH

Executive committee of the
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
P.O. Box 944
Burlington, Ontario
L7R 3Y7

Straightforward, every day, grammar allows the listenership to grasp the need for God in his day to day life, thus stimulating the desire for further contact with a representative of the Church. Most pastors in the American and Canadian Reformed Churches contribute to the “Voice of The Church” program.

The typical Voice of The Church broadcast opens with a program title, speech title, author’s credit and a brief musical interlude. The announcing voice and music selection in this portion of the program are consistent from week to week. This establishes the program’s identity in the same way most television and radio programs would. Following the opening comes the preacher’s message. This will be read, either by the contributing pastor or by a regular volunteer reader. A minister will normally contribute meditations as a four or five week series. This allows him to build on a consistent theme over a one month period. A doxology of congregational singing or spiritual music

follows the speech. At this point the producer will make multiple copies of the master tape. Each copy is then tailored to its individual sponsors specifications. These specifications include such items as sponsoring church credits, Vacation Bible School or Bible Study Club announcements and the required tape format for the broadcasting station. The final item in every Voice of The Church broadcast is an invitation to contact The CRBA for a written copy of the presented meditation or for further study material. At this point the programs are sent, one month supply at a time, to each supporting church’s transmitting radio station.

Airing of broadcasts

The function of the CRBA is the preparation of radio messages. It is the responsibility of church councils/consistories and evangelism committees to arrange transmission via local radio stations. Currently 26 of the 46 Canadian and American Reformed Churches are cooperating with the CRBA in the airing of broadcasts. These churches work with four different radio stations to present six broadcasts across North America. Once established the relationships between radio stations, their underwriting churches, and the broadcast association are largely routine. Most of the work is done at the initiation of a broadcast agreement.

The first step in the practical side of airing the “Voice of the Church” is finding a station that targets the intended audience. Classical, rock and roll, or any other type of station will all cater to a different age group and mentality. WDCX-FM, which airs two southern Ontario broadcasts, and KARI-AM, which carries the 2 Fraser Valley broadcasts, both target a Christian audience. Stations of this type receive the highest level of listener response. It has also been argued that they are preaching mainly to people who are already practicing some form of religion and are not in dire need of spiritual nourishment. The remaining two broadcasts are CKMW-AM, a Country and Western station in Carman, Manitoba, and CIMJ-FM, an easy listening station in Guelph, Ontario. Consequently, the broadcasts on these two stations receive different levels of response than the Christian stations, but the amount of virgin soil on which they throw seed is greater.

The next step is to negotiate the broadcast time slot. Most radio stations will recommend carrying a weekly reli-

gious broadcast Saturday or Sunday. This would coincide with a generally more positive frame of mind on weekends. Selecting a suitable time of day to air a broadcast is difficult, since it requires consideration of people’s listening habits. For example, CIMJ-FM carries its “Voice of the Church” presentation at 7:05 Sunday mornings. This time was selected because it is a time of dedicated listenership; the audience at this hour is doing little else than listening to the radio. Early risers, exercise walkers, and members of the service industry are the likely recipients of this broadcast. The WDCX-FM broadcasts (10:30 a.m. on Saturdays and 5:45 p.m. on Sundays) cover the peak listenership period of the day. However, these are also the busiest times of the day and rating the percentage of active listeners versus those with the radio on as passive discord is difficult. As soon as the tedious details are negotiated, it is up to the promoting Home Mission Committee to inform the C.R.B.A. of its arrangements. This will initiate the flow of taped messages between the producer and the radio station. Once this is in place, the primary duty of the sponsoring Evangelism Committee becomes the handling of listener feedback.

Feedback from listeners

Listener response is the integral part of the radio broadcast program as it serves to open the door to personal contact between members of the supporting churches and the radio audience. Isaiah 55:11 states that “when the Word of God goes out, it does not return empty.” Further to that, it does not return via any one standard road. The CRBA receives responses that vary from broken, almost indecipherable gibberish to articulate, well-structured English. We receive words of praise for the content of various speeches, and letters of reprimand from Islamics trying to set us “straight.” Generally speaking however, feedback comes in one of three forms:

- Requests for copies of specific messages.
- Requests for general information concerning Christianity, the Bible and the Canadian Reformed Church.
- Direct interaction between church members and broadcast listeners.

Requests for copies of specific speeches usually arrive after the airing of messages regarding moral issues. Family values and the sanctity of marriage are by no means forgotten issues and our Biblical views of these issues do not

“Women’s Rights”

by Rev. J. Moesker

Published by:
VOICE OF THE CHURCH

Executive committee of the
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES
P.O. Box 944
Burlington, Ontario
L7R 3Y7

go unheeded. Requests such as these constitute the majority of our listener feedback.

Requests for general information concerning Christianity, the Bible and the Canadian Reformed Church show up randomly. The writers of these letters are usually people who have been regular listeners to the program for some time and feel compelled to accept our invitation for further correspondence. The CRBA policy in regards to listener feedback is to fulfill the respondent's immediate requirements and pass the individuals name on to the closest co-operating church for further contact.

Although direct interaction between church members and broadcast listeners is typically non-initiated it is the most valuable form of feedback. For example, a hospitalized lady in Guelph discovered that her attending nurse was a regular listener to “The Voice of the Church.” This led to a series of fruitful discussions on our place in God’s world as individuals and families. The nurse and her husband,

armed with Rev. Feenstra’s publications on marriage and families, have since joined a Reformed Church in their community. In another instance, a disc jockey on one of the program’s secular transmitting stations cautiously admitted to being a regular listener of the program. Over the past few carefully timed “administrative” visits to the station, the dialogue has slowly been warming up. We pray that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, this contact will also bear fruit. During the early years of the CRBA, an earnestly searching individual was directed to “The Voice of the Church” broadcast by a co-worker. She, along with her husband, has since joined a Canadian Reformed Church. Other associations between broadcast listeners and church members have developed over the past nineteen years and more will develop in the future. If each of us will “let his light shine,” the seeds sown via the “Voice of The Church” will be nurtured to yield one hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

The future

What does the future hold for the CRBA and its “Voice of the Church” broadcast? Even if we do not know what tomorrow will bring, focusing on positive goals is pleasant. Increased listenership via an increased number of radio transmissions is one of our aims. Going “on line” and making the “Voice of the Church” accessible around the world is also something we are targeting. A full-time pastor, who would write, air and counsel respondents to our weekly broadcast is our strongest aspiration. Realistically however, the greatest thing we can hope for is that our broadcast may continue to find its way into people’s souls and open the door to let God’s love flow through us into a believing heart. Although justifying this objective by quoting Calvin’s Institutes or our Three Forms of Unity might be laudable, quoting Mrs. Debbie George may be even more instructive. She is a “Voice of the Church” listener who recently contacted the CRBA to request enrollment in the “Gift from Heaven” Bible course. She writes as follows:

Dear Friends in Jesus:

I am writing this letter in response to your free Bible course offer. I have heard your broadcast on WDCX. As we are in the last days, I believe that we need all the armour of God so that we can defend our faith and stand firm.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Rev. J.L. Van Popta
2716 Glen Street
Metcalf, ON
K0A 2P0

* Please note – P.O. Box 254 should no longer appear in the address.

I praise God for ministries like yours who are offering free courses. It is especially an added blessing to those of us who can’t otherwise afford it. I have always been very hungry for the Word of God and I read my Bible daily. When I receive understanding in some things, I realize how much more I don’t know or understand. It is almost as if there are a thousand things more to learn and understand for everything that we do learn and understand. All that I know is that I love the Word of God and that I will do whatever I can to grow more deeply in my relationship with Him. I have been saved by believing and trusting in Jesus for three years now, and I desire to become a vessel which the Lord may use. I know that I need more knowledge and understanding and I believe that God is using your ministry to help the hungry. Please tell me how I may receive this Bible course and if there is any cost incurred. I will pray for your ministry and for you.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Your friend in Jesus,
Debbie George

Come Lord Jesus!

For more information on establishing a radio broadcast please contact:

*Canadian Reformed
Broadcast Association
P.O. Box 85449
Burlington, Ont. L7R 4K5
Ph. (905) 639-1905
Fax(905) 639-0674*

*Harpert Vanderwel
C/O Audiocraft Productions Inc.
1232 Thorpe Rd.
Burlington, Ont. L7S 2B2*



Women's League Day

June 24, 1997

Sumas, Washington U.S.A.

by Sheryl Bisschop

Photos by Dena Bosscher

The 34th annual Women's League Day was hosted by the Women's Society of the American Reformed Church of Lynden. Two hundred and forty-nine women enjoyed a day of thought-provoking speeches and discussion along with Christian fellowship. This year's League Day meeting was held Sumas Christian Reformed Church. The theme for the day was "Contentment: Rejoicing In All That The LORD Has Given."

Mrs. Alice Kuik of Lynden, the chairlady of the morning session, opened the meeting with a word of welcome and a brief history lesson on the church of Lynden. Mr. Peter Sneepe of the Netherlands was introduced as the organist/pianist for the day. Mrs. Kuik introduced the theme of League Day, requested the singing of Psalm 62: 1,4,6 and 7 and afterwards led us in prayer. The Scripture passage of Matthew 6: 19-34 was read as a reference text for the speech by Mrs. Martha Kooiman of Lynden. Instructions for the question period and the use of question cards was explained, after which Mrs. Kooiman was introduced and given the floor.

Mrs. Kooiman entitled her speech "Overcoming Materialism." In her introduction, Mrs. Kooiman described our lives in an age of affluence where many people are more concerned with economics rather than morality. The Bible clearly instructs us to be good stewards of what we have been given by the LORD. There are over 2000 references to money and possessions in the Bible. Obviously, it's an important subject! The LORD does not condemn money and possessions. Rather, the love of money and the preoccupation of possessions are condemned. Money is a gift from God, but it can be defiled. There are Biblical examples of the Israelites blessed with much wealth, but Deut. 8 tells us that we must remember that everything is given to us by God. The Bible provides four prin-

*Speaker
Martha
Kooiman and
Chairlady
Alice Kuik of
the Lynden
Women's
Society.*



ciples for money management: 1. Work; 2. Save; 3. Plan by budgeting priorities and controlling expenditures; and 4. Don't make resources liable to someone else's folly.

Mrs. Kooiman then went on to the subject of tithing. The Bible doesn't give us a prescription on how to give. Rather, it's a danger to set up some absolute legalistic standard. Many people think of tithing as 90% for me, 10% for the LORD. However, everything belongs to the LORD. Matthew 6 reminds us that we must lay up our treasure in heaven. There are two treasures, two visions and two masters – we must choose one! We shouldn't spend time stockpiling our earthly riches, but should look forward to the riches in heaven. Giving tithes proceeds from the heart and the LORD will bless those who give cheerfully. We should beware of practicing righteousness before men and give privately. Giving is a spiritual exercise we are required to perform. God can only be served with single-mindedness. We should not covet other's possessions. The love of money leads to every conceivable sin. Those blessed with wealth and possessions must be aware of two dangers: 1. Be careful not be high-minded; and 2.

Don't trust in your wealth instead of God. The more you have, the greater responsibility you attain. There are five signs to watch for in determining if you love money: 1. Do you spend more time thinking about money than about doing your job correctly? 2. Do you feel that you never have enough? 3. Do you want to flaunt your possessions? 4. Does it kill you to give it away? and 5. Do you engage in sin to obtain your riches?

God commands us to not be anxious about money and possessions. Worrying is sin and we shouldn't question God's providence. Be satisfied with what the LORD has given and live in obedience to Him. Mrs. Kooiman concluded her speech by expounding eight principles to help us in our challenge of overcoming materialism: 1. Consciously realize that God controls and provides everything we own; 2. Cultivate a thankful heart; 3. Discern your needs from your wants; 4. Don't buy what you don't need; 5. Spend less than you make; 6. Save what is left in order to make yourself available to the LORD; 7. Give sacrificially to the LORD; and 8. The joy of life is relationships, not things.



*Poems presented by
Yarrow's Women's
Society.*

*Chairlady Corrie Geurts and Speaker
Jenny Van Driel of the Maranatha
(Surrey) Women's Society.*



Mrs. Kuik thanked Mrs. Kooiman and led the ladies in singing Psalm 119: 13 and 14. The question period followed with discussions concerning family finances, the stock market, life insurance, tithing and contributions. After closing the discussion, Mrs. Kuik led us in singing Psalm 127: 1 and 2. The ladies present were then given the opportunity to stand and shake hands with their neighbours in the pews. Two ladies from the Yarrow Women's Society, Mrs. Henriette Heetebrij and Mrs. Minnie Huttema, were introduced. They each read a poem in line with the theme of the day. The first poem was written by Helen Steiner Rice and was based on Phil. 4:11 regarding contentment. The second poem was entitled "Thank You, God, for Everything." Following the Yarrow ladies' contribution, Mrs. Kuik introduced a "new" league day song written by Liz Buist. This song was sung by the ladies after a tune introduction by Mr. Peter Sneep on the piano. Mrs. Kuik led us in pre-lunch devotions and Mrs. Kooiman closed the morning session with prayer. We were then dismissed to the Sumas CRC gym where we all enjoyed a buffet lunch prepared by the Women's Society of Lynden.

Upon returning to the church sanctuary after lunch, the afternoon session was opened by the chairlady, Mrs.

Corrie Geurts, of the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church in Surrey, B.C. Mrs. Geurts thanked the Women's Society of Lynden for the lunch and a word of welcome was expressed to all, especially those attending from outside the Fraser and Nooksack Valleys. There were also women present from the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church and the United Reformed Church of the Lynden area. The traditional league Day Song, "Sing God's Glory" was sung. Mrs. Geurts introduced Mrs. Colleen Bulthuis and Mrs. Rita Visscher from the Cloverdale Canadian Reformed Church who then provided us with some entertainment. Everyone had the opportunity to learn more about some women of the Bible in the form of a game. Clues were given as women, dressed in "Bible-times attire," strode down the aisle. Participants were requested to stand, guess the name of the Biblical character, and earn a prize for the right answer.

After Cloverdale's entertainment, Mrs. Geurts led us in singing Psalm 84: 1,2,3 and 4. Then she read the following scripture texts: Psalm 34, Titus 2:1-5, and 1 Thess. 5:11, 16-24. The afternoon speaker, Mrs. Jenny Van Driel of the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church was introduced by Mrs. Geurts. Mrs. Van Driel entitled her speech "En-

couraging All Mothers – The Importance Of The Christian Home."

Mrs. Van Driel began with some reflections on the morning topic and added some tie-ins with the afternoon topic. Her job description of a housewife included a list of several different occupations. Can you say that you're JUST a housewife? No way! We need to be content and thankful for what the LORD has given us. Whether we are grandmothers for many years or new mothers, we know the responsibility for the spiritual and physical needs of children. We need to constantly look to our merciful God for comfort and guidance. The institution of the family is under attack. Feminists look at marriage as slavery for women and some even go back to the ancient religion of witchcraft. In government, the agenda is against families and Christianity. Mrs. Van Driel encouraged young mothers by telling us that raising covenant children in the fear of His name is the most rewarding job. We may not always feel adequate in our motherly positions, but we must remember that God knows our weaknesses and knows that we can't do it alone. We can only do our job with all our heart and try to do our best. The words of Psalm 86 is an encouraging prayer for mothers. Mrs. Van Driel then quoted some passages from the

book entitled "Marriage and the Family" by Dr. J. Visscher. She also reminded everyone that the mother sets the tone in the home. The mood of the mother affects everyone around her and a mother's actions and words are far-reaching.

Mrs. Van Driel listed several recommendations for mothers: encourage your husband and be thankful for him; discipline your children with love, teaching them about sin and their boundaries; teach your children to thank the LORD and to ask forgiveness; read the Bible and pray with your family at mealtimes; keep up the practice of going to church twice on Sunday; and be an active and living member of a faithful church.

A special tribute was given to the "Grand-Omas" that were present. The dear ladies who pioneered long ago have a legacy to share with us in all the hardships they had to endure. The younger women can learn so much from the older women who have "been there" and lived under much more difficult circumstances materially than we do today. Mrs. Van Driel stressed that the purpose of her speech was not intended as a "how-to" but just as an encouragement to mothers in all our different circumstances.


At the conclusion of Mrs. Van Driel's speech, Mrs. Geurts invited all



Entertainment by Cloverdale's Women's Society.

to sing Psalm 71: 1,3 and 8. A discussion period followed. A comment was made that is it not only important that you talk to your children about the LORD, but to also talk to the LORD about your children. A suggestions was also made to set up an informal network where women have the opportunity to encourage each other. A question was brought to the floor regarding the place of television in the Christian home.

Mrs. Geurts closed the discussion period and opened the floor to general business. Some correspondence was read and a list of proposed changes to

the next league day's distribution of duties was announced. There were no further questions or comments, so Mrs. Geurts then presented a token of appreciation to the two speakers of the day and requested the singing of Hymn 48: 1-4. Mrs. Hillie LeGrand of the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church closed the afternoon session with prayer. The ladies were invited to enjoy each other's company over refreshments before returning to their homes. Everyone left with some renewed thoughts of contentment and encouragement; rejoicing in all that the LORD has given. 

BOOK NOTICE

By C. Van Dam


Calvin on Galatians in a New Translation

John Calvin. *Sermons on Galatians.* Translated by Kathy Childress. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1997. 671 pages. \$ 46.99 U.S.

This is a new translation of Calvin's forty-three sermons on Galatians which were originally delivered from November 1557 to May 1558. The translator, Kathy Childress, produced a very readable text in modern English without losing the flavour of the original for she has clearly stayed as close as possible to the French text. Needless to say, this rendering is a tremendous improvement

over the 1574 translation of Arthur Golding which has recently been published by Old Paths Publications (and reviewed and recommended in the *Clarion* of February 9, 1996). Considering the work and expense involved, it is quite unfortunate that Old Paths Publications and the Banner of Truth were not aware of each other's plans with respect to making these sermons available again. In any case, the sermons of Calvin on Galatians are now suddenly available in two editions!

Since I have reviewed Calvin's sermons on Galatians earlier (as noted above), I will leave it at this notice. Permit me two closing comments. Firstly, reading through some of the sermons

again, I was once more struck by the directness and force of these sermons. They bring the Word of God to bear on the lives of God's people. The modern English helps to accentuate or makes even more obvious the impact these messages made and still make. These sermons bring us face to face with the heart of the gospel and the Saviour himself. Second, since these sermons read so well, they can easily be used with great profit for personal devotional reading or for a Bible Study group which is studying Galatians. Also, because these sermons are fuller and have more application than Calvin's commentary on Galatians, they are a most useful addition to one's resources for understanding this part of Scripture. 

BOOK REVIEW

By Karlo Janssen

Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*
Harvest House Publishers, 1993
263 pages, \$7.95 US

Neil Anderson, a professor of practical theology (Talbot School of Theology, Biola University), is an acclaimed name in discussions on spiritual warfare. In his book *The Bondage Breaker* Anderson attempts to instruct people in their position in Christ so as to redeem them from negative thoughts, irrational feelings, and habitual sins.

With an increasing awareness of the existence of the spiritual realm books like Anderson's are much needed. Christians have to realize that the principalities and powers are not figments of the imagination but are real beings that have their influence every day. Anderson also correctly warns us not to go too far by thinking of Satan and the demons as divine beings. Satan, too, is a creature of God that, although it operates in planes different from those of humans, should never be considered to be all-knowing or present everywhere (p. 84). When we speak of the forces of evil, we do not speak of a force that is equal and contrary to good under God, but we speak of individual, personal beings, fallen *angels*, that band together in hardened rebellion against God.

Anderson believes he understands the way in which demons influence our lives. I have no reason to doubt that the events he describes really happened. Anderson is to be applauded for attempting to describe how one should respond to the forces of evil. But his answer is not satisfying. The plentiful acclaims printed in the front of the book, or Swindoll's comment "A calm, practical, workable plan from Scripture that results in freedom and victory for the child of God" will not vindicate the rather unscrupulous way in which Anderson at times handles God's Word. Allow me to illustrate this with some examples.

Anderson writes "Paul declared: 'It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery' (Gal. 5:1). This verse not only assures us that God wants us free, but warns us that we can lose our freedom" (p.12). This freedom, Anderson then suggests, is a freedom from sin and from the devil. But is it? Gal. 5:1 speaks of freedom from the old covenant with its restrictions. In Gal.

5:2 Paul continues to speak about circumcision. Thus Gal. 5:1 in no way proves that we have been set free from bondage to Satan, and definitely does not prove that we can lose our freedom from Satan to be bound to him again (which, in fact, would be a denial of the perseverance of the saints, a path Anderson seems to follow if we look at Harry the Satanist highpriest, pp. 86-87,114).

Another example of inaccurate exegesis is found on p. 143. Anderson describes the scene from Zechariah where Joshua the highpriest stands in dirty robes before God and Satan accuses him (Zech. 3:1-5). Anderson then claims: "This courtroom scene continues night and day for every child of God." Scripture tells us differently. In the new dispensation Satan has no place in heaven (Rev. 12:7-9) nor can he stand before God's throne anymore to accuse us (cf. Rom. 8:33,38).


Dangerous are the doctrinal foundations for Anderson's approach. He describes them in chapter 3. I lift out just one, a doctrine which Dr. de Jong discussed in the editorial of Vol. 46#13 (June 27, 1997). It is captured by the statement "No longer a sinner but a saint." The argument is made: because we have died to sin (Rom. 6) we are no longer sinners but *saints who occasionally sin* (p. 44).

This is contrary to what we confess in the Heidelberg Catechism. Our sinful nature is something we struggle against *all our life* (q/a 56) and even our *best works are all imperfect and defiled with sin* (q/a 62). This is an accurate summary of Scripture. At the *conclusion* of describing the struggle within the Christian, Paul still states that he *serves* the law of sin with his flesh (Rom. 7:25). And what of Is. 64:6 "All our righteousness is like filthy garments?"

The claim is made by Anderson (and many others) that the Bible never calls a believer a sinner (p. 44). Not so. In Luk. 18:9-14 we read a parable of Jesus. Christ tells how a tax-collector went to the temple (would an unbeliever do this?), stood at a distance in humility, not even looking to heaven but beating his breast (would an unbeliever have this attitude?) and prayed to God (would an unbeliever do this?) "God, have mercy on me, a *sinner*." Of him our Lord said "He went home justified before God." And I'm curious to know how Anderson would explain Ps. 51.

A key passage for Anderson is Rom. 6. He writes that the past tenses in the opening verses of Rom. 6 indicate that saints are no longer sinners and have no need to sin. Anderson here confuses justification with sanctification. True, we are justified before God in the death of Christ and thereby *declared* free from sin. But this does not mean that we are now already in this life free from sin. No, Rom. 7 shows that evil still clings to us. Sanctification (making people holy) is a process begun in this life by the Spirit, but not completed until the moment we are received into glory (1Thes. 5:23). Anderson appears to maintain the doctrine of positional sanctification or perfectionism, the belief that we are already sanctified and are able to live perfectly holy lives on earth. Thus he writes: "You no longer *need to sin*" (p. 44). However, Scripture *only* teaches us that God has *declared* us righteous, has justified us. Regarding sanctification we read in 1Thess. 3:13 that it comes only with the final victory; the Lord establishes our hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. In the meantime we fight the struggle of which Paul so eloquently speaks in Rom. 7, torn between two laws: the law of the mind which seeks to serve God and the law of the flesh which continues to serve sin.

Much more could be said about Anderson. His view of faith is skewed: he imagines it to be some power that can increase and decrease in size (pp. 82-83). His anthropology is a warped dichotomism: his attitude toward the body has Gnostic overtones (p. 43). Moreover, his approach to Scripture is pragmatic – all sorts of "lessons" and "steps" can be derived from texts (chap. 12) – and his doctrine often opens itself to the charge of semi-Pelagianism.

Anderson tackles a question that desperately needs addressing: how must we as children of God deal with the reality of the world of demons. But Anderson provides no Scriptural answer. Let us heed the warning sounded by John: "Test the spirits to see whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1Jn. 4:1). Literature that espouses doctrine of this nature has no place in the Christian home; it is as misleading as the New Age philosophy it seeks to overcome. 

I.L.P.B. Update September 1997

As one of the Women's League delegates to the Inter League publication Board, it is my pleasure to highlight the activities of the I.L.P.B.

The I.L.P.B. is operating in an environment in which the societies which gave the organization its mandate are sometimes using I.L.P.B. material and sometimes turn to the Navigators and other evangelical sources. Without condemning other sources per se, the I.L.P.B. is not happy with this development. Rather than focusing on God and His Word, the attention often turns to man and his experiences. The I.L.P.B. is committed to publishing quality outlines on as many books of the Bible and the Confessions as possible.

We realize that our material may be challenging for some and perhaps too meager for others, however a challenge never hurts and for those who wish to dig deeper, other commentaries are available.

In addition to our own research and development some authors have approached the I.L.P.B. with a manuscript. We are careful to scrutinize whether these are within our mandate, the suit-

ability of the material and the finances available for publication. I.L.P.B. also co-operates with our brothers and sisters "down under." Several books on our list have actually been published by a similar organization as ours in Australia.

I.L.P.B.'s campaign to locate translators, editors and authors was successful, but production stagnates when various people become sick, are busy with other things or are promoted to glory. As a result some books that are in the pipeline do not move as fast as we would like. At the same time several people still actively pursue the preparation of new materials.

It should be mentioned that most of our workers are volunteers, board members and committee members receive no remuneration for their labours. Translators, editors and typesetters are paid for their efforts and of course the printer charges us for printing and binding.

Within the committee and board there is always a certain amount of turnover as some volunteers end their term but we try to keep the transitions as smooth as possible. We would like to

thank the Administration Committee for doing a great job!

The following books have been reprinted: Colossians, Response to Your Baptism, and Redeemer vs. Destroyer.

Work in Progress: James and 1 & 2 Peter, Infant Baptism and Conversion, Luke Volume 1 & 2, Acts Volumes 1 & 2, Wat is hierop Uw Antwoord, 2 Corinthians, Believe and Confess Volumes 1 & 2, You His Child and You His Guest, Outlines on Joshua, Een Koning naar God's wil, Jona Profeet van God, and None Like Thee.

The goal of the I.L.P.B. is to promote the study of God's Word among His people in order to equip them for service in His Kingdom. Please contact the I.L.P.B. representative in your congregation. By ordering your books through your local representative you will save the shipping and handling charges. We also offer a discount when you buy 10 books or more.

Thank you for your support and wishing you the Lord's blessing on your studies.

For the I.L.P.B.

Jo Anne Van Middelkoop 

PRESS RELEASE



Classis Contracta Ontario South held at Ancaster Canadian Reformed Church, August 27, 1997

1. Opening

On behalf of the convening Church of Ancaster, Br. W. Smouter opens the meeting promptly at 8:00 p.m. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 46:1,2, reads Psalm 46, and leads in prayer. He welcomes the brothers present.

2. Examination of Credentials

The delegates of the Church at Ancaster report that the credentials are found in good order. The churches of Hamilton, Smithville, and Ancaster are properly represented.

3. Constitution of Classis

Classis is constituted. Classis accepts the suggested officers as moderamen for this Classis:

Chairman: Br. W. Smouter

Clerk: Br. H. Schutten – responsible for recording the Acts of Classis and the Press Release.

4. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda is accepted as proposed.

5. Approbation of call extended by Ancaster to the Rev. G.Ph. van Popta

All required documents were reviewed by the meeting and found to be in good order. Classis approves the call extended to and accepted by the Rev. G.Ph. van Popta since all supporting documents are in good order. Rev. J. de Gelder, on behalf of Classis, extends

congratulations to the church at Ancaster and her new minister.

6. Appointments

The Church at Hamilton is appointed to represent Classis at the installation of the Rev. G. Ph. van Popta on Sunday, August 31, 1997.

7. Personal question period was made use of.

8. Censure ad Art. 44 C.O. – not needed.

9. Acts and Press Release

The Acts are read and adopted and the Press Release was approved for publication.

10. Closing

Rev. J. de Gelder closed the meeting in prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. 