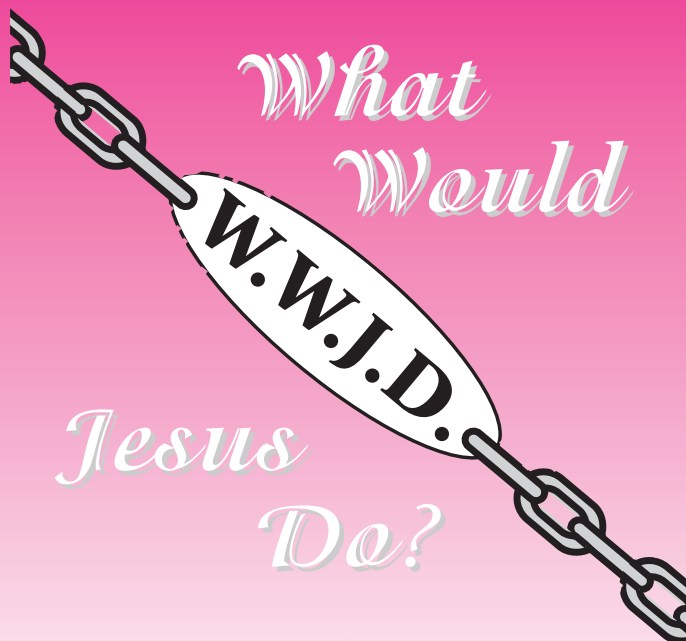


# Clarion

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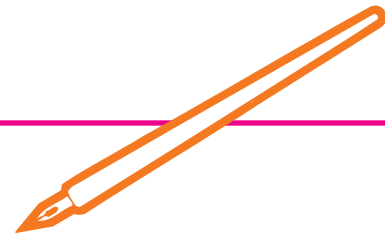
*What  
Would*

*Jesus  
Do?*

Numbers

10:1-10

By N.H. Gootjes



## W.W.J.D.

The Christmas season is over. The red ribbons, the fake snow and the glitter have been used effectively to hide that Christmas is about Jesus Christ. Now all this can be removed from the storefronts, for no longer is anyone in danger of being reminded of Jesus. Life is back to its secularized self.

There are people, however, who do not want to forget Jesus Christ. They know that He is our life, our strength and our salvation. Some young people have even found a way to be reminded of Him. They wear a bracelet with the letters W.W.J.D.: What Would Jesus Do? They recognize that they as Christian youth do not have an easy time in this world. They are surrounded by the pitfalls of temptation, but they do not want to succumb. When they are in danger of following sin, they can look at their wrist and be reminded of Jesus Christ. Thinking about what Jesus would do in a situation like their own would go a long way to silence the voices of temptation and to help them behave as Christians, as real followers of Jesus.

We all need to be reminded of Jesus continually. It is not easy for any one of us to live in a world full of temptation. Thinking about Jesus, who in all things was tempted like us, yet without sinning, can be helpful. Many of the popular people who are as role models do not exactly lead good and honest lives. They need to get their stories published in newspapers by whatever means. They are not known because of their good deeds but are notorious because of their sins. It is much better to think of Jesus, who remained sinless even in the midst of temptation.

The question is, however: Does it help to think of what Jesus would do?

### Jesus as a teen

There is only one story in the Bible about Jesus as a teenager. Luke recounts the story of what happened when Jesus was twelve years old and went with His parents to the temple (Luke 2:41-52). Although He is not exposed to any particular temptation to sin on this occasion, the story may be helpful. Luke mentions four things the young Jesus did. 1) He stayed behind in Jerusalem when His parents were already on their way back to Nazareth. 2) He was speaking with the teachers of Israel in the temple. 3) He answered His mother's anxious reproach. 4) He went back with His parents to Nazareth and was obedient to them. Which of these four things would young people of twelve years old and older be encouraged to do? Not too many! 1) No parent would appreciate it if one of their children would stay behind when the whole company is on the way back home. 2) Speaking with the scribes about the Word of God and its implications shows the remarkable insight and wisdom of the young Jesus, but we cannot expect that from young people today. In their case, it would usually be pre-

sumptuous. 3) Not apologizing to your parents when they have been looking anxiously for three days would be rude for any Christian child today. It is only Jesus, who could say: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 4) Being obedient to His parents is the only part of this story about the teen Jesus that could be applied to children today. If even Jesus (who was, after all, the Son of God, and who knew much more about God than His parents) was obedient, children should follow Jesus' example and also be obedient to their parents.

### Jesus' earthly life

What about Jesus Christ's life as an adult? Can what He did be an example to us to follow? What do we know about His life? If we summarize the gospel record, several aspects are very prominent in Christ's work.

In the first place, the Lord was a teacher. Jesus Christ gathered a number of disciples around Him, and taught them. He also gave instruction to the people that came to Him from the different cities in Israel. This is a very important aspect of His work. He taught the nation of Israel for about three years. Here, however, He cannot be an example to us today. We cannot speak with the same authority Jesus had, already during His life on earth. His authority struck the first hearers. The people in Capernaum were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes (Mark 1:22). Jesus was the Son of God, who had insight in God's plans and knew God's will. He proved that He could speak with more authority than anyone else at His time by His miracles. The people remarked: "What is this? A new teaching! With authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mark 1:27). No one today can claim for his words the same authority Jesus had and still has.

Something else that characterized Jesus' life were His many miracles. He healed the sick; He multiplied the bread; He stilled the storm; He even brought three people back from death. All these things are clearly beyond any one of us; we do not have the power to perform such wonders. The gospels speak of many works Jesus did, but hardly any can be repeated by us. Here, as well, we cannot do what He did.

Maybe someone would object that Christ's miracles proved His divine power, and that we obviously do not have that. He is, however, at the same time a man. Can we not do what He did as man? Yes, maybe we can do several things He did: we can walk around, eat and sleep. But Scripture does not emphasize these events. What Scripture emphasizes about His human work is His suffering and death. He was scourged, nailed on the cross, forsaken from God; He died, was buried, and rose again. What Jesus did as human sufferer, can hardly be something for us to do.

Overall, what we know of Jesus' life on earth does not lend itself to be repeated by us. He is exceptional, and that shows in all the stories the Bible tells about Him. It does not help very much to think about what Jesus would do in a certain situation. He might very well have done something we would never be able, or even be allowed, to do.

**W.W.J.W.M.T.D.**

Is it wrong to have wristbands reminding us of Jesus Christ? I do not think so. Let us by all means think about Jesus Christ more and more. He has been so concerned about us that He came down from heaven. It was for us that He taught and suffered and died. But that was not the end of the road for Him. He conquered death, left the grave and returned to this world. Then He went up to heaven and became King of heaven and earth. He still is the King; all things are subjected to Him.

That is something not only young people, but all of us, should recognize. We need to think more about Jesus Christ when we are asking ourselves what to do as Christians. Jesus is King in heaven. He is our King. We should obey Him in our daily work and not give in to temptations to go against Him. This obedience should be visible in our lives.

Perhaps we need an improved expression in seven letters. W.W.J.W.M.T.D. What Would Jesus Want Me To Do! 

**What's inside?**

W.W.J.D. or W.W.J.W.M.T.D.? Are you wondering what it's all about? Read the editorial by one of our new associate editors, Dr. Gootjes, and find out.

In the latter part of last year, our Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity were busy. First they attended a meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches (ARC) in Kalamazoo, Michigan; then they were at the second synod of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) held in St. Catharines, ON. The Rev. W. den Hollander, minister of Toronto church, reports on these meetings.

We believe that the Lord requires us to seek out others who hold to and love the Reformed faith. We appoint Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity. These deputies attend meetings such as those mentioned above because we are convinced that church unity is important. If two true churches (or federations of true churches) exist side by side, each developing its own church life, we know that something is not quite right. In "Observation Deck," Rev. VanRietschoten writes about a great push for church unity going on in Holland between three (liberal) denominations. However, the unity being sought and found is based upon a watering down of Scriptures and a devaluation of the confessions. Any unity which is not based upon the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God as confessed in the Reformed confession is no true unity. It is only a pathetic imitation of it.

Rev. Van Spronsen sings his swan song as the Hiliter. Once again, thank you, Rev. Van Spronsen, for your faithful work these past three years in gleaning bits and pieces of information from what is happening here and there within the churches.

God be with you all!

GvP



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**IN THIS ISSUE**

Editorial – W.W.J.D. — N.H. Gootjes.....26  
 Treasures, Old and New – Meekness is not weakness  
 — P.G. Feenstra .....28  
 The 1997 Meeting of the Alliance of Reformed  
 Churches — W. den Hollander.....29  
 Speech held at the meeting of the Alliance of  
 Reformed Churches, October 16 and 17, 1997  
 — Rev. W. den Hollander .....31  
 Second Synod of the United Reformed Churches in North  
 America, St. Catharines, Ontario: Oct. 21-23, 1997  
 — Rev. W. den Hollander and br. H. VanderVelde .....32  
 How do pilgrims have fun? — N.D. Kloosterman .....34  
 Heritage Christian School  
 — American Reformed School Association.....37  
 Observation Deck — J. VanRietschoten .....38  
 The Hi-Liter – News from Here and There  
 — C. Van Spronsen .....39  
 Mexico evening in Burlington — Harry Alkema .....40  
 Welcome Evening for Rev. H. Versteeg and family  
 — A.J. Ytsma .....42  
 Press Release .....43  
 Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty .....43



By P.G. Feenstra

## Meekness is not weakness

*Psalm 37:11 – But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.*

Psalm 37 is put together in the form of an acrostic. The first letter of each stanza of four lines follows the sequence of the letters of the alphabet. Thus the first stanza begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the next with the second letter, and so on. An acrostic functioned as an educational tool, assisting the youth in learning the Psalm. Other examples of acrostics are Psalms 25, 34, 119 and 145.

Psalm 37 counsels children of the Lord on the matter of life's choices. How then will you live? Will you cater to the pressures of society, or will you live each day as a humble servant of the Lord? Will you envy the prosperity of the wicked, or will you bend your neck in submission to the Lord's will? In verse 11 the psalmist gives us sound advice: Not the wicked but the meek shall inherit the land.

Those words sound very similar to the third beatitude that our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed. When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain. He sat down and taught His disciples saying, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. . ."* (Matthew 5:3-5).

Clearly Christ was alluding to Psalm 37:11. This Psalm unfolds the character of the meek. The meek are those who with humility and gentleness view their role in relation to God as that of a servant. They are not proud and they do not pursue their own personal gain. Their prime concern is the Lord, His kingdom and His church, His Name and His glory.

Meekness is not weakness but a quality that must permeate our entire personality. The meek are not spiritual push-overs but they go forth in the strength of the Lord and in the power of His might.

The first eleven verses of Psalm 37 lay down six imperatives whereby meekness will grow and develop in us. The first rule is: Do not fret because of evil men nor be envious of those who do wrong. The success of evil men is superficial and not to be envied. Their happiness is temporary and has no deep roots. It makes little sense to get all worked up over something that lasts only a few decades, when what we receive in Christ lasts an eternity.


The next three rules direct us to the Lord. We are to trust in Him, delight in Him and commit our way to Him. The meek submit to God's will and do all things in total dependence upon Him.

Those who trust in the Lord will find Him to be a source of great delight.

By keeping our eyes off the "prosperity" of the wicked we also commit our ways to the Lord. Translated literally, "commit your way to God," is "to roll one's way to God," that is, take the burden off your shoulders and lay it on God. You see, the meek need not worry because they leave the dominion of creation and of their own lives in the hands of the Lord.

The fifth rule for the meek is: Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him. That's exactly the opposite style of those who live without the Lord. They cannot wait but want to have position and possession right now. The meek know God will destroy the wicked and vindicate the godly. *"Yet a little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look well at his place, he will not be there"* (37:10).

The sixth rule governing the meek is stated in verse 8: *"Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath!"* When you are meek you do not rebel or lash out at God or your neighbour and you are sensitive to the emotions and feelings of others. The meek always bend under God's hand. They do not give up on God because they know He will not give up on them.

These are the characteristics of the meek. How much are they seen in us? 



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# The 1997 Meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches

By W. den Hollander

Once again one of the Deputies for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity attended the meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches. This meeting was held on Thursday and Friday, October 16 and 17, at the Immanuel Fellowship Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

At 1:30 p.m. the meeting was opened by br. Fred Colenbrander (Ancaster), Vice-All of the Interim Committee. After his opening prayer, he led in a devotional address on 2 Kings 5:1-19. Following this official opening, roll-call was held, showing that thirteen churches were represented, while four churches sent observers; some fraternal delegates also were present (the Rev. Bao of the Saigon Reformed Presbyterian Church in Garden Grove, California; the Rev. H. Bout, missionary in Mexico for the Messiah's Independent Reformed Church, Holland, Michigan; and yours truly on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches). As chairman for this meeting the Rev. Paul Murphy, minister of the Dutton Independent Reformed Church, was chosen. The clerk of the Interim Committee, br. Peter Yonker, reported on the activities of the Interim Committee as well as on his own activities during the time since the previous meeting.

## Fraternal delegates

Before the meeting went into the major part of the agenda, the special delegates received opportunity to address the meeting. Your deputy at this meeting was the first to receive the floor (the text of the address can be found elsewhere in this issue.) followed by the Rev. Bao and the Rev. H. Bout (who was present, also, because of a meeting of the ARC Eternal Life Mission Committee held in the morning of that day). As visitors, present just for the first hour of the meeting, were the Rev. S. Boikor as well as Prof. Dr. Pozokana, members of the

Hungarian Reformed Church, who happened to be in the area for different purposes. They also received the opportunity to convey Christian greetings and introduce the situation in their home churches.

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***Christ not only  
prayed for the  
unity of the true  
believers but He  
also pursues this  
unity by His Spirit  
and Word.***

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## Committees

According to the agenda, reports were to be delivered on the activities of the ARC Mission Committee as well as of the committee to study the differences between The Three Forms of Unity and The Westminster Standards. Due to the transitional stage in which the ARC found itself these reports could not be given. In fact, the meeting discussed the need for the existence of these committees. At this point in the meeting it was observed that much would depend on the direction this meeting of the ARC would decide to go. Although it was considered edifying, for example, to use the ARC meetings in the future for the exchange of information on the local activities in works of mission, the actual purpose for a Mission Committee to be of assistance in such mission projects was no longer there. With respect to the second committee, the Interim Clerk reported that this committee had not submitted any official or final report, due to the fact that the committee members had joined the federation of United Reformed

Churches. After the discussion of the overtures pertaining to the future objectives of the ARC the meeting would decide what to do with material which could possibly be available from this committee's studies.

The overtures presented to this meeting of the ARC very much concerned the future of the Alliance. They were presented by the King's Presbyterian Church of Pompano Beach, Fl. (Rev. Geoff Donnan). With the first overture a proposal was submitted to change the Constitution to facilitate membership of entire denominations or wider assemblies of local churches. The purpose for this change would be to use the ARC as a forum for discussions on ecclesiastical unity.

## Overtures

During the discussion of this overture a wide variety of views was presented, trying to map the future of the ARC. The sentiments differed considerably about the reason for continuing ARC membership or concerning each delegation's expectations for the ARC. Ultimately, however, the meeting could agree on the forum idea as expressed in the overture, especially with a view to the ARC's primary purpose of pursuing ecclesiastical unity. For the purpose of promoting this new objective, a Promotion Committee would be established, which should seek to invite and attract as many among the orthodox and faithful Reformed and Presbyterian federations/denominations as possible (together with many independent Reformed and Presbyterian congregations), requesting them to attend the next ARC meeting for mutual edification, assistance, and promotion of ecclesiastical unity.

The second overture of King's Presbyterian Church was much in line with the previous one: it proposed to use the ARC as a forum, also, for a theological/confessional discussion on matters

which presently divide the Reformed and Presbyterian churches from each other as well as within their own camps. The discussion was split up in the matter of the concept of such a forum and on the issue of the topics to be discussed. After the meeting agreed on the concept of this proposal, recreating the ARC into a forum for discussions of this nature, a schedule was made up for some years to come. In subsequent years papers on the following topics should be prepared (by professionals, via Internet, and through local discussion-groups) for presentation and deliberation: Creationism, Continental and Presbyterian Church Polity, Millennialism, Egalitarianism, Regulative Principle of Worship and its applications (in that order for the coming years).

Finally, King's Presbyterian Church proposed to adopt as a position paper a document entitled *A Reformed Confession Regarding Hermeneutics*. The meeting had some difficulty with the name of the paper, claiming to be a confession. The delegates could accept the merits of the paper for giving guidance on questions concerning hermeneutics (or how to use the Scriptures on questions such as creationism, egalitarianism, the regulative principle, etc.). After some discussion, the meeting adopted the paper as a position paper for the purpose of the objectives outlined in it.

### **The Unity of the Church**

On Friday-morning, the meeting of the ARC welcomed into its midst the Rev. Steve Wilkins, minister of the Auburn Avenue congregation, PCA, in Monroe, Louisiana. The topic of his presentation was *The Unity of the Church*. On the basis of texts such as John 10:10-16; John 17: 14-24; Eph. 4:1-7, he worked out his topic. He concluded from the scriptural data that Christ not only prayed for the unity of the true believers but that He also pursues this unity by His Spirit and Word. He emphasized the actual manifestation of this unity, so that the world would see this work of Christ. Hence, implied in this work of Christ is the norm and calling for the believers to pursue the unity of the church visibly in the way of uniting churches. (The existence of denominations is a consequence of sin!) The speaker strongly motivated his audience to promote this unity by way of a strong defense of the truth. "Set out

the Reformed doctrine and oppose heresy and sin with vigor, compassion, and zeal!" A realistic pursuit of this unity in the truth requires forbearance as well as a keen awareness that the ultimate federation of united Reformed churches (i.e. of Reformed and Presbyterian believers) will be a unity in diversity (i.e. unity in the truth and the confession of it, and diversity in matters of liturgy and the like).

The format of a report on a meeting like this does not allow for a detailed account of the discussion which followed this presentation. However, as your observer, I can assure you that both the presentation as such as well as the questions raised, generated a very fruitful and worthwhile discussion on the norms, requirements, calling, and process of church unity. Many of the points which your observer had been asked to make during the debate on the overtures the day before, came into yet sharper focus in this discussion. Rather than all sorts of theological discussions propagating views, theories, and the like, we should pursue a confessional unity, confessing the truth as the only foundation for an ecclesiastical unity. Even if the unity of denominations holding to the same confessional standards seems elusive at times, we need to pursue a dialogue among such denominations in which we focus on our confessional unity and in which we come to grips with differences which are of a secondary nature (e.g. liturgical practices, administrative and organizational customs, etc.). In pursuit of a catholic approach to this unity, also the lessons of history concerning church unity and actual unions could help us come to such a confessional unity.

### **What is the Church?**

At the close of the meeting, the chairman, the Rev. Paul Murphy, delivered a speech about the topic *What is the Church?* What does it mean to be a living member of the Church? He took his starting point in Matt. 16:18, and he concentrated on the four aspects in that text: the Church is militant, confessional, evangelistic, and holy. He, too, re-iterated many of the aspects of the discussions during this ARC meeting, especially the fact that we need each other more than ever. United we stand, divided we fall! In our time, more than ever, we need to enforce the antithesis between the Church and the world, rather than between traditions and/or



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denominations. We have a calling to promote the Reformed faith, confessing the truth, equipping the members, sanctifying the Church!

I have to come to the end of this report. Thanks to the openness of the meeting to a brotherly exchange of insights, and due to the nature of the material on the agenda, the 1997 meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches gave ample opportunity for fruitful edification. Since the number of delegates was rather small, the discussion during the entire meeting took place in plenary sessions, which proved conducive for the widest possible participation in the discussions. Although your observer did not himself seek or initiate too much participation (as is his due as observer!), nevertheless, upon the urgent request of the delegates, his involvement was invited and appreciated throughout the meeting. It was therefore with humbleness and gratitude that I could function fruitfully and effectively at this meeting as your Deputy for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity. As long as we may receive opportunities of this nature, we should continue to advise, encourage, and direct these sincere brothers and sisters in Christ, with compassion, zeal, and faithfulness. 



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# Speech held at the meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches, October 16 and 17, 1997

## Esteemed brothers

Thank you so much for your invitation to this meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches. We appreciate even more the privilege of addressing you on the floor of your meeting at this time. As deputy for the promotion of ecclesiastical unity, it is my sincere pleasure, therefore, to extend our spiritual greetings to you on behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches, greetings of grace and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, greetings of fellowship and well-being in the Holy Spirit!

## Faithfulness

For quite a number of years now already, we have commended you for your faithfulness to the Scriptures of our God and to the Reformed confessions of the Churches. Time and again we expressed our strong endorsement of your resistance to a spirit of independentism. We applauded in your midst the Biblical spirit and desire for ecclesiastical unity, urging you to pursue it not only in words but also in deeds. This spirit was expressed continuously in the pursuit of the question how to work obediently with the Scriptural principles, data, and incentives for federative unity! The catholicity of this spirit showed in the fact that time and again the understanding prevailed that you should not discard federative unity and a church-orderly unity because of distorted forms in the past or deviant practices in the present. Also your studies and discussions bear witness to it! Our sincere exhortation, therefore, should be, "Keep moving in that direction!"

## Unity

We can appreciate that this is a matter which takes time. You need to see the way first, then study the Scriptural approach in proceeding on it; you also need to give leadership, taking your congregations along. As can be seen in the history of every secession and return, the one minister takes

longer than another, the one congregation needs more time than another. As long as you continue to pursue this route, maintain the momentum of this development, stir up your spirits, motivated as you are by your common bond in the truth! Ecclesiastical unity is a matter of faith, i.e. a matter of obedience (not preference!) In statements of reformation and return, e.g. in 1834, 1944, 1980, the notion was included that those who want to be church according to the Reformed confession, should avoid the ungodly path of sectarian and uncatholic independentism and isolation, but rather seek the unity of the true faith on the foundation of the adopted Forms of Unity alone.

This ecumenical task is still as relevant and urgent as ever. The Head of the Church and the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith, our Lord Jesus Christ, in gathering, preserving and defending His church, has led His church on these paths before! Hence, still, the primary task before you today is your relationship with other true churches, on the basis of a common confession. Coming to such a unity, I suggest, with the United Reformed Churches, who have preceded you on this path, and with the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches, who are your earlier predecessors yet, you may then also continue to remember our urgent request to take these steps only provisionally, in order that we may come to a federation of all faithful reformed churches in the not so distant future (including the CdnRCs)! Today, we need each other more than ever!

## History

No doubt you know, that already as early as 1950 we had grave difficulty with the CRCs continued ecclesiastical relationship with the GKN instead of with the Liberated Churches. During this time of contemplation and meditation it may be helpful as well, to give renewed hearing to the twice spoken urgent appeals from the CdnRCs (1963,

1977) to the CRC, which went unheeded at that time, though alerting to similar deviations as the ones which trouble you today. We do not remind you of these appeals to say with it "See, we told you so!" but in order to bring to remembrance the love for you which went unanswered at that time: we never forgot about you nor did we ever want to let go of you, our brothers and sisters in the Lord!

## The future

We realize that due to the historical developments during the past 40/45 years we have become somewhat estranged. As a result of this temporal and ecclesiastical distance differences are perceived which may be only just that: perceived differences. Hence it is our sincere desire to see you progress in that direction of ecclesiastical unity with your Reformed brothers and sisters, your Reformed ecclesiastical predecessors, in order that the Reformed denominations become united! At the time when such a confessional ecclesiastical unity is accomplished, we should then also together consider the divergent paths of history (confessionally, ecclesiastically, culturally) of the Reformed and Presbyterian brotherhood, making use gratefully of the serious studies made of our confessional differences. We would like to urge you to proceed in this order of priorities, rather than entering upon an ill-prepared conglomeration of Reformed and Presbyterian churches, a unity which will not last.

In the light of all this, we wish you much wisdom, understanding, harmony, love and unity at this meeting. Be assured of our continued prayers for you, that the Lord in His mercy may lead and direct you, that so, in His infinite grace, we may find each other in Spirit and in truth! Thank you for your hospitality and kind attention.

Report and speech respectfully submitted by

Rev. W. den Hollander. 

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# Second Synod of the United Reformed Churches in North America, St. Catharines, Ontario: Oct. 21-23, 1997

## Synod Convened

On Tuesday, October 21, 1997, at 1:30 p.m., the chairman of the Trinity Orthodox Reformed Church of St. Catharines opened the second synod of the United Reformed Churches in North America in the Christian manner. A committee appointed beforehand by the convening church checked the credentials of the delegates and found those of 56 churches to be in good order. They reported on some irregularities in the delegation of some and informed the meeting that other churches were unable to send delegates or would join later. They also passed on the requests of the churches in Chino and Escondido, which requested provisional acceptance into the federation, yet with charter member status (which means that they would not need to join by sponsorship nor would their pastors require a *colloquium doctum*). All credentials were accepted as well as the special requests granted.

Among the material submitted for synod's consideration was a *Form of Subscription to the Three Forms of Unity*. Although there was no formal acceptance of this form as yet, the meeting proceeded with the common assent to this form. Thus synod was declared constituted and its first action was the election of a moderamen. Besides the Rev. Jerome Julien, the Stated Clerk of the federation, synod appointed br. Chuck Dijkstra (of Trinity Orthodox Reformed Church) as Chairman, and the Rev. Ralph A. Pontier (of Orange City, IA) as its Vice-Chairman.

## Agenda

As part of its initial business, synod set out to organize itself in dealing with the agenda, consisting of some 60 overtures pertaining to the Church Order and another 20 overtures on related or other matters. The convening church had prepared a proposal for the organization of synodical committees of pre-advice. After some discussion this course of action was accepted. However, in regard to the adoption of the agenda, quite a discussion developed concerning a great

number of overtures submitted by Classis East. This classis had dealt only in a preliminary manner with these overtures, without taking them over as classis in order to present them to synod. Considering, however, that the previous synod had stated that each church could submit proposals for revision, and seeing how especially the discussion on the final version of a Church Order was still in flux, and the development of a federation still somewhat in a transitional stage, synod decided to admit these overtures and accept the agenda as submitted.

## Stated clerk

Synod then heard the report of the Stated Clerk, the Rev. Jerome Julien. He reported on his activities since the previous synod. Also from his report it appeared how a great many churches are considering joining this federation or informed him of their requests to be received via the classes. He was involved as well in contacts with the OPC (he attended the General Assembly), in preparations for a delegation of the Rev. J. Gangar to the meeting of the ICRC in Seoul, and in matters of mission and requests for the federation concerning mission projects. These and other activities (such as the compilation of a directory for the federation) show how the federation is taking shape and is beginning to function as a federation of churches. At this point in the agenda attention was given as well to the financial affairs of the federation in the way of scrutinizing the Treasurer's Reports for Canada and the US. Thus, it was not until 4:45 p.m. that the advisory committees gathered in their designated rooms in the Trinity Church facilities to begin the preparations of their pre-advice for the plenary sessions of synod. As Deputy for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity, I joined Committee #8, which had to deal with ecumenical matters. Throughout the meetings of this committee I was received well and requested to participate in all the discussions.

## Remembering for renewal

The evening of October 21 had been set aside for an inspirational meet-

ing in which the Rev. John Bouwers would have the address. On the basis of Deut. 8: 1-20, especially verse 18, Rev. Bouwers spoke on the topic *Remembering for Renewal*. The text for this address led the speaker to express "a caution, a calling, and a commitment" in regard to the process of federation. Establishing a new covenant of churches requires careful consideration of past unfaithfulness in order to proceed with renewed obedience and commitment in the course of Christ's church gathering work. This meeting was inspirational indeed, and with this instructional speech and uplifting address every participant became enriched and encouraged.

## Fraternal delegates

After the opening devotions on Wednesday morning and some in-house matters, synod invited fraternal delegates to address the meeting. The following speakers made use of this opportunity: The Rev. T.E. Tyson for the OPC, the Rev. M. Koerner for the RCUS, the Rev. T. Vandenhevel for the PCA, the Rev. C. Schouls for the FRCNA, the Rev. Prof. R. Dekker for the PRC, the Rev. W. den Hollander for the CdnRC (see elsewhere for the text of this address), and the Rev. C.A. Matie for the Christian Reformed Church in Myanmar (Burma). The chairman responded to each speaker in turn.

On Thursday, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. a meeting took place of the above delegates, together with their respective fellow delegates (included as well was Dr. J.P. Roberts of the IPC of Mexico) with the newly appointed members of the Synodical Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU). In this meeting each delegation received the opportunity to express the objectives and goals of the federation which they represented for ecumenical relations and church unity. The delegates could voice their opinions as well on the preferred mechanics and structure for future contact with the CERCU. As a result of this preliminary meeting, the suggestion was made and supported to have a similar meeting of delegates in the



future in which Scriptural principles for the promotion of church unity could be discussed. The CERCU was advised to take some initiative in the establishment of such a forum, or to consult with others pursuing a similar forum (e.g. the ARC or the ICRC regional conferences).

### Advisory committees

On Wednesday most of the time was used initially for the advisory committees to prepare their recommendations for synod. However, during the afternoon sessions some attention was given to the matter of incorporation. As advisor and consultant for the Structure Committee, br. Herman Faber was present to give legal advice on the pros and cons of incorporation. Seeing that synod was not ready to proceed to some decision making and that further studies on the differences between the Canadian situation and that in the USA appeared necessary, synod adopted a motion to defer this matter to the next synod.

As the advisory committees completed their work in formulating a pre-advice for the benefit of the discussion of the overtures on the floor of synod, these committees received the opportunity to present their recommendations. In the context of a report on this synod, it would lead too far afield to elaborate in detail on the issues discussed in plenary sessions. However, due to their controversial or crucial character, let it suffice to mention some of the topics which received special attention: the need for and functioning of Synodical Deputies (analogous to our Deputies of Regional Synod ad Art. 48 C.O.) was rejected; the possibility for admission to the ministry for candidates with exceptional gifts (our Art. 8 C.O.) was discontinued; the need for and functioning of church visitors was endorsed and the practice of classis appointed visitors continued; the position of Stated Clerk was maintained; the frequency of the meeting of classes from at least once every six to once every twelve months was adjusted; covering the costs of synod (no more synodical assessments or quota, but rather) by freewill offering was established; a proposal to publish a denominational periodical did not fair well!

### Inter-Church relations

In pursuit of the task of observing the procedures and discussions of this synod, your deputy had a special interest in the way synod would deal with the *Inter-Church Relations Committee Report*. In carrying out their mandate, this committee had initiated contact with federations most closely related to

the churches belonging to the federation of the URCNA: CdnRC, FRCNA, and OCRC. In that approach the contact was carried out by correspondence, a correspondence which in the case of the CdnRC was very fruitful and which had led to a clear mutual understanding of objectives, goals, and principles for ecclesiastical unity.

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***Establishing a new covenant of churches requires careful consideration of past unfaithfulness in order to proceed with renewed obedience and commitment in the course of Christ's church gathering work.***

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Evidently, the members of this Inter-Church Relations Committee were very familiar with the history of the CdnRC, with their background in the Liberation, and with the developments leading up to the formation of the federation of CdnRC. This knowledge and familiarity was expressed especially in the latest letter written to our deputies, which letter was quoted repeatedly in this *Inter-Church Relations Committee Report*. The committee conveyed in its letter its consideration of the Liberation as God's way and work to bring His people back to Himself from deviant teachings and practices. The committee also expressed its belief that the CRC should have established ecclesiastical relations with the liberated churches in the Netherlands and discontinued them with the GKN. As well, the committee related their conviction that Dr. A. Kuyper's teaching on the pluriformity of the church was unscriptural and contravened the Belgic Confession, articles 27-29.

As you will understand, your deputies were very thankful receiving these answers in our correspondence with this committee. Your deputy, therefore, in his address to synod derived the contents for his speech from this correspondence as well, expressing our delight and gratitude for this growing understanding. The question, of course, for your deputy concerned the way in which synod would deal with this report and interact with this correspondence of its committee. Therefore, when synod came to the recommendation of the


committee to approve their work, a discussion developed in which the differences were highlighted from, on the one hand the parameters for the committee's dialogue with other deputies for church relations, and on the other hand the meaning of synod's approval of this work. Whereas the dialogue for the committee needs to be extensive, the investigation deep, and the assessment and judgment thorough, synod on the other hand is not involved in the actual dialogue as the committee is. As a result of this discussion and of these considerations, synod decided to receive the *Report*, accepting the work of the committee, without endorsing the committee's views.

### The future

The discussion on the floor of synod was both interesting and helpful in showing us the sentiments and sensitivities pertaining to our contacts in past and present. At the same time, the committee's approach of extensive reporting and forthright assessing for the merit of the attention among the churches also helps us in our correspondence and contacts at future occasions. From both sides we will have to work with perceptions and notions about each other, which will need substantive attention in order that ecclesiastical unity may be accomplished in obedience to the Word of God and in accordance with the Confessions. It is with a view to this pursuit that we have become reassured and encouraged by the overall dealings, discussions, and decisions of this second synod of the URCNA. The unity of the true faith was evident beyond a doubt.

The desire to obey God's Word and be faithful to the Confessions and be loyal to the Reformed church polity was evident. At the same time, there still is a process to take place in which the experiences from the past, the fears about their recent history, and the complete return to full-out Reformed practices must be worked out. It testifies of spiritual humbleness and scriptural integrity, therefore, that in many discussions decisions were deferred to a future synod in order to ensure this faithfulness. When synod decided to convene the next synod on June 15, 1999 (sooner than the planned three-year sequence), and closed this synod on Thursday, October 23, at 9:30 p.m., it was the common prayer and desire to continue in this way in total submission to the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ!

Respectfully submitted by

Rev. W. den Hollander,  
and br. H. VanderVelde  
(who twice attended synod as well). 

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# How do pilgrims have fun?<sub>2</sub>

By N.D. Kloosterman

## How do pilgrims have fun?

How can we enjoy pop culture in a way that is consistent with the Christian worldview? Isn't this the real question behind the plea for help being made by Christian parents who know they cannot – and should not – control their children's behavior twenty-four hours a day? Isn't this the real need, namely, that we equip our young people so that, because they know the antithesis, as they come to understand the pilgrim lifestyle, they will be able to continue the journey after we're gone?

If we were to ask the same question with regard to sexuality ("How should Christians enjoy sexuality?"), we would not be satisfied with adopting a catalog of permissible sexual behaviors. Rather, we must understand sexuality within the context God gave for it. Admittedly, this kind of answer won't satisfy the adolescent cry: "But how far I may go on a date?" Similarly, in our evaluation of pop culture today, the approach we must take is not to develop a catalog of permissible musicians or movies. It is to cultivate moral discernment about the function and power of entertainment within our culture.

At this point Christians have faced, and continue to face, one very grave danger. You will recall our description of "pilgrim" to mean *resident alien*, someone who lives temporarily in a land, though having citizenship in another country. The most serious danger confronting us as this kind of pilgrim, in relation to our surrounding culture, is the temptation to disconnect these two words, these two notions, or "resident" and "alien," and to choose or prefer one over the other.

This disconnection or separation can be done in one of two ways.

One mistake is what I would term *cultural avoidance*, and occurs when Christians come to *prefer alienation over residency*. This leads to a cultural ethic of *moral maximalism*, which argues for clamping down, monitoring pop culture, policing the fences, and the like. Such an impulse arises from a desire to shelter our youth and our-



selves from the prevailing culture, from an overestimation of our ability to avoid contact with evil in modern society. At the same time, because it emphasizes alienation within modern culture, cultural avoidance underestimates our calling to be of service within this present world. Moral maximalism eliminates the tension of living as resident aliens by denying that we are *residents* in this culture, by deserting our calling to render the service of salt and light within the world.

The other mistake is what I would term *cultural immersion*, and occurs when Christians come to *prefer residency over alienation*. This leads to a cultural ethic of *moral minimalism*, which basically says that each is on his own, and each has to find his own way. Ironically, this view can easily arise from the faulty notion that since we're going to be redeemed "out of" this world anyway, it doesn't really matter

what we do in this world. The apostle Paul dealt with this kind of moral carelessness in Corinth. Another source of moral minimalism is the notion that since we're victors in Christ, all things are ours to enjoy. Paul dealt with this line of argument in Corinth as well. Moral minimalism eliminates the tension of living as resident aliens by denying that we are *aliens*, by accommodating to modern culture as something basically good.

Now, what we need to see is that both mistaken approaches eliminate the antithesis which is essential to the identity of pilgrims as resident aliens. The antithesis belonging to the pilgrim lifestyle, resulting from election, lying at the heart of the gospel, lies not in one or the other of those words, but in their very connectedness. Both the "sheltered" approach and the "immersion" approach disconnect residency and alienation, and thereby effectively

destroy both the status and the ethic characteristic of pilgrims.

In answering the question, How do pilgrims have fun?, I would offer three positive suggestions for your reflection.

### The role of thanksgiving

The more experienced I become in studying the Bible and Reformed confessional truth, the more significant I find the Biblical and catechetical emphasis on gratitude as the essence of Christian responsible living. Among the many functions of thanksgiving in the Christian life, I believe one of the most important is that by giving thanks – for food, for each other, for the gospel, for fun and leisure – we consecrate to God, we set apart and fence off for godly service our substance, our relationships, our activities. With regard to the matter of this essay, the question becomes: How do Christians give thanks in their leisure?

Let me begin to sketch an answer, very briefly considering a few New Testament passages relating to the believer's use of the creation and participation in culture.

The first passage we note is Romans 14:5-8. The apostle Paul is giving advice to the congregation in Rome which is suffering from disputes and disagreements between the "strong" and the "weak." Without commenting in great detail on the precise nature of the disagreements, and the flow of the apostle's advice (for which see Kloosterman 1991, 30-43), we wish to observe that both groups within the church, both the "strong" and the "weak," act from a religious motive in that *both* "give thanks to God": "He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks" (Rom. 14:6b). Our modest point is that thanksgiving is that mode whereby we direct to God either the enjoyment or the renunciation of our Christian liberty with regard to the creation. But this gratitude is a far cry from the subjective attitude of "I think I can thank God for this." As the Heidelberg Catechism makes clear, gratitude is expressed in good works, which must arise from true faith, conform to God's law, and seek His glory. All of this is why the apostle urges both "strong" and "weak" in Rome: "Let each be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). Gratitude is the fruit of conviction.

Thanksgiving to God in our use, or non-use, of creation is discussed also in 1 Corinthians 10:30-33. The apostle Paul had just appealed twice to the same Bible verse (Ps. 24:1) to advise the

Corinthians both to eat whatever was sold in the market and not to eat that same food if someone identified it as idol-food.<sup>13</sup> But merely being able to give thanks to God is inadequate ground for proceeding. Giving thanks, you see, must include my weaker brother, so that I don't cause him to stumble if he should violate his conscience and follow my example. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

A third passage relevant to the role of thanksgiving in the Christian's relation to culture is 1 Timothy 4:3-5: ". . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." The context of these verses involves false teachers forbidding marriage and certain foods which God had created to be received with thanksgiving. Now, we must be careful not to equate "every creature of God" with "every product of culture," for the latter obviously entails what people have done with the creation. In other words, we should distinguish between created things and cultural products, i.e., message- and value-embodiment phenomena that employ (aspects of) creation.

With that distinction in mind, these verses offer several helpful insights for our interaction with modern culture. We hear once again the exhortation to "receive with thanksgiving," but this gratitude finds its boundaries within what I would call covenantal concourse, consisting of God's Word and our Word-guided prayer. Evil does not reside in the creation, nor in "things" of creation, but in the human heart. This means that by giving thanks, God's Word of blessing and our grateful prayer sanctifies, sets apart, consecrates for service to God any created gift.

Enjoying the creation and its cultural uses with thanksgiving means, then, that we are able to "get a fix on them" in relation to God and to our neighbor. This means, among other things, we are scared to death of idolatry. Whether it be the idolatry of sports figures or stars of the silver screen, or the idolatry of form and beauty, or the idolatry of power and money, gratitude

to God fixes limits and boundaries to our enjoyment.

Enjoying the creation and its cultural uses with thanksgiving also means that my neighbor's well-being always has a claim upon me, whether that neighbor be my tennis opponent or my fellow church member, my adolescent child or my spouse. Christian liberty serves neighbor love.

There is nothing wrong with frivolous activity as long as life isn't devoted to frivolity. We who are believers in Jesus Christ need not fear the cultural idols of our day as long as we don't reverence them. However, many of the signs around us within the church indicate that Christians are not being very successful in keeping pop culture in its place. Think of the "contemporary Christian music" movement; consider the market-driven, pop-culture Mc-Churches known as megachurches; notice the resurgent interest today in incorporating the visual and the dramatic in preaching and worship. Most distressing of all is that these phenomena are accompanied by a "dumbing down" in doctrine and truth. As Myers puts it, evangelicalism has become not so much a community of orthodoxy (right doctrine), as a community of orthopathos (right feeling). Especially the church's worship is being sentimentalized as a result.

Part of the problem is that Christians have often been critical of the *content* of pop culture (nudity, profanity, blasphemy, violence), but oblivious to the power and function of its *form*. When the Christian faith is marketed as a "natural high," offered as a rewarding lifestyle option, or sold as the key to health and wealth, then preachers are accommodating the gospel to the culture rather than helping people evaluate the culture with the gospel. In point of fact, the forms of contemporary popular culture, with their emphasis on the new and the now, cannot sustain a message of a God who judges, of a God who demands repentance and self-denial.

You can enjoy popular culture without compromising your Biblical principles as long as you are not dominated by the sensibilities of pop culture, as long as you are not captivated by its idols (Myers 1989, 180). But this enjoyment requires awareness of the moral and intellectual pick-pocketing going on during entertainment encounters.

Parents have a great obligation to establish a cultural sensibility in their children. Home life must be characterized by a culture of transcendence, that is, a culture whose central values of



integrity, service, and cultivation arise from love for God and His Word, and love for our neighbor. We must teach our children that having fun is real work of a different sort, work of a cultural sort, the kind that reads between lines of poetry, looks beyond the canvas, listens above the music, and sees more than what the camera shows.

## 2. Avoiding the poison of abstraction

A second suggestion I would offer is that we avoid the poison of abstraction. By this I mean that we simply cannot abstract an item of culture from its context for analysis with the Bible in hand. I am not saying that we cannot analyze our culture with the Bible in hand. Rather, that we cannot isolate from its cultural context, function, and place, any particular element or phenomenon.

For example, what is the Bible's judgment about eating "on the run?" It would do us little good to pull out the concordance and do a Bible study on "meals." We must analyze the role of the automobile and highways in modern society; we should know something of modern views of time and convenience; and we really need to think about the pressures relieved by fast-food restaurants and microwave cooking. Scriptural teachings about time and about stewardship will get us further, because now we are incorporating this single element into a cultural matrix or set of relationships.

We must observe, and draw necessary implications from, the fact that young people never go to see movies. A young person goes to see a particular movie. This means that a certain young person, with his or her emotional, intellectual, and religious abilities, sees a particular movie, which communicates a specific worldview able to be evaluated by objective standards of truth and beauty in terms of its moral, economic, political, and cultural message.

The poison of abstraction belongs to a pattern of cultural analysis that has become all too familiar. Imagine studying the permissibility of dancing without considering the context of rock music. You grin? It's been done. Developments in pop culture and advances in entertainment technology tend to be viewed as neutral, neither good nor bad, evaluated apart from the purposes they originally served. Little attention is given to the "message" embodied in the medium, to whether the values of a secular worldview are being preached. Especially prevalent is the refusal to an-

alyze various contexts for encountering views of reality portrayed by the entertainment media.

Such abstraction is dangerous because nothing exists "as such" or "in itself." What I mean is this: television "as such" doesn't exist, so we cannot render a moral judgment about television "as such." A movie "in itself" is a non-entity. Cultural products always come with a context, embodying values, making appeals, communicating messages. Evaluation of cultural products, therefore, must deal with this entire context.

## 3. Arming our youth through guided confrontation with culture

The problems we face in terms of what popular culture presents to us are similar to those faced in the Christian school classroom when teachers introduce students to certain books that present a non-Christian, perhaps even an anti-Christian, worldview and message.

You might be asking: Is there not a danger of bringing the world inside the school, by permitting students to read such literature? Is there not a danger of bringing the world into our homes by having a television? Yes, there is that danger. But there is also the possibility for students in school and children at home learning how to interact Biblically with the culture of the modern world. And that opportunity arises with *guided confrontation*.<sup>14</sup>

By guided confrontation, we refer especially to teachers guiding students in their confrontation with texts or images that conflict with what is legitimate within their own Bible-formed worldview. *Confronting students with slices of life that are evaluated in terms of Biblical principles and the Christian worldview must be designed to make the antithesis visible and to demonstrate the conquering, liberating power of the truth in terms of modern culture.* Such formative guided confrontation is a blessing in a day such as ours, when our children and young people encounter numerous pressures and experiences that we, their parents and grandparents, never encountered.

But this guided confrontation must then deal honestly with cultural expressions that violate more than the seventh or the third commandments. There are many forms of blasphemy and profanity that are not four-letter words! There are all kinds of infidelity just as sinful as sexual promiscuity. Books and films communicating a non-Christian message are like aspirin pills. The pills are good for some things. Some non-

Christian authors use language very well, and their work can provide a mirror of modern life, even modern empty life. But aspirin pills that are good for "something" can also be deadly if little children ingest them, or if grown children fail to read the instructions for using them.<sup>15</sup> The dosage level of guided confrontation is important as well. Children don't need very much; collegians can deal with more. But in any dosage, the aim is to arm our children and young people for the battle out there known as the Christian life.

Our youth need guided confrontation that fulfills two purposes. First, they must be helped to discern and identify the messages being communicated by pop culture.

Let me tell it in parable form.

One night I went to the heart of downtown to do a study of human nature. You can imagine the scene: neon lights flashing their messages, doors squeaking open and slamming shut somewhere in the dark of night, sirens in the distance. I stood for a time in the shadows, out of range of the streetlight, yet close enough to see a group of young people walking down the street, laughing, joking, jostling one another. In the group was this lad, slender, mild mannered, soft features, but obviously a "babe in the woods."

At one point I noticed that the lad had separated from the group. They had gone on down the street, while he had turned the corner, and had fallen into conversation with a prostitute. I began to watch more carefully, straining my ears to hear the conversation.

I could hear her loud and bawdy slurs, her lewd yet disarming invitation to join her in the bed she had prepared for her next customer. She assured the lad, who by this time had gotten control of his nerves and his curiosity, assured him that her pimp had left town for the night, so he need not fear getting rousted from his sexual pleasure.

As I said, he was a "babe in the woods." He followed her like a dog follows its mistress, eyes down, shoulders stooped, like a prisoner going to his punishment. So stupid was this kid that he didn't know his folly would cost him his life.

Incidentally, you'll find the real story and its warning in Proverbs 7:1-23.

Why do we need guided confrontation with the messages of pop culture? Simply because our youth are babes in the woods, and because we're losing

these undiscerning, unsuspecting, unprepared youth by the hundreds to the whores of modernity.

But a second, equally important function of guided confrontation is to equip them with the answer and the power of the gospel. Pop culture screams, "Self!"; the gospel answers: *service*. Pop culture sings, "Now!"; the gospel says: *later*. Pop culture whispers, "Enjoy!"; the gospel says: *obey*.

I emphasize that *both functions of guided confrontation are essential, even correlative*. Without explaining the messages of modern culture, the gospel of Jesus Christ is irrelevant to daily living. Without equipping with the answers and power of God's Word, the gospel is impotent for daily living.

We may hesitate to adopt this approach because of the problems we have faced in North America, where religious cultural confrontation has given way to cultural accommodation. What began as antithetical confrontation of modern culture, armed with a Biblical worldview, appears to have mutated into full-blown capitulation to modern culture. Within evangelicalism today, the rules of cultural engagement are changing radically. Pluralism is the watchword; access to the public square is the prize; the respect of intellectual peers is the pathway to "influence."

But in my judgment, the seductive attraction of the media and forms of entertainment can be curbed, if not disarmed, by demythologizing the media and pop culture. Rather than limiting our critique to pop culture's exploitation of sex, violence, and profanity, we need to expose the spirits of modern society and the way popular culture sells them.<sup>16</sup> Most believers are not equipped to analyze and evaluate the modes and messages of popular culture with a Christian apologetic and worldview. We must begin by raising the level of doctrinal literacy within the church, by building within church members this Christian worldview, and then go further to apply that worldview to issues of contemporary culture. We who are preachers, parents, and teachers need to go beyond moaning and groaning about the competition pop culture is giving us, competing for the heads and hearts of our youth. Let's fill their heads and hearts with a vision of the Christian life in contemporary society that is antithetical, yes, but delightful too. Address from the pulpits and in the classrooms the implications of living in the television age.

### Conclusion

Christians live alongside non-Christians within an ever-changing culture,

but they belong to another world, the kingdom that is coming. This means that, on the one hand, Christians must learn to sense the distance between themselves and non-Christians, while on the other hand, they must learn to understand their daily participation with non-Christians in the shared realities of culture.


As a citizen of two worlds, the believer will never really possess unimpeded enjoyment. The tedium and toil of work will be there, after the toys have been put away. But the glorious reality for Christians is that even in their leisure, even while they're having fun, they are preparing and cultivating themselves for effective service in today's world, a service whose fruits will last into eternity.

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<sup>13</sup>For a discussion of the apostle's argument, see N.D. Kloosterman, *Sandalum Infirmorum et Communio Sanctorum: The Relation Between Christian Liberty and Neighbor Love in the Church*, (1991), 17-30.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Douma, *Christelijke levensstijl*, (1993), 143-146.

<sup>15</sup>Douma, *Christelijke levensstijl*, 145.

<sup>16</sup>Q.J. Schultze, *Televangelism and American Culture: The Business of Popular Religion*, (1991), 237. 

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## Heritage Christian School

This past September, the teaching staff at Heritage Christian School in Denver, Colorado, was pleased to begin their fourth year of instruction in the classroom. As may be expected, there was an eagerness present among both the students and teachers, as together they looked forward to life together again during a new school year, and the academic challenges lying ahead. There was a recognition as well of the necessity to acknowledge this work in the classroom, assistance to Christian parents in the upbringing of their children, as significant in Christ's kingdom.


The school board and members of the school association in Denver would like to thank our brothers and sisters in the Canadian and American Reformed

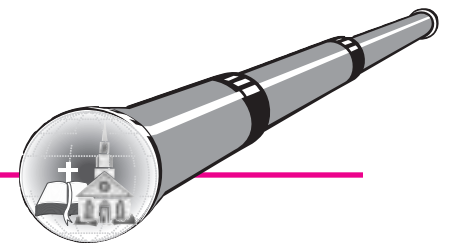
churches who, with their generous gift-giving in the recent fund-drive advertised in the *Clarion*, have been instrumental in preserving the financial basis of the school. More than \$15,000 collected over the past year has been raised through this particular fund-drive, permitting the continuation of the school in Denver. This money has been used to help pay operational expenses, as well as to help offset projected expenses into the next school year.

A large grant of money, made available by our brothers and sisters in the Netherlands, has been allocated towards a building fund for the school. Currently, the school makes use of an older "one-room school building" of some historic value to the larger com-

munity. As the current lease is due to expire shortly, the association has begun making tentative plans towards the construction of a school building in the area.

It is with heartfelt gratitude to our Heavenly Father that the parents and members of the American Reformed School Association in Denver acknowledge these financial gifts making possible a school for Reformed education. It is our prayer that these contributions might pay dividends not only in the lives of these children and their families, but also in the wider federation of churches to whom we belong.

American Reformed  
School Association  
Denver, Colorado 



# Observation Deck

By J. VanRietschoten

Often we visit the *Christian Observer* Website. This agency gives "information about the Presbyterian and Reformed community." From *Presbyterians – Week of Dec. 12* they pass on church news from Holland. I am going to quote this in full and place numbers where comment is necessary.

## Dutch Approve United Protestant Church Order

Three Dutch denominations took a major step toward union by approving a church order at a combined synod in November. With only 12 percent of delegates voting against the proposal, the course for the United Protestant Church in the Netherlands (VPKN) was set. Final union, however, is still some years away and will require approval of each party to the union. The three churches, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN), the Netherlands Reformed Church (NHK), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (ELK) have been in the process for over a decade.

The process is called *Together on the Way (Samen op Weg)*. Among the controversial points was the name of the new church.[1] Earlier the churches had decided not to use elements of their own names, such as "Reformed," "Lutheran" or "Evangelical." However, opposition came from a branch of the NHK called the Reformed Alliance (Gereformeerde Bond). They proposed "United Church of the Reformation" to keep the ties of the new church to the Reformation, rather than just "Protestant." That and a few more alternatives did not get many votes, and the synod accepted the new name.

Of the three only the NHK has a current church order article on marriage.[2] Since both the GKN and the ELK have more liberal acceptance of marriage and non-marital relations, the orthodox wing of the NHK feared the sanctity of marriage would be watered down. The combined synod, however, rejected their proposal to take over the arti-

cle on marriage from the NHK's church order. Since the marriage clause could provide a barrier for the NHK's final acceptance of the union, the synod decided to make a declaration on marriage. This declaration would be part of accompanying explanations for the church order. In the declaration, they said, "Marriage ought to be considered holy as a bond of love and faithfulness before God's face, which mirrors the relation between Christ and his Church." However, they added "with pain" that among them there "is no unanimity concerning other life commitments (levens-verbintenissen) as bonds of love and faithfulness before God's face."

The new church will no longer recognize unbaptized children as members.[3] In the NHK, there was a class of membership called "birth members," meant for the unbaptized children of adult members. They also agreed to allow local churches to serve the Lord's Supper to baptized members who had not made profession of faith. Children at the Lord's Supper will thus be possible in the new VPKN.[4]

The new church order uses the Leuenberg Concord as a way to put Lutherans and Reformed together.[5] The combined synod defeated a proposal to place this understanding in the bylaws instead of the church order itself. A wide margin agreed the two traditions "came together under a common (gemeenschappelijk) understanding of the gospel."

**Observation [1] Name:** One of the parties to the new church order is the NHK (Nederlands Hervormde Kerk). Within this church functions the Reformed Alliance. This Alliance practically operates as a church within a church. The Alliance adheres to the Reformed Confessions (The Three Forms of Unity) and would like the Church Order of Dordt to be reinstated in the NHK. Their preference to retain the designation "Reformed" in the new name is understandable since they will want to continue their position as Reformed Alliance in the new church. No doubt the

twelve percent against the new church order came from those members of the synod who belonged to the Reformed Alliance in the NHK.

**Observation [2] Marriage:** The paragraph on marriage reminds us of the "sexual-orientation clause" woes we have here in Canada. Again it is the Reformed Alliance trying to preserve the Biblical commands regarding marriage. This led to a trade off. Within the new church there will be room for those who uphold God's will for marriage as is expressed in the quotation from Ephesians 5. There will also be room, however, for those who endorse alternate forms of marriage.

**Observations [3] and [4] The Sacraments:** Regarding the decisions concerning the sacraments there is both a "plus" and a "minus." Only baptized children will be recognized as members. That is a "plus." Admission to the Lord's supper, however, will not be upon profession of faith. Baptized children may be admitted without profession of faith.

**Observation [5] The Confessions:** The "Together on the Way" synod chose *The Leuenberg Concord* as basis for bringing together Lutheran Church and Reformed Churches. In the discussions, efforts were made to keep this out of the church order. To understand the opposition at this synod to the Leuenberg Concord we need to know something about this concord. The late Dr. L. Doekes' wrote (and I translate):

The ongoing devaluation of the confessions is also evident in *The Leuenberg Concord*, which was agreed to by a number of European churches of Lutheran and Reformed origin plus the Waldensic and Bohemian Brothers. In this *Concord* they declare, that the earlier "rejections" in the Reformed confessions no longer pertain to the present doctrinal position of these churches. One can only speak about election in reference to the call to salvation in Christ. Witness of Scripture concerning Christ makes it impossible for us to accept an eternal counsel of God to final rejection of certain persons or nation.




In this *Concord* we find disagreement with the doctrine of election and reprobation as confessed by the Reformed Churches in the Canons of Dordt since 1618. By keeping this *Concord* out of the new church order, and placing it in the bylaws, synod made an effort to appease opponents. It is hard to see how the members of the Reformed Alliance could ever abide by this decision. The Reformed Alliance in the NHK has always been a staunch de-

fender of the Biblical truth confessed in the Canons of Dordt.

In this move to church union we observe a give and take process. This reminds us vividly of the process which from 1908 to 1926 brought about the union between Congregationalist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches in Canada. Also that was a process of give and take. In the present moves towards union between Canadian Reformed, Free Reformed and United Reformed Churches in NA, we may be thankful

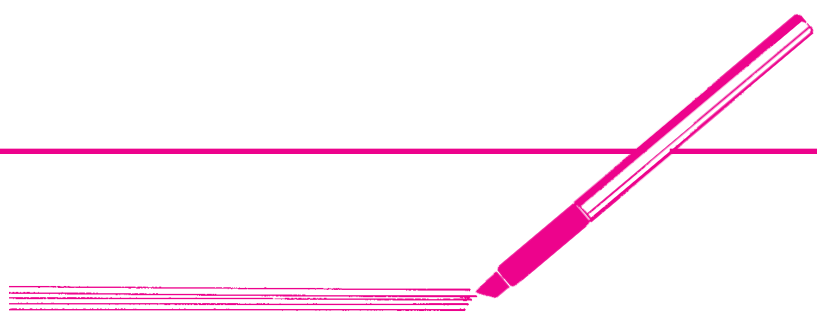
that all three church federations adhere to the Reformed confessions and maintain them. We may also be thankful that there is growth in accepting the well-tested principles of the Reformed Church Order of Dordt. In Holland we observe a ship aground. And a grounded ship is a warning, a beacon at sea, to others.

<sup>1</sup>L. Doekes, *Credo: Handboek voor de Gereformeerde symboliek*, Amsterdam, 1979, p. 401. 

## THE HI-LITER

News from Here and There

By C. Van Spronsen



Many congregations have a host family program but often few visitors make use of it. Such was also the case in London, ON. The deacons suggest that if you are not already doing so, when your turn as host family comes around and there are no out-of-town visitors, you invite a member(s) of your own congregation who might otherwise not have much contact with others. A suggestion more of us could take to heart!

\*\*\*

The Church at Toronto is in the process of rebuilding its organ. It is hoped that the work will be finished in early 1998. It will mean some changes to the front of the auditorium.

\*\*\*

"A gold wedding band was found in a collection bag. Please call . . . to claim." It's an ancient practice to collect earrings etc. Even in the days of Aaron it happened. Why would anyone, however, want to reclaim the given item?

\*\*\*

Some food for thought was provided by Rev. J. Poppe in the Albany (Australia) Church Bulletin: "Why is it that only office-bearers read and pray with us when they visit? After an evening in which we as friends reflect on the joys of life, the difficulties we face, or the situation in political or church life, why don't we draw near to the throne of God and thank Him for His blessings and pray to Him for His grace?"

\*\*\*

The Church at Bedforddale (Western Australia) will as of January 1, 1998, be known as the "Free Reformed Church of Mount Nasura."

\*\*\*

From the same source another thought is passed on from Rev. K. Harmannij who wrote in *Dienst* about communion of saints: "A good rule of thumb seems to me to be that you can ask every adult church member that they devote one part of a day (morning, afternoon or evening-CV) per week

to church work (apart from going to various meetings). And that as Consistory you should not ask of the office bearers more than two parts of a day each week for their task. . . ."

\*\*\*

Also in Albany they could begin a half hour broadcast on the local radio on Sunday mornings between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. They have adopted the name "Voice of the Church." These broadcasts will not be replicas of the church services. The messages are shorter and far simpler. The music is varied with only some Psalms included as the Genevan tunes are foreign to the average Australian.

\*\*\*

The idea to have a theological student do a practicum in the Attercliffe congregation will not materialize. We read in the *Family Post* that "After some discussion the council decides not to take the responsibility of having a student in a paid position for three months of the summer."

\*\*\*

The council of the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton, AB, has decided to use the New King James Version in the worship services. It appears to me that this is the only Canadian Reformed Church who has decided to use this translation. Right?

\*\*\*

The Providence Canadian Reformed Church faithfully contributes to the Food Bank. No less than 70 lb. of food were donated in a month.

\*\*\*

The Armadale (Australia) John Calvin Primary School marked its 40th Anniversary on December 2. A long day of celebrations was scheduled with assemblies, games, BBQ etc. Special 40th Anniversary 1998 Calendars were printed and made available.

\*\*\*

Dr. F. G. Oosterhoff of Ontario visited the churches in Australia and gave a series of lectures on post-modernism. They were well attended and enjoyed by many.

\*\*\*

The Church at Kelmscott (WA) is seriously looking into possible mission work in China. The Mission Investigation Committee "recommends a strategy to broadcast the Gospel into China by radio, capture the interest of individual people, gather responses, assist in forming fellowship groups and, when possible, institute churches." Further planning will continue.

\*\*\*

The Council of the Church at London, ON sent a letter to the newly elected mayor and council members of the City of London exhorting them in their God given tasks. In reporting on this letter reference is made to Art. 28 of the Church Order where it is stated as the duty of office-bearers, amongst other things, that they are to "endeavour by due respect and communication to secure and retain the favour of the authorities towards the Church." This could, indeed, receive the attention of more of us!

\*\*\*

A special Council Meeting was held in Burlington South. Here follows the short report: "The meeting was called to order with a special welcome to representatives from the young peoples. The agenda was established followed by several hours of action packed volleyball. Needless to say, the elder players (as opposed to younger) and the deacons proved their skills and established an unprecedented score of nine games to none . . . no that is not a typo. . . not nine to nine but nine to none! Perhaps council will need to consider counseling this group of sorry athletes on their skills at the game of volleyball. The meeting was closed in an unusual manner."

\*\*\*

In Legana (Tasmania) the congregation is finding a new way to promote the work among the youth of the Church.

The idea of a Youth Council has been put to the consistory and has met with their approval. This is to be a body representing consistory, parents and youth to "run" youth work. This will allow the youth to become more part of decision making, group work, consultation, leadership and organizational skills.

\*\*\*

In the Church at Brampton, home visits are planned well ahead. In the end of November the congregation received a schedule with the dates and names of all the home visits planned from December 8 to April 20. This could save the elders many extra calls and frustrations!


\*\*\*

Rev. J. VanVliet and family of Lincoln (ON) could move into the brand new manse behind the church building, vacating the townhouse they occupied for a year. They are overwhelmed and extremely grateful for the beautiful and well-designed home they could now occupy.

\*\*\*

As of January 4, 1998, in Winnipeg (MB), there will be two congregations formed from the one existing congregation. In the morning of January 4th two services were scheduled as usual of the East and West wards. In the afternoon there would be a combined service, conducted by Rev. Jonker, in which the ordination would take place of the office-bearers who would make up the new consistories. Such a split is a whole new experience in congregational life and will take some adjusting!

\*\*\*

This Hi-Liter, finished on New Year's Eve, will also be the last product of my high-lighting. It was a pleasure to peek over the fence into your backyards and pass on some tidbits of information to others. We thank all who faithfully sent bulletins etc., as well as for the personal notes of encouragement and appreciation. We wish our successor, Rev. J. DeGelder of Smithville, ON, all he needs to continue this column in one form or another. A blessed new year to you all! 

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## Mexico evening in Burlington

By Harry Alkema

In late October of last year, the Burlington Reformed Study Centre was privileged to host Dr. J.P. Roberts from the Juan Calvino Seminary in Mexico City for a speech on the Reformation in Mexico. Dr. Roberts has been professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion at this Seminary for nearly two decades.

Before reporting on his speech, let me first give some background information based on an interview I had with him.

### Interview

*Professor Roberts, as you have an American background, how did you come to the Juan Calvino Seminary?*

My parents were called in 1942 to serve as missionaries in Mexico. They ministered to the Mayo Indians in Northwest Mexico and later to the Maya in the far Southeast of the country. At this time I learned the language of the people, Spanish, and grew up in their culture. I am at home with these people.

*Quite an impressive start. Can you tell us where you did your schooling?*

My family is originally from the US, so my higher education is from there – Trinity College, Calvin College, Calvin Theological Seminary and San Francisco Theological Seminary. I have received three Masters degrees and two Doctorates. The Lord led me to study not only the Calvinist theology but also the latest trends in modern theology so as to better understand our surrounding culture.

*Professor, can you tell us a little about the Juan Calvino Seminary?*

The Seminary was established by Rev. Dr. Felipe Delgado who saw the need for an academic learning centre that would express the great truths of the Reformation. The Seminary is uniquely located between the two great cultures in the Americas and directly serves the greater Mexico City region.

*One last question. In a word, what would be the most important issue for the college and your teaching?*

We must be completely faithful to God's word. We can be a distinctive people who have impact in all areas of life – politics, professions, whatever.

### **Report: Burlington Reformed Study Centre**

After Prof. C. Van Dam introduced and welcomed the speaker, Dr. Roberts spoke. Here is a brief summary of his speech.

Dr. Roberts began his speech by confronting the audience with a question. "God is sovereign, so why do missionary work? Why get involved?" To help us come to a good answer, Dr. Roberts asked us what we would say to a man sitting on a high ledge, about to jump off. "Don't jump!" you say. "Why not?" came Robert's ready reply. After some friendly prompting, Dr. Roberts and the audience found a suitable answer. "There is a better way!" This is the missionary's starting point for people in distress. We all, in whatever walk of life, tell others that there is "a better way." It is Christ's way, through faith. This is God's command to do missions. Missions, in the broadest sense, are circles of blessings, circles of effective change. The more faithful we are, the more God will bless the work. If we are fully faithful to His command and (like John Calvin) fully Scriptural, then we will have a world view that is closest to God's will for this world. We could cite many cases where churches are lax, or add to the gospel, or do it in such a way only to have a wide and extending circle, but which is farther from God's way. We, however, should be sure of our faithfulness and stay true to Scripture.

In the Mexican and Latin American evangelical scene, there is great spiritual renewal in a culture deeply steeped in Roman Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> The *Juan Calvino* Seminary attracts much interest nationally with many students coming from the Presbyterian churches and from the country at large. Churches, previously only close geographically,

are now becoming interested in the Seminary because of its Scriptural fidelity. Students are drawn to the beacon of light cast out into the country.

The face of missions has changed dramatically in Mexico. No longer do we as a rule have missionaries with their families going into remote places. No longer is the missionary a lone voice in the wilderness. In a sense, the future of missions is tied to volunteers – ordinary God fearing people, with love in their hearts. Can I place a burden on you (listeners) here? Some time ago, after ministering to the Mazahua Indians for nearly two years, a group of American volunteers helped with building for two months. When they left, the villagers put on a tremendous party to show their heartfelt thanks. Feeling a little left out, having dedicated two years of ministry, I reluctantly expressed my feelings to the organizers to the effect that I too would not mind some token of appreciation. The organizers' response was revealing and surprising. "Dr. Roberts, you have to be here, that's God's way. But these people came as volunteers, willingly without reward. We love them!" It was the Lord's way of showing that volunteers can minister effectively when their deeds come from a faithful and giving heart.

The history of the church in Mexico did not have an auspicious beginning. The first contact with non-native culture was by Spanish pirates, looting for gold. The second major contact wasn't any better. It was the Protestant US that invaded. Shortly afterward, in 1910, the country was torn by a bloody revolution in which the "religious" Roman Catholic leadership and church lost its grip on the people. In this setting Mexico has a cautious eye on religion. However, in spite of this handicap, the Presbyterian missionaries, already in the nineteenth century, began preaching to a spiritually hungry people. Its gospel was Scriptural and unique. It answered the central questions to life and asked for a complete fidelity to a faithful God.

When deterioration came in the large Presbyterian church, Felipe Delgado set up the independent *Juan Calvino* Seminary. This school flourished and grew with support both academic and financial from the Christian Reformed Church (CRCNA) for about two decades (1962-1980). This happy state of affairs was not to continue. Developments in the CRCNA led to a withdrawal of support. The young Seminary


had to strike out on its own and depend on the Lord for its existence. But, the Seminary remained faithful to the Lord and His Word and continues to be a blessing to its many and growing number of students.

How may we work together in missions? Let us consider the examples of faith in Hebrews 11. We, who are waiting to be perfect, are already in part. With God, following His will, we can work in a mighty way! We have an invitation to participate in a Biblical Reformed mission. Let's make it count. Let's make it distinctive!

The response to Dr. Roberts' speech was enthusiastic. It was wonderful to be enriched by seeing God's goodness and faithfulness in the work of the *Juan Calvino* Seminary. One question in the question period stands out. "What are the challenges facing the Seminary and do you have a challenge for us?" Dr. Roberts answered that the Seminary seeks to offer faithful instruction for a society that has a deep wariness toward religion. The Seminary is small but has a big task because it seeks to have an impact on people in all walks of life, including the leaders and professionals in our country. By its teaching, the Seminary also stimulates reformation in churches and the establishing of Christian schools. In view of the pivotal role the Seminary has, it desperately needs the wider international support of the Reformed community to nurture its limited resources. God has providentially provided for us in many ways in the past and now you can be a part of that too. This is the challenge. Do you have volunteer organizations? Perhaps there is an opportunity here. The fields are fertile and the harvest is beckoning. May we all be faithful to His Word.

After the meeting, the audience could meet with this personable speaker and many availed themselves of the opportunity. Those interested in communicating with Dr. Roberts can do so. Although Dr. Roberts is on sabbatical right now, he can be reached at the *Juan Calvino* Theological Seminary. The address is: Viena 99, Coyoacán 21, D.F., Mexico. The fax number is 525-554-4662.

*Monetary gifts to the Seminary can be made out to: Worldwide Christian Schools (Mexican Project) and sent to P.O. Box 81129 RPO Fiddlers Green, Ancaster, Ontario L9G 4X1 (donations are tax deductible).*

<sup>1</sup>See C. Van Dam, "The Need for the Reformed Faith", *Clarion* 46:22 (1997), 476 



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# Welcome Evening for Rev. H. Versteeg and family

By A.J. Ytsma

May 30, 1997, was more or less a "sad" farewell evening for the congregation of Chatham, ON, because Rev. Wieske left us after 4 1/2 years of service. Four and a half months later, on the other hand, there was a happy welcome evening because Rev. H. Versteeg had accepted the call to Chatham.

Rev. H. Versteeg was installed as minister in the morning service on October 12, 1997, by Prof. J. Geertsema who chose as his text Col. 2:3. His theme was: In Christ Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He considered three points: 1. The source of this wisdom and knowledge. 2. The meaning of this wisdom and knowledge. 3. The measure of getting this wisdom and knowledge. In the afternoon Rev. Versteeg held his inaugural sermon on 1 Corinthians 2:1-15. His theme was: The unity of the church stands and falls on the unity in Christ. He drew our attention to two points: 1. The preacher must preach the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. The congregation must live the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives.

A welcome evening was held on November 7, 1997. Deacon Henry Heyink opened the meeting with having the congregation sing Psalm 8:1 and 2 and then read Psalm 8. He welcomed the congregation, especially Rev. Versteeg and his family. He spoke of thankfulness to the Lord in hearing and answering our prayers that the vacancy was filled so soon after Rev. Wieske's departure. After the opening, the Versteeg family and the congregation were treated to a number of presentations.

The Kindergarten class and the students of Eben-Ezer School sang some beautiful songs for us. The students' songs were accompanied by the principal, Willa Dale Smid and Grade 5 student, Stephen De Boer, at the piano. Teacher Carol Bos, directed the singing.

Various societies made contributions to the evening, among which



were the Thamesville Women's Society, "Work and Witness" and the Chatham English Speaking Women's Society "Emmanuel." Mike de Boer and Janice Bultje sang for us some very beautiful hymns.

The Young Peoples' Society, under the leadership of Chris Veenema, presented to the Versteeg family in a comical manner, alphabetically, the congregation of Chatham. All the members had to stand up when their initial last names were shown and mentioned. The result was that the "De Boers", the "Bultjes", the "Bergsmas", the "Heyinks", the "VanderVeens" and the "Veenemas" were most representing the Chatham congregation. The Society also made a Welcome Song, which was sung by us all.

Near the end of the evening, elder and member of the Bible Study Club, Bob Beintema, went up to pulpit and first gave us a quiz, by which we had to indicate on a sheet of paper the proper birthdays of the Versteeg family. To-

gether we sang the song "God is so Good." Then he spoke a few words as representative of the Council and the congregation by which he expressed our thankfulness with the arrival of the Versteeg family. He presented Rev. Versteeg with an easy chair, in which the minister could rest for a while after a day of hard work!

At the end of the evening Rev. Versteeg spoke. He thanked the congregation for the beautiful evening and the gift. He expressed his happiness that young and old participated in this evening. He then presented to us his children and his wife, who helped him so much in Indonesia, especially in the medical field. They were all happy that the Lord called them to Chatham.

Our closing song was Hymn 63: 1 and 2. Also during the evening we sang some hymns with Janice VanderVeen at the organ. After this official part of the evening we had a social get-together in the basement with coffee, tea and refreshments.





## Press Release of Classis Ontario-South of December 10, 1997 held at Lincoln.

### Opening

The chairman of the convening church calls the meeting to order. Scripture reading is Isaiah 11. The Lord is asked for a blessing over the meeting. The delegates sing Hymn 12. The delegates are welcomed. The delegates of Grand Rapids are not able to be present due to illness of both brothers.

### Constitution of Classis

The delegates of the convening church examine the credentials. These are found to be in good order. Classis is declared constituted. The moderamen is as follows:

- Rev. K.A. Kok            chairman
  - Rev. J. DeGelder      clerk
  - Rev. D.G.J. Agema    vice-chairman
- The Agenda is adopted.

### Art. 44 C.O.

The chairman asks the requited questions. Two churches ask for advice. The

church at Smithville asks for advice to proceed with discipline. This request is discussed in closed session. Classis decides to give its concurring advice. The church at Watford asks for advice in a matter for the deacons. Classis cannot give advice since most of the churches have not dealt with this matter.

### Appeal

An appeal from a brother and sister is discussed in closed session. Classis adopts an answer to the appeal.

### Request br. P. Holtvluwer

Br. P. Holtvluwer requests permission to apply to the March Classis to be examined with regards to speaking an edifying word. Classis grants this request.

### Reports

A report for the Fund for Needy Churches is discussed. Classis decides to approve the work of the administrative church based on the result of the independent audit conducted on November 19, 1997. Classis also decides to approve the application from the churches in Blue Bell and Rockway, on the un-

derstanding that the amount requested from the churches in support of the needy churches remain at \$22.50 per communicant member during 1998.

Classis received a report of a special church visitation to the church at Grand Rapids.

### Appointments


- Next Classis
- Date: March 25, 1998
- Place: London
- Convening church: Blue Bell
- Suggested officers:
- Rev. Hofford, chairman
- Rev. K.A. Kok, clerk
- Rev. J. DeGelder, vice-chairman

### Art. 34 C.O.

The chairman judges that nothing was said or done that requires censure.

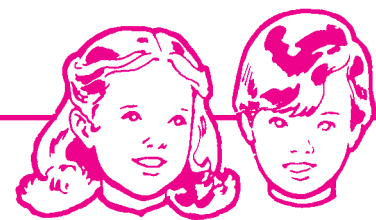
The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved.

Classis sings Psalm 122: 1,3. The chairman leads in prayer of thanksgiving and closes Classis.

For Classis,  
D.G.J. Agema,  
vice-chairman at that time 

## OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



### Dear Busy Beavers:

1997 is over now, and we are into 1998. Time continues on, and we all get older. So many things happened in 1997, and for each one of us it was different. Some have had a new brother or sister, some have moved to a different school, others have seen a loved one taken by the Lord. Yet we all know that whatever may have happened in 1997, or whatever will happen in 1998, this all comes from the Lord, our heavenly Father. Trust in Him at all times, and He will bless you in everything you do. Pray that He will continue to be with you and your family.

Happy New Year!

### BIRTHDAYS

A very happy birthday to all those Busy Beavers who will have their birthday in January 1998.

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 Trisha Hartman     | 25 Corrine Heemskerck |
| 5 Stacey Termeer     | 26 Kaylie Raap        |
| 9 Shannon Tenhage    | 28 Erin Kottelenberg  |
| 13 Robin Bosscher    | 29 Charlene Tuininga  |
| 16 Jennifer Bisschop | 29 Pieter Agema       |

There has been no mail in the last while, but I do still have some puzzles and jokes for you all.

## CHALLENGER

by Shawna Bethlehem

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



## WHERE JESUS PRAYED

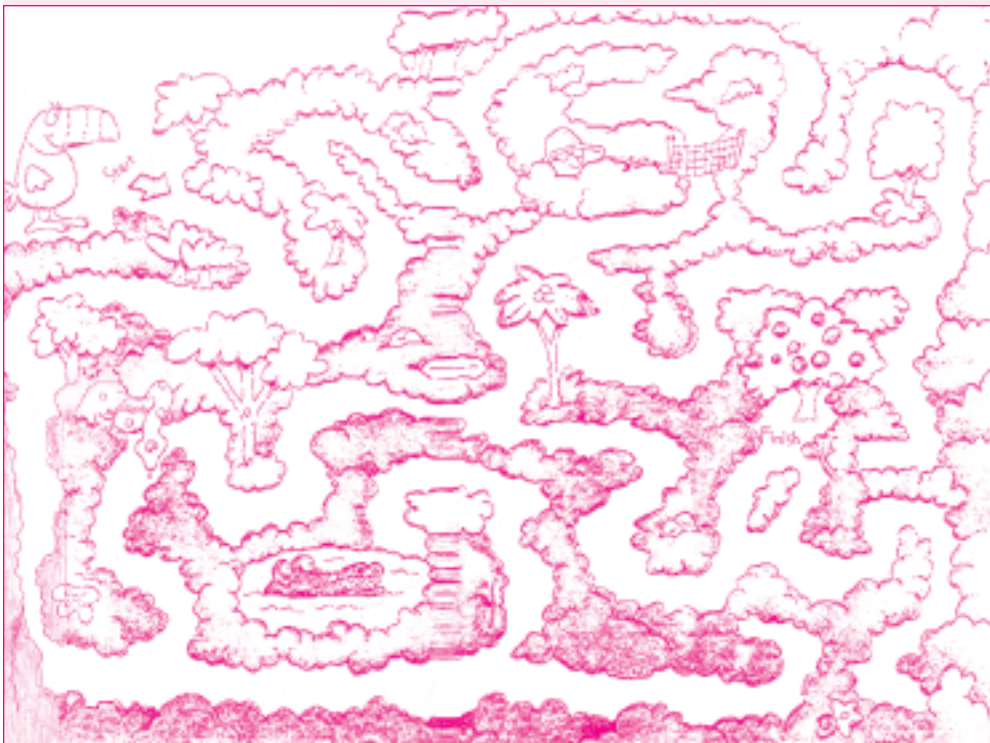
Jesus prayed before each major task He faced. List the places or circumstances when Jesus prayed.

1. On a \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus prayed all night before He chose the twelve disciples, Luke 6:12-13
2. At \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus prayed that God would remove the "cup" from Him if it were possible, Mark 14:32-36
3. In a \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus prayed before He fed five thousand people, Matthew 14:13-21
4. Jesus prayed at a \_\_\_\_\_, John 11:40-44
5. When He was \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus prayed. Luke 3:21
6. At \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus prayed for forgiveness for those who crucified Him, Luke 23: 33-34
7. When he was \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus prayed the Lord's Prayer. Matthew 5:1; 6:9
8. In a \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus thanked God for the food, and two travelling companions suddenly recognized Him. Luke 24: 28-31
9. In the \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus took break and blessed it, thereby instituting the Lord's Supper, Luke 22:16-20
10. On the coasts of \_\_\_\_\_, children were brought to Jesus for Him to pray for them, Matthew 19:1-14

## WHO CAN HELP TILLIE TOUCAN REACH HER FAVORITE TREE?

You can! Trace along the path until you reach the tree.

by Tamara van Leeuwen



## JOKES:

From Stacey Termeer

- Q. Why did the duck cross the road?  
A. It was the chicken's day off!
- Q. What do you get when you cross a parrot with a cheetah?  
A. A walkie-talkie!
- Q. What kind of driver doesn't have a license?  
A. A screw driver!
- Q. What kind of band doesn't make music?  
A. A rubber band!
- Q. What kind of person always wants you to smile?  
A. A photographer!
- Q. What two things have eyes but can't see?  
A. Needles and potatoes!
- Q. Why do cows wear bells?  
A. Because their horns don't work!

