

# Clarion

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*John Calvin Centre  
Larnaca, Cyprus*

*Numbers*

*10:1-10*

By J. Geertsema

## A visit to MERF headquarters in Cyprus

In January of this year, I had the privilege of visiting the John Calvin Center of the Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) in Larnaca on the island of Cyprus. The MERF-Canada committee delegated me to be its representative at an important meeting. What follows is information about this meeting and about MERF in general. Three questions are posed and answered: MERF: What is it? What does it do? And what is it now?

### What is MERF?

MERF means Middle East Reformed Fellowship. It is a fellowship, a communion, of Reformed people in the Middle East, that is, in countries of Africa and Asia located south and east of the Mediterranean Sea. These countries are



John Calvin Centre

largely Arabic-speaking and Muslim. Sizeable faithful churches exist in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, the Arabian Gulf States, Egypt, and the Sudan. Yet, throughout most of the Middle East and North Africa only handfuls of Christians can be found amongst the overwhelming Muslim majority. Open meetings of the Christian church are either forbidden or just tolerated if she refrains from trying to convert Muslims to the Christian faith in most of these nations. And yet, that is what MERF tries to do in obedience to Christ: preach the Gospel of redemption in Christ Jesus to the Muslim people in these countries.

The Fellowship is not restricted to people in the Middle East. It also involves people and churches on the other continents. There are MERF committees in the Netherlands, England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in the USA and Canada. Through these committees Reformed and Presbyterian churches become involved. This involvement of churches is an important aspect of MERF. It is not just an organization of individual Reformed people, but an evangelistic outreach organization with very strong ties to Reformed Churches in both the Western world and the Middle East. The intention is to serve as a link between Reformed Churches in the Western world as *supporting* bodies and Reformed churches in the Muslim world as *supported* bodies. It is in line with this that MERF-Canada too is a national committee appointed by the Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington-West (now Waterdown), and under its authority.

### How did MERF start?

MERF began in Lebanon in 1970. Three students, John Grotenhuis, the son of an OPC minister, Hind Jacob and Victor Atallah got together in Beirut for Bible study and prayer. By 1974 the Middle East Reformed Fellowship was a fully organized group of about sixty people. The basis of this new MERF was the Christian faith as confessed in the Reformed standards of faith on the European continent as well as in England and North America. This meant concretely the Three Forms of Unity of Reformed Churches and the Westminster Standards of Presbyterian Churches. (This same standard was adopted as the basis of the ICRC.)

The purpose was to bring individuals, families and churches to a conscious awareness of and commitment to the Reformed faith. The Fellowship called the Middle Eastern churches established by Reformed missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century back to the roots from which they had begun to drift. But then, in 1974, war broke out in



Lebanon, dispersing the members of the Fellowship. In 1976, before leaving to the United States, Victor Atallah organized and registered a daughter organization of the remaining Lebanese members called the Lebanon Reformed Fellowship. In 1977 he was ordained and sent back as an OPC missionary minister to Lebanon. However, he and his wife, Lisa, were forced to return to the United States the following year due to a renewed outbreak of war. He then worked for five years with the Back to God Hour. In 1983 with the help of others, Rev. Atallah reorganized MERF as a larger, wider-reaching organization for the whole region of the Middle East and surrounding Muslim nations. Rev. and Mrs. Atallah moved their family to the eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus in 1984 to realize the reorganization of the Fellowship, also continuing follow-up work with the Back to God Hour for one more year. They registered MERF as a charitable offshore company in the Republic of Cyprus (a free, largely Greek Orthodox nation) on November 8, 1984. A year later Rev. Atallah was able to form a regional Board for MERF of some fourteen members, mostly from Egypt. Three or four members were also from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and the Arabian Gulf. It was acknowledged that the Board of this mission work in the Middle East should have an indigenous character. This would make MERF more acceptable in the Arab world, not being a western organization that would raise suspicions. This new beginning had a good start. And soon MERF grew bigger.

### *What's inside?*

Recently, Professor J. Geertsema spent some days on Cyprus at the John Calvin Centre of the Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF). The Lord is using MERF and the ministry of its director, the Rev. V. Atallah, in powerful ways. It reminds us of what the Lord did through Paul's teaching in the lecture hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9,10). The Word of the Lord was heard in the whole surrounding area. So, today, through MERF, the Word of the Lord is heard throughout the Middle East.

Man pursues knowledge. We want to know things. But, what *can* we know? How can we acquire knowledge? How *certain* is our knowledge? What is truth? Such questions about knowledge and veracity have occupied thinkers for millennia. There have always been those who said there is no absolute truth to be known; however, never as today have so many influential thinkers promoted this idea. Skepticism reigns. We speak of postmodernism. A Reformed Christian thinker who has thought and written quite a bit about this is Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff. We are very pleased to begin publishing a series of four articles on the theme of postmodernism.

Ought we maintain the second service? Read what the Rev. F.J. Bijzet writes about the question.

A government needs a standard to rule by. To govern without a norm is impossible. Dr. J. De Jong addresses this point interestingly in the press review.

In addition you will find a meditation by the Rev. Marc Jagt, a Ray of Sunshine, and an update on the work in Ukraine. Pleasant reading!

GvP



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#### IN THIS ISSUE

A visit to MERF headquarters in Cyprus	
— J. Geertsema .....	146
The Cross becomes a pulpit	
— M. Jagt .....	150
Postmodernism and the question of truth <sub>1</sub>	
— F.G. Oosterhoff .....	151
No need for a second service?	
— F.J. Bijzet .....	154
Ray of Sunshine	
— Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman .....	155
Press Review – Showing your colours	
— J. DeJong .....	156
News Update on Ukraine	
— Martin Nap and Jan Werkman .....	158
Press Release .....	160
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty.....	161



Chapel in John Calvin Centre.

### What does MERF do?

MERF basically has four distinct programs or activities. These are:

1. *Evangelism*
2. *Church Extension*
3. *Biblical Training*
4. *Diaconal Support*

A few remarks about each:

#### 1. *Evangelism*

Here an “indigenous, God-centered and church-directed outreach” is the heart of MERF’s ministry. First there is the training and support of indigenous *national evangelists*. They know the culture and circumstances of the people better than any foreigner. They do not need visa and other documents. They need, however “preparatory training and an on-going program of instruction, oversight and nourishment” linked with “the regional church under which they work.” This “recruiting, training, and supporting [of] national evangelists” is “central to MERF’s strategy.” And “this work is always done under the oversight of ecclesiastical bodies.”

The second task in evangelism is *Arabic radio broadcasting*. Gospel messages have been prepared and broadcasted in cooperation with Words of Hope of the Reformed Church of America (RCA) over a popular secular station in Monte Carlo as well as other stations. These can be heard by the 270 million people in all of the 22 nations of the Arab

League. Many write in response to hearing the Scriptural messages and are given personal follow-up care by correspondence, literature and visitation. This evangelism is the basic and first task of MERF.

#### 2. *Church Extension*

When through radio, the witness of national evangelists, or the use of literature, people come to believe in Christ, they are directed to existing churches of Reformed faith. And if such churches do not exist the aim is to bring the converts together and establish Reformed congregations. These (almost always) very small churches

are encouraged to spread the gospel also themselves. MERF “will only help and support church-extension projects which are properly under the oversight of Reformed ecclesiastical bodies and which are clearly aimed at establishing Reformed churches.” For this purpose too literature in the Arabic language is provided.

#### 3. *Biblical Training*

The training meant here, is largely done in the John Calvin Center on Cyprus, but also includes training programs held in the region. There are three programs: the *Augustine Program*, the *Athanasius Program*, and the *John of Damascus Program*.

The *Augustine Program* aims at providing indepth Bible training to those already engaged in active service in their home churches. Selected groups of thirty to forty people come to Cyprus for two or more weeks of study.

The *Athanasius Program* aims at providing instruction in the teaching of the doctrine of the Scriptures to promising new converts with the potential of becoming capable leaders. They are prepared to make profession of faith and become part of locally organized Reformed churches.

C) The *John of Damascus Program* is set up to train people from Western countries who seek to evangelize Muslims in their own country. They are taught in this program about the Muslims, their culture, and so on.



City of Larnaca on the south coast of Cyprus.

#### 4. Diaconal Support

War and political instability in Iraq and Sudan have caused great physical need among the Christians and the communities in which they bear witness to Christ in these countries. The need reaches far beyond the diaconal resources of the local churches, thus MERF has become actively involved in helping the churches meet the most pressing needs. MERF has no paid staff for the sole purpose of dealing with financial aid. Diaconal funds are handled by those belonging to local churches involved with MERF. "Primarily, diaconal aid is to be administered not in terms of cash but by means of supplies and services." And such "diaconal aid must aim at encouraging the beneficiaries towards hard work and the seeking of reasonable, sustaining jobs. The objective is to equip [the recipients] not only to take care of themselves and their loved ones but also live a life of sacrificial giving."

When on Cyprus, I met three black ministers from Sudan. Support for the needs in their country went very much through their hands and the hands of other church leaders with links to MERF. They gave me copies of reports about the aid received and how it was used. These reports show that the aid was distributed very much in line with the adopted rules. Support is provided in the form of food, instruments to prepare food, clothing, and building materials for building or rebuilding homes. Further, help is provided for building preaching centers, and for supplying bikes for evangelists to go from the one preaching centre to the next. Of interest may also be a remark of one of the three black ministers from Sudan. He said at the occasion of one of the meals we had together on Cyprus: "Here we have three good meals every day. Next week, when we are back home, we will have again one meagre meal in the evening."

#### Where is MERF now?

Through the years MERF grew. At first a house was bought on Cyprus for the activities of training, local worship services, receiving people, and administration. Three years ago a beautiful new building was erected. It



Old Greek Orthodox St. Lazarus church.

has a chapel, offices, dormitories for students and other guests, a large dining room and kitchen, a library, and a lounge. The John Calvin Center is largely a gift of well-to-do business men. It was officially opened three years ago. Its style reflects features of the twelve centuries old Greek Orthodox Saint Lazarus church close by (according to the tradition, built above Lazarus's second tomb). But back to the question *What is MERF?*

MERF grew also in another way. Last year the Back to God Hour of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) joined into an agreement of cooperation in Arabic radio broadcasting and follow-up ministries with MERF and the Words of Hope of the RCA. This growth brought along the need for reorganization. Also, increasing work, increasing support for the work and diaconal aid, especially for Sudan, from the churches in the western world made it clear that exclusive indigenous control could no longer be maintained. A structure with more transparency and accountability to the supporting committees as well as a broader base of representation of Middle East field committees was needed. In December of last year all MERF committees received information

about the necessary reorganization accompanied by a request to send a delegate to a meeting in January to establish the new structure.

The chairman of our MERF-Canada committee, the Rev Mulder, was unable to attend for health reasons. We were convinced, though, that our committee should be represented at this meeting. So, I was chosen to go. At the meeting of delegates on Cyprus in January, the new structure was established. A Board of Directors of six, later expanded to seven members, has oversight over the work. These men from five different continents all have many years of active experience serving the Reformed cause in the Middle East. Further, an International Council of members delegated by all the national MERF committees, including both indigenous supported and western supporting committees, meets annually to review and plan for the work.

Now I have new friends, Reformed ministers in Arabia, Egypt and the Sudan. The bond that binds us is our common Reformed faith in our great, mighty and righteous, faithful and gracious triune God. May He continue to bless also this work for the coming of his kingdom.





By M. Jagt

## The Cross becomes a pulpit

*Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read:  
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

*Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city,  
and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek (John 19:19-20).*

If the devil ever laughs, this must have been one time that set him off uncontrollably. "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" affixed to the man's own cross! Talk about particularly biting sarcasm!<sup>1</sup> He is finally proclaimed king, but only as He dies a cruel death, when it suits the gleeful mockery of those who opposed Him. The words are written in the three major languages of the day. Not just Aramaic, but also Greek and Latin, the languages of the cultural and political powers of the day. The devil's apparent victory is maliciously announced to the entire world.

But the devil's laugh is never the last. As his mocking laughter dies down, a greater sound fills the air, the laugh of God Almighty (Ps 2:4). His will is being done here. His kingdom is advancing. The devil's victory is a hollow one. God is indeed in the process of installing his king over all the nations.

The sign is written in three major languages, Aramaic, Greek and Latin. It is a great proclamation that the kingdom of God is breaking into the entire world. It is an anticipation of Pentecost, when the kingdom of God would come to peoples of all languages.

Here on the cross our Lord Jesus Christ is moving world history/church history into a new era. The chains and fetters of our sin and guilt are being broken. The great servant of the Lord is at work making rebellious people into servants of the Lord as well.

On the cross the Saviour takes our place as sinners and rebels. Perhaps that is what we think of first when we remember that Jesus took our place on the cross.

But the Saviour is also taking our place as a light in this world and restoring us to that task.<sup>2</sup> Here is the servant that Isaiah speaks of, the one who would "be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles" (Isa 42:6). That was the ultimate purpose of Israel, the servant of God. Why did God choose her great-grandfather Abraham, after all? So that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen 22:18). God would work through one people to reach all peoples. But Israel had failed in that task. She was incapable of being a light in the world herself. She was overcome by the darkness time and time again.

And so the Saviour comes, not just to take her place as a failure before God, but also to restore her place as a light. That is what this sign in three languages illustrates. In Jesus, the people of God can become that servant that is a light to the Gentiles, to even the cultural and political superpowers of the day. In this Jesus of Nazareth the people of God, Abraham's offspring, can finally be a blessing to all nations.

But look at how this happens! Look where that blessed light begins to shine. On a cross, of all things! A cross becomes the pulpit! What brings darkness to the King, brings light to the world! Where He is dying, life, the kingdom of God, is beginning to blossom in this world.

It is almost a paradox, this sign above the cross. But this is the paradox of the kingdom of God that is breaking into the world in Jesus Christ. It does not come like the kingdoms of mankind. It finds its point of entry in a cross! It comes when it appears to be defeated, when evil appears to get its


own way! Light only comes to the world when the darkness of evil exerts its full strength. Here on the cross is the way through which the great victory of God is won.

Crosses become pulpits of the Great Kingdom. The Saviour himself shows the way. But He also equips us and enables us to bear these. His cross and our crosses are not the same. His cross allows us to bear our crosses. Because He was forsaken by God, because He lost the love of his Father, we can bear our crosses assured of the Father's love. His cross allowed the Spirit to be poured out by whose power our light remains shining in this dark world.

It is not easy for us either. The devil at times may even rub his hands with glee. He is bent on mocking us, toying with us, even, like he tried to toy with the Saviour. But the devil never has the last laugh. Our God does. Let us bear our crosses as well, confident that through them the kingdom of God is advanced. The Saviour's work on the cross does not free us from our own crosses. But his suffering transforms our suffering so that it speaks powerfully in this world. The devil's mockery can become the Almighty God's great proclamation. Blood of shed Christians can water the seed of the gospel. Our crosses of shame and disgrace can become pulpits that speak of the kingdom of heaven itself. May that fill us with joy and laughter!

*Rev. Marc Jagt is the minister of the Canadian Reformed Church in Ottawa.*

<sup>1</sup>cf. K. Schilder, *Licht in den Rook* (Delft: W.D. Meinema, 1926) pp. 203-207.

<sup>2</sup>N.T. Wright, *The Crown and the Fire*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) pp. 31ff. 

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# Postmodernism and the question of truth<sub>1</sub>\*

By F.G. Oosterhoff

What can we know? How do we know? How certain is our knowledge? These and similar questions have occupied men and women for millennia and continue to occupy them today. They are especially urgent for people who live, as we do, in a time when many of those who shape public opinion deny the very existence of knowledge and truth.

Such skeptical ideas are not new. In both ancient and modern times there have been people who believed that over-arching truth does not exist, and that therefore the individual has to create his or her own truths – and occasionally these skeptics have been influential. Never before, however, have they been as successful in spreading the seeds of radical doubt as they are today, in our postmodern society. Their success derives from a number of circumstances. Among them is the fact that, for the first time in our history, skepticism is at the core of the prevailing world-view. As a result, it affects schools and the media to a much larger extent than ever before; and in an age of mass education and electronics these schools and media reach a much higher percentage of the population than was the case in former times.

Because we are in the world, we do not escape these influences. It is therefore important that we make a point of testing the prevailing spirit of skepticism and try to find an answer to the questions it poses. In this series of articles I hope to do so. We will give special attention to the important role which *theories of knowledge* play in the matter. As I hope will become apparent in the course of the series, an awareness of this concept and its influence will help us not only to trace the

causes of the postmodern denial of truth, but also provide us with a means of escape from today's quagmire of skepticism and doubt.

We can only reach this goal, however, by following a roundabout way. Postmodernism grew out of modernism: it is both a consummation of modernism and a rebellion against it. Therefore, if we want to give an adequate explanation of its nature, we will have to begin with a survey of modernist attitudes and of the differences between modernism and postmodernism. This is the topic of the present article. We will first give a description of modernism (paying special attention to its prevailing theory of knowledge)

**It is important that we make a point of testing the prevailing spirits of skepticism and try to find an answer to the questions it poses.**

and then list some of the reasons for today's widespread rejection of modernist ideals. Many of these reasons, we will notice, are to be found in twentieth-century political and social developments and in recent advances in science and technology.

Ideas, however, also played a role in the shift from modernism to postmodernism. That aspect will have our attention in the second article. We will concentrate there on the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), describe his rejection of both

modernism and Christianity, and note the way in which he influenced postmodernist attitudes toward knowledge and truth, including religious truth.

If in the first two articles we attempt to explain the postmodernist denial of truth, in the third and fourth ones we concentrate on the second part of our thesis, namely the way in which a proper understanding of human knowing can serve as an antidote to all-out skepticism. Such an understanding, based on a critique of the modern theory of knowledge, has indeed been achieved by a number of late-modern and postmodern thinkers, and we will proceed by looking at the way in which their accomplishments can benefit us. The third article gives attention to the work which the Reformed theologian and philosopher Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) has done in this respect, and the fourth and concluding one concentrates on the contributions of the Anglo-Hungarian philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891-1976).

## Modernism

First, then, a brief description of modernism. The modern period lasted from about 1600 until well into the twentieth century. Its demise and replacement by postmodernism is usually said to have happened some time after the Second World War, somewhere in the 1960s or thereabouts. As a cultural period, modernism followed the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. Among its more important characteristics are the following:

1. The scientific revolution, and the amazing advances made in science, and subsequently in science-based technology.

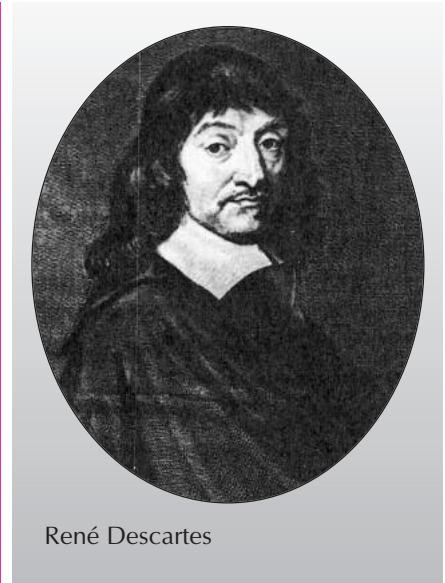
2. The rise of Western Europe as a global power, one that in course of time managed to control the rest of the world economically, politically, and to a large extent also intellectually and culturally. The modern age was the age of the white man, who began to speak of his exalted position as his "manifest destiny."
3. The expansion of the western world's economy; the great increase in trade and commerce and also in people's material well-being; the rise and triumph of capitalism; the industrial revolutions.
4. The liberalization of politics; the birth of democracy; the stress on human rights, and the growing concern with humanitarianism.
5. The process of secularization. Modern culture in its early stages was still officially Christian, but towards the end of the period the *official* culture had become secular, and in many ways even anti-Christian – even though Christianity itself not only survived, but greatly expanded in that same period.
6. The confidence in human reason, as exemplified especially in the faith in the scientific pursuit; and the belief that, given time, science and technology would overcome all the problems humanity faced and establish a heavenly city on earth. This confidence gave rise to:

7. The so-called Idea of Progress which implied a belief in human and social perfectibility. Before long this idea would develop into a belief in *automatic* progress and so help bring about the rise of evolutionism.

8. The dominance of a theory of knowledge according to which objectively certain knowledge can be achieved as long as one follows the approved method, namely the scientific one. Because theory of knowledge is central to our discussion, I must say a bit more about the modernist one.

The modern theory was closely related to the modern scientific method. The fathers of that method were the Englishman Sir Francis Bacon, who died in 1626, and the Frenchman René Descartes (Cartesius), who died in 1650. Descartes, a mathematician, was the more influential of the two, and the method is therefore usually called the Cartesian one. The method stressed careful logical reasoning and strict objectivity. To guarantee the latter, Descartes insisted that scientists begin by doubting away all subjective elements – that is, all personal and cultural preconceptions, all personal wishes, and also all religious beliefs. Neutrality and detachment were the prerequisite for the achievement of fully objective knowledge.

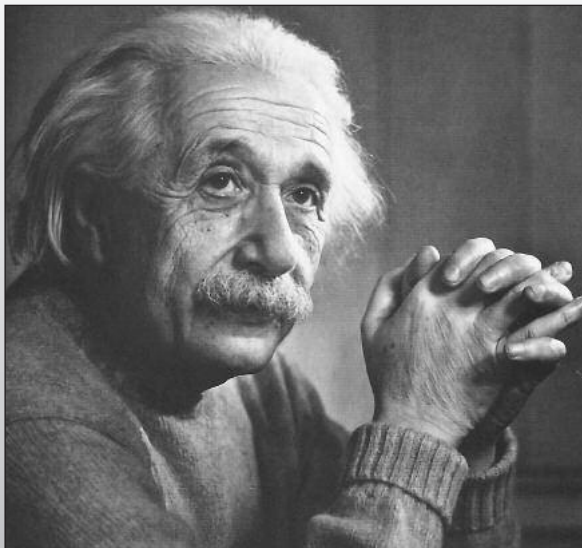
The method worked well, especially in the early modern period, when most scientific work was done in astronomy



René Descartes

and physics. It worked so well that it came to be seen as foolproof. Descartes himself believed that a good mind was not really necessary in scientific work; mediocre thinkers, as long as they followed the rules, could do as well as geniuses. Adherence to the proper method ensured success. This widely-shared opinion gave rise to the modernist creed that "Science is god and method is its prophet." Postmodernists refer to this belief as the faith in *scientism*, or the cult of *scientific objectivity*. They are fighting it tooth and nail, and rightly so, for while it has been highly effective in some areas, it has also done great harm.

I said that the Cartesian method worked well, but that is not quite the way to put it. Scientists never really followed the official version, nor did they engage in the universal doubt that Descartes prescribed – even if they thought they did. The real harm done by the cult of scientism was the belief that the scientific method, as Descartes himself proclaimed, was to be applied universally: that it was the means to reach objective truth not just in science, but also in all other areas of thought. Descartes himself followed it, for example, to prove the existence of God. And so it gave birth to the prevailing theory of knowledge of modernism, which means that it was indeed applied in deciding upon all manner of things – things both human and divine. Not surprisingly, before long the theory was used to judge the validity of divine revelation and, in the end, to dismiss its truth claims.



Albert Einstein



(By stating this I am not suggesting that the scientist faith and the theory of knowledge that was built on it were the only reasons for the secularization of Europe under modernism. There were other factors. Yet the scientist cult played a very important role in this development.)

### The turn to postmodernism

Perhaps I have left the impression that all was optimism and certainty under modernism. This was not the case. We also meet skepticism, pessimism, fear, and cultural discontent in the modern age. Yet overall the period can be characterized as optimistic, indeed as extravagantly optimistic. The extravagance of its expectations, and the twentieth-century's realization of its absolute groundlessness, go a long way in explaining the postmodern reaction.

The realization of modernism's failure dawned when the twentieth century was still young. A major reason was the devastating First World War, but that, of course, was only the start. The First World War was followed by the Second, by the rise of totalitarianisms, the gulag, the holocaust, the Cold War, and also by the rebellion of Europe's colonies. The West no longer dominated the rest. While all these things happened, people also realized that science and technology, the idols of modernism, were not just forces for good, but frequently for evil as well. They made possible nuclear weaponry, caused pollution and the exhaustion of natural resources, and, with the advances made in bio-technology, exposed society to a variety of other threats. Instead of being adored, it came to be seen as a threat, at best a necessary evil.

The factors contributing to postmodernism were not all of a negative nature. A very important element was the so-called second scientific revolution, which took place in the early twentieth century. I am referring to the new physics, and to the array of technological devices (laser, computer, and so on) which the new physics made possible. Especially because of the effect which this technology had on communication and transportation, it drastically changed society and its economy and greatly contributed to the post-

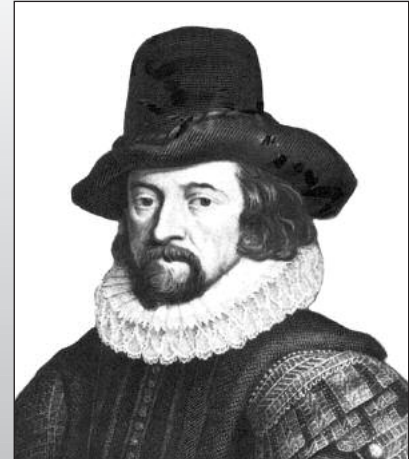
modern concept of the world as a global village.

It is important to note, however, that in spite of their tremendous technological potential, the scientific advances of the early twentieth century did not enhance society's faith in human reason, as such advances had tended to do in the past. In fact, they contributed to the decline of that faith. Both quantum physics and Einstein's relativity theories made it clear that modern thinkers had been overly optimistic. Early modern scientists had believed that the world was a machine and altogether intelligible. As the eighteenth-century English poet Alexander Pope famously expressed it: "Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night; God said: 'Let Newton be!' and all was light." Einstein and his colleagues showed, however, that science cannot fully explain the universe and may never be able to do so. Nature is again seen as mysterious, beyond human understanding. In that sense the new science, unlike the science of Newton and his colleagues, *diminished* mankind's stature.

Nor was that the end of the story. Problems arose also in the field of mathematics. Long considered the way to all truth, it now became increasingly evident that it contained unresolvable paradoxes. Furthermore, it appeared that Euclidean geometry did not have universal validity: one mathematical system fitted one area of research, another was needed for a different one. This discovery introduced the period not only of post-Euclidean mathematics, but also of post-Euclidean relativism. Add to these developments the theories of historicism and of the sociology of knowledge that truth depends on time and place and is therefore relative, and of psychoanalysts like Freud and his peers about the preponderance of the irrational in man, and you see the deepening chasm between the modernist attitude of humanism and optimistic rationalism, and the postmodernist disbelief in man and human reason.

### The fall of Marxism

Yet another important factor in the rise of postmodernism is the failure of communism, the very system that had been considered humanity's last best




Sir Francis Bacon

hope. It had promised to realize the Enlightenment ideal of creating a heavenly city on earth and insisted that its success was guaranteed by the laws of science. For communism thrives on scientism. It is inconceivable apart from the modern theory of knowledge. Because of its humanitarian goals and its scientific pretensions, communism had drawn the allegiance of millions upon millions of people in both East and West, including a large number of western intellectuals. Its failure became apparent as early as the 1930s, but the evidence was papered over. It could no longer be disguised, however, after the post-war disclosures first of Stalin's and then also of Lenin's crimes. The collapse of faith in communism was a major cause of the student rebellions and the counter culture of the 1960s, the decade which many historians designate as the one in which postmodernist ideas began to reach a critical mass. Several of today's postmodernist philosophers, in fact, are converts from communism and date their conversion from that period.

*Dr. Oosterhoff is a retired teacher of history living in Hamilton, Ontario.*

\*The articles in this four-part series are based on a paper presented at the National Principals Conference, held in Ancaster, Ontario, November 1 – 3, 1999.

Note: for the background of several of the topics I am dealing with in the series, see my *Postmodernism: A Christian Appraisal* (Winnipeg: Premier, 1999). See also the references given there. 

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# No need for a second service?

By F.J. Bijzet

It happened during a ministers' meeting, a couple of years ago. The issue was whether or not to have a second worship on the Sunday. Do not worry, they were not ministers belonging to "our" federation. The speaker, a professor, promoted abolishing the afternoon worship service. One of his main arguments was that this service had been instituted during the Reformation to help solve the problem of lack of knowledge among the church people. That was the reason for the afternoon service, where the doctrine was taught following the Heidelberg Catechism. In the opinion of the speaker, today such a lack of knowledge no longer exists among the church people in general. They know much about the Bible. That is the reason why so many no longer attend the worship service in the afternoon. (It is true that in "his" churches the attendance is miserable, possibly 25%). The church people were nourished sufficiently during the morning service, and do not need more. They should not be stuffed with it.

His argument appeared to convince people, and initially there was little opposition. Then one minister stood up who told the following story: "In our congregation, we began a campaign to revive the work of the societies. Happily, we were partially successful, for we were able to activate several people to study Scripture together. The funny thing is, that those people who gradually became enthusiastic for Bible study, also began to attend the afternoon service. They seem to feel the need to hear more about God's Word. That does not agree with the speech of the professor. If that was true, would we not expect these people to stay away in the afternoon?"

The professor could not immediately come up with a response. I was reminded of a word the Lord Jesus spoke after He had told the parable of the sower. He urged them to listen intently to the gospel: "Consider carefully what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you – and even more" (Mk 4:24). Perhaps we think first of all of a measuring stick. We can take people's measure, and find them wanting. In a similar way, other people, or God, will take our measure. However, Christ is thinking of measuring cups as are used in the kitchen. In Israel, too, they came in different sizes. The Lord Jesus used this image. If you come to listen to Him with a small measuring cup, it is filled quickly. True, in that case you do not take home much from Jesus. But the larger your measuring cup, the more you receive and the richer you get.

Is this not similar when we go to church. It depends on your attitude how much you profit. Someone who comes to listen with great anticipation what the Lord is going to tell us on Sunday, receives much. But someone who begins with aversion, or listens reluctantly or even critically, should not be surprised when he or she cannot do much with it. You also notice that people who benefit much from the service because they began expecting much, have a growing de-

sire to receive more. They continue to come with a large measure to take it home filled to the brim. However, those people who after the service leave rather empty since they took along a small measure, go to church expecting less and less. Could it not be that the Lord Jesus meant that with the sentence that immediately follows: "Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him" (v. 25)?

Among us, too, the number of people increases who no longer feel the need to go to church again in the afternoon. Why? Because they already spend so much time on God's Word? Because they are in danger of being stuffed? Are they people who during the week are busy with the Word of God? Are they the faithful members of the societies or the Bible study groups? The people with the largest measures?

Or is it the other way around?

*Rev. F.J. Bijzet is a minister of the Reformed Church of Emmen, the Netherlands.*

This article was first published in *Nader Bekeken*, February 2000, p. 44 and published here by permission. Translation by N.H. Gootjes. 

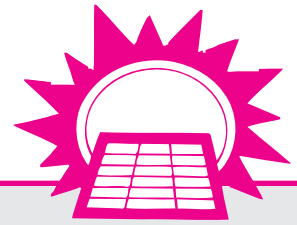


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By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

## Dear brothers and sisters,

It is again that time of the year that spring is upon us. All around us we see the beginning of new life outside, and we again can enjoy the warm sunshine. This is indeed a beautiful time of the year. At this time of year we, as church of Jesus Christ, celebrate Easter. The world also celebrates Easter, but with the main focus on the Easter bunny that goes around and hides chocolate Easter eggs. Celebrating it in this manner greatly displeases God. Rather, on Easter morning, we get up and prepare ourselves for church. We go to church to be reminded of what Christ has done for us sinful people. Christ died on the cross so that we can inherit eternal life. In faith we must continue to trust in God and believe in Christ's resurrection. We know from the Bible how He had to suffer for our sake. Through Christ's death on the cross our sins are completely forgiven when we humbly ask this in our prayers. Only then will Christ's death have a rich meaning for us today.

In Philippians 2:7 it states: ". . . but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." What does this part of passage mean to us? On the cross the greatest sacrifice of all was made. Christ had to empty himself completely on the cross. He became like a servant or a slave who has to listen to their master or boss; so Christ also had to obey his Father in heaven as to what He wanted his beloved Son to do. He was utterly despised and rejected; that is, He was regarded as worthless, so that we may again receive eternal life. We can now today live in fellowship with Him and enter his holy presence with joy and thanksgiving. We can do this in our personal relationship with Christ, when we pray at home, or do devotions, and also when we are in Church, where we worship Him.

God let his only begotten Son die for us miserable sinners. Why would He do this for us? Out of love, God gave his only Son knowing that we could not pay for our own sins. As we can see in the Catechism, in Lord's Day 15 and 16, Christ had to die on the cross so that we could be assured that He took upon himself the curse which lay on us. Through this our old nature is crucified and put to death and buried with Him. We no longer have to offer sin offerings to God but only thank offerings, thanking Him for everything with all of our heart. What a joy and comfort to know that we can have fellowship with Christ and that God is our Father.

We today also have a cross to bear. Life has its many difficulties, sorrows and temptations. Do you sometimes

*What then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31,32)*

find it difficult to carry your own cross? May we find comfort in our Lord Jesus Christ who knows exactly what we are going through, because He ". . . has been tempted in every way, just as we are" (Hebrews 4:12). He promises to help us through his Word and Spirit. Each one of us is given a place in the communion of saints. He gives us parents, or caregivers, who love us and help and teach us to serve Him in the ways that please Him.

Through his suffering on the cross, He helps us to bear our cross today. What a blessing it is to be able to hear God's Word being preached to us on Easter morning. We hear how He rose again and after three days was able to tell us his people that we can rest in his sure promise, that our sins are forgiven. We now have everlasting life and when we die, Christ will take us to himself. We truly know that it is by God's grace that we are saved. How rich we are to have such a Saviour. This is our joy today. Christ has all power on earth and heaven, and He says to us, "I am with you everyday and will help you to bear your cross, so that you in return can praise Me."

*If God is on our side, against us shall be none.  
He did not spare His own, His well beloved Son,  
But gave Him up for us that He might save us truly.  
Will He with Him not give us all things free and fully?  
Who then will yet accuse those whom He has elected?  
T'is God who justifies in Christ, the Resurrected.  
(Hymn 27:1)*

### Birthdays in May:

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Debbie Veenstra

RR 1, Sherkston, ON L0S 1R0

#### 10<sup>th</sup> Rob DeHaan

Anchor Home  
361 Thirty Road, RR 2  
Beamsville, ON LOR 1B0

#### 30<sup>th</sup> Bernie DeVos

40 Kerman Avenue,  
Grimsby, ON L3M 3W5

Congratulations to Debbie who will turn 26, and Rob who will be 35; and to Bernie who will turn 25! We hope you all will have an enjoyable birthday. May our heavenly Father continue to surround you with His love and care in this new year.

Until next month,

Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

MAILING CORRESPONDENCE:

548 Kemp Road East,  
RR2 Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2  
Tel: (905) 563-0380





## Showing your colours

During the course of the fall of last year a Committee of concerned Christians in Amersfoort, Holland, organized an evening for prayer and reflection with regard to the proposed plans of the Dutch “purple coalition” to introduce new legislation on the issues of euthanasia, abortion, and the so-called homosexual marriage. After the evening, the organizing Committee wrote the Dutch prime minister a letter, to which was appended a hefty notepad of signatures. According to the report, they wanted to tell the prime minister “how we as Christians have looked to ourselves and that we have placed our concerns about these developments before the highest Sovereign Power of heaven and earth.” The Prime Minister responded to the letter, and it was subsequently printed in the Christian Daily *Nederlands Dagblad*. In the letter, the so-called “purple coalition” is showing its colours, and readers may be interested in seeing how those colours appear. Here follows the letter of Prime Minister Wim Kok:

You wrote to me about the sensitive topic of euthanasia. In our society, questions which are difficult to answer have come up, in part because of the advancing possibilities in medical science. Doctors are now able to keep people who are afflicted with deadly and debilitating diseases alive for longer periods than before. At the same time they are able to discover serious defects even before birth which are not, or barely are, compatible with life. Also because of this, patients sometimes come to the point where they earnestly ask the doctor to do something which appears to be in conflict with his calling, namely, to end a life, instead of saving and protecting it.

I say “appears to conflict” since the consciousness has steadily grown that it is also a part of his task to alleviate suffering. And also where suffering is so serious that it can only be put to an end by death, it must be possible that after careful consideration of the matter, a doctor chooses to acquiesce in the request of the patient.

In this difficult question, the government must present a normative framework: to give room where it deems this to be morally responsible, and drawing boundaries where it finds this necessary. In this approach the government maintains three starting points: First, a vulnerable life ought to be protected. Ending the life of someone who has not asked for it must remain punishable by law. Second, ending a life by request must never be accepted as something automatic. Precisely with the request of a patient for euthanasia it is of critical importance to see to it that all the necessary care be given to the patient so that his request does not arise out of seeking escape from fear and /or loneliness. And finally, life ending actions must never occur underhandedly by doctors. Openness, accountability, and monitoring are required. Our society must be able to determine whether doctors are acting within the bounds of an established normative framework.

Concerning the proposals with regard to minors in the proposed legislation on euthanasia, let me say the following. Unfortunately, children, too, are not immune to serious illnesses. Children that find themselves in a situation of hopeless and unbearable suffering

often have a good insight into their situation and know full well how to formulate what they wish for themselves. The government is of the opinion that also among minors the so-called “judgment of discretion” can be present in order for them to come to a responsible and well-considered request regarding euthanasia.

### Abortion

With regard to the recent proposal on abortion the following may be said. In most cases, late pregnancy termination concerns a situation in which it must be admitted that the child is not capable of living. Besides this there can be such serious defects that it is already clear during the pregnancy that after the birth the child will not be treated, since according to the prevailing medical insight, and in view of the very poor prognosis, this would only lead to the continuation of a very hopeless situation for the child. Thus, the child will die after birth because of its defects.

In practice it appears that sometimes, on the basis of complete and clear information concerning the situation of her unborn child, the mother indicates that she is not able to complete her pregnancy. The government wishes to create some room in these exceptional cases, with the condition that there is a responsible ruling in place that requires doctors to report these cases and to allow themselves to be monitored with regard to their actions. Creating this increased clarity for the physician does not mean that he is obligated to honour the request. To complete a

pregnancy remains a priority in all stages, and current medical administration is always focussed on that.

### Marriage

In your letter you also bring forward objections of principle against the proposed legislation in regard to opening civil marriage to people of the same sex. In the deliberations concerning this proposed bill, the government was conscious that there are divergent views regarding marriage in our society. Some see marriage as a formal, contractual agreement to which the law binds rights and duties; others regard marriage in particular as a God-given relationship between a man and a woman, within which in principle the following generation is cared for and raised. Still others acknowledge a symbolic and emotional value in marriage which encases a matrix of civil and legal rights and duties. The proposed bill to open the civil marriage institution for persons of the same sex respects these divergent views by regarding marriage exclusively in its civil and legal relationships, according to the present legislation on this issue.

The proposed legislation also takes into account recent relevant developments and opinions.

The House of Commons of the Estates General has already for a number of times considered the question whether the civil marriage institution should be opened to people of the same sex. A majority of the representatives of the people is of the opinion that there is no objective justification for a marriage prohibition on couples of the same sex, and so has expressed itself in favour of the elimination of this prohibition. The government underscores this judgment and feels that the principle of equal rights and duties of people of differing sexes and of the same sex with regard to civil marriage and adoption should be allowed to have its effects in the way reflected in the proposed legislation.

Questions of life and death demand extreme care and attention. The government attaches great value to a careful and well considered exchange of thoughts on medical-ethical questions. Critical reactions engendered by the proposed legislation forms a catalyst for the government to carry on the debate in the Second Chamber and the First Chamber in the coming weeks with greater intensity and carefulness.

With the highest regards,  
W. Kok

I have included this letter as an example of how modern governments in Europe and America are approaching these issues today. It is not my intention to debate with the Premier or ridicule his standpoint. I have the greatest respect for the honourable minister, and can appreciate the pressures and difficulties associated with governing a pluralist society as one finds it not only in Holland but in most of the western world today.

However, with all due respect, perhaps something may be said, more as a reflective note. For it strikes me that the guiding standard for the premier in his letter is the will of the majority of the representatives of the people. Yet for those in a position of government, there must be a standard which overrides all others, and that is the all-abiding law of God. And that law has entirely faded from view in this letter, having come to be regarded as only the personal opinion of a small segment of the people.




DECLINED the call to Houston,  
British Columbia:

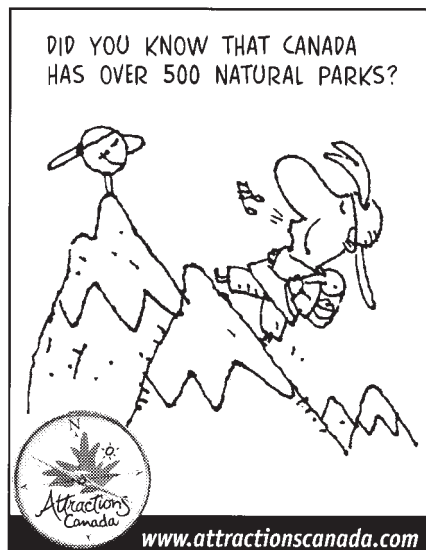
**Rev. J.P. VanVliet**  
of Lincoln, Ontario.

This, however, will not do. The civil authorities have the duty to maintain as much as possible the norms of God's Word as given in his Scripture, the way these norms have also been handed down in our Judeo-Christian heritage. Ultimately those who govern are not simply accountable to the people, but above all they are accountable to God.

Reading the letter one can appreciate the judicious and careful tone of the Prime Minister. However, behind the judicious tone lurks a frightening and deadly sting. For here one finds an open and public defence for man to take matters of life and death into his own hands. Everything must be controlled and monitored! Nothing can be done without accountability! But to whom? And who has the final say? The state will decide. The state plays . . . God.

It grieves one to read that after only fifty years a country once freed from a spirit of Nazi tyranny now appears rapidly to be choosing approaches to the issues of life and death that are analogous to what lived in the minds of leading people in that reign of terror. If the "will of the majority" becomes the final standard on these sorts of moral issues, who can be safe from arbitrary measures or random error? In the measure a government chooses this option, it sacrifices its actual God-given duty – the protection of the people, even the weakest, for the glory of God and the well being of the neighbour.

In Prime Minister Kok's letter the "purple coalition" shows its true colours. It reflects current trends also in the North American context. As secularized governments show their true colours, let us, as we pray for them, also pray that the gospel may show its true colours more and more – before "terror reigns in all the land's dark places" (Ps 74:12, *Book of Praise*). 



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# News Update on Ukraine

By Martin Nap and Jan Werkman

*What follows is a report about the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches in the Ukraine as presented by the missionaries of our sister church in Hattem, the Netherlands.*

## Reformed Theological Education

“Thus far has the Lord helped us” – Ebenezer. These biblical words can be used to describe the process of merging Reformed and Presbyterian forces for the establishment of a Reformed seminary in Kiev, Ukraine. In the future, the smaller and younger Evangelical/Reformed Churches in the Ukraine (about 10) want to have their own registered and accredited Theological Institutes to train future pastors and Sunday School teachers. A number of mission groups and other Reformed helpers are involved; they include – Presbyterian Church in America (and their Mission to the World - PCA/MTTW), our sister churches in the Netherlands, and Br. Bakker and Rev. Sikkema of the United Reformed Churches of North America. They were present at the three conferences held in Kiev. We are very thankful for the spiritual input of the brothers and also for the financial help which was forwarded to Kiev for the future seminary. At the time of writing we are busy preparing the curriculum and getting ready for the first classes to be held in May/June 2000. The educational format will be a combination of following lectures and taking correspondence courses. The main focus of the seminary is mission-oriented training with a strong emphasis on the Reformed and Presbyterian character of the teaching and oversight at the seminary.

## The two young churches in Rivne and Stepan

In Stepan, four publicly professed their faith on January 9, 2000. Among them was an elder who lives in a north-

ern village which our team visited six years ago on a very cold day. In the house were two grandchildren aged 9 and 15 and a seemingly very old grandfather. I gave some copies of the Heidelberg Catechism as a gift. At the time, the father did not seem to be interested. After six years, this father has become Presbyterian and has confessed his faith. After his profession of faith we gave him the new Ukrainian translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, a venture in which the brothers Sikkema and Bakker (from the Canadian churches) participated. Upon receiving his copy of the Catechism, he said: “Six years ago I started to read that little book which you gave to our children. After reading it, I said to myself, ‘This is gold’.”

In Rivne, we had the first worship service in the new building at Christmas on January 7, 2000. To celebrate this occasion the mission gave the new Russian translation of the third and last volumes of Calvin’s Institutes.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in the Ukraine are also growing. A group of competent missionaries of the PCA/MTTW assist these churches. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless them.

Martin Nap

## Mission in Tavrieske and Dnepropetrovsk

In Tavrieska, a small village near Cherson in the southern part of the Ukraine, lives Katja, the sister of a deacon in Stepan. Katja has been evangelizing in her village. She teaches English at her local school and through her work, she has met many of the people in the village. About two years ago, she organized worship services in her apartment. As the number of visitors grew, she rented more space in a separate room to accommodate twenty people. After continued growth she moved the

services to a local music school. At this time there are approximately 30 visitors. It is a great joy to support them! They praise and trust the Lord and are hungry to know more about Him and to live their daily lives before Him.

The city of Dnepropetrovsk is a large industrial city where communism ruled for 70 years, not 40 as in other parts of the Ukraine. Therefore the religious roots of the people are more deeply destroyed. A young inhabitant of Dnepropetrovsk, named Alexander Mitrofanoff, visited Kiev about three years ago. He bought a copy of the catechism in a bookstore; Martin Nap had given the bookstore the catechisms as well as his name and address. Alexander read the book and came to an understanding of the importance of the Reformed faith. He asked the owner of the bookstore for the address and received the fax number of Martin Nap. Alexander wrote Martin Nap a letter. This event was used by our heavenly Father as the start of a new relationship. This young man now organizes worship services in Dnepropetrovsk and will lead his first class in January on the topic of church history at the above mentioned Reformed seminary in Kiev.

## The Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church in Kiev

The Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church in Kiev was officially registered in the summer of 1999. The worship services are being held in a cafe in the center of the city. The number of visitors is growing slowly. However, we are happy to report that six visitors have recently expressed their wish to become members. They have been Christians for several years, transferring from the Baptist Church. We are working on evangelization in Kiev. There are approximately 500 churches in Kiev; half are Protestant and the other





half are Orthodox or Roman Catholic. The upcoming months will be dedicated to planning a mission strategy addressing the differences and strengthening the Reformed/Protestant foothold.

### Literature

From the beginning, the Dutch Mission knew that this mission work is full of risks. We are very happy with the reelection of President Kutchma who protects the freedom of the churches. But nonetheless we try to work in such a way that the fruits of our work remain in the Ukraine, even if we would have to leave the country. This underlines the importance of literature. We produce and translate Reformed literature into both Ukrainian and Russian. We also know that a lot of literature is produced by other missions all over the world. So we are trying to make an inventory of Christian literature. We have found 5000 good and useful Christian titles. A special part of our task is editing sermons. Every week we publish a new Reformed sermon. The reason is practical. Katja, who at the moment plays the leading role in the congregation in the village of Tavrieske, has no theological education. She – as well as we – prefer a male leader but the Lord has not provided this yet. So, we send her prepared sermons which enables us to lead the worship services. We have about 80 sermons, which will be of great importance when the Lord gives us contact with new mission posts.

*Jan Werkman*

### Material and social help

De Verre Naasten is a Dutch association which has always had very close connections with our sister churches. They supported the mission with material and social help. Now we call ourselves a “development-organization.” In August 1998, we initiated a program in the Ukraine. We started an income generating-income improving program. We gave courses teaching how to write a business plan. At the end of the courses, groups of people could ask us to give them a line of credit, to be used to “start up” their business plan. The groups consist of about 4 people each. In Rivne, 6 groups have requested credit, and in Tavrieske 4 groups have requested credit. The 10 % annual interest of these credits is given to the local church. The total amount of issued credit is at this time approximately \$20,000.00. This year we hope to extend help to support the financial management of the congregational budget. This does not mean “financial help,” but advice on how to be accountable and how to decide to choose priorities, etc.

*Anja Werkman-Ellen*

### Addresses

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rayon, oblast Kherson

Mission of Dnipropetrovsk

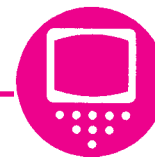
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## Press Release of Classis Central Ontario, March 10, 2000

1. On behalf of Burlington Ebenezer as the convening church, the Rev. G. Nederveen called the meeting to order. He requested the brothers to sing Psalm 98:1 and 2, read Isaiah 12, and led in prayer.
2. The credentials were examined by the delegates of Toronto and found to be in good order. There were no instructions.
3. Classis was constituted. The appointed officers were: C. Bosch, chairman; G. Nederveen, vice-chairman; G.H. Visscher, clerk.
4. **Memorabilia:**  
The chairman thanked the convening church for preparing classis and observed that this was the first classis in the new millennium. He wished the church at Toronto well in their efforts to call a second missionary.
5. The agenda was adopted after a report from the Committee for Needy Churches was added to the provisional agenda.
6. **Reports:**
  1. The treasurer requested that the churches pay the assessment by October 1st. Assessment for the year 2000 is \$3.00 per communicant member, \$2.00 for Classis and \$1.00 for Regional Synod East.
  2. The church at Burlington-Waterdown reported that the books on the Fund for Financial Aid to Students of the Ministry were found to be in good order.
  3. The church at Burlington-Waterdown reported that the books on the Fund for Needy Churches were audited and found to be in good order.
  4. The church at Flamborough reported on the Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry. No students requested assistance at this time. Flamborough recommended that a fund of about \$2,500 be established and set the assessment at \$2.00 per communicant member for the year 2000. Classis decided that

this assessment be resubmitted at the September Classis.

5. The Committee for Needy Churches reported that support would still be forthcoming from Classis Northern Ontario. Classis set the assessment at \$6.00 for the year 2000.
7. **Question Period** according to Article 44 C.O.  
The chairman asked the customary questions. None of the churches sought advice from classis.
8. **Proposals and instructions:**  
Overture from Fellowship Church at Burlington South with the request that "Classis overture Regional Synod East to bring to Synod 2001 the matter of extending the vote for office-bearers to all communicant members in good standing, and no longer restrict this matter to male communicant members only." Fellowship Church requested Classis to recommend to Regional Synod East that this matter be submitted to General Synod, requesting Synod to do one of the following:
  1. Appoint a Committee to serve the Churches with a report in this matter, or,

2. Declare that the election of office-bearers should involve all communicant members in good standing.

A motion to delete option "2" was carried. The remaining overture was adopted, and forwarded to Regional Synod East.

### 9. **Correspondence received:**

A letter from a brother against the overture of Burlington South was declared admissible. Classis did not accede to the overture of this brother.


### 10. **Appointments:**

1. Convening church for the next classis: Burlington South. Date: June 9, 2000.

2. Suggested officers: chairman, J. DeGelder; vice-chairman, G.H. Visscher; clerk, C. Bosch.

11. Question period was used.
12. Censure according to art. 34 CO. was not necessary.
13. The Acts were adopted and the Press Release approved.
14. The chairman requested the brothers to sing Psalm 72:1 and 5, and led in closing prayer.

For Classis Central Ontario,  
March 10, 2000

G. Nederveen 

## PSALM 138

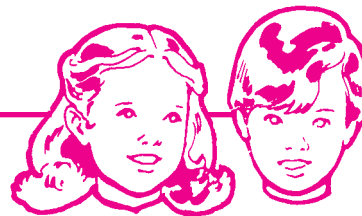
1. With all my heart, O LORD, I praise  
Your glorious ways, Your exaltation.  
Before the gods Your name I bless  
In thankfulness and adoration.  
I bow down toward Your Holy place  
And laud Your grace, Your love unending,  
For You have shown Your word and name  
To be supreme and all-excelling.
2. You answered me the day I called;  
You made me bold and valiant-hearted.  
You heard me in my darkest hour  
And by Your power was I supported.  
Let then the kings of all the earth  
In awe shout forth their praise unbroken,  
For peoples everywhere, O LORD,  
Have heard the words that You have spoken.
3. Now let all kings with one accord  
Extol the LORD in joyful chorus.  
Let them all praise God's majesty,  
For great is He: His ways are glorious.  
Though high-enthroned, He from above  
Looks down in love upon the lowly,  
But from afar the proud He knows  
And will expose their ways unholy.
4. LORD, You will to my rescue come  
When troubles loom from all directions.  
Though enemies around me swarm,  
Your mighty arm is my protection.  
Your pledge to me You shall fulfill;  
By nothing will Your love be shaken.  
You are the ever-faithful One:  
Let all You've done not be forsaken!

William Helder A.D. 2000

Melody: Psalm 138 of the Genevan Psalter 1543 / Geneva, 1551

# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



## Dear Busy Beavers

On April 23, we will be celebrating Easter. Easter is when we remember that our Lord Jesus died on the cross (Good Friday) but then He also rose again from the dead. This is what God did for us – He sent His only begotten Son into the world to save us from our sins. We were so sinful that Jesus came to take away all those sins we have done and make us “new” before the Lord, so that we do not have to suffer like Jesus did. Isn’t that a wonderful that Jesus did for us? Aren’t we very privileged to know that God loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son? We should really appreciate that and should thank Him for His great gift of everlasting life.

Lots of love,  
Aunt Betty

## UNSCRAMBLE THE ANIMALS

by Busy Beaver Nadine Barendregt

D	O	G	O	H	R	N	C
T	L	I	G	O	A	T	A
I	I	P	M	R	B	C	C
G	O	R	O	S	B	O	H
E	N	A	U	E	I	U	I
R	C	T	S	L	T	G	C
H	A	O	E	B	S	A	K
C	O	D	W	L	E	R	E
B	E	A	V	E	R	E	N
K	A	N	G	A	R	O	O

**FIND:** Kangaroo Dog Cat Horse  
Goat Pig Cow Rabbits  
Cougar Tiger Chicken Lion  
Mouse Beaver Bee Rat

## MOTHERS IN THE BIBLE

By Busy Beaver Jolene Wierenga

1. This mother of Reuben was Jacob’s first wife \_\_\_\_\_
2. She bore Isaac late in her life \_\_\_\_\_
3. She hid Joshua’s spies \_\_\_\_\_
4. From her sprang the line of the prophesied King \_\_\_\_\_
5. Bringing her son to Eli, she fulfilled her word \_\_\_\_\_

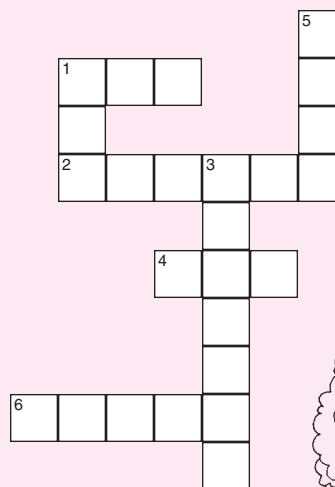
**CHOOSE FROM:**

Rahab, Hannah, Bathsheba, Leah, Sarah



## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

By Busy Beaver Melissa Tuininga



**Across:**

1. What meows?
2. What has long teeth?
4. What barks?
6. What neighs?

**Down:**

1. What moos?
3. What cockadoodledoos?
5. What is boiled or fried?

