

Clarion

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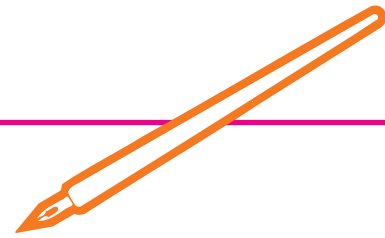


*Theological College Library
Expansion*

Numbers

10:1-10

By James Visscher



A new team, a new start

Thanks to the old team

It is only proper that I, along with the Publisher of this magazine, express my appreciation for all of the work that has been done by the retiring members of the “old” *Clarion* team: Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. C. Van Dam, and the Rev. G. van Popta. These brothers have contributed countless hours and much energy to bring you this magazine. They could have been out golfing, but instead they wrote articles and editorials, organized issues, answered tons of mail, and made difficult decisions. Together they did so much to improve the quality of this *Clarion*, and for that they are owed a loud round of applause. They leave large shoes for us to fill.

Welcome to the new team

As for the “new” team, it is not totally new. Rev. R. Aasman, Dr. J. DeJong, and Dr. N.H. Gootjes were all members and editors of the “old” team. The Rev. Cl. Stam, after being out of *Clarion* for some years, returns as an editor. We are very happy to have him back and are sure that his prolific and keen pen will benefit the magazine greatly. Rev. R. Aasman, who was an editor already, is now taking on the very demanding task of Managing Editor, a task for which he has unique qualities. All of which leaves the undersigned as the only really new member of the team.

Of course, it also raises a question, namely, “what is a totally new member doing as the captain of the ship?” I know that I am not the one to answer that question and you will have to get your answer from those who approached me to take on this added duty.

Let me say, however, that it is not something that I applied for nor anticipated; however, upon being approached, I weighed it prayerfully, asked for lots of advice from my wife, the elders of the Langley church, as well as my colleagues, and finally accepted. I did so in the awareness of my own shortcomings, in the knowledge that I am surrounded by very capable editors and publishers, and in the conviction that the Lord does not desert those who call on Him for help.

We need your help

Still, no matter how good a team may have been put together, there is one vital aspect that must not be forgotten, and that is you, the readers. We can write the greatest articles in the world and print the nicest magazine, but it will all be for naught if no one reads it. In other words, we need you.

In the first place, we need your prayers. Without them, and the support of the Lord, nothing that we do will really prosper.

In the second place, we need your involvement. We need you to subscribe, to read, to contribute and to critique this magazine. We want you to look forward to its arrival. We want you, young and old, to read it. We want you to be informed, taught, and challenged by it. We also want you to let us know if we are not doing a good job or, if you have suggestions, as to how we can do an even better job. (My phone number is 604-576-2124; my fax number of 604-576-2101; my email is visscher@direct.ca)

Our commitment to you

For our part we are committed to listening to you and to bringing you the best magazine that we can. What that means is a magazine that is dedicated to the defense and promotion of the Reformed faith, a faith based on the Word of God and summarized in the creeds and confessions of the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches. The Lord has given us a great treasure, and treasures are not meant to be admired, hoarded or buried, but to be shared and enjoyed.

We also want to deliver to you a magazine that appeals to different ages and interests in the churches. Thus we will continue to have Scripture meditations, words for the sick and disabled, a children’s corner, news from near and far, press releases and family announcements. In addition, a new education column, a re-vamped book review section, theme issues and other things are in the works.

Finally, we also want to bring you a magazine that is on the cutting edge of new theological and ecclesiastical developments, that is practical and profitable on a daily level, and that is not afraid to deal with controversial issues in a sensitive and up-building manner.

In short, we have our work cut out for us, but with your prayers and the efforts of many, the Lord will surely bless it.





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What's inside?

The nature of *Clarion* is to reflect frequently on the life of the church and of the Christian. These two are bound together inextricably. In catechism classes, we diligently learned the marks of the true and false churches. However, our ministers always pointed out to us that in between the two paragraphs in Article 29 of the Confession describing these marks was a paragraph we were not allowed to miss: the one that describes the marks of Christians. A true church needs to be peopled by young and old who show the marks of Christians.

In this issue, a couple of articles focus on the church.

Dr. Trimp writes about how a true church can degenerate into a false church and how this decay does not happen over night but is a process. If members do not embrace the gospel preached or submit to the discipline administered, the church will decline. Dr. Van Dam reviews a book on the church written by the Rev. G. Van Rongen. We have also re-printed a page or two out of Rev. Van Rongen's book about the marks of Christians that underline what Dr. Trimp is saying.

Yes, there is the church and our task in it. But there is also the world, and we have a task in it as well. Dr. John Boersema reviews a book about Christians in the workplace and the relations between managers and labourers.

The Sisters Nordeman and Gelms provide us with a Ray of Sunshine and the Rev. James Slaa has written a meditation for our reflection and edification.

Finally, the new chief editor of *Clarion*, Dr. James Visscher, has filled the front page. May this be the first of many editorials to flow from his “pen.”

As you will read elsewhere, this issue signals a significant change in the editorship of *Clarion*. After having greeted you some 140 times from this little box, I've decided it's time for me to say good-bye as managing editor.

It's been a lot of fun. I'll miss you all. Best wishes! God be with you!

GvP

Changes in *Clarion's* Editorial Committee

Farewells...

... from the editor

There is a time for coming and for going. For the past two and a half years I have had the privilege of being editor of *Clarion*. As I informed the publisher when taking on this task, my commitment could only be on a year by year basis. I am most pleased to be able to step aside now and make room for new talent. D.V., I hope to continue on as a co-editor until the end of August and will then resign from *Clarion* in order to dedicate myself fully to my work at the Theological College.

In bidding my farewell, I wish to take the opportunity to thank all those involved in the process of getting *Clarion* out, especially the Rev. G. Ph. van Popta, the managing editor, as well as all the co-editors. It has been a tremendous experience to work together in harmony with a common goal. The cooperation and mutual support could not have been better. Last, but not

least, "thank you" to you the readers for your support since you ultimately make *Clarion* possible.

C. Van Dam

... from the managing editor

After having served as managing editor for almost six years, the time has come to pass the responsibilities on to someone else. I have enjoyed the work very much. It was a privilege for me to work very closely first with Professor Geertsema and then with Dr. Van Dam. I thank them especially, but also the co-editors and all the contributors, for their cheerful collaboration. As well, I thank the publisher, Mr. Bill Gortemaker, for his good cooperation and support.

The Rev. R. Aasman of Edmonton has taken over the management of *Clarion*. (Please note the new addresses for editorial matters in the masthead.) I am confident that my friend and colleague will ensure our magazine will continue to find its way into your mailboxes every other week. I wish him well.

It was a pleasure and privilege to serve you, the reader, in this capacity. It is my hope and prayer that *Clarion* will continue to be of good service to you.

G. Ph. van Popta

Welcome!

As Editorial Committee, we are very happy that Dr. J. Visscher and the Rev. Cl. Stam have been found willing and able to come on board as editor and co-editor respectively and that the Rev. R. Aasman has been found willing to be managing editor. Welcome brothers! Our joy is enhanced by the fact that there will now be a greater representation of ministers on the Editorial Committee as well as increased representation from western Canada. May the Lord our God graciously bless the new team and continue to make *Clarion* a blessing for the churches!

C. Van Dam



From the Publisher

Our Appreciation

For the hard work done

In the editorial you have read about the changes on the *Clarion* editorial team. As publisher we wish to express our gratitude to those who are leaving the team, as well as to those who are coming on board, while not forgetting the ones who are continuing to serve.

We have a lot of appreciation for the hard work done by Professor J. Geertsema, Dr. C. Van Dam, and Rev. G. Ph. Van Popta as editors of *Clarion* for many years. Let me pause for a moment and say a few words about each one of them.

Professor J. Geertsema has been a long-time, active team member of *Clarion*, first as co-editor, then as chief editor, and again as co-editor. Indeed, he has spent countless hours providing articles for our magazine. In addition, he always was a willing listener and dispenser of advice. His convivial approach to working for the benefit of the churches will be remembered for a long time to come. As he retreats from the position on the editorial team we thank him heartily for his input into the affairs of *Clarion*.

Over the past two and a half years Dr. C. Van Dam has been chief editor of *Clarion*. Our readers may not be aware of his almost three-decade-long involvement with the magazine. Always a contributor, in the last decade he was a member of the editorial committee. We were aware of his many activities when appointed chief editor, and therefore appreciated the more his willingness to help when called upon. To shoulder an additional task when he was already very busy was not easy. Yet, he saw it as an obligation to take on the work for the well-being of the churches. We thank him very much for

his work for *Clarion*. Dr. Van Dam will continue to serve on the committee till the end of August, and we know he will not stop the flow of contributions from his hand to *Clarion*. Dr. Van Dam thank you for your support.

Almost six years ago Rev. G. Ph. van Popta took on the task of coordinating the flow of *Clarion*. We could hardly have made a better choice of manager. In his efficient way he provided regularity to the biweekly submission of material. It was truly a pleasure to be able to count on his preparedness. And all of it was delivered in a cheerful manner. Rev. Van Popta's pastoral activities have grown considerably and we have understanding for the new challenges he faces having moved from a smaller congregation to a larger one. Thank you, Rev. van Popta, for the dedication you brought to the task. You made producing *Clarion* a whole lot easier.

Rev. R. Aasman, Dr. J. DeJong, and Dr. N.H. Gootjes will carry on as members of the new team. We would be remiss if we did not thank you for staying on. It is very much appreciated.

For the hard work ahead

Stepping forward on the editorial team to take the place of those who are leaving are Rev. C. Stam, minister in Hamilton, Ontario, and Dr. J. Visscher, minister in Langley, British Columbia. Rev. Stam has been on the editorial committee before, in the 1980s. He was an able writer then, and we hope now again to benefit from the wealth of insight he has gained over the years. Welcome again, Rev. Stam.

Dr. J. Visscher is well-known among us and needs no elaborate introduction. His activities, past and

present, reach many corners of church life: chairman of the Board of Governors of the Theological College, chairman of past synods, past chairman of the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad, chairman of the Board of Superannuation, editor of *Diakonia*, a publication for office-bearers, and participant in many other activities. Why do we mention some of his activities? Taking on the chief editorship of *Clarion*, in his first editorial he raises the question: "What is a totally new member doing as the captain of the ship?" Fair question. From the above it is clear he is no stranger in Canadian Reformed land, and judging from his myriad of activities he is a proven organizer, and administrator, and editor. We are confident he will be an able captain. Welcome, Dr. Visscher.

Working closely with him will be Rev. R. Aasman, minister in Edmonton, Alberta. As new managing editor he has already been handed the working file from Rev. van Popta. Considering his enthusiastic and positive outlook we believe the file is in good hands. Assistance will be provided to make his task easier.

Dear readers, here is your new team. Expect some new approaches and improvements in the magazine.

The editorial work is undertaken so that you, the reader, may be edified by their efforts under God's blessing. All wish to serve in obedience to the triune God who provides for his church. May the Lord grant insight and wisdom to all involved.

For the publisher,
W.(Bill) Gortemaker



By J. Slaa

Trust in the Lord

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe. (Proverbs 29:25)

Today we are faced with so much pressure. We can be under pressure from family, friends, co-workers or from society in general. They want us to give in to their way of thinking. At times, this can be good. Other times it is not, because they invite us to go against God's will. Sadly, at times we cave in to this pressure.

The text above calls this the "fear of man." We are worried about how people think. We are afraid of upsetting people if we take a stand against them. So we give in, even if it means sinning against God.

Caving in to this pressure is like stepping into a snare. The image of the text comes from the activity of catching birds. In Bible times, birds were needed for a number of things, like sacrifices, food and caged pets. The fowler caught birds with a snare, which was a net of some sort. It is a very appropriate image. If we fear what men think of us, or worry about what they will do to us, we set up a snare for ourselves. When we do man's will, we get trapped and caught. Then, as in a real snare, things get worse. We get more and more trapped.

One time Abraham feared man. He worried that the king of Egypt would kill him when he learned that Sarai was his wife. So he encouraged his wife to lie and say she was his sister. As a result, the king of Egypt married Sarai! Peter feared man, too. The disciple stayed close by when the Lord Jesus was held for trial. But when he was confronted about his allegiance to Jesus, three times he denied that he knew Him. He was afraid of being imprisoned with Christ.

This is how Satan works: he makes us lay snares for ourselves. Satan tempts us to compromise wherever possible, so that we can be everyone's nice guy. Children and young people want to be liked by their peers. They will cave in to pressures about clothing style and fads. They will go with friends to bars and movie-theaters. Married couples

think about limiting children and having mothers working, just to reach or maintain a particular lifestyle. Parents give in to their children's demands and relax rules because they don't want to upset them or look bad in front of friends. In all our relationships, Satan tempts us, and we give in to what man wants. It's our human nature. It's our sinful flesh. Even Abraham and Peter, considered men of great faith, fell into these snares at times. God shows us the depth of this sin. When we fear man we actually *forget* God. We forget his power and his promises (Isa 51:12,13).

The text above teaches us to fear the Lord. "Whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe." Literally, it says that he is *lifted up*. He is "set on high" as "on a wall." He is brought to safety. God is a wall or stronghold. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe" (Prov 18:10). "The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid" (Ps 27:1)? The teacher encourages us to trust God because He is the Almighty God who has created heaven and earth, and all things in them. He is the faithful Father who cares for those whom He loves. He is the covenant God who delivers us from all our enemies.

Our Lord Jesus, the greatest Teacher, also instructs us not to fear what man thinks. Rather, we should fear God who puts in hell. In Luke 12:4,5 He says, "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him." Jesus encourages his disciples not to be afraid when they have to defend their faith. They must not shrink from acknowledging God before men. This command comes with a promise. When they acknowledge God, then God will acknowledge them (Luke 12:8-10).

We can obey this instruction only because Jesus obeyed it for us first. Where we fall short, He has fulfilled God's demand. He did not submit to the pressures of the people, enduring ridicule and mockery. He did not flinch in the face of his false accusers. He did not do his own will, which was to live, but He did the Father's will, and feared Him. He suffered on the cross for our sake. Thus, our sins and weaknesses, including this aspect of bowing to man's pressures, are forgiven! Even more, God has exalted Christ for his faithfulness. Now Christ empowers us to follow in his steps! Christ gives the Holy Spirit to be faithful to this proverb. He will help us overcome our weaknesses. Christ is the reason that we can trust in the Lord!

We read in Hebrews that Moses "regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw Him who is invisible" (Heb 11:26,27).

When we serve man, and fear his reprisals and opinions, we get tripped up and *fall* into a snare. We are brought low, and there is more trouble in store for us. Ultimately, there is death. But when we serve God, and fear Him, and trust all his ways, then we are *lifted up on high*. We are put on a wall, inaccessible to those who try to hurt us. God provides safety and refuge. We will live! When we trust God, for the sake of Christ, we will be blessed!

Let us do the will of God, even if it means that we lose the friendship of family, friend or co-worker. Let's trust in the Lord and do what He asks of us, even if it means that we are persecuted for his name's sake. Let's look to the reward! When we fear God, He will lift us up! He will give us strength and safety and life!

Rev. James Slaa is the minister of the Canadian Reformed Church of Elora, Ontario.



Between “True” and “False”

By C. Trimp

The fact that our church is the church of Jesus Christ, is no guarantee that she shall always stay that way. It isn't likely to happen overnight, but the true church can change into a false church. This is a process of degeneration, whose progress and consequences we can see by the light of the Scriptures. We also should not forget that a church which has become a false church can yet, by the grace of God, be converted and Reformed.

J. van Genderen*

The quotation above mentions a “process of degeneration” which characterizes the deterioration of a “true” church to a “false” church. What patterns can one recognize in such a process by the light of the Scriptures, one might wonder? For such a process can only succeed when it is supported by patterns, which have certain aspects in common. Degeneration does not work like a thief in the night who robs someone of all that he has in a single moment. Degeneration cannot, all of a sudden, rob the church of its good qualities.

The origin of the evil spirit of degeneration will become known to us when we study somewhat closely certain church-historical events. Although it will of course be impossible to be complete in this study, we *do* hope to trace a number of important factors. In this article we would like to draw your attention to four factors.

Our nature

Every church member is prone to deprave the church. This is something that has been stated for centuries in our confessions (e.g. Q&A 114, 115 and 127 of the Heidelberg Catechism and Article 29 of the Belgic Confession, in the section which speaks about the marks of Christians).

We are the target of evil powers (arch-enemies) and to these powers also belongs our sinful nature (cf. Rom 7:23). This enmity expresses itself through the acts of the sinful nature, as the apostle explains in Gal 5:17-21. (I suggest that you read these verses intently in view of

your own functioning in the church community!)

Furthermore, we all know our restrictions and limitations. Who understands the deep meaning of God's laws? Who fathoms the far-going implications of Christ's gospel? Who has trained himself so well in knowledge and godliness (2 Peter 1:3 and following) that he possesses the wisdom about life with God and neighbour according to the meaning of Q&A 2 of the Heidelberg Catechism? Who can call upon the renewal of his mind and the testing and approving of God's will (cf. Rom 12:2)? If we would take the effort to ponder these things with ourselves in mind for just five minutes, we will only be infinitely amazed that

“Keeping the words of Christ and enjoying the love of Christ, cannot be practiced in our lives as two separate matters. Our lives would then fall apart into two compartments: orthodox teaching and a mystic or pious enjoyment of God.”

Christ, to this day, preserves his church, and did not let us perish together in the deterioration, degeneration and disintegration of the church!

Our one-sidedness

Within the history of the church we witness one grand display of the incapacity of church members (including ourselves) to fight the good fight of faith.

Besides the never ending, arrogant arguing against the truth, there are other ways to undermine the church. We can think of the fact that church members have become more and more one-sided with regards to knowledge of the truth.

All sorts of old and new church conflicts have often resulted in stresses and reactions which were assumed correct, but had to be exposed at a later point in time as, though understandable, not necessarily justified defences. The history of the church offers us a long chain of such reactions. Here follow a few examples.

1. Forms of hierarchical church government can be shocking and damaging. In fighting this hierarchical church government, churches can become resolute in their own battle attitude. Result: they become consistently independent and want nothing to do with any kind of supervision of the churches with regards to each other. The local church can stand its own ground just fine!
2. When the church has had enough of the complacency and passiveness of the tolerant church people, and it calls the brothers (and sisters)

to action, this can easily lead to the kind of activism that automatically results in a “purification movement” towards *perfectionism*. Some types of Methodism have shown this clearly in history. But as a reaction to that, one can fall back into *anti-nomianism*: one will not hear of any concrete law or commandment, for “love” has replaced all laws. In this case the medicine is just about as bad as the disease.

Together these type of reactions shape the heritage and historic baggage with which we as churches live and co-exist. Attempts to avert a degeneration factor when it has been noticed, apparently can result in behaviour and thought patterns which in turn produce new degeneration factors.

Our stubbornness

Article 28 of the Belgic Confession explains, among other things, the duty of all believers in Christ’s church: they must submit themselves to its instruction and discipline, “*bend their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ.*” This is a reference to the words of our Lord in Matthew 11: 28-30.

The function of a yoke is like that of a harness. It is a tool that farmers used to use for putting their draft animals to work. For example the yoke was used to pull the plow through the soil. A yoke was therefore a “burden” and is easily associated with “heavy work,” “being controlled” and “corrected.”

Most of the time such a yoke is a rough business. In the Bible it is also used as a metaphorical expression of

**“Independentism,
religious
individualism,
which leads to the
degeneration of the
church.”**

the enemy’s tyranny. But in the Belgic Confession (Article 28) the word “yoke” as in “the yoke of Jesus Christ” includes a referral to the instruction and discipline of the church. This goes for the relationship between office-bearers and church members, as well as for the interaction between the churches.

That yoke is *easy* and this burden is *light*. In this case the “yoke” is a figurative expression of the teaching of Christ Jesus, the Mediator. If someone becomes a disciple of Christ (“learn from me”, verse 29), he finds rest for his soul (verses 28 and 29), and is not harassed or burdened with heavy tasks. He may make the teaching of the free grace of Christ his own and he may experience communion with the Father (verse 27). The instruction and discipline of the church are used with respect to this gospel.

From this teaching of the love of God there will grow a community of people who learn to live in love towards God and one another. Legalistic preaching will bring man back to rely on himself. It will appeal to man’s self-interest and will create a church community of harassed individuals (see Matthew 9:36) who at the most will or-

ganize themselves into a community of the disaccorded who are divided among themselves.

But the teaching of Christ is fellowship up-building. That manifested itself on the day of Pentecost: the apostolic witnessing of Christ’s death and resurrection turned out to be instantly fellowship up-building: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship. . .” (Acts 2:42a).

This aspect actually has been included in the yoke-metaphor. Two draft animals under the same yoke and in the same harness form a team. The yoke (by a crossbeam) connects the two animals when they are both hitched in front of a plow or cart. However, the animals need to be a match. “Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together” (Deut 22:10). “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Cor 6:14a). Under the good teaching a fellowship will be formed. That is why in olden days “yoke” could be a symbol of marriage (con-iugium, also because of the same “iugum” = yoke).¹

Conclusion: the fellowship that characterizes the congregation of Christ, arises under and is carried by the teaching of Christ. It does not originate in a feeling of camaraderie or solidarity. The same goes for the fellowship between the church communities. The *federation* of churches is also included in the expression “bend the neck under the yoke of Jesus Christ.”² Someone who does not wish to carry this yoke or throws it off, damages a very essential point of the life and community in the church. He trusts in himself, because of a lack of humility or because of individualism, because of an under-

Galatians 5:17-25

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

estimating of the dangers or overestimating of his own capabilities. He sins against the letter and the spirit of Article 28 of the Belgic Confession.

This is the contribution of independence, religious individualism, which leads to the degeneration of the church. The preservation of the federation of churches is not a matter of acquiring authority, but on the contrary, a matter of recognizing the wisdom of Christ and one's own limitations. But Christ's wisdom is opposed by our stubbornness and obstinacy: clear symptoms of our lack of fear of the Lord.

Our lovelessness

During our search for causes of degeneration of the church we encounter an even deeper layer when we turn our attention to "the lovelessness of our heart." We connect here with a well known expression of H. Bavinck.

Our Lord directed us in his last words and in his prayer (John 13 - 16 and John 17) to the commandment of love towards Him and towards each other. He did not give us a vague and obscure story about "love," but He pointed out very clearly that love towards Him will be found in "having" and "keeping" his teachings: his words and commandments (see John 13:5, 34-35; 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:9-10, 12-14, 17; 17:26). The letters of the apostle John are one continual ode to this love – of God and of ourselves.

But our heart is slow, our understanding limited and our love towards God, whom we haven't seen, and towards our brother, whom we do see, is often sparse and unstable (see 1 John 2:3-6, 9-11; 3:11-13, 23-24; 4:7-12, 16-21; 5:2-4; 2 John 5, 6).

The seriousness of this great shortcoming in our life, is found in the fact that we, through our lovelessness, are playing a dangerous game with the church's great mystery of salvation: the presence of the Father and the Son in our hearts and within the congregation. We learn this from Christ's words in John 14: 23,24.

How amazed was a person like Luther about the far-reaching implications of God making his home with man! In this he recognized the communion with God and the *enjoyment* of the love of God. In this regard he spoke about the work of the Holy Spirit, who gives us a new heart, a new mind and a new joy of living.³ Keeping the words of Christ and enjoying the love of Christ, cannot be practiced in our lives as two separate matters. Our lives would then fall apart into two compartments: orthodox teaching and a mystic or pious enjoyment of God.

The mystery of the church is however exactly that she can be a home (and thus a place of meeting) between God and man: living in love with the triune God under the pure preaching (along with the sacraments). That is the heartbeat of the church. If people's hearts stay cold at this point, then the degeneration of the church is in full progress.

Translated by Inge van Delft of Edmonton, Alberta

* W. van't Spijker et al., *De Kerk: Wezen, weg en werk van de kerk naar reformatische opvatting*, (Kampen 1990) 296.

¹ It will therefore not be a surprise that the Latin "iugum" also can have the meaning of a "mountain ridge". A ridge forms a small connection between two mountain tops. In



Examined by Classis Ontario South on June 14th, 2000 and received consent to speak an edifying word in the churches (Church Order, Article 21)

Student Carl Vermeulen

Called to Smithville, Ontario

Rev. R.A. Schouten

of Abbotsford, British Columbia.


Accepted the call to the Free Reformed Church of West Kelmescott, Western Australia

Rev. A. Veldman

of Albany, Western Australia.

German that is still called a "joch": e.g. "Jungfrau joch."

² See the wonderful essay by W. van't Spijker on Article 28 of the Belgic Confession (especially the section about the "yoke of Christ") in the celebratory collection for J. Kamphuis: M.J. Arntzen et al., *Bezielde verband* (Kampen 1984) 218, 219.

³ See A. Nebe, *Die evangelischen Perikopen des Kirchenjahres*, 2. Band (Wiesbaden 1886) 473-475. U. Asendorf, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers nach seinen Predigten* (Göttingen 1988) 226 and further. 

The Marks of Christians – Article 29 of the Confession of Faith

Those who are of the church may be recognized by the marks of Christians. They believe in Jesus Christ the only Saviour, flee from sin and pursue righteousness, love the true God and their neighbour without turning to the right or left, and crucify their flesh and its works. Although great weakness remains in them, they fight against it by the Spirit all the days of their life. They appeal constantly to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of Jesus Christ, in whom they have forgiveness of their sins through faith in Him.

COLLEGE CORNER

By Dr. J. De Jong



Time to move!

Throughout the spring the work crews have been busy erecting our new library facility and we have watched the building change from drab grey (cement blocks) to bright yellow (insulation) to a fine auburn-textured brick. The final form is by far the best and it's really starting to look like something! Right now the finishing touches are being put on the inside: electrical work, lights, carpets, doors, and so on. According to all parties I have spoken to, we are well on schedule and moving is set to begin in a matter of weeks. The shelves and some furnishings will need to be placed in the building, and then the move can begin!

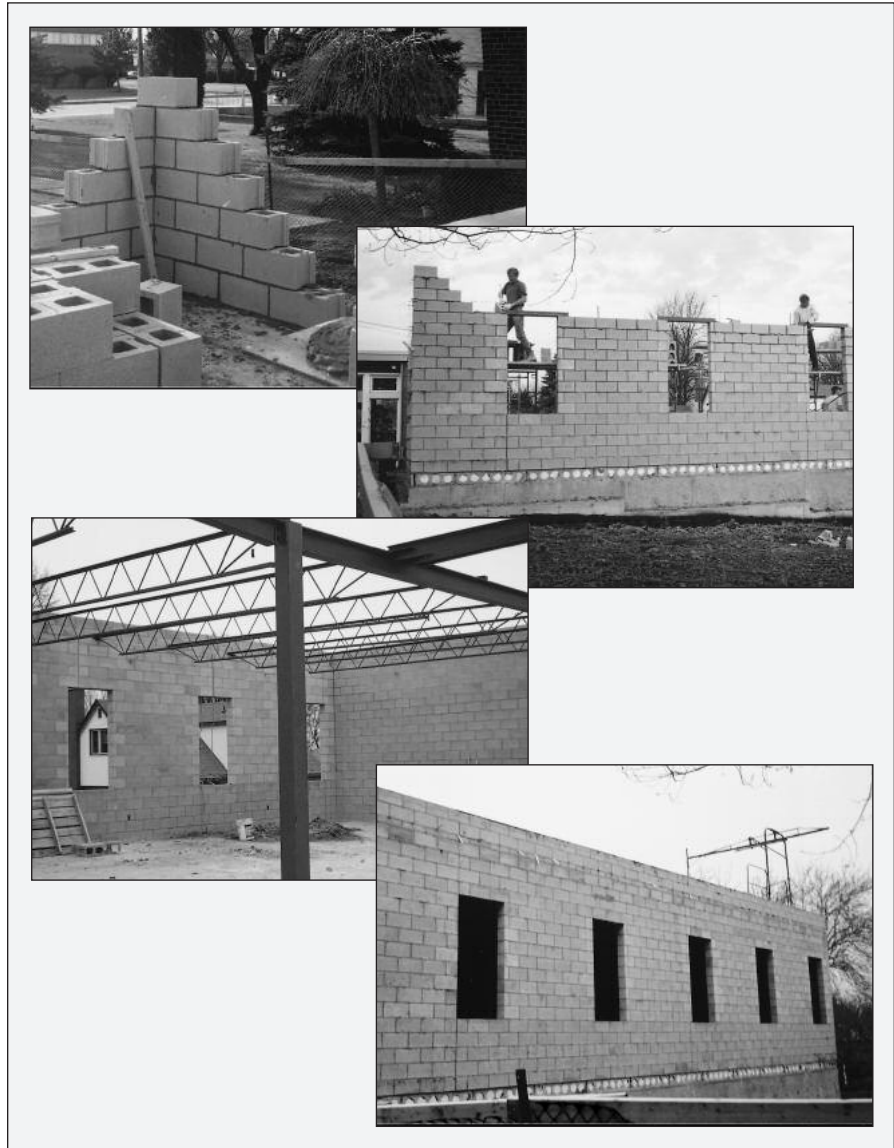
We are all looking forward to this change and we are confident that this will bring a vast improvement in accessing our resources and study environment. Our library has up to 23,500 items, and is growing all the time. So we are very pleased with the support of the churches which will allow our current rate of growth to be maintained.

The move itself is a big project requiring a great deal of planning and organization. We have received help with boxes and materials, and have also received commitments on volunteer labour. We are confident that with a bit of a push this job can be completed in about two weeks. So far we can look back on a project that has proceeded well, without any major injuries or mishaps. We can only thank God who makes this all possible!

We hope that by mid-July our books and other information resources will be comfortably settled in their new home. Then renovations can be begin on the vacated space, reverting the former library into a chapel/lecture hall along with additional office space and a small faculty lounge. We hope that with the start of the new academic year in September, everything will be in place.

Keeping us informed!

We value highly our bond with the churches. Therefore we would also like to add a brief request in this College Corner. Ever since the College opened, several churches have been sending us

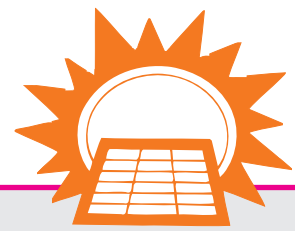


their local bulletins regularly. Over the years, however, the number has slipped, and fewer churches are sending the bulletins to us. Perhaps new administrators have not been informed about the existing practice. Whatever the reason, we would like to activate the bulletin administrators of the churches and request them to send the bulletins to us or have them passed on by reliable travellers and couriers. The students (and not only they) would like to keep informed about the happenings in the local congregations, and this is another way in which the tie with the

churches can be maintained. Please remember that we have students from various parts of the country (and overseas) and they like to keep informed about their local situations, as well as get a flavour of our church life around the country. Right now there are about eight to ten bulletins that are being collected in our coffee room. That's only a fourth of the churches of the federation. Could we double this number, or even bring it up to 75% of the total? Thanks for the thoughtfulness!

Till next time!





By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands (2 Cor 5:1).

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As brothers and sisters, we all belong to some household. Most of us are brought up in a family. We have parents that care for us, and we may have brothers and sisters with whom we grow up. In this country we are all so richly blessed that all have a house to live in. Some of us may have even moved to a brand new home, and maybe even seen their home being built. First a big hole must be dug, and then we soon see a foundation being built in the hole. A foundation is a very important part of a home. It must be built well and stand strong so that the remainder of the house can rest securely on top of the foundation. If a foundation is built well, then no matter what storms may come, the house will remain standing.

A home is also where we receive nourishment with the daily bread we receive from our heavenly Father. It is a place where we are taught about the ways the Lord commands us to walk in. There are many more things that go on in a household; but today we would like to focus on the household of God.

In being a child of the LORD, we all belong to this household of God. We therefore also share everything of this household. Christ, being the Head of this household, gives us everything we need for body and soul. He supplies us with food in abundance on our tables, and spiritual food, that is, the food of the Bible. In the Bible we may find everything that we need to know. God teaches us how we must live, not only in our own homes and our families, but also with regards to others. How rich we are to be a part of this household!

But how are our foundations built? Do we have it firmly grounded on the right foundation, that is, the foundation of Christ? We must daily look at what is inside our hearts. We do not have to look too long and we will soon find how sinfulness and evil fills our hearts. Sin is what kept us separated from God, and there is only one Mediator who can stand between God and us, and that is Jesus “. . . who is a true and righteous man, and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is at the same time true God” (LD 5).

When our hearts are turned in the right direction, that is, trusting in the Triune God, then the rest will follow. Trust in God and have a believing heart, then He will also wash away all our sins and will also no longer remember our sinful nature which we have to fight against each and every day. Christ is faithful, and has promised to all of us who believe in Him, that He will lead us to the end of times.

Put your hope and confidence in Him and encourage one another daily. We must walk beside each other on the same ground and speak to each other of the mighty hand of the Lord in all that happens around us, and also in our own personal lives. We must speak freely and remind one another that we do not walk in our own strength, but that

we walk in the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Keep your hearts open, that the Holy Spirit may dwell therein, and take a good look at your own foundation. Build on the knowledge of God's Word, for it is filled with instructions for everything we need to know – the way we must live our daily lives in our own homes, in all that we say to others, and all we do, including all the thoughts we have. This life can be tiring and burdensome, but we know that the end is coming, that one day Christ will call us home, to our final eternal home where we will forever praise Him. Praise the Lord!

*One thing have I desired of God as favor,
That I may always in His temple dwell
To view the beauty of the Lord my Saviour
And in His house to seek His holy will.
For in the day of trouble and of strife
He in His shelter will preserve my life.
Within His tent He'll keep me at His side;
High on a rock He safety will provide. Psalm 27:2*

Birthdays in August:

4th **TERENCE BERENDS**

Anchor Home

361 Thirty Road, RR 2 Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

5th **PHILIP SCHUURMAN**

65 Lincoln Street West, Welland, ON L3C 5J3

9th **ROSE MALDA**

Oakland Centre

53 Bond Street, Oakville ON L6J 5B4

18th **FENNY KUIK**

140 Foch Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2C 5H7

23rd **JACK DIELEMAN**

5785 Young Street Apt. 704, Willowdale, ON M2M 4J2

Congratulations to you all on your birthday! We hope you all will have an enjoyable day with family and friends. Above all, may God bless you in this new year that lies ahead of you. Terence will be turning 24, Phil will be 41, Rose will be 43, Fenny will turn 48, and Jack will be 28 years young. Till the next time,

Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

Mailing correspondence:

548 Kemp Road East

RR 2 Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2

1-905-563-0380

NOTE: for any parent or caregiver whose special child has moved within the last two years, could you PLEASE send us your new mailing address. This will make it more pleasant for those who are receiving birthday mail. Thank-you for your co-operation. If you do it **right away** after reading this note you will **hopefully** not forget.

Pastoral remarks on the marks of Christians

By G. Van Rongen

A nominal membership in the Church is not sufficient. Even when, with a clear conscience, we can confess that we belong to the true Church – in other words, that our churches are faithful churches of the Lord Jesus Christ – we must realize that the Church is always a mixture, God’s threshing-floor (Augustine).

The marks of Christians are essential for our membership in the Church and even for the true Church itself. We must never isolate the marks of the true Church from the marks of Christians – the latter being, not a kind of fourth mark of the Church, but, as we should now understand, the essential fruit of the three marks and therefore included in them. When the gospel is indeed preached purely, sealed sacramentally, and upheld in Church discipline, the fruits of these activities become manifest.

A true Church is a living Church. The gospel keeps the true Christians’ faith


alive, as is shown in what follows: “They believe in Jesus Christ the only Saviour, flee from sin and pursue righteousness, love the true God and their neighbour . . . and crucify their flesh and its works.” We are expected to be living members of the Church, exhibiting the marks of Christians, and thereby demonstrating our gratitude for being brought to share in the blessing of Abraham’s seed for all the nations of the earth.

At the same time this understanding of the marks of Christians keeps us from using the marks of the true Church in a formal, neutral way. It leads us to personal self-examination: Are the fruits of all that happens in Church present in the personal life of the members of the Church? It leads us to collective self-examination: Is our congregational life only “traditional” as a result of sterile preaching? Is the power of the Word of God to bless manifest in our life as a congregation?

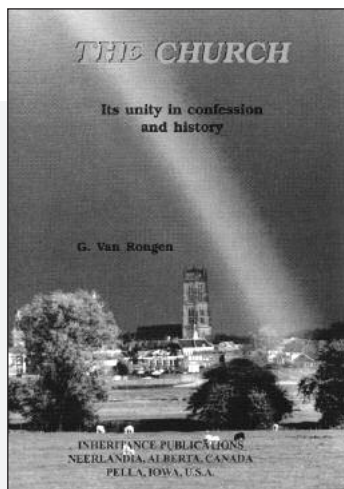
Our Confession emphasizes not only the office bearers and the work

that they do (which is the Roman Catholic concept of the church), but also the way in which their work is received by the congregation. This is why words such as “assembly” and “congregation” are prominent and even dominant in the definitions of the Church given in Articles 27 through 29!

In other words, a congregation or confederation of churches cannot be called true when a Scriptural Confession alone is maintained and when the office bearers can be called faithful, but when all of this results in the life in the members and in the congregation or churches as a whole. The office bearers’ faithful discharge of their duties and the congregation’s faithful reception go together. This is how a true Church presents itself!

From G. Van Rongen, *The Church: Its Unity in Confession and History*, Neerlandia: Inheritance Publications (1998), p. 152-53. 

BOOK REVIEWS



The Church: Its Unity in Confession and History

By C. Van Dam

G. Van Rongen, *The Church: Its Unity in Confession and History*. Neerlandia, Alberta: Inheritance Publications. Paperback. 240 pages. \$ 14.75 CDN. Toll free order number: 1-800-563-3594.

This is a very good and timely book. With the churches discussing unity with others, it is basic to a good understanding to know how to approach matters of ecumenicity and

what we believe about the church according to our confession. This book seeks to do that and it does it well. It is simply written, pastorally motivated and does not get lost in theoretical questions. It guides the reader through Scripture, history and confessional development and so deals with issues that have much practical significance for the life of God’s people. The author, who is 82, presents here his mature and perceptive observations on our confession about the church and we do well to listen to him.

Rev. Van Rongen’s approach is to go through Articles 27 to 29 of the Belgic

Confession line by line and explain the Scriptural basis and historical background of each concept. This careful and patient study is easy to understand and follow for Rev. Van Rongen has the average church member in mind and he succeeds in making potentially difficult matters clear and to the point. The book is very instructive and accessible. Because it carefully follows the exact wording of our confession and because there is also a Scripture index, it is relatively simple to find what you are looking for. However, not just the average church member will benefit from Van Rongen's study. For those who are interested in more detail, there are some small print sections in the text and footnotes with further explanations and references.

It is impossible to do full justice to a book of this nature in a short review, but let me mention some things which will hopefully motivate you, the reader, to buy this book and study the matters for yourself.

After discussing the meaning of the catholicity of the church, Van Rongen comes to the implications and mentions that the catholicity of the church will prevent us from using our own church life as the measuring rod with which we measure other believers or churches. We cannot expect other true believers and churches to be exactly as we are when we consider their different historical and cultural background. The all-important question is: Is it evident that in them also God has fulfilled the promise He gave to Abraham? This promise concerned all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3), and thus included many historical, cultural, and even racial variations. Therefore we cannot expect the particular churches of every continent and nation to be similar. Within the true Church there is a healthy "pluriformity"! (p. 45)

Van Rongen challenges us to think carefully of the contents of Article 29 when he writes:

We should remember that Article 29 should not have the unofficial heading found in the *Book of Praise*: "The marks of the true and false church." The real contrast made in this article is between the true Church and the many sects, those various falsifications of the Church and its doctrine, of which the false church is an extreme example (p. 159, see also pp. 115, 122).

When Van Rongen writes about how we approach other churches, he correctly urges us to be modest when observing the weaknesses of others since we too have faults and imperfections. In the context of a federation seeking a relationship with other churches he notes:

The matter of common faith is first and foremost, however, because only on this basis can differences be discussed and resolved.

In this connection we must take into account what Scripture teaches us about the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ, either in person or through his apostles, dealt with churches which clearly showed that they had not yet reached the goal of perfection.

In line with 1 Corinthians and Revelation 2 and 3, great Church leaders can still give us good guidance. For example, Aurelius Augustine states that the Church is God's threshing floor, where the chaff must be separated from the wheat, and John Calvin, in his *Institutes*, says that every church shows imperfections, one church even more than the other: "even in the administration of Word and sacraments defects may creep in which ought not to alienate us from its communion" (IV.i.12).

The point is not whether other churches are without imperfections – what about our own churches? – but whether we confess the same God and the same divine works of the Triune God (p. 102-103).

There is much in this instructive book that will stimulate further discussion and study on the church. Van Rongen, for example, also shows repeatedly how the errors of Rome and Anabaptists, against which the Belgic Confession set forth the biblical truth, are also there today, sometimes in very subtle forms. Van Rongen also reminds us that the church is not ours, but belongs to Christ. The church can only be known by a true faith. We believe the church.

After dealing with Articles 27-29, Van Rongen's book concludes with a reprint of a very interesting earlier publication of his, "Unity of Faith and Church Unity in Historical Perspective." This is followed by two shorter contributions on the Liberation of the 1940's: "Fifty Years Liberation 1944-1994" by the late Rev. K. Bruning and "Personal Recollections" by Rev. Van Rongen.

Rev. Van Rongen gives us much to learn and appreciate concerning our confession about the church. It is to be hoped that many will read and study this material. This book is highly recommended!

Us and Them: Building a Just Workplace Community

By J. Boersema

John R. Sutherland, Editor: *Us and Them: Building a Just Workplace Community*. Mississauga, ON.: Work Research Foundation, 1999. 182 pages, \$14.95 CDN

With the book *Us and Them*, John Sutherland, a professor of management and ethics at Trinity Western University, has made a significant contribution by seeking to present a Christian perspective on the field of industrial relations – the relations between managers and workers. As editor, Sutherland has brought together a series of essays by eleven Christians who have special expertise in the area and a desire to bring a Christian worldview to bear on it. John Redekop, in his foreword, commends the book to a wide readership including every Christian union activist, every clergy person, every Christian manager and every Christian employee. Given the dearth of Christian literature on the subject, Redekop's call should be heeded.

Not that the reader should expect a coherent, detailed blue-print of a Christian approach to the various issues. Rather, the reader will find an opportunity to reflect on a variety of views which provide a useful starting point for discussion and further work. A major theme running through the book is that the current adversarial system of industrial relations – "us versus them" must be changed for a more cooperative style of "us and them." The book's authors are convinced that a Christian perspective mandates such a direction – that the "Christian faith is the new wine that enables us to build a just workplace society." Considering that Canada is probably one of the most strike-prone countries in the world, such a direction would certainly seem to be desirable. Consequently, also

Clarion readers are urged to read and work with this book.

Within our circles, discussion has been primarily about the issue of union membership. Hopefully, this book may encourage us to also think further about how employee relations must be organized Christianly. While much of the book deals with management/union relations, it also provides food for thought for those involved in the non-union situation. In the remainder of this review, I will attempt to give a brief overview of the book and suggest some areas where further work could usefully be done.

Why things are the way they are

The first part of the book begins with an interesting historical review of the views of “the Church” and organized labour in Canada. Considering the surprising amount of relevant material, it is understandable that Groenewold has remained primarily descriptive. It would, however, have been helpful if the noted opposition by Christians to organized labour in the past had been evaluated in more detail. Was this opposition justified on the basis of scripturally supported arguments? Are these arguments still valid?

Harry Antonides sketches out the secular underpinnings of today’s unions and gives some pointers towards an alternative direction which must include freedom of association and reforms that will “hand responsibility back to workers, open up decision-making in the workplace and encourage people to do the best possible job wherever they are working.”

Mestre and Sutherland conclude this section with an interesting comparison of the Japanese “worldview” on human relations with three basic tenets derived from the Judeo-Christian perspective.

Developing a different approach

The second part of the book contains five articles aimed at “finding a better way” to replace the current adversarial approach. Graham Tucker focuses on “community-building” and presents a list of helpful elements to foster such a cooperative approach. His list deserves serious review in all companies – whether unionized or not. Sutherland and van Weelden then review the use of the strike weapon. They argue that strikes may be permissible to fight genuine injustice, when all other av-

enues have been thoroughly explored, when no innocent bystanders are hurt and legitimate moral rights of others are not violated. A more collaborative system of labour relations patterned on countries such as Japan, is, however, essential to reduce the use of strike action. Since the specified criteria for a “just” strike are – as they recognize – ambiguous, their contribution will hopefully encourage further debate. That debate should probably recognize more explicitly than these authors do, the obligation that Christian employees owe to their employer. Mark Turner provides some practical suggestions for “win/win” bargaining – including the necessity for public sector employers to say “No.” Ed Pypker highlights the importance of building trust within the work community. Finally, van Rassel illustrates how some secular unions have made significant contributions on moral issues and that, consequently, there are opportunities for Christian union members to bring Christian principles to bear on the workplace. It is difficult to accept, however, that the possibility of achieving some incremental good can justify active participation at the highest level in the adversarial secular union movement.

The challenges that lie ahead

The book concludes with three essays about the future. Joseph Kaas, an experienced manager and management consultant, argues that a significant change in management attitude is required to create a pro-active culture of improving employee-management relations so that businesses can better meet the challenges of international competition. He provides some specific suggestions to this end. Ray Pennings sketches out some major tasks that unions should focus on in order to be relevant for the future – worker participation, new services, e.g. training, sectoral unionism and diverse structures. It is not surprising that Pennings, who is the CLAC’s public affairs director, argues that unions will always have an essential role to play. I did not, however, find that position totally convincing. A debate on this issue is certainly in order. Finally, Dirk de Vos considers the context of the increasing globalized, technological new economy in which


labour relations is only one aspect of the challenges we face. He notes two contradictory themes. First, that “sheer economic necessity and competition, coupled with technological developments are forcing both believers and unbelievers to entrust workers with a considerable degree of responsibility.” On the other hand, the tough competition threatens to create a harsher workplace in many situations. Nevertheless, the old-style confrontational solutions will not work; the need for Christian witness will remain.

Other issues to be developed

Sutherland, in his introduction, begins with the heart-wrenching example of Christian teachers on both sides of a dispute concerning union membership. In his co-authored article on strikes, he also presents a couple who sought and gained exemption from union membership on the grounds of religious objection. Nevertheless, the volume seems deficient in that it does not include an article in which the basic question, “May Christians be members of the secular unions?” is comprehensively evaluated. Further work ought also to be done on the implications of the “check-off” – the forced payment of union dues by non-members.

While Antonides and Pennings are strongly critical of the “closed shop” in Canadian labour relations, the possibilities of multiple-union recognition and bargaining as occurs in the Netherlands is not explicitly dealt with. This may well be an avenue to explore further. Moreover, while several authors take positive note of the more harmonious models of Japan and various European countries, significant further work will be required to decide if and how such models can be instituted here. In my recent book, *Political-Economy to the Honour of God*, I reviewed the Dutch system in some detail but was forced to conclude that it did not provide a ready blue-print for implementation elsewhere.

Overall, however, this book provides a highly useful starting point for debate about Christian perspective on labour relations. Hopefully, some of you will be challenged to enter this debate.

Dr. John Boersema is a professor of business and economics at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario. 



Press Release of Classis Ontario-South held on June 14, 2000.

1. On behalf of the convening church of Attercliffe, Rev. Agema opened the meeting by requesting us to sing Psalm 105:1 and 3. He read from God's Word Galatians 2:15-3:9 and led in prayer. He welcomed all present, especially the students W. Bredenhof and C. Vermeulen as well as Rev. R. Stienstra who is present as an observer from the United Reformed Churches and Rev. W. Boessenkool and his wife, who live in South Africa but reside temporarily in Grand Rapids where he serves our sister congregation.

2. Rev. Agema informs the meeting that the credentials have been found in good order. All the churches are represented. The church at Grand Rapids is represented by Rev. Boessenkool as a member of this congregation and br. Kingma as a deacon.

3. Classis is constituted. Rev. Kok is chairman, Rev. Agema, clerk and Rev. Wieske, vice-chairman. The chairman thanks the church at Attercliffe for all the preparations made. He also mentions that the church at Smithville has extended a call to Rev. R. Schouten of Abbotsford, BC.

4. The agenda is adopted. The chairman proposes that Rev. Stienstra be allowed to be present during closed sessions. The meeting agrees with this proposal.

5. Br. Wes Bredenhof is present to be examined with a view to be declared eligible for call in our churches. The documents are found in order and the brother presents his sermon proposal on Galatians 3:6-9. Classis goes into closed session and finds this proposal sufficient to proceed with the examination. Rev. Agema examines in O.T. (Judges 1), Rev. Wieske in N.T. (Colossians 1) and Rev. Stam in doctrine and creeds (Art. 22-26, B.C.; Heidelberg Catechism 25-31 and Canons of Dordt, V) while the other delegates also receive the opportunity to ask questions.

In closed session the examination is discussed and found favourable. Br. Bredenhof is informed of this outcome and after he promised not to teach any-

thing against God's Word as summarized in the Reformed Confessions, Classis declares him eligible for call. Rev. Van Popta hands him a call from the church at Smithers to work as a home missionary amongst the Indians in the Bulkley Valley. After singing Ps 105:2 and prayer by Rev. Agema, the delegates receive the opportunity to congratulate br. Bredenhof.

6. A proposal from the church at Kerwood to change Art. 6 of the Classical Regulations by adding the point of "inviting of observers to the next Classis" is adopted.

7. A proposal of the Rockway church to change the Church Order wherever it mentions "consistory with the deacons" to "council" and to submit it to the next Regional Synod East for their agreement to send it on to Synod Neerlandia 2001 is defeated. The meeting breaks for lunch.

8. At 1:30 p.m. the meeting is reopened with the singing of Ps 105:4. Br. D. Poppe who is present to be examined with a view to be declared eligible for call is welcomed by the chairman. The documents are in order and the brother presents his sermon proposal on Amos 9:11-13. In closed session this proposal is discussed and it is decided to continue the examination. Rev. Agema examines him on Judges 2:1-3:11; Rev. Wieske on 1 John 2 and Rev. Kok on B.C. Arts 14-21; H.C. 25-31 and C of D II with some of the other delegates also participating.

The exam is evaluated in closed session and found to be sufficient. Br. Poppe promises not to teach anything against God's Word as confessed in our creeds and is declared eligible for call. We sing Ps 89:1 after which Rev. Wieske leads in thanksgiving. The delegates receive an opportunity to congratulate br. Poppe and his wife.

9. The chairman gives the floor to Rev. Stienstra. He conveys the greetings of the United Reformed Churches and expresses the hope that the Lord may bless the efforts to grow closer together so that we may come to federative union. The chairman thanks him for his presence and brotherly words of encouragement.

10. Br. Carl Vermeulen, a third year student at the Theological College who is present to receive the privilege of speaking an edifying word receives the opportunity to deliver his sermon proposal on Exodus 34:10-14 after the necessary documents are found to be in order. In closed session classis decides to continue the examination. Rev. Stam examines him in doctrine and creeds (C of D III/IV). The exam is judged satisfactory and after the brother has promised not to teach anything against God's Word as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, he receives permission to speak an edifying word in the churches for a period of 12 months. We sing Hymn 8:14 and are led in prayer by the chairman after which the delegates receive the opportunity to congratulate br. Vermeulen and his wife. The meeting breaks for supper.

11. After supper we sing Ps 47:1. Roll call is held. All the delegates are present. The three questions specified in Art 44, C.O. are asked by the chairman. The churches at Grand Rapids, Kerwood, Lincoln and Rockway request the advice of classis. In closed session advice is given.

12. The following reports were received and dealt with:

- a. A financial overview from the classical treasurer over the past year.
- b. An audit from the church at Lincoln of the books of the classical treasurer.
- c. Inspection of the classical archives by the church at Kerwood.
- d. Fund for needy students from the church at Chatham.
- e. Church visitations to the churches at Chatham, Hamilton and Smithville.

Classis concurs with the recommendation of the treasurer to assess the churches for \$5.00 per communicant member for classical expenses and \$2.00 for Regional Synod's expenses for the year June 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001.

13. **Appointments:** Convening church for next Classis: Blue Bell. Place: Hamilton. Date: September 13.

Suggested moderamen: Rev. J. Ludwig – chairman; Rev. K.A. Kok – clerk; Rev. D.G.J. Agema – vice-chairman.

All the appointees of last year are re-appointed.

14. Classis takes note that since the previous classis of December 1999, Rev. J. Kroeze has been released from his call as missionary of Hamilton in Brazil and has accepted a call to be-

come the minister of the Free Reformed Church in Legana, Australia.

- 15. Question Period is held.
- 16. Censure was not necessary.
- 17. The Acts are read and adopted.
- 18. The Press Release is read and approved.

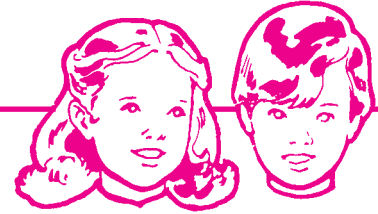
19. We sang Psalm 80:7 and 8 and the chairman led us in thanksgiving after which he closed the meeting.

For Classis,
Rev. G. Wieske
vice-chairman e.t.



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers

Yippee! School is finally over and you are now on holidays. What are you going to do for the next two months? I guess there are so many things to do that right now you are wondering what can be done. But whatever you do, be sure to enjoy the break. And also make sure you remember to write me a letter and tell me what you are doing.

Lots of love, Aunt Betty

Our Story – continued

Grandad's New-Old Nursery Rhymes

Once again it was bed-time and Louise was having her good-night chat with her grandfather. She always enjoyed that, for he often made her giggle with the things he said, and told her stories to think over before going to sleep.

"What are you thinking about now, Grandad?" she asked. "I can't help thinking of that pony," he said, "the one that started out as Dapple Grey. You remember,

*I lent him to a lady
To ride a mile away,
She whipped him and slashed him
And rode him through the mire,
I wouldn't lend my horse again
For any lady's hire."*

"Yes," said Louise, "that's the old rhyme." "Well," said her grandfather, "although it says I wouldn't lend him again, how'd it be if we let him go back to that horrid lady? He's not so tame, now, and he might teach her a lesson." "Oh, yes please!" cried Louise. "Let me see now," he said.

*"I had a little pony once,
His name was Dapple White,
I lent him to a lady
And he gave her quite a fright.
He kicked and he bucked
And he threw her on her face,
For the way she treated ponies
Was an absolute disgrace!"*

"Lovely!" said Louise, "it served her right for being so unkind to him." She thought over the brave little pony for a while, then feeling sleepy, she slipped her arm around Grandad's neck and gave him a kiss. "Good-night, Grandad," she said. "Goodnight, my dear," said Grandad. *The end*

Did you enjoy that story? I thought it was great.

Can you make up some new-old nursery rhymes? See if you can make some and send them in to me. I will

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Deborah Van Beek | 24 Jacquie Selles |
| 9 Shaun Smeding | 25 Crystal Slaa |
| 11 Andrea Meliefste | 27 Luanne Feenstra |
| 13 Lorelle Barendregt | 29 Melville Buist |
| 13 Rebekah Barendregt | 30 Becca Brasz |
| 18 Jared Helder | 31 Jacqueline Jager |
| 24 Kimberly VanderVelde | |

A SPRINGTIME WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver Rebecca Van Dijk

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

Find:

FLOWERS	SPRING	SUN	GRASS
VACATION	HAPPY	APRIL	MAY



FROM THE MAILBOX

Thank you to *Rebecca VanDijk* for your letter and puzzle. It must be fun having a new sister. What were you doing outside with Grandpa? Was he making something at your house? Write again, won't you.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Simon VanDijk*, and thanks for your letter and puzzle. You must have just recently had your birthday, so I'll say happy birthday, even though it's a little bit late. Did you have a good time? Till next time.