

# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
VOLUME 49, NO. 21 OCTOBER 13, 2000

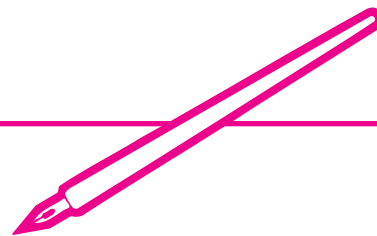


*Ribbon-cutting at the new  
Theological College library*

Numbers

10:1-10

By P. Aasman



## The strength of the Reformed heritage

*A cord of three strands is not quickly broken  
(Ecclesiastes 4:12)*

The Reformed faith has proven resilient. It was born whilst royal decrees forbade it, grew in the face of the world's scorn, spread though the powers of hell tried crush it, and has endured five centuries though wolves arose within her to tear and rend her.

The Reformed faith is like the proverbial cord, not quickly broken, for it has joined hands with the catholic church of all ages. But she has her own distinctives, three of them, each of which would be easily frayed and broken if it were the sole distinctive, but when woven together, they form a cord which will never be broken.

### *Sola gratia!*

The three strands are contributed by three different leaders within the Reformation. Luther's enduring contribution to Reformed faith is summarized by the slogan, *sola gratia*, by grace alone. He even branded the letter of James "a straw epistle" because it did not teach this doctrine as clearly as he would have liked James to teach it. But on its own, *sola gratia* is vulnerable to wear and tear. Paul found that out. After preaching about God's forgiving grace to any who believed in Jesus Christ, people began to ask, "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" (e.g. Rom 6:1). *Sola gratia* is only one strand which is not strong enough to withstand the evil thoughts of human hearts.

### *Sola scriptura!*

The second strand was especially contributed by Zwingli, with his renaissance cry, "Back to the sources!" He insisted that the Bible is the sole means of grace and salvation. He even went so far as to question whether the sacraments were independent means of grace. For the



expression *sola scriptura* we are especially indebted to Zwingli. But also this strand, on its own, is subject to abuse. Certain sects reject the church's history and scorn any guidance into the holy Scripture, and interpret it in their own bizarre fashions. Similarly, the Pharisees in Christ's day used Scripture in a detached and cruel fashion to suit their own purpose. *Sola scriptura* is only one strand, but by itself, it could never bear the weight of the church for very long – because of the perverseness of human hearts.

For the third strand we are especially indebted to John Calvin. The controlling principle through his theology might be summarized by *solus Deo gloria*, to God alone in glory. And yet, even this strand of our Reformed heritage is vulnerable to abuse. Paul says of the Jews, "they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge" (Rom 10:2). Zeal for God's glory is not enough, for fools run ahead uninformed by God's Word.



## Soli Deo gloria!

The Reformed churches need to ask themselves if they honour all three strands of our tradition. Luther's rediscovery of God's grace needs to be protected by Zwingli's commitment of obedience to everything written in the Word of God, and both of these principles need to be driven by passion for God's glory. If we don't maintain commitment to all three principles, the cord of salvation will fray and weaken, and eventually, we will drop out of God's favour. There are many who have done so in the past centuries. But the Reformed faith really is strong and resilient, so long as we uphold each of the three strands.

*Sola gratia!*

*Sola scriptura!*

*Soli Deo gloria!*



### What's inside?

In this issue of *Clarion* we focus on the Reformation and our Theological College. Rev. P. Aasman has a guest editorial on the beautiful and well-known theme of the Reformation: *Sola gratia! Sola scriptura! Soli Deo gloria!* Only when these three strands are maintained together will we remain strong as the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. J. Visscher picks up on this theme with the first of three articles which deal with God's abiding truth. His theme comes from Martin Luther's famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress is our God;" it is the line, "God's truth abideth still." God's Word is truth and it is lasting truth.

On September 8, our Theological College had its 26th convocation evening. The next day, there was the official opening of the new library facilities. We have included in this issue the various speeches and presentations given at these two occasions. Plenty of photos have also been included. There is also a press release of the Board of Governors meeting on September 7. The Lord has blessed our churches richly by providing us with our own Theological College which stands firmly entrenched in the line of the great Reformation. The College provides future ministers with a training that holds the highest regard and reverence for the Word of God. By the time a student graduates, he can read the Scriptures in the original languages and he is trained to bring the riches of God's Word in the churches and the mission field. *Soli Deo gloria!*

Rev. P. G. Feenstra gives his third installment on the subject of angels. Angels hold reverence for the greatness of God. They are but servants of God. We are the children who have been obtained through the blood of Christ. How much more should our lives show reverence and awe for our God!

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Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

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U.S.A. U.S. Funds	\$39.00	\$52.00
International	\$60.00	\$90.00

\* Including 7% GST – No. 890967359RT

Advertisements: \$11.75 per column inch

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Agreement No. 1377531

Publications Mail Registration No. 09907

ISSN 0383-0438

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# God's truth abideth still (Part 1)

By J. Visscher

In this issue of *Clarion* we are commemorating the fact that on October 31, 1517, the opening salvo was fired in what would become the Great Reformation. Whether or not that date is correct is a matter of some debate. There are those who argue that 1520 (the year of Luther's three definitive Reformation treatises) or 1521 (the year of the Diet of Worms) would be a more accurate starting point. Whatever the case may be, for our purposes we shall stick to the year 1517.

## Remembering

So what are we as members of the church of Jesus Christ to do with an event that is already 483 years old? In the first place, you can say that we are to remember it. We are to recall what happened in those turbulent years.

In a day and age when the past is so often forgotten and dismissed, it is still a beneficial thing to touch base with history. Yes, and that goes double for the history of the church. Unfortunately all too few people, and that includes Christians, are students of history. The natural inclination is to wrap ourselves in the concerns of the present. And if there is any extra time in our lives, we would rather spend it on the future than on the past. Little do we seem to realize that a good understanding of the past is essential for a proper view of today and a healthy approach to tomorrow.

## Reflecting

Yet we are not only to remember past events, we also need to *reflect* on the significance of those events. What this means is that we are not just to read an account of past happenings. No, we also need to see very clearly what was at stake. What kind of principles, what sort of ideas, what type of developments, were being discussed and debated, promoted and rejected.

In other words, the end of October is not just that time of year when Christians take a leisurely stroll back in his-

tory, it is also a good time to tune your minds to history. It's a good time to think, to analyze, and to discern what transpired in those days long ago and what application it may have for the present. Quite simply, in a day and age wherein many Christians would rather be amused than educated, entertained than challenged, you are being asked to put on your thinking caps.

## Refreshing

This brings us to a third thing. We need to remember and to reflect, but we also need to be *refreshed*. While activating the brain, we do not want to bypass the heart. For a committed child of God, the issues raised in the days of Reformation are the kind of issues that should stir our lives and speak to our souls. After all, they belong to the heart and to the essence of our faith. By no means may we consider them to be of secondary or minimal importance. No, they have to do with fundamental truths, truths that have the ability to stir in us a new appreciation and dedication for the Reformed faith.

*A good understanding of the past is essential for a proper view of today and a healthy approach to tomorrow.*

## What truths?

So what truths were at stake in those days long ago? The simplest answer would be to say that there were many truths that hung in the balance. There were doctrines like faith, justification, forgiveness, and good works. There were the sacraments, their number and nature, things like marriage, last rites, priestly ordination, confession and, above all, the Lord's Supper. There were particular practices like

the selling of indulgences, the sale of church offices, priestly celibacy and more. There was the matter of the politics of Rome, the powers of the church and the position of the pope. Suffice it to say, the list of grievances and contentious issues was long. Many aspects of the truth were under attack.

Indeed, the list is so long that it has become popular to narrow it down to a number of "onlys" or Latin "solas." There is the expression "sola Scriptura" (by Scripture alone) which asserts that one of the main issues of the Reformation has to do with the singular role and place of the Holy Scriptures in the life of the church. There is the expression "sola fide" (by faith alone) which has to do with the manner of our salvation. Is salvation a consequence of faith and works or are we justified by faith alone? There is the expression "sola gratia" (by grace alone) which raises the question as to whether or not salvation is truly a gift of God or a meritorious thing, partly produced by man.

It would appear that no matter how one approaches the Great Reformation of the 16th century, one is forced to deal with many different issues. There just seems to be no way around the fact that in those days a multitude of truths were in discussion, debate and danger.

## One foundational issue at stake

Still, I would like to direct your attention to the fact that there was especially one unifying and foundational issue at stake. What was it? You can find it in Martin Luther's famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." In it there is a certain line that has also been chosen as the title for this article, namely, "God's truth abideth still." In other words, it is my contention that at bottom the Reformation was not just about many truths being twisted, but about how the truth in general was being handled. Issues of doctrine, of practice, of sacraments, of church governance,

do not stand apart and alone. No, they are all connected to how the church regards and deals with the truth, the truth of Almighty God.

*The Reformation was about how the truth, in general, was being handled.*

### Does truth exist?

So what is truth? Does it exist? You will remember that this is the question or remark that Pontius Pilate addressed to the Lord Jesus during his trial. Our Saviour had said, "For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." To which Pilate reacted by saying, "What is truth" (John 18:37, 38)?

Now it is difficult to know exactly how to take these words of Pilate. Did he utter them in jest or as a joke? Did he utter them as a cynic – no one knows the answer anyway? Did he utter them as a skeptic – no one knows and it does not really matter? It is hard to decide. Nevertheless, there is one thing that is fairly obvious and it is fact that for Pilate there was no absolute, identifiable body of knowledge that can be labelled "truth." As far as he was concerned, truth was either non-existent or it was relative.

But if Pilate, the Roman, had a problem with truth, so did the Greeks. Paul came to Athens, and what did he see? He saw a city full of idols (Acts 17). Every god imaginable had an altar there. Yes, and just in case one had been forgotten, they added one more altar and put on it the inscription "To an unknown god."

So what does that tell you about their view of truth? It indicates that as far as the Athenians were concerned, truth was pluriform. It did not reside with one god but with many gods. They all had a piece of it. They all owned a part of it. Who had the best part? No one knew anymore. Who had all of it? No one did.

The result of such confusion is that truth was undermined. If there is no way to judge different truth claims and no identifiable body of knowledge called "truth," then men are still living in darkness. Superstition and confusion can then have full rein in human society, and they did. Just take a close look at the world of the Greeks and Romans.

For that matter, one might add that our Western world today appears to be in much the same state. There is no longer any consensus as to what constitutes truth, neither is there any agreement or acceptance of moral absolutes. Society is adrift and we see that in the way marriage and the family are dealt with. We see it in the breakdown of distinctions between male and female. We see it in laws that undermine respect for human life. Truth has been sacrificed on the altar of selfishness and self-centredness.

*Truth was defined and determined by the Word.*

### Can the church determine truth?

But if Pilate could not or would not identify truth, and if essentially the Greeks had the same difficulty, such was not the problem of the Reformation. In those days truth was not a problem because it was linked to so many different gods. No, it was a problem because it was linked exclusively to the Roman Catholic Church. In the 16th century, and before that already, it was not God who determined truth, it was the church. The teaching office of the church told people what to believe. It defined the truth, taught the truth, and defended the truth.

Now, some might consider that to be an improvement over the days of the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul. At least people knew then what was truth. At least there was an absolute standard to go by.

Or was there? The Reformers, men like Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Bullinger, and others, challenged both the right of the church to control the truth, as well as the accuracy of its definition of the truth. For them truth was not a property or a monopoly of the church. No, truth was defined and determined by the Word. They insisted on those words of the Lord Jesus "Your Word is truth" (Jn 17:17). Indeed, the Reformers developed and promoted a Theology of the Word, a theology that carefully defined and accurately declared the Truth with a capital T.

### The Reformation Teaching on Truth God

How, then, did the Reformers see truth? For openers, they insisted that

the only way to understand truth is to turn to God. Their major premise was that all truth resides with God. He possesses all the knowledge, wisdom and insight. He alone knows all things.

### Revelation

Next, they moved on from God's ownership of all truth to the matter of revelation. What is revelation? It is a word that describes an unveiling. Something that was previously hidden and concealed is made known by having the wraps taken off, or by an unveiling that exposes it to human view and scrutiny.

In this regard the Reformers insisted that the only reason why we have truth today is because God decided to reveal it or unveil it. He could have kept it to himself. He could have left man in the dark, but He decided not to. He decided to reveal himself, his Person, his glory, his power, and his will to mankind.

*Things creation could never tell us, the Word tells us.*

### General or natural revelation

How did He do this? The Reformers said that there are really two types of revelation or two ways in which God reveals himself. The first they called either "general revelation" because it is common to all men, or "natural revelation" because it comes to us through nature or the natural order.

In this connection one can think of Psalm 19 and its well-known opening words, "the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (verse 1). One can also cite Romans 1:19-20, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." The point being made in both instances is that the created world clearly points all men to God. There just has to be a Creator. There has to be someone vastly greater, higher and more powerful than man. Mankind has the proof of this everywhere around it.

So it is that creation, as well as history and conscience too, reveal the truth to us. They tell us about a God of power, wisdom and goodness.

The sad fact is, however, that man sees this only in part. Sin obscures the truth. Our fallen condition hinders us from seeing clearly. In addition, this revelation is limited to nature, history and conscience. As a result, general or natural revelation is not enough. It can not save us. It does not reveal the way of salvation. In order to be saved, we need a further, clearer, and fuller revelation.

### Special revelation

This is now precisely what God gives to us. In addition to the creation that declares his handiwork, we receive his Word. What is the Word? It is, the Reformers said, the fuller truth, the richer truth, the deeper truth. It communicates to us in a form we can understand not only about God's power and wisdom, but also about God's love,

mercy, grace, peace and salvation. Things creation could never tell us, the Word tells us.

In this regard, the same Psalm that speaks about the heavens, also says, "the law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes" (Ps 19:7,8). Quite simply, greater wisdom, greater joy and greater light come to believers through the Word.

One of the Reformation confessions puts it well when it says, "(God) makes himself more clearly and fully known to us by his holy and divine Word as far as is necessary for us in this life, to his glory and our salvation." (BC Art. 2)



CALLED by the church at Smithville, Ontario:

**Rev. J. Visscher**

of Langley, British Columbia.

\* \* \* \* \*

DECLINED the call to Grand Rapids, Michigan:

**Rev. W. den Hollander**

of Toronto, Ontario.

## Hymn 41

*A mighty fortress is our God,  
A bulwark never failing;  
Our Helper He, amid the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe  
Doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
And armed with cruel hat.  
On earth is not his equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side,  
The Man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus it is He;  
Lord Sabaoth His Name,  
From age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.*

*And though this world, with devils filled,  
Should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God has willed  
His truth to triumph through us.  
The prince of darkness grim,  
We tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure,  
For lo! his doom is sure;  
One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers –  
No thanks to them – abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours  
Through Him who with us sideth.  
Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also;  
The body they may kill,  
God's truth abideth still;  
His kingdom is forever.*

Martin Luther, 1529: alt. 1783?



# Angels from the Realms of Glory (Part 3)

By P.G. Feenstra

## The example of the angels

In the service that God requires of us, we are to take our example from the angels in heaven. They, too, have an office which is to be fulfilled according to the will of God. The angels in heaven are held out to us as an example of obedience to the will of the Lord. Explaining the petition “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” the Heidelberg Catechism says, “Grant also that everyone may carry out the duties of his office and calling as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.”

Christ teaches us this prayer knowing how the angels serve God before his throne. In heaven the will of God is obeyed absolutely and perfectly. The angels are working for the Lord of hosts, for the advancement of his kingdom and the glory of his name.

As long as the earth remains polluted with sin, heaven remains an example to earth – more specifically, the angels are an example to us. When God commands, we are to be ready for action, following the example of the angels. We have even greater cause to do the will of God than the angels do. They are his servants but we are his sons and daughters.

## The example of the seraphim

Isaiah 6:1, 2 gives us a clear witness of how the heavenly servants are an example to the children of God on earth: “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.”

In the first chapters of this prophecy, Isaiah is commissioned by the Lord to point out to King Ahaz the error of his

ways. Ahaz is not sovereign but is subject to the will of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The king of Judah must fear and honour the Lord who has chosen him to be king; otherwise he will forfeit every right to rule.

Regardless of our status, the Lord must receive on earth the same reverence which He receives in heaven. Isaiah knows that the Lord is revered and feared in heaven because of the vision that accompanied his call to office. At that time the curtains of heaven were opened and Isaiah was given a view of God’s dwelling place. The prophet saw the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up. He saw the Lord in the splendour of his majesty and surrounding Him were the seraphim. These angels call out to one another, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.” The seraphim have a holy reverence for the glory and greatness of the Lord.

*As willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven.*

## Their reverence for the greatness of God

Why do these angels cover their faces with two of their wings? Are they not allowed to see God? Heaven is their home, is it not? The seraphim, whose own name means “splendid radiance, burning bright,” cover their faces in full recognition of the greatness of God. The Lord, the King of all the earth is so great and glorious and full of majesty that even those who stand before Him day and night and who are constantly at his service cover their faces.

As church of Christ on earth we must follow the example of the seraphim in how we worship the Lord. Worship is bowing down before the living God, adoring our covenant Father, praising the Lord who is the only Sovereign, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Both angels in heaven and the saints of God on earth are to bow down before the greatness of the Lord. Recognizing God’s greatness we cannot come to worship God casually, but in a manner that reflects respect and awe for the Lord.

## Their respect for the holiness of God

The angels cover their faces; they also cover their feet. Thereby they acknowledge their own unworthiness to serve in the Lord’s totally awesome presence; they respect the holiness of God. The seraphim do not want to draw any attention to themselves. All admiration must be concentrated, without distraction, on the Lord alone.

Isaiah understood the message. If the seraphim cover their faces, how much hope is there for the prophet? No wonder that he says, “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips” (6:5). Who can stand in God’s holy place but he that has clean hands and a pure heart (Ps 24:4)?

That same sense of awe and respect for the holiness of God must be present with us when we approach the face of God in prayer, praise and worship. This is why the apostle Paul gives Timothy the following instruction, “I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly

clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works" (1 Tim 2:8-10). The men are admonished to have no sin on their conscience when they approach the Lord in worship and the women are encouraged to dress in such a manner that they do not draw attention to themselves.

Like the seraphim, men and women of the church must "cover their feet" when they enter into God's presence and appear before his throne of grace and mercy. Following the example of the angels we are to respect the holiness of God in the faith that Jesus Christ cleanses us from sin and enables us to stand in the presence of a holy God and in the hope that one day we, with all the saints, will stand before the

throne of God, serving Him day and night in his temple.

*Let the example of the angels encourage and stir us up to be zealous.*

### **Their readiness to perform the will of God**

With the last two wings the seraphim fly – indicating their readiness to do the will of God. The seraphim are ever at hand, prepared for obedience. Once again, Isaiah has understood the message. Isaiah wants to be such a willing servant. When the Lord calls him to office by asking, "Whom shall I send, and

who will go for Us?" Isaiah replies, "Here am I! Send me" (6:8). He will fulfil his office and calling as willingly and faithfully as the seraphim in heaven.

We are to live in the hope and expectation of a new heaven and a new earth where the servants and the children will serve the only Sovereign, the King of kings, in perfection. Today we do not see angels but they see us. They rejoice when a sinner repents, when they see the children of God having a reverence for the greatness of God, respect for the holiness of God and a readiness to perform the will of God. Let the example of the angels encourage and stir us up to be zealous in fulfilling the function and calling the Lord has given to us on this earth as his people. May our obedience give reason for rejoicing in heaven. 



# COLLEGE CORNER

By Dr. J. De Jong



## A joyous celebration – the College Evening

The second week of September, marking the beginning of the fall semester, is always a festive time for the Theological College. The College evening has been held every year for the last thirty years, and also represents an annual evening of praise and gratitude for all God's gifts throughout the year in the training for the ministry. However, the evening this year marked a special evening of celebration with the official "inauguration" of our new library facilities. The central theme of our celebration was gratitude to God the Father who in his providence has also permitted this project to come to a good completion, and so allowed us expanded facilities for all our activities on our small west mountain campus in Hamilton.

The evening began with the official opening and the reading of some congratulatory letters from several churches, including several sister churches in Australia. Special guests in the audience included, among others, the Rev. and Mrs. H. Knigge, former missionary of the church of Toronto to Irian Jaya. Then followed the principal's report, in which the highlights of the previous academic year were briefly reviewed. The report, which you can find elsewhere in this issue, indicated that our deepest gratitude lies in the fact that God in his mercy allows the work to continue, and so uses the College to provide the churches with ministers and missionaries equipped to proclaim his gospel. We pray that God may also grant his guidance and blessing in the year ahead.

This year's address focussed on a topic in church history, that is, Luther's development from 1505 to 1518 as reflected in his "theology of the cross" which he defended in the form of twenty-eight theological theses at a disputation of the Augustinian Order in Heidelberg in 1518. The intent of these addresses is to give the audience an example of the sort of things we speak about at the College. Thus every year our people can receive an impression of the importance of the various different disciplines involved in the training

for the ministry. In this way the professor giving the address for the evening gets an opportunity to show something of the various disciplines he is called to teach.

Next the Master of Divinity degree was conferred on Wesley Lloyd Bredenhof, our only graduate this year. Wes took his undergraduate degree in Alberta before coming to Hamilton. He developed an interest in missions throughout the years of his stay in Hamilton, and he has accepted the call to work among the Carrier Indians in Smithers, B.C. He is also currently enrolled in the Diploma of Missiology program, and has taken additional university training with a view to this special task. May the Lord also bless this work for his glory!

After the address a special moment arrived with the official inauguration of our new library facilities. On behalf of the building committee appointed by the Board of Governors, br. W. Oostdyk spoke a few congratulatory words. He recounted various aspects of the work of the committee, and thanked his fellow committee members and the contractor, br. G. Aikema for the excellent cooperation throughout the project. Br. Oostdyk presented the College with a commemorative plaque marking the opening of the new building.

Another highlight of the evening was a congratulatory word spoken by Br. A. Van Leeuwen, one of the deputies for the training for the ministry in the federation of our sister churches in Australia. Br. Van Leeuwen's address can also be found in this issue. The principal mentioned to him that at the College we highly value the bond that we have with our brothers in Australia, and are grateful that in this way, despite great distances, we can be of service to the churches "down under." Later br. Van Leeuwen said to me: wherever you are in the world, you always feel directly at home among Reformed people. Indeed, we sense immediately that despite the distance we have a strong bond with our Australian brotherhood, and we may be thankful that sister churches can be of service to each other in this way.

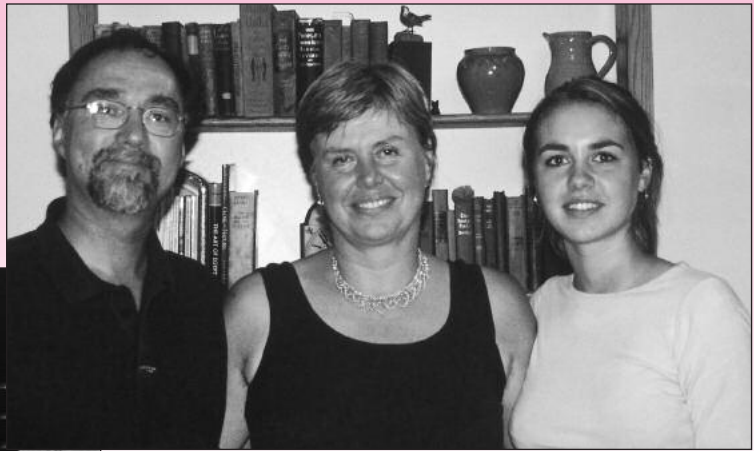
On behalf of the Women's Saving Action, sr. Joanne Van Dam and sr. Carla Zietsma made a presentation to the College library fund. Once again we received a cheque of \$25,000. We are always encouraged and gratified with the constant and unfailing support of the sisters who in their way contribute to the growth and development of our theological school.

Our accompaniment for the evening, as well as the musical interlude, was provided by the three oldest of the Kruis-selbrink sisters, who came to the evening



Back row (l-r): Dr. J. Visscher, Rev. P. Feenstra, Mr. W. Smouter, Mr. M. Kampen, Rev. J. Moesker, Rev. R. Aasman, Mr. Wes Bredenhof, Mr. W. Oostdyk, Rev. D.G.A. Agema, Mr. J.H. VanderWoude, Rev. W. denHollander, Mr. H. Sloots.  
Front row (l-r): Rev. W.W.J. Vanoene, Prof. Dr. J. DeJong, Prof. Dr. J. Faber, Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes, Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam, Prof. J.M. Batteau.

*J.M. Batteau, his wife Margreet and youngest daughter Saskia!*



*Kruisselbrink sisters.*



*Open House*



all the way from Owen Sound. The sisters, Rebecca and Richelle (with Renee as page turner) did a wonderful job and we are grateful for their participation in our program.

### **The Open House**

On Saturday September 9 our festivities continued with an Open House which was held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The official ribbon cutting ceremony took place at 11:00 a.m., with our librarian Margaret VanderVelde doing the honours along with the emeritus librarian Dr. J. Faber. At the ceremony a few words were spoken by the chairman of the Board of Governors, the principal and the former principal and first librarian, Dr. J. Faber. A brief congratulatory address was also given by br. Dick Pot, representing the Australian sister churches, who were participants in our fund raising drive. His address is also found elsewhere in this issue.


Our guests then had the opportunity to tour our renovated building and especially the new addition. Several peo-

ple from the surrounding neighbourhood also dropped in to view the premises and extend their congratulations. A lot of work was done by all the trades, both in and around the building, in order to get us looking our best for this day. A big thank you to all who participated in one way or another to make this day a success! And thanks to those who dropped in to see us. It was a memorable day!

### **The new term**

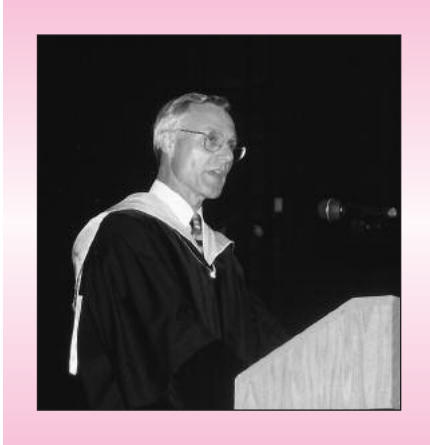
At the College evening we were able to introduce the guest lecturer filling in for Dr. N. H. Gootjes during the period of his sabbatical. Drs. J.M. Batteau is currently minister of the church at Wageningen, Holland. He was born in New York, grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, took his undergraduate training at Harvard University, and later enrolled in the M. Div. program at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He was on his way to pursue further studies in Germany, but while visiting Holland he happened to

meet a Dutch girl of Reformed background . . . and so ended up staying in Holland. He attended the Free University in Amsterdam, then transferred to the Theological University in Kampen, where he obtained his "doctorandus" degree in theology in 1978. He taught dogmatics at Pusan University, Korea for eight years, where he was a colleague of Dr. Gootjes. Rev. and Mrs. Batteau have four children, the youngest of whom came with them for their stay in Canada.

We welcome Rev. Batteau to the teaching duties at the Theological College and we wish him a fruitful and rewarding stay in our midst. May God continue to guide and bless the work of the College in the year to come. We are thankful for the many tokens of support we have received, and above all for your prayers through which the work of the seminary is brought before the throne of grace in heaven. We rely in God's strength daily, and with his promise we may look forward to a blessed new season of study and work. 

By Dr. J. De Jong

# Principal's Report



Having come to the end of my first year as principal of the College, it is with thankfulness to God that I may report on a successful and fruitful academic year. The Lord blessed the teaching staff and students with health and strength so that the work could be done, and it is also gratifying to report that the students generally did very well in their studies, and kept up a good spirit of teamwork and friendship throughout the year.

We had an exciting year especially with regard to all kinds of activities going on in and around the premises, all for the work of the new library. In this, too, we give thanks to God who permitted this project to come to a good completion. We owe our gratitude to the contractors, Gary Aikema and his associate Henk Van Halen, as well as all their assistants for making this project a huge success. Our special thanks to the Building Committee members Bill Oostdyk and John VanderWoude, who kept a close watch on the progress of the project, and did a lot of leg work to keep it moving. Special thanks also to our staff members Catharine Mechelse and Margaret VanderVelde, who put in many extra hours towards this project.

## Students

Five students graduated at our convocation last year for the M. Div. degree, and one student received the Diploma of Theology. The five were: Frank Dong,

Peter Holtvluwer, John Koopman, Ted Van Raalte and Ken Wieske. Darlene VanderPol, who became Mrs. Darlene Smith, obtained the Diploma of Theology. She currently works at the Anchor Home for the Handicapped, and hopes to get into teaching.

One student will graduate tonight, Wes Bredenhof. He started with a larger class, but ended up on his own, a persevering warrior! He has continued to develop his interests in mission, and we are confident he will be enriched and enrich others through this work. May God bless his plans!

We may announce the arrival of quite a group of new students: Mr. Steve Bisschop of Langley, B.C., Mr. Reuben Bredenhof, originally from Cloverdale, B.C., Mr. Albert Gootjes of Hamilton, a student with a familiar last name around our halls, Mr. Pila Njuka from the Reformed Churches of Indonesia, and Mr. Ian Wildeboer, originally from Grand Valley, Ontario.

## The academic year

The year opened with our annual convocation last September, in which Dr. N. H. Gootjes gave an address on the "Promise of the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup> The following Monday the staff met our freshman students for an orientation, and on the following Tuesday it was down to work with the full team of staff and students. It was a pleasure to welcome colleague J. Geertsema back to teaching after his six-month sabbatical. He is currently working on a commentary on the letter to the Hebrews as a part of his sabbatical project. Meanwhile, Dr. N.H. Gootjes has begun his sabbatical period, which runs until the end of the year. Replacing him in the Dogmatology department is Rev. J. M. Batteau, a minister with an American background who served with colleague Gootjes in Korea for ten years, and now is the minister of the Reformed church in Wageningen, Holland. We welcome him and his wife Margreet and their daughter Saskia! We hope that they will feel at home in our midst, and enjoy their stay among us.

Professor Geertsema also visited the churches in British Columbia last June, delivering a speech on "Jesus Christ Redeems Creation." He reported that he was able to meet many familiar faces throughout the trip, and that much appreciation was expressed for his address. We are thankful that in this way, too, the bond between the College and the churches may be strengthened.

On Tuesday October 5, 1999, Prof. C. Trimp, emeritus professor of diaconology at our sister institution in Kampen, gave a talk entitled: "The relationship between the written and the spoken word." With our emeritus Dr. J. Faber serving as translator, the presentation moved along very smoothly, and despite his age the speaker was able to tackle a number of questions with zeal and vigour.

On Friday, January 10, Dr. C. Van Dam gave a slide presentation to the College community concerning his trip "down under." It was an enjoyable evening, which even attracted a few native Australians who saw some new and interesting dimensions of their country! Colleague Van Dam's lectures in Australia are being published, and will appear in print this year D.V.<sup>2</sup> Dr. J. De Jong was also able to supplement the publication of Rev. H. Scholten's *Church History Notes* (for in house use), which appeared in 1997, with his *Church Polity Workbook*. Dr. De Jong published one of his speeches for the Ministers' Conference in *Koinonia*, entitled "The Experiential Aspect in the Preaching."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Van Dam also published one of his Convocation addresses in a more extended version in the same journal, the speech of 1997 entitled "God With Us: The Gospel of the Holy of Holies."<sup>4</sup>

Dr. J. Faber, our emeritus professor of Dogmatics, still enjoys good health. On January 3, 2000, he opened the second semester of classes with a guest lecture on "The Church in Calvin's *Institutes*."

The colleagues in active service were able to continue their lectures unhindered, and also filled a number of speaking engagements for the surrounding churches. Colleague Van Dam





*Mr. and Mrs. Wes Bredenhof and Mr. L. Bredenhof.*

addressed the Ministers' Conference in May with a speech entitled "The Golden Calf."

On April 28, 2000 we received a visit from Dr. L. J. Joosse, and br. C. A. Folkerts, representatives of the Deputies for the International Reformed Theological Training, a school set up by our Dutch sister churches both for the training of missionaries and indigenous mission workers. Discussions were held concerning our program in Missiology and how it compares with the work of the IRTT. It is important for us to keep abreast of the many changes that are taking place in the area of missions and missions training in our time, and this was an excellent opportunity to hear about the work of the IRTT.

During the month of April Dr. F. G. Oosterhoff taught a unit in Church History on the background ideas to the Enlightenment. It's always a pleasure to welcome her to the College, and the students are always amazed at how much ground she can cover in a short space of time. It doesn't take her long to size up the students and put them to their paces. Judging by some of their reactions around exam time, I would say: she gives them a good run for their money!

### **The library**

Perhaps the most talked about project around our facility this year was the library expansion. What a lot of time and effort went into this project! Once again we may heartily thank all those involved in making this new facility a

reality. And a special word of thanks to the many volunteers that came in to help us move the books. With most of the students gone for the summer, and with the ladies urging us to have the books moved, I can tell you that for my colleagues and me these volunteers were a very welcome sight. We are very happy with the result! Not only has it provided a larger facility for our books and information resources – something which our librarian, Ms. VanderVelde was eagerly looking forward to – but we also have a new and bigger room for sermon sessions (the old library room), and a few new offices, as well as a faculty lounge. In every way our working environment has been enhanced! I think the ladies working at the College will be especially grateful, since they have been sharing some fairly cramped office space for a long time. Now they will each be able to regulate the temperature in their own offices, with the result that they no longer need settle for the (sometimes less than) happy medium. Thank you again to all the regular volunteers who assist in administering circulation and processing of library materials.

### **Pastoral training**

On October 28, 1999 Rev. J. De Gelder, the coordinator of the Pastoral Training Program, visited us and met with our first year students, introducing them to the various components of the work of ministry in a congregation. Rev. De Gelder managed to line up a number of our second year students with

mentors for their one week in house training. So far we have received very positive feedback from our students and former students concerning this new program at the College. We owe a word of thanks to those churches and ministers in the federation who have helped out in guiding and monitoring students and interns with regard to their preaching and pastoral work. Most of the church officers with whom I have spoken regarding this program find that it is a good exercise for them too! We are also grateful for the regular feedback students receive from consistories with regard to their speaking an edifying word. This, too, represents extra time and effort for the churches involved, but the responses has been very helpful for the students, and the cooperation of the churches is appreciated.

### **Future planning**

Much time is being taken up at the meetings of Senate with regard to our development as a theological school. As you will have noticed from the published reports of the meetings of the Board of Governors, issues like accreditation and the expansion of our programs are being discussed. We are also giving attention to putting more weight on courses in pastoral care. All this stems from our basic commitment to provide a confessionally sound training with the best academic standards possible. In this process the input and advice of peers from other backgrounds and traditions can be very helpful. Our hope and prayer is that God may continue to grant the means so that the College can be a useful instrument for the churches and for his kingdom for many years to come.

### **Conclusion**

God has been good to us in allowing us to carry on with the work of the College for another year. We are grateful for your prayers and support. Currently we are looking forward to a new academic year with quite a group of first year students! May the Lord continue to bless the College and the churches, and may the work here be done in submission to the advance of his kingdom in this country and in the world.

<sup>1</sup>See *Clarion*, Vol. 48 (1999) 468-470.

<sup>2</sup>The lectures will appear shortly as: C. Van Dam, *Perspectives on Worship, Law and Faith. The Old Testament Speaks Today* (Pro Ecclesia, Perth, 2000).

<sup>3</sup>See *Koinonia*, Vol. 18.1 (Spring 1999).

<sup>4</sup>See *Koinonia*, Vol. 18.2 (Fall 1999). C



By J. De Jong

## Preachers of the Cross The enduring heart of the Reformatory impulse<sup>1</sup>

Five hundred years ago a young boy in northern Germany ended up advancing his schooling at the Cloister of the Brethren for the Common Life in Magdeburg. A short five years later, he entered the University of Erfurt in Thuringa to take his Master of Arts degree. He was going to major in law, but a terrible thunderstorm which nearly killed him led him to knock on the door of the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt in 1505.<sup>2</sup> This was the beginning of a long process of inner struggle and turmoil which would boil over into a powerful movement sweeping not only Germany, but all of Europe. The winds of change were beginning to blow across the continent, and so forceful was that wind that nothing could stop it. It drove its way through the continent and left an unmeasurable impact: a divided Christendom, intensified religious conflict, the formation of the Reformed church and ultimately the penetration of the Reformed principles through all of life.

In Luther studies today, much attention is given to this period of turmoil and upheaval after 1509 that marked his early academic career. How did Luther come to a reformatory understanding? What happened in that period of eight years in Luther's life leading to the breakthrough of 1517? How did that period of inner turmoil become a catalyst through which winds of change would sweep across the continent and later take on the whole world?

In this address we cannot examine all the issues surrounding this fascinating period in Luther's life. We barely have time to consider one facet of the problem, and so uncover what the central issue was. We propose to take one moment at the end point of the struggle and use it as a window to isolate some salient features of this period of inner turmoil and strife in Luther's life. By looking through this window we want to isolate the heart of Luther's spiritual

journey from Erfurt to Wittenberg. It is that heart or kernel that we want to take with us as we stand before a new millennium and meet the challenges posed by an ever changing world.

*The winds of change  
were beginning to blow  
across the continent.*

### The Heidelberg disputation

The window through which we wish to look is connected to a city whose name is very familiar to Reformed people of our background, including our young people, and that is the beautiful and captivating city of Heidelberg. In 1518, six months after the famous posting of the 95 theses, Luther took part in a scholastic debate in Heidelberg, and his contribution to that debate has been recorded in a document called Theses at the Heidelberg Disputation.<sup>3</sup> At this point Luther is strongly convinced of his new position. By this time the new theology has crystallized in his mind, and he has become very confident and bold concerning his stand. He is still a monk in the undivided church, the disputation is one among brothers of his order, the Order of the Augustinian Hermits, and at this point he is simply a fiery spokesman for reform.<sup>4</sup> Little did he know that there was much more to follow!

*The cross that is our  
theology.*

Let's review these theses to see the point to which Luther had come in 1518. There are twenty-eight theological theses in all, and they can be divided into four sections.<sup>5</sup> The first section deals with the relationship between

works and merits, a recurring subject for Luther. These theses (1-12) stress that works cannot earn or merit salvation at all, since even our best works are clothed and defiled with sin. Already at this point Luther introduces a special concept: the fear of the LORD. Only works done in the fear of the Lord prevent them from being in themselves mortal sins making the sinner worthy of condemnation.

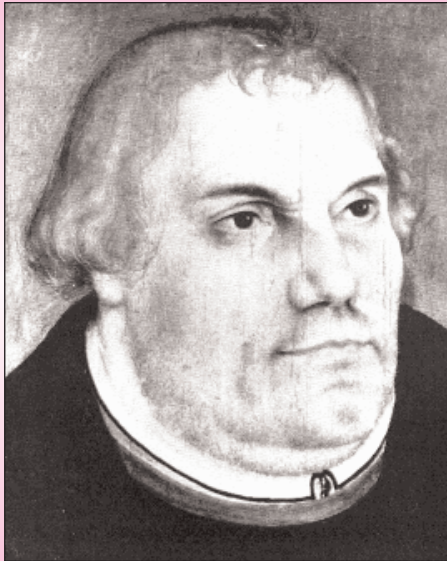
The second block of theses (13-18), looks at the same matter from another angle, that of our will in relation to God's salvation. Here a theme arises to which Luther had alluded in his famous 95 theses. The human will is not free in itself to choose the good, but must be acted upon in order to do what is right. And that is entirely God's work!

The third section of theses (19-24), one to which I will return, is the most intriguing and the most discussed section of the piece. The theses here concern the way God appears in the world and how He does his work in people. In working his special works, God appears in the form of his opposite. That is one of the features of his act of revelation. He is the all powerful God! But in making Himself known to people, He chooses the road of weakness and humility. He uses the means of foolishness and suffering to show his real heart.

Then we have a fourth section (25-28), a sort of summary, which puts all the emphasis on grace alone, and says that in effect all our salvation and our works lie in God. He is the first and the last in human life. Whatever good we find in the world, it all comes from Him. Grace comes before law!

### Heidelberg and Wittenberg

If we compare the theses of the Heidelberg Disputation with the more well-known 95 theses published in 1517, we find points of similarity and points of difference. The similarity is of course



Martin Luther.

readily seen in the form of the address. Luther is a monk, a professor of Bible and he behaves in the way university lecturers did in those days. If one wished to publicize a certain point of view it was presented in the form of theses. As far as the content is concerned there are also points of overlap. The Wittenberg theses dealt with works and the value of works as well. In Wittenberg Luther said: indulgences cannot save you. In Heidelberg his vision is broader: works cannot save you. But the root idea was the same. Before works we must tremble in fear and trust before the one, living God.

But there are also noted differences between the two sets of theses. The Heidelberg Disputation is especially unique in the third section which speaks about the way God works his salvation in us. God appears to us in hu-

mility, weakness, and in suffering. Thesis 19 says: "That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who claims to see the invisible things of God by perceiving things in the world." That is the negative thesis. Then follows the positive one, Thesis 20, which says: "That person deserves to be called a theologian who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God through suffering and the cross."<sup>6</sup> Essentially Luther is saying: in the works about which people normally boast, in the collective dominating presence of human achievement as it shown in the great basilicas and cathedrals, there you do not find God. Rather, in way of suffering you find God, since that's the way He Himself appears in this world.

Several of the theses of this section, including the two I have quoted, would sound quite paradoxical in our ears,

and we would probably wonder what exactly Luther meant by them. They deftly jump back and forth with contrasting statements and then end up in a fiery declaration: "The love of God does not first discover but creates what is pleasing to it." You could summarize it all with a recurring phrase of Luther, often used precisely in this period: "The cross, the cross that is our theology."<sup>7</sup> There is no true theology other than the theology of the cross.

<sup>1</sup>Text of an address given at the 26th Convocation of the Theological College, September 8, 2000.


<sup>2</sup>On the effect of the thunderstorm see H. Veldman, "Het onweer bij Stotternheim: Luthers eerste keerpunt!" *De Reformatie* Vol 74, No. 5 (October 31, 1998) 99-102.

<sup>3</sup>For the Latin original see *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Weimarer Ausgabe]* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883-) [hereafter WA] 1, 353-365.

<sup>4</sup>This was a general meeting of the Augustinian Order, one which Luther was obligated to attend, cf. W. Von Loenwich, *Martin Luther. The Man and His Work* (Translated by Lawrence W. Denef), Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), 121.

<sup>5</sup>Here I follow the analysis of G.O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross. Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1997) 20f.

<sup>6</sup>The Latin text, which includes a play on words hard to bring out in the English, uses the word *posteriora* for "manifest things," that is, the "hinder parts" of God with an allusion to Exodus 33:18-23. For Luther, man could only approach God through the avenue of his "back side" or "hinder parts," that is through his self-revelation in the form of a Servant, the Babe in the manger, the wounded One on the cross, cf. WA 1, 362.

<sup>7</sup>CRUX sola est nostra Theologia!" Cf. WA 5, 176. 





# Presentation of the key to the new library

By Bill Oostdyk

**Mr. Chairman, members of the Board of Governors and faculty, brothers and sisters,**

Tonight we may mark the successful completion of a project started quite a number of years ago. General Synod Abbotsford 1995 had on its table a report from the Board of Governors proposing the addition of a new library. This report was sent back to the board, with the request for more detail, as well as a proposal for a financial plan which would not overburden the churches due to increased assessments.

General Synod Fergus 1998 again saw a similar proposal on its agenda, this time with the requested detail and rationale. It was proposed that the required capital be obtained via a fund raising campaign, with the stipulation that commitments for at least 80% of the needed funds should be in place before construction could begin.

This proposal was well accepted by the churches, and Synod instructed the Board of Governors to proceed as proposed. Now you know that a general synod ceases to exist when it has completed its agenda. However it seems that this synod wanted to keep a hand in developments because not only did it instruct the governors to proceed, but it appointed two of its delegates to the finance and property branch of the Board of Governors. These appointees were Bill Smouter and yours truly. Subsequently, in its June 1998 meeting, the Finance and Property committee decided to make it a "double bill feature" by appointing Bill Smouter to head up the fund raising committee, and Bill Oostdyk to head up the building committee. One can't help but wonder if perhaps there wasn't a little conspiracy. But it seems that synod knew what

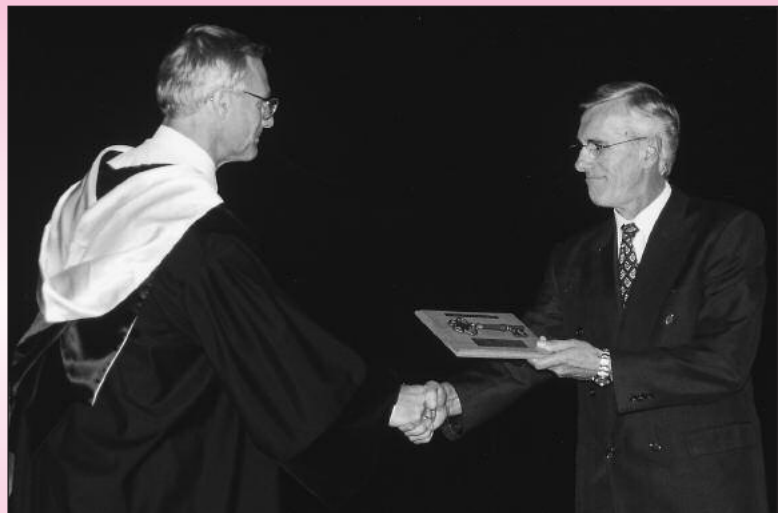
it was doing, considering that the efforts of the fund raising committee were richly blessed in that by March 1999, the required 80% of the funds were in place, growing to 100% by the end of that summer.

Upon recommendation of the building committee, the firm of G. L. Heeringa was appointed as our architect, and the process of detailed design was begun in the fall of 1998. However, due to numerous time consuming delays, a building permit was not obtained until November of 1999. Meanwhile a number of contractors were invited to submit prices, and we were most grateful when several of the bids were well within our budget. The successful bidder, Shelterclad Construction, was found willing and able to start before winter even though much of the prime season for construction had passed. Thus it was that on No-

vember 4th of last year we could begin with a sod turning ceremony.

It is interesting to note that General Synod in its considerations made this statement: "Implementation of this proposal will necessarily encounter many unforeseen circumstances and the Board of Governors must have the authority to modify the plan and its implementation provided that such modification or alteration is not materially or substantially different than the recommended plan."

Well, once again it appeared that this synod knew its stuff. Unforeseen circumstances arose right from the word go. At the sod turning ceremony, Dr. J. Faber was asked to do the honours. We got him all set up with a hard hat and a shiny new shovel. When it was time, he bravely buried the shovel into the ground, and was about to lift the first ground, when the first unforeseen oc-



*Presentation of the key to Dr. J. DeJong.*

curred. That sod must have come from VanderWoude's sod farm because it was obviously not going to roll over without a struggle. We all held our breath for a moment, wondering whether the sod would come out or whether his feet would come up. What would it be? De sod – or – de-feet? I'm happy to be able to tell you that Dr. Faber, not to be de-feeted, stood his ground, and the sod came out after a brief struggle. However, it was clear to us that excavation was simply going to take too long this way. So we decided to forego the potential savings, and we called in heavy equipment.

Several days later as the excavation got under way in earnest, I received a frantic call from the site. "We struck oil." You would think with that kind of news one would expect a response of something like "break out the champagne and let's celebrate. We'll be able to afford more books than they'll know what to do with." But there was a problem, you see. We are a not-for-profit organization so we can't be in the business of making money. But not to worry Mr. Chairman, we managed to extract the oil without showing a profit. In fact, just to be on the safe side, we spent a little money in doing so. For those of you who don't know, we hit an old oil tank and thus we were faced with an environmental cleanup. From then on, the unforeseen notwithstanding, the project proceeded nicely, and in June, with the help of a number of volunteers we were able to start moving in the shelving and books.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize some of the people involved in the project. First there is the building committee. Initially only John Vander-


Woude and myself were appointed to this committee, with the request to expand the committee by finding several volunteers. I'm sure everyone realizes that manpower is not easy to find due to the many demands for time within our community. After some head scratching initially, an idea came to us. Why not use some woman power instead? And who better than our librarian, Margaret VanderVelde, and our administrative assistant, Catharine Mechelse? That turned out to be the best thing we ever did. Obviously they had every reason to be motivated since they would be working within new facility. It also provided us with full-time on-site representation. And believe me, nothing, and I mean nothing, escaped their attention. Thus these two ladies who by now would surprise you with their knowledge of construction, and John VanderWoude, became my co-workers in the committee. Now contrary to popular belief that John is a man who lets grass grow under his feet, I can assure you it's not true. John worked as hard as anybody to keep the project moving. So Margaret, Catharine, and John, thank you for the dedication, co-operation, and good harmony within our committee.

Then I would like to express appreciation to our architect, Mr. Gerry Heeringa, for his professional input and guidance throughout our project. Next I wish to thank our contractor Mr. Gary Aikema and his right hand man Mr. Hank van Halen for a job well done. Thank you for completing the project ahead of schedule, and for all your help in dealing with many unforeseen situations. I'm sure that anyone looking around the facility will agree that everything is done in a workmanship like

manner. Last but not least, I wish to thank the faculty and students for their patience during the noise, dust and inconvenience of construction. Not once did I hear a complaint, and I'm sure that along with us you constantly "looked beyond" by visualizing the end result.

With gratitude to our heavenly Father we can inform you that we were able to construct the new library, renovate and spruce up much of the existing building, as well as purchase the necessary furnishings, all within the limits of the funds available.

And so Mr. Chairman, I have one last duty to perform by presenting the customary key, symbolizing the completion of our mandate. You will see right away that the key I have here could only be symbolic because you will not find a lock anywhere which will accept this key. However, we hope that it will nevertheless be functional as a display somewhere in the new library. There are several inscriptions on the plaque. One reads, "presented by the building committee on the occasion of the completion of the newly constructed library, September 7, 2000." The other is a quotation from Psalm 119, the same Psalm from which are taken the words on the cornerstone of the new building which read, "Your word is my light." Continuing then in this light, the words on this plaque are, "The unfolding of your words brings light" (Ps 119:130). It is our hope and prayer that this expanded facility may serve well to prepare men to unfold, or as we could also say, to explain the Word of God.

Mr. Principal, please come forward to accept this key. 





# Presentation of the Women's Savings Action at the College evening

September 8, 2000

Mr. President, Members of the Board and Faculty, Graduate,  
Brothers and Sisters

This first College Evening of the new millennium  
We stand once again on this podium  
On behalf of the Women's Saving Action a few words to say  
As we gather here on this festive day.

During this past year much has taken place  
All of it under God's goodness and grace.  
We share in the joy that a new library could be built  
And that many years of planning could be fulfilled.

Funds were raised in an expansion drive  
Generous donations at the College did arrive.  
As Women's Savings Action we also did our part  
So that the construction could really start.

At the sod turning Dr. Faber put a shovel in the grass  
Eye witnesses report he turned it over with class.  
Next on the agenda was digging the hole  
Big equipment arrived and things started to roll.

First the foundations were laid  
Careful attention to every detail was paid.  
Foundations must always be solid and firm  
In whatever we do, we would all confirm.

Under the watchful eye of the College community  
The blueprints gradually develop into reality.  
Each trade in turn does its part  
Making it fit together is quite an art.

The bricklayers finish off the outside  
Others do the finishing touches inside.  
The big day arrives the librarian has been preparing for  
To move the books to the new facility next door.

While the library was under construction  
We as women of the Women's Savings Action  
Were also busy with the work of building  
By funds for the purchase of books providing.

For what would a library building be without books  
At the College no one our important role overlooks  
We continue a work we have done for many a year  
A construction project which to us is very dear.

For what would the Theological College be without a library  
And keeping it up to date and relevant is most necessary  
As Women's Savings Action we clearly the need do see  
For that reason we gladly give of our time and energy.



*Dr. J. De Jong with Mrs. Van Dam and Mrs. Zeitsma*


Under God's blessing the library has continued to grow  
Since it started humbly on Queen Street many years ago.  
The library may grow, but one thing remains the same  
We know that all honour must be shown to God's holy Name.

That is why the foundation of the library  
On the cornerstone you will see  
From Psalm 119 it is quoted "Your Word is my Light"  
That indeed we must always keep in sight.

This past year the work of the Women's Savings Action  
Under the blessing of the Lord could go on its usual fashion.  
Also in our building project many are involved  
Without your participation the whole venture would be dissolved.

Across this beautiful land and even beyond many did save  
For the library of the Theological College they joyfully gave.  
The representatives and their teams faithfully did collect  
All worked hard on this most worthwhile project.

We want to thank you all from the heart  
That once again you have done your part.  
A total of \$27,081.41 did come in  
How richly God has blessed us again.

Mr. Principal, we congratulate you with the new library facility  
In this God's gracious provision for the College we may see.  
And now on behalf of the Women's Savings Action we pledge  
\$25,000 for the library of the Theological College.  
May our heavenly Father bless you richly in the new school year  
May his love and guidance always all of you be near. 



# Speech of Australian delegate at the Convocation of the Theological College

By A. Van Leeuwen



Mr. A. Van Leeuwen

Esteemed Board of Governors, Faculty, Students, Distinguished Guests, Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

On behalf of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, I wish to thank you for the generous invitation which the Board of Governors extended to us to be present at the opening of the College's new library and so for the convocation also.

We share in the abundant joy you have at this time and we wish to join with you in thanking the Lord of lords for his mercy in that the much needed expansion of the College building may now be a reality. It is our hope and prayer that the new building may amply

serve the purpose for which God created it, namely, that his kingdom is made to come and his Name is glorified through the use of the College building.

You will be aware that the ten churches forming the bond of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia are currently served by nine ministers, six of whom are graduates of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches. So you see that in them we reap fruits of the labours performed at this College, and we thank God for these ministers.


You will also be aware that we have readily sent a good number of

young men from our midst, I believe the number is ten, to study at this College. True, the distance is geographically about as far away as one can get on this globe. It is that reality that prompts some desire in our midst and which led Synod of our churches in their meeting this year, to charge deputies to investigate our own Training for the Ministry in Australia.

But that, as we do say in Australia, is a pipe dream for now. Cheerfully and eagerly, we continue to look on the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton as "our" Theological College. Be assured that we remember you in our prayers, and readily apportion a part of God's material blessings upon us for the support of the College in Hamilton.

Brothers and Sisters, you will agree with me that foreign representatives come and go, and with their departure they are easily forgotten. Whilst that is quite okay as far as my person is concerned, it is much more preferable that you do not forget the Australian churches.

For that reason, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia would have liked to present you with an assortment of pipes for your future chapel organ. But, for more practical reasons, it is my pleasure to present you with a cheque for \$3000 (Can) for the Organ Fund. May that then serve as a small reminder of your sister churches Down Under.

We pray that the work at the College may continue in faithfulness to God's holy Word; that many more men may be trained to serve the holy, catholic church joined and united with heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power faith. 

# Speech of Australian delegate at the official opening of the Theological College library

By R. Pot

Mr. Chairman, brothers of the Board of Governors, members of the faculty, students, brothers and sisters:

Australia, being the smallest of continents in the world which is also a country, is at the same time the one and only country which makes up that smallest continent. It is the only nation that began as a prison.

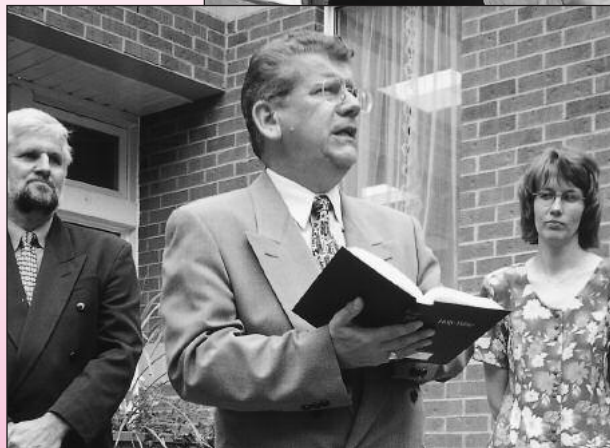
Since we live and work there, and have come from that small continent, I trust that you don't take it ill of me, that my contribution here this morning is but small as well. Furthermore, as I have not graduated from this college, I hope that you are not expecting a theme with two or three points either.

On a more serious note: my wife Lucie and I are very grateful and honoured to be here this morning on the occasion of the official opening of your upgraded facilities. I was also privileged to be involved in the fund raising activities among the Australian sister churches. I don't mind conceding that at some stage we had serious doubts in even coming close to the amount targeted.

However, despite our doubt and pessimism to reach that target, we may acknowledge the hand of the Lord, who opened the hearts and the wallets of many of his people in Canada and Australia who willingly and generously contributed so that the target could be met.

On behalf of the Australian Churches, I may offer our sincere congratulations with these excellent upgraded facilities. Comparing what we have seen this morning, with the cramped facilities we saw three years ago, then indeed the building

Mr. R. Pot and Dr. J. Visscher



committee and all those involved with this project are to be congratulated!

We in Australia are extremely grateful for your college. In fact we often refer to it as our college. The benefits are mutual as well as numerous. Not only can we send our Australian students to Hamilton for training in the ministry, our vacant churches can also call Canadian ministers who have had their training at this Theological College. In fact two thirds of the ministers presently serving the Australian churches, have graduated from this college. Be assured that we in Australia remember the college regu-

larly in our prayers, in the homes as well as in the churches on Sundays.

It is our prayer that the Board of Governors, the Principal and the other faculty members, support staff as well as the students, under the blessing of the Lord, who is the King of the church, may continue to work in good harmony for the benefit of the churches in many countries across the world. Moreover, that your work at this college may be for the furtherance of God's kingdom. To Him be the honour and glory, also for what we wit-





## Press Release of the Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches held on September 7, 2000

### Opening

Dr. J. Visscher opened the meeting with the reading of Ephesians 2:1-10 and led in prayer. All governors were present as well as the principal, Dr. J. De Jong. Dr. J. Visscher was reappointed as chairman of the board, Rev. R. Aasman was reappointed as vice-chairman, Rev. D. G. J. Agema was reappointed as secretary and brother H. J. Sloots was reappointed as treasurer. Minutes of the meetings held on September 9, 1999 and March 22, 2000 were approved.

### Report of Finance and Property Committee

A report was presented regarding the financial affairs and property of the Theological College. Financial statements and a budget for 2001 were approved. The assessment per communicant member will remain at \$63. The committee also presented a revised methodology for calculating the salary of the professors which will more accurately reflect the intent of the instructions of Synod 1986. A report on the new library indicated that the facilities are completed. The Finance and Property Committee expressed their approval and delight over the completed project. The committee is thanked for all their hard work.

### Reports to Lectures

Visits were made by governors to classes at the Theological College during the past year. One report was submitted by Rev. W. den Hollander and Rev. P. G. Feenstra. A second was submitted by Rev. R. Aasman and Rev. J. Moesker. These reports spoke very positively about the quality of teaching at our college. Visitors were appointed for the new academic year. For the fall classes, Rev. D. G. J. Agema and Rev. W. den Hollander were appointed. For the winter classes, Rev. J. Moesker and Dr. J. Visscher were appointed.

### Report of the Senate

The professors submitted outlines of the courses which they plan to teach

during the upcoming academic year. Dr. J. Faber has requested the board's consent of his resignation from the senate. This was granted. Deep appreciation was expressed for all that Dr. Faber has done for the college.

### Principal's Report

The principal's report (which would be read at the convocation and published in *Clarion*) was read and approved.

### Library Report

Thanks to the Women's Savings Action, the college was again able to purchase books and periodicals. Several substantial donations of books were also presented to the library. The new library has been completed and is functioning well. The governors took grateful note of this report.

### Registrar's Report

An update of the students at the college was presented to the Board of Governors. The following students were admitted to the first year of study after a successful interview with a professor and governor: Stephen Bisschop from the Church at Langley, B.C., Reuben Bredenhof from the Church at Hamilton, ON, Albert Gootjes from the Church at Ancaster, ON, Pila Njuka from the Church at Ancaster, ON (originally from Indonesia), and Ian Wildeboer from the Church at Hamilton, ON.

### Successor for Prof. J. Geertsema

In our previous press release, we reported that Prof. J. Geertsema was granted his request to retire as professor of New Testament by the end of the 2000/2001 academic year. A candidate to replace Prof. J. Geertsema was presented to the Board of Governors by the Senate. The board approved the candidate and will recommend his appointment to the next Synod. Until this is reported to Synod in May of 2001, this matter will remain confidential.

### Pastoral Proficiency Program

Rev. J. DeGelder submitted his report on the activities of the Pastoral Proficiency Program of which he is the coordinator. Based on this and previous reports, it was very clear that this program is most beneficial to the theology students. Since the program is still in its trial stage, the Board of Gover-

nors will probably wait for Synod 2004 to request that this program be made a permanent and compulsory part of the studies at our college.

### Master of Theology Program

It was decided that due to manpower it was not feasible to start a Master of Theology program at our college at this time.

### Accreditation

The senate was charged at the previous meeting to investigate the viability of accreditation by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Recognition by the ATS will allow degrees granted by our college to be recognized at other academic institutions. The report of the senate made clear that it was not viable to seek accreditation with ATS at this time. However, it became clear from studying the requirements of the ATS that our college is lacking in formal policies regarding such matters as sexual harassment, discrimination, dismissal, etc. A committee comprised of Rev. D. G. J. Agema, Dr. J. De Jong, W. Smouter (convenor) and M. Van der Velde was formed to prepare some policies.

### Diaconological Department

At the previous board meeting, the senate was asked to investigate the matter of increasing teaching time in the area of diaconological studies (Dr. J. De Jong's department) and adding a fifth professor. The latter was deemed infeasible. As to the former, the other departments will give up some time from their teaching to make this possible. Locally available expertise would also be invited to assist Dr. J. De Jong. One example would be Dr. F. G. Oosterhoff. This report was accepted by the board.

### Other Matters

The board agreed to a senate request to ask General Synod 2001 to appoint Margaret Van der Velde to the Committee for the Official Web-site of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The Property and Finance Committee will investigate the possibility of setting up a committee which will assist foreign students financially to be able to study at our college. The board accepted the nomination of a replacement governor in the Property and Finance Committee. The candidate's name will



be presented in a report to Synod 2001. Reports by Dr. N. H. Gootjes on his attendance of the Bingham Colloquium and by Dr. J. De Jong on the Open Book and Scholarship Conference were made to the board and gratefully received.

### Closing

The chairman, Dr. J. Visscher, pointed out that this might be the last official meeting which he and several other governors would be attending since their terms would expire at the next Synod. He thanked the brothers for good cooperation over the past nine years. The vice-chairman then thanked Dr. Visscher for his excellent leadership as chairman of the Board of Governors. The meeting was closed in a Christian manner.

*For the Board of Governors  
R. Aasman*

### Press Release of Classis Central Ontario, Sept. 15, 2000

#### Opening

On behalf of the convening church of Burlington Waterdown, Rev. G. Visscher opened the meeting in the usual Christian manner and welcomed the delegates.

#### Examination of Credentials

Fellowship church of Burlington reported on the credentials, which were found to be in good order. All the churches were lawfully presented.

#### Constitution of Classis

Classis was declared constituted and the following officers were appointed: Chairman: Rev. W. den Hollander; Vice-chairman: Rev. C. Bosch; Clerk: Rev. G. Nederveen.

#### Agenda

After some additions the agenda was adopted.

#### Reports

The following reports were presented:

- Burlington Fellowship – Church for the Inspection of the archives: The archives were found to be in good order.
- Burlington Waterdown – Church for Auditing the books of the classical treasurer: These books were found to be in good order.
- Flamborough – Church for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry: For the past year no needy student came forward with a request for financial assistance. Classis adopted Flamborough's recommendation that a Fund be established with a start-up amount

of \$ 2500.00 and that the churches be assessed \$ 2.00 per communicant member for 2001.

- Committee for Needy Churches. Classis approved the committee's recommendations re. Ottawa's request for assistance. Classis also decided, "in principle" to assess the churches \$ 19.00 per communicant member for 2001.
- Burlington Waterdown – Church for auditing of books of the Fund for needy Churches: The books were found to be in good order.
- The Financial Report from the Classical Treasurer. The assessment for the coming year was set at \$ 2.00 per communicant member. The assessment for Regional Synod is also \$ 2.00.

#### Question Period according to Article 44 C.O.

The chairman asked the churches the questions as stipulated in this article. Each of the churches answered in turn and none sought the help or judgement of classis.

#### Proposals or Instructions of the Churches

The "Bethel" Canadian Reformed Church of Toronto presented an overture recommending that:

- Classis support a proposal to enrich the Hymn section of the book of praise" with hymns that are suitable for special occasions such as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost, or with Hymns for special purposes such as doxology, offertory response, Baptism, Mission and the like."
- Classis "pursue this matter by submitting it to regional Synod East 2000 with the intention that Regional Synod may propose to general Synod 2001 to include this task of evaluation and scrutiny in the mandate of the Standing Committee of the Book of praise."
- That the SCBP "Receive submissions and proposals for additional Hymns from the churches with the reasons for their suitability . . ."

Classis adopted this proposal which will be sent to the convening church of regional Synod East 2000.

The church of Ottawa had an explicit instruction which asked that our relationship to the Free Church of Scotland be clarified seeing there is now also a Free Church Continuing. Classis advised to wait for the Report of Deputies for Contact with Churches Abroad to General Synod 2001.

#### Appointments

Classis made the following appointments:

- Convening church for next Classis - Flamborough ( Dec. 8, 2000, 9:00 a.m. in the Burlington Ebenezer church building.)
- Suggested officers for next classis: Chairman: Rev. M.R. Jagt; Vice-chairman: Rev. J. De Gelder; Clerk: Rev. W. den Hollander.
1. Committees or Deputies: Committee for examinations: Coordinators: C. Bosch and W. den Hollander; Exegesis Old Testament: G. Nederveen; Exegesis New Testament: G.H. Visscher; Knowledge of Scriptures: M.R. Jagt; Doctrine and Creeds: J. De Gelder; Church History: W. den Hollander; Ethics: M.R. Jagt; Church Polity: G. Nederveen; Diaconology: C. Bosch.  
2. Church Visitors: J. De Gelder, W. den Hollander, G. Nederveen  
3. Church for taking care of the archives: Burlington Ebenezer.  
4. Church to inspect the archives: Burlington Fellowship.  
5. Treasurer: J.J. Poort. Alternate: J. Dykstra  
6. Church to audit the books of the classical treasurer: Burlington-Waterdown.  
7. Church for financial aid to students of the ministry: Flamborough.  
8. Church for auditing the books of Fund Financial Aid to Students for the ministry: Burlington-Waterdown.  
9. Committee for needy churches: Fred Lodder ( treasurer); Barry Hordyk, Bill van Huisstede.  
10. Church to audit the books – Fund for Needy Churches: Burlington-Waterdown.  
11. Observes – Free Church of Scotland: G. Nederveen.

#### Delegates to Regional Synod of November 2000

Ministers: J. DeGelder, W. den Hollander, G.H. Visscher – alternates: C. Bosch, G. Nederveen, M.R. Jagt, in that order. Elders: L. Jagt, G.J. Nordeman, B. Poort – alternates: R. Jager, K. Veldkamp, A. Smouter, in that order.

#### Closing

Personal question period – was not made use of.

Censure according to Article 34 C.O. was not deemed necessary seeing the delegates' exemplary conduct.

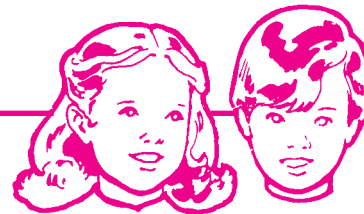
The Acts were read and adopted and the Press Release was read and approved.

Classis sang Hy. 34:1,2,5 and 6 and the chairman closed in prayer.

*For Classis Central  
C. Bosch , vice-chairman at that time*

# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



## Dear Busy Beavers

Do you know when Reformation Day is? Do you know what it is about? I suppose you will be learning about it in your classroom. Reformation Day is the day that a man by the name of Martin Luther nailed a piece of paper on the door of the church in Wittenberg, explaining to the people where the church was going wrong. The Lord had helped this man by opening his eyes and showing him where, from the Bible, the church leaders were leading the people astray, away from the Word of the Lord. The Great Reformation is an important day in our church history. If you don't learn about it at school, ask one of your parents or one of your grandparents. They will surely know.

Lots of love, Aunt Betty

## Bible Dreams

by Busy Beaver Jolene Wierenga

1. He dreamed of cows and corn (Gen 41:1-7).
2. He told his dream to his brothers (Gen 37:5).
3. He dreamed of a stairway in Bethel (Gen 28:12).



## CLARION

## ADVERTISEMENTS

### Births

Praising God from whom all blessings flow, we joyfully announce the safe arrival of our daughter

**DELANEY DENISE DEBOER**

Born September 13, 2000

A sister for *Veronica, Edward and Luke*

**Bruce and Helena DeBoer**

8 Gallacher Avenue, Richmond Hill, ON L4E 2W9

We thank the Lord for the precious gift He has entrusted into our care, our daughter and sister

**LEAH JOLENE**

Born August 4, 2000

**John and Joanne Hutten**

*Dustin, Shawn, Brittany, Jesse, Allen, Christina and Michaela*

## FLOWERS

by Busy Beaver *Shawna Bethlehem*

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

**FIND:**

Rhododendron	Daffodil	Spirea
Shooting Star	Viburnum	Daisy
Buttercup	Lupine	Poppy
Geranium	Prairie Rose	Iris
Lilac	Fireweed	Violet
Bluebell	Dogwood	

The Lord has richly blessed our family with the birth of another daughter

**NATASHA TAMARA**

Born August 27, 2000

**Albert and Tammy Meinen (nee DeJonge)**

*Nicole, Alexandria, Chelsea*

12th grandchild for Pete and Willy DeJonge of Chatham, Ontario

13th grandchild for Kina Meinen of London, Ontario

839 Viscount Road, London, ON N6J 2C7

Rejoicing in the LORD, we wish to announce the birth of

**DAMON DANIEL**

Born September 16, 2000

A brother for *Ruby, Cory, Robyn, Dustin*

**Proud parents Dan and Dorothy Flokstra (nee deLeeuw)**

*Psalm 126 verse 1(Book of Praise) The LORD has done great things for us; With joy and thanks His Name we bless.*

1319 - 248 Street, Aldergrove, BC V4W 2B9