




Clarion

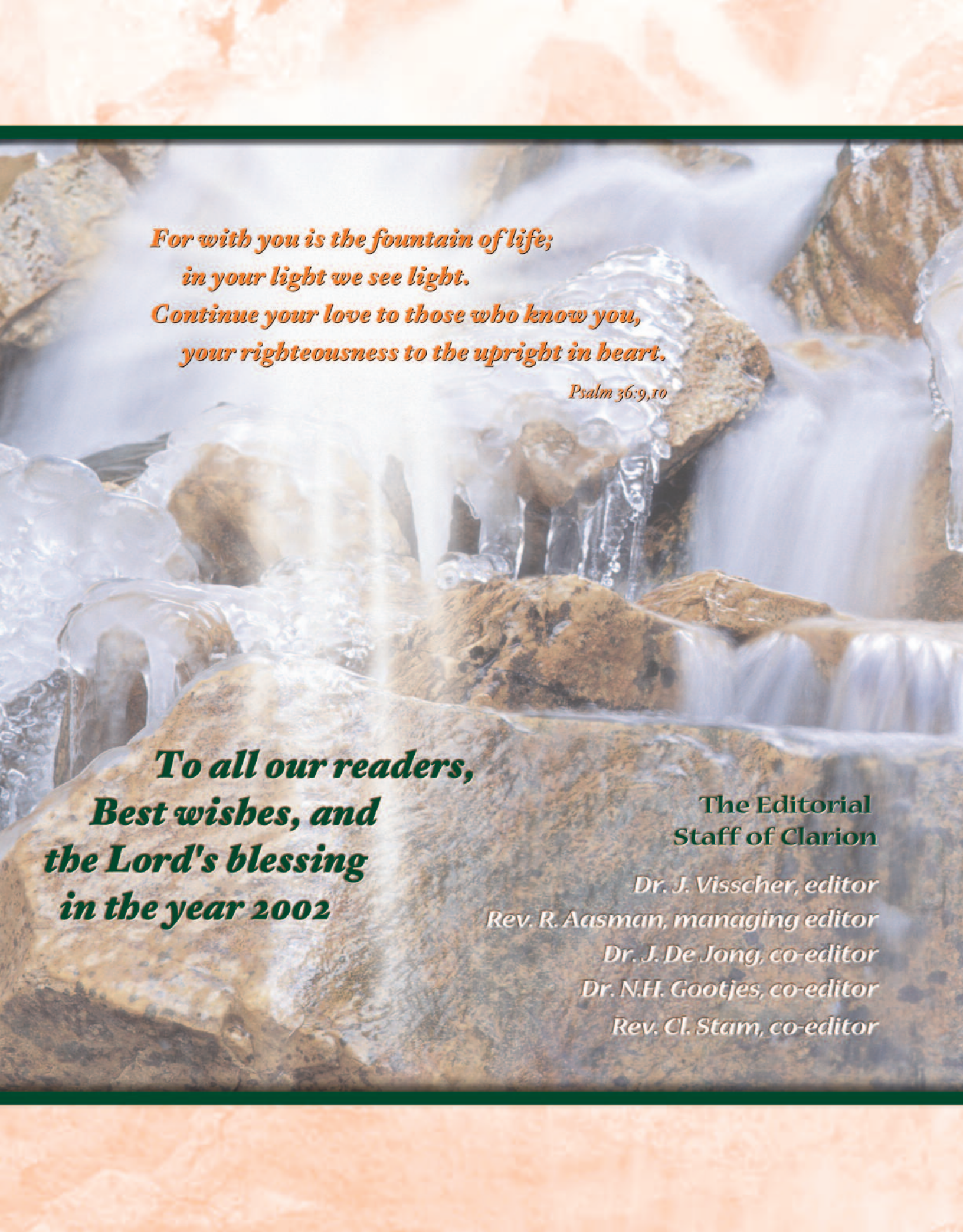
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE



*The LORD will write in the
register of the peoples:
"This one was born
in Zion."*

*As they make music
they will sing,
"All my fountains
are in you."*

Psalm 87:6,7



*For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.
Continue your love to those who know you,
your righteousness to the upright in heart.*

Psalm 36:9,10

***To all our readers,
Best wishes, and
the Lord's blessing
in the year 2002***

**The Editorial
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From the One Year to the Next

by N.H. Gootjes

Looking back

Looking back at the events of the past year, the one event overshadowing everything else is the brutal attack on America on September 11. For many, the pictures seen on that day are etched into their memory. First came the shocking news that a plane had flown into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York. Almost twenty minutes later, another hijacked plane flew into the South Tower. It was launched into the building with the deliberate intention to cause maximum damage. None of the passengers on board of these planes survived the crash. Many people working in the buildings were killed instantly. When both towers collapsed nearly two hours later, almost all those who were still inside were killed, including the firefighters who had entered the building to rescue the survivors. The latest estimate is that at least 3000 people died.

This was followed by news of another crash. A third hijacked plane slammed into the north side of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Again, all passengers on board lost their lives. One side of the building collapsed, killing many more people. A fourth plane was diverted from its original route to San Francisco. It did not smash into a building, probably as the result of several people on board rushing to the front of the plane to take control of it. They lost their lives, but prevented another massacre.

As if these disasters were not enough, at roughly the same time someone spread the anthrax virus through the mail. This appears to be an attack directed at the Senate of the United States. Several people who came into contact with the virus died and the work of the Senate was seriously hampered. At the time of this writing, the persons behind this attack on the government have not yet been unmasked. This attack on its government was potentially as dangerous for the nation as the attack on its economic centre.

Evil looms large when we look back on the year past. We wonder how someone could conceive such evil schemes. These disasters were not the result of sudden eruptions of anger. The preparations must have begun long ago. In both cases, the actual implementation was carefully carried out, and with merciless precision. Even now, when the shock has worn off and a war is fought against the Taliban in Afghanistan, the question remains how such events can happen. How could anyone conceive such horrendous plans, let alone have the heart to realize them?

At the bottom of all this is our sinfulness. Paul spoke about this in his letter to the congregation at Rome. He refers there to Gentiles who do not want to recognize God. They come to all kinds of sins. Among the evil deeds they do,

Paul includes: "They invent ways of doing evil" (Rom 1:30). That is what we saw in the use of planes as weapons. Osama bin Laden and his associates worked out this scheme to cripple Western civilization by striking at its very heart, which is its financial centre. In order to reduce the worldwide domination of American culture with its immorality, they felt justified to suddenly attack it where it was not defended. And something similar can be said about the spread of the anthrax virus. The perpetrator(s) will have reasons for this sneaky attack to immobilize the Senate, and came up with a new way of attacking the

government via the mail, a necessary lifeline with the American people.

Looking back at the year past does not fill us with pride and optimism about our world.

Looking forward

Regardless, the new year will be brought in. Champagne will boost the merriness at parties, people everywhere in the world will wish each other a happy New Year and the ball may even drop again in New York. But there is no



*Evil looms large
when we look
back on the
year past.*



*Our portion
is the triune
God.*

solid basis for this optimism. Peace and prosperity are unstable commodities. We may enjoy them in the coming year, but it is also possible we will lose them.

What do we expect for the coming year? If we look for a growing economy, we may be disappointed. If we want a safe and healthy life, no one can guarantee us that we will receive this. There is only one thing stable: the gracious gifts of God. These are not dependent on men.

That was already confessed in the *Lamentations* which speaks about a man who had experienced adversity and felt depressed. But the man knew that there was one thing which could not be taken away from him: the proofs of God's compassion. These are visible every day (Lam 3:22, 23). He

expresses the basis of his conviction when he says: "The Lord is my portion."

This is a profound statement because his life did not exactly show that God was with him. Many things had been taken from him, from his health to his prosperity (Lam 3:4, 17). He recognized in all the disasters the hand of God who robbed him of the good life he had. One thing is left to him: God himself. He may no longer have a field to call his own, or his own home, but God is his inheritance (Lam 3:24). God is his God. And he knows that God is good.

In the New Testament, this is repeated and expanded in the promise at baptism (Matt 28:19). Our portion is the triune God: God the Father who created this world in which we live, God the Son who came into this world to save us, and God the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. God with all his powers and gifts is the firm basis of our lives. That is the confidence we carry with us into the new year.

We cannot enter the year in the conviction that no evil will reach us. The Canadian government cannot guarantee us that we will be safe from any attack that may be devised against this country. No medical doctor can guarantee that we will have a healthy life. We may wish one another health and prosperity, but no one can make that happen. Nor is our peace assured. We do not know how long the war in Afghanistan will last, or what kind of retaliation may be devised from the side of the Taliban for the incessant attacks by the Western nations.

In view of the evil of our time, we enter the new year looking up to God. Perhaps we needed to learn this again. **C**





You have in your hands the final issue of *Clarion* for the year 2001. During the past year, we have produced one issue every two weeks. This represents a lot of work by the editors and the publisher. It has been particularly gratifying to receive quite a number of articles from members throughout our churches. Thanks to email, articles and photos came electronically to my office, and were easily included in an issue of *Clarion*. May I express my appreciation on behalf of the *Clarion* team for the regular supply of articles and press releases.

In this issue, we remember both the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and the dawn of a new year. As the years go by, we remember with deep thanksgiving to God that every day and every year has been made possible for us through the redeeming blood of our Saviour. In Christ we have life and we have a life which can be used to the praise and glory of God.

We have a variety of articles in this issue: a Year End Review, reports of a Women's League Day and a Guido graduation, matters relating to the Theological College, a speech on singing the Psalms, mission work in the Ukraine, a report of an institution of a new church, and some of our regular columns. In this issue you will also find many advertisements and greetings from different church members.

On behalf of the *Clarion* staff, I wish you the Lord's blessings for the year 2002. As Dr. N.H. Gootjes concludes in his editorial: we enter the new year looking up to God.

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Born to Rule

by A.J. Pol

Peace?

What could possibly disturb our peace? That question was answered on this past September 11. The police, fire departments, and ambulances rushed to disaster scenes in New York and Washington. Many of us watched television or listened to the radio during that day. We were horrified. We are not as safe as we would like to think.

The uncertainty since then continues. Our Armed Forces are on the alert and law-enforcement agencies are at work. But people called to promote law and order are limited in what they can do to protect us. There is no guarantee that they will anticipate every move terrorists might make.

Conflict

The great dragon described in Revelation 12 is at work behind this. He is “that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan” (Rev 12:9). We see evidence of his activities around us. The basic conflict is not between the Western world on the one hand and Muslim terrorists on the other. The basic conflict is between God and the devil. The devil is not only at work in Muslim countries. He is at work throughout the world.

The devil sows terror, using wicked people as his instruments. But God sows the seeds of hope through the proclamation of his Word. All things are in his hands. He can use the difficulties of our



*“She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne”
(Rev 12:5)*

times to further his work of grace in Jesus Christ.

The woman and the dragon

In Revelation 12, the apostle John tells us about his vision of “a woman clothed with the sun.” Her radiant appearance indicates the glory of her high position. The moon is “under her feet.” That speaks of dominion. A crown of twelve stars is on her head. It is a sign of royalty. God has chosen to give this woman symbols that speak of her privileged position over creation, which is the work of his hands. The virgin Mary is the one who gave birth to our Saviour. But the woman in the vision represents the people of God. This becomes clear when you read all of Revelation 12. Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament the people of God are portrayed as a woman, a bride, a wife. Think, for example, of Isaiah 54:5, where we read: “For your Maker is your husband – the LORD Almighty is his name – the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer.”

John also saw another sign in heaven: “an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads” (Rev 12:3). The great dragon is “that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray” (Rev 12:9). He is portrayed in this chapter as a huge, powerful and cunning beast, ready for violence and destruction. He has a host of fallen angels under his command.

The child of the woman

Satan is powerful, but he cannot overpower God. In Genesis 3:15 we read the LORD God's promise that the offspring of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. It is a prophecy of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The days of the serpent are numbered. The devil, however, has always tried to avoid his own defeat. If you read through the Old Testament you'll see many signs of his work. He did what he could to prevent the birth of our Saviour from becoming reality. The New Testament tells us of his activity at the time of Christ's birth. Think of what king Herod did, killing all the young children of Bethlehem to make sure of the death of the promised Messiah.

The King

Revelation 12:5 shows us why the dragon wanted so desperately to kill this child. He is "a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre." The additional term translated as "a male child" highlights

the masculine character of this son. Not the dragon, but this son of the woman will be the divinely appointed ruler of the world.


The reference to the "iron sceptre" also occurs in Psalm 2. This Psalm speaks of how the nations rage and the peoples plot against the LORD and against his Anointed One. It is a prophecy of the coming King, the Son of God. He will one day rule over the rebellious nations with an iron sceptre (Ps 2:9). This means they will be subject to his will. If they do not submit to him, they will be judged by him. That is why this Psalm ends with the words, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment" (Ps 2:12).

Victory


The dragon wanted to devour the child after his birth, but was unable to do this. God himself protected his Son. During the years that followed, Satan continued his attacks on our Saviour. When Jesus Christ died on the

cross, it seemed as if the dragon had won. The opposite, however, was true! The death of Jesus Christ gave Him the victory over all the power of the devil. Sin was atoned for. Death could no longer be the final punishment for those who take refuge in Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ and his ascension to heaven confirmed his victory. The child of the woman "was snatched up to God and to his throne." That is where He is now. It is a position of glory and power.

The dragon will continue to rage. He will use the conflicts and wars of this world to further his own ends. But his efforts are doomed to failure. Hold onto that, no matter what the devil and all his angels, and wicked people may seem to accomplish. Jesus Christ, born of the woman, is now in heavenly glory. He is the Ruler of the nations. Remember the final words of Psalm 2: "Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (Ps 2:12). Acknowledge Him as Saviour. Worship Him as King. 

Christmas



*All my heart this night rejoices
As I hear
Far and near,
Sweetest angel voices;
"Christ is born," their choirs are singing,
Till the air
Everywhere
Now with joy is ringing.*

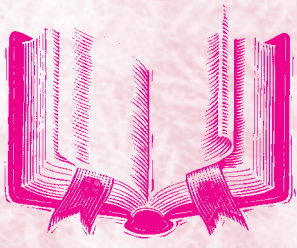
*Hark! a voice from yonder manger,
Soft and sweet,
Doth retreat,
"Flee from woe and danger!
Brethren, come! from all doth grieve you,
You are freed;
All you need
I will surely give you."*

*Come, then, let us hasten yonder!
Here let all,
Great and small,
Kneel in awe and wonder!
Love him who with love is yearning!
Hail the star
That from far
Bright with hope is burning!*

*Thee, dear Lord, with heed I'll cherish,
Live to thee,
And with thee,
Dying, shall not perish;
But shall dwell with thee for ever,
Far on high,
In the joy
That can alter never.*

Paulus Gerhardt, 1656; Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1858





The Gospel for the Womb

by P. G. Feenstra

At Christmas time, many people become sentimental about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Songs and carols concentrate on the baby Jesus born in Bethlehem. Yet the real reason why Jesus Christ had to come in our flesh and blood is often misunderstood, disregarded or slighted. It is, therefore, our responsibility as church to break through all sentimentalism, emotionalism and ridicule, and defend and confess the amazing significance of Christ's conception and birth. It is necessary to our eternal salvation that we should believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ (Athanasian Creed Article 29). The conception and the birth of Jesus Christ is the gospel of the womb *for* the womb. It is an essential part of our faith. It is so essential that the apostle John writes, "Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God" (1 John 4:2,3).


The Son of God took upon Himself our human nature

The Son of God did not come down in wrath and judgement, as He could have, but He assumed our flesh and blood in his immense and unfathomable love for his people. Article 18 of the Belgic Confession summarizes the doctrine of Christ's incarnation as follows:

We confess, therefore, that God has fulfilled the promise He made to the fathers by the mouth of his holy prophets when, at the time appointed by Him, He sent into the world his only begotten and eternal Son, who took the form of a

servant and was born in the likeness of men (Phil 2:7). He truly assumed a real human nature with all its infirmities, without sin, for He was conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit and not by the act of a man.

The eternal Word, who was with God and was God, emptied Himself of his godly glory. He humbled Himself, stooping below the level of his godly



The Son of God took hold of our human nature so that it became his own.

dignity, to save us from our sins and eternal perdition. The Son of God took hold of our human nature so that it became his own. He did not put on his humanity like we might put on a coat, only to lay it aside after his redemptive work was accomplished and his earthly ministry was completed. The flesh and blood He assumed will remain with Him forever.

The miracle of Christ's coming in the flesh

Every time we say with the Apostles' Creed, "He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary," we are confessing a tremendous miracle. Nevertheless, the miracle of Christ's coming is not in his conception and birth as such. Every conception and birth is truly amazing. We stand in awe of the life which God creates. David sings of this in Psalm 139:13, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." From a human point of view, Christ's birth was similar to every other infant born into this world. His birth, however, was miraculous because of the manner in which He was conceived.

What made his conception and birth miraculous? It should be understood that a miracle is more than something supernatural, a happening that defies the laws of nature. In the Bible the connection is not between a miracle and the laws of nature but a miracle and salvation. A miracle is a surprising act of God with a view to the coming of his kingdom and the redemption of his people. Isaac was born to the elderly Abraham and Sarah. It surprised everyone. It is a miracle because it is an act of God with a view to the coming of his kingdom. Similarly, the waters of the Red Sea part to let the people of Israel pass through as a surprising act of the LORD's deliverance. God parts the waters of a sea to show his people that He does not and cannot depend on people to accomplish his redemptive plan. It is in this sense that Christ's conception and

birth are miraculous. God sends forth his Son so that his kingdom can come through the removal of man's sin. The Lord our God brought this about by his own power, and not through human effort. The conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit and the virgin birth not only defy the laws of nature but are a perpetual reminder that salvation is accomplished through the supernatural work of God. Beyond all question, great indeed is the mystery of our religion (1 Tim 3:16).

Why redemption needs to begin at conception

In Psalm 139 David admires human conception and childbirth. The same author confesses in Psalm 51:5, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." Sin begins right in the womb at conception. This pattern has been there ever since the fall into sin and will be there until the day of Christ's return. No matter how many children are born into the world, they fall under the condemnation of Adam and the curse of God. We are conceived and born in sin and cannot free ourselves from sin. The Lord in his infinite goodness and kindness starts his work of renewal where our problems begin. His conception and birth assure us that He will set us free from our original as well as our actual sins.

Christ Himself determines how He will be conceived and born

The manner in which Jesus Christ is conceived and born is beyond our human comprehension. He who has God as his natural Father is conceived by the Holy Spirit. As the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The only natural Son of God adopts Joseph to be his earthly father. He is born to a daughter of Adam but he is not generated through a son of Adam. He partakes in Adam's flesh and blood without taking part in Adam's sin. In this way he is able to set the life of his people on an entirely new foundation.

Christ willed his own conception and his own birth. He is the only one who legitimately controls his own birth. He chose his own mother and determined when He would come into

the world (John 1:14; Gal 4:4). Nothing was forced upon Him. The Heidelberg Catechism says Jesus took upon Himself true human nature from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary (Lord's Day 14). He voluntarily accepted our human nature.

Think for a moment what this means. If you were told beforehand that your conception and birth would mean enormous suffering and that it would mean having to bear the burden of God's wrath against sin, would you choose it? Christ could have continued enjoying the bliss and glory of heaven. Nevertheless, He willingly takes upon Himself our human nature, knowing full well it would mean suffering, punishment and death. Our Saviour realized fully that his conception and birth would culminate in the cross. To save us from eternal perdition and to restore all things to the perfection of Paradise, He willingly humbled Himself and took upon Himself our human nature.



*He blesses
the wombs
of mothers
who bear
children in the
covenant.*

The blessing of Christ's coming in the flesh

Today we may confess the gospel for the womb. It is comforting for us to know that He who came forth from the womb of Mary, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, is our Mediator. Being in Him we may have the assurance that our sins are covered in the sight of heaven. Outside of Christ, all life is cursed at conception. He takes the curse which lay on us because of our sins and replaces it with his blessing. Great indeed is the gospel for the womb!

Sin results in the curse of God. Under the blessing of Christ our sins are forgiven and we are restored to communion. Jesus was and remained God in his human nature so that He could represent both sides of the covenant and could bring them together. Even though He was ridiculed and mocked by his own people and was forsaken of God and man, He did not utter one curse. Jesus did not curse the womb of his mother; He did not curse the day He was born, as Job and Jeremiah had wrongfully done while in the depths of despair (Job 3:3-19; Jer 20:14-18). Christ bore the cross and despised the shame in love for us so that we should never come under the curse of God.

This is the benefit of Christ's incarnation for the womb. Covenant life is not senseless or useless. Christ blesses our homes, our marriages, and the conception and birth of children in the covenant. Therefore, no individual, regardless of how difficult he or she may have it, has the right to curse his mother's womb, his conception or his birth. No child of the Lord has reason to say, "I wish I was never born."

Christ begins his redemptive work at the beginning of our life so that all of our life may be filled with his blessing. He blesses the wombs of mothers who bear children in the covenant. Life is sanctified in Christ our Mediator so that also those who never get married or never receive children of their own are rich. They have everything in Christ. The gospel for the womb is also for those covenant children who are deformed, handicapped, or who never see the light of day. Christ's conception by the Holy Spirit and the virgin birth result in this gospel: we are now free to ask the Lord for his blessing on the pregnancies of covenant mothers, upon covenant families and individuals.

At this time of the year we confess the mystery of God's love. He who was without mother in heaven is without an earthly father so that He might redeem and renew our life as our Mediator. He redeems the totality of life. Christ's coming in the flesh is for our eternal benefit. In Him the gospel for the womb is an amazing part of your life!





Year-End Review 2001

by J. Visscher

Almost over

The year of our Lord 2001 is almost over. In a matter of days a whole new year will dawn. What will it be like? What will it bring? What changes will it lead to in our personal lives, our church life, our life in this world? We do not know. We can only wait with bated breath and with a believing heart. For we know that the Lord's faithful care will sustain us as we move ever closer to the day of the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Looking to the future, however, is not the only thing that we tend to do at this time of year. For not only do we try to look ahead, we also make it a point to look back.

September 11

When we do so it does not take long for our minds to fill with the images of September 11. On that day airplanes became weapons and two of the tallest buildings in the world became targets. The unimaginable happened and thousands died. The United States of America went to war. Canada, and many other countries, joined in.

Terrorists represented the new enemy. A man by the name of bin Laden took an unenviable place beside the likes of Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and the other scourges of humanity. A war-torn, poverty-stricken country called Afghanistan and its ruling Taliban party experienced the disapproval of much of the world for harbouring bin Laden. The bombs rained down on it, and as this is being written, they are still falling out of the sky.

Along with terrorism and war, 2001 experienced something else as well,

namely, economic meltdown. Prior to September 11, the news coming from the stock markets of the world was not good. Tech stocks, which had long been the darling of many, were not living up to expectations. Massive overproduction, saturated markets and speculative buying were all taking their toll. And then along came that horrendous day in September, and the economy of the world stalled. Talk of recession dominated the financial pages.



Synod Neerlandia

Yet if the biggest news story in the world was the terrible destruction of the World Trade Center and all of the fallout from it, the biggest news in the Canadian Reformed Churches had to be the General Synod that met in Neerlandia in the month of May. It seems that no one was making any great predictions and most expected more of the same.

Were we ever in for a surprise! After thirty-five years of contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, there was finally a breakthrough. The Reformed Church in the United States and the Reformed Churches in Brazil

were also embraced as churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. Discussions with the United Reformed Churches led to a unanimous decision to proceed to Phase 2. It would appear that these decisions, and others as well, will insure that Neerlandia, if not exactly on everyone's geographical map, remains on the ecclesiastical map for some time to come.

Local church life

Amidst all of this news, international and ecclesiastical, church life at the local level continued. In most cases it was a smooth continuation, and yet here and there, changes took place. The Church at Waterdown, Ontario, saw its minister appointed as the new Professor of New Testament Studies. The Rev. G.H. Visscher accepted this appointment and so Waterdown became vacant. It called the Rev. J. Van Vliet, but he declined, and at the end of the year Waterdown remains vacant.

The Church at Guelph welcomed a new pastor and teacher in the person of the Rev.J. VanWoudenberg, who came from Kerwood. This same church decided to address the matter of its aging and crowded building by making plans to erect a new one.

The Church at Elora called Candidate C. Vermeulen and received a positive response. Normally, this would mean the end of their vacancy; however, the Department of Immigration had other ideas. It would appear that while being an "Aussie" is an honour, it is not of such a nature that it is able to cut through government red tape with great speed. Hopefully, a date for his ordination can be set soon and our brother can get down to the real work of the ministry.



Mr. C. Vermeulen

Two new congregations came into existence. The Church at Glanbrook was instituted and so solved Hamilton's over-crowding problem. The new Church at Grassie did the same for the Churches at Lincoln and Smithville. It should also be mentioned that Glanbrook did not wait too long before it called the Rev. D. Vandeburgt of Denver to be its first pastor.

Another church in the east that is still looking for a pastor is the Church at Grand Rapids. It extended any number of calls, but the vacancy persists. The same applies to the Church at Smithville, which hoped that the Rev. W. den Hollander of Toronto would finally put an end to their extended period of vacancy. It was not to be.

In the western part of the country, all of the churches are blessed with pastors, except for the Churches at Smithers and Vernon. The former has, like Smithville, been vacant for some time and continues to receive declines. Needless to say, this is very discouraging. The latter has not been vacant as long but is struggling after it decided to seek the release of its minister, the Rev. D. Moes. This is not the place to do a post-mortem on the Vernon situation, except to say that what happened there has taken its toll on congregation and minister alike. We all need to pray for better things to come for both.

The Churches at Chilliwack, Langley and Yarrow all know something about drywall dust. Yarrow was blessed with a beautiful new building after spending many years in a school gym. Chilliwack and Langley both decided that renovations were needed in order to make their buildings more functional. Meanwhile, the Churches at Cloverdale and Smithers are pondering what further steps to take in the improvement of their buildings.

Ministerial news

Along with congregations being in the news, several ministers also made the headlines. Rev. G. Nederveen had his studies crowned with success and was awarded the Doctor of Ministry degree by McMaster University. Rev. C. Bosch, who underwent a major operation, could return to his work in the Church at Burlington-South. Rev. M. Jagt of the Church at Ottawa did something that most ministers do before they enter the ministry. He exchanged the life of a bachelor for that of a married man.

Two new congregations came into existence.

Although perhaps not headline news, it can also be reported that both the Revs. J. VanVliet and E. Kampen miss the classroom and have enrolled in graduate studies programs. Others are contemplating the same step. We can only wish them every success. No doubt the churches that they serve will become the beneficiaries of having pastors who continue to sharpen their skills.

On a related note, the Churches at Surrey and Winnipeg were so considerate as to grant their pastors, the Revs. K. Jonker and C. VanSpronsen, sabbaticals. This enabled them to re-charge their batteries, to dig deeper into certain subjects, and to do some things that one usually only dreams about. Hopefully, it will stand them in good stead as they return to active service.

Once again this year did not see a lot of movement among the ministerial brigade. The exceptions were the Rev. J. Slaa who exchanged the Church at Elora for the Church at Kerwood. Also moving to a different place was the Rev. D. Moes who re-located in Langley, and the Rev. G.H. Visscher who went to Ancaster in order to be closer to the Theological College.

Those forgotten men and women

While it is a fact that ministers garner a lot of press in our churches, it is also a fact that organists do not. A more apt way to describe them may be as "those forgotten men and women."

As such this is hard to explain seeing that they play a rather pivotal role in our worship services. We all know that a skilled organist can add immeasurably to our praise. In light of this, it is only fitting that organists receive some well-deserved recognition in a review such as this. Many of them give unstintingly of their talents and time, sometimes even of their money. They labour on doggedly, even if their efforts are not noticed. So, to all of you artists on the organ bench, I would say, "Forgive our neglect and accept our thanks."



Canadian Reformed Church at Yarrow, British Columbia

The Theological College

At the Theological College in Hamilton the work of training young men for the ministry of the gospel continues. The faculty composed of the professors: J. DeJong, N.H. Gootjes, C. Van Dam and G.H. Visscher do their work faithfully and well. There is much appreciation for their labours. Prof. J. Geertsema, our emeritus Professor of New Testament, graciously agreed to help out past his retirement date. In order to give the new appointee time to adjust and to make headway on his doctoral studies, he took the main teaching load for the fall semester. Hopefully, the new year will see him doing what he planned to do, namely, researching and writing a commentary on the letter to the Hebrews. We wish him and his wife many good retirement years.

The support staff at our College, namely Miss Catharine Mechelse and Miss Margaret VanderVelde, continue to do excellent work. Catherine takes care of the office and Margaret makes sure that the library runs smoothly. Together, they form an invaluable part of the College team.

On the whole the student body remains small. This year one student graduated and three were admitted. Along with the returning students, the student body now numbers eleven. On the one hand, we can be thankful for these numbers, also seeing that our College has some of the toughest entrance requirements anywhere and that many other church federations are facing a severe manpower shortage. On the other hand, there is a need for more students. At present there are eight vacancies in the Canadian and American Reformed Churches (including one missionary posting), one in the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (which could soon become two), a number of retirements loom on the horizon and a few more churches may be instituted in the coming year. Parents, teachers, and pastors need to do what they can to stimulate young men for seek out the gospel ministry.

Before we leave the College scene, there is one more thing. I can campaign for it freely now seeing that I am no longer a governor. What about a more distinctive name for our College? Why not invite the members to submit names of a more personal, geographical or historic nature? I am sure

that someone can come up with something better than what at present is little more than a bland generic name (excuse my frankness).

Evangelistic activities

Across this vast land of ours local churches are also busy with various evangelistic efforts. Literature distribution, Vacation Bible Schools, Saturday Camps, special outreach evenings, radio broadcasting via the Voice of the Church, Campfire!, Bible courses, and other activities are all part of the mix.



Across this vast land of ours local churches are also busy with various evangelistic efforts.

Special mention should be made of Campfire!, a summer camp in Ontario that once again has attracted hundreds of young people. Seeing that two of our children enrolled this past summer, my wife and I had the opportunity to check it out for a day, and we were impressed. The dedication of the staff led by Ian and Nadia Wildeboer, the boundless enthusiasm of the young people, the ready hands of so many volunteers, and the quality of the program were gratifying to see. It is an effort that begs for imitation in other parts of the country.

Another activity out east of an evangelistic nature that deserves recognition is Streetlight Ministries, an outreach work headed by Richard Bultje. This project is located in the downtown area of the city of Hamilton. It is a joint effort of the Churches of Ancaster and Burlington- South.

In the western part of the country efforts are also being made to bring

the gospel to our neighbours. In the Fort Babine and Smithers areas, the Rev. W. Bredenhof, together with a willing cast of volunteers, is working among the native peoples. Locating himself and his family in Fort Babine has led to many personal contacts with the inhabitants as well as the organization of a number of regular activities such as sports camps, Bible study and Sunday worship services.

Hundreds of kilometres to the south another work is being done. This effort is geared to the Chinese population of the greater Vancouver area. Rev. F. Dong meets every Sunday with a group of mostly new immigrants, teaching them the basics of the Reformed faith, praying that they will confess Christ and hoping that they will form the nucleus for a new church. Meanwhile, many churches in the west support these endeavours with their offerings and prayers.

Mission work

The main foreign mission fields of the Canadian Reformed Churches continue to be located in countries of Brazil, Indonesia (Irian Jaya) and Papua New Guinea. The Revs. E. Venema and K. Wieske in northeast Brazil and Rev. A. de Graaf further to the south are busy planting churches, teaching students, and leading mission congregations. The former mission aid worker who was assisting Rev. de Graaf, brother Henk Plug, has returned to Canada. He was supposed to take over as the new principal of the Timothy School in Hamilton; however, serious illness delayed his plans. Hopefully, by the time you read this there will be considerable improvement in his situation.

Meanwhile, the missionary emeritus, the Rev. R.F. Boersema, is far from inactive in Bristol, Tennessee. He is hard at work setting up an internet-based theological training school that will train future ministers for the Brazilian churches.

On the other side of the world, the Rev. S. 't Hart and his family have returned to Papua New Guinea after a well-deserved furlough. The passing away of his right-hand man, brother Isac Sarumi, will no doubt have consequences for his work. May it please the Lord to fill the vacuum and raise up another man to assist Rev. 't Hart.

Across the border to the west lies Irian Jaya. For many years it was the



Isaac Sarumi

site of much mission work done by both Canadian and Dutch missionaries. At the present it is a blessing that the Rev. H. Versteeg, former missionary and at present pastor of the Church at Chatham, Ontario, can still make periodic trips to Irian Jaya assisting and advising the churches there.

The fact that Clarence and Jeanette Togeretz, together with their children, continue to live in Irian Jaya should also be noted. The work that Clarence does as a member of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) is invaluable and gives much needed help to missionaries and isolated communities alike.

Although the work is not organized in the same way and there are no missionaries or mission aid workers in place, it should also be mentioned that various countries in the Caribbean, as well as Mexico, are receiving more and more attention from members of our churches. Faithworks in the east continues to send volunteers to many different places. Various churches in the west have sent teams to Central America. Currently, Duane Visscher of the Church at Langley is busy assisting in the much-needed building expansion at the Pan da Vida Orphanage in Mexico.

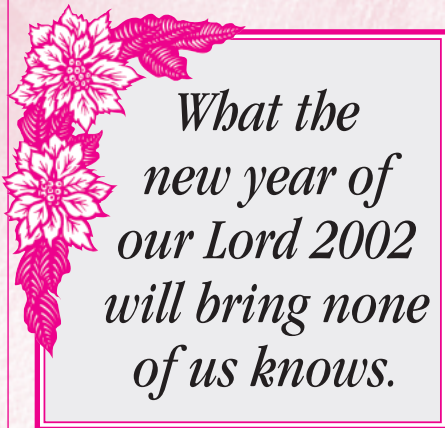
Going from a southern into a much further eastern direction we come to Cyprus and the work of the Middle East Reformed Fellowship. This work is supported by any number of Reformed churches around the world. At its new training center, it educates pastors and leaders who come from surrounding Arabic countries. It is also involved in radio broadcasting and in the distribution of aid to countries like Sudan.

Back in Canada the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund continues hard at work collecting monies and distributing the same to worthy needy causes around the world. Because of its small size and the desire to avoid high

administrative costs, the CRWRF has no full-time employees. What it tries to do is channel the funds that it receives through other worthy agencies that it monitors on a regular basis. Sometimes this does complicate matters, but for the most part it seems to work. The western branch of the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund known as Manna is based in Edmonton and receives its support from various churches and schools in Alberta and Manitoba. Manna fully supports the Mufu Home in Kenya, an orphanage which gives food, shelter, and a Christian education to a large number of children.

Christian education

If our churches were much involved in mission work during this year, they were equally active in the area of Christian education. Across our land, Christian elementary and high schools continue to exist and, in many places, to thrive and grow as well. The fact that this is happening without full government funding is a tribute to the generosity of the Lord and the commitment of so many parents.



In Hamilton, Covenant College continues to train teachers for many of the schools in Ontario. Unfortunately, most of the graduates cannot teach in the western provinces because their degree is not recognized. Still, it is hoped that as the number of teachers increases in Ontario, there will be some trickle-down benefits for the rest of the country.

In Langley, B.C., 2001 was the year that Trinity Western University won its court battle with the BC College of Teachers. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the fact that TWU requires its students to commit to a Chris-

tian code of behaviour does not disqualify its graduates from teaching in the public school system. Had the highest Court in the land ruled otherwise, it would have had serious repercussions not just for schools and churches, but for Christian freedom as a whole.

Since teaching is an ever-evolving profession, almost all of our schools encourage their teachers to attend conventions and seminars, as well as to take various courses. In this connection school principals from all over Canada met in British Columbia and Washington state for several days of intense sharing and discussions.

All in all, the impression that one receives is that our teachers are very able and committed to their task. Parents and children can be thankful that they do their work with such zeal and dedication.


Special homes

If the work of education is ongoing so it also the work of caring for the handicapped and the aged. In Ontario, Anchor Home continues to be a special place where some of our special members receive special care. The same work is also being done in Alberta by Rehoboth and in British Columbia by Bethesda.

As for the older members in our midst, many of them benefit from various seniors complexes. Manohar Manor in Langley, Emmanuel Home in Edmonton, Greenview Villa in Carman, Mount Nemo Lodge in Waterdown, Ebenezer Villa in Hamilton, are but a few of the many places sprinkled across the land.

In closing

Well, it is time to bring this long story to an end. No doubt I have forgotten some people and events. I trust that you will not hold it against me.

Still, you can see that 2001 has been a very busy year on many fronts. So many things, big and small, happy and sad, have taken place. What the new year of our Lord 2002 will bring none of us knows. But then, if we continue to live close to our heavenly Father, it does not really matter. He will guide us and keep us. He will lead us and protect us. He will supply us with all that we need both for this life and for the life to come. Therefore, let us go forward with confidence, testifying to His faithfulness and relying upon his grace. We will not be disappointed. 



From the Publisher

Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead . . .

Philippians 3

Forgetting

Who can forget what lies behind us this year? The reverberations of the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, on the New York Trade Centre and the Pentagon are still felt in our personal lives, in our economy, and globally. Our collective souls have been jarred to make us reflect on what went wrong. People are seeking answers to incomprehensible actions. Western society soul-searching is scanning the deeds of its past. Are we on the right track in dealing with one another?

The apostle Paul, on the road to Damascus, was suddenly struck by the arresting power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The evil he was about to do was halted by a blinding light scan: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" The gain which Saul thought to have in this world, he now, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, counts as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus as his Lord.

When we review our life in the light of the Scriptures, we are faced with our wrong thoughts, our misdeeds, our sins. We are forced to reflect on our life's choices and compare them to God's requirements in his Word. Are we on the narrow path or must we come to a turning point?

Straining forward

We do not know in detail, how the West will deal with the aftermath of the attack. Will the approach to conflicts with peoples and nations be different from that of the past? Will the West present itself as an aroma which attracts rather than repulses global fellow dwellers? ". . . many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things."

The apostle Paul knew what to do after his sudden arrest: "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

We, too, should strain toward what is ahead. We do not fully understand how God will lead us through turbulent times, but we do know that ". . . our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus

Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

So, forget the world of yesterday, turn to the Lord today.

Our appreciation and thank you

It is great working with the *Clarion* team under the leadership of Dr. J. Visscher, our chief editor. As publisher, we regularly deal with the managing editor, Rev. R. Aasman. It is a pleasure to see the articles appear promptly for each issue of *Clarion*. Thank you Dr. Visscher and Rev. Aasman for efficiently managing the content of *Clarion*. They are ably assisted by the work of our co-editors Dr. J. De Jong, Dr. N.H. Gootjes, and Rev. Cl. Stam. Our gratitude is to all of you for making our task easy.

Supporting the editorial team are our regular contributors Rev. J. De Gelder, Rev. P. Feenstra, Rev. G.Ph. van Popta, Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman, and Aunt Betty.

A host of other contributors round out the crew of *Clarion* magazine helpers. Thank you all for your part in our publication efforts.

Our subscribers and advertisers make it all work, and therefore, we greatly appreciate your standing behind all our endeavours. We look forward to another year of providing you with edifying articles so that all of us may be strengthened in the power of the Word. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (John 1:14).

Greetings

At the close of this year we bring you our greetings and wish you the Lord's blessing for the year to come. Rejoice in the Lord for He subjects all things to himself. To Him be the glory and dominion forever.

W. Gortemaker





College Corner

by Dr. J. De Jong

Celebrating milestones

In the goodness of our God, we have been enabled to enter into a new academic year at the College. It's a semester of milestones, so there has also been time for celebration. At the same time we are grateful for the opportunities to carry on with our regular program. His blessings are new every morning!

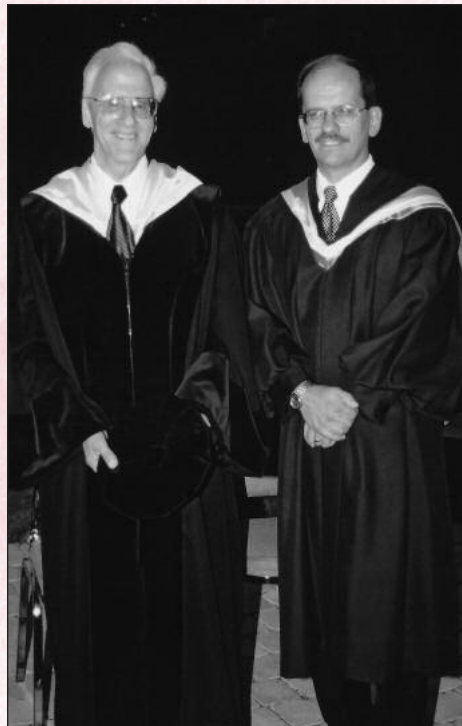
The convocation

The term began with the annual College Evening, in which we were able to witness the graduation of Candidate Carl Vermeulen. Carl accepted the call to the Church of Elora, and was happy to settle in that community with his wife and family. The ordination date was set for October 7, but unfortunately had to be delayed because of problems with his visa. We wish our brother much strength with this setback, and express the wish and hope that he soon may take up his duties in Elora.

The address for the evening was given by Prof. J. Geertsema, and was entitled *Is Conversion after Apostasy Impossible? A look at Hebrews 6:6*. The evening was a milestone for our colleague in that it formed his last address as professor in active service at the College. Prof. J. Geertsema also published a more extended version of this topic in a *Festschrift* for his collegial counterpart in the Netherlands, Dr. J. VanBruggen, at the occasion of the latter's retirement.

A Twenty-fifth anniversary

Towards the end of September we were able to celebrate another milestone. Colleague N.H. Gootjes was able



Prof. J. Geertsema with his successor, Prof. G.H. Visscher.



Student Dong-woo Oh from Pusan, Korea

to celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary in the ministry, as well as his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, all in the same month. Several addresses were given by his colleagues, and then the floor was turned over to the students who added their special touch of humour by presenting a typical lecture by Dr. Gootjes. Pages of Louis Berkhof's dogmatics were being thrown all over the floor, so it appeared that this particular textbook

does not receive the highest marks in the lectures of Prof. Gootjes!

Our new student from Korea, Dong-woo Oh from Pusan, also took the opportunity to speak a few words, in which he especially thanked Dr. Gootjes for the books which he published in Korean, material which is still used for theological courses in the Presbyterian seminary today. His address was a special moment of the



The Gootjes family in celebration!

Students and son Henk reviewing the mock lecture.



evening, since it brought closer to the audience a period in the life of our colleague and his family with which few here in Canada are familiar.

A thirtieth anniversary

With less fanfare and publicity (in this case), Colleague C. Van Dam celebrated his thirtieth anniversary in the ministry of the Word in the month of October. We congratulate our brother and his wife, and wish him continued health and strength for his duties at the College.

The new year

Prof. G. H. Visscher has moved with his family into the area of Caledonia south of Ancaster. He has taken up his teaching duties with zeal, and his studies at McMaster University are also proceeding very well. Meanwhile, Prof. Geertsema is still helping out with teaching Greek to allow Prof. Visscher the time he needs to make progress with his McMaster studies. These studies are not only


important for his future work, but also provide him with a wealth of material to work with now as his teaching begins. May the Lord grant all the strength that is needed!

We are grateful that the Lord is still sending students to us, and that there are others preparing to take up their studies at the College. Right now we have three first year students, one of whom is in the Diploma program, the other enrolled in part time studies. Along with our seniors, now totalling a class of eight, we have a good group present at our weekly chapel times.

Practical training

Of our eight seniors, two students were able to complete their three-month internships this past summer. Student Walter Geurts worked in Flamborough and Burlington-Waterdown, while Julius VanSpronsen worked in Lincoln and Rockway. In both cases the students were permitted to be involved in the various aspects of ministerial life. Since the

churches are currently in the initial stages of this program, one can expect a few problems and hurdles, which both students certainly had to contend with. However, as an overall impression, both were very pleased and satisfied with the program. One of the students wrote: "In sum, I think that the PTP as it is set up right now is a good program. It definitely met its aim of giving me 'first hand experience in the practical aspects of ministry.'" The other student summed up his review of the program by stating: "It was a valuable learning experience and I think the program is a great opportunity for students to learn about the life and work they are preparing to do." Our thanks to the program director, Rev. J. De Gelder, for the time and effort expended in administering this program!

May the Lord continue to bless and prosper the College's work, also in this academic year. Till next time! 

Hi-liter



by J. de Gelder

We have another peak in incoming local bulletins. Perhaps I am mistaken, but it seems like it's getting more difficult to put a Hiliter together. Many churches nowadays have these individual mail slots, and the councils and consistories often use these to distribute significant information separate from the bulletin. Sometimes I have to look through quite a pile of bulletins to glean enough bits and pieces that are worthwhile or interesting enough to pass on. At least that is my opinion. But here we go again.

Ancaster

The province of Ontario was one of the few provinces with zero support for independent schools. We know that earlier this year the provincial government decided to assist parents who send their children to independent schools by providing them with refundable tax credits. Rev. G. Ph. van Popta commented on this in the Ancaster bulletin:

We can be happy about this decision as it is simply a matter of justice and equity. We have every right to take advantage of this new tax break. It will certainly help by easing somewhat a huge financial burden. But let us not get too excited about it. We ought to remember what father Abraham said when the king of Sodom wanted to give him money: Genesis 14: 21 – 24.

In Ancaster the consistory also adopted a new setup for what we used to call "pre-confession class." I give here the entire decision, including the reasons. It's a bit lengthy for this column, but then it speaks for itself. I think it is an excellent improvement.

The minister will, over several years, teach a variety of topics in a class designed for those who have undergone the Grades 8 – 12 Heidelberg Catechism classes. The topics will include: Belgic Confession, Canons of Dort, Church History, Church Order, World Religions. As well, there will be a focus on Church Life. Part of the class may also be spent on going through a book of the Bible. The young people will receive and need to become familiar with *Summary of Faith* by Dr. K. Deddens.

In class, after every Lord's Supper celebration, the minister will ask whether there are any students who wish to make a public profession of faith to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. Those who express such desire will be visited by their ward elders and invited to come to a consistory meeting at which they will be examined as to faith in God, motivation, knowledge of Bible and Confessions, Christian walk of life, and Church Life. If they are deemed eligible to make profession of faith, announcements will be made and the profession will take place before the next Lord's Supper celebration.

Reasons:

This setup emphasizes that profession is a matter of the heart rather than the completion of a certain course of study. Profession of faith is not a matter of finishing a course or doing what your friends do, but a matter of your own decision and commitment.

This approach allows catechumens to attend the class for as many years as they require and so acknowledges the varying levels of spiritual development. Some may be ready at 17, others at 20+. Because topics are dealt with in a three or four year cycle, the "problem" of some young people repeating the course and going through the same content is removed.

In a footnote it is added:

The young people would be encouraged to continue attending the class (after the profession of faith, that is. JD). The class could even, possibly, be opened to communicant members who desire a "refresher" or are interested in specific topics.

Rockingham (Australia)

The matter of profession of faith was also discussed in Rockingham. A short report of a consistory meeting informs us:

It is suggested that profession of faith takes place two or three times a year instead of the present arrangement of allowing the young adults to do so when they feel they are ready. This will also make it possible for the minister to hold a special sermon for the young people and present it to them after the service. Several brothers expressed concern that if this suggestion would be taken up then the spontaneity would not be there. The frequency of this event brings great joy and there is no real need to have a specific sermon for this. It is agreed to continue the practice as stands.

Elora

In Article 3 of the C.O. it says that the election to any office shall take place according to the regulations adopted for that purpose by the consistory with the deacons. These local regulations show a variety of practices and procedures. In Elora they do it this way.

Consistory with the deacons have decided recently that all members of the congregation, *including* (emphasis mine, JD) the elders and deacons, be required to submit by way of letter the names of brothers they deem suitable for office. Further, all nominations will be considered by the elders and deacons in advance of the meeting in which the slate will be drawn. Thus, the deadline for nominations is no longer the day of the meeting in which the slate is drawn, but the Saturday before, in which the agenda for the meeting is prepared. The main thought behind the change is this: the brothers of the consistory with the deacons felt that the reasons for nominating, including those of the office bearers, should be considered in good time.

This is an orderly and well structured procedure. The only drawback could be that since also office bearers must now submit the names of eligible brothers in writing before the meeting, council may tie down its flexibility (and perhaps responsibility?) too much by considering the nominations closed before the meeting.

Edmonton Providence

Home mission committees are always looking for opportunities to promote the awareness in the congregation of our missionary task, and to equip brothers and sisters for it. Here is what they do in Edmonton:

How do we explain our faith in a way that others can understand? The Evangelization committee would like to begin a series of learning/teaching sessions before the morning service (9 am – 9:45). These sessions may provide you with another opportunity to bring the gospel of Christ to many friends who may have questions or as an opportunity to better equip yourself to bring the good news to people in your neighbourhood. We are cur-

rently looking for people who would be interested in helping to organize and teach these sessions. A great way to use your time on Sunday!

London

How often do we celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? A while ago the consistory in London decided to change from four times a year to six times a year. That's not such a dramatic change, but in the discussion leading up to this decision attention was also given to the thought of weekly communion. In London's bulletin, "The Pilgrim's Voice," Rev. J. Ludwig reflected on this matter. He wrote:

Liturgical changes need to be grounded in Scripture, and what can be gleaned from Scripture, in particular from Acts 2:42, Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 11, is that the New Testament Church practiced weekly communion. If the meaning of those texts is disputed (Do they refer to the Lord's Supper or the love feasts?) then one must, at least, conclude that Scripture does not set any limitation with respect to frequency. The words of institution "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup" (1 Cor 11:26) leave it open. This does not mean that it is *council's* goal and purpose to implement weekly communion. In fact, as you probably could tell, it is an issue that lies close to *my* heart. The reason for raising it before council and congregation was simply to create an awareness, to promote discussion, to make you delve into Scripture and church history. Each generation has to ask itself, "What are the reasons why we do things the way we do? What is the Scriptural basis for the customs, traditions, and practices in our ecclesiastical life?" To answer that with, "That's the way we have always done it" will not suffice. As the saying goes, "A Reformed person is an informed person."

Barrhead

By now the official Acts of Synod Neerlandia have arrived. Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar relates that an interesting observation was brought to his attention with regard to one of the decisions of Synod.

The decision to seek contact with the OPC took place at the Synod of Edmonton. The decision to recognize them as true church of our Lord Jesus Christ was taken at the Synod of Coaldale and now the decision to enter into sister church relationship has taken place at the Synod of Neerlandia. The common denominator is Alberta! It's just a point of interest . . . no more. We are thankful for all that could be done with the other Synods as well.

You better be!

Langley

The Rev. J. Visscher also contemplates briefly on some of the decisions of our last General Synod, and concludes:

Now, these decisions, and others that were taken, will not translate into happiness for everyone. Some will think that Synod Neerlandia went too far. Others will be of the opinion that in certain areas it did not go far enough. Let us realize, however, that the day when a synod comes along and satisfies every member on every issue, is a day that will not dawn in this dispensation. So, let us be thankful for the steps that have been taken, deal properly and charitably with those that were not, and move on from discussing church to being church in Canada and in the world.

Chatham

One could defend that the church needs to show openness and an inviting attitude towards the world we live in. But can you also go too far? The council of the Church in Chatham made a firm decision in this respect:

The Committee of Administration is asked to look into fixing the back door of the Church so that it will stay open . . .

Till next time.



What's Next?



*Some Remarks at the Dawn of the New Millennium (Part 1)**

by J. De Jong

Introduction

The transition to the new millennium has come and gone with great festive fanfare, but with hardly a hitch in terms of global problems and difficulties. Doom theorists were quickly put to silence and the world continued as before. Most of us are getting used to the novel habit of writing 2001 in our diaries and cheque books, and the busy pace of life has for many hardly allowed much reflection on the significance of the transition from one millennium to another.

However, from the perspective of faith this transition is important, and the dawn of a new millennium represents a significant milestone for the world, and especially for the church of Christ. It certainly forms an incentive for us to discern the times! For partly due to the perceived threat posed by the Y2K problem, and partly due to the general climate of relativity and change in which we live, there are today a wide range of prophecies and predictions of imminent doom coming over the world. And the religious market has joined the parade as well, for one can purchase a good deal of books that make predictions concerning the end time realities that are dawning upon our world. Armageddon seems to be near by!¹

My objective in these articles is to suggest that although the change to a new millennium itself is very significant and noteworthy, we need to approach it through the glasses of Scripture, that is, with a spiritual view on the unfolding events of our time. Also our calendar with its unique system of dating falls under the provi-

dence and guidance of God. So even though we are aware there may be some minor inaccuracies associated with this dating, we speak of the "year of our Lord 1999," the "year of our Lord 2000" and the "year of our Lord 2001." The passing and changing years still fall under the lordship of the risen Son!



*Scripture
itself gives
clear
indications
concerning the
signs at the
Lord's return to
his people.*

From a strictly historical point of view, the church entered the second millennium at 1000 A.D. Contrary to the opinion of many there is not much evidence supporting a widespread social upheaval around that date.² Whether Pope Sylvester II, the pope of the day, held a special mass is even disputed, and at any rate, it was not long before everyone realized that the world was just continuing as before, and that the dawn of the new millennium, although in itself a significant

milestone, did not bring any special cosmic or extra terrestrial manifestations with it.

The same may be said as we enter the third millennium. Most if not all of the predicted manifestations of chaos and upheaval did not materialize. The regularity of the seasons in a new millennium is a testimony of God's faithfulness. However, we can say that the marks of disorientation and social instability are more pronounced than ever before. And that forms reason enough for the church to be more vigilant in changing times.

Fervour in the air!

There is no doubt that we live in times of increased instability, times of greater foreboding with regard to the end of the world. Perhaps it is a sense of emptiness and doom that contributes to tragedies like Littleton, Colorado and Taber, Alberta. Certainly a sense of the apocalyptic and the imminent end of the world pervades events like the David Koresh burning at Waco, Texas, and the gruesome suicide of the followers of Beep Bop who thought they were getting on to Haley's comet. We could mention things like the Oklahoma bombing, cult murder-suicides in Quebec (order of the Templars) and so on. A lot of events show the down side of dabbling in the dangerous waters of excessive, misdirected spirituality.

In all this we need to distinguish between the millennium as dictated by our calendars and the millennium as a concept sparking excessive radical movements. Here the use of the terms are related, but not the same. The first meaning of the word simply points to a

period of 1000 years on the calendar. The second meaning includes and suggests in it the related ideas of a special or distinct period of time set apart for special divine purposes. Although the idea itself has strong roots in the Old Testament, the term “millennium” was first used to describe the “thousand year” reign of which John speaks in Revelation 20:1-6. The period described there was often – and still is – taken in a literal way, but then it was often given its own special twist. So the term “millennium” was also associated with the coming of a golden age of one kind or another. Often this golden age was seen more as discontinuous with our normal time, or as a rapturous culmination of it, rather than an actual part of calendar time that we live by today. So over the years the term millennium has broadened out to include many groups, actions and movements that have expected an imminent future period of glory to be ushered in by God at any specific pre-determined date. Hence we also speak of millenarian movements which have crossed the path of the church’s history from time to time, and still crosses that path to this very day. And the change to the year 2000 functions for many as a catalyst and spawning ground for the breeding of these sorts of ideas.³

Millenarian movements

What are these millenarian movements like? Movements of spiritual excess, or millenarian movements have been around a long time. Many of them have chosen their own dates for the world’s end, and still today many predictions are being devised on the basis of our calendar marking the imminent end of the world. We are going to take a look at these movements to remind ourselves that these things going on today have a good deal of historical precedent. But such an exercise has the additional benefit of reminding us that we must not go beyond what God has revealed to us in his Word. Scripture itself gives clear indications concerning the signs at the Lord’s return to his people. We do not need to conjure up theories, prophecies or fantasies beyond this revelation. And if we stick to what God has revealed in his Word, we find that there is no need for over-dramatic reactions, but we may continue with our regular task in confidence and trust as we look

forward with greater intensity to the day of the Lord’s return.

The Montanists

One of the first of the sects to pose a danger for the church was the group called the Montanists.⁴ Montanus was a self styled prophet from Asia minor, who preached the dawn of the new Jerusalem in a town called Pepuza, in about the middle of the second century. He had two women prophetesses who joined him in his movement, Maximilla and Priscilla. Montanus called himself the Paraclete, and he called the age that dawned with his own appearance as the age of the Paraclete. His followers were called “spirituals” and promoted such things as glossolalia, prophecies, visions, and other ecstatic experiences. They also promoted what is called asceticism, that is, the practice of a rigorous life style marked by avoiding any earthly pleasures or pursuits.



With the rejection of the Messiah as revealed by God, the Jews developed an extravagant apocalyptic theology.

The Montanists have many features, but we want to isolate strictly those that are important for our topic. As we isolate some of these features, we notice many similarities to millenarian and ideas and cults today. First of all, Montanus prophesied an imminent end of the world. He promoted the establishment of an ideal society in the new Jerusalem, which was to descend from heaven on to Phrygian soil. The coming of the heavenly Jerusalem would mark the dawn of

Christ’s one thousand year reign. Hence this is one of the first millenarian cults of the Christian era. Just as you see among cults today, Montanus summoned all true Christians to come to Phrygia to await Christ’s return in fasting, prayer, and repentance.

Montanus espouses on the one hand a freedom of the spirit. All people shared the gift of the Spirit, both men and women. So there was no need for special offices. Yet on the other hand, a strict and rigorous discipline was maintained. In order to truly be prepared for the golden age one had to refrain from foods and marriage. He promoted a rigorous policy of fasting, and a renunciation of marriage. He also rejected infant baptism, and promoted a believer’s baptism, that is, the baptism of those who had joined his sect. Above all, his teaching was marked by a renunciation of the world and all its gifts and goods.

Marks of the millenarian sect

So the contours of the spiritualist and millenarian sect become clear. These sects go beyond what is revealed. They claim to have received prophecies and visions directly from God that go beyond the Bible, and then set dates concerning the imminent return of Christ. They also exhibit elitist tendencies, and claim to have graces of the Holy Spirit that exceed those found normally among the people of God. In effect, they take elements of the divine and internalize them. Hence the ancient sin of the first century sects known as the Gnostics is revived. They taught that there is a element or spark of God within you, and your participation in and experience of the Holy Spirit determines how life must be ordered all around you. And that, in turn produces a rigorous legalism, a life style determined by strict human laws and regulations.

Here legalism and millenarianism go together! That is understandable since, like legalism, millenarianism too has its roots in the Judaism of the pre-Christian era.⁵ With the rejection of the Messiah as revealed by God, the Jews developed an extravagant apocalyptic theology. They coined all kinds of surrogate ideas to amplify and embellish the end time themes of the prophets. But these were apocalyptic constructions born out of minds that had deviated from the line of the scriptures.

Besides using Jewish apocalyptic, Montanus also borrowed from Gnostic literature, and mixed all this with isolated prophecies from the Old Testament.

Another feature of Montanism is the element of radicalism dominating the sect. Tertullian later joined the Montanists but he was never quite as radical as the Montanists were, and later developed his own group. The radicalism of the Montanists implied an impatience with and intolerance to any form of accommodation to human weakness in the church. Of course, the church must radically turn away from sin. But she must deal with sinners in compassion and with temperance. Not so the Montanists! Tertullian, a milder Montanist, held that a second marriage constitutes adultery. But the strict Montanists said that even the first marriage is to be rejected as a distraction from the preparation for true visionary and revelatory experiences. They were spiritualists, and so become rigorous and exacting in their demands upon people. In these demands the good gifts God had granted in creation were despised and demonized.

The medieval era

Although there were sporadic movements of excess throughout the early mediaeval era, it is not until the twelfth century that major apocalyptic movements rise again. It seems that as the church went into periods of serious decline in doctrine and moral behaviour, these groups began to spring up again. In the twelfth century one finds the rise of sects like the Cabbalists (Jewish) and the Catharists (Christian). Both of these sects were influenced by Gnosticism and mysticism, and promoted an other-worldly ideal.

Joachim of Fiore

The foremost figure in the medieval period with millenarian overtones is a Cistercian monk in southern Italy called Joachim of Fiore (1145-1202). This brilliant monk followed Montanus in dividing the history of the church into three periods according to the persons of the Trinity. The first age was the age of the Father or of the law; the second was the age of the Son or the Gospel; the third age, to which Joachim was working, was the age of the Paraclete. He saw himself as the new prophet, the one called to prepare people for the golden age. Only, at

this point the golden age is different. It is the age marked by the monastic life, a life of study and contemplation, free from the shackles of luxury and the corruption of the world. As Cohn puts it, "the world would be one vast monastery in which all men would be contemplative monks rapt in mystical ecstasy and united in singing the praises of God."⁶



Millennarian movements are in fact using the millennium idea to introduce a strange, non-biblical dualism into Christian doctrine.

Joachim taught a period of incubation which preceded each period of history. The period of incubation for the first stage of history lasted from Adam to Abraham, for the second from Elijah to Christ, and so for the third from Benedict to himself. Using the figure of forty-two generations, taken from Revelation 11:2, Joachim was able to set the date for the dawn of the judgment and Christ's return at about 1260, (see also Rev 11:3 and 12:6). Later, when this date passed without any dramatic occurrences and so left Joachim's disciples in bitter disappointment, the order of the Franciscans took their cue from Joachim's theology, and developed their rigorous ideal of poverty on the basis of his messianic predictions. Thus, even though the world did not end at Joachim's sched-

uled date, the spirit of radicalism and world flight championed by Joachim was perpetuated within the walls of the official church, and there arose a distinct party of opposition to the predominate spirit of luxury and excess that marked the church, and especially the papacy, of that period.

Recurring features

With Joachim, even though the context has changed, the same millenarian features as one finds with Montanus return. For him the Bible is not enough. And like Montanus, he becomes the herald of a new millennium and a new golden age, the age of the Spirit. This age is marked by rigorous asceticism, freedom from the shackles of world and flesh. One really wonders whatever happened to the women in Joachim's world, for aside from all those entering the convents, they really do not exist at all. Here again, the old Gnostic error returns: spiritual elitism, world flight, and more concretely, a turning away from the concrete cultural task that the Lord has given to the church. The mundane or every day tasks of life are considered to belong to a lower realm, the realm of evil or the devil, and the new rule promotes a contemplative existence in which all the desires of the flesh are sublimated to a heaven-connected and heaven-driven ecstasy in which the soul finds ultimate union with God.⁷

It ought to be clear by now what exactly is going on in this millenarian movements. They are in fact using the millennium idea to introduce a strange, non-biblical dualism into Christian doctrine. For behind the radicalism and legalism these groups espouse, there is the dominant conviction that created gifts, too, are to be rejected as ungodly and sinful. Joachim himself believed in a thousand year reign before the return Christ, not after it. He was in that sense, an early postmillennialist.⁸ But in fact his model was one which pictured a golden age of an entirely different order than normal life as we experience today, a utopia rather than a millennium.

What was true of Montanus was also true of Joachim, although to a lesser extent. Joachim based his schemes and constructions on the Scriptures, but took a very literalist approach to them, and basically superimposed his view of history upon them. He divided the Old and New

Testaments into seven parallel periods, and each numerical pattern in the Old Testament had a counterpart in the new. Here again, as is characteristic of the sects, the Scriptures become the pawn of a preconceived apocalyptic visionary model, and man's ideas take precedence over God's Word.

– to be continued

*This is a revised version of an address given to the churches of Alberta-Manitoba in the spring of 1999. It has been adapted to a post-millennium setting! It was of course written before the events

of this past fall, namely the terrorist attacks and the war in Afghanistan.

¹Some examples: Grant R. Jeffrey, *The Millennium Meltdown. The Year 2000 Computer Crisis* (Toronto: Research Publications, 1998). An earlier volume gained some notoriety as well: Charles Berlitz, *Doomsday 1999 A.D.* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1981). See also R.G. Clouse, et. al. *The New Millennium Manual. A Once and Future Guide*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999).

²So H. Schwartz, *Century's End. A Cultural History of the Fin De Siecle from 990s through the 1990s* (Doubleday, New York,

1990), 12ff. See also D. Thompson, *The End of Time. Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium* (London, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1996), 37.


³For a brief survey, see Clouse et. al., 41ff.

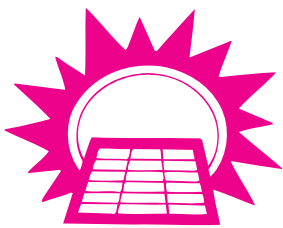
⁴Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2nd edition, 1970), 25-26.

⁵Cohn, 19f. See also J. Kamphuis, *Signalen uit de kerkgeschiedenis* (Groningen: Vuurbaak, 1975) 22, 46.

⁶Cohn, 109.

⁷See Kamphuis, 32-35

⁸He is so named by N.T. Wright, cf, *The Millennium Myth. Hope for a Postmodern World* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 13. 



Ray of Sunshine

by Mrs. Corinne Gelms
and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Micah 5:2

Merry Christmas! Are these not familiar words spoken at this time of the year? Everywhere in the shopping malls, Christmas carols are playing and people are in a great mood. The pressure of getting presents together for Christmas Day puts a lot of stress on some people. Christmas seems to come faster each year, and each year the stress comes back again. For us as Christians, Christmas has a very special and deep meaning in our lives. The Bible teaches us the importance of Christ's birth not only on Christmas Day, but every day of our lives.

Already in the Old Testament, Micah the prophet wrote about the Christ who would one day be born in Bethlehem. He knew that out of the line of Judah a Saviour would be born.

This Bible text of Micah 5:2 is not a real popular one in our world today. Some may not even understand what this verse means. To them Christmas is a time of celebration and of human kindness and good cheer. They may know the Christmas story, but it ends there. They do not know the true meaning, because they do not want to know it. It would also show that they would have to repent from their sins. The devil loves it when all the attention is put on presents and putting up of lights and so on. The more he can keep the focus of Christmas on presents and worldly things, the happier he is.

We know that our joy and happiness goes much further. Our happiness and cheerfulness does not stop after Christmas, but continues everyday throughout the year. We know why

Christ had to be born. God gave us his Son out of love to die for our sins. He promised it in the Old Testament, and it became a reality in the New Testament. He came as our Mediator. As question and answer 36 of the Heidelberg Catechism says, "What benefit do we receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ? He is our Mediator and with his innocence and perfect holiness covers in the sight of God my sin in which I was conceived and born."

This gives reason for true humbleness and a thankfulness to last a lifetime. When we look back on the Old Testament, we realize how from the beginning to the end of the world God will save his people. Many texts in the Old Testament speak about the coming Messiah. Isaiah 9:6 reads: "For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given and the government will be on his shoulders, and He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Every year Christmas may be a time of celebration, but it does not stop at Christ's birth. As we grow in our faith, it may mean a lot more. We now have eternal life in Him our Saviour. Our Saviour who had been born in a manger, now rules on high watching over his members. He did not leave us when He ascended into heaven. We now have his Word and Holy Spirit to guide us.

Let us also celebrate this Christmas joyfully and always remember the deep love God has for those who love Him. His Son was born to us so we now can have eternal life. Glory be to Him alone! May we wish you all a Blessed Christmas!

*Blest be the God of Israel,
The Lord who visited His own:
Who by His gracious providence
Redemption unto us made known.
Within His servant David's tent
Has He to us, His people, sent
The horn of His salvation;
E'en as He spoke by holy men of old,
Who unto Israel foretold
How He to them His mercy would unfold.*
Hymn 14:1

Birthdays in January:

- 2nd** Liz Koning will turn 41
9905 152nd Street
Edmonton, AB
T5P 1X4
- 7th** Christine Breukelman will be 30
2225-19th Street
Coaldale, AB
T1M 1G4
- 17th** Henry Driegen will be 46
#19-31450 Spur Avenue
Abbotsford, BC
V2T 5M3
- 17th** Grace Homan will turn 46
Anchor Home
361, Thirty Road S.
RR 2, Beamsville, ON
L0R 1B0
- 19th** Janine Smid will be 32
510 2nd Street, RR 7
Strathroy, ON
N7G 3H8
- 27th** Hank Orsel will be 71
2424 Woodward, Apt. 10
Burlington, ON
L7R 4E3
- 30th** Tyler Hoeksema will be 13
6755 Lorne Drive
Sardis, BC
V2R 2G3

Congratulations to you all who will be celebrating your birthdays, the Lord willing, in 2002. We hope and pray that you will have an enjoyable day together with your family and friends and above all with the blessing of the Lord. Till next year,

Mrs. Corinne Gelms and
Mrs. Erna Nordeman
Mailing Correspondence:
548 Kemp Road East
RR 2 Beamsville, ONT L0R 1B2
Phone: (905) 563-0380



“That We Should Be Called Children of God!”

1 John 3:1

*The Fortieth Annual League Day of the Canadian Reformed
Women’s Societies in Ontario held on October 17, 2001*

by Danielle Ravensbergen

Devotions

The morning of October 17 dawned gray and blustery as women all over Ontario stepped into their vehicles and made the trek to Stoney Creek. We met at the familiar Chandelier Place, where the glittering overhead lights welcomed 360 women who were eager to pass the day in study and socializing. We enjoyed fellowship and found our places around the numerous tables which had been prepared for us. The day officially began at 10:00 a.m. when our League President, Mrs. Martha DeGelder welcomed everyone, familiar as well as unfamiliar faces! She commented on the fact that, as the seasonal fall wind blows outside, inside we will be speaking about the power of the Spirit who is also compared to the wind in Scripture. After the singing of Psalm 95, accompanied by Mrs. Toni Kampen, and reading from 1 John 5:1-12 we bowed our heads in prayer together to ask our God for a blessing on this day. Mrs. DeGelder also spoke a brief word of welcome and introduced the theme: “How great is the love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called children of God!” God works his love in us through the Holy Spirit, which strengthens all earthly bonds as well as the bond between us and our Father. Several announcements were made. Mrs. Ingrid Vandergaag was elected as treasurer to replace Mrs. Dicky deBoer. Our sponsor for the collection of the day would be MERF. The President also called our attention to the bright red balloons hovering above our tables which sported the number forty in honour of this being the fortieth League

Day in Ontario. Mrs. DeGelder asked those among us who remembered those early years to perhaps come up with some memories and present them in the afternoon. With the roll call it became evident that most congregations were well represented.



*“Without the
Spirit there
is no word,
and without the
word there is
no Spirit.”*

Rev. C. Bosch

After the singing of our League Song, we prepared for the morning speech by reading John 14:1-31 and singing of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 139:1,4,7. Mrs. DeGelder warmly welcomed Rev. C. Bosch as our guest speaker. Rev. Bosch expressed his thankfulness for the privilege of sharing “confessional thoughts” on the Holy Spirit in his speech entitled “The Lord and Giver of Life.” The Holy Spirit testifies to Jesus Christ and to the wonder that we may be called children of God! Rev. Bosch began his speech by pointing out that the Nicene Creed calls the Holy Spirit “the Lord and Giver of Life.” We are to enjoy the restoration of

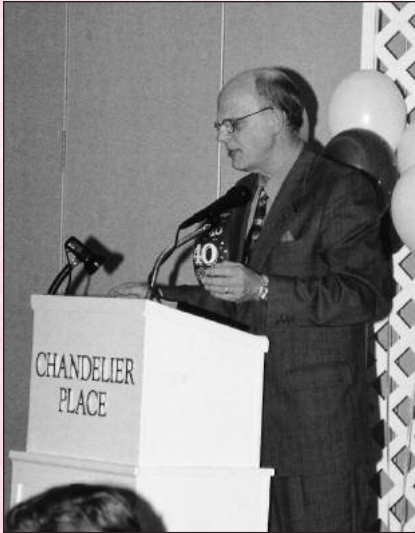
the gift of life in a world that is filled with terror and death. On the basis of Scripture we can say much about the Holy Spirit. Rev. Bosch divided his speech into two segments: Who is the Spirit? and, What He does, including a) creation, b) re-creation, and c) his relationship to Christ’s Church.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Who is the Holy Spirit? He is, together with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God. The Old Testament teaches us the divinity of the Holy Spirit already in Genesis where He is co-creator, hovering over the waters and breathing life into man. We see the Holy Spirit as life-giving, regenerative, and omnipresent. He was waiting for the completion of our redemption in Jesus Christ, after which we enjoy the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. His joy is in working constantly to bring us to Christ. He is divine, searching the deep things of God, making intercession. The Holy Spirit can also become our enemy, when we grieve the Lord with our sin. We confess Him to be the author also of God’s Holy Word; thus the Bible is the sword of the Spirit which cuts into our lives. Without the Spirit there is no Word, and without the Word there is no Spirit. Thanks to Him, we may hear the voice of our Father.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

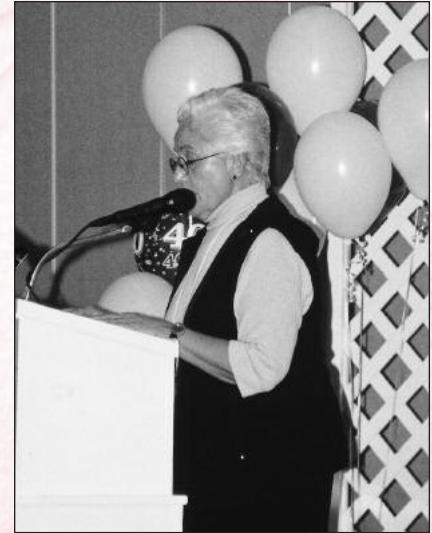
What does the Holy Spirit do? He is in creation, putting the finishing touches on what God the Father has made. When we see in springtime that the new grows out of the old by the power of the Spirit, who makes what is dead, alive, we receive a sneak preview of



*Rev. C. Bosch introducing his topic
"The Lord and Giver of Life"*



*Rev. C. Bosch with
Mrs. Martha DeGelder,
the President of the Women's League.*



*Mrs. Toni Kampen introducing her
topic "How then shall we Worship?"*

what He will do to our decaying world on the dawning of the new day! Then He will paint his eternal, final canvas. The Holy Spirit is also the finisher of creation, in re-creation. We confess in Lord's Day 20 that He makes us partake in Christ and all his benefits. His regenerating work is constant, made evident through our fruits of faith. We pray in Psalm 51 "do not take your Spirit from me," because it is the Spirit who equips us for a life of faith. We also know Him from his relationship with Christ's Church. The Church is the workshop of the Holy Spirit; we may not grieve Him by closing our hearts to the preaching of the Word.

Round-the-table discussion

We sang Hymn 36:1,2,4 to close the speech, then opened up round-the-table discussion. Questions resulting in these discussions were brought to Rev. Bosch. We discussed praying to the Holy Spirit, the sin against the Spirit which is constant and conscious rejection of Christ, the difference between the Old and New Testament working of the Holy Spirit, and the singing of spiritual, uplifting songs. Rev. Bosch welcomed additional questions to be forwarded to him later. Collection was held for MERF and we sang Psalm 29. Mrs. Cathy Scholtens asked God for a blessing on our meal. A delicious lunch was enjoyed by all in the spacious "dining room" and mothers of nursing infants took the hour to pick up their babies from the downstairs

nursery and enjoy them for a short time. We reconvened with prayer at 2:00 at which time Mrs. DeGelder read letters from the Netherlands and Australia, congratulating us on our League Day and sending warm greetings. The women of Burlington South entertained us with a light-hearted song about "The Butter Factory," at which they had fashioned among others a minister, aunt Jemima, and a wicked witch!

*"Our music
is to please
God, not to
entertain
ourselves."*

How then shall we worship?

We read from Revelation 4 and sang Hymn 4 to prepare for the afternoon speech which was presented by Mrs. Toni Kampen on the topic "How Then Shall We Worship?" She divided her speech into three points: Corporate Worship, Music and Worship, and Personal Worship (devotions). All heaven is jubilant before God and joins us in worship to God. Already in the Old

Testament, in Exodus 25-40, God details the tabernacle and the priesthood, teaching his people Israel how to worship Him. Israel could draw near to God in a formal, liturgical, solemn and holy way, focussing on God's majesty. We learn in the New Testament, Hebrews 5:8, to worship God with reverence and awe because He is a consuming fire. God speaks to us in corporate worship through the proclamation of his Word. We must come to church with our thoughts centred on God and our hearts prepared to hear his voice. Saturday evening already we prepare for Sunday, when we go to the place where we may say: "The living God is here!" We also worship God through music. Isaiah heard the seraphim in heaven singing "Holy, holy, holy!", the seraphim whose task it is to chant the holiness of God. Revelation 7:10b reveals the beauty of music, where heaven's songs are centred on God. The *Book of Psalms* also provides us with rich songs of praise for our life of faith and worship. Our music is to please God, not to entertain ourselves. The third aspect of worship is that of our personal devotions. We are taught to spend time in the reading of God's Word and in prayer, contemplating and meditating on what we read. We confess in Psalm 86:11, "Teach me your way, O God. Unite my heart to worship your Name." In order to know God, we must study his Word,



The glittering overhead lights welcomed 360 women.



and must “present our bodies as living sacrifices, which is our spiritual worship” (Rom 12:1).

We sang “Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet,” after which we opened the discussion. The topics of discussion included how we should pray, studying the unfamiliar Psalms from our *Book of Praise* at home so that they become more familiar, and the importance of family devotions. It was good to be reminded of the richness of our faith and the many ways God has given us to worship Him!

Reminiscing

As the day came to a close, we reminisced with Mrs. Vis from Attercliffe as she spoke about the League Day in 1964, held exclusively in the Dutch language! Mrs. DeGelder made several announcements. Our collection for MERF yielded \$1024. The ladies of Burlington South were thanked for their tremendous work in organizing the League Day. Next year the League Day will be hosted by Brampton, the

Lord willing. Mrs. Jane Oosterhoff was thanked for being the League representative for ILPB for eleven years. Mrs. Chandra Vanderboom has been found willing to replace her. Mrs. Shirley Broekema was thanked for her work on the Horizon Board in layout. We also thanked Mrs. Dicky de-Boer for her term as treasurer and welcomed Mrs. Ingrid Vandergaag in her place. A note was made that Mrs. Henrietta Vanderlaan will be completing her task as corresponding secretary one year before her second term is up, for which Mrs. Martha DeGelder will take on an extra year as President. We closed the day with the singing of Psalm 99:1,2,3. Mrs. Toni Kampen led us in a prayer of thanksgiving. C

Australian Christmas Tree

Its botanical name is Nuytsia floribunda named after the Dutch navigator Pieter Nuyts. It is known as Fire Tree, Golden Bough and more commonly, the Christmas Tree. It can only be found in Western Australia and flowers during the Christmas season. It is limited to areas of sandy bush land and it is unusual in that it grows but cannot be grown. This is because it is a root parasite that has no means of feeding except through the roots of established host plants. You can grow a seed and it will sprout, but it will stay at seedling size for years. In nature, it sends feeding stems for literally hundreds of metres in every direction, latching on to every plant in sight from grass to towering trees and partaking delicately from each of their life support systems.



We can stand in awe of God's work in creating this tree, which is arguably one of the most beautiful in the world, but its great botanical mystery is far from solved. To Him be the glory!

The photo is taken by Henry Houweling near Cape Naturaliste, Western Australia.



It isn't the Church – it's YOU


*If you want to have the kind of
church
Like the kind of church you like,
You needn't slip your clothes in
a grip
And start on a long, long hike.
You'll only find what you left
behind,
For there's nothing really new.
It's a knock at yourself when you
knock your church;
It isn't the church – it's you!*

*When everything seems to be going wrong,
And trouble seems everywhere brewing;
When prayer meeting, Young People's
meeting, and all
Seem simmering slowly-stewing,
Just take a look at yourself and say,
"What's the use of being blue?"
Are you doing your "bit" to make things
"bit"?
It isn't the church – it's you!*


*It's really strange sometimes, don't you
know,
That things go as well as they do,
When we think of the little – the very
small mite –
We add to the work of a few.
We sit, and stand around, and complain
of what's done,
And do very little but fuss.
Are we bearing our share of the burdens
to bear?
It isn't the church – it's us!*

*So, if you want to have the kind of
church
Like the kind of a church you like,
Put off your guile, and put on your best
smile,
And hike, my brother, just hike,
To the work in hand that has to be done –
The work of saving a few.
It isn't the church that is wrong, my boy;
It isn't the church – it's YOU.*

Author Unknown



*Let heav'n and earth praise Him with grateful songs,
The seas and all that stirs in them adore Him,
His people come with shouts of joy before Him,
For God shall save His Zion from her wrongs
And Judah's cities will the Lord rebuild.
There will His servants be, in praise excelling.
With their descendants will the land be filled;
And those who love His Name find there a dwelling.*



*Psalm 69:12
Book of Praise*



Difficult Tunes?¹

by J. Smith

The worship service is covenantal

It's my pleasure to speak to you tonight on the topic of congregational singing. Since I am an organist, you can well imagine that the singing in the worship service is something close to my heart. But it is not simply as an organist that I am speaking to you tonight, but as one of you. For the music in the worship service is not just the specialty of the organist or of a few people who are well-trained in music. It is a matter for the whole congregation.

When Rev. G. Van Dooren was still alive, one of the things which he stressed is that the worship service is covenantal. In the covenant, there are two sides, God on the one hand, and we on the other. So too there are two sides to the worship service: on the one hand God speaks to us in the Bible reading and in the preaching, and on the other hand, we respond to God through prayer, by giving gifts, and by singing praise to Him. God's Word comes to us from the pulpit, and the congregation responds from the pew. That is covenantal worship.

The organist

But where does the organist fit into all of this? The organist has his own task, sitting in a corner by himself, pushing the keys and the pedals, pulling the stops, and turning the pages of his music. He sits with the congregation during the sermon, but when the minister says, "Amen," off he goes, back to his music, away from the congregation, off in his own little world. Well, maybe it seems that way sometimes. But there are only two sides in

the worship service; the organist is not a third party. First and foremost, the organist is a worshipper, a member of the worshipping congregation. His primary task is to help the congregation to praise God in song. In that sense the organist is no different from anyone else. He is one of God's people, giving the covenantal response of praise, thanking God for the wonderful promises that we have heard in the reading and preaching of the Word.



*Every
once in a
while there's a
psalm on the
board with
an unfamiliar
tune.*

Now, you and I both know that singing is not always an easy task. We have 150 psalms in our *Book of Praise*, and sixty-five hymns. We don't have much trouble singing the hymns, and most of the psalms are well-known too. But every once in a while there's a psalm on the board with an unfamiliar tune; you try to sing along, but then you make a mistake, you start to sweat, you don't quite dare to keep going, especially if you don't read mu-

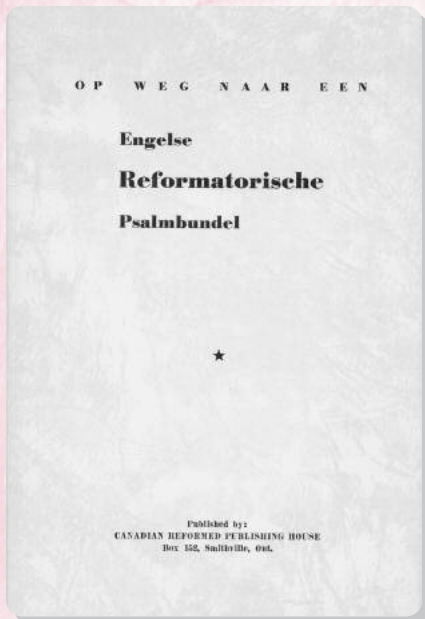
sic that well; then sometimes the organist stumbles, and that doesn't help matters either. It's a relief when the song is finally over. And when you leave church the biggest thing you remember about the service is what a hard tune that was.

Committee for improved singing

As many of you probably know, the council has a committee which deals with matters of organ playing and congregational singing. As committee we recently made a proposal to council for improving the singing. We suggested that this could be done by having the congregation practise some of the less familiar tunes before the worship service. As you have heard, council has accepted this proposal, and we are going to start doing this one service per month.

As brothers and sisters, we are all different, and we probably have our own ideas about this proposal. Some of us will think that it is a good idea. Others will have their questions; questions like, what is the use of practising those difficult tunes? After all there are plenty of other psalms and hymns to choose from; why not just avoid the hard ones? Or we might ask, if those tunes are so hard, why don't we get rid of them, and replace them with better ones? Others might add, those Genevan melodies are more than 400 years old anyway; isn't it time our *Book of Praise* had a "tune-up?"

Lots of questions, brothers and sisters, good questions, and bigger questions than I can answer in fifteen minutes. But what I will try to do is to lay down some of the main principles for congregational singing.



Report of deputies of Synod
Homewood 1954.

Do we have to sing all the psalms?

The first question is: do we have to sing all the psalms? Here I may begin with the Scripture passage that was read at the beginning of this meeting: Paul wrote to the Colossian congregation, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God" (Col 3:16) This passage tells us that the word of Christ has to dwell in us richly. In other words we have to be full of the Word of God; it must be always on our minds and on our lips. This is also true when we sing: the Word of God has to be on our lips. Paul did not tell the Colossians to sing whatever words they liked, but to sing the Word of God. And that is the first principle of congregational singing that I want to share with you tonight: we have to sing words which God has first given us in his Word.

Paul then mentions psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Now you might wonder, hey wait a minute, we have psalms and hymns in our *Book of Praise*, but what about spiritual songs? Aren't we missing something? But some explainers say that psalms, hymns and spiritual songs are three different terms for the psalms; all three of these words refer to the 150 psalms. That is indeed possible. If you look at

the title of some of the psalms, such as 65, 66, 67, 68, 75, or 76, the title says, "A Psalm, a song." In other words, they are both psalms and songs. And Matthew 26:30 tells us that after Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper at the Passover celebration, he and his disciples sang a hymn. We know from the customs of that time that the hymn that they sang was probably one of the psalms. For in those days they sang psalms 113-118 at the feast of the Passover.

But whatever the case, we know that the New Testament commands us to sing psalms. That is what they did in the early church already. Many of the psalms were forgotten by the Roman church in the Middle Ages. But during the Reformation, the Reformers rediscovered the Word of God, and they also rediscovered the importance of singing the psalms. One of the mottos of the Reformation is *sola Scriptura*, Scripture alone!, and for the Reformers this also applied to the singing. It meant that the people had to sing the songs that were found in the Bible. The Reformers translated the Bible into the language of the people, and they also set the psalms to music and rhyme so that the congregation could sing them again. This did not mean, of course, that they were not allowed to sing hymns. Already in the Bible we have other songs besides the 150 psalms, such as the two songs of Moses, and the songs of Hannah, Zechariah, Mary, and Simeon. The Reformers in general did not forbid hymns, but emphasized that these had to be Scriptural. The most important principle for congregational singing is that our songs are Scriptural.

But do we have to sing all the psalms? Can't we skip the hard ones and stick to the easy ones? Here we have to remember first of all that it is God who gave us His complete revelation; He also forbids us to add or to take anything away from it. If we want to know the whole will of God, then we have to pay attention to the whole Bible. It was God who decided to give us 150 psalms, not 120 or 130. So if we are commanded to sing psalms, we should sing them all. If we consistently neglect some of them, we are neglecting some of God's Word and withholding some of the praise that is due to his name. We know the *Book of Psalms* to be a very rich book of

comfort. We read there of the experiences of very human people, people like us, with all the joys, the sorrows, the hopes, the disappointments, the fears, and the cares of life. The more we sing the psalms, the more they become part of our life, the more they can comfort us in times of trouble. And then it can only help us to learn new psalms; these too can enrich our lives and bring praise to God.



Many of the psalms were forgotten by the Roman church in the Middle Ages.

Deal with these difficult tunes

But then we still have to deal with these difficult tunes. Are they not more of a hindrance than a help? Would it not be better to replace them with easier tunes? Is it really necessary that all of the psalms have Genevan tunes? These are not new questions, brothers and sisters. They have been asked ever since the Canadian Reformed Churches began. When we and our parents and grandparents first came to Canada, they found that the Genevan Psalter which they knew so well and loved so much did not exist in the English language. So what should they do? Should they use the *Psalter Hymnal* of the Christian Reformed Church? After all, it did have some of the Genevan tunes, and many of the other psalms set to different tunes. Or should they make their own Genevan Psalter in the English language? That would be a huge task, and few of the immigrants were fluent in English. Some of you can remember the questions.

Already the first national synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches dealt with this. Because the delegates there were concerned that some of the songs



in the *Psalter Hymnal* were not faithful to Scripture, they decided to be very careful in using it: they said that only the thirty-four psalms which were set to Genevan tunes in the *Psalter Hymnal* should be used in the churches. They also appointed a committee to begin the task of translating the rest of the psalms. And so the first English *Book of Praise* in our churches was a little green booklet with thirty-four psalms. But did everyone agree that the Psalter should only have Genevan tunes? Not at all! In the Acts of General Synod Edmonton 1965 we read that Synod instructed the deputies for the *Book of Praise*: "not to be restricted to the 'Genevan tunes' but be authorized to use other melodies which are in harmony with the purpose of congregational singing in the church services; [namely] the praise of the Lord." They were also authorized "to publish, by way of exception, two different rhymings of the same Psalm (one on a Genevan tune, one on a different tune) in the Psalter, in cases when omission of one of these would clearly mean a loss, especially with regard to the melody" (Article 35, p. 70).

Moreover, in the Acts of General Synod Orangeville 1968, we read that Synod said that those tunes which are hard to sing should be replaced by "other melodies of priceless value" (Article 87, p. 30). But when the deputies reported to the next Synod in 1971, they said that they had decided to use only

Genevan tunes, even the difficult tunes. The *Book of Praise* was printed in 1972 and presented to General Synod Toronto in 1974. Why did they decide to use only the Genevan tunes for the psalms? Rev. Van Dooren tells us this in a speech that he made to Synod when he presented them with the finished product (Article 101, p. 40):

. . . we established contact with experts, not only in language but also in Church music. For a moment these contacts spread over nearly the whole world, even reaching as far as Japan. In answer to our questions, the final result of advices received from Church music experts was that, as far as the tunes were concerned, we should preserve the Genevan Psalter unmixed and undefiled.



*The more
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times in
trouble.*

Over the years the words of the psalms have been revised here and there, but so far as I know, no General Synod again dealt with the question of replacing the difficult Genevan tunes with other ones. So here we are: we have the Genevan tunes for all 150 psalms. And we as Canadian Reformed churches find ourselves with a rich collection of the whole *Book of Psalms* to sing to the praise of God.


There have always been people among us who do not care for the Genevan tunes. People are different, and we all have different tastes in mu-

sic. But we must never let go of the psalms, for they are the Word of God which God has commanded us to sing. And in the *Book of Praise* we have all the verses of all 150 psalms set to music and ready to be sung. Many of the tunes we have come to love. They are versatile tunes. Think of Psalm 130 which we can sing with sadness: "Out of the depths of sadness, O Lord, I cried to thee." And we can also sing it with joy: "Hope in the Lord, O nation! . . . his plenteous salvation He'll send you from above." And then there are some other tunes that are a little harder to love. We call them the difficult tunes.

But are they really so difficult?

But are they really so difficult, brothers and sisters? I am convinced that they are not difficult, but only unfamiliar. We do not sing some of the psalms very often, and that is why we do not know them. And that becomes a cycle: we then don't choose to sing them either, so we never learn them. But I think we will find as we practise these tunes that they are no different in style than the other more familiar tunes: they are not more complicated. They only have half notes and quarter notes, just like the rest of the psalms, and they have a rest at the end of every line. I think that with some effort and cooperation we can learn them quite easily. It will help if teachers assign some of these psalms to the students for memory work, and if parents sing them with their families at home. It will help if we include them in the worship services every once in a while.

I do not know how it will go, brothers and sisters, but let's do our best to learn these tunes. Let us in this way also build each other up, and let us do it all for the glory of God's name, for that is the goal of all our praise and worship.

¹This is a speech given at a congregational meeting of the Canadian Reformed Church in Burlington-Waterdown on March 26, 2001. 





Institution of the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church

by Marlene DeBoersap

First worship service

On August 12, 2001 at 4 p.m. the members of the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church gathered together to worship God as a new congregation. Weeks of planning came to fruition with this inaugural service.

Covenant church is comprised of members from both the Lincoln and Smithville congregations. Locally we are called "the Grassie church" because the hamlet of Grassie is a central location for our members. However, depending on where, the Lord willing, land is purchased we could eventually be called "the Grimsby-South church." We currently worship in the Smithville church building.

Rev. J. VanVliet preached from Psalm 122:6-9 where David speaks of the peace of Jerusalem. In Hebrews 12 there is a reference to the heavenly Jerusalem which is the church of the firstborn, Jesus Christ. In this way, the Psalm also applies to us. The theme and points for the sermon were: The Peace of Jerusalem is ours in Christ. 1) This peace is prayed for; 2) this peace is proclaimed; 3) this peace is pursued.

Rev. VanVliet explained that the covenant which God has established with us is "a covenant of peace" (Ezek 37:26). However, it is a mediated peace through Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant. Therefore, we have the peace of Jerusalem *in Him*. Yet, having received this peace in Christ, we must also work it out as members of his church. In the first place, we should pray for peace, unity and harmony in our midst. And having prayed we should actively show the love of Christ to the entire congregation with-

out discrimination. Next, we heard that this peace is proclaimed. We should not underestimate what a privilege it is to hear this gospel of peace proclaimed from the pulpit Sunday after Sunday. Finally, we were reminded that the peace of the congregation must be pursued. Sometimes it requires sacrifices on our part to do what needs to be done for the good of God's household. However, knowing what a great sacrifice Christ made for us, we are spurred on to seek the prosperity of our friends and brethren.



*David speaks
of the peace
of Jerusalem.*

A good start

Rev. VanVliet's sermon put us off to a good start with the theme of peace resounding in our hearts and minds. After the ordination of council and words of congratulations from sister churches we rounded off the afternoon with a social gathering.

Snippets of conversation were overheard about how quickly the plans for institution became reality. How quickly? Approximately twenty-one weeks from the first full institution committee meeting in March to today's inaugural service.

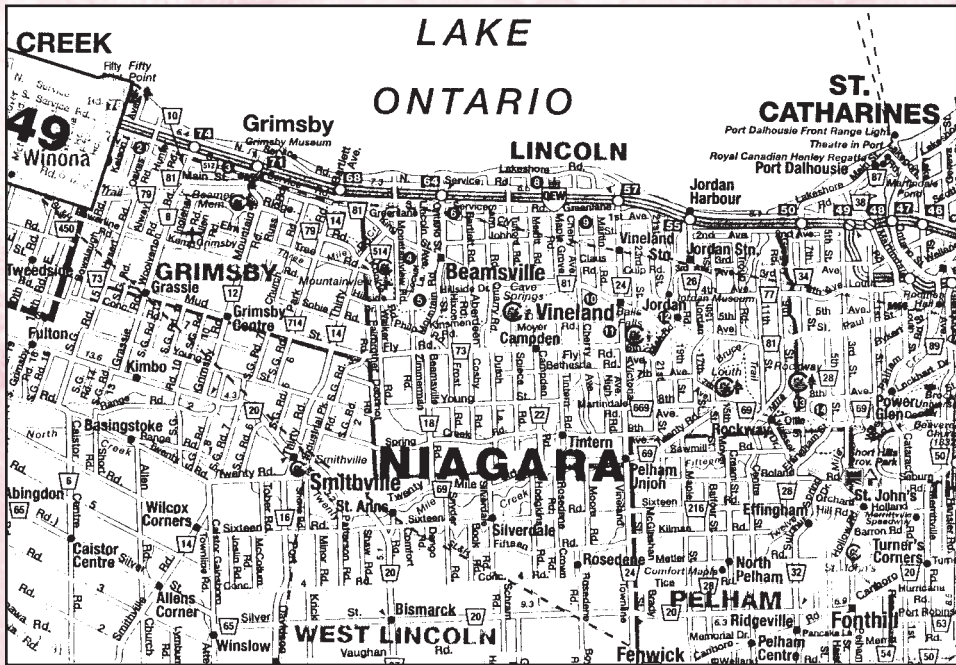
How it all began

In December, 2000 a common topic of conversation was how the Lord had richly blessed both the Lincoln and Smithville congregations with abundant growth. Thankful for growth, but not so keen on the overcrowded seating arrangements, the Lincoln council published a call for voluntary proposals from within this congregation. This was on the premise that a voluntary institution would be preferable to a forced split.

A group of six brothers from Grimsby came together and took up the challenge. After advising the Lincoln consistory, this group became known as the Grimsby Institution Committee. Realizing Grimsby did not have enough families to begin a new institution, and recognizing Smithville was also in need of expanding, the Grimsby Institution Committee contacted the Smithville Expansion Committee on January 5, 2001. Would Smithville consider the feasibility of a church in Grassie with members from Grimsby and west Smithville?

Smithville was already in the advanced stages of planning their own east-west split. After having put considerable effort into their own plans, the Smithville Expansion Committee was nevertheless willing to explore mutual options and put their well-developed plans on hold.

On February 1, 2001 representatives from both committees met informally to discuss the feasibility of instituting a new church instead of splitting two existing ones. It was agreed to proceed. An enlarged committee, now consisting twelve members, six from



Covenant Canadian Reformed Church is the gateway to the Niagara Peninsula churches.

Services are currently held in the Smithville church building.



Grimsby and six from Smithville, met for the first time as the “Grassie” Institution Committee on March 7, 2001. A new executive was elected by the Committee members and work began full throttle.

Committee at work

The “Grassie” Institution Committee consisted of the following: Esko Vaisanen, chairman; Jake Ravensbergen, vice-chairman; Mike DeBoersap, treasurer; Ron Boverhof, recording secretary; Wayne Breukelman, corresponding secretary; Fred Post, property search co-ordinator; Dave VanAmerongen Jr., building co-ordinator; and members-at-large: Jaco Haas, Fred Tamminga, Grace VanAndel, Bert Vis, and Henry Vis.

On April 6, 2001 every family living within the proposed borders received an information package which contained an introductory letter, a map

of proposed boundaries, a proposed membership list based on those boundaries, and a proposed church budget. The committee members paired up to visit members in their homes. Some seventy homes were contacted or visited within approximately two and a half weeks. On April 18, the committee decided to establish seventy-five percent as the minimum level of support amongst the decided communicant membership needed to proceed with the institution. The committee was humbled and thankful for the results: eighty-eight percent support. The support grew to ninety-five percent by the second membership meeting.

Membership meetings

The first “Grassie” membership meeting was held on April 26, 2001 in the Smithville Church annex. At this meeting decisions were made by the

proposed membership on a budget and on a process for electing the first council. The committee then prepared the “Formal Request for Cooperation for the Constitution of a Consistory for the Canadian Reformed Church of Grassie” and submitted this request to both councils on May 3, 2001. On May 8, both councils, meeting independently, unanimously approbated the request as presented. The formal request was then taken forward to Classis Ontario South by the delegates of Lincoln. Classis convened on June 13, 2001, and with thankfulness, the formal request was approbated by Classis.

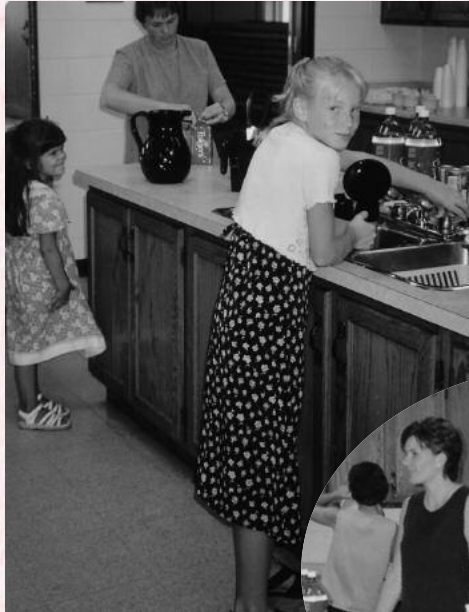
On June 27, the second “Grassie” membership meeting was held for the purpose of adopting a name for the new congregation as well as electing office bearers to the first council. On August 12, the Covenant Canadian Reformed Church was instituted.

The first bulletin

Esko Vaisanen wrote in our first bulletin:

In hindsight, it would be safe to say that none of the Committee members initially realized just how much work would be involved in the institution of a new church. Notwithstanding, it was both an honour and privilege to be able to carry out this work. As Committee, we owe a debt of gratitude to our spouses and families for their patient support and encouragement. We also thank the members of the new congregation for their enthusiastic support, their suggestions, and their prayers. On this memorable day, as brothers and sisters in the Lord, we witness the continuing church building work of our Lord. *Soli Deo gloria.*

*Preparing for
Coffee Social*



*Soli Deo
gloria.*

*Consistory members
from Lincoln and
Smithville and
Covenant
Council Elect.*



*Coffee Social enjoyed by
covenant members and
visitors from sister
churches.*

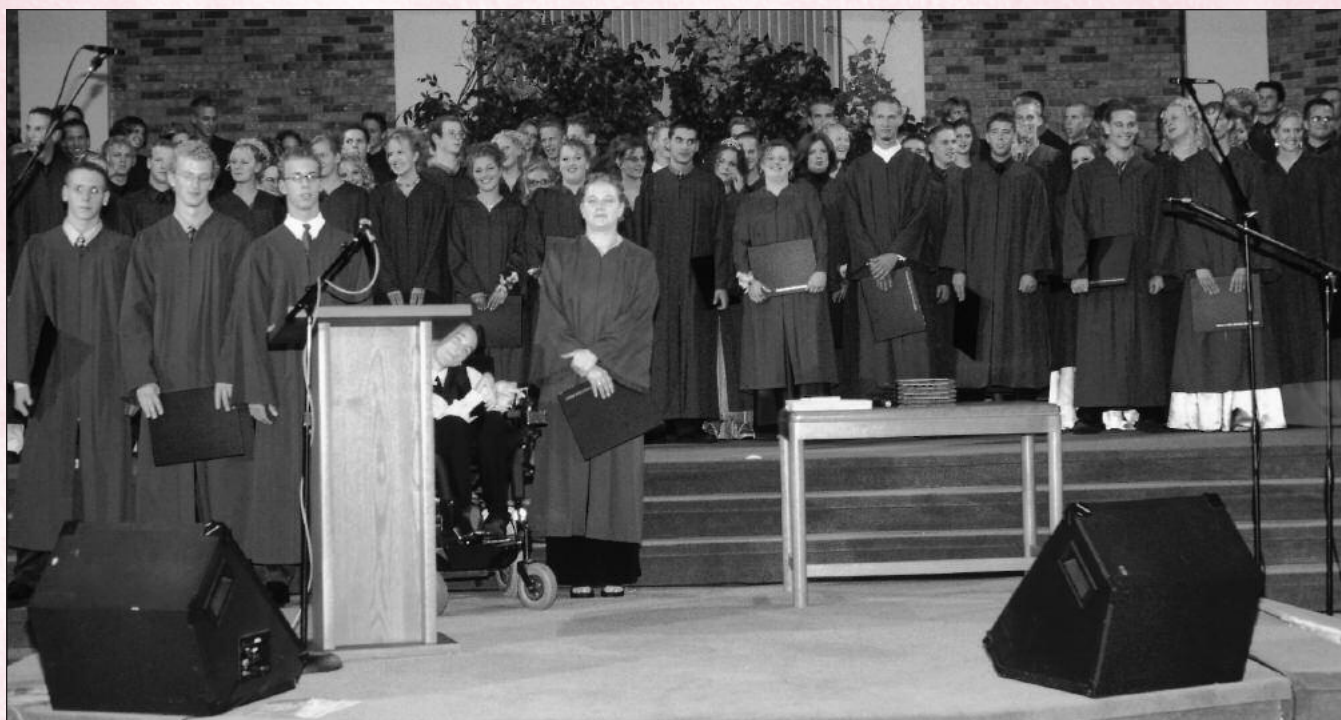




The Eighty-Nine Pearls

Guido Graduation 2001

by Michael Noot



This year's graduating class was one of the largest in the school's twenty-six year history, with eighty-nine students receiving a secondary school diploma.

As the leaves changed colours and the temperature dropped in southern Ontario, thoughts in the Guido community turned to graduation. Graduates, parents, board members, teachers, and friends all gathered at Park Bible Church in Burlington on Friday, October 26, to witness the official release of eighty-nine pearls.

The chairman of the board, Mr. Leo Kampen, opened the evening with a word of prayer and the reading of Psalm 46. Mr. Kampen explained that this Psalm is about leave-takings. He compared the Israelites' situation as

they left Egypt to the situation of the Guido graduates. He emphasized that, just as the Israelites were faced with a long journey in a wilderness that did not know God, so the graduates face a long journey in a world that denies our God. Mr. Kampen concluded his remarks by underlining the fact that God will guide the graduates through the wilderness.

Following the opening speech, the principal, Mr. Hans VanDooren, welcomed everyone to the ceremony. He delivered an address that focused on intersections. He mentioned the busy

hallway intersection near the office and gymnasium and the new all-way stop intersection near the school. He highlighted these examples in order to emphasize the importance of intersections – they make us pause and think. Mr. VanDooren concluded by saying that no other intersection will make us think more than the intersection between the word and the world.

The Guido choir then provided a break in the speeches by beautifully performing two pieces, *Alleluia Canon* and *For just a little while*. In the second piece, Mrs. Leanne VanBostelen

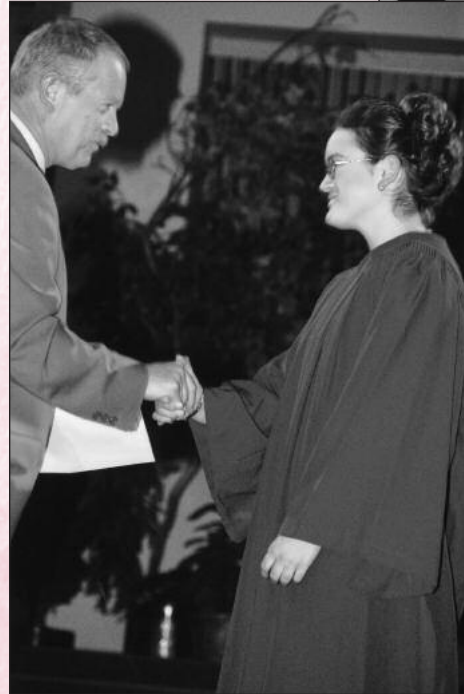
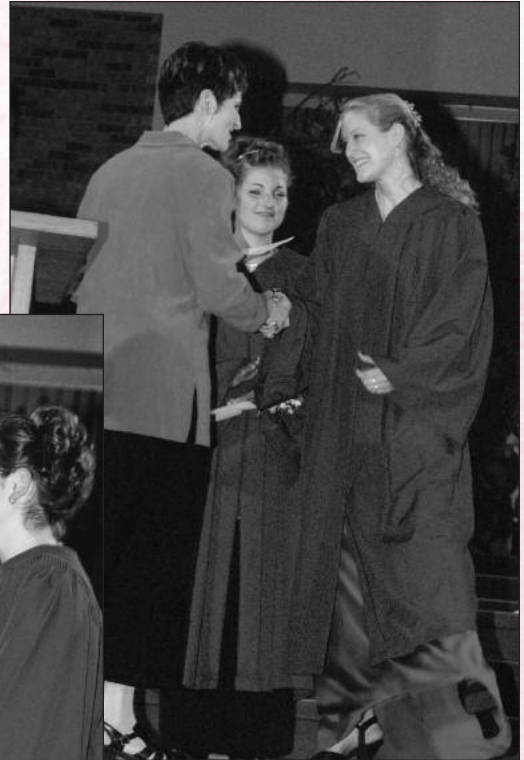
inspired the crowd with a solo and several male teachers joined the all-girls choir.

The guest speaker, Rev. George Ph. van Popta, continued with the chairman's theme of leave-takings by comparing the graduates to eighty-nine pearls. He explained that the students had now been released from their oysters and let out into the great big sea. He spent some time explaining that, because of the events on September 11 in the United States, the sea is now more dangerous than ever. We all live in a world where the West is clashing with militant Islam, he said, and it is not out the realm of possibility that the sea may one day turn its tide against Christians. He comforted and strengthened the graduates, and all his listeners, by saying that surviving in this sea requires only two things: faith in God and a striving for his kingdom.

Rev. van Popta's speech was followed by the moment all graduates had been waiting for: the presentation of their diplomas. After the presentation, the handshakes, and a few smiles, the graduating class was introduced to the audience, who gave them a standing ovation.

Following this presentation, many of the graduates received the additional honour of special awards. The exceptional achievements of this class

Lisa Vanderwoude and Angela Ouwersloot were awarded generous scholarships from higher institutions of learning.



Deanna Smid was presented with the Dr. F. G. Oosterhoff Student-of-the-Year Award for her exceptional contribution to school life in general.

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMAS

Anton Alkema
Jonathan Bax
Sarah Beintema
Christopher Blokker
Michael Boeringa
Bradley Boersema
Jonathan Boersema
Lataunya Bol
Marina Bremer
Jennifer Brinkman
Victoria Buikema
Krista Dantuma
Lindsay Dantuma
Justin Deboer
Lee-Ann Dekker
William den Hollander
William Dykema
Cara Faber
Jentine Gootjes
Tanya Groen
Andrew Harsevoort
Pieter Harsevoort
Cornelius Heemskerck

Mary-Jane Heemskerck
Colin Hekert
Emily Helder
Peter Helder
Dustin Hofsink
Cyrus Hopman
Aaron Hordyk
Eric Horlings
Christopher Hulzebosch
Ashlea Jagt
Joanne Jans
Cheryl Jelsma
Kimberley Kamstra
Rebecca Kelly
Ryan Kingma
Amanda Knegt
Mark Kottelenberg
Jessica Linde
Timothy Linde
Henry Lof
Dustin Ludwig
Sherri Ludwig
Gordon Malda

Richard Malda
Joseph Morris
Melanie Muis
Andrea Nederveen
Bruce Nyenhuis
Denise Oostdyk
Jason Oosterhoff
Jonathan Oosterhoff
Deborah Ostermeier
Angela Ouwersloot
Suzanne Ouwersloot
Amy Poort
Karen Poort
Jason Porter
Sophie-Ann Ravensbergen
Krystle Richer
Sarah Roodzant
Cassandra Ruggi
Cedric Sandink
Michelle Schutten
Deanna Smid
Arie Smouter
Travis Spoelstra

Anne Stegenga
Karin Terpstra
Mark Torenvliet
Sharalee Vandenbos
Brian Vanderhoeven
Mark Vanderpol
David VanderVeen
Jennifer VanderVelde
Jordan VanderVelde
Kimberley VanderVelde
Lisa VanderWoude
Karyn VanDooren
Michelle VanDyk
Melissa VanHengstum
Adam VanHof
Henry VanLuik
Jeanette VanPykeren
Michelle VanVeen
Hilda VanZanten
Karen Vis

were highlighted by these awards as a large percentage of the graduates were called up on stage.

Next, the audience was entertained by a terrific, and often times humorous, valedictory address by Pieter Harsevoort to conclude the evening. Pieter spoke about the nature of education and recalled many comic events of the last four years with his class. He concluded by effectively summarizing the theme of the evening: trust in the LORD and He will provide you with all things.



Pieter Harsevoort, congratulated here by the Principal, Mr. J. G. VanDooren, later, in his valedictory address reminded his fellow graduates of the highlights of their four years at Guido de Brès.

AWARDS

The Harry Aasman Memorial Scholarship

Deanna Smid

The George DeBoer Memorial Scholarship

Angela Ouwersloot

The Guido de Brès Alumni Scholarships

Marina Bremer
Peter Helder
Mark Kottelenberg
Jordan VanderVelde
Lisa VanderWoude
Karen Vis

The Premier School Agendas Ltd. Scholarships

William den Hollander
Jentine Gootjes
Pieter Harsevoort
Kim Kamstra
Sherri Ludwig

The Redeemer University College Board of Governors Scholarship

Lisa VanderWoude

The Ontario Aiming for the Top Tuition Scholarship

Angela Ouwersloot

The Edward M. Stam Technological Proficiency Award

Jennifer Brinkman and
Sophie Ravensbergen

The Ontario Scholar Certificates for 2000-01

William den Hollander
Mark Kottelenberg
Angela Ouwersloot
Deanna Smid
Karen Vis

The Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award for Students

Cheryl Jelsma

The Dr. F. G. Oosterhoff Student-of-the-Year Award

Deanna Smid

The Governor-General's Bronze Medal

Deanna Smid

The Guido de Brès Christian High School Participation Awards

Lataunya Bol
Marina Bremer
Lindsay Dantuma
Cara Faber
Jentine Gootjes
Kimberley Kamstra
Mark Kottelenberg
Melanie Muis
Deborah Ostermeier
Angela Ouwersloot
Cassandra Ruggi
Deanna Smid
Sharalee Vandenbos
Brian Vanderhoeven
Lisa VanderWoude
Karen Vis

C

Hymn 65

*All praise and thanks
to God
The Father now be
given
The Son, and Him
who reigns
With Them in highest
heaven,
The one Eternal God,
Whom earth and
heaven adore
For thus it was, is
now
And shall be ever-
more.*



News from . . .



The Women's Savings Action

Contributions received

With thankfulness to the Lord we may report that during the past year a total of \$31,242.02 was collected. This amount is up considerably from what has been collected during the last few years and we are very grateful for that.

As you can see on the list of contributions, \$55.00 was received from Australia – this comes from the Women's Society "Priscilla" in Albany. It is gratifying to see our sisters in Albany re-

member the work of the Women's Savings Action. Thanks very much! Royalties from books written by the late Prof. L. Selles for ILPB netted \$776.81. We very much appreciate these additions to the total amount collected.

College evening

With the increase in the amount collected and the fact that we no longer have to save for expansion we decided to increase our contribution for the library to \$27,000. For the last

seven years we had given \$25,000, so the College community is very delighted with the additional \$2,000 to spend on books and periodicals. Our heartfelt gratitude to all of you for making this possible!

Changes in the board

When Carla Zietsma handed over a cheque for the purchase of books and periodicals to the principal this past College evening, she did so for the last time. After acting as our treasurer for

WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION

Contributions for the year ended June 30, 2001
(with comparative figures for the previous year)

Congregation	2001	2000	Congregation	2001	2000
Abbotsford	\$ 752.50	\$ 715.00	Houston	\$ 420.00	\$ 384.29
Aldergrove	977.50	600.00	Kerwood		
Ancaster	1,123.46	926.60	Langley	1,554.10	1,401.00
Attercliffe	1,017.50	1,006.50	Langley/Willoughby Heights	860.00	295.00
Barrhead	808.00	1,375.22	Lincoln	569.00	308.20
Brampton	177.34	146.24	London		240.00
Burlington Ebenezer	1,023.50	972.35	Lynden	538.08	585.11
Burlington Fellowship	566.00	557.62	Neerlandia	1,469.80	
Burlington Waterdown	935.00	780.00	Orangeville	320.47	457.00
Calgary	490.75	362.00	Ottawa	202.00	
Carman East	355.00	242.00	Owen Sound	255.00	285.00
Carman West	233.00	531.00	Rockway		
Chatham	525.00	625.00	Smithers	999.43	819.96
Chilliwack	445.00	489.00	Smithville	1,355.91	1,195.40
Cloverdale	695.00	1,020.00	Surrey	402.00	525.00
Coaldale	615.00	827.50	Taber	105.00	
Edmonton Immanuel	1,096.00	1,226.00	Toronto	494.69	
Edmonton Providence	2,299.22	2,730.23	Vernon	516.50	324.50
Elora	105.90	100.20	Winnipeg Grace	590.00	635.00
Fergus	1,110.78	710.74	Winnipeg Redeemer	642.00	738.25
Flamborough	724.43	662.94	Yarrow		
Grand Rapids	128.41		Australia	55.00	647.39
Grand Valley	206.27	147.63	Royalties (Selles)	776.81	1,214.99
Guelph	1,004.00	626.50			
Hamilton	1,656.67	1,519.14			
			TOTAL COLLECTED	\$31,242.02	\$28,995.50

the past twelve years, Carla is passing on the financial responsibilities to Chris Nienhuis. Thanks, Carla, for volunteering your services all those years! This spring Liz Hofsink resigned from her position as president. Thanks, Liz, for cheerfully fulfilling your duties! It was decided that Joanne Van Dam would take over as president. Dinie Gootjes was found willing to assume the secretarial duties. Chris and Dinie, a hearty welcome and thanks for your willingness to serve on the board! All in all, a rather new look to the board but our commitment remains the same and we look forward to continuing this important work of serving the College community together with all of you.

Sincere appreciation

Yes, all of you make it possible for us to present our annual gift for the library of the Theological College. Our heartfelt gratitude to all the representatives and their teams who spend hours organizing, collecting and counting! We warmly welcome new representatives and helpers and express sincere appreciation for the dedicated efforts and enthusiasm to those who have retired. But we would have nothing to give and the representatives would have nothing to count if all of you did not faithfully make your donations and we do thank you from the heart.

The new library

As you can imagine, the College community is very happy and thankful

for the new library facility. During this past year it has proved to be very functional. Daily it is put to good use by faculty and students. It is a real blessing that the College may now enjoy a new modern library building. But a library building, however important, is only a building. What really makes a library are the books and periodicals. And for a library to stay functional, it must be kept up-to-date and continue to grow. It must keep abreast of new developments and our changing times.

A gift

That is where we may perform our vital role. Yes, we may. It is strictly voluntary. Every year we, as Women's Savings Action, may come with a gift on the College Evening. But, it is a gift which is of utmost importance for the library, because it is the main source of funds for the purchase of books and periodicals. It is a gift which over the years the College community has come to count on, but it has never been taken for granted! When you give a gift, you show that you care. We thank you so much for giving, for collecting, for counting, for wanting to participate in showing our love for the College. If, perchance, you or your congregation did not participate in our gift this year, do join us this coming year! Our gift is for a very special purpose; it is for the Theological College where future preachers and teachers of the Word may be trained. We thank the Lord for giving us willing hearts and providing us with the means to be able to continue this most worthwhile

work. To Him alone goes all the praise and glory!

A new secretary

After the writing of this newsletter, I will be passing on the secretary's duties into the capable hands of Dinie Gootjes. During the last twelve years, I have written the words "thank you" countless times. Let me end this newsletter by once again saying "thank you" to all of you – the many representatives and helpers during the last twelve years for your wonderful cooperation, and all of you who have given and continue to give so generously. Above all, my gratitude to the Lord for giving me the opportunity to serve in this way.

The new board:


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Email: cvandam@sympatico.ca

Secretary:

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Treasurer:

Mrs. Christine Nienhuis
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Stoney Creek ON L8J 1P4
Ph. 905 561-4220
Email: pelican@icom.ca 

*Our soul awaits the great Redeemer;
Our help and shield, Him we acclaim.
Our hearts rejoice in Him and glory,
For we trust in His holy Name.
So we humbly pray Thee,
Let Thy steadfast mercy,
Lord, upon us be,
And in love deliver
Us, Thy flock, forever,
As we hope in Thee.*



Psalm 33:6
Book of Praise



Update from the Reformed Mission Work in the Ukraine: August 2001

by Jan Werkman¹

Tavriyske

The Church in Tavriyske has grown. Twice, brothers and sisters publicly professed their faith and became members of the congregation. The congregation is growing towards the election of elders. The Lord willing, elections will take place in September. The congregation dismissed the evangelist who was working there. Now there is an empty place, with no spiritual worker. Everyone is busy thinking about a solution to this problem. A Pravoslavian church (Kievan Patrachy) has appeared in the village. This strongly influences the religious context of the local Reformed church.

Dnipropetrovsk

In Dnipropetrovsk nothing has changed. The very small congregation worships together every Sunday in someone's home. They are still looking for an evangelist or pastor.

Kiyv

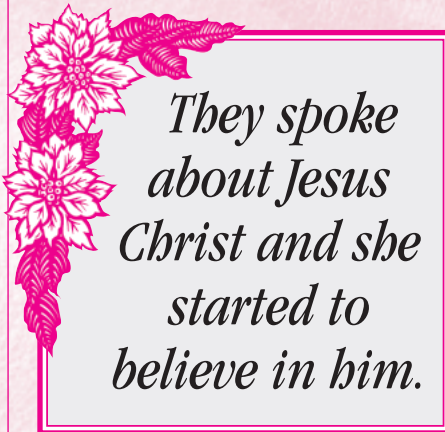
One of the participants in the group which studies the Bible and catechism will publicly confess his faith next month. For this small congregation this means a lot. There are few new guest members. Because of my trips to the south, I'm often absent. So we are waiting for Sandor and Ibolya who will work in Kiyv from the first of October.

Ridna Ukrainka

The congregation in this small village has grown in faith. They have started to talk about public profession of faith. Next week they will probably formally accept guest members. The worship services will now be organized in accordance with Reformed liturgy.

Kakhovka

In this small town, about 100 kilometres from Kherson, the Lord has given us brothers and sisters. They have their own leader who organizes worship services. This leader was looking for Reformed brothers and sisters already for a long time. Via several intermediate steps he got the address of the church in Tavriyske. In June 2001 he became a member in Tavriyske together with his family. The congregation of Tavriyske will support him until his own congregation in Kakhovka has been organized in the Reformed manner. This brother, Mikola Troyan, hopes to study at the Reformed seminary in Kiyv.



Kherson

Our colleague from Simferopol, Frikkie Mulder, met a young woman in the city of Kherson. They spoke about Jesus Christ and she started to believe in Him. Frikkie asked me to help him in his support to this woman. I can do that during my trips to the region of Kherson – Tavriyske – Kakhovka. Also Mikola

Troyan will help. The final responsibility will lie with Frikkie Mulder for this work. We hope and pray that the Lord will use this small seed to create a Reformed church in Kherson in the future.

Literature

The work of producing literature continues. We have to correct the existing Ukrainian brochures because there are some grammatical errors. Then we translate the brochures into Russian. We also need to make more new brochures but there is no time for that for the time being.

Simferopol

Brother Frikkie Mulder, who works among the Muslims in Crimea, asked me, "Is it permitted to translate some Ukrainian booklets which came from the library of Pastor Volodimir Borovsky and from the libraries of others into Russian?" I told him, "Yes, it is permitted." The reason is that the owners of these libraries gave these books to the Ukrainian Evangelical Reformed Church (UERC) in the hope that they will be used for the up building of the church of our risen Lord. That's one argument. But there is also a juridical point of view. From Kiev I cannot determine whether the publishers of these books still exist. Probably it is only a formalistic point. Nevertheless, if one of you, dear readers, has a remark to make about this, please get in touch with Frikkie Mulder.

Conclusion

The new developments in the congregations give a lot of work. I'm travelling more often and longer to the region of Tavriyske. That is rather burdensome

for my family and for me, but we understand that it is necessary. We need your prayers to fulfill this task. I also ask your prayers for Mikola Troyan and his congregation. May the Lord grant that they soon be recognized by the UERC as a Reformed congregation. Pray for Tavriyske and their concerns about the vacancy. Let's give thanks to the Lord. He gave this growth!

¹Rev. Jan Werkman is a missionary in the Ukraine for the Dutch Mission – Hattem, The Netherlands

*We need your
prayers to fulfill
this task.*



Addresses:

Joint Reformed and Presbyterian Seminary of Kiyv

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01033 Kiev; phone and fax:
+380 (0)44 220959
email: ersu@ukrpack.net

Church of Kiyv

(via Rev. Jan Werkman)
Jan Werkman, UI Dobriy Put 51
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+380 (0)44 2653681
email: refmiss@jw.relc.com

Ukraine Committee

Galenshoeve 2
8052 AW Hattem, the Netherlands
email: uc.secr@hetnet.nl



In Memoriam:

*Rev. David Craig,
1937 - 2001*

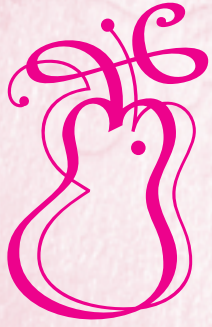
by **E.H. Pol**

On October 25, 2001, Rev. David Craig, minister of the l'Église Réformée du Québec (ERQ) at Repentigny, died suddenly. His memorial took place on Sunday afternoon, October 28. Rev. Craig also taught lectures at L'Institut Farel in Montreal.

David had a special place in the hearts and minds of many people, young and old alike. He will be missed most of all by his wife Nancy and their two grown children, who now live in Ontario and British Columbia. David was a real man of God. A faithful preacher and beloved teacher, as well as a dear friend to many. He was one of the founding fathers of the ERQ. His teaching has resulted in many converts from Catholicism to a Reformed view of Scripture. God's ways are beyond our understanding as we ponder the loss to the Church of Repentigny and L'Institut Farel.

The sermon at the funeral was held in French by Rev. J.G. Zoellner on 2 Corinthians 4:14- 5:5. Family members spoke, ministers expressed their thoughts, the *lieutenant-gouverneur* of Quebec spoke, since David was a senior chaplain overseeing chaplaincy in Quebec. There was a good number of military personnel present as well. For the sake of both David's and Nancy's unilingual relatives the memorial service alternated in French and English.

The service was held in the downtown United Church next to the *Musee des Beaux Arts* on Sherbrooke street, where the Montreal ERQ has its Sunday worship services. This large church was almost filled with people. The burial was held the next day on Monday October 29, 2001.



Greijdanus Orchestra Successfully Tours Ontario

by K. Sikkema

The 45-member orchestra of the Reformed Greijdanus High School in Zwolle, the Netherlands, spent its fall-break in Canada. The enthusiastic musicians and students and four chaperones were thrilled to see the country and to display their musical talents in concerts as well as workshops in several schools. According to organizer Bram Verhoef, the preparations took two years to complete, "But it is a fascinating trip, and we are being very well received. The audience shows its appreciation, and that it is something very special for them."

The day after their arrival and reception in guest-families in Fergus, the group went to St. Jacob's farmers' market, and presented their first concert in St. George's Anglican Church in Guelph. The following Monday was filled with workshops at Maranatha/Emmanuel Schools in Fergus, followed by a similar program in Hamilton on Tuesday. With over 400 students, Guido de Brès Christian High in Hamilton is numerically the largest Reformed High School in Canada, but that is but small compared to the school of 2500 students the Dutch guests were used to! However, they were thrilled to ride a true school bus, rather than a luxury touring-car as they traveled from the one concert or stop to the next. The itinerary included performances in Smithville, Toronto, Owen Sound, and a fare-well concert in Fergus. The group's stops included Niagara Falls, the Maid of the Mist, the CN Tower, natural parks, and of course a Big Whopper.

Just before the Smithville concert, director Aad Stevens encouraged his orchestra. "Do your best. It's a full house. Show your best side . . . yes, that's the way to do it, Henriëke! This concert is unique. You can't redo it. Don't spend too much time tuning your instruments Twenty seconds is enough; if it

takes longer the audience will go nuts. Janna sets you up, and there you go!" Indeed, the church was full to capacity. The ceiling fans needed to be turned up, and the doors kept open for fresh air. With the andante and allegro from Vivaldi's Concerto this caused a problem when the music blew away!

Geerten van de Wetering was the organist, and he enjoyed playing the organ here. Canadian organs are different: "You are far from the pipes, which causes the organ to respond more slowly; and accompanying the orchestra is more difficult." The audience loved Geerten's organ variations on some favourite hymns, and people were surprised about the volume the instrument produced.

The guests were welcomed in English and Dutch, and Bram Verhoef announced the pieces to be played. However, when he started singing a few lines of "Hava Nagila", the audience joined in before the orchestra could take over. A similar thing happened when two trumpeters played "Amazing Grace" as they walked to the front of the church. It is doubtful that the building had ever held music by Beatle John Lennon, but the audience clearly enjoyed the orchestra's rendition of "Yesterday". Joost Voorberg smiled behind his drums with the enthusiastic applause. The standing ovation at the end was rewarded with another round of "Hava Nagila". It took a while for all players to find their guest-family, but by that time the remaining 17 CDs were sold out.

The young people and guest-families in Fergus and Elora tried hard to make their Dutch visitors feel at home. For the Sunday night the young people had arranged a fun program, and their guest families planned outings of their own for the last Monday, followed by a barbecue. To Verhoef, that

was overwhelming. As a result, this trip was very different from other tours the orchestra had made into poor countries like Hungary and Poland. "Canada is so much more similar to Holland," Verhoef commented. Some of the young people added, "It is very special. In Holland everyone knows us, but not here. The people let us know that they appreciate it that we are here. It is also nice that we get along so well. There are no arguments or anything. . . ." On the board in Smithville's catechism room some other comments were left behind as well: "Dikke kuzzz . . . mij!" "Love all you young people!" "We love you all, the orchestra." Verhoef figured that some lasting relationships could very well have been established as a result of the tour. C

CHURCH NEWS



Declined the call to Smithville, ON:

Rev. W. den Hollander

of Toronto, Ontario.

Called by the church of Grand Rapids, MI:

Rev. D. Vandeburgt

of Denver, Colorado, USA.

As of November 4, 2001 the worship services of Burlington Ebenezer are held at 9:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.



The Battle of Tiny Township and Equity in Education

by K. Sikkema

Introduction

Battles conjure images of conflict, sacrifice, persistence, heroism, bravery, and often bloodshed. Sometimes these battles and the images of these battles hit the headlines; other times these images are hidden stories. Sometimes the battles are fought with guns; other times they are fought with words or pen strokes. The battle for the funding of religious schools has heard many words and seen many pen strokes. Set in a history of Roman Catholicism against Protestantism, this battle of funding began. The funding battle still continues in Ontario.

Roman Catholic or Protestant?

Ontario has had a history of conflicting claims. After 1625, French Protestants (Huguenots) were strictly forbidden to emigrate to New France. Both France and New France were to be Roman Catholic. French Jesuit priests became indefatigable agents of that cause, and several of them were martyred by the “savages” whose souls they sought to save. Their inland headquarters and chief shrine for eleven Huron missions was at Ste. Marie-among-the-Hurons, near present-day Midland, Ontario.

Meanwhile, ferocious Iroquois from New York and Pennsylvania physically attacked the Hurons. In their quest for access to better furs for their Protestant Dutch and English musket-suppliers, they first annihilated the Neutrals north of Lake Erie, and then proceeded to decimate the Hurons (or Awendas) in 1648. Lest their holy site fall in the hands of the Iroquoian infidels, the Jesuits themselves burned

down Ste. Marie. Today, the Martyr’s Shrine near the site is a pilgrim attraction in their honour. In the nearby Township of Tiny, Awenda Provincial Park is a monument to the Hurons and the wilderness they once occupied.



The Common Schools Act (1859) regulated public funding for schools for people of a “dissentient” faith.

Not until the nineteenth century was Ste. Marie rebuilt. By then, however, Ontario had become predominantly Protestant. So the stage was set: a historically Roman Catholic area in a predominantly Protestant province. By the twentieth century, another battle loomed in the very same area. This time, it was the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Separate School Board of the Township of Tiny who launched the attack. For their legal battle, they received

moral and financial support from their yoke-fellows across the province.

Funded segregation in education

The Roman Catholic French were defeated by the Protestant English in the brief Battle of the Plains of Abraham at Quebec City in 1759. The fate of New France was sealed at the 1763 Treaty of Paris: it had become British territory. The English were now challenged with governing a people within their borders who spoke a language different from their own, had another religion, and maintained a unique culture. This challenge also played out in *educational funding*.

In Upper Canada (Ontario), educational funding legislation recognized the presence of people of different beliefs, including French and Roman Catholic. The 1841 Day Act provided that “any number of inhabitants of any Township or Parish professing a religious faith different from that of the majority¹ of inhabitants of such Township or Parish” may “dissent from the regulations” and set up their own school. Segregation was believed to promote social harmony. In 1843, the *Public Schools Act* regulated funding for “common schools and grammar schools,” as well as for “separate schools” with at least fifteen students in attendance.² In 1859, the *Common Schools Act* provided for school funding for “common persons” in rural areas, as well as for separate schools for people of a “dissentient” faith. Separate schools were allowed to impose levy and collect school rates. A *Council of Public Instruction* was to make curriculum decisions for all schools. In 1863, Roman Catholics were


promised Legislature grants, exempted from paying municipal rates, and received inspection by the Chief Superintendent. At Confederation in 1867, the *BNA Act* stipulated, that, subject and according to certain provisions, “in and for each Province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education . . .” (section 93). Hence, education became a *provincial* matter in Canada. In the following years, grading was introduced in the schools, the “public school” curriculum became an eight-year program, and by 1899 the Roman Catholic Schools received public funds to the end of grade ten.

The Battle of Tiny Township

In the 1920s, Ontario’s public school system was well entrenched with grades 1-8 for elementary, and 9-13 for secondary education. The Trustees of the Roman Catholic Separate School Board of the Township of Tiny now observed a discrepancy between their constitutional rights and the actual funding for their schools. The Constitution (the *BNA Act*, section 93.1) provided that “nothing . . . shall prejudicially affect any Right or Privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any class or Persons have by Law in the Province at the Union.” Yet, provincial legislation prohibited the “teaching of and funding for secondary school subjects in separate schools,” and “denied separate school supporters exemption from the rates levied in support of public secondary schools.” This appeared to be unfair indeed. After all, mid-nineteenth century legislation had taken pains to give the Roman Catholics a level educational playing field, and as late as 1899 they had been granted funding up to grade ten. With the further development of the educational system, following the spirit of the past would also extend funding and other privileges. Thinking they had a good case, the Trustees of the Township of Tiny garnered support from the other Separate School Boards in Ontario, and took the Province to Court in 1926. This was the opening shot of the Battle of Tiny Township.

The Trustees were undoubtedly dismayed, but not defeated, when they curiously lost their case. Their petition was denied, because “the rights and privileges of the separate schools at

Confederation concerning money grants depended upon legislation of the *former Province of Canada* and were expressly described as grants of *this Province*”; and therefore “the *Province of Ontario* was unaffected by such obligations . . .” In other words, they were not entitled to funding, because the province now operated under a different name! It is no wonder that the Trustees took their case to the Ontario Court of Appeal – but it dismissed the case unanimously. Heavier artillery was needed, it appeared, and an appeal was made to the Supreme Court of Canada.³ However, it was evenly divided on the issue, and dismissed the case in 1927 (SCR 637). Tiny’s Trustees then fired the one Constitutional shell they had yet left: the Privy Council. It heard the case. It considered the arguments. It fired its parting shot in 1928: the *Council of Public Instruction*, established in 1859, was broadly empowered to regulate course selections, and indeed could prevent the Roman Catholic Separate Schools from providing secondary education without violating Section 93.1 of the *BNA Act*. The Battle of Tiny Township seemed lost.



*Tiny’s
Trustees fired
the one
Constitutional
shell they had
yet left: the
Privy Council.*

The Supreme Court of Canada revisited the case in 1987, when Ontario asked it to judge the constitutionality of extending funding to grades eleven and twelve of the Roman Catholic Separate Schools (*Reference re Bill 30*). It then recognized that at the time of Confederation *all* rights and privileges were granted by the law of the *Province of Canada*, and that the rights and privi-

leges granted in Section 93.1 of the *BNA Act* were “empty shells” *unless* they were transferred to the Provinces under their new names. The Supreme Court decided that it was in line with the spirit of the *BNA Act* that funding be extended to those grades of the Roman Catholic Separate Schools, and overturned the 1928 *Tiny* decision.⁴ After sixty years, the battle was won as yet.

Human rights and educational funding

Human Rights became a major international theme during the twentieth century. First, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was adopted on December 10, 1948. It declared, that, “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory . . . Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children” (Art 26:1, 3). Furthermore, in 1976, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* was adopted by the United Nations’ General Assembly. It granted, that, “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion . . . to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching . . .; respect for parents . . . to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions” (Art 18); “All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law . . .” (Art 26); and, “The provisions of the present covenant shall extend to all parts of federal States without any limitations or exceptions” (Art 50). Finally, the *Covenant’s “Optional Protocol,”* when signed, recognized the United Nations’ Human Rights Committee as competent to judge the validity of complaints from victims of violations of its stipulations.⁵

Canada prides itself in having signed all three of these documents, and frequently reminds other countries to stop human rights violations. It is, therefore, publicly embarrassing that Canada itself was found guilty of discrimination in the 2001 report of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. After all, Ontario funded schools of one religion (Roman Catholic) but not of any others.

Adler, Tadman, and Waldman

Shortly before the Ontario government decided to ask the Supreme Court about the constitutionality of extending full funding to the Roman Catholic Separate Schools in *Reference re Bill 30*, it received the Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario (the Shapiro Report, 1985). This report concluded (among others) that extending (partial) funding to independent schools would have a limited impact on total public school enrolment, and not undermine its objectives.⁶ Although this conclusion was encouraging to many, it did not result in any kind of public support for Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, or other religious schools.

Several groups were unhappy with the subsequent extension of funds to the Roman Catholic Separate Schools. Civil Rights in Public Education, Inc., for instance, argued that there should be only one publicly funded school system. Others (including Susie Adler, Leo Elgersma, and the Ontario Alliance of Christian School Societies, and the Jewish and Christian groups they represented), stressed the inherent violation of their religious and equality rights as guaranteed in sections 2(a) and 15 of the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Unsuccessful at presenting their claims to the Court of Justice and the Court of Appeal, they finally laid their case before the Supreme Court of Canada in 1996. It held that Section 93(1) of the *BNA Act* gave certain (non-fundamental) freedoms to groups present *at the time of Confederation*, which may not extend to everyone else. Provinces have the constitutional right to extend funding to some schools and not to others (Justice Iacobucci); and if people's *choice* of religion requires them to start independent, non-publicly-funded schools, this does not infringe on their *freedom* of religion (Justice Sopinka). The Supreme Court dismissed the appeal, but Madame Justice L'Heureux-Dubé dissented, stating that it must be considered as an equality issue under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and not primarily as one of provincial rights or of freedom of religion. She held that not funding these schools is an infringement on their right to protection of equal benefit of the law. Partial funding could assist these "vulnerable minority communi-

1625	New France must be Roman Catholic
1648	Jesuit Mission near Midland destroyed
1759	English defeat French in Battle of the Plains of Abraham
1841	People of "dissentient" faith may establish their own schools
1843	Funding for separate common and grammar schools
1859	Funding for "dissentient" schools regulated
1863	Roman Catholic Schools promised legislature grants
1867	BNA Act makes education a provincial matter
1899	Roman Catholic schools receive funding to grade 10
1928	Roman Catholic schools denied funding beyond grade 10
1982	Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms & Constitution
1985	Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario
1986	Roman Catholic schools receive funding to grade 12
1996	Supreme Court dismisses appeal for religious school funding
1999	Ontario religious school funding declared discriminatory
2000	Ontario refuses to change discriminatory funding
2001	Ontario passes equity in education tax credit

ties" with some recognition as well as in their continuation (Adler, [1996] 3 SCR 609).



*Canada
received
ninety days to
eliminate the
discrimination
and to report to
the Committee.*

Unhappy with this dismissal, the Civil Rights in Public Education, Inc. (as per Tadman et al) and representatives of the Jewish schools (as per Waldman *et.al.*) appealed to the United Nations' Human Rights Committee. Tadman et al. did not convince the Committee that they were victims of a violation of their human rights, and their case was dismissed on November 4, 1999. Arie Hollis Waldman et al. were more successful. Despite vigorous attempts by Canada to convince the Committee to the contrary, it held that if a State chooses to fund religious schools, it should do so without discrimination *unless* there are reasonable and objective grounds to do so. It decided on November 5,

1999, that, although preferential treatment of Roman Catholic Separate Schools is enshrined in the Canadian Constitution, it *cannot* be a reasonable and objective ground for discrimination. Canada received ninety days to eliminate the discrimination and to report to the Committee. On February 3, 2000, it reported that Ontario had no plans to do something about it, but Canada affirmed its commitment to the international human rights regime, and promised that it would continue to work with the provinces to this end. On May 9, 2001, the Government of Ontario introduced the Equity in Education Tax Credit, the Bill passed on June 27, and it received Royal Assent on June 29.

Conclusion

In the end, we recognize that the king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases (Prov 21:1), even if we see the Battle of Tiny Township, human rights activism, and Jewish persistence playing a role in the partial support for religious schools in Ontario. The embarrassment of being discriminatory in the eyes of the UN Human Rights Committee, and getting it reported by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, was too much for Canada. It would appear that this embarrassment is also the strength (or the weakness) of the Equity in Education Tax Credit. Unless further secularization eliminates all differences between the public and separate schools in Ontario, it seems unlikely that Civil Rights in Public Education, Inc., will obtain their goal of

just one publicly funded system, and eliminate the discrimination in that manner. At this point, removal of funding from the Roman Catholic Separate Schools would cause major social and political upheaval, as they serve thirty-six percent of the student population! It is not yet known which regulations the government will attach to the tax credit, and how they would affect us. The matter remains in the Lord's hands, and we do well to remember this in our prayers.

Endnotes:

¹After the American Revolution (1776) many (Protestant!) United Empire Loyalists settled in Ontario. Combined with new immigrants from Europe, the Protestants soon outnumbered the small French population in most places.

²Common schools were intended for average males or females aged 5-21 who wanted to learn the Three R's. Grammar schools prepared for college or university, and it was, to some extent, possible to attend common school and grammar school at the same time. Neither school was graded like our schools are. Separate schools were often, but not always, Roman Catholic.

*“The king’s
heart is in
the hand of the
LORD; he directs
it like a
watercourse
wherever he
pleases.”
Prov 21:1*

³To take a matter to the Supreme Court is very expensive. For instance, Trinity Western University in British Columbia had spent over \$1.6 million in legal fees and communications over five years when the Supreme

Court decided in its favour last May. The court also awarded \$172,000 for costs, to be paid by the British Columbia College of Teachers. (The issue was whether this Christian university was allowed to implement its own complete and accredited teacher training program, rather than relying partly on Simon Fraser University. Having won the case, they will start their full program in September 2002).

⁴It has been argued that *Tiny* was overturned only “to the extent required [] to affirm the right of separate schools in Ontario to provide education throughout the secondary years and to receive public funding for same.” William J. Smith and William F. Foster. *Religion and Education in Canada, Part I: The Traditional Framework*. *Educational Law Journal* 10(3), March, 2001, p. 418.

⁵These documents are easily available on the Internet. It should also be noted that the interpretation of these documents is an intricate process, in which the face-value of a single stipulation is often restricted by others.

⁶Statistics Canada reported in July, 2001, that independent school attendance in Ontario has climbed from 3.3% to 4.3% between 1987/88 and 1998/99. Canada-wide, the figure climbed from 4.6% to 5.6%.





Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I have just finished reading the editorial of Dr. J. De Jong: "Gains and Losses" in the October 12, 2001 issue of *Clarion*. It strikes me that what brother De Jong speaks of as "losses" (the "gains" will only prove to be such if there will be "forward" movement on the Church Order to be agreed upon by the two parties) can only be so characterized if the underlying assumption of Dr. De Jong is correct. That underlying assumption is that proposals of a committee are in fact agreements, his opening paragraphs to the contrary notwithstanding.

For consider, after quoting at length from the "Statement of Agreement" (an Agreement, let it be understood, that spells out what the combined committees of the URC and CanRC decided they would propose to their respective Synods!) Dr. De Jong writes: "It was obvious that Synod Escondido 2001 did not like this part of the agreement. For although it willingly entered Phase 2, it did so on its own terms by brushing this agreement aside."

To my mind, that last sentence is both presumptive and pejorative. It is presumptive in that it proceeds from the assumption that a Synod ought not to decide something other than its committee(s) propose(s). Why else does Dr. De Jong refer to Synod Escondido's action as a brushing aside of what the combined committees agreed to propose? It is pejorative in that it speaks of the decision of Synod Escondido as an action it took "on its own terms" – as if that were not really the prerogative of a Synod vis a vis a committee's report.

If you then read again what brother De Jong speaks of as losses – the "date for full union," the refusal of the URC to place Article 34 of its Church Order in suspension, and the question of Theological Education – then you recognize that all those issues are spoken of as losses for the Canadian Reformed Churches because the Synod of the URC failed to do the bidding of the combined committees as spelled out in their Statement of Agreement. Note well, the article of Dr. De Jong is written not as a report of a committee member to his fellow committee members. Rather, the article is written as an editorial in the (official?) church paper of the CanRC. When it is then said, "Another area where we failed to make headway," the "we" can only be understood as referring to the Canadian Reformed Churches not to the committee of the CanRC.

If, then, it is true that the Canadian Reformed Churches see the action of the Synod of the URC as a number of "losses" suffered by the Canadian Reformed Churches and not as a number of correctives to a report of a committee which the URC is prepared to live with and to proceed further with on the road to "full union" with the CanRC, then the editorial of Dr. De Jong has succeeded in highlighting that there are more areas that need to be addressed than had been anticipated. I trust that is not the case. I also believe that the article of Dr. De Jong, though perfectly legitimate as the reflections of one committee member to his fellow committee members, is inappropriately placed as an editorial in the *Clarion*.

Yours in his service,
(Rev) R.J. Sikkema

A brief response:

My thanks to Rev. Sikkema for his consideration of my comments. Allow me two points in reply:

1. I did not mean to take anything away from the prerogative of a Synod, whether Neerlandia or Escondido. However, in the case which the Synod had before it an agreement comprising the input of two sides (CanRC and URC), it seems to me only proper to proceed on the basis of the agreement that has been reached. As I recall, the Committee's viewpoint was that the move to Phase 2 would occur on the basis of the acceptance and ratification of the agreement reached. You are then, in my view, obligated to work as much as possible within the established parameters; otherwise one ends up putting the agreement at risk.

2. Why would it be inappropriate for one member of the committee to express his opinion on the current state of the unity process? Naturally I also value the opinions of my fellow committee members. No doubt they would have said things somewhat differently than I did. However, all of us are clear that whatever is written under one's own name is written on personal title, and in no way reflects the opinion of the Committee as a whole.

With fraternal regards!

J. De Jong





Our Little Magazine

by Aunt Betty

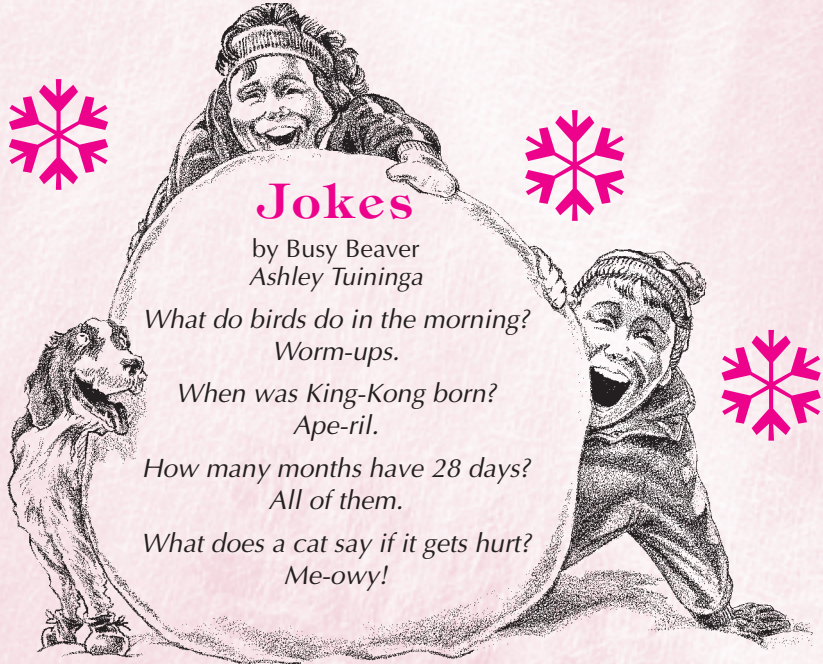
Dear Busy Beavers

This is the last Our Little Magazine for 2001. Did it seem to go very fast for you? Sometimes time goes very slowly, such as when you are waiting for something to happen. At other moments, the time seems to go very fast, particularly when you have a deadline. The deadlines always seem to come faster than the time you have to do your task.

However, we may always be assured that God will be with us, no matter how we feel. He looks after us through thick and thin. He is our faithful heavenly Father and will never forsake us.

Have a Happy New Year and I hope to hear from you all in 2002.

*Lots of love,
Aunt Betty*



Jokes

by Busy Beaver
Ashley Tuininga

What do birds do in the morning?
Worm-ups.

When was King-Kong born?
Ape-riL.

How many months have 28 days?
All of them.

What does a cat say if it gets hurt?
Me-ow!



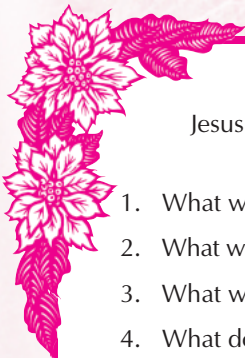
Puzzles

Jesus taught the Disciples

Jesus spent much time instructing his disciples so that they could take over when he left the earth.

Answer these questions about what Jesus taught the disciples.

1. What was the only thing Jesus told his disciples to take on mission trips, Mark 6:8? _____
2. What were the disciples to do if they were not welcome in a place, Mark 6:11? _____
3. What were the disciples to do on their mission, Luke 9:2? _____
4. What do we call the prayer Jesus taught his disciples, Matthew 6:9-13? _____
5. How did Jesus tell his disciples to treat others, Matthew 7:12? _____
6. To what two things did Jesus compare the disciples, Matthew 5:13-16? _____
7. To what did Jesus compare his relationship with his disciples, John 15:5? _____
8. What did Jesus use to teach his disciples humility, Matthew 18:1-2? _____
9. What did Jesus say he was leaving with the disciples, John 14:27? _____
10. What did Jesus tell his disciples to use as a remembrance of his body, Luke 22:19? _____
11. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do if they loved him, John 14:15? _____



Word Search

by Busy Beaver *Rebecca Van Dijk*

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

FIND:

Fall	Raking	Leaves	Jumping
Autumn	Orange	Pumpkins	Red
Yellow	Turkey	Brown	Thanksgiving
Sweater	School	Reformation Day	



From the Mailbox

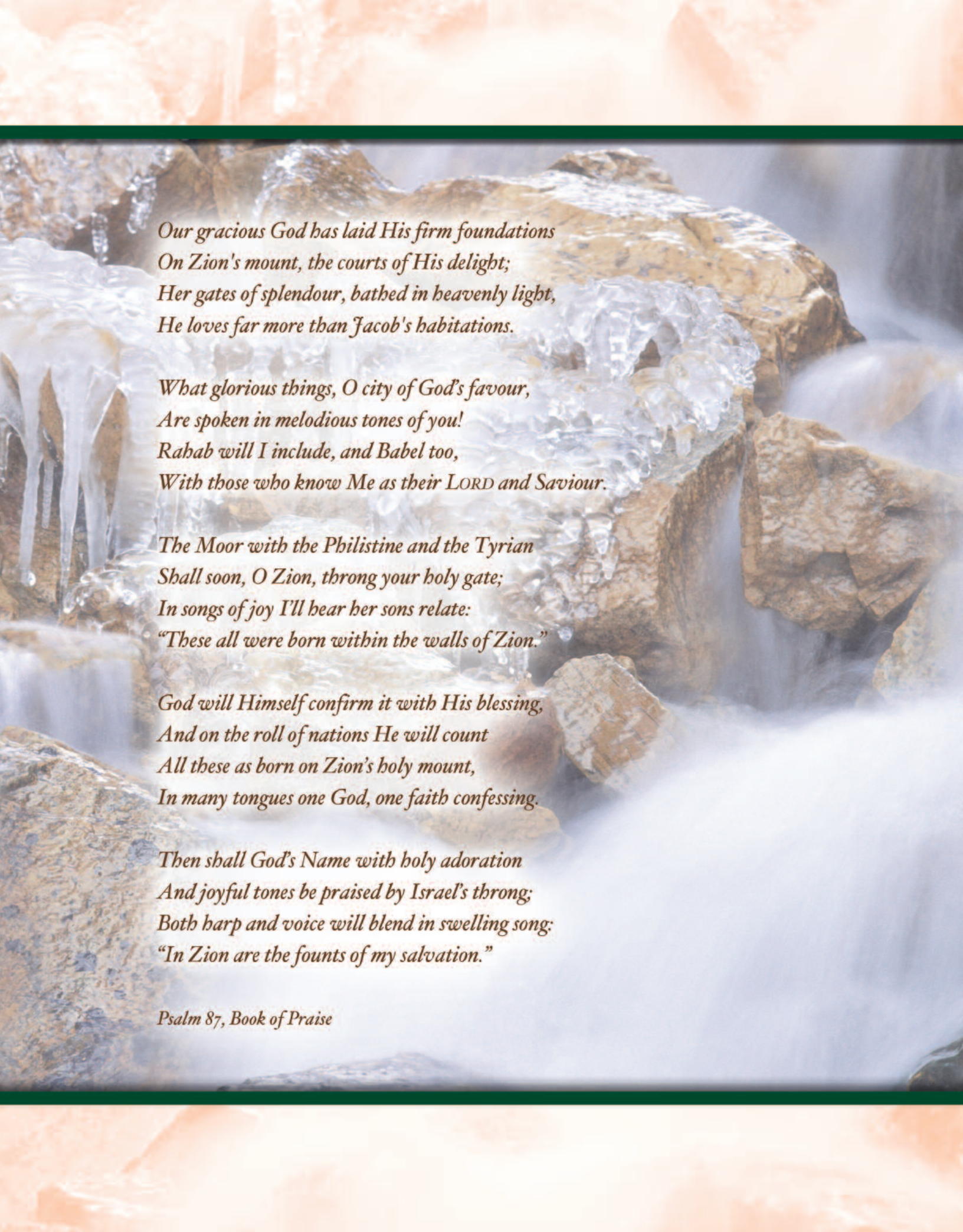
Hi, *Ashley Tuininga*. You asked me if you could become a member of the Busy Beaver Club, but you already are a member! It was very nice to receive a letter from you, together with your puzzle and jokes. Your dog must be a beautiful dog, being half German Shepherd and half black Labrador. But either you are quite short or he is very big for a one year old dog, that he is up to your waist when standing on all four legs. Wow! Bye for now.

Thank you to *Rebecca Van Dijk* for your letter and puzzle. That was very nice of you to be a volunteer at the library for the summer. Reading is a good pastime, don't you think? Although, like you say, it is a good idea to get out for some fresh air and not read all the time. Does it get very confusing that you have two teachers in your school, both called Mrs. tenHaaf?

Aunt Betty

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*Our gracious God has laid His firm foundations
On Zion's mount, the courts of His delight;
Her gates of splendour, bathed in heavenly light,
He loves far more than Jacob's habitations.*

*What glorious things, O city of God's favour,
Are spoken in melodious tones of you!
Rahab will I include, and Babel too,
With those who know Me as their LORD and Saviour.*

*The Moor with the Philistine and the Tyrian
Shall soon, O Zion, throng your holy gate;
In songs of joy I'll hear her sons relate:
"These all were born within the walls of Zion."*

*God will Himself confirm it with His blessing,
And on the roll of nations He will count
All these as born on Zion's holy mount,
In many tongues one God, one faith confessing.*

*Then shall God's Name with holy adoration
And joyful tones be praised by Israel's throng;
Both harp and voice will blend in swelling song:
"In Zion are the founts of my salvation."*

Psalm 87, Book of Praise




*Holiday
Cheer*

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