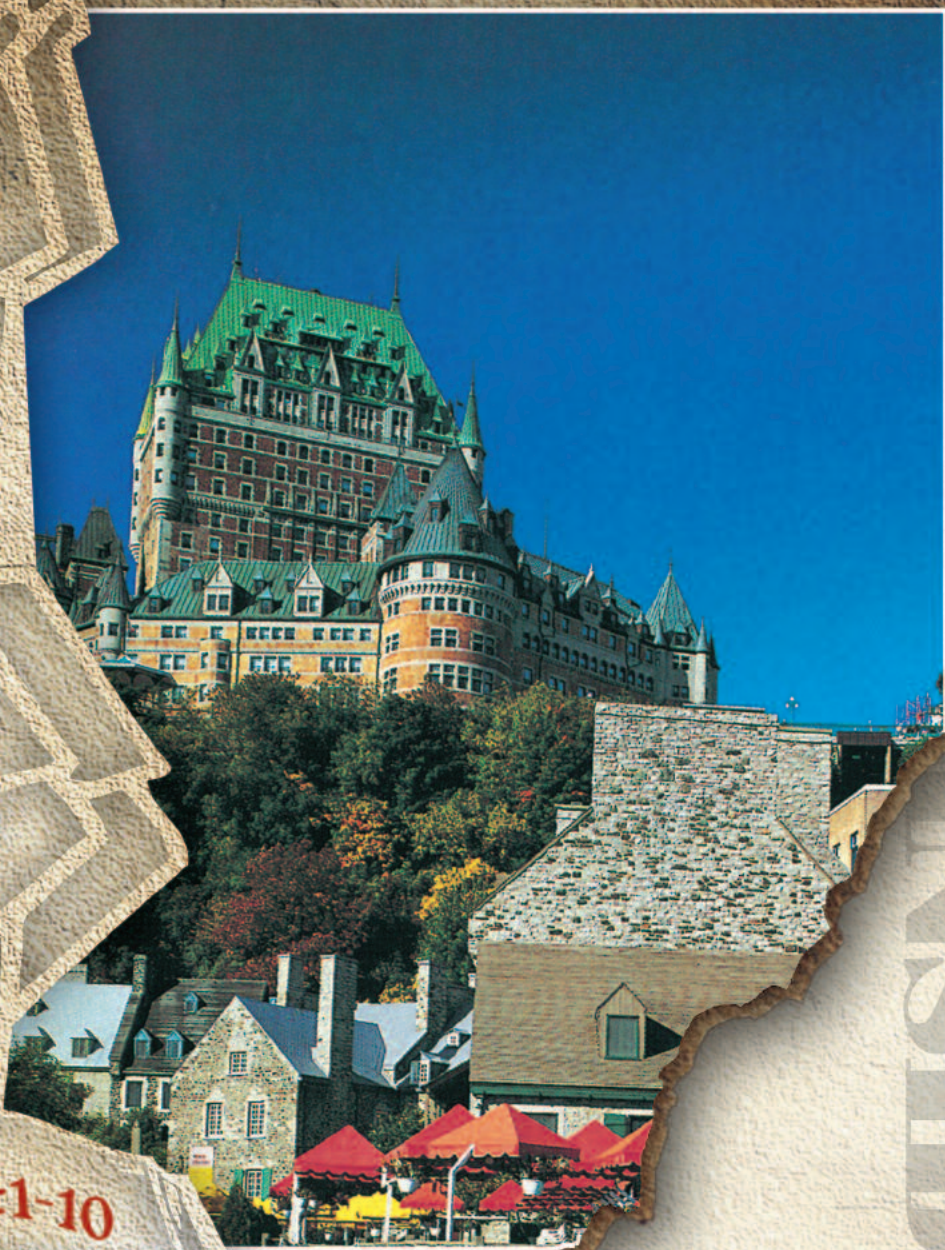


Clarion

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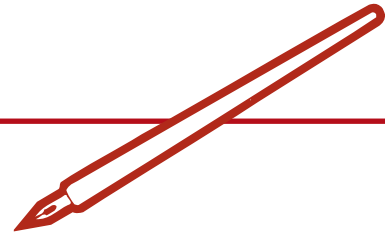


Numbers

10:1-10

*Quebec:
The ERQ in
St. Georges de Beauce*

NSIDR



By J. Visscher



What is the Church Good for Anyway?

As Reformed believers we are often busy with the biblical doctrine of the church. Attention is frequently focussed on its marks (preaching, sacraments and discipline). Attention is also paid to its characteristics (unity, holiness, catholicity). At times consideration is given as well to the many literary images used in the Bible for the church (flock, house, tree, ship, race, people, nation, remnant – to name only a few).

One thing, however, that you do not hear a lot about has to do with the calling and the task of the church. Many may know what the church is by definition, but they have difficulty identifying its function. Yes, and that brings us to a very necessary and relevant – if somewhat irreverent – question, namely “what is the church good for anyway?”

Many may know what the church is by definition, but they have difficulty identifying its function.

Well, what is the sense of the church? Why has Christ Jesus our Lord been so busy gathering, defending and preserving it throughout the centuries? In coming up with an answer many things can be cited. From my perspective, however, there are three things that are fundamental and foundational.

The first task of the church – worship the LORD

For openers it is important for us to realize that the first task of the church has to do with worship. The people of God have been called and kept in existence in order that the name of the Lord may be praised.

Is this not what we read over and over again in the book of Psalms? Psalm 92 urges its readers and singers: “Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.” Psalm 100 encourages all people, “Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.” And then there is what must be the noisiest psalm in the Psalter, Psalm 150, “Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary, praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power, praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the

trumpet. . .” The thrust of these passages is simple: praise and worship are God’s due. Therefore they constitute the church’s first order of business.

Of course, such a conclusion often serves as a springboard to all sorts of other questions about worship and worship styles. “How shall we then worship? What is suitable, and permitted, and what is not?”

Without giving a lengthy treatise, some of the following questions need to be considered:

- is our worship purposely directed to the glory of God?
- are the elements or activities of worship rooted in Scripture?
- is the preaching of the Word of God central?
- are the sacraments faithfully administered?
- do the Psalms receive primacy of place in the singing?

Unfortunately much of what claims to be worship today does not ask these sorts of questions. Rather we live in an age where worship has much more in common with entertaining men and women, boys and girls, than it does with God. The sermons are often short and superficial. The elements are always changing. The songs are frequently repetitive and of questionable quality. The aim of the music has more to do with creating atmosphere and hyped-up emotion than with honouring God. Indeed, whenever the subject of our worship comes up for discussion we do well to ask ourselves whether our worship is in keeping with the words of Hebrews 12:28, “let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.”

The worship services may first of all have a praise function, but they also have an educational one.

The second task of the church – equipping the saints

If worship is first, then it can be said that equipping the saints should never be far behind. In this connection I am almost always led to think back to one of my teachers during my seminary years, namely the late Rev. G. Van Dooren. One of the hallmarks of his ministry and teaching had to do with Ephesians 4 and the missing comma in verse 12 of the King James Version.

What is that all about? It has to do with the fact that the KJV gives the impression that it is the task of special office bearers to build up the church of Christ. "Wrong translation and wrong inference!" said Van Dooren. It is the task of the officers in the church to prepare the members for works of service, and then, it is the task of the members to build up the body.

In other words, what he was arguing for was a trained membership and an equipped body of believers. And he was right! The second duty of the church is to see to it that everything is done to prepare the members for service. The worship services may first of all have a praise function, but they also have an educational one. And that applies especially to the second service wherein the Word of God is preached as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism.

It applies as well to the Catechism instruction that is given. Young people need to know the truth not simply to give them access to a store of religious knowledge, but to give them the tools (i.e. the truths and the principles) so that

What's inside?

What is the church? This is a question that has caused much discussion and debate among Reformed churches. However, in the discussion about what is the church, one may forget what it is to be the church. This is a matter addressed by Dr. J. Visscher in his editorial.

Speaking of what it means to be the church, we note with appreciation the work of the Owen Sound Mission Board in connection with the Reformed Church in Quebec (ERQ). We are reminded to keep the ERQ in our thoughts and prayers, as well as in our financial support.

In his *Observations* column, Rev. G. van Popta speaks about his first-hand knowledge of a praise and worship evening. His honest evaluation of some of the songs and singing that take place on such an evening make us realize again what a blessing we have in the rich and deep Psalms of the Old Testament.

This issue should be in your hands just before Ascension Day. Rev. C.J. VandeVelde's meditation reflects on the significance of the ascended Christ's victory in the spreading of the gospel, and the gathering of his church from many nations.

John and Margaret Helder present the second of two articles which deal with their defence of Genesis 1 from the perspective of creation scientists. It is refreshing to see that even though there is some debate going on between Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff and John and Margaret Helder, there is the common thread of holding Genesis 1 in high esteem as the infallible Word of God.

Of great interest to the Canadian Reformed and the United Reformed Churches will be the report of a joint meeting which dealt with a "Song Book." This can be a very emotional discussion. Some recent articles and letters in *Clarion* underline the importance of the singing of psalms and hymns in our churches.

We also have our regular column, *Education Matters*, and several press releases.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial – What is the Church Good for Anyway? — J. Visscher	202
Treasures, New and Old – Christ is in Control — C.J. VandeVelde	205
The Case for Creation Science: It Honours God (Part 2) — Margaret Helder and John Helder	206
Owen Sound Mission Board – – “Project Quebec” Update	208
Observations – “Praise and Worship Music” — G.Ph. van Popta	210
Education Matters	211
Media Release	213
Press Releases – Board of Governors of the Theological College, Classis Manitoba, Classis Alberta.....	214

they can apply themselves profitably in church and world and kingdom.

Also, this has application when it comes to the study of the Bible. When members come together to delve into the Word they are doing more than involving themselves in a holy activity. They are to consider themselves to be in training mode. After all, does the apostle Paul not remind Timothy and us that this is what the Bible is all about when he says, “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16, 17)?

Believers need to make the world their workplace.

We live not only in an age that turns worship into hype but also one in which a great deal of living is based on feeling. Oh, and then I realize that at times things have been too cerebral in the church but what we are seeing at the present time is a pendulum swing in the opposite direction. So much of what claims to be theology today is not determined by the study and application of the truths of Holy Scripture but by how it makes us feel. The subjective is in and the result is that fewer and fewer people who style themselves Christians believe that “training in righteousness” is even necessary. Giving form and substance to “the hope that is in them” is a daunting challenge to many. They have so little knowledge and understanding of the Bible to go by. They have not been equipped because the church has neglected its educational responsibility.

The third task of the church — witnessing to the world

Having mentioned that the church has a duty to worship the Lord and to train its members, we come to a third duty, namely to bear witness to the world. In other words, the church does not exist for its own sake. It exists for the Lord, for the members and for the world.

In this connection, whether you want to call Matthew 28:19 and 20 the Great Commission or not, matters little. What matters is that here our Lord gives a crystal clear command to his church (and not just to his apostles either). The command is “Go!” But “go, where?” Why into all of the nations. But why should we go? The answer is threefold: to make disciples, to baptize and to teach. The church is there to bear witness.

Surely, this is not in doubt. The Lord Jesus does not call his followers “the salt of the church” or “the light of the room.” He is much more expansive than that. He calls them to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Matt 5:13, 14). Believers need to make the world their workplace. They need to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Needless to say, this represents a huge challenge. It is a challenge that the church has not always handled well. Often it has become confused as to its proper relationship to the world. At times it has opted for easy assimilation by taking over the message and standards of the world, while neglecting its radical witness. At other times the church has opted for rigid isolation in that it cut itself off from the world, fearing contamination.

Yet neither assimilation nor isolation is the true biblical answer to the world. No, the answer lies in participation, but then in critical participation. The popular but true slogan goes like this: “we are *in* the world but we are not to be *of* the world.” Our God expects us to let our light shine in the world, to let it shine brightly.

In conclusion, when people ask you “what is the church good for anyway? What purpose does it serve? What relevance does it have?” Then remember these three: worship, training and witness. Indeed, do more than just remember them; participate in them. Worship the Lord sincerely, faithfully and thankfully. Train yourself in truth and godliness. Witness to a world in darkness about the saving and transforming light of Jesus Christ, your Lord.



Dr. J. Visscher is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley, British Columbia.



By C.J. VanderVelde

Christ is in Control

“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria . . . Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went.” (Acts 8:1b, 4).

Sometimes we wonder about the purpose of things happening in our personal lives or in the world at large. Sickness, financial hardship, terrorist attacks, wars and natural disasters can make us wonder whether there is any direction to events. The Word of God teaches that Christ is in control and that He is guiding all things for the completion of the plan of redemption (Eph 1:20-22). But what do we see of it?


Luke begins the Book of Acts by indicating that he is going to write about the things that Jesus Christ did after his ascension into heaven (cf. 1:1, 2) in order to show that Christ uses his power from heaven for the benefit of the Gospel’s spread throughout the world. As such, the Book of Acts is not so much about the acts of the apostles as about the acts of the ascended Christ!

We see something of Christ’s control in the events soon after Pentecost, as revealed in the text. Before his ascension into heaven, Christ had told his apostles that they should wait in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (1:4). Christ told them that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit had come upon them, and they would be his witnesses “. . . in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (1:8). Thus Christ outlined the program for the spread of the Gospel after Pentecost: first Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria, and then the ends of the earth. Acts 8:1b and 4 show us how Christ *implemented* part of this program for the spread of the Gospel: believers from Jerusalem were scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria as a re-

sult of a persecution, and those who were scattered preached the Word wherever they went. Note well that Christ used a persecution to move from the first phase to the second phase of the spread of the Gospel. The Gospel’s rejection by Jerusalem had been sealed with the martyrdom of Stephen, who was stoned to death (7:59, 60). Now it was time for the Gospel to go to Judea and Samaria, and Christ used for his own purpose the subsequent persecution that broke out “on that day.”

The Gospel of the risen and exalted Christ came to Judea and Samaria in the time after Pentecost because those who were scattered from Jerusalem preached the Word wherever they went. One could also translate that they *evangelized*. When people asked them why they were fleeing, they had an opportunity to testify about Christ. While it may have looked like the cause of the Gospel was being shattered in Jerusalem by the persecution, the persecution actually served to spread the Gospel! In this way, Christ was preparing the ground for his apostles to move beyond Jerusalem in their task of proclaiming the Gospel. For notice also that the apostles were not scattered, a detail which is evidence of Christ’s complete control in these events.

Christ works in unexpected ways. Even when we are not able to discern a guiding hand in events, Christ is working out the plan of redemption. The believers in Jerusalem who had to endure persecution probably had many questions because they did not see the overall picture, but this did not mean that there was no overall picture. This snapshot in the history

of the church has been revealed to us to make clear that Christ is in control, even though this may not be readily evident to our eyes. This should give us tremendous comfort. Personal hardship, wars and natural disasters serve a purpose in the coming of God’s kingdom. God can draw us closer to the Word by means of difficulties in our personal lives, and terrible events on a world-scale can provide openings for the spread of the Gospel. May the words of this text comfort us as we live in a dark world, or as we face difficult circumstances in our own lives. Christ rules on high and is directing all things for the completion of the plan of redemption! 

Rev. C.J. VanderVelde is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Yarrow, British Columbia.



Accepted the call to Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Rev. J. Ludwig

of London, Ontario.

• • •

Called to the church at Smithville, Ontario:

Rev. A. Souman

of Zaltbommel and Tiel, Netherlands.

The Case for Creation Science: It Honours God (Part 2)¹

By Margaret Helder and John Helder

Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff has set up a caricature of the creation model. This caricature she then criticizes in the name of the Reformed tradition. She implies in article #1 for example, that creationists support (at least by their actions) “a belief in the scientific method as the way to all truth.” She says such an approach is both dangerous and demonstrably false. True enough, but these words do not apply to creationists. Similarly in article #2 she says that Reformed scholars reject “the idea that the scientific method is religiously neutral and fully objective, yields knowledge that is absolutely certain and is the means of reaching truth in all fields of knowledge.” Can you imagine a Christian who thinks like that? Creation advocates certainly do not, but how do you convince someone who wants to think otherwise? Dr. Oosterhoff says in the course of article #2 that a suitable course of action is to tackle assumptions at the root of these problems. Again this is precisely what we do.

It should be pointed out that the scientific method and the forming of scientific theories (comprehensive explanations or paradigms) are different activities. The scientific method is a way to study certain every day phenomena. It is a tool that involves experimentation, observation and conclusions drawn on the basis of these studies. In our opinion, such studies are a reliable way of obtaining insights into the modern world. From such studies we can draw conclusions about how the living cell carries on the processes needed for life, under which conditions an organism will grow, and so on. Surely such information is as reliable as the studies from which they were derived. It is however necessary to evaluate the source of the information. Was the experimental de-

sign biased, was a valid question asked, were all the data considered, what assumptions were made before conclusions were drawn, and so on. Paradigms or comprehensive explanations, on the other hand, cannot be proved or disproved. We can however check to see how well our actual observations from nature fit predictions based on the paradigm, as to what we should find.

Purpose of science

The purpose of science, of course, is to study the natural world. Obviously however, repetitive studies of the same phenomena are a waste of time. Thus generalizations concerning certain often repeated observations are the next obvious step. Similarly experiments may help us find explanations for our observations. Moreover as a result of our observations, many people have attempted to manipulate nature. Our modern technology, agriculture and medicine are the obvious results of this approach. None of this however would be possible without some theories (mental pictures) of what is going on.

While some scientific theories indeed seem philosophically neutral, others are quite the opposite.

For example, the modern idea of what the atom is like, has led to the development of the periodic table of elements. Without such theoretical tools there would be no chemistry. No one supposes the present picture is absolutely correct, but it works well enough. Everyone in science understands how tentative such explanations are.

Set record straight

While some scientific theories indeed seem philosophically neutral, others are quite the opposite. Unfortunately scientists have developed theories about origins. Moreover they have very specifically been motivated to develop explanations which are atheistic in approach (i.e. deny the possibility of a supernatural cause). Creation based scientists have objected to the philosophical approach of these scientists and to how they use the data. Specifically many observations do not fit these scenarios for origin of the universe, origin of life, appearance of various living kinds, and so on. Do secular scientists correctly represent the data and the significance of their finds in such areas as biology, geology, astronomy and cosmology? If not, we should tell the world so.

In addition, some fear that there are situations in which Christians have no answers to unbelieving scholarship (e.g. Oosterhoff 2002. *Clarion* 51 #4 p. 84). Such a fear displays a lack of understanding of how science is conducted. Since there is no such thing as proof in science (as has been widely recognized for many decades), scientists simply interpret data in terms of their own *a priori* position. Secular scientists interpret in terms of the evolution model (or paradigm) and creation scientists interpret in terms of the creation model (or paradigm). For example, many Christians have worried about studies which suggest an ancient earth and an ancient universe. This is an unfounded fear, as Dr. John Byl of Trinity Western University points out: “Also, it should be noted that an apparent age and history of an object are not properties intrinsic to that object. Rather they can be inferred only on the basis of the theoretical model that is used to interpret the

observed characteristics. The illusion of a particular past history arises only when we view the data through the mirror of a particular set of premises. . . . It is always possible to construct models that interpret the observational data in a manner consistent with the traditional biblical chronology” (John Byl 2001. *God and Cosmos* p. 200-201.) Supporters of the creation model have long sought to acquaint the public with this situation. All the critiques of radiometric dating discuss the effect of prior assumption on interpretation of the data.

In light of biblical revelation

Some areas of science involve mainly observations rather than experiments. Astronomy, geology (especially paleontology) and some ecology are in this category. We cannot, for example, rerun past events such as how organisms were trapped in sediments which later turned to rock. The verifiable facts are the identity of the fossil, and where it was found and in what kind of rock. Anything else is inference. This fact, creation scientists emphasize. They do hold also however, that it is reasonable to point out the rapid processes and catastrophic flooding that would be required to trap and fossilize these organisms. This information is partly derived from laboratory studies and partly from observations made in nature. Thus we interpret the fossils in terms of the worldwide flood of Noah, which was an actual worldwide event. Are fossils

a suitable concern for Christians? In that God has allowed us to find them, we insist that they are a suitable area of study. Is it permissible to interpret these data in terms of biblical revelation? If it is not, there is no point in studying the fossils, or indeed any science, at all. We can indeed discover facts concerning nature and we can assess their significance (in the light of criteria discussed elsewhere). Obviously all interpretations are tentative, and will change as further information is obtained. The objective however, is to seek the truth.

God does not need our efforts, yet we are commanded to fight sin, the world and the devil.

Our duty

It is perfectly Reformed to contend that God gave us our talents to use in his service. This includes science. Douglas Kelly, for example, Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina, wrote a book in 1997 which examined Scripture and scientific paradigms (*Creation and Change*. Mentor). God does not need our efforts, yet we are commanded to fight sin, the world and the devil. With all the wonderful scientific information which we have at our disposal today, it would be a de-

viation of our duty not to inform the world how nature testifies to God’s work and glory. The Belgic Confession, Article 2, states how God makes himself known to us in creation: “. . . by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most beautiful book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many letters leading us to *perceive clearly the invisible qualities of God, namely, his eternal power and deity*, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20. All these things are sufficient to convict men and leave them without excuse.” Thus when nature is misinterpreted to defend evolution, we have an obligation to use this “most beautiful book” of creation to demonstrate that nature clearly reveals “his eternal power and deity.” It is a fact that many Christians have, over the years, used their God-given talents to study nature and to share with others the significance of the information that they have obtained. Is this work in the Lord’s service, or is it not?

¹ *Second of two articles responding to “Faith and Science in the Reformed Tradition” by F.G. Oosterhoff.*

Dr. Margaret Helder is a botanist. John, her husband, is a horticulturist. Together, they are active in the Creation Science Association of Alberta and members of Providence Canadian Reformed Church in Edmonton.



Owen Sound Mission Board – “Project Quebec” Update

(Work with the E.R.Q. congregation in St. Georges de Beauce)

The E.R.Q. is a relatively new Reformed church federation in Quebec, trying to be a witness of the Reformed gospel in the predominately Roman Catholic society in which they live. In May of 1999 a letter was received by the Owen Sound consistory, sent by the consistory of the Eglise Chretienne Reformee du Beauce (the E.R.Q. congregation in St. Georges du Beauce). In this letter the consistory there inquired as to whether Owen Sound could provide support in the calling of a second minister (Rev. Paulin Bedard) to help provide Reformed teaching to the many new members in their congregation. This would enable Rev. Mario Veilleux, their current pastor, to focus some of his attention on evangelism within the Beauce area. Included in this letter was a request for spiritual support to help them in dealing with various issues within their congregation. A delegation was sent to visit with the consistory of this congregation for a weekend. There was found here a sincere desire to serve the Lord in a Reformed manner as well as a very strong desire to learn more about the way that we as Canadian Reformed Churches function. It was felt that providing this assistance to this congregation is in line with the recommendations of Synod 1998 in assisting the E.R.Q. where possible.

Rev. P. Bedard

It was agreed that we were willing to pursue the possibility of providing this support providing that first, Rev. Bedard spend approximately three months in our area to become familiar with the overall functioning of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and that their consistory send a delegation to our church on a yearly basis. Secondly, that via a yearly delegation from our congregation, there is a review of their situation.

Thirdly, that the intention of this contact is with a view to drawing us closer together as federations, and finally, that financial support can be arranged.

Subsequently, Rev. Bedard spent approximately three and a half months in Owen Sound in the beginning of the year 2000, where he attended consistory meetings, Bible studies etc., and also spoke at many of the congregations in Classis Central and Northern Ontario. During his stay in Owen Sound he also translated study notes from Rev. Feenstra and other ministers within our federation into French for the purpose of teaching the Heidelberg Catechism within their church. He also provided a list of questions, from the consistory in St. Georges, regarding various issues within the congregation there. These questions were discussed with the consistory in Owen Sound in order for him to be able to return to St. Georges with answers for them to deal with. Visits have been made since that time with the consistory in St. Georges. Moreover, Rev. Bedard, Rev. Veilleux, and several other members of the consistory have visited Owen Sound.

Fruitful contact

The contact with St. Georges has been very fruitful. Many of the items which Rev. Bedard took note of during his stay in Owen Sound have effected change in the local congregation in St. Georges as well as other congregations in the E.R.Q. Also many of the issues which normally are discussed at a synodical committee level are now also being discussed at the local consistory level and in the congregational Bible studies. It is encouraging to see the hand of the Lord in the progress that has been made, but continual teaching, discussion and encouragement is

required to keep these current developments underway.

As we look forward to another year under the guidance of our Lord, we do so in the awareness of his providential care which was experienced during the past year, the year of our Lord 2001. It is with great thankfulness that the Owen Sound Mission Board can also report to the supporting individuals and congregations, that the guiding hand of the Lord was evident in the developing relationship between the congregation at Owen Sound and the E.R.Q. congregation in St. Georges de Beauce.

St. Georges

The congregation in St. Georges has been blessed with the ability to worship, conduct catechism instruction, attend Bible study, and develop an awareness of the congregation within their community. The faithful preaching of the Word could continue and the communion of saints could function in the support of each other and especially of those who are new members within the congregation. The consistory has also started a home visit schedule, with Rev. Veilleux and Rev. Bedard alternating visits, together with one elder. The Gospel has been individually presented by Rev. Veilleux and by other members of the congregation to several individuals, of whom the congregation asks for your support in prayer. The mission work within the community is also very active. Rev. Veilleux has prepared a booklet of about forty pages for the members of the congregation, in order to help them in a very concrete way to share their faith. As well, a short pamphlet is being prepared for distribution to every home in a designated area of town. The congregation was recently saddened by the sudden passing away of Rev. David Craig, minister of the



E.R.Q. congregation in Repentigny. They ask you to remember the congregation there in your prayers: that the Lord will provide another pastor and teacher for this congregation as well as the congregation in Charny, which will be vacant by the end of the summer 2002.

Reformed study material

Rev. Bedard continues to work at the translation of Reformed study material from the English to the French language. This work benefits the congregation in St. Georges as well as the E.R.Q. federation as a whole. He has translated Rev. Van Dyken's *To you is the Promise and to your Children* and is currently working on the translation of two more volumes of Rev. Van Dyken's material. As well, Rev. Bedard prepares and preaches sermons to the congregation in St. Georges and provides pulpit relief to other congregations within the federation. It was decided by the consistory in St. Georges that at this time Rev. Bedard would not be involved with Institut Farel due to the distance between St. Georges and Montreal, where the Institut is now located. As well, Rev. Bedard is now the editor of the E.R.Q. news bulletin,

entitled *En Lui (or In Him)* which is published three times a year.

Information meeting

On October 19, 2001, an information meeting was held in the Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church for the purpose of providing the supporting congregations with information regarding the support of the congregation in St. Georges. During this meeting, the chairman of the mission board, Mr. W. Wildeboer, provided those in attendance with a report from Rev. Bedard. In this report Rev. Bedard gave a glimpse into the life of the congregation there, showing the Lord's hand in the ongoing activities within the church in the past half year. There was also an update on the financial situation presented by the treasurer. The following is the current financial situation:

Budgeted amount for the year 2001	\$ 49,600.00
Balance carried forward from the year 2000	\$ 17,805.39
Amount received to date (Oct. 2001)	\$ 42,276.02
Amount outstanding for 2001	\$ 1,750.00
Expenses for 2001	\$ 47,623.50
Anticipated surplus for 2001	\$ 14,207.91
Budget for 2002	\$ 52,000.00
(budget includes salary and employer cost for Rev. Bedard as well as \$ 4,100.00 for miscellaneous costs and travel expenses for delegates).	

Delegation

In November of 2001, a delegation from the consistory and the mission board of the Owen Sound congregation was able to visit the congregation in St. Georges. They were able to discuss matters pertaining to the growth and development of the congregation together with the consistory and were able to offer support and encouragement to one another. The delegates were heartily welcomed and departed greatly enriched by the fellowship experienced with this congregation.


The congregation of Owen Sound has been able to make this commitment to the congregation in St. Georges with the generous support of the various congregations and individuals, without whom we could not hope to undertake this venture.

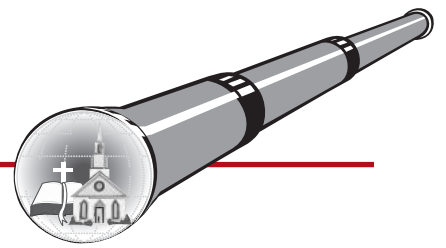
As can be seen from the 2002 budgeted amount, the support required has increased for the coming year. Although the goal of the congregation in St. Georges is to become financially self-sufficient, they are unable to provide for their financial needs at this time. Part of the goal of self-sufficiency was increased membership and this has not taken place in a significant manner as of yet. The mission board requests your continued support in this project, both financially and prayerfully. We are witness to the Lord's great blessings in this project in this past year and we hope to assist in the spread of the true Gospel in this area of Quebec.

The Mission Board of the Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church.

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“Praise and Worship Music”

By G.Ph. van Popta

Recently, I attended what was billed as a “contemporary worship service.” It’s a monthly event that attracts hundreds of people. Since it is right in my backyard, I thought I should check it out. Allow me to make some observations (which I also discussed with the organizers of the service). The service consisted of three main components: a message, songs, and a drama clip.

The message was pretty good. The speaker addressed the audience on Romans 7:7ff and, in my estimation, got the points right about original sin, total depravity, and sovereign grace. The songs were. . . . Well, let me elaborate.

The service started off with a lot of singing – about forty-five minutes worth non-stop. The songs were all of the Praise and Worship genre. I made several observations. Whereas at first everyone was singing, as song after song was projected on to the screen, fewer and fewer people continued. They remained standing and swaying, but many were no longer singing. At some points it seemed as if only the praise band on stage was still singing. I had the sense of people slowly being mesmerized or hypnotized. The music seemed to have an anesthetic quality. I had to think of what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:14, “. . . I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.” After a half hour of the highly repetitive choruses, were people still singing with their minds?

Another observation I made is that all the songs were about how great things are, about ecstatic raptures and victorious living. They are uni-dimensional and, thus, superficial. Remaining on a constant high of the victory and the ecstasy is surreal. Life is not like that, as any adolescent or young adult can tell you. Here are a few examples of the genre:

God Is Awesome!

God is awesome, God knows it all
He’s got the big picture up on his wall
So don’t worry just keep trusting tomorrow’s in his hands
God is in control

(Chorus)

‘Cause God is awesome
God is awesome
God is awesome
God is awesome

God is awesome, he rules the land
Demons tremble at his command
Nothing ever happens that he doesn’t see
So pray and keep on prayin’

CHORUS

*I Say Yes!*¹

(Chorus) I say Yes Lord, I believe in you I say Yes Lord, I will be faithful and true I say Yes Lord I know I’ve been blessed By the power of your Spirit (clap) I say Yes I say Yes! (clap) When you call my name I say Yes! (clap) When you tell me to change I say Yes! (clap) To your every request By the power of your Spirit (clap) I say Yes. . . . CHORUS I say Yes!

(clap) I will love only you I say Yes! (clap) I love the things that you do I say Yes! (clap) I want to be like you By the power of your Spirit (clap) I say Yes. . . . CHORUS I say Yes! (clap) I will not be afraid I say Yes! (clap) I will stand and be brave I say Yes! (clap) For the ones who are blessed, By the power of your Spirit, They say Yes. . . .

The Psalms are so rich in that they are inspired by God but also describe every human emotion and condition from the most depressed to the most ecstatic.

If you sing only this type of song, your singing has only one dimension, that of victory and ecstasy. That is not realistic. Compare this with singing the Psalms. The Psalms are so rich in that they are inspired by God but also describe every human emotion and condition from the most depressed to the most ecstatic. The Psalms are true to human life. Think, for example, of Psalm 116. After describing how the cords of death had entangled him, the anguish of the grave had come upon him, and how he had been overcome by trouble and sorrow, he cried to the Lord to save him. The Lord did save him from his distress, and he praised the Lord for the salvation. This one song travels the journey from the depths of despair to the heights of joy. This is real! This is life!

Some Psalms speak largely (or only, e.g., Psalm 88) of despair; some sing only of joy (e.g., Psalm 150). Taken together and sung in variety, our song will be a true reflection of life which has downs and ups, sadness and joy, despair and ecstasy. Life has a lot of sharp edges and dark corners. We simply do not always have the *Joy, joy, joy, joy, down in my heart! Where?! Down in my heart! Where?! . . .* To pretend is false. To sing only about the joy is not real or true.

Another observation I made was (and I do not mean to sound irreverent) that in some cases I could take out the name “Jesus” and insert the name of my wife, and it worked: *Jesus, do you know how much I love you. Let me tell you now how I adore you. I’m so in love with you; yes, Jesus, I’m so in love with you* (sung about a half dozen times).

Making Praise and Worship music your staple song will leave you hungry. At best, the genre does not provide enough because of its single dimension; at worst it presents some pretty questionable theology. Please do not forget to sing the divinely inspired and multi-dimensional true to life Psalms.

Next time some observations about the drama clip.

¹ © 2001 Chris McNaught

² Rob Des Cotes - Copyright © 1997 Omega Project Publishing.



Rev. G.Ph. van Popta is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Ancaster, Ontario.



Like a Responsible Parent

By P. Veenendaal

Miss Jones, a teacher in a public high school, was in a quandary. She had just been contacted by the local police concerning one of her students who had been caught stealing in a nearby store. The girl's parents could not be reached but the student needed parental advice. The teacher gave the following advice: "Do not own up to anything until you have legal counsel." She found it difficult to give this advice because if she had been acting *in loco parentis* she would have advised the girl to own up to her wrong behaviour. Yet, she felt that in order to avoid potential conflict with the parents later, she had to play it safe.

In loco parentis is a Latin term meaning "in the place of a parent" and is sometimes used to explain the basis for the legitimacy of the authority of a teacher in the classroom. It means that, while a child is under the supervision of a teacher, this teacher will take care of him as a responsible parent would. We can think of an example such as a child who is subject to certain corrective disciplinary measures. Another example would be a teacher who, because of his interaction with students, learns certain information which requires action on the part of school administration, church or civil authorities, as was the case in the example concerning Miss Jones. It can also be used in determining the content of classroom instruction.

Where does it come from?

Where does this idea of "in the place of a parent" come from and how does it function in our schools today? Our society's focus on the individual's rights and freedoms and the belief that all opinions are equally valid, are making it more and more difficult for parents to exercise discipline over their children, and it therefore becomes more difficult for teachers to determine how this "in loco parentis" should work for them. Does this old Latin term have real meaning in our Reformed Christian schools today, or have changing times made it impossible for teachers in our schools to put this into practice? Who will decide if or when these

changes in secular society should really be impacting on the operation of our Christian schools?

Rev. K. Jonker (CRTA Sept 92) traces the history of education back to the Old Testament times when fathers taught their sons and mothers taught their daughters. Later, Christians in Greece and Rome sent their children to schools established by the state. During the Middle Ages, the government and church jockeyed for position as to who was actually responsible for the education of children. The state was interested in the economic significance of education while the Roman Catholic Church's goal was to bind the people to the institution of the church. The discovery of the scriptural truths by sixteenth century reformers, also regarding the covenant, directed the responsibility of education to the parents. The conclusion of Luther, Calvin and others in this was clearly that parents are responsible for the education of their children. Therefore Rev. Jonker draws the conclusion, "no *in loco parentis*."

Church order

Earlier versions of the Church Order of Dort put the supervision of the schools on the shoulders of the elders. Even the version used in the Canadian Reformed Churches today implies that the consistory has some responsibility here: "The consistory shall ensure that the parents, to the best of their ability, have their children attend a school where the instruction given is in harmony with the Word of God as the Church has summarized it in her confessions" (Article 58). In order to carry out its duties faithfully here, a consistory would have to be fully assured that the schools which parents are using live up to this "harmonization" with Scripture.

Parental involvement

In the past, independent parental schools have led the way in showing that it is important for parents to be deeply involved in their children's education. Until recently, the direction of public schools has shown that parents have little to say. Public schooling is often charted with political motivation and will be adapted to whatever seems most acceptable to a majority of the voting public. Often we have seen that a change in provincial government has caused a drastic change in the direction

of the delivery of education. For example the implementation of standardized testing in the province of Manitoba has seen several versions of (non)implementation during the last few years when different political parties were governing. Only recently have parent advisory committees been established so that parents can more effectively communicate to teachers how and what they desire concerning the education of their children. Whether or not these committees will have a positive impact on educational matters remains to be seen.

What role should parents play in regards to the operation of their school and how should teachers take into account the wishes of the parents of students they teach? Studies have shown that parental involvement has positive consequences for the child. Parental encouragement for their children is strongly linked to performance, attendance and retention at school. Many teachers will tell you that involving parents in the performance and behaviour of their children yields positive results. There is a good pragmatic reason to stay in touch.

Parental responsibility

But there is more to it than just the practical aspect of how well the children are doing. Many times, the Bible tells parents that they are responsible to teach (their children) diligently. Nowhere in Scripture can we find that the task of educating the children of the covenant can or should be delegated to others. So even if parents do a certain amount of godly delegating, the responsibility of what is taught and learned remains with them. That is why it is so important that parents and teachers are on the same wavelength concerning curriculum content, worldview and discipline. The same Christian discipline and character present in the home, must exist at school. If this is lacking in either, children will soon notice that a double standard exists and suffer from the ensuing confusion.

That brings us back to the term *in loco parentis*. Parents may never escape their responsibilities concerning the education of their children, although delegating certain aspects of it may be done, albeit with their active participation. Parents must be involved in the curriculum and discipline decisions of their covenantal parental school. They must be in contact with their children's

teachers regularly and attend school activities so that they are fully aware of how the school is functioning. How else can the teachers know how to teach and discipline *in loco parentis*? Miss Jones should have been able to tell her wayward student to own up to her misdeeds and accept just punishment for it, and be fully assured that the parents would have supported her in giving that advice.

Hold fast the responsibility

All around us we see a new revolutionary era of permissiveness hijacking the responsibilities of the parents and placing it in the hands of other "experts." Reformed parents must hold fast to the responsibility given them concerning the education of their children. And when they delegate some of their authority to the school teachers, they must stand behind them and give them the support they need to do their tasks well. "So we ought to support such men [and women], that we may be fellow workers in the truth" (John 3:8).

Mr. Peter Veenendaal is National Coordinator of the Reformed Political Research Council and lives in Carman, Manitoba.

Peregrine Survey

By K. Sikkema

While some of the children from Fergus now attend grade 11 and 12 at Guido de Brès Christian High in Hamilton, Maranatha/Emmanuel (Fergus) is again considering expansion to include those grades. It is also working on allowing membership status to families from "Orangeville" who send their children to the Fergus high school. The school received an inspection from the Ministry of Education, and is permitted to continue to grant credits for its high school students. This is noted with joy, as the input received from the ministry also does not impede being Reformed in content and outlook.

One can experience a pajama day, hear teachers' regular discussions of professional articles or books, and see daily parental supervision on playground at Timothy Christian School (Hamilton). The school also expects to see Mr. Henk Plug (former mission-aid worker in Brazil) finally join its staff. As March is one of the "teacher burnout months," the Timothy Newsletter advises that teachers depend entirely on God, as Matthew 11 suggests, talk to other colleagues (and especially the principal), exercise, and take breaks during the day as well as the night.

Smithville's Grade 8 Geography class conducted a quick demographics survey, and found that the resulting pyramid was typical for a growing population. Also, the cohorts in the 10-20, 40-50, and 70-80 age brackets were larger than those for each of the two decades in between. If this pattern can be extrapolated into the future and across the country, we just may see a flurry of school expansions in about ten to fifteen years.

Credo (Brampton/Toronto) is reviewing its membership policy, as its constitution currently states that "a person shall cease to be a member, if he fails to pay his arrears of dues or fees within 30 days after notice of him of such arrears by the Board." The board calls for the membership to be faithful in its stewardship, including the use of Christ instituted offices. A new set of guidelines for volunteers was adopted as well, in order to "ensure a degree of uniformity throughout the school," and to set parameters of what may and may not be expected of them.

Tyndale (Calgary) is establishing an Education Committee: there are just too many issues which the Board needs to deal with, including matters of curriculum development, implementation, and oversight. Meanwhile, its first and only principal has been appointed to use his talents at the new school in Lynden, Washington. We wish Lynden the Lord's blessings as they tread on new ground. Tyndale has a new teacher treading new ground too, coming from New Zealand and putting Tyndale's student-teacher ratio at 37-3. Tyndale is growing too: "We see the enrollment increasing at a faster pace each year. This is great news of course, however it will impact the space, number of teachers etc. in the near future. For instance, we can see a need (D.V.) to expand in a few years." Finally, the school appointed Mr. Ed Hoogerdijk to be their new principal. What blessings!

Coaldale Christian school was "allowed to start a High School in September. With the blessing of the Lord we hope to add grade eleven in September, 2002. A lot to look forward to! Most importantly, though, is our hope and expectation that the Lord will return on the clouds of heaven."

In Edmonton, the public school system offers a choice of educational models from which parents can choose, including "Christian." The idea was introduced by Mr. Emery Dodsall, former superintendent of Edmonton public schools. This resulted in improved average student achievement for the public system. Contrary to what Reformed schools seek to achieve (i.e. quality Reformed education with a view to serving

God), this was exactly what Dodsall was after, given the public schools' dismal performance before the change was made. Mr. Emery Dodsall was instrumental in getting some independent schools (including Edmonton Christian Schools) to join the public system, in return for full funding. Parkland Immanuel Christian School wanted no part of this. Shortly after the Edmonton Christian Schools joined the public school system, their teachers also joined the recent strike by the Alberta Teachers' Association. Mr. Dodsall is now serving as the Deputy Minister of Education in British Columbia, and the question arises whether our schools in British Columbia will be given similar bait to give up principles of Reformed education as the schools in Edmonton.

Credo Christian High (Langley) considered attendance difficulties at membership meetings, and proposed to define a quorum as "a number equivalent to one-third of the combined membership who have children attending the highschool." It also took note of vice-principal Moe's completion of his Master of Administrative Leadership Program at Trinity Western University, and the school's principal, Mr. VanderBoom's, Fraser Institute's Outstanding Principal Award. Congratulations to all, including the hard-working colleagues, parents, and students!

Credo Elementary (Langley) also appointed its new chairman as representative to the CCRTC, but its board also considers "what the School Societies in the Valley could do as an alternative to better serve their own requirements." Undoubtedly, that will include that any teacher graduating from Covenant Teachers' College will help fill a position in our schools somewhere, and if not directly, the Valley schools will benefit indirectly. Trinity Western's new full-fledged teaching certification program, though operating on a different basis and philosophy, is also likely to be considered.

This was a broad sweep of interesting morsels from our school bulletins. Yet again, it only touched the surface of the many things that are going on in full-swing reformed education. Let us continue to commit our education efforts to the care and direction of our heavenly Father.

The Education Matters column is supported by the CRTA-East. Reader responses or articles can be sent to abkingma@kwic.com or to Clarion.



Mr. Keith Sikkema is a grade 8 teacher and vice-principal at John Calvin School in Smithville, Ontario.



Joint Meeting of the “Song Book Committee” and “Psalter Hymnal Committee” of the Canadian/American Reformed Churches and the United Reformed Churches in North America.

On Friday and Saturday, March 15 and 16, 2002, a combined meeting took place at Cornerstone URC, London, Ontario of the song book committees of the Canadian/American Reformed Churches and the United Reformed Churches in North America. Called by the URC committee, the Rev. Ed Knott, Chairman of the URC committee chaired the two days of meetings. Attending this meeting from the Canadian/American Reformed Churches were Rev. Douwe Agema, Rev. Chris Bosch, Dr. Niek Gootjes, Mr. Chris Nobels, Mrs. Christine van Halen, and Rev. George van Popta. Those present from the United Reformed Churches were Dr. Mike Horton, Rev. Ed Knott, Rev. Rand Lankheet, Mr. Henry Nuiver, Rev. Dennis Royall, Rev. Derrick Vander Meulen, and Rev. Dick Wynia.




and guidelines that will then be submitted to the churches of each federation for approval.

The joint committee began to focus on the task of hymn selection, a task that will take much time and prayerful effort, and which will take more concrete shape as the guidelines and principles are agreed upon. The next joint meeting is scheduled for

This two-day meeting was appreciated by all of the delegates present, and

a brotherly (and sisterly) spirit of Christian fellowship and cooperation pre-

vailed throughout. The respective committees look forward eagerly to the

task for which they have been set. 





Press Release of the Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches held on January 25, 2002.

Opening: Rev. R. Aasman opened the meeting with the reading of Ephesians 3:14-21 and led in prayer. After he welcomed everyone present, he proceeded to commemorate Dr. J. Faber's fiftieth anniversary of his ministry and marriage. He wished him and his wife the blessing of the Lord and also expressed the hope that He would grant Dr. Faber a speedy recovery from the rather serious operation on his esophagus.

Roll Call: Everyone is present with the exception of Rev. Cl. Stam, who is absent with notification. The chairman extended a special welcome to Dr. J. de Jong and Dr. C. van Dam.

Minutes of the meeting of September 6, 2001: They were read and after a few additions and minor changes were adopted.

Agenda: The agenda was established after adding a few necessary items to the provisional agenda. There were no matters arising from the minutes that required immediate attention.

Reports of visits to Lectures: The governors who visited the lectures on October 10 and 12, 2001, could state with gratitude to the Lord and Head of the church that the lectures were of a good academic standard, that they were very much geared to training young men to become ministers of the gospel, and that the material presented by the professors was done in a clear and concise manner.

Board of Governors Handbook: It was concluded that it was well on its way to completion. The Handbook committee's proposal, to set February 15, 2002 as the deadline for any further additions, was adopted.

Memorandum from Senate: Special attention was drawn to the response given by the Senate to the decision to increase the weight of the Diaconological disciplines. The change in the curriculum will involve a sacrifice of 1/2 hour per week for the year, or of one hour per week for

one semester by the other departments. The addition of 16 lecture hours to Poimenics in the second semester will allow the professor to bring in outside speakers for at least 12 of those hours. A suggested breakdown revealed: Directed pastoral care – 2 hours; Counselling – 6 hours; Team approaches: 2 hours; Youth care – 1 hour; Crisis Management – 1 hour.

Pastoral Training Program Report: This report by the PTP coordinator Rev. J. de Gelder was received with gratitude. During the discussion of the guidelines for the financial remuneration of the student's summer internship it was stressed that not only large but also small churches should be able to participate in this Pastoral Training Program. The Board made some amendments to the proposed guidelines. Rev. de Gelder and Dr. de Jong will prepare a draft on the specific guidelines to be used to administer the funds for students requiring additional support beyond what is paid to them by the church where they serve their internship.

Proposal from Senate/Finance and Property Committee: The proposal to increase the tuition fees from \$1750.00 to 1800.00 was adopted.

Recommendation from Finance and Property Committee re location for Convocation and Graduation: In view of the extra high cost (minimum of \$13,800.00) of holding the convocation in the West in September of this year, the Board accepts the recommendation to keep the Convocation at the usual location, i.e., where the Theological College is located.

Foreign Students Bursary Fund Guidelines: Dr. J. de Jong gave a short explanation of these guidelines. They were adopted after making some cosmetic changes and streamlining them. This decision, then, calls for the funds gathering activities to proceed immediately.

Closing: Br. W. Smouter led in thanksgiving and prayer. The chairman, Rev. R. Aasman, closed the meeting.

*For the Board of Governors,
B.J. Berends*

Press Release of Classis Manitoba, March 4, 2002, held at the Redeemer Canadian Reformed Church building.

- The convening church opened the meeting with the reading of 2 Samuel 7 and singing of Psalm 72:1, 2, and leading in prayer. The chairman of the convening church wished the Rev. D.W. Vandeburgt God's blessing at this his last Classis MB. He also noted with thankfulness the good progress in relations of our federation with the United Reformed Churches in North America (hereafter URCNA). Invitations for observers were extended by the convening church to the URCNA, to the Northern Plains Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States (hereafter NPC of the RCUS), and to the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (hereafter POD of the OPC). All of these responded in some way.
 - The convening church inspected the credentials and declared Classis constituted, inviting the executive officers to take their places: Rev. K. Jonker as chairman, Rev. T. G. Van Raalte as vice-chairman, and Rev. D. W. Vandeburgt as clerk.
- Classis decided to receive Rev. F. Folkerts as observer from the URCNA. With some additions the proposed agenda was adopted.
- The Emmanuel American Reformed Church of Denver, Colorado (hereafter Emmanuel ARC) requested that Classis approve that the Rev. D.W. Vandeburgt be honourably released from his service to this church. They supplied a certificate of release, and Classis approved the release, so that Rev. D.W. Vandeburgt will begin serving Trinity Canadian Reformed Church (hereafter CanRC) of Binbrook, Ontario, on April 1, 2002.
- The Classis MB Fund treasurer's report was received with thankfulness and Classis approved a charge of ten dollars per communicant

member in the Classis MB region for the year 2002. The treasurer's books were found to be in good order by the inspecting church.

5. The Church for the inspection of the archives found some items to be missing. Several items were contributed immediately. The rest will be located by the church for the Classis archives.
6. In closed session church visitor reports per article 46 of the Church Order (hereafter CO) for the churches of Redeemer CanRC of Winnipeg, Grace CanRC of Winnipeg, Carman East CanRC, and Carman West CanRC were all received by Classis. The chairman expressed the thankfulness of Classis in receiving these reports, which show that the churches endeavour to be a light to the world.
7. In open session, the Rev. F. Folkerts, minister of the divine Word in the Providence Reformed Church of Winnipeg, a church of the URCNA federation, was welcomed to the meeting by the chairman.
8. a. Emmanuel ARC of Denver requested classical pulpit supply after March 2002. Classis decided to supply Denver with a minister of the divine Word once per month at the last Sunday of the month, and to reconsider this matter at each Classis MB.
b. Emmanuel ARC of Denver requested a church counsellor per article 45 CO. Classis appointed Rev. J. Moesker.
9. The chairman asked the churches of Classis MB whether the ministry of the office bearers was being continued, whether the decisions of major assemblies were being honoured, and whether the churches needed the judgment or help of Classis for the proper government of their church, per article 44 CO. Two churches asked for the advice of Classis, each in a matter of discipline per article 68 CO. Advice was given.
10. a. At this point, under Correspondence, the Rev. F. Folkerts addressed Classis with unofficial greetings from the Western Canada Classis of the URCNA. He thanked Classis for this opportunity, noting it was the first time a URCNA member had addressed Classis MB. He emphasized our unity of faith, that is, our common confessional stand.

Rev. F. Folkerts also expressed thankfulness for the good progress between our local churches. The chairman responded by assuring Rev. F. Folkerts that the local CanRCs were committed to continuing in the process to the fullest expression of unity, and that we too uphold the URCNA in prayer.

- b. Mail was received from Grace CanRC, per request to them from the RCUS subcommittee of the Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA), for Classis MB to take up contact with the NPC of the RCUS. An invitation had been sent by the convening church to send observers and the RCUS responded by an official letter of greeting from the chairman of the Interchurch Relations Committee of their Classis. This letter was gratefully read at Classis. Classis decided to take up contact with the NPC of the RCUS, and to appoint a deputy for this. Greetings will be sent together with copies of the Acts of Classis and a Church Yearbook.
 - c. Mail was received from the POD of the OPC, requesting contact. Classis decided to take up such contact and to appoint a deputy for this. Greetings will be sent together with copies of the Acts of Classis and a Church Yearbook.
 - d. To facilitate Phase 2 contact with the URCNA, it was decided to appoint a deputy from Classis for contact with the Classis Western Canada of the URCNA, and to also send the Acts of Classis and a Church Yearbook (cf. Acts of General Synod Neerlandia, article 73, 5.3 and 4.6.6).
11. a. Next Classis will be on June 10 or September 23, 9:00 a.m., convened by Carman East CanRC. Suggested executive officers are Rev. J. Moesker as chairman, Rev. K. Jonker as vice-chairman, and Rev. T.G. Van Raalte as clerk.
b. Due to Rev. D.W. VandeBurgt leaving Classis MB, Rev. A.J. Pol was appointed as a new secundus delegate to Regional Synod West May 21, 2002.
c. Rev. K. Jonker was appointed to conduct examinations in Diaconiology and Rev. T.G. Van

Raalte in Church History, to replace Rev. D.W. VandeBurgt.

- d. Br. W. Chase was appointed as observer to the POD of the OPC.
 - e. Rev. K. Jonker was appointed as observer to Western Canada Classis of the URCNA. The observers under d. and e. will coordinate their work with observers appointed by Classis Alberta.
 - f. Rev. A. J. Pol was appointed as observer to the NPC of the RCUS.
 - g. Redeemer CanRC was appointed as Church for the inspection of the Fund for Needy Churches and Grace CanRC was appointed as Church for the inspection of the Fund for Needy Students.
12. Personal Question Period was held. Classis was thanked by Denver for the support and encouragement received.
 13. The chairman concluded that there was no need for censure per article 34, CO. The Acts were adopted and this Press Release was approved. After the singing of Hymn 59:3, the chairman closed in prayer.
Vice-chairman at that time,
T.G. Van Raalte

Press Release of Classis Alberta in Barrhead March 5-6, 2002

The president of the convening and hosting Church in Barrhead, Rev. E. Tiggelaar, welcomed the delegates, opened the meeting by requesting the assembly to sing Psalm 84:1, 2. He then read Psalm 89:1-18 and led in prayer.

Under memorabilia he congratulated Rev. G. Snip on the acceptance of his call to the Reformed Church (Liberated) of Zevenbergen, the Netherlands, and wished the Immanuel Church in Edmonton the blessing of the Lord as they seek a new pastor. He noted that Rev. R. Eikelboom had declined a call to the Canadian Reformed Church in Smithers, British Columbia. Furthermore, he congratulated Rev. Th. Lodder on his call to Smithers, and on the mission calls from the Canadian Reformed Church in Toronto, Ontario and from the Free Reformed Church in Armadale, Western Australia to labour in the Port Moresby and Lae regions of Papua New Guinea.

The credentials were perused by the delegates of the convening church and it was noted that all the churches were represented by their primary delegates,

and further, that a number of churches had included instructions and other attachments with the credentials.

Rev. Tiggelaar invited the officers who had been suggested by the previous classis to come forward, barring any objections. Appointed were Rev. W. Slomp as president, Rev. Th. Lodder as vice president, and Rev. R. Eikelboom as clerk, who then took their place. The agenda was adopted.

The treasurer's report, the report for the inspection of the books of the treasurer, that of the church for the inspection of the archives, and of the deputy for contact with the provincial government were received thankfully, discussed and will be responded to appropriately.

The assembly went into closed session to discuss church visit reports to the churches in Calgary, Coaldale and Taber by the Revs. Aasman, Slomp, Snip and Tiggelaar.

A letter was received by the Barhead Church suggesting that Br. C. DeBoer be appointed to the Committee for Needy Churches. This brother was appointed. An email was also conveyed to Classis via the Taber Church from the Sub-Committee of the Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA), encouraging Classis Alberta to take up contact with the Reformed Churches of the United States (RCUS) Classis nearest our southern border, namely the South Central Classis with churches in Colorado, Montana, Nevada, South Dakota and Wyoming. Rev. Aasman was appointed to coordinate this.

A request was made by the Immanuel Church in Edmonton that Rev. Aasman be appointed as counsellor in light of the impending vacancy. This request was granted, and will take effect when the vacancy begins.

Classis went into closed session, and later divided into committees, to deal with appeals and letters from the church in Coaldale.

In the evening, Rev. Th. Hoekstra, minister of the United Reformed Church in Neerlandia who was present as an observer of Classis Northwest of the URCNA, was invited to speak. He spoke about the second phase of church unity between our two federations of churches. In wake of the churches in the URCNA ratifying phase two narrowly, he explained why in his opinion the majority was so marginal, particularly that many churches south of the

border do not know the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. He spoke about the differences that exist between our federations, and hurdles to overcome, emphasizing the importance of getting to know one another. Rev. Aasman responded with appropriate words of brotherly encouragement and joy.

After spending some more time in closed session dealing with the appeals, because of the late hour the president adjourned the meeting after inviting the assembly to sing Hymn 35:1, 3, and leading in prayer.

Classis reconvened the next morning at 9:00. The president of classis, Rev. Slomp, opened by inviting the assembly to sing Psalm 72:1, read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, and led in prayer.

Closed session continued for a while.

In open session it was noted with much gratitude that a letter had been received from the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. This presbytery indicated their desire to maintain fraternal relations with our classis, joyfully noting that the relationship between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches has been re-established. This letter was received with great joy and thanksgiving to the Lord of the church. At a future meeting Classis will appoint an observer to attend a meeting of this presbytery.

In closed session the president asked the questions stipulated in Article 44 of the Church Order. The Coaldale Church sought advice. The church visitors were appointed to visit there with the proviso that they are invited by Coaldale's council.

Calgary was appointed the convening and hosting church for the next meeting, scheduled for June 11, 2002. The alternative date would be October 8, 2002. Suggested officers were Rev. Tiggelaar as president, Rev. Slomp as vice president, and Rev. Lodder as clerk.

Elders P. Van Bostelen and A. Van Leeuwen (primary), and M. Vogelzang (alternate), and Revs. Eikelboom and Tiggelaar (primary), and Aasman and Lodder (alternates), were appointed as delegates to Regional Synod West in Winnipeg on May 21, 2002.

Rev. Snip was appointed as observer to Classis Northwest of the URCNA to be held in Ponoka, AB in the month of June 2002.

Personal question period was held (Article 44 of the Church Order).

After the Acts and Press Release of Classis were adopted, the vice president invited the assembly to sing Hymn 46 and led in prayer. The meeting was closed.

*For Classis Alberta,
Th. E. Lodder*

Update to the 2002 Yearbook

1. Under the Canadian Reformed Church of Flamborough, Ontario, the e-mail address for the organist should read: musiclover@interlynx.net
2. Under the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithers, British Columbia, the e-mail address for Rev. W. Bredenhof should read: wbredenhof@canrc.org
His radio phone: 1-250-697-6316, after the beep 28601