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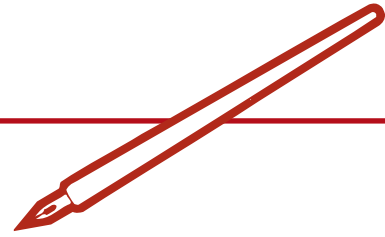


Ordination of Rev. Julius VanSpronsen

INSIDE:

- *Church in 2003 A.D.*
- *Everything Changes But God Remains the Same*
- *Missions and Exegesis*





By N.H. Gootjes



Church in 2003 A.D.

Christ's control

The year 2002 is history, and we have entered a new year. A long line up of days stretches out before us. The days are like the blank pages of a new agenda, with nothing written on them as yet. But day after day events will be written on the pages of the year, and become part of history. As we move on, one day after another, what difference does it make? With the Preacher we could easily say: All is vanity.

What gives sense and direction to the new year is the fact that it is a year of the Lord. This was already recognized in an old Latin expression, *Anno Domini*, abbreviated as AD. Translated, it means the Lord – the Lord Jesus Christ – the king of all creation. Because of its Christian connotations, attempts are being made to replace it by the letters CE, meaning Common Era. This is a futile attempt to remove the importance of Christ. Although the Common Era is not named after Christ, it is still dated after the birth of Jesus Christ! He continues to determine the way we count the years. “The One enthroned in heaven laughs” (Ps 2:4).

*The year is in the control of the King
Jesus Christ.*

However, it is clear why people would want to remove the reference to Jesus Christ. For our dating of the years still refers to the lordship of Jesus Christ over all creation. He is the Lord of all things in heaven and on earth. Whatever may happen in this new year, it still happens under his control, and that gives us a heartfelt confidence as we continue into the new year. The same lordship has another significant result, as well. The fact that Christ is the Lord means that we ought to obey Him as our Lord. We are in this world to serve Him. The pages of our agendas will be filled with all kinds of different activities, but all our actions should be done in obedience to Jesus Christ. The year is in the control of the King Jesus Christ, and in our day to day life we should show that we are his humble servants.

Unity discussions

An important issue on the agenda of the coming year is the ongoing unity discussion. This discussion has been going on for several years, and now things are moving. Synods have dealt with the issues. As a result, in several places meetings have been held between Canadian Reformed and United Reformed church people. In speeches, the possibilities and obstacles have been explained and discussed. Committees consisting of delegates from both sides have

met; they are working on reaching agreement on issues important for the continuation of the church. Things have been set in motion.

Questions rise in the hearts of the people where this all may lead to. How much progress will we make in the coming year, or will obstacles obstruct progress? This causes feelings of uncertainty, for we do not know in advance what will happen and where we will be at the end of this year. As the Lord has not given us the ability to foresee with certainty what will take place a year from now, we cannot anticipate that in our plans. We are unable to base our actions on our expectations for the future.

Rather, we should take into account what Scripture says about the church and its unity. In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul wrote about a much farther reaching transition period than we are experiencing today. The church people in Ephesus obviously consisted of Gentiles, or rather, non-Israelites who had been converted by the gospel of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:19). They did not belong to the descendants of Abraham who had received God's promises for himself and his children for many generations to come. After the Lord Jesus had come for the salvation of many, however, the gospel of salvation went out to the whole world, and Gentiles came to faith in the God of Abraham, and his Son Jesus Christ. They became fellow citizens. Jews and Gentiles became one people, on the basis of a common faith in God and in Jesus Christ, something that was unthinkable during the Old Testament.

*If even Jews and Gentiles with their
totally different background could come
together, all the more we should strive for it.*

For this event Paul uses a very uncommon expression, which thus far has only been found in this verse: the whole building “is joined together” (Eph 2:21). This expression speaks of a continual process of being fitted together. Believing Gentiles and believing Jews grow together, becoming one. A wide gap had always existed between Jews and Greeks. They were different nations, with different historical backgrounds, different languages, different cultures. However, within the church they are “being joined together.” And as the result of this being joined together, they grew together as one building. That is the church where God lives with his Spirit (Eph 2:22).

Our situation today is by far not as complex as the situation existing in Ephesus during the first century. There is a

common basis in believing in the triune God, as proven by adherence to the same confessions. Actually, we have mutually recognized one another as faithful churches of Jesus Christ. But we do have a different background and tradition. We have gone separate ways for fifty or perhaps 100 years, and that can be noticed. We can become focussed on the differences which do exist. Therefore it is important to realize that today's differences in cultural and ecclesiastical background are by far not as wide as they were between the believing Gentiles and the believing Jews in the first century. If even Jews and Gentiles with their totally different background could come together, all the more we should strive for it.

It cannot be ignored that this process will cause friction, misunderstanding, and sometimes pain. People with different background are not easily "joined together." That can also be seen in the Bible, where the book of Acts is clear about the fact that there were sometimes differences of opinions and disagreements. At the same time, the Jews and the Gentiles were one church, and more and more became one church. That calls us to activity.

In all this we recognize that 2003 is another year of the Lord. Our actions should be determined by a common recognition of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not by a different culture or a different historical background. The process of "being joined together" has begun. Let us continue this in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.



Dr. N.H. Gootjes is professor of Dogmatology at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario. nhgootjes@canrc.org

What's inside?

At the beginning of the year of our Lord 2003, we are reminded again how all things are in the control of our King Jesus Christ. Rev. J. Moesker reflects on this in his meditation. Dr. N.H. Gootjes also emphasizes this in his editorial. He also makes some observations about church unity. He reminds us that even as Jews and Gentiles were united in spite of very different backgrounds, so today, different backgrounds and traditions should not keep faithful churches of Jesus Christ apart.

On October 20, 2002, Rev. Julius VanSpronsen was ordained as minister of the Word in Smithers, British Columbia. That event is reported on in this issue. The joy and thanksgiving in Smithers is most perceptible!

In his *Observations* column, Rev. George van Popta writes about an exciting new radio program in the Hamilton area. You will have to read the article to see who is hosting this program. But I can tell you that it is a phone-in program where the listener can ask questions about the Bible. It sounds great!

Once again we have a *Hiliter* column by Rev. J. De Gelder. We also have a short book review, a couple of press releases, a report of the Women's Savings Action, a report on Reformed education in Denver, and finally, an article by Rev. W. Bredenhof regarding the importance of good training for missionaries.

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Visscher

Managing Editor: R. Aasman

Coeditors: J. De Jong, N.H. Gootjes, Cl. Stam

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION

26 Inverness Crescent, St. Albert, AB T8N 5J3

Fax: (780) 418-1506 E-Mail: raasman@canrc.org

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

(subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.

One Beghin Avenue

Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5

Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202

Email: clarion@premier.mb.ca

World Wide Web address: premier.mb.ca/clarion.html

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IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|--|----|
| Editorial – Church in 2003 A.D. — N.H. Gootjes | 2 |
| Treasures, New and Old – Everything Changes But God Remains the Same — J. Moesker | 4 |
| Mission and Exegesis — W.L. Bredenhof | 5 |
| Observations — George van Popta | 7 |
| The Hi-liter — J. De Gelder | 8 |
| Ordination of Rev. Julius VanSpronsen — Harold Dykstra | 10 |
| Thank You For Supporting Reformed Education in Denver — Roelof T. Brintjes | 12 |
| Book Notices | 13 |
| News from the Women's Savings Action — Dinie Gootjes | 14 |
| Press Releases – Classis Pacific West, Classis Manitoba | 16 |

By J. Moesker

Everything Changes But God Remains the Same

*"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day; Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see. O Thou, who changest not, abide with me."*

Psalm 102:25-28

The words of this well-known hymn express what the psalmist wanted to say in Psalm 102:25-28. The year 2002 has been a year of much change. Each one of us can relate the different changes that have taken place in our own life during this past year. Now we have begun a new year. It too will be a year of change for us. What changes will take place during this year, we will have to wait and see.

It says in Psalm 102:25 and 26, "In the beginning you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them, and they will be discarded."

Thousands of years ago God brought this world into existence by his almighty power. He created this world and everything in it out of nothing in six days. But the world that God created did not remain as He created it. A great change took place. The world that God created was a perfect world. It was a world free of sin, sickness and death. But when Adam and Eve fell into sin, the world changed. Sin brought sickness and death and decay into this world. The earth no longer produces its fullest. Weeds and thistles grow up among the crops. There are times of climate change. People change as they age. People die, and others are born. Civilizations come and go.

The world we live in is always changing. Think of the changes that have taken place over the past 100 years. During that time we have gone from horse and buggy, to car, to plane, to jet, to rocket and to space travel. We have seen the rise and fall of the communist regime in the Soviet Union. New nations have come on the scene. Others have disap-

peared. Global warming has taken place. And we can be sure that if God lets the world continue this change will continue too, even at an increasing pace. It is like someone's wardrobe. Clothes wear out and go out of style and you buy new clothes and discard the old ones.


However, in the midst of all the change that has taken place and is still taking place on this earth, He who created it has remained the same. God does not change. He is not a fickle individual who keeps changing his mind. God does not say one thing but mean or do another. God is forever and always the same.

This is a source of great comfort for believers as they look ahead. Living in a world that is changing so rapidly, it is of great comfort to be able to cling to someone who does not change. We have a covenant God who does not change his attitude about us. In Christ his Son He has promised redemption from our sin. God has promised that through faith in Christ we are justified before Him and are heirs to life everlasting. God will not change those promises. And that is our security for the future.

The year that lies before us is filled with insecurity. We don't know what will happen this year. It might bring many changes to us personally. Members of our family may be taken out of this life by God. It may be that during this year, we will be called home. Perhaps this is the year God has appointed to be the last year of this world's history. Maybe during this year, Christ Jesus will return in all his glory to take us to heaven. We just don't know what the new year has in store for us.

In spite of the changes that might take place during this coming year, the psalmist gives us the confidence (verse 28): "The children of your servants will live in your presence; their descendants will be established before you." As believers, we know that our life here on earth will not last forever. We may be sure that when we pass from this life, which is really no more than a constant death, our God in Christ will bring us safely into God's eternal presence. There we'll live forever, together with the generations of our children who follow us in God's covenant ways.

There is another way in which our descendants continue to live. The present generation may pass away before the Lord returns, but by God's grace there will be another generation of believers after us. The Lord has promised that his church will continue to exist until the end of time. And the believers who live after us will be secure in God's presence too. Nothing will be able to take them out of God's hand. Not even Satan with all his henchmen will be able to overthrow the believers. They are secure in God's presence.

So we can look ahead in this insecure and ever-changing world with confidence and security. No matter what may happen, God will not change. He will always be with us and deal with us in his love for the sake of Jesus Christ, his Son. He is ultimately the reason we may believe that God never changes. 

Rev. J. Moesker is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Carman East, Manitoba. jmoesker@canrc.org

Missions and Exegesis

By W.L. Bredenhof

By the grace of God, missionaries are privileged men. They have the singular privilege of seeing lives changed by the power of God working through his Word and Spirit. “And such were some of you,” said Paul to former Corinthian fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals and thieves (1 Cor 6:11). Ministers working in the regular ministry sometimes have the opportunity to see before their eyes that miracle of a new creation – outsiders or perhaps hypocrites converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. However, missionaries see this as the norm of their ministry. This miracle of the new life is normally affected through the preaching of the Word.

Preachers first

Missionaries are in the first place preachers. Says the Form for Ordination for Missionaries, “. . . a missionary shall first of all preach the Word of God to those who are without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise.” Having said that, it must be realized that not all missionaries approach their preaching task in the same way. Many missionaries give the same attention to their mission sermons that a minister in a regular congregation would. Others give less. They may reason that a missionary only preaches a simple message and thus less work is needed for the sermon. Moreover, the missionary life is very busy, especially in developing relationships and instructing or counselling people on an individual basis. The average missionary may not have the same amount of time available for study as would the regular minister. A different ministry means a different approach to preaching.

This is not simply an academic question. If it is true that the missionary requires less work for his sermon, then we could also lower the requirements for our missionaries. Why do they need

over eight years of post-secondary training if they are not fully utilizing their education? And how many missionaries haven’t been told that they are wasting their gifts by working in their given field instead of in an established church? There is a popular view in Christendom that anybody can be a missionary. It does not take a man (or, nowadays, a woman) with an extensive theological education. Anybody can board a wide-body jet, fly several hours, and arrive at a mission field and begin working. They may even take the title of “missionary” for themselves.

There is a popular view in Christendom that anybody can be a missionary.

This issue, therefore, revolves around two questions. First, how important is exegesis for preaching? Second, how important is the office of “missionary?” Are our past approaches to these questions simply part of a tradition we have outgrown? Or is there more at stake?

How important is exegesis?

Let’s first address the question of exegesis. What is exegesis? It’s something that all the regular ministers in our churches do in a regular work week. They sit down in front of the Scriptures and they wrestle with the text. They translate the Greek or Hebrew. They work to understand the grammar. They plot the structure of the text and analyze it carefully. They make careful study of the important words and phrases in the original text, comparing Scripture with Scripture. Nearly done, they formulate their own conclusions as to the meaning of the text.

Then, and only then, do they consult commentaries to compare their exegesis with the conclusions that others have reached. It’s only at this point, after much labour, that a minister is ready to move on to preparing the sermon.

Is this whole process biblical? Is this necessary? Aren’t there many people in the congregation who could study a Bible passage and make a sermon just as good as the minister? Let’s consider what God says through Paul in 1 Timothy 4:13-15:

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.

Timothy, a prototype of today’s minister, was encouraged by Paul *to devote himself* to the task of preaching and teaching. He wasn’t supposed to go and preach off the cuff. He was to prepare. A devoted teacher just doesn’t show up in the classroom. He prepares for class – so also preachers diligently prepare for preaching.

This is implied also in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” This means that Timothy was to be careful with the Word of God. He could not go and present his own opinion. He had to be absolutely certain that his words when he preached were the Word of God. This becomes even more crucial when it is realized that preachers are ambassadors of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:20). An ambassador or herald in the ancient world could not bring his own opinion – it had to be the message with which he was sent.¹

It should also be noted that Timothy’s task included an evangelistic component.

According to 2 Timothy 4, his work included convincing and doing the work of an evangelist. Timothy was not exclusively a missionary, but his work did involve a missionary aspect. Nowhere did Paul make a distinction between preparing to preach to believers and preparing to preach to unbelievers. In both instances, Timothy had to be careful with the Word of God and he had to be devoted to the task of preaching. Therefore, all preaching today, whether to believers or unbelievers, must be based on sound, careful, and thorough exegesis. It only follows, then, that missionaries need to have the right theological training to engage in this rigorous exegesis.

How important is office?

That leads us into our second question concerning the importance of the office of "missionary." Actually, here we have to make a distinction. In our churches, there is no office of missionary. There is an office of ministers of the Word. However, some of these ministers have been set apart as missionaries and some as professors. These are ministers with a special task.

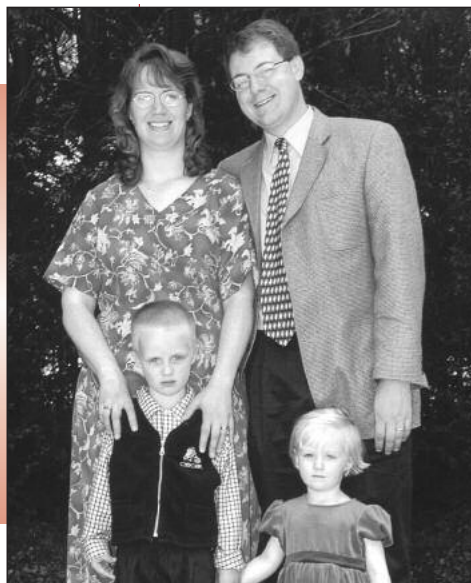
What we find today is what some have called the "democratization of the church." Everyone in the church is placed on an equal level in every respect. American evangelicalism has always been loose on the idea of office and the contemporary scene has not witnessed any improvement. With thanks to God, we may state that faithful Reformed churches have not followed this path.

Nowhere did Paul make a distinction between preparing to preach to believers and preparing to preach to unbelievers.

We maintain that God has given offices to the church. One of these offices is the ministry of the Word and sacraments. We do not allow just anybody to ascend the pulpit, preach the Word, administer Holy Supper and Holy Baptism. There is a lengthy period of study followed by extensive examinations at the classical level. These are not just formal exercises. We take the concept of office very seriously.

So, why are missionaries required to have the office of a minister? There

Rev. Wes Bredenhof with his wife Rose and children Josiah and Julie.



is first and most importantly the matter of authority. An office bearer is sent out by Jesus Christ through a Church. He comes with the office of an ambassador or herald. That means that he comes in the place of the Lord Jesus Himself. The missionary therefore has the right and privilege of saying, "Thus says the Lord. . ." He may say that with boldness and confidence. Second, there is the education required. A missionary is constantly confronted with many issues for which a theological education is necessary to successfully navigate. This education includes training in exegesis. That in turn ties into the most important task a missionary has: preach the Word! To preach faithfully, a missionary needs to be well-trained. Besides, a missionary is also concerned with planting churches. That involves not only preaching, but also the administration of the sacraments and the training and ordination of office bearers.

Because of the scriptural norms, we must maintain a strong connection between mission preaching and exegesis. The missionary has to be out in the field, going from home to home and reaching out to the lost. But he also has to be in his study, faithfully preparing sermons. Much thought and work has to go into preparing a sermon for congregants with a limited vocabulary or Bible knowledge. And then what about preaching in a foreign language? In many ways, the missionary's work will be easier if he has a full exegesis of the passage upon which he can draw. He doesn't necessarily have to preach every single angle of the text.

But when he draws a full measure of exegesis, he can be confident that the message he brings is the very Word of God in truth.

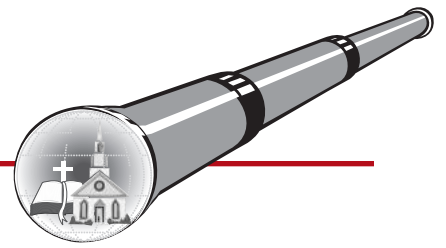
This approach to mission preaching and exegesis also results in a greater benefit for the missionary himself.

This approach to mission preaching and exegesis also results in a greater benefit for the missionary himself. Exegesis is not like plugging words into a machine and then a few hours later out pops a sermon. Exegesis, despite the technical description given above, is a spiritual activity. The text, the Word of God (!), speaks first of all to the exegete. The exegete in turn responds with prayer and devotion. Exegesis may sound like drudgery, but it is far from that. It is a joyful and beautiful work and the missionary who either does not or cannot exegete the Scriptures fully is not only robbing his listeners, but also his own spiritual walk with the Lord. To faithfully preach the Word, whether in an established church or on the mission field, there must be faithful, comprehensive exegesis!

¹Cf. *The Preacher's Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies*, John Stott, Eerdmans, 1961, p.37.



*Rev. W.L. Bredenhof is missionary in Fort Babine, British Columbia.
wbredenhof@canrc.org*



What does the Bible say?

By George van Popta

Lord willing, on January 5, 2002, a new radio program will have hit the airwaves in Hamilton, Ontario. The program is called, "What does the Bible say?"

Like most Canadian cities, Hamilton has its share of live open line talk shows dealing with a glut of topics. One can also hear much taped religious programming, including our own *Voice of the Church* emanating from an American station just across the border in Buffalo, New York.

One brother of the Ancaster congregation made the observation that despite the many open line talks shows and taped religious programs, there is a void. There is no program that allows people to phone in with their questions about the Bible and receive sound answers. A further observation was made: Despite the "Christian" past of Canada, society is abysmally ignorant of what the Bible teaches. Our growing acquaintance with many Hamiltonians through Streetlight Ministries, an urban outreach ministry of Ancaster and *Fellowship* (Burlington-South) churches, has made that abundantly clear.

The brother wanted the void of biblical knowledge to be filled. Hence was conceived "What does the Bible say?"

"What does the Bible say?" is a one hour live program where listeners will be able to phone in with their questions about the Bible. As far as we know, it will be "one of a kind." We hope to provide a forum where people living in the Golden Horseshoe of Ontario will be able to hear the truths of Scripture explained.

Rev. Clarence Stam of Hamilton will be the main host. It will be "his" program. Rev. George van Popta of Ancaster will be Rev. Stam's backup, sitting in for him when he is away. As well, at times, and at least initially, they will do the program together. The churches do not have any direct involvement in the program; however, the two ministers will be doing this with the support and encouragement of their elders.

The goal of the program is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ in our area, answer questions about the teachings of the Bible, and steer people towards the Church and/or Streetlight Ministries. After a brief meditation or comment, the phone lines will be opened to the public. At times, an expert in some field of Biblical knowledge will be invited to be a guest on the program or to be live on line from his home.

Someone will be screening the calls to ensure that the caller is not a wrong number or completely abusive; however, no one will be quickly cut off. Any question about the




Rev. Clarence Stam of Hamilton will be the main host.

Bible will be considered fair game. If someone tries to extract the opinion of the host on a given topic, we will keep going back to what the Bible says. The opinion of the host on an issue will be declared irrelevant; we will talk about what the Bible teaches.

Other than many religious programs, there will be no "asks" for money. A small corporation called "Biblical Truth Broadcasting Corp." has been set up. The corporation will seek to raise funds through donations. Hopefully, it will soon have a tax number as a charitable, non-profit organization, which will be able to issue tax receipts to donors.

The program will air Sunday evenings, 6:00-7:00 p.m., on AM 900 CHML, Hamilton's main AM radio station. It reaches pretty well the whole Golden Horseshoe, from Toronto to Woodstock down the Niagara Peninsula. CHML is considered

to have a "mature" audience. The timeslot is good since many people still have their radios on at this time before switching to TV at 7:00 p.m.

Our hope is to have, eventually, a daily prime-time program. There may also be the possibility of buying hours from radio stations across Canada and replaying the programs. As CHML is owned by the Corus network of radio stations, perhaps there will be the possibility of syndication. Who knows? Please pray for this new endeavour. 

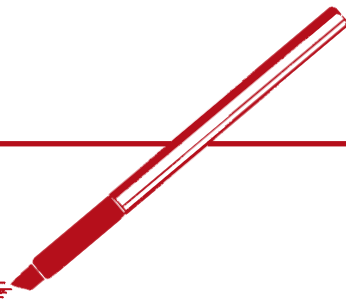
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Rev. G.Ph. van Popta is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Ancaster, Ontario. gvanpopta@canrc.org

THE HI-LITER

News from Here and There

By J. De Gelder



Longing for church activity

In his pastoral column the Rev. J.G.R. Kroeze of the FRC of Legana in Tasmania, Australia meditates on what he senses as a change of mood in the church, a longing for activity:

Simply setting objectives for the church can change its nature if the objectives set are out of biblical balance. We must not set up as primary objectives what Scripture doesn't. We must not set our sights for rejuvenation of the church on the wrong thing. A dynamic church is an obligation, but the dynamism should be that of God working in us, and not that of human origin. To have a dynamic church life constant Bible study and prayer are necessary, for a dynamic church life is built on God working through the spiritual life of the individuals. If the latter is at a low pitch, so will church life be, and if church life is made dynamic, but the individual's spiritual life is at a low pitch, then the church will self destruct, for its dynamism is not from God. The only safe way for a church to lift its game is by repentance and return to God. That begins at home in Bible reading and Bible study, in personal devotion to God and prayer. If you notice that your Bible study and prayer life are degenerating slowly or are nearly non existent, then you know where to start the rejuvenation of the church. You have identified the problem. Correct that and you will begin to notice growth in yourself and you will also notice that "church" is not boring, but stimulating and strengthening.

This is the difficult path. If you try to correct the personal spiritual lack by communal activism, you have chosen the easy route. You have substituted works for repentance and faith, and it will backfire, for activism will not enrich you spiritually. It may turn the church into a dynamo, but its energy will dissipate and leave the church an empty shell, for it will be based on human

energy, and not on God's. Once that is exhausted, the church will be left wondering: Where to now?

If we are at a crossroads as churches, let us make certain the path we follow is the one God has laid before us, and not one which looks attractive to man. Too many churches have come to this same intersection and with the best of intentions and motives have lost their way, for their way was not determined by repentance and return to God, but by steaming ahead. Let us think this through very carefully, for where we are today, and the direction we go today will determine whether we remain God's church or an empty shell full of dead men's bones.

Keeping in mind Rev. Kroeze's conclusion that "longing for activity in the church is wonderful if it is an expression of a true love for our God and of a living and active faith, but dangerous if it is based on a desire to get the church moving," we can be thankful for, among other things, a renewed and revitalized interest in Home Missions. The church of *Ancaster*, in cooperation with *Burlington Fellowship*, is expanding the activities of "Streetlight Ministries" downtown Hamilton. There is already a large group of volunteers working with Richard Bultje, the full time worker in the downtown area. If everything goes according to schedule, a building has been purchased downtown, as a centre for service and worship. Plans are also on the way to call a home missionary.

Coordinating home mission

Some areas in our church life could benefit greatly from a better cooperation and coordination of activities. The autonomy of the local church is one of the cornerstones of our Church Order. And rightly so! But we drive it to the point that we keep reinventing the wheel in our local churches. In church A people spent a lot of time, energy, and sometimes even money on developing material that is already available in church B. One area in which coordination is very helpful is home mission. For years there was in the western part of the

country the Reformed Evangelism Taskforce. At a meeting of the Home Mission Committees in the Fraser Valley:

A proposal was made that one evangelism committee draft up a plan for what might be called an "Institute for Evangelism." This institute is to be a continuation of the Reformed Evangelism Taskforce, which is currently under the supervision of the Langley Canadian Reformed Church. Should this "Institute for Evangelism" be established, it is to be run either under the auspices of a consistory, or by consistory-appointed representatives of each congregation. It was suggested that the "Institute for Evangelism" have the following components:

- Compile an inventory of material available
- Provide training. This includes training in Reformed ethics and hands-on, practical skills for outreach.
- Publish appropriate outreach material, including the maintenance of a Web-page
- Build bridges to denominations with which we have fraternal relations.

In the meantime it was decided to restructure the existing Reformed Evangelism Taskforce with a renewed mandate along the lines of this proposal. All the churches have received a letter to inform them of these changes.

Similar purpose

Recently a meeting was held of the League of Home Mission Committees in Ontario with a similar purpose. Here also the decision was made to come to greater cooperation, and to share projects and plans, as well as material. For practical reasons it will probably be good to have separate structures in east and west, but in our electronic age it should also be possible to develop a working relationship between the two organizations.

A new possibility for outreach in the community was presented in the Hamilton area. Rev. G. Ph. van Popta wrote in the *Ancaster* bulletin:

I have been asked to be involved in a new radio program that will be aired on CHML 900, starting January 5th, 2003. It will be an open line phone-in program to which listeners will be able to call with their questions about the Bible. The focus will be on what the Bible teaches. It will run every Sunday evening from 6:00 to 7:00. The Rev. Cl. Stam will be the host. My main involvement will be as the backup host who will sit in for the Rev. Stam when he is not available. We see this as a great possibility to sow the seed of God's Word in our community. It seems the Lord is providing a wonderful window of opportunity to speak the biblical truth into a postmodern culture.

Many of these things cost money which we collect, either by regular voluntary contributions, or in collection bags during, or after the worship service. Some churches have discussed the practices we have developed in this field, to make our gift giving to the Lord more meaningful, and in harmony with the scriptural principles. It is remarkable that this can lead to such a variety in conclusions. In *Grand Valley* it was decided that the contributions for the ministry of the gospel must be collected during the worship service, and not in a box in the foyer of the church.

However, in *Orangeville* the brothers concluded that for collections within worship the emphasis must be on the ministry of mercy. Contributions for the ministry of the gospel do not be long there. They should be collected in a box in the foyer of the church, a practice similar to what we read in 2 Kings 12:9. In one of the churches in *Australia* there is room for a more contemporary approach:

There have been a number of requests from members to pay their contributions via Internet Transfers. In order to streamline this, an additional church account has been set up to accept Internet payments.

Ecclesiastical fellowship

Ecclesiastical Fellowship with other churches include the rule that we can invite each others ministers on the pulpit. For several, mostly practical, reasons this will only happen occasionally, of course. But it is good to make use of this possibility whenever it is feasible. The pulpit is a significant place in the process of becoming more familiar with each other as churches. After all, in Article 29 BC the faithful preaching of the gospel is the first mark of the true

church. Earlier this year Rev. B.J. Berends from *Brampton* was invited to lead the worship service in the OPC at Bohemia, Long Island, New York. And Rev. A.J. Pol from *Carman* preached in the RCUS in Minot, N.D. The Rev. V. Atallah, director of the Middle East Reformed Fellowship, and minister in the OPC proclaimed the Word in *Burlington Waterdown* and *Flamborough*, Ontario, and in *Langley*, British Columbia.

Exciting things are happening in our relationship with the United Reformed Churches. No, I do not believe that it is going to be an easy route to unity. The road is bumpy, and we will have to deal with many hurdles and potential roadblocks. But I do sense from many local bulletins that in general the churches take on the challenge before us, and work hard to make things work. I cannot list all the activities, but will give a more general impression.

Compared to a year ago, I am amazed by what I read in the bulletins. I do not have the impression that a lot has happened on the level of our synod-appointed committees, but I am amazed at, for instance, the participation in pulpit exchanges. I believe that this aspect will turn out to be crucial. We must learn to trust one another. Well, when we learn to trust each other's preaching as faithful to God's Word and the Reformed Confessions, we have come a long way! For that will give us on the local level a solid basis for ongoing discussions on other matters. Such mutual trust will make it easier to handle things we disagree in. To be fair, there are also some councils that have serious concerns, and the next general synod will most likely have to deal with those.

In the meantime meetings are being held; presentations, speeches, panel discussions, etc. involve the congregations on both sides, so that we all can make informed decisions. I said I was not going to list the things that are going on, but I will make one exception. The Church of *Langley* did this:

A suggestion was made to consider "winning" our church here in *Langley* with the URC in *Escondido*, California. Seeing that we do not have a URC in *Langley* and that those that do exist in the *Fraser Valley* have a CanRC next door, this would be one way for us to get involved. At the same time it would also draw in at least one URC in *America* that is far removed from us and knows little about us.

An interesting option for other CanRCs that do not have a URC next door.

Catechism classes

Catechism instruction is an important part of a minister's activities. Some colleagues spend quite some time marking tests, and in some churches they issue report cards even. So far no one has been able to convince me that this the right thing to do. I feel more comfortable with what I read from Rev. E. Kampen in *Willoughby Heights*:

I've been making a round of visits to parents with children in Catechism classes to review how they did this past year. This way there is opportunity to give an oral report and have the equivalent of a parent/teacher interview too. You can understand that the primary concern is growth in faith and the attitude shown. This makes a written report card rather unsuitable. Report cards may work for school where the primary concern is academic growth to equip the children for fulfilling the mandate given at creation and to do so as God's children. Progress there can be measured in numbers to a degree. Spiritual development, the key concern of catechism classes, requires a conversation between pastor and parents.

Liturgical matters

Liturgical matters are always good for interesting discussions. The council of the Church in *Aldergrove* had some lengthy discussions on this topic, and considered various proposed changes in the light of the covenantal nature of our worship. After hearing the congregation, it was decided to implement the speaking of the votum together as congregation. "We believe this will be to the edification of the congregation as together we take upon our lips our confession of trust in and dependency upon the Lord."

Organists can be easy targets for criticism: they play too slow, too fast, too loud, too soft, too wild, and what have you. In *Bunbury*, Western *Australia* they don't have that problem: "The singing in *Bunbury* attracts much positive comments from visitors. We don't have an organ, and we have no intention of getting one either. Like John Calvin we prefer to praise the Lord solely with our voices, rather than to have our voices drowned out by the thundering sound of an organ." For the quiet organ music before the service and during the collections, they use . . . cd's!



Rev. J. De Gelder is minister of the *Flamborough Canadian Reformed Church* in *Ontario*. jdegelder@canrc.org

Ordination of Rev. Julius VanSpronsen

By Harold Dykstra

Morning

After being vacant for nearly four years, the congregation of Smithers was very thankful that they could witness the ordination and installation of their new minister, Rev. Julius VanSpronsen, on October 20, 2002.

Rev. VanSpronsen was installed by his father, Rev. C. VanSpronsen, a former minister and missionary of the Smithers congregation. Rev. C. VanSpronsen chose as his text for the service of the ordination 1 Timothy 4:11-14:

Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

He preached the sermon under the theme "Let nothing stand in the way of preaching and teaching." He stressed how while a minister has many tasks, his primary task is the preaching of God's Word and the teaching of the believers. Those tasks, which can be distinguished but not separated, must take priority over all things.

Afternoon

That afternoon, Rev. J. VanSpronsen preached his first sermon as the minister of the congregation of Smithers. He chose as text 1 Thessalonians 2:13:

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the

word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word God, which is at work in you who believe.

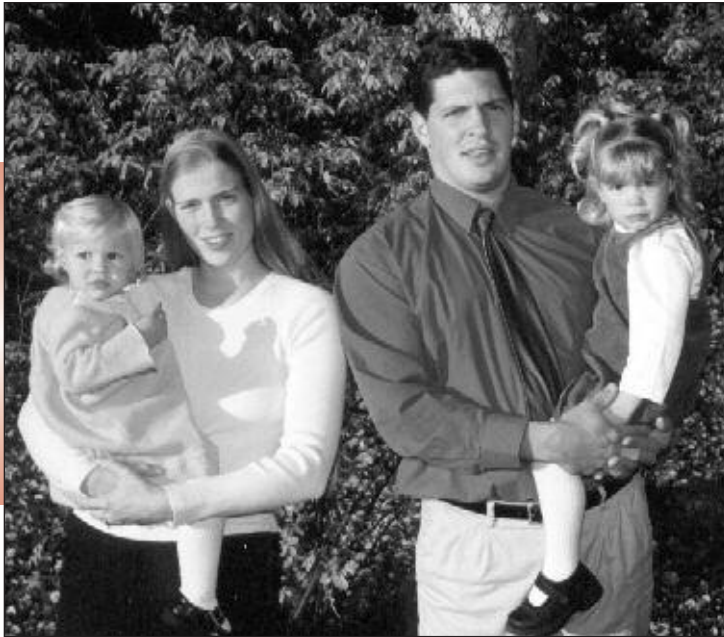
He preached a sermon with the theme "The Church will persevere by clinging to the Word of God." God is working in the church throughout history with his Word. He ensures that the proclamation of his Word will always continue. He works in the hearts of those who listen to that proclamation to ensure that there is an acceptance of that Word, and he causes it to work on those who hear it. For the Word of God always has an effect, one way or the other, on the hearts of those who hear it, and on their relationship with God.



Rev. J. VanSpronsen is congratulated by his father, Rev. C. VanSpronsen after his ordination.



Rev. VanSpronsen receives a ceremonial key to the Smithers church building from consistory chairman, Br. D. Bandstra.



Rev. Julius VanSpronsen with his wife Karen and daughters Elena (l) and Melissa (r).

Evening

That evening, the congregation, along with many visitors from local URC congregations, Houston and farther away, gathered to welcome their new minister and his family. The council spoke some words of welcome, read some letters of congratulations from other churches in the federation, and presented Rev. VanSpronsen with a symbolic key to the church, adding that a functioning metal key to open the consistory room would hopefully be following soon.

The preschool "Little Lambs" sang a song of welcome. The elementary students from Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School sang a song which introduced the minister and his family to the school, and issued their new minister the challenge to come and play a game of soccer at lunch time. Then the high school students made a presentation of twenty-six items, one for each letter of the alphabet, which formed a "Bulkley Valley Survival Kit." Some of these items included:

- B - bear spray for protection from some of the local wildlife
- S - warm socks for our cold winters
- W - a new watch so that he would never be late for church on Sundays
- Q - quarters so that he could phone his dad for advice

A musical group made of members of the congregation performed a number of selections, and led the congregation

in singing a number of songs. Then Rev. VanSpronsen was challenged to match up a number of grandchildren with their corresponding grandparents. He did remarkably well considering that he had been in the Bulkley Valley for less than a week, although he did have some help, unintentional or otherwise, from the participants, especially the children. He was put on the spot again during a Bible quiz, in which everyone was invited to stand and could stay standing until they answered a question incorrectly. The challenge extended to him was to be the last person standing. He was able to meet that challenge, so his instructors at the theological college can be assured that he



Declined the call from Neerlandia, Alberta:

Rev. D.G.J. Agema

of Attercliffe, Ontario.

Declined the call from the church at Toronto, Ontario to work as missionary in Papua New Guinea, and the call to the Free Reformed Church of Albany, Western Australia:

Rev. J.D. Louwse

of Fergus, Ontario.

has remembered at least some of what they taught him.

A piano and an organ solo were performed by members of the congregation, and then Rev. and Mrs. VanSpronsen were presented with a large number of welcome gifts given by members of the congregation. The evening was concluded by some words from Rev. VanSpronsen in which he read a thank-you written by his father many years ago for the warm welcome he received into Smithers. He felt that the words written by his father applied today again, and wholeheartedly thanked the congregation for the efforts that they made to make him and his family feel welcome. 

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Thank You For Supporting Reformed Education in Denver

By Roelof T. Brintjes¹

Readers in *Clarion* will by now be familiar with the advertisement requesting donations for the school in Denver that has been appearing regularly over the past year. In response to the article about the school that appeared last year in *Clarion* and the advertisement we are thankful for the outpouring of gifts that we received. The purpose of this letter is to specially thank all the many churches, brothers and sisters that supported the school in Denver through their gifts in the last year and are continuing to do so. We received a total amount of \$20,000 that helped to cover our shortfall for the 2001-2002 school year. Indeed, without the financial support of our brothers and sisters in Canada it would have been impossible to sustain the school in Denver. We appreciate these gifts very much and thank the Lord for his gracious provisions through these gifts.

Operating grades 1 to 12 in a small school with only one full-teacher and three teacher's aides, calls for special structures and teaching procedures. Due to staff limitations, a multi-grade classroom format is utilized at Heritage Christian School. In the grade school, courses such as spelling, mathematics, or English grammar are taught sequentially using mass-produced textbooks. Bible history, social studies, and the physical and natural sciences are generally taught to the students as a group. It is necessary for the teachers to adapt themselves to a variety of age levels in a single classroom, and to involve each of the students in discussion and appropriately graded seatwork as much as possible. Several different reading groups are in operation, making independent study a necessary part of most of the older students' days. Although there are drawbacks to this system of operation, positive benefits include a challenging work environment, inter-



action with students of varying age levels, and a sense of community not necessarily characteristic of a single grade classroom. Heritage Christian School also maintains a high school, offering college preparatory course work for our high school students. Traditional subject matter is offered at the high school level, including a significant amount of reading of primary sources in the major content areas. We have been encouraged by the development made by our high school students, as well as the ease with which they are able to assimilate into the university level experience. An important part of the educational process is the annual spring play or recitation. The student body coached by the teaching staff and assistants has produced plays such as

Anne of Green Gables and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. These and other special events round out a fairly academic school life for the students. Finally, members of the staff at Heritage Christian School recognize that they are contributing to an ongoing effort to analyze, develop, and systematize their curriculum. A curriculum committee answering to the school board has been mandated with the task of overseeing this effort.

The children given to us by the Lord are first of all his children. In addition, they are the future generation of the church. It is therefore one of the fundamental Reformed beliefs to conduct the upbringing and education of our children in harmony with the Word of God. The public school system in the USA

has become more and more secular during the past several decades to the point where God and his Word are banned from the school premises. Children in the public schools are taught that pleasing self, fulfilling one's own desires, and being applauded by the world for one's own achievements is most important. As Christians we do not strive to attain personal goals for our own honor, to be great achievers, or to better ourselves or measure up to the standards society has established for our own sake. As Christians, we look to Christ's teachings and recognize that they are central in our lives and that He guides us to honor Him in all we do. Then we strive for excellence in all spheres of life focused on God's Word. The congregation recognizes that just as the Reformed faith structures church life, so it ought to structure school life and education. It is important to note that recent contacts with a local United Reformed Church (URC), Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), and local OPC churches in the area

have indicated that our school remains the only Reformed/Presbyterian School in the Denver region. The other local Reformed/Presbyterian churches are very similar in size to the American Reformed Church.

The school does not receive any financial help from either the national, state or local governments. The community in Denver provides approximately sixty-five percent of the operating funds while about thirty-five percent is contributed through gifts from outside the Denver community. During the past year three new students were admitted to the school of which two were from a Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), one of the churches with which our churches now have ecclesiastical fellowship. We are thankful for the new students that could be admitted to the school and the outlook is that more children from the RCUS will attend school during the next school year.

The Lord graciously provided for the school through financial support

from our brothers and sisters in Canada. The families in Denver trust and pray for the Lord's continual provisions, financially and spiritually, as we strive to guide our covenant children in the truth of God's Word. Although we anticipate growth in student numbers in next two years, it is clear that the need for financial support from outside (approximately thirty to thirty-five percent of the total annual budget of the school) the community in Denver will remain in the foreseeable future. It is against this background that we would like to express our sincere thanks to all the brothers and sisters in Canada, the United States, Australia and the Netherlands for their support in the past and continue to ask for your support for the Heritage Christian school in Denver; support not only in financial terms, but above all spiritual support through your prayers for the church and school in Denver.

¹On behalf of the board of the American Reformed School Association in Denver 

BOOK NOTE

By C. Bouwman

September 11


Kornelis Sietsma, The Self-Justification of God in the Life of Job, translated by R.C. Janssen, Neerlandia: Inheritance Publications, 2001, 103 pages, no price.

A year before World War II broke out, a minister of the Word preached seven sermons covering the book of Job, about how people struggle with understanding evil and what God's answer was to that struggle. Not so many years later this preacher, Rev. Kornelis Sietsma, died in the concentration camp at Dachau. Meanwhile, the seven sermons he had preached before the war had been published – and so became a source of comfort and encouragement for the believers of the Netherlands in the dark days of suffering we know as World War II.

More than sixty years after the book of Job was expounded in these seven sermons, Inheritance Publications saw fit to translate and publish them in today's international language. The translator, Rev. R.C. Janssen, is well known in our midst. The occasion of this translation is seen in its dedication "to the family members of those who died as a result of the terrorist attacks on New York, Washington and Somerset, PA, on September 11, 2001."

That's fitting. September 11 has raised so many questions in our world, and the questions are not only in the minds of the unbelievers. Bali and Mombasa have only made the questions louder. Why the suffering? Where is God?? The Lord, though, does not give new answers to modern people; He does not change, and so draws today's people to the answers He gave to

yesterday's generation. The Holy Spirit put his answers to such questions on to paper in the book of Job more than 3000 years ago, and that answer was very ably expounded more than sixty years ago as the world stood on the threshold of WW II. As our world grapples with the difficult questions of pain and insecurity and terror (and perchance on the threshold of another war), the world needs so much the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ – a gospel (as Rev. Sietsma shows) proclaimed so gloriously in the enigmatic book of Job.

Inheritance Publications has done the English speaking world a service by making available in our day this rich explanation of the book of Job. The book serves very well for personal meditation as well as support material for Bible study clubs. 

News from the Women's Savings Action

By Dinie Gootjes

Board

Now that Joanne Van Dam has become president of the Women's Savings Action, it will be my task and pleasure to keep you up to date with our work. After about ten years as local representative for Ancaster, involved in the work of calling people, collecting and counting, it is now interesting to see things from a national and even an international perspective. Joanne did not thank herself in the previous Newsletter, but I will do it now. Thank you, Joanne, for the many years of faithful work you gave to the WSA. We will miss you in your function as secretary, and at the same time wish you the Lord's blessing in your new work as our president. I also want to mention Chris Nienhuis, who has kept the books in admirable order and who has written many thank-you notes to local representatives after they have sent in their cheques.

Contributions received

With thankfulness to the Lord, we may report that during the past year \$28,416.79 was collected, an impressive amount of money. This does not include \$428.61 received as royalties from books written by the late Prof. L. Selles for the ILPB. This amount could not be included under the 2001/2002 book year, so it will appear on next year's list. As always, we very much appreciate this addition to the regular contributions. This year's amount may not seem that much when compared to last year, when we collected \$31,242.02. That was, however, a really exceptional year. We are now close to the level of the year before. You can find the amount collected last year in your congregation on the list of contributions. If your congregation did not participate last year, join us (again) for this year. The College is there for the training of ministers for all our churches, and they all need their tools. Through the WSA we can do our part

by providing these. The books of the Women's Savings Action were audited on September 25, 2002 and were found to be in good order.

College evening

At the College evening, Chris Nienhuis again handed Dr. J. DeJong a pledge of \$27,000. That was more or less as expected, but this year there was a surprise (professors and students did not know about it): a one time gift for the purchase of three parts (that is, thirty-nine books) of the new edition of Luther's complete works. This will make it possible to study in the original language the important statements of Luther in connection with the Reformation of the church and the reorganization of church life. In the meantime these books have arrived and have found their place on the shelves of the new library building. "New" is of course a relative term here: the building has been in use for two years now. It is still a source of thankfulness for professors and students alike that they can find books and a quiet place to study in the comforts of a spacious and functional building.

Appreciation

The work of the Women's Savings Action is deeply appreciated by the College community, but also outside of that circle. At any time a considerable number of books are being used by ministers, active or retired, other people studying a theology related subject, church members preparing for Bible study, etc. The cards from the books used by any one outside of the College community are marked with a coloured paperclip, and at any time the box with cards from books taken out, looks colourful with the dozens of paperclips. The annual gift of the WSA is made possible by all of you who give a donation, year after year, for the library. Our heartfelt appreciation for

your generosity. A warm welcome to our new reps, and a special welcome to the newly instituted congregations of Glanbrook and Grassie. Thank you everybody who again worked so hard to keep the WSA going. In thanking our donors and representatives, we also thank our Father in heaven, who every year again gives strength and enthusiasm for this task.

Mutual help

It might be possible to help each other in this work. I used to think that the collection procedure would be the same in all congregations. But I quickly found out that there are many methods of contacting people and collecting money. I think it will be useful for all involved to know what other people are doing and what other people's experiences are with a certain method. So I have asked the representatives of the various local congregations to let me know how they organize their work. I will try to give an overview of what everybody is doing in next year's Newsletter for the representatives. In this way they could assist each other and maybe give inspiration for a new approach where necessary.

The Board:


President:

Mrs. Joanne Van Dam
642 Ramsgate Road
Burlington ON L7N 2Y1
Ph. 905-634-0593
E-mail: cvandam@sympatico.ca

Secretary:

Mrs. Dinie Gootjes
10 Vespari Place
Hamilton ON L9C 6Y5
Ph. 905-387-9399
E-mail: gdinie@hotmail.com

Treasurer:

Mrs. Christine Nienhuis
36 Hopewell Crescent
Stoney Creek, ON L8J 1P4
Ph. 905-561-4220
E-mail: hnienhuis@sympatico.ca 

WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION

Contributions for the year July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2002
(With comparative figures for the previous year)

| Congregation | 2002 | 2001 |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Abbotsford | \$ 1080.00 | \$ 752.50 |
| Aldergrove | 620.00 | 977.50 |
| Ancaster | 857.27 | 1123.46 |
| Attercliffe | 1053.50 | 1017.50 |
| Barrhead | 734.00 | 808.00 |
| Brampton | 286.44 | 177.34 |
| Burlington Ebenezer | 968.50 | 1023.50 |
| Burlington Fellowship | 910.15 | 566.00 |
| Burlington Waterdown | 765.00 | 935.00 |
| Calgary | 365.77 | 490.75 |
| Carman East | 279.00 | 355.00 |
| Carman West | 47.00 | 233.00 |
| Chatham | 532.25 | 525.00 |
| Chilliwack | 536.00 | 445.00 |
| Cloverdale | 1215.00 | 695.00 |
| Coaldale | 1300.00 | 615.00 |
| Edmonton Immanuel | 978.50 | 1096.00 |
| Edmonton Providence | 2383.15 | 2299.22 |
| Elora | 313.00 | 105.90 |
| Fergus | 511.08 | 1110.78 |
| Flamborough | 920.10 | 724.43 |
| Glanbrook | 569.50 | — |
| Grand Rapids | | 128.41 |
| Grand Valley | 186.58 | 206.27 |
| Grassie | 167.95 | — |
| Guelph | 845.00 | 1004.00 |
| Hamilton | 1229.69 | 1656.67 |
| Houston | 452.50 | 420.00 |
| Kerwood | | |
| Langley | 1455.00 | 1554.10 |
| Langley/Willoughby Heights | 550.00 | 860.00 |
| Lincoln | 368.26 | 569.00 |
| London | 191.00 | |
| Lynden | 500.03 | 538.08 |
| Neerlandia | | 1469.80 |
| Orangeville | 174.78 | 320.47 |
| Ottawa | 158.65 | 202.00 |
| Owen Sound | | 255.00 |
| Rockway | 817.00 | |
| Smithers | 1080.65 | 999.43 |
| Smithville | 1200.54 | 1355.91 |
| Surrey | | 402.00 |
| Taber | | 105.00 |
| Toronto | | 494.69 |
| Vernon | 516.00 | 516.50 |
| Winnipeg Grace | 622.95 | 590.00 |
| Winnipeg Redeemer | 675.00 | 642.00 |
| Yarrow | | |
| Australia | | 55.00 |
| Royalties (Selles) | | 776.81 |
| Total Collected | \$ 28,416.79 | \$ 31,242.02 |



Press Release Classis Pacific West, December 3, 2002

The meeting was opened in the customary manner. Classis was constituted with the following serving as executive: Chairman – Rev. J. Visscher; Vice-chairman – Rev. E. Kampen; Clerk – Rev. J. Huijgen. The agenda was adopted.

Classis went into closed session to deal with a number of discipline cases. Advice was given (cf. Church Order article 62; Form for Excommunication, second public announcement).

The next Classis was scheduled for April 1, 2003 (alternate date June 10, 2003). The Church at Smithers was appointed as the convening church.

*For Classis Pacific West,
December 3, 2002, Rev. E. Kampen*

Press Release Classis Manitoba December 9, 2002 at Redeemer Canadian Reformed Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba

1. Opening and Constitution of Classis

On behalf of Carman West Canadian Reformed Church, which was convening church for this classis, Rev. A.J. Pol read from 2 Corinthians 5 and led in prayer for God's blessing on this assembly. Delegates and guests – in particular Rev. D.M. Boersma who was here for a colloquium – were welcomed. The Church of Denver was congratulated now that Rev. Boersma accepted the call by that church. It was also mentioned that Rev. J. Moesker has accepted the call to Vernon, B.C., and the hope was expressed that Carman East would soon have a minister of the Word again. The credentials were examined by the delegates of the convening church and found to be in order. Classis was declared constituted with the following officers:

Rev. A. J. Pol – chairman
Rev. J. Moesker – vice-chairman
Rev. K. Jonker – clerk

After the addition of one item of correspondence, the agenda was adopted. Rev. J. VanRietschoten was admitted as advisor to this classis.

2. Acceptance of Rev. D.M. Boersma into Classis Manitoba

The documents concerning Rev. Boersma's acceptance of the call and release from the Maranatha Free Reformed Church in Pretoria, South Africa

were presented to classis and found to be in order. Rev. Boersma's release from classis in South Africa will be expected at the next classis. Rev. Boersma was engaged by the assembly in a colloquium which included discussion concerning doctrine and confessions.

It was decided to admit Rev. Boersma to the ministry of the Word in Classis Manitoba of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. Rev. Boersma signed the Form of Subscription in use in Classis Manitoba. The chairman welcomed Rev. Boersma to classis, and Psalm 116:8,9 was sung. Rev. VanRietschoten gave thanks to the Lord for this occasion.

3. Instructions from the Churches (Art 33 CO)

- The Church of Carman East requested classis to provide pulpit supply when it becomes vacant in February 2003. Monthly pulpit supply was granted.
- The Church of Carman East requested classis to appoint Rev. A.J. Pol as its counsellor. Granted.
- Redeemer Church of Winnipeg requested classis to withdraw its proposal to this classis to amend the classical regulations. This was agreed to.

4. Certificate of Release for Rev. J. Moesker

The required documents concerning the call to Vernon, B.C. which was accepted by Rev. Moesker were submitted and reviewed and found to be in order. Rev. Moesker was granted certification of honourable release from classis. He was thanked for his work as minister in Classis Manitoba. He in turn thanked the classis for the brotherly cooperation which he consistently experienced as minister of classis.

5. Correspondence

- The Church at Carman West resubmitted proposed Regulations revisions for Classis Manitoba. One of these changes was not adopted, whereas the other revision concerning the fall classis reports was adopted. Revised regulations will be distributed to the churches.
- Classis Alberta requested that future classes be informed of Classis Manitoba's contact with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Rev. T. VanRaalte, the contact person for Classis Manitoba,

will keep contact with Rev. R. Aasman, contact person for Classis Alberta concerning this.

- Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC sent a letter informing classis that it wishes to maintain contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches through Classis Manitoba. Presbytery passed on its greetings to this classis and expressed intent to continue the good relations.

6. Question Period (Art 44 CO)

Chairman read the questions of Article 44 of the Church Order. In all churches the ministry of the office bearers is being continued and the decisions of the major assemblies are being maintained. No churches requested advice for the government of their church.

7. Appointments

The following appointments were made:

- Pastor T. VanRaalte was appointed church visitor to replace Rev. Moesker. Rev. Pol was appointed as coordinator of the church visitors.
- Rev. Boersma was appointed as examiner for doctrine, creeds and ethics to replace Rev. Moesker.
- Next Classis: convening church is Denver, in Redeemer church Winnipeg starting at 9:00 am on March 10, 2003.
- Suggested officers of next Classis: Chairman – Rev. T. VanRaalte
Vice chairman – Rev. A.J. Pol
Clerk – Rev. D.M. Boersma

8. Personal Question Period and Closing

The delegates of Denver thanked Rev. Moesker for his service as counsellor. They also informed classis that installation of Rev. Boersma would take place on February 16, 2003. Classis decided to send Rev. VanRietschoten as representative to the installation. Rev. Boersma expressed appreciation for the good reception received at this assembly, and stated that he looks forward to taking up his office in Denver and his duties in classis. Chairman thanked the brothers for the good cooperation at this assembly. The acts were adopted and the press release approved. Hymn 40:3 was sung and Rev. Jonker offered up thanksgiving. Chairman closed the assembly.

J. Moesker, Vice chairman e.t.