

# Clarion

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*Does Baptism  
Save?*

*“A Fish Story”*

*Kagisong  
Hospice  
(House of  
Peace)*



*The use of  
media in  
evangelism*



Cl. Stam

Rev. Cl. Stam is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton, Ontario.  
[clstam@canrc.org](mailto:clstam@canrc.org)

# Radio Broadcasting in Southern Ontario

*All too often and too easily we leave the media to the devil and the world, and make little effort to claim and use this means for the true proclamation of the Gospel.*

## Radio Broadcasting in Southern Ontario

Tucked away in *Clarion's* Year-end issue in the Review 2003 was a mention of the radio program "What Does the Bible Say?" as it takes place every Sunday evening on Hamilton's A.M. 900 CHML. Rev. J. Visscher wrote, "As well, a new radio phone-in program called What Does the Bible Say? was set up in Ontario. It is being hosted by the Revs. Cl. Stam, and G. van Popta, and can be heard every Sunday evening."

In this editorial I wish to pay some more attention to this program, and tell you something about its history, format, and purpose. I do so because CHML staff have informed us that this program is a *first*. There are many religious programs being broadcast all over Canada, but this program is the *first live call-in radio program* that deals with matters of faith and religion.

## The use of the media in evangelism

In the early 1970s Rev. G. van Dooren and I worked together to get the program "The Voice of the Church" off the ground. This program offers brief meditations on Scripture passages as well as some Christian music. We felt that the media should be more utilized for the purpose of organized and structured evangelism. Thankfully, this program still continues to function today, thanks to the persistent effort of volunteers who give much of their time for this undertaking. I understand that this program is still being used all over Canada and in the United States. Keep up the good work.

During my ministry in Hamilton, we twice collaborated with the Dutch broadcasting organization IKON (*Inter-Kerkelijke Omroep*) to broadcast church services. One was a combined live effort of the churches in Hamilton and Hilversum, hooked together via satellite. The other was a Christmas service, taped in Hamilton, and broadcast twice in

The Netherlands in successive years. There was a positive reaction in Europe to this effort, and I hope that one day we will be able to organize something similar.

The above shows that I have always had a high interest for Gospel broadcasting work. All too often and too easily we leave the media to the devil and the world, and make little effort to claim and use this means for the true proclamation of the Gospel.

A few years ago I was approached by a member of the Ancaster congregation, who suggested that we try to broadcast via CHML Hamilton. This station was chosen because it is known as a talk radio station to which many people listen. We could use the format of a *talk-show* to respond to listeners having questions about the Bible.

When the CHML management agreed to a contract (which we had not expected so quickly), final arrangements



Rev. Cl. Stam





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**EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:**

Editor: J. Visscher; Managing Editor: R. Aasman  
Coeditors: N.H. Gootjes, W.B. Slomp, Cl. Stam

**ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:**

CLARION, 26 Inverness Crescent, St. Albert, AB T8N 5J3  
Fax: (780) 418-1506 E-Mail: [raasman@canrc.org](mailto:raasman@canrc.org)

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were made and the Rev. G. van Popta and I started broadcasting on the first Sunday in 2003. We have now aired this program for one year, and the contract has been extended to the end of 2004 with an even better time slot (7.00-8.00 p.m.) on Sunday evenings. We hate to disturb your supper-time.

Needless to say, this is a costly endeavour. Anyone who wishes to help out in this respect by sending donations to Biblical Truth Broadcasting (BTB) should contact Bill Bartels in Ancaster. BTB hopes to have a charitable donation tax number soon, so that proper and lawful receipts can be issued. To contact BTB, please write to Bill Bartels, 450 Book Rd., Ancaster, ON L9G 3L1 (tel. 905-648-3205).

**The format of the program**

As mentioned, CHML is known as talk-radio. This means that a host introduces a topic about which discussion or debate ensues via the telephone. Rev. G. van Popta and I alternate in taking the “air-chair.” People may phone in and be heard live on the air. Besides interacting with the topic presented, listeners may ask any question relating to the Bible. It really is a talk-show.

**Inside . . .**

In his editorial, Rev. Cl. Stam informs us of a radio broadcast which he and Rev. G. van Popta host in the Hamilton area. It is exciting to see how the Lord blesses this work and allows wonderful opportunities for the spreading of the gospel.

Committees from the URC and the CanRC working on a common church order are progressing very nicely, as we see in a report in this issue of *Clarion*. Clearly Phase 2 of the relations between our respective churches is bearing fruit.

Few people would compare *Clarion* to *Field and Stream*. However, we do have an article entitled “A Fish Story” and written by a student at our Theological College. Since Reuben Bredenhof is in his final year at the College and probably doesn’t have much time for fishing, you may trust that he is writing about another kind of fishing.

We have a presentation on the Kagisong Hospice in Africa and our columns *Children’s Catechism*, *Treasures, New and Old*, *Ray of Sunshine* and *Education Matters*. We also have a letter to the editor.

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I remember how nervous we were at first. We had never done anything like this before, and who knows what to expect? Rev. van Popta and I are not trained in any way for broadcasting work, and here we are running a full-fledged hour of talk-radio. Many people do not even dare to phone in, let alone that they would consider hosting such a program.

It was already on this point that we received some heavy criticism from out of our own churches. The format was considered to be all-wrong. How could one ever put the Bible up for discussion? The Bible is normative, not questionable. What we needed to do was *preach*, not respond to questions. Furthermore, cooperating in a Sunday broadcast meant breaking the fourth commandment by not keeping the Sabbath. Our two nervous ministers were setting a very bad example. Furthermore, to stay on the air, we would have to compromise the Bible's position by being politically correct, and so the Truth can never really be spoken. Some even urged us to drop this plan immediately and repent from our evil ways.

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*I remember how nervous we were at first. We had never done anything like this before, and who knows what to expect?*

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I cannot deal now with all these objections. The format is rather special and offers specific opportunities. But no opportunity is without its dangerous challenges. As far as the keeping of the Sabbath is concerned, I have always been taught that works of necessity, mercy, and ministry were acceptable and even required on the Sunday. We are simply using an existing medium, not causing it to come into existence.

CHML management is very appreciative of our efforts, even stating that they seldom heard such a "pure" program, where simple but direct answers are given from the Bible. That's quite a compliment, even though we did not ask for it. We also gratefully mention that there is wide-spread support among our own people throughout southern Ontario. Thank you very much, and may the Lord bless your prayerful support! Phone in and liven up the program.



Rev. G. van Popta

### The purpose of the program

Already I have taken up more space than should be allowed in an editorial. But let me make a few remarks about the purpose of this radio program. The goal is not self-aggrandizement. The purpose is not to give some ministers (and others) more work. Both hosts (and our main back-up man, Rev. C. Bosch) have serious health concerns. We sometimes call it the program of "the walking wounded." We should be doing less, not more.

The purpose is two-fold. First, we want to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and inform our community of the hope of salvation. We see this not as an option but as a *calling* (Matt 5:14-16; Phil 2:16). Hopefully some will hear the Word and be saved.

Secondly, we want to foster knowledge of the existence and life of the Reformed churches in our community. Therefore we always identify who we are and where we worship, and invite people to come to these services. We see this as a possible consequence of our work at CHML. It is important also for our young people to know and hear that the church has an active presence in the community.

After one year of broadcasting, the Rev. G. van Popta and I are humbled by the privilege given to us each Sunday to speak the Word of God to a potential audience of well over a million people. We've had calls and letters from northern Ontario to Pennsylvania. That covers a lot of territory.

Sometimes we get seven callers; sometimes none. It doesn't matter. *What matters is that the Word goes out, loud and clear.* We thank the Lord for this great opportunity. We thank the directors of Biblical Truth Broadcasting and all the donors for their unselfish support.

You can hear our program via the Internet also. Just direct your browser to [www.900chml.com](http://www.900chml.com) and you can listen via audio live streaming. You can also email us. I end with the closing words that we try to end each program with: seek the Lord while He may yet be found; read your Bible every day.

R.J. Eikelboom

Rev. R.J. Eikelboom is  
minister of the Canadian  
Reformed Church at  
Calgary, Alberta.  
[reikelboom@canrc.org](mailto:reikelboom@canrc.org)

# Does Baptism Save?



MATTHEW 13:52

*Baptism . . . now saves you.*

1 Peter 3:21

“Baptism saves?” Better check your Bible to see if this is really what the Bible says. “Baptism saves?” Surely, that can’t be right! That sounds like another one of those embarrassing statements that so often make everything “Canadian Reformed” sound suspect in the Reformed community. In fact, this claim also caused some disquiet in one of our own Bible study meetings recently. In a discussion on 1 Peter 3, the question was asked whether we should teach our children that they are saved by baptism – which is what Peter seems to be saying – and the consensus was that such a statement must be qualified in some way. According to the meeting, our children cannot be left to walk around with the idea that they are saved by baptism. Because they just might believe it. And subsequently they might presume that baptism takes the place of a living faith in Jesus Christ. The assertion that “baptism saves” was considered to be singularly unhelpful.

But obviously the apostle Peter was not concerned that his readers might believe that they were saved by baptism. Instead Peter says it very boldly: baptism now saves you. What could be clearer than that? And yet – like all other words in Scripture – these words must also be read carefully. Because the apostle does not argue that many years ago, when you were baptized, you were saved. Peter does not claim that when you were baptized, your salvation happened. Instead Peter speaks to the baptized community today, and he tells us what is happening in our lives today. Peter says:

now – that is, today, in the year of our Lord, 2004 – now baptism saves you.

And you ask how it is possible that baptism saves you today? Well, a long time ago, when you were baptized, God spoke to you. Then God promised to wash you clean with his blood and Spirit. And then the words that God spoke to you at your baptism were not meant to be filed away in a photo album. Instead you are required to use your baptism now. You must put your baptism to work today. You must believe the promise of salvation, which was confirmed and sealed to you in your baptism. And you must repent from your sins and turn to God by living a new life. When you use your baptism in this way, your baptism truly does save you.

It is interesting to read how the NIV Study Bible explains this particular verse. The note suggests that “the act of baptism is a commitment on the part of the believer in all good conscience to make sure that what baptism symbolizes will become a reality in his life.” This implies that my baptism was a sign and seal of my promise to God. It implies that – at baptism – I committed myself to God, and I used baptism to symbolize my commitment.

This explanation really does remove the heart of baptism. But the apostle is not speaking about what our baptism means for God. Instead he is telling us that baptism is now saving us. And whether Peter refers to baptism as a pledge of a good conscience (NIV) or appeal for a clear conscience (RSV), that really makes no difference. Instead, when Martin Luther wrestled with doubt about

his salvation, Luther is reputed to have scrawled in large print on his desk, “I have been baptized.” Luther understood that baptism was not a commitment to God on his part. Instead, God had spoken to him through baptism. Then God had promised to save him from sin and give him eternal life. And so, when Luther was assailed by doubts, when Luther was plagued by a guilty conscience, he remembered his baptism! And then Luther appealed to God on the basis of his baptism. Luther said: God, through baptism you promised to forgive my sins. And so, give me a clean conscience! Luther prayed for forgiveness and faith. And the basis of his prayer was the objective fact that – through baptism – God had already made a commitment to save him. And because Luther was baptized, he dared to say: indeed, Jesus Christ has paid for my sins! And God has given me the Holy Spirit! I know it, said Luther, because I am baptized.

Does baptism save? Of course baptism does not replace a living faith in Jesus Christ, but baptism does save. Baptism saves in the same way as preaching saves. When you believe the Gospel that is preached, you are saved. But the Gospel according to Peter is that when you believe the Gospel that is signified and sealed to you through holy baptism, you are saved. So do not underestimate the importance of baptism. Instead, respect the preaching and the sacraments as divine gifts which are instruments used by the Holy Spirit to give you a saving faith.



## “A Fish Story” (John 21:11)

Reuben Bredenhof is in his final year at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches. [randr.bredenhof@sympatico.ca](mailto:randr.bredenhof@sympatico.ca)

*They were not able to haul the net onto the ship, for the net was so filled with fish.*

### The setting

We have all heard (or maybe spun) a good fish story. Especially the fishermen among us will know how easy it is to slip into telling “fish stories,” that is, exaggerated tales of how one bravely hauled a fish in, despite its powerful thrashes and flashing fangs. And when recounting a fishing tale, it seems very natural to slowly increase the size of the fish wrestled into submission each time the story is told; first it was this big, then this big. . . .

In John 21:1-14 we encounter what we might call a “fish story.” The disciples of Christ had passed the whole night on the Sea of Tiberias (or Galilee), but had caught nothing. Then their risen Lord again appeared to them, and from the shore directed them to cast the fishing net on the other side of the boat. This they did, and they found what they were looking for: fish, and lots of them! They were not able to haul the net onto the ship, for the net was so filled with fish. Instead, the disciples rowed for shore, towing the heavily-laden net behind them. Jesus, tending to some fish roasting over a fire, instructed the disciples to bring over some of their catch, presumably so that they could all have breakfast after the night of work.

And so the net was dragged ashore – full of fish: 153 large fish, to be exact! What a catch it was – from empty nets to a mother lode within a matter of minutes. To some this story is. . . well, fishy. That is an awful lot of fish to catch at the drop of the net! The skeptic asks, Is this not a typical fisherman’s exaggeration? Perhaps by some stroke of

luck the disciples had netted a passing school of fish, but the disciples could not have caught *that* many. And why would they have counted them?

### The code-breakers

While there are skeptics ready to dismiss this number 153 as an overstatement or invention, there are others who think that there probably were fish caught, sure, and the number is not accurate, certainly not, yet the number is not simply an exaggeration that has slipped in, but is a number that demands *interpretation*. It is a number that is a code, a count of fish that is profoundly symbolic of something else, something much more meaningful than fried fish for breakfast with the risen Lord. In this view, the number 153 jars the reading experience – what an unusual place for a specific number, for a precise tally of fish, of all things! In the drama of the disciples meeting the resurrected Saviour, why would this sum of landed fish be included? And so, many interpreters of Scripture have sought to “rescue” this number from irrelevance, assigning it an important, hidden meaning.

It is said that few statements in the Fourth Gospel have teased the minds of its readers throughout the ages so much as this one in verse 11: “it was full of large fish, 153.” And looking for fancy symbolism and cryptic code in the Scriptures is not only a practice from earlier times in church history as we might expect. Even a recent and reputable commentary on John states, “Almost certainly. . . the writer intended some further significance to be seen in the number.”

The most popular solution to this fish problem goes all the way back to the church father Jerome, of the fourth century AD. In his commentary on Ezekiel 47 he links the miracle of John 21 with Ezekiel’s vision of the stream of living water that flows from the Temple to the Dead Sea, which makes the latter teem with life. Ezekiel says in 47:10, “Fisherman will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds – like the fish of the Great Sea.” Jerome explains Ezekiel 47 thus: “Writers on the nature and properties of animals. . . say that there are 153 species of fish.”

Jerome’s suggestion then is that the evangelist John used the ancient tradition about the total number of fish species to make the miraculous catch into both an acted parable and a fulfillment of Ezekiel. The catch of 153 fish was something that pointed to and confirmed the mission of the apostles to all nations. Without Christ, his followers can do nothing (demonstrated in that they fished all night and caught not a thing), but with him and his instruction, these “fishers of men” bring in the multitudes. From *all* of mankind would the church be gathered, paralleled in this act of *all* 153 species of fish being caught by the disciples. Indeed, as it says in Matthew 13:47-48, “The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore.”

Jerome’s explanation has fallen on hard times recently. It has been revealed that the ancient zoological writers

Jerome refers to never speak of 153 fish exactly, but rather of “countless myriads” of fish. And one important ancient writer’s record of all the different fish species adds up to . . . 157.

Augustine, a contemporary of Jerome, proposed an explanation of the 153 that was of a completely different character. He pioneered the mathematical solutions to the problem, by observing that 153 is a triangular number. Triangular numbers are calculated by adding up consecutive numbers; in this case, 153 is the sum of the numbers 1 to 17. A triangular number can be represented by a regular geometric arrangement of equally spaced points; if one represents the numbers 1 to 17 by dots on separate lines, a triangle is formed. Augustine then pointed out that 17, constitutive of the number 153, is the sum of 10 and 7. The former represents the Ten Commandments, the latter the sevenfold Spirit of God.

Further, it is evident that 10 and 7 were important numbers in Jewish tradition (the world created by 10 sayings, 7 days of creation, 10 wonders in Egypt, etc.). 153 is then a symbolic number whose significance derives from its components: 17 is the sum of the two most sacred numbers, the importance of which is increased when it is triangulated. From this Augustine deduced that 153 is a numerical symbol for perfection, and for the perfection of the church. The great catch at Tiberias thus foreshadows the full gathering of believers.

Another explanation makes 153 refer to the sum of all the faithful throughout the world in a different way. Three, it is said, has the same significance as  $153 = 3 \times 50 + 3$ . There are only three parts of the world from which the whole church would be gathered: Asia, Africa, Europe (we note this explanation was given in the twelfth century, before the Age of Exploration and the “discovery” of Australia and the continents of the Western Hemisphere – thus many people are left out of the equation).



The numerical solutions have multiplied over the years. Cyril of Alexandria, a theologian of the fifth century, proposed that 100 represents the fullness of the Gentiles, 50 the remnant of Israel, and 3 the Trinity. Other explanations have been sought in the field of gematria, which plays with words in languages where numerals are

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*Cyril of Alexandria. . . proposed that 100 represents the fullness of the Gentiles, 50 the remnant of Israel, and 3 the Trinity.*

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represented by letters of the alphabet (a = 1, b = 2, etc.). Both the Greeks and Hebrews represented numbers in this way; any name could be added up and represented by its total. The graffiti of Pompeii revealed an example of gematria, “I love the girl whose name is 545.” With gematria, scholars have found that 153 is the sum of such Hebrew phrases as “the church of love,” and “the children of God.” Alternately, 153 has been taken as the sum of the Greek abbreviation, *iota-chi-theta*, which are the first three letters of the early Christian acrostic, *ichthus*

(Greek: fish!), representing *Hesous Christos Theou Huios Soter* (Jesus Christ Son of God, Saviour).

### The search for meaning

Up to this point in our survey no explanation of the 153 fish has commended itself. We have seen only extensive speculation and much exegetical imagination. But perhaps we should not be hasty in rejecting all these interpretations, even though strange in our view – alphabetical code and symbolic numbers are not totally foreign to the Scriptures: think of 144,000 and 666 in Revelation, and of the code-words for Babylon in Jeremiah (25:26, 51:41; 51:1). There is “code” in the Bible – but do we have it here in John 21? How do we know?

The host of exegetes and commentators and scholars throughout the centuries all arrived at John 21:11 looking for something: an answer to what the significance of “153” was. Many tried to link this miraculous catch to the words that Jesus spoke at the beginning of his ministry, that his disciples would be made into fishers not of fish but of men (Mark 1:17). As we have seen, this marvellous catch is then understood to point to the ingathering work of the apostles – in various ways, the 153 is construed to signify the fullness of the church or the gathering of the host of

the Gentiles. Indeed, this would be a beautiful image – the risen Lord giving a last tangible sign of his blessing and presence to his disciples before they spread their gospel-nets to the ends of the earth.

But does it work? When looking for numerical symbolism in the Scriptures, we should firstly consider the place of the reference in the book. Revelation, in which several symbolic numbers are found, is of course a book rich in symbolism. For the alphabetical code that occurs in a couple instances in Jeremiah, we rely on old rabbinical tradition. In the gospel of John, do we have other numerical symbolism or cryptic code?

### John the eyewitness

On the contrary, John is uniquely a historical book. It is emphasized that John is an eyewitness. Of the Word that became flesh John says, “We have seen his glory” (1:14). And this eyewitness stood at the cross too, when the soldier pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, “The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true.” (19:35). And again at the close of the gospel, “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book. But these are written. . .” (20:30-31).

The gospel of John confirms in many places that the one who wrote this account was present with Christ during his ministry. One commentator remarks, “[The narrative of John] is marked by minute details of persons, and time, and number, and place and manner, which cannot but have come from a direct experience.” For example, times and seasons are mentioned more frequently than in the three other gospels: the Passovers, feasts, the two weeks at the beginning and end of the ministry, other lengths of time, and different hours or times of day. And John often gives numbers in his description of the Lord’s ministry: two disciples with John the Baptist, six water pots at Cana, five loaves and two small fish, three and a half miles

out on the Sea of Galilee, four soldiers who divided his clothes, 38 years of sickness, 300 denarii, 5 husbands, and. . . 153 fish.

Scholars have pointed to, besides these obvious additions of detail, small traits in the account which testify to the keen recollection of an observer. Such scenes as the calling of the first disciples, the foot-washing, and the scene in the high priest’s court are alive with intensity, curiosity, and foreboding, respectively.

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### *The good news is that the “fish story” of John 21 is not a yarn but a true account of our Lord.*

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And witness the vivid fishing scene of chapter 21: it is early morning after a night of fishing – a night which was “irrelevantly” (but realistically) precipitated by Simon Peter’s sudden desire to hit the water, “I’m going to fish,” followed with the other disciples response, “We’ll go with you.” Later in this detailed scene, Jesus appears on the shore unrecognized, the fish are caught, and Jesus is suddenly seen for who He is by “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (the evangelist John). And so Peter hops out into the water (who but an eyewitness would include the odd detail of Peter first wrapping his outer garment about him?), while the disciples follow, coming with the boat while towing the fish from “about a hundred yards” from the shore, and finding (just picture this) “a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.”

It is a lively picture in the early morning on the shores of Sea of Galilee, and one that the disciples would not soon forget. Here was their Lord again, appearing to them for the third time after He was raised from the dead! Their hope was being restored, for their Master was restored to them, still in power and glory.

### The net result

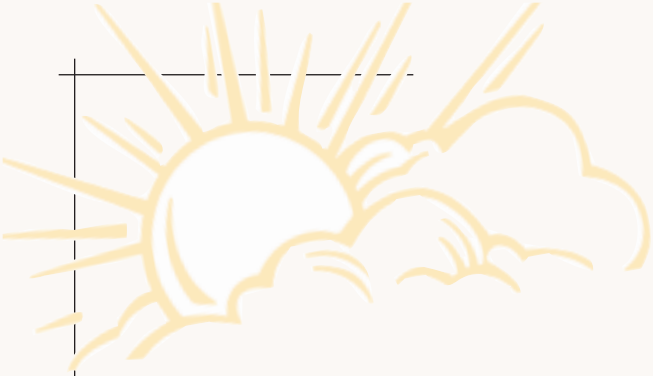
What then of the 153 fish? It is no exaggeration to say that so many were caught, for the net was completely full. It is no invented number to specify that 153 were netted, for John, helped by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), clearly had a careful eye for detail. Plus, John and the men in his company were fishermen by trade – they would naturally be interested in how many were caught, just as a fisherman today will without fail ask another fisherman sitting on the dock with fish in his bucket, “How many?” or “How many pounds?”

It is no symbolic figure to say that 153 large fish were landed that morning, even if Jesus was about to give some final instructions and soon leave the earth. The tally of 153 is not fancy math or an allusion to some ancient zoological tradition – in the context of the book it is simply yet profoundly another detail by John the eyewitness. This remarkable number only confirms again the account that John has provided for us: John was there, and he can testify that this Jesus is the Christ!

What a shame to lose this picture of breadth and universality of the Christian mission, some might say. These followers of Christ were to be fishers of men all over the globe until the fullness was gathered in – and what better confirmation of this than a “perfect” catch of fish just before Christ departed for heaven? But it need not be a shame or a loss to accept a non-mathematical and a simple reading of “153.” Instead, this big number takes a small part in a trustworthy account of one who truly died, who truly was buried, who truly was raised to life, and who truly showed his divine glory again to his disciples on earth before ascending into heaven. The good news is that the “fish story” of John 21 is not a yarn but a true account of our Lord, who most certainly is alive, and who from heaven is most certainly able to help us all spread our nets today as fishers of men.







# Ray of Sunshine

By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

*“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Saviour and my God.” Psalm 43:5*

It is at this time of year where we all long to see the spring weather. For some of us there may be a feeling of being alone or longing to see someone. Even though we may have some friends and family near, we may always share in the rich comfort of having our Father in heaven who always is near us. He shares all our sorrow and feelings and knows what we all go through on this sinful earth. He has also promised us that He will not leave us alone or forsake us. We are rich in Him. Continue to put your hope and trust in Him for then we will never alone.

## Everyone Needs Someone

*People need people and friends need friends,  
And we all need love for a full life depends-  
Not on vast riches or great acclaim,  
Not on success or on worldly fame,  
But just in knowing that someone cares,  
And holds us close in their thoughts and prayers-  
For only the knowledge that we're understood,  
Makes everyday living feel wonderfully good,  
And we rob ourselves of life's greatest need,  
When we "lock up our hearts" and fail to heed,  
The outstretched hand reaching to find,  
A kindred spirit whose heart and mind,  
Are lonely and longing to somehow share,  
Our joys and sorrows and to make us aware,  
That life's completeness and richness depends,  
On the things we share with our loved ones,  
and friends.*

By Helen Steiner Rice

*Let not your hearts with anxious thoughts  
Be troubled or dismayed.  
Believe in God, believe in Me  
And trust My gracious aid.*

Hymn 30:2

## Birthdays in March:

- 3 TREVOR HOFKINK will be 36**  
C106 8920 165th Street, Edmonton, AB T5R 2R9
- 10 JAMES BOONE will be 8**  
22 Aberdare Road, NE, Calgary, AB T2A 6V9
- 12 GERRY EELHART will be 42**  
9713-151 Street, Edmonton, AB T5P 1S6
- 15 JIM VANDERHEIDEN will be 45**  
1156 Diltz Road, RR 2, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W2
- 18 ROSELYN KUIK will be 30**  
68 Lynn Lake Drive, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4N7
- 26 COURTNEY POPKEN will be 11**  
9445 Windsor Street, Chilliwack, BC V2P 6C5



Congratulations to all of you who are celebrating your birthday this month. We wish you all a very enjoyable day together with your family and friends, and above all the Lord's blessing for this new year. Till next month,

Mrs. C. Gelms and Mrs. E. Nordeman  
548 Kemp Road East, RR2, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2  
Phone: 905-563-0380



J. Wiskerke van Dooren

# Lord's Day 3



*Mrs. J. Wiskerke van Dooren published a Children's Catechism in Dutch. This has been translated with her permission.*

Do you remember what we discussed last time? That there is something wrong deep down inside us? Perhaps you think: But I cannot help that, I did not make myself. Adam and Eve had not made themselves, either. God made them, and they were the best creatures God had made. They were to be an image of God on earth.

We could even say that they were somewhat like a picture. If we had seen these first people we would have remembered God who had made the whole world. And they could speak to God without fear. They didn't have to be afraid of Him. They obeyed God and loved God. They would have a great future with God. And we would, too, if nothing had changed.

But why are we today so much different? The answer is that Adam and Eve in paradise did not obey God. They listened to Satan. And they sinned.

Perhaps you think: That may be true, but that has nothing to do with me. I was not in paradise. I did not listen to Satan. But do not forget: Adam and Eve together comprised all of humanity! You can say: when Adam and Eve sinned, all of humanity sinned. And you belong to humanity, just as your grandpa and grandma, your father and mother, and all the others. When Adam and Eve sinned, they became evil inside. And we can discover evil inside of us.

We can already see evil in babies. Two cute babies are in the same playpen. They are too young to have learned about good and bad. And yet, the one grabs the

toy from the other. And when cookies are handed out, they fight to be first. When they do not get their way, they scream. You can see that evil streak even when they are still very young.

But is our heart so evil that we can never do anything completely good? Is it true that we often do bad things? Yes, for we have become bad. But we can say more. Although we are born evil, things can become good again. Jesus Christ himself said that we need to be born a second time.

That is strange, being born again. How is that possible? You cannot go back into your mother's womb! That is true, and Jesus did not mean to say that. He meant something else, but that looks a bit like a birth.

He meant that you begin a new life. You are going to live a different life than people who do not belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. For that, you need a new heart. Everyone who wants to get rid of sin needs a new heart.

That means: You begin a second life. That is a life as God wants you to live. And just as you grew in your mother before you were born, you also grow in this new life. We call that regeneration. That means: you grow up and become stronger as a child of God. He gives you strength. You can say: God's Spirit helps you to love God, and to obey Him.



# Kagisong Hospice (House of Peace)

Sheila Kamstra is recording  
secretary for CRWRF

*“And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”*

Luke 1:76-79

In response to the AIDS pandemic, which is taking lives and destroying families by the millions in Africa, CRWRF is reaching out to find a way to show the mercy, love and hope of the Gospel in an oftentimes hopeless situation. CRWRF has been supporting two Children's Homes in Kenya, the Achego Home and the Tumaini Home, for many years now. Through your regular donations and sponsorships, the children receive their food and clothing, uniforms and funding so that they can attend school, and receive a Christian education and upbringing. These programs also educate the children about the rampant spread of AIDS that they see all around them, and call them to live a life pleasing to the Lord, a life which will allow them to avoid AIDS. This of course is the best way to control the spread of AIDS, but when the population you live in is affected on a daily basis by this devastating disease, then education is not enough. CRWRF sees an opportunity and feels a calling on behalf of our supporters to demonstrate the “Hope of Mankind,” through the care and counselling of the sick and dying.

In this regard, we solicited your prayers and gifts at the time of Thanksgiving 2002 to further this relief work. We are thankful to report that we were able to reach out to our sister churches in the Free Reformed Church of Pretoria who have an “Aids Commission” as one aspect of their Home Mission.

## **AIDS patients**

In Soshanguve, a less privileged settlement in the North-Western section of Pretoria, a large number of volunteers have been trained by the Institute of Primary Health Care (IPH), a non-governmental organization established to assist the increasing number of AIDS patients. The patients are often very ill, suffering from disabling infections and weakened by diarrhea. The volunteers trained by IPH render an excellent service to these patients in their homes, often in co-operation with the local clinics. In this way the majority of the terminally ill AIDS patients can be cared for at home under supervision and with support of their family members and in an environment, which is familiar to

them. Every week members of the commission visit patients. The patients receive food parcels, consisting mainly of fresh vegetables and medicine. Nursing assistance is given and opportunities for conversation about the mercy of God are held. The commission provides Bibles in the language of the patients, if they wish, as well as some Bible-study outlines that are prepared by Rev. A.J. de Visser.

Many people from rural areas and even foreign countries settle alone in urban areas such as Soshanguve, leaving their families behind. When they get ill the task of caring for them is too heavy for the few relatives or friends they have. A similar dilemma occurs when patients need to be cared for by elderly people like grandparents. This explains why one of the most apparent needs, at the moment, is to set up a hospice where terminally ill patients can be cared for in a dignified and comforting manner.

Although IPH has acquired an excellent track record in Soshanguve for the service rendered by it to the community, IPH lacks the financial resources required to buy land and build a hospice. Also in this regard the Aids



## Church News

Eligible for call:

**Candidate Walter Geurts**

3417 Rockwood Drive  
Burlington, ON L7N 3H6  
905-631-8433

[wgeurts@cogeco.ca](mailto:wgeurts@cogeco.ca)

Examined by Classis Niagara on January 14, 2004, and declared eligible for ordination:

**Candidate David de Boer**

The ordination will take place February 1, 2004, D.V., in the morning worship service of the Dunnville Canadian Reformed Church.

Called by the church of Neerlandia, Alberta:

**Rev. W.M. Wielenga**  
of Lynden, Washington.



Commission of the Free Reformed Church of Pretoria (“the Aids Commission”) became involved with IPH. The AIDS commission decided to contribute to the establishment of a hospice.<sup>1</sup>

### Trust fund

A trust was established to take responsibility for the canvassing of donations and to negotiate the acquisition of the property and the building of the hospice. This trust has been extremely busy with this process. All of our Canadian readers can appreciate the work involved with such an undertaking: the planning, the applications, the bureaucracy, etc. After putting approximately one year’s work into the plans of renovating an existing building as a hospice, the trust was told that they could in fact *not* renovate that building, in that location, for that purpose. Disappointment and discouragement was felt all around, on

both sides of the world, especially when the need for this hospice is so pressing! But thanks be to the Lord, prayers were answered and a new property was identified where the trust could apply to build from “scratch.” Much of the previously laid plans could be incorporated and we could finally receive the good news from the trust in September 2003 that the property had been purchased and registered in the name of the Kagisong Hospice Trust.

The building of this Hospice is an ambitious project indeed, which will take place in three separate phases. The work of the Aids Commission has received support from local churches as an outreach project, as well as some support of our sister churches in Holland. The Dutch organization, *De Verre Naasten* (Our Distant Neighbours) has agreed to fund the first phase of the building project. The support of CRWRF will go towards the second phase of the

project. If you would like to give specifically towards this project through CRWRF, please note on the memo line of your cheque that your donation is for the “Kagisong Hospice Trust.” If you would like more information regarding any other opportunities to promote the fundraising for this second phase of the Kagisong Hospice, please contact us at our email address [crwrf@cogeco.ca](mailto:crwrf@cogeco.ca)

*The trust regards the establishment of this hospice not only as a way to serve a community in need of help, but also as an opportunity to serve the kingdom of our Lord, by spreading his Word to the dying people in desperate need of a message of hope. Your support will be greatly appreciated.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Kagisong Hospice – Proposal – September 2003

<sup>2</sup> Soshanguve Aids Project – Newsletter – July 2003

**Press Release of the meeting of the combined committees of the Canadian Reformed and United Reformed Churches to propose a common church order, held November 04-06, 2003 at the United Reformed Church of Dutton, MI**

Present were: Dr. Nelson Kloosterman, Rev. William Pols, Rev. Ronald Scheuers, Rev. Raymond Sikkema and Mr. Harry Van Gulp, representing the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA), and Dr. Gijsbert Nederveen, Mr. Gerard J. Nordeman, Rev. John VanWoudenberg and Dr. Art Witten of the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC).

Dr. Kloosterman opened the meeting with a brief meditation on Psalm 46 in which he reflected on how the psalmist reminds us about God's presence in the church but also in the world: "Come, behold the works of the Lord, how He has wrought desolations in the earth." Witness the devastating fires in California and other disasters. The world agonizes in pain. Yet: "The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob our refuge." Therefore we may continue in trust and confidence.

After opening prayer an agenda and timetable for the next three days were circulated and adopted. The minutes of the August 05-07, 2003 meeting were reviewed and approved.

**Classis**

A review of the articles thus far adopted resulted in a few modifications in grammar and syntax. Several items yet to be done were noted. In the article dealing with "The Classis" the following sentence was added: "Ordinarily a classis shall consist of between 8 and 12 churches."

The matter of the number and choosing of delegates to general synod was once more discussed. It was clear that arriving at an appropriate formulation of such an article depends in

great measure on understanding the nature and functioning of a general synod. Since the functioning process is normally identified in a set of regulations for general synod, it was decided to approach the 2004 Synods of the respective churches for a mandate for the Combined Committee to also formulate such synod regulations. Since broader assemblies ought to be deliberative in nature the general consensus is that delegation from each consistory will result in numbers that would make this deliberative functioning impractical if not impossible. It was therefore agreed that the second last classis before general synod will choose delegates to that synod. The exact numbers or formula will be determined later after advice from the respective 2004 Synods has been received. Regulations for broader assemblies shall also delineate the function of the convening church and / or of the designated clerk serving the convening churches.

**Items to be addressed**

Dr. Witten presented an interim report regarding "gaps" still to be addressed by the Committee. This report compared the Church Order of Dort, 1920 with the proposed church order thus far completed, identifying items still to be addressed.

Rev. VanWoudenberg presented a draft formulation of various appendices to the proposed Church Order. They included credentials for delegates to classis, regional synod and general synod as well as stipulations for a licensure exam, candidacy exam, ordination exam and a *colloquium doctum*. An ad-hoc committee of two members was struck to serve the committee with recommendations regarding these appendices.

In its efforts to formulate a proposed church order this meeting once more addressed two areas, the Offices and the Assemblies. The following provisional conclusions were reached:



**The offices**

Regarding the Offices the following was added to art. 2: No one shall exercise an office without having been lawfully called to it. Also the stipulation was added in the relevant article that all ministers shall remain subject to the church order whether he serves as the minister of a congregation or as one charged with some other ministerial task. In the article dealing with the calling of an ordained minister within the federation, wording was added. The classis is to ensure the good order of the calling process. Written testimonies of his (the minister being called) good standing and of his release from the church and classis he last served are to be submitted.

An understanding was reached that it is the responsibility of classis to examine a student requesting a license to exhort or speak an edifying word in the churches. This is based on the consideration that such license to exhort extends beyond the local congregation and affects all the churches of the federation.

**Preparation for the ministry**

Regarding the preparation for the ministry, articles were formulated stating that competent men shall be urged to study for the ministry of the Word. A man aspiring to the ministry must be a member of a church in the federation and must evidence genuine godliness to his consistory, who shall ensure that he receives a thoroughly Reformed theological education. The council of his church shall see to it that his financial needs are met. Further, anyone aspiring

to the ministry shall seek licensure to exhort in the churches. Such licensure shall be granted only after the student has completed at least one year of theological education, and has sustained a licensure examination conducted by his classis. Stipulations for such examination to be specified in an appropriate appendix. Classis shall give license only to one who is preparing for the ministry and only for the duration of his theological training. All the work of the licentiate shall be conducted under consistorial supervision. At the conclusion of his training a student shall ask his consistory to request classis to conduct a candidacy examination, as stipulated in the relevant appendix. Upon sustaining this examination, the classis, with the concurring advice of the deputies of regional synod, shall declare him eligible for call among the churches of the federation.

When, for weighty reasons and exceptional circumstances, a pastoral relationship has become irreconcilably broken, a minister may be released from his duties in the congregation only under the following conditions: A. This release shall not occur for delinquency in doctrine or life, which would warrant church discipline, B. This release shall take place only when attempted reconciliation, with the involvement of classis has been unsuccessful, resulting in an intolerable situation, C. This release shall occur only with the approval of classis and the concurring advice of the deputies of regional synod, which approval shall include provisions for proper support of the minister and his family for up to two years.

The council from whose service he has been released shall announce his eligibility for call. This eligibility shall be valid for no more than two years, where after he shall be honourably discharged from office.

## Elders and deacons

Also articles dealing with the calling of elders and deacons were provisionally agreed to as follows:

The council shall provide adequate preparation of elders and deacons by means of instruction and training regarding the duties of each office. The procedure for the lawful calling of elders and deacons shall consist of: First, the council shall nominate only male communicant members who meet the biblical requirements for office and who indicate their agreement with the Form of Subscription. Prior to nominating, the council may invite the congregation to direct attention to suitable men. The number of nominees shall be at least equal to, or at most twice, the number of vacancies.

Second, after public prayer, elders and deacons shall be elected by the congregation according to the regulations adopted for that purpose, to a term specified by the consistory.

Third, the council shall appoint the elders and deacons and shall announce their names to the congregation two weeks prior to entering office, in order that the congregation may have opportunity to bring lawful objections to the attention of the consistory. They shall be publicly ordained or installed with the use of the appropriate liturgical form and shall subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity by signing the Form of Subscription.

Elders and deacons, having been elected in accordance with local regulations to a term specified by the consistory and having been appointed by the council, shall subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity by signing the Form of Subscription, and shall be ordained or installed with the use of the appropriate liturgical form before entering upon their work.

The duties belonging to the office of elder consist of shepherding and ruling the church of Christ according to the

principles taught in Scripture, in order that purity of doctrine and holiness of life may be practiced. They shall see to it that their fellow-elders, the minister(s) and the deacons faithfully discharge their offices. They are to maintain the purity of the Word and sacraments, persist in praying for the congregation, assist in catechizing the youth, and promote confessionally Reformed schooling at all levels. Moreover they shall visit the members of the congregation according to needs, engage in family visiting, preserve and promote concord and unity among the members and between the congregation and its office bearers, exercise discipline in the congregation, promote the work of evangelism and missions, and ensure that everything is done decently and in good order.

## The assemblies

Regarding the Assemblies the following has been considered. In every assembly a clerk shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings. A regional synod, consisting of three or more classes, shall ordinarily meet once per year. If it appears necessary to convene a regional synod before the appointed time, the convening church shall determine the time and place with the advice of its classis. The regional synod shall deal only with matters properly placed on its agenda by the churches via the classes and with lawful appeals of decisions of classis. The chairman, vice-chairman and clerk shall be chosen at the meeting to facilitate the work of the synod. In addition to hearing and acting on the reports of its deputies, it shall determine the time and place for the next regional synod, and designate a convening church.

## Deputies of regional synod

Regarding the term of the deputies of regional synod it was agreed that the deputies shall serve until they are discharged from their duties by their regional synod. As discussed earlier, a general synod shall consist of delegates chosen by the classes. A general synod



## Letter to the Editor



shall meet at least once every three years at a time and place set by the previous synod, which shall also designate a convening church. If it appears necessary to convene a general synod before the appointed time, the convening church shall determine the time and place with the advice of its regional synod. The chairman, vice-chairman and clerk(s) shall be chosen at the meeting to facilitate the work of the synod. In addition to acting on reports that were mandated by the previous synod, a general synod shall deal only with matters properly placed on its agenda by the churches via the classes and the regional synods.

### Next meeting

The last hour was used to review the agenda for the next meeting. The press release was presented and approved. Again it was stated that it is important to understand that the committee, in fulfilling its mandate, is only preparing a church order proposal. And, while considerable time is spent in formulating the various articles, taking in consideration their history and their function in the new united federation, it is still a working document. The Committee will present its report to the 2004 Synods of the respective churches and is looking forward to receiving comments and feedback. This next meeting will take place D.V. August 10-12, 2004 at the Ebenezer CanRC in Burlington.

Appreciation was expressed to the Dutton URC for its hospitality and the exceptional help its secretary was able to give to the committee. Dr. Kloosterman, in his closing remarks, stated his thankfulness to the Lord for the brotherly manner in which the committee could proceed with its work. Seldom had he experienced such good harmony and patient deliberation in the work of a committee. To God alone be the praise and glory.

For the Committee  
Gerard J. Nordeman

### Letter to the Editor:

In the editorial of Volume 52, Number 24, dated November 21, 2003, Rev. R. Aasman is strongly suggesting that because “now there is possibility of a new party, a party which can be moulded by the citizens of this nation” and becoming a member of the new Conservative Party of Canada “would get people in the grassroots of a new party and thus be able to shape that party. Perhaps they will even shape the future of this country,” he seems to be promoting the new party, rather than supporting the Christian Heritage Party, a party that recognizes the supremacy of God. Rev. Aasman states that he “. . . has a healthy respect for that party. Perhaps that is where you want to maintain your support,” suggesting in the tone of the article, that we Christian would have a better chance if we supported the bigger new Conservative Party rather than the small Christian Heritage Party.

The party principles of the Christian Heritage Party are that it recognizes one triune God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit); that the Holy Bible is the inspired, inerrant written Word of God, and that is the final authority above all of man’s laws and government; that the civil government is under the authority of God; and that the decision-making process by the civil government must not in any way contravene biblical ethics.

Stephen Harper, the leader of the old Canadian Alliance, told the Calgary Herald editorial board in December 2002 that “all moral issues are off the table.” Can Christians support a political party that does not recognize the supremacy of God?

In a 1990 interview, Deborah Grey, the Reform/Canadian Alliance member of Parliament, stated “there is only one Christian party in Canada – the Christian Heritage Party.”

Are we like the kings in the Old Testament that sought alliances with the kings of Egypt and Assyria when threatened by enemies? Are we strategically supporting the new Conservative Party of Canada because supporting them has a change of winning? As Ron Gray, leader of the CHP states, “It is God alone who raises up and puts down governments. Christian goals should not be to defeat the Liberals. . . but rather to lift up biblical standards of right and wrong.”

Therefore, in order to shape the future of this country, we should not join the new Conservative Party of Canada (or the present day Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservative parties), but support the Christian Heritage Party.

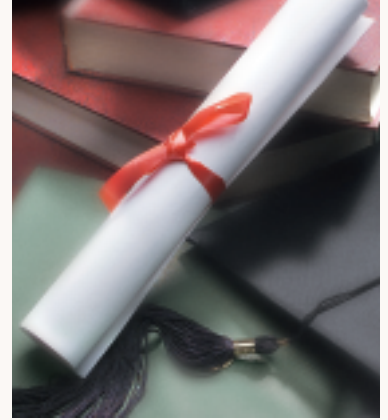
Hank Jager  
Fergus, Ontario

*I could not agree more that biblical principles influence all that we do in life – including our involvement in politics. That is why in the past I have been a member of the CHP and strongly supported it. A problem for me is that we did not even have a CHP candidate in our riding during the last election – in spite of our local efforts. At this point I have a question which I would ask the reader to consider: do religious principles necessitate unequivocally that in the political sphere of life I support and involve myself only in the Christian Heritage Party?*

RA

Please mail, e-mail or fax letters for publication to the editorial address. They should be 300 words or less. Those published may be edited for style or length. Please include address and phone number.

K. Sikkema



# Want to be a Teacher?

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

*One nice part of teaching is that you often “grow on the go.”*

Teaching is not for everyone: large numbers of people assert, “It is not for me.” At the same time, it is good that there are school teachers, and that there are actually people who say, “It is for me.” Of course, there are probably few people (if any) on this earth who do not sooner or later personally experience the curse on the ground, the painful toil, the thorns and thistles, and the sweat of their brow as they eat their food (Gen 3:17-19) including school teachers. Hence, we are not going to talk about the days we call rough, tough and “full of adversity,” when everything goes wrong, and when we wish to be left alone or go to the beach at Kuta, Waikiki, or some other pleasing place. Those days are there for all of us to be reminded of the providence of God and his Fatherly care for us in Christ. So, while school teaching is perhaps not for everyone, and while all of us have “bad” days, that should not deter anyone from *considering* teaching. After all, it is for some – perhaps even *you*.

I think teaching is for me. It has not always been like that, for at one time I envisioned becoming either a cash-cropper or a school master, at another, an astronaut, then a pilot or an onboard Boeing 747 technician, a truck driver, and even an artist, an author, or a minister – some of the typical stuff kids dream of. However, when my poetic and juvenile dreams evaporated, the one after the other, I found myself heading for a career

in which I faced the other side of the classroom. Having done it now for some time, it is hard to imagine myself doing anything else. Now, when I tell stories, I can still dream of all the other things I previously envisioned on the career routes I did not take. Teachers are allowed – and in a way – are even expected to do that, as they present aspects of God’s beautiful creation, God’s work in history, and different ways to serve God to their students.

*As a teacher, one is almost automatically involved with the community.*

## Tutor

Teaching is for me, but that doesn’t mean that I am good at all teaching. Years ago, when my boss, a farmer turned clothier, asked me to tutor his son in high school math “because you are in Teachers’ College,” I soon discovered my ineptitude. Just like all farmers don’t make good clothiers, not all student teachers make good math tutors. I got paid by the hour, but might have been more economically effective selling shirts, socks, ties, and business-suits!

Even now, there are some subjects that are just not my strength, and there are always times when you have to

make the best of a challenging situation. One nice part of teaching is that you often “grow on the go,” and end up doing and liking things you never thought you would! Also, in many schools, there is recognition that God gave each teacher, just like each student, his or her own unique talents to develop and to serve Him. Many fine schools capitalize on teachers’ strengths as much as they can. As a teacher, you don’t need to be good at everything, and you may even have options in choosing what you do best.

## Choice

Talk about choice! Just the other day I was looking at *Clarion’s* annual teacher ad pages. Although some schools may advertise earlier for new or never-yet-filled positions, by gentleman’s agreement, ads usually start in the first issue in January, and peter out sometime during the spring. (As I mention elsewhere, that was somewhat different this year). It is amazing how much choice there is out there, from Kindergarten, to Elementary, to High School, and even College levels! While some people prefer to focus their choice on a specific age-range (say, grade 3-4), or limit the scope of their subject area (say, grade 11-12 geography), small schools have a great deal of built-in variety and enjoyment for the esoteric few who teach there. Thus, each school has its own peculiar ways of making teaching an

exciting and varied career, allowing also for growth through the ranks. Why, I even remember a university professor who started her career as a Kindergarten teacher!

## Community

As a teacher, one is almost automatically involved with the community. There is constant interaction with colleagues, with students, and with parents. These contacts take different forms, via an interview, the phone, little notes, or meetings; they may be pleasant,

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*In a Reformed school, this communication places one in the midst of the communion of saints and all its benefits.*

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tiring, rewarding, challenging, overwhelming, painful, humbling, or exhilarating to name just a few possibilities, but there is always interaction. In a Reformed school, this communication places one in the midst of the communion of saints and all its benefits. And if, at times, it feels better to be away from the community and to go camping with family or friends at Silent Lake Provincial Park, for instance, the summer holidays provide opportunities galore to recharge one's batteries, to step back and reflect, and to be energetic and enthusiastic about starting anew by the end of August! Some teachers use part of this time to take courses to upgrade themselves, or to improve their understanding of the "world out there" through a temporary business affiliation, but, in the new year, all of them will have new experiences and insights to share with their colleagues, their students, and their communities!

## Stories

Teachers have stories to tell. There are stories about the children who just couldn't grasp a concept, and to whom, through the mediation of a teacher, the light of understanding broke through. At such times nothing else matters, and the sun shines for the rest of the day. There are the moments when you suddenly realize the tremendous growth in students as they progress from grade K to 8, then to grade 12, and then make public profession of faith. Such are the moments of joy to be savoured and to give thanks for. I love it when my former students learn a skill I don't have and can't imagine living without. I love it even more when we meet at the Table of the Lord.

I remember the first time I had to tell the story of Christmas to a Grade 5 class, as a student teacher. I felt profoundly privileged that I was allowed to tell the class the gospel of Christmas. I couldn't understand why the mentor teacher wouldn't want to do that himself! I pulled out the commentaries, the outlines, and various translations, and spent hours preparing the "Perfect Christmas Story." I can't remember how long the story was, but, more than anything or anyone else, I was enriched by the experience.



## Privileges

Teaching covenant children in a Reformed school is a string of such privileges, every day again. There are also stories of failures, and of shortcomings, and of inability to handle it all, but perhaps the greatest privilege of a teacher in a Reformed school is to encounter each day the gospel of Jesus Christ. When I mess up, I'll have to face the dirges of the consequences, and I have to repent, but by God's grace, I may then also continue, and plead on the work accomplished by Jesus Christ. I can yet commit the students in *my* care into our *heavenly Father's* care. That is the best story we can tell the next generation.

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*To be a parent, and to teach, is to be an instrument of the Holy Spirit. It is an awesome task.*

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That story is far more than a pious tradition of Christian schools, as Professor B. Holwerda said at a Ladies' District Meeting in December 1941: it is the story of our confession of the Triune God. For that story our schools were established and maintained, as it penetrates every subject area and guides and teaches covenant children along the path of service to God. That service is radically different from the pursuit of a career, as the cosmos is the Lord's, and they are the Lord's, and because the Lord's Holy Spirit has been promised to them. To be a parent, and to teach, is to be an instrument of the Holy Spirit. It is an awesome task.

Teaching is for me. Could it be for you?

If you are a teacher, why don't you share what you like about it?