

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 53, No. 4 • February 13, 2004

Fruit of the Spirit

The Complete Heavenly Food

Why Do We School Our Children?



Ancient Treasures and the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Canadian Museum of Civilization



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Fruit of the Spirit

If these are the standards of life in the kingdom of God, then the bar has been raised very high.

We are all familiar with what Paul writes in Galatians 5:22-23 about the fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." I had good reason to think about this in depth recently because I preached on this passage. As I thought about it, I started to have a sinking feeling in my heart. At a superficial level, one can easily say, "I am a loving person, I have a lot of joy in my heart, and I am at peace with my God, my neighbour and myself." But as the list which comprises the fruit of the Spirit continues, and one reflects a little more deeply, it is like someone lays a burdensome mantle on one's shoulders. We reflect on characteristics such as patience, gentleness and self-control. I reflect on that. And I say to myself, "by nature, I am not a man of patience, nor am I a gentle man, nor do I exhibit self-control in all aspects of my life." If these are the standards of life in the kingdom of God, then the bar has been raised very high. Who can attain it? I cannot.

Frightening

One might ask, "Is it advisable to talk in this way? Is it even right to talk in this way?" At a certain point it is not right to talk in this way. At the same time, it is an honest evaluation of man for what he is by nature. In his own strength man has not a ghost of a chance to exhibit what Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit. This also opens the door to the very thing that Paul is addressing in his letter to the Galatians and to what is one of the biggest mistakes that man can make. Throughout history there has always been a tendency for people to think that salvation depends on their own achievements. In other words, that not just salvation in general but even justification specifically depends on good works. It is this heresy which Paul had to deal with in his letter to the Galatians. In Galatia there

were Judaizers – Jewish Christians – who were teaching the Gentile Christians that in order to be saved they needed more than Jesus Christ to pay for their sins; they also needed to do their own part by keeping the Old Testament laws and traditions, including circumcision.

There was a horrible twist to this heresy, as Paul makes clear. For the moment we will not even consider what an insult this is to God who graciously gave his Son to secure our redemption by his active and passive obedience. The teaching of the Judaizers is a legalism which leads to the frightening scenario we just described above, namely, that as we contemplate the law of God we realize with hopeless desperation that we have not a chance of keeping that law. That is the hopelessness of legalism: you are always struggling to keep the law while knowing you can't do it and therefore you are damned before God.

Libertinism

There is, however, another horrible twist to the heresy being promulgated in Galatia. There is a kind of libertine thinking which Paul describes in verse 13: "But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature." Some might think that legalism and libertinism are poles apart. But it is not so and experience proves it. A powerful example uncovered by our Lord Jesus Christ was the self-righteous Pharisees who on the one hand were sticklers for the law, but on the other hand, they were lawless in business matters and many other things. They had an outward shell or veneer of righteous legalism, but inwardly they were like a tomb filled with dead men's bones. In their private lives they placed themselves above the law. This is a strange mutation of legalism and libertinism which makes a mockery of obedience to God.

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

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**ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:
(subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):**

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One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
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Email: clarion@premierprinting.ca

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
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Subscription Rates for 2004	Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada*	\$42.00*	\$69.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds  	\$44.50	\$57.50
International	\$69.00	\$103.00

*Including 7% GST – No. 890967359RT
Advertisements: \$13.50 per column inch
Full Colour Display Advertisements: \$19.00 per column inch
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

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Agreement No. 40063293; PAP Registration No. 9907; ISSN 0383-0438

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It can and does happen today. People can be scrupulous and rigorous about all kinds of rules, and they can always be talking about church and school, but meanwhile in their private lives – which they are scrupulously careful in keeping hidden away – they can live in sexual immorality, be crooked in their business dealings, use foul language, and be violent in their behaviour to strangers. This kind of legalism and libertinism can go hand in hand. Outwardly there are all kinds of rules – rules which want to demonstrate a closeness to God – but inwardly there is no rule at all – a lawlessness which demonstrates one who is far removed from God.

The Gospel

Paul bridges this twin-polluted stream of legalism and libertinism with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul outlines in chapter 4 the awesome gift of God’s love in giving his Son to be born of a woman, born under the law to secure our

Inside . . .

Rev. M. Jagt of Ottawa whets our interest as he writes about an exhibit at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. One of the highlights of this exhibit is a look at the Dead Sea Scrolls. Unfortunately, Hull, Quebec is quite far from where I live. But if you are closer, you might want to attend this exhibit after you read the article.

The editorial takes a look at the fruit of the Spirit as described in Galatians 5. The beauty of what Paul writes in Galatians is that while the standards of kingdom living are very high, we have been equipped for that very thing by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ by grace alone.

A press release from a Classis in Ontario informs us that candidates S.C. Van Dam and D. DeBoer both passed their peremptory examinations. We rejoice with these brothers and wish them the Lord’s blessings as they begin life in the ministry of the Word.

We are kept up to date about the Women’s Savings Action for our Theological College. We also have our columns *Education Matters*, *Treasures*, *New and Old* and the *Children’s Catechism*, along with three letters to the editor.

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adoption as the sons of God. Therefore, as we face our own sins and condemnation, what is our only hope for body and soul, in life and death? It is the cross of Jesus Christ. Nothing more and nothing less! He not only paid for our sins, but he also fulfilled all the obedience required of us. We call this active and passive obedience. Therefore when we stand before the cross of Jesus Christ, and with empty hands say to him, "O Lord, I have nothing to offer you, but I do believe with all my heart that you fulfilled all righteousness for me," then the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ is imputed to us so that God not only declares us not guilty of sin, but also considers us as never having sinned and having fulfilled all the obedience of God's law.

*Does this now mean that
God's law has no place in
our lives?*

Does this now mean that God's law has no place in our lives? No, what it means is that we are freed from the curse, the hopelessness and the narrow confines of a law that we could never keep in our own strength. But now that we are justified in Christ's blood, we are also filled and renewed by his Holy Spirit so that with joy and delight we can keep God's law as a guide of thankfulness. As Paul writes in Galatians 5:24: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires." And as Jesus Christ said in John 15: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." When the cross of Jesus Christ is central in our lives and we are

led by the Spirit to crucify the sinful nature with its passions and desires, we are liberated to live a life of thanksgiving and praise to God!

This puts a whole new perspective on the fruit of the Spirit. The list in Galatians 5 does not frighten or intimidate me any more. I still know what I am and what my struggles are. But I also know that God isn't telling me: "you fix it or else." He is saying: "I know you can't fix it, and that is why I gave my Son to die for you and my Spirit to renew your life."

The fruit of the Spirit means exactly this: that through faith in Jesus Christ and by holding on to him, the Holy Spirit so works in my heart that the fruit of a renewed life begins to form. I can be what I once could not be. I can be a man who loves, who is filled with joy, who is patient, who is gentle, who is self-controlled. The more I draw to the cross of my Saviour, the more that I pray and long for the Spirit to work in me, the more I can become a new man bearing the fruit of the Spirit.



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The Complete Heavenly Food



MATTHEW 13:52

“We never see anything but this manna!”

Numbers 11:6

Israel’s complaint about the manna took place only a short time after departing from Mt. Sinai. You would expect excitement and joy. Instead there were complaints. The complaint started with the rabble, which probably refers to the mixed multitude that had accompanied Israel out of Egypt (Exod 12:38). The complaint had to do with God’s survival diet, which consisted of only one thing, manna. Egypt’s diet had been so rich, so varied, consisting of fish and various vegetables.

The question is whether God’s food was so bad. We get a picture quite to the contrary in the verses 7-9. It is described as a delicacy with a pleasant yellowish appearance, the colour of bdellium, the gum resin of a certain plant. From the connection with coriander seed, used for flavouring, we get the impression that the taste was also very pleasant. It is described as having the taste of cakes baked with oil. In Exodus 16:31 it is described in terms of wafers made with honey. It could be prepared either by boiling it in water or baking it. What should strike us the most, however, is that this food truly was for nothing! It was a gift from heaven. It was there for the picking. All Israel had to do was go out to get it and prepare to eat it.

Notice all these aspects about the manna: it was delicious, nourishing, plentiful, constant, the food without price that could not be bought for money. There was enough for every day. All it

required was to be gathered and eaten. Furthermore, while this food was rich already, there was the prospect of far more abundant provisions. After all, this was only the food for on the way, while travelling through the wilderness to the land flowing with milk and honey?

All this makes us think of our salvation in Christ, of which the manna is a shadow. In John 6 we read how He described Himself as the manna, the bread from heaven. Anyone who would eat this bread would live forever. This call to eat Christ as the spiritual food is the call to believe in Him for the forgiveness of our sins. We can read in John 6 how the Jews “began to grumble about Him because He said, ‘I am the bread that came down from heaven’” (John 6:41). We do not have to transfer the language of food about being delicious, but we may transfer to Christ as our bread from heaven the fact that it is plentiful, constant, all we need for on the way to the Promised Land and truly for nothing.

As the manna fell upon the camp every morning to feed the people for the day ahead, Christ is there every morning to strengthen and sustain us. It may seem so simple, even to the point of being monotonous, but in Christ we find everything we need to sustain us on our journey through the wilderness as He justifies us by his atoning blood and renews us by his Holy Spirit. The world may offer many interesting things. These things may seem far more appetizing to

our sinful heart as they do not require the humble confession of our sins and the throwing ourselves upon the mercy of God. Realize, however, that they can do nothing for you with a view to your eternal salvation, as they cannot help you on the way to the Promised Land.

In reflecting on the complaints about the manna, we do well to remind ourselves of Paul’s words that Israel’s wilderness experiences “occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did” (1 Cor 10:6). A few verses later Paul writes, “these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come” (1 Cor 10:11). This means we must be on the alert for any rabble, of those hovering around the tents of the church trying to breed dissatisfaction with the food given by God from heaven. Look to Christ, the true heavenly bread, the true food to life everlasting. In the church, the fact that there is nothing to see but Jesus Christ is not reason for complaint but reason for joy. He is all we need. He is freely given. As Isaiah says, “Why spend your money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy?” (Isa 55:2). As our Lord says, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35).



J. Wiskerke van Dooren

Lord's Day 4.



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

You have a little brother who is four years old. I am sure you won't ask him to help you with math. Of course not: a four-year old can't do math.

We cannot obey the Ten Commandments which God has given to us. We talked about that before. Now a question comes up in your mind: then why does God tell me to keep these commandments? I cannot ask my little brother to do something he cannot do. Why does God ask something of me I cannot do?

Do you remember that we talked about Adam and Eve who lived in

paradise? They were the first human beings, the father and mother of all people who would be born. You could say that their children were all included in Adam and Eve. And their grandchildren and great grandchildren, and so on.

God wanted the same thing from Adam and Eve that He also wants us to do.

These two, Adam and Eve, had heard what God had said. They knew what they should do and what they should not do. And they were able to live in obedience to God's commandments because God had made them good. Adam and Eve began living as God wanted them to do. And that made them happy. What God wants is always the best for us.

But what happened? The people changed because they became disobedient. And now they could no longer live as God wanted. Did our Father in heaven change? No. He does not change from one day to the next. He wanted the same thing from Adam and Eve that He also wants us to do. He still expects that we do his will. And God can demand that, for He had made us.

God was angry when Adam and Eve sinned. And God does not change. He is still angry when people sin, when they do bad things rather than obeying him.

God is angry. But where is God's mercy? Is He not merciful to us? Yes, of course He is. And in the next couple of months we will often speak about that. But first you have to learn that the sins people commit make God angry. He is merciful, but that does not take away his anger.



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Ancient Treasures and the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec



Would you like to see: the tombstone of King Uzziah? The only surviving artifact from Solomon's temple? The oldest section of the Bible we have – a tiny silver scroll inscribed with the Aaronic blessing you're all familiar with – from around the time of Hezekiah? Stone purification jars like those used at Cana? And hundreds of other treasures relating to the Bible?

Until April 12 visitors to the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull Quebec, just opposite the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, have a rare chance to see some fascinating artifacts while

museums in Israel undergo renovations. The exhibit is entitled "Ancient Treasures and the Dead Sea Scrolls" and is organized by the Israeli Museum in Jerusalem, in collaboration with the Montreal Museum of Archaeology and History and other Canadian agencies. It's the first time many of these treasures have left Israel and after April they will immediately be returning to Israel.

Even if you're not into archaeology, the exhibit is a wonderful treat for believers. It truly makes the Bible come alive before your eyes. For many years Scripture has been treated as the stuff of

myth and legend; King David, for instance, is often seen as just a fairy tale prince. But the exhibit demonstrates that as archaeologists continue to dig, more and more evidence surfaces that supports the facts of Scripture.

A stele

At the museum, you'll first see a stele (a stone pillar) from Tel Dan which contains, in early Aramaic, the boast of a Syrian king. Part of it reads: "... I killed Jehoram son of Ahab, and Ahaziah of the house of David and I set their towns in ruin and turned their cities into



desolation . . .” (Some of these words are reconstructions.) The book of 2 Kings describes how the northern border city of Dan exchanged hands time and time again in the on-going hostilities between Syria and Israel and thus would be the natural place to find this sort of inscription. The stele itself appears to have been torn down and used for pavement – perhaps when Dan was again under Israelite control. The inscription itself matches the political picture given by scripture in 2 Kings 8 and 9 which tell us Judah and Israel, under Jehoram and Ahaziah respectively, were allied against Syria. While the stele also disagrees with Scripture – Jehoram, apparently, was not fatally wounded (see 2 Kings 8:29) and neither did Ahaziah die at the hands of Hazael, king of Syria, it’s easy to understand the inscription as a boast of a proud king who wanted to embellish his accomplishments. Even more important, however, this stele contains one of the first, if not the first, concrete reference to King David outside of Scripture. It is true that this is still debated (some say the reference is only to a town Bethdavid/Bethdawd cf. Bethlehem “House of Bread”), but the general consensus among scholars is that this proves King David was no mere legendary prince.

Ostraca

The exhibit also contains ostraca (pottery pieces) with the name Pashur – a biblical name (Jer 20:1), a very intricate Phoenician seal of a certain Jezebel (probably not the one of Scripture, though), and the seal impressions of Gemariah and Baruch (Jer 36:10). There is also an ossuary (a bone box) of Joseph

son of Caiaphus, most likely the Caiaphus under whom Christ was condemned. All this affirms the biblical figures were real people.

Tiny pomegranate

In addition to the silver scroll with the Aaronic blessing, which was found at a burial site outside of Jerusalem and illustrates the faith of Old Testament believers, the exhibit also showcases a tiny pomegranate from about the same time period. Inscribed on it in old Hebrew script are the letters, “lby[t yhw]h qd? khnm” (letters in square brackets are reconstructions) which translates something like, “belonging to the house of Yahweh, a holy offering for the priests.” The tiny pomegranate itself was probably used to decorate the tip of a sceptre or staff. We know the

pomegranate was a prominent architectural motif in Solomon’s temple (for instance they were carved into the decorations on top of the two main pillars, Jakin and Boaz, 1 Kings 7:42) but there is no record of such a sceptre or staff being commissioned by the LORD. It’s only through similar finds at other religious sites that scholars insist that this carved pomegranate played a role in the service of the LORD. That this tiny artifact is all we have left of Solomon’s glorious temple is a chilling reminder of the judgment of our God not just upon the world, but also upon his people. (Jer 26:18, cf. Mark 13:1, 2 and 1 Peter 4:17.)

Lots more

There are other religious items, too numerous to individually item. A horned incense altar, a model temple shrine, statues of bulls, Astarte fertility idols, and more show that religious life and apostasy was alive and well in ancient Israel.

An ancient game, complete with pieces, is on display and several pull toys – models of rams, bears, and other animals, all on wheels so that toddlers of old could scamper around with toy behind, just like our children do today. Not much has changed – except these toys have lasted two and a half millennia!

Archaeology also attests to our age-old quest for youth and beauty. On display are many kinds of jewellery and cosmetics that would make a woman of today envious (see Ezek 16:11-13, Isa 3:16-24). The exhibit also depicts life in a typical home in ancient Israel.

Lines are also drawn from Judaism to Christianity and Islam, and so you’ll also see some mosaics and other decorative



Ivory Pomegranate



parts of early churches, side by side similar parts from synagogues, demonstrating the Jewishness of the early Christian church.

As for the tombstone of Uzziah, in the first century B.C. his burial site outside Jerusalem was moved – and the exhibit contains the epitaph that masons erected to mark the new location of King Uzziah's tomb.



Silver Scroll

Literary treasures

In addition to many other notable finds, on display are a number of literary treasures. There is a Torah scroll from one of the first Canadian Jewish communities – which measures forty-four meters long! There's a Latin Bible from 1479 and an old Rabbinic Bible, in which you can see ancient commentary and notes arranged all around the Hebrew text. And in a special room, where light and heat and moisture are all carefully computer controlled, are the exhibit's pride and joy – three of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 by a Bedouin boy who, while searching for a lost sheep, threw a rock into a cave and heard the sound of breaking pottery: the *War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness* (impeccable handwriting!) the *Community Rule* and *Isaiah B* (a copy of the book of Isaiah). The *War Scroll* and the *Isaiah* scroll have never left Israel. It would take another article to describe the significance of these finds at Qumran – and there are free lectures at the museum itself every Thursday from February 5 to March 25 by leading specialists.

Earliest fragment

In addition to shedding light on religious life around the time of Christ and possibly give us the earliest fragment of the New Testament (this is debated), without a doubt the Dead Sea Scrolls help support the reliability of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. In

the past, the Hebrew Masoretic text of the first millennia A.D. has often been questioned and criticized – and translations such as the RSV reflect this bias. It is true, that previously our oldest copy of the Old Testament was relatively young – a manuscript from 916 A.D. But now we have found manuscripts over a thousand years older – and they show incredible agreement. The *Isaiah B*, scroll, for instance, although it is in poor condition, demonstrates the existence of a Masoretic type of text long before the Masoretic period, and itself may reflect the existence of a Masoretic text from even further back into the centuries before Christ. Clearly, to write off the Hebrew text we have received is an extremely rash judgment. Jewish scribes meticulously guarded the purity of Scripture – and through them we see the hand of our God protecting his Word for his people.

The exhibit, in true politically correct fashion, avoids making any religious statements or pronouncements. But it is a wonderful glimpse into biblical times. On the one hand, no amount of evidence will convince someone to believe if they are unwilling to believe. Our Lord Jesus Christ says in his story about Abraham and Lazarus, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). But for those of us who love the biblical accounts and treasure the Word of God, these artifacts will certainly deepen the hue of our faith.



D. Stoffels



Why Do We School Our Children?

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“Society has created the institution of school and as Christians we have accepted that institution. So why do most people send their children to school?”

Introduction

In the past year there have been many articles dealing with why we should have specifically Canadian Reformed schools. In this article I will focus not on that topic, but rather on why parents send their children to school at all. Society has created the institution of school and as Christians we have accepted that institution. So why do most people send their children to school?

Six reasons for schooling God’s covenant children

I have identified six reasons, and I will treat each reason separately which is clearly an artificial way to approach it. In reality all the reasons are present to some degree for most parents. My goal in this article will be to illustrate that there is one reason that should override all the others. It does not cancel the others out, but it should be the primary or guiding reason for sending God’s covenant children to school. Since our whole life is to be captive to Christ, the reason must of necessity connect to our professed faith.

Reason 1: to meet legal requirements

At the most superficial level this can be the reason that you send your children to school. There is a legal requirement to educate your children, and if you do not do so, then the provincial or state government may well prosecute and punish you.

This point is certainly part of why most people send their children to school. As Christian citizens of a democratic country, we recognize our obligation to follow the laws the government passes. If this were the only reason for schooling our children, then in all likelihood we would not ask too much of schools. The legal requirement to school your children is not the bottom line for most people; it is a starting point at best.

Reason 2: to socialize them

This reason for schooling cannot stand on its own. It is something that happens in school, and it can be both a positive and negative point. I suspect that very few parents would have this as a primary reason for sending their children to school. At the same time, it is certainly a goal that many parents do have.

Reason 3: to keep the kids out of trouble (daycare)

This may sound foolish when stated this way, but it is a reason for a very small number of parents. Some parents really do not expect much more from school.

Reason 4: to get trained for a job

I suspect that if most parents were asked, “Why do you send your children to school?” that this would be one of the first reasons to be verbalized. When questioned further, they probably would acknowledge that it is not the primary reason, but I think that subconsciously it

may have become the primary reason for sending them off to school.

For many parents one of the main factors in sending their children to school is the idea that their children need to be well equipped for a job that has the potential to provide them with an income that is sufficient to support a family and lead a comfortable life. An increasing parental demand for and availability of trade programs at the high-school and middle school level supports the increasing importance of this factor in our society.

There is nothing wrong with a school that provides training which is helpful to being well-equipped for a job, but there is definitely something askew if this is the primary reason for schooling our children. God gives us the gift of work and the command to work, but He never tells us that this is our goal or purpose in life. One could argue that our comfort is quite low on God’s list of priorities for us. If being able to get a good job is our primary reason for sending our children to school, then we send a clear message to our children and to others that we believe personal comfort and money is what matters.

Reason 5: to develop good citizens who contribute to improving society

This reason is often cited by Ministries of Education as the purpose for teaching Social Studies. Schools are assigned the task of producing citizens that are well-equipped to contribute to

making the world a better place to live. This reason is closely tied to the previous reason with the term skill-sets (the skills that industry deems necessary in good employees) becoming popular. A strong force for setting school direction and curricular decisions has become the needs of industry. The value of a liberal arts education is pushed aside as the needs of industry surge to the forefront.

Reason 6: to become a good “church/kingdom member”

I have purposely chosen the above wording even though it immediately begs for clarification. What I mean by a good church member is someone who has fully developed their God-given talents and as part of that is well-educated in terms of being able to think critically, discerningly and to demonstrate wisdom – which I would define as “knowing God’s will and doing it” (wisdom includes learning how to treat people appropriately). Secular society would describe most of what I mean with a phrase like, “thoughtful, responsible, active and thinking citizens who are able to acquire the requisite information to consider multiple perspectives and to make reasoned judgments.” (Social Studies 11; Curriculum Document. British Columbia: 1997.) This is an excellent goal, but unfortunately it stops short of wisdom.

Our children need to be able to tell when a person has a valid and true point or when their point is “out to lunch” and/or untrue. As Dorothy Sayers writes in her essay “The Lost Tools of Learning,” “. . . both teacher and pupils must be ready to detect fallacy, slipshod reasoning, ambiguity, irrelevance, and redundancy, and to pounce upon them like rats.” That ability is what I believe should be the main goal of any school. The task of the parents and the church is to raise children to know the LORD, while the school’s main task is to help students develop their God-given talents especially in the area of thinking independently and critically within the bounds of God’s Word. Working towards this goal looks quite different in primary than it does in high school, but it is crucial that there be a unified program from primary to high school if this goal is to be achieved.

For a person to be able to be a good church member, they need to be taught many of the things they are currently taught plus some things that they are not taught. They need to have a strong emphasis on learning the skill of clear thinking, and they need to be trained in effective communication, both written and spoken. They also need to understand “what makes people tick.” They need to have a strong understanding

For we let our young men and women go out unarmed, in a day when armour was never so necessary.

of basic science, math, geography, history, the Bible, and how to understand, promote and defend it (apologetics). They also need to know how to relate biblically to people. Without all these areas it is less likely that the students will achieve the balance they need to be a keen thinker. As a side benefit to this type of schooling, the end result will be, among other things, a person with the skills to be a superb employee, one whom employers will compete to hire.

Conclusion

This article is a brief summary, and I hope that I do not give the impression that I think school should be unrelentingly difficult, joyless and only for the academically inclined children. This is far from the truth. I believe that school must reflect life as the Bible shows it, and that means a rigorous (which by God’s grace need not feel rigorous) life but a balanced one. God’s plan includes both play and rest as a part of life; we need to ensure we keep them in their proper balance and place.

The main point is that our focus in sending our children to school needs to be clear. The focus is that we are to train our children to be the best servants of God (good church members!) that they can be. That must dictate our decision making for all questions related to schooling. Our children’s desires cannot be allowed to dictate our fundamental decision-making and direction-setting unless those desires are in accordance with God’s will. As parents we feel

sympathetic towards our children and this is for the most part the way it should be. What is not good is if our sympathy for them overrules our task as parents. As parents we need a clear understanding of why we should school our children. With that focus or understanding clearly and firmly fixed in our hearts and minds, we can withstand the temptation to make decisions on the basis of our child’s complaints about how hard school is, how much work they have, or how unfriendly people are. As a parent, often my child does not even have to express those feelings for me to feel sympathetic towards them; however, with my eyes firmly fixed on God, I can evaluate my feelings and move forward in the right direction.

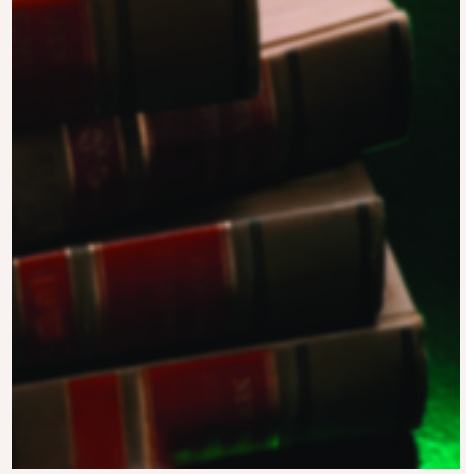
I would like to end with another quote from Dorothy Sayers’ essay “The Lost Tools of Learning:”

For we let our young men and women go out unarmed, in a day when armour was never so necessary. By teaching them all to read, we have left them at the mercy of the printed word. By the invention of the film and the radio, we have made certain that no aversion to reading shall secure them from the incessant battery of words, words, words. They do not know what the words mean; they do not know how to ward them off or blunt their edge or fling them back; they are a prey to words in their emotions instead of being the masters of them in their intellects. We who were scandalized in 1940 when men were sent to fight armoured tanks with rifles, are not scandalized when young men and women are sent into the world to fight massed propaganda with a smattering of “subjects”; and when whole classes and whole nations become hypnotized by the arts of the spell binder, we have the impudence to be astonished. . . . we have lost the tools of learning, and in their absence can only make a botched and piecemeal job of it.

Notes: Quotes taken from Douglas Wilson, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*, (Wheaton Ill.: Crossways Books, 1991), Appendix A. p. 164.

Education Matters is supported by the Canadian Reformed Teachers Association (CRTA East). Reader responses or articles can be sent to abkingma@kwic.com or to Clarion.

News from the Women's Savings Action



College Evening

Time passes quickly. Our book year ended on June 30, and already the first donations for the new year are coming in. On September 5, 2003 Prof. C. Van Dam, on behalf of the College community, accepted a cheque from the Women's Savings Action. Again it was possible to donate an amount of \$27,000. As you could read in the *Clarion* of October 10, 2003, we slowly unrolled a list of the books bought with last year's money: twenty-seven pages with more than 500 titles. We wanted to make visible to those present, how much the Women's Savings action does for the library in terms of book acquisitions. The special bookcase marked "New Books" in the library is never empty.

Selection of books

How are the books for the library selected and how do they end up on the library shelves? The library has an amount on the budget for books, but who decides how to spend it, and how are books entered in the library? Our librarian, Margaret Van der Velde, and the associate librarian, Prof. N.H. Gootjes, are ultimately responsible for selecting the books to be bought. During the year all the professors hand in order cards with information on the books they would like to see in the library. Then the librarians must make a choice: which

books, old or new, add the most to the collection, and how is the balance between the different specialties maintained? After the selection process the order cards go to Catharine Mechelse, who takes care of the actual ordering. Once the books arrive, Catharine unpacks them, checks the invoices, pays the bills, and off they go to Margaret, who catalogues them. When she puts them on the "New Books" shelves, they are ready to be used.

Collection

The people involved in the Women's Savings Action had a busy year. Under the blessing of the Lord, an amount of \$30,064.74 could be collected, up from last year's \$28,416.79. You can find the amount collected in your congregation in the List of Contributions. The balance sheet shows that at the end of the book year, there was \$40,086.48 in the bank. For this year we decided against increasing the amount of the gift for the library, keeping it at \$27,000. But if the collection continues to go so well, we might be able to increase the amount next year. That would be great, since book prices have a tendency to go up!

Appreciation

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to all the representatives of the WSA, who work hard every year again to collect and count the money. And there is great

thankfulness to our heavenly Father for all the people in the churches who again this year contributed towards the library of the Theological College. Not in the first place from us, but from the many people within and outside the College community who enjoy the use of the library. We pray that our heavenly Father may bless the use of the resources of the library for the furthering of his kingdom.

THE BOARD:

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Women's Savings Action

Contributions for the year July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003

(With comparative figures for the previous year)

Congregation	2003	2002
Abbotsford	\$ —	\$ 1080.00
Aldergrove	821.00	620.00
Ancaster	843.66	857.27
Attercliffe	1181.00	1053.50
Barrhead	685.00	734.00
Brampton	123.85	286.44
Burlington Ebenezer	1236.55	968.50
Burlington Fellowship	509.00	910.15
Burlington Waterdown	885.00	765.00
Calgary	323.29	365.77
Carman East	268.00	279.00
Carman West	207.00	47.00
Chatham	464.00	532.25
Chilliwack	500.00	536.00
Cloverdale	890.00	1215.00
Coaldale	665.00	1300.00
Edmonton Immanuel	1897.65	978.50
Edmonton Providence	1262.69	2383.15
Elora	650.00	313.00
Fergus	623.93	511.08
Flamborough	1093.50	920.10
Glanbrook	529.00	569.50
Grand Rapids	—	—
Grand Valley	151.50	186.58
Grassie	530.21	167.95
Guelph	1049.50	845.00
Hamilton	1471.00	1229.69
Houston	608.00	452.50
Kerwood	—	—
Langley	1725.00	1455.00
Langley Willoughby Heights	1265.00	550.00
Lincoln	1150.50	368.26
London	275.00	191.00
Lynden	—	500.03
Neerlandia	—	—
Orangeville	249.25	174.78
Ottawa	135.00	158.65
Owen Sound	200.00	—
Rockway	450.00	817.00
Smithers	1172.77	1080.65
Smithville	1115.03	1200.54
Surrey	330.00	—
Taber	—	—
Toronto	164.00	—
Vernon	276.00	516.00
Winnipeg Grace	711.25	622.95
Winnipeg Redeemer	948.00	675.00
Yarrow	—	—
Australia	—	—
Royalties Selles	428.61	—
Total Collected	\$ 30,064.74	\$ 28,416.79



OUR FOREIGN STUDENT BURSARY FUND

has its first academically qualified applicant. He is from Sudan and comes highly recommended by, among others, Rev. Victor Atallah.

As Canadian Reformed community at large, we now have the opportunity and privilege of funding his studies and stay in Canada.

Your invited donation will, the Lord willing, be multiplied through the spreading of the gospel in which our applicant hopes to become instrumental in his country of origin.

Gifts of any size are welcome and those of \$10.00 and over qualify for a receipt for income tax purposes.

Please remit to the College at the following address, with the cheque clearly identified as intended for the

"FOREIGN STUDENT BURSARY FUND"

*The Theological College of
the Canadian Reformed Churches*

110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON L9C 5A1



Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College

HAMILTON, ONTARIO

ADMISSIONS SEPTEMBER 2004

The **Board of Covenant College** invites applications from prospective students for the 2004-2005 academic year.

The College offers teacher training programs to prepare candidates for teaching positions in the K-Grade 10 range.

Admission Requirements:

For the 1-year Diploma of Education program:
a suitable university degree.

For the 3-year Diploma of Teaching program:
a grade 12 diploma with university entrance equivalence.

Prospective candidates are invited to contact the College for more information and/or to obtain an enrolment package. **Students are encouraged to apply before March 31, 2004.** Those who plan to seek admission in the year 2005 are also encouraged to contact the College as soon as possible.

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Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College

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Tel: **905-385-0634** Fax: **905-385-8409**

E-mail: covenant@nas.net

Postal: 856 Upper James Street, Box 20179
Hamilton, Ontario L9C 7M5



Dear Editor,

I have greatly enjoyed reading Dr. R. Faber's articles on "The Introduction of Evangelical Hymns in the Dutch Reformed Churches." However, one statement in the third installment (in the Year-End *Clarion*) is questionable: "Secession leaders did not argue against the use of hymns from Scripture or the confessions; the Bible neither commands nor forbids the use of spiritual songs." I cannot say for sure about the other Secession leaders, but this statement does not appear to hold true with Hendrik DeCock. DeCock seems to have opposed the use of all hymns, not merely bad ones. DeCock said, "Hymns were never introduced into the church, except to cause degeneration and contempt for the welfare of the church, or perhaps in cases of incomplete Reformation" (p2). Further he writes, "We see as well, amongst other things in the New Covenant, that in the best of times, and in the purest churches, hymns are never found or tolerated" (p3). Later, DeCock argues the old Reformed position that Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 contain a command to sing psalms, rather than three separate kinds of compositions (pp 5-6). He maintains that the introduction of hymns is a departure "from God's express command." So, at least one Secession leader did argue against all hymns and he did so on the basis of a command of Scripture. We do not have to agree with the esteemed Rev. DeCock, but we should properly acknowledge his arguments.

(Page references are to the English translation of DeCock's 1835 pamphlet, *De zoogenaamde evangelische gezangen*. . . . Published in English as *According to the Command of the Lord: Rev. H. DeCock's Case Against Hymns*, translated, edited, and annotated by J.A. Wanliss and W.L. Bredenhof, 1998).

W.L. Bredenhof,
Fort Babine,
British Columbia

I am grateful for the interest expressed by Rev. W. Bredenhof, and by others, in the history of congregational singing, and welcome the opportunity now to illustrate the nuanced treatment it requires. *De Zoogenaamde*. . . *Gezangen* was one of the brochures in mind when I wrote the two paragraphs on DeCock's position and the conclusion on the general stance in the Secession. While the rhetoric

(as seen in the exaggerated claims cited as p. 2 and 3 in the letter above) wishes you to believe it, DeCock does not argue against hymn-singing *from Scripture or the confessions*. Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 ("as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts"), while debated even in recent years, cannot be said to constitute God's express command against hymn-singing. A glance at the brief account of Scholte and Brummelkamp shows that their understanding was different from DeCock's.

If by "the old Reformed position" Rev. Bredenhof means that of the Reformers themselves, I would direct the reader to *Clarion* 51.16 (p.389), where the texts are cited in an account of the Reformers' correct interpretation of them as teaching all believers to sing praises to God (cf. Zwingli's "spiritual" interpretation, mentioned in *Clarion* 50.6 [p.138]). If, however, "old Reformed position" refers to that in the early Dutch Reformed churches, the reader is directed to the carefully worded decisions of the first synods, at which Psalm-singing is promoted but hymns are not explicitly banned on the basis of a scriptural command.

I think justice was done to DeCock's position in the two paragraphs dedicated to him: they begin with the statement that he "influenced believers with strongly-worded brochures in which he attacked also the *Evangelical Hymns*," and – as actions speak louder than words – end by reporting that he "requested only the singing of Psalms during worship services." The phrase "strongly-worded" is a nod to the polemical tone of *De Zoogenaamde* . . . *Gezangen*, and to its strained exegesis. His reported actions, meanwhile, demonstrated that DeCock opposed the use of all hymns.

On balance, however, and taken as a group, the leaders of the Secession (and, more importantly, the orthodox congregations generally) maintained the position that the Bible does not command or forbid the use of spiritual songs. It was the heretical content of the *Evangelical Hymns* that was refuted by Scripture and the confessions. Thus the issue concerning the hymns must be seen in the context of an orthodox movement against the increasingly unreformed teaching and governance in the Dutch Reformed Church.

R. Faber

Letter to the editor of *Clarion*:

Papua, Papua New Guinea – same island, different nation! On the last Sunday of last year we received both the Mission Calendar and the year end issue of *Clarion* – wonderfully on time! However, paging through both, we realized that the official name-change of Irian Jaya to Papua has confused both the writer of the Year End Review 2003 of *Clarion* as well as the publisher of the Mission Calendar. As they are not the only ones who are confused, for we have come across this confusion of names more often, perhaps it is good to clarify this through this public means.

Dr. Visscher writes “on the other side of the world in Papua, or what was formerly Papua New Guinea ...” in the year end issue of *Clarion*. It is not Papua New Guinea that changed its name, but Irian Jaya. Irian Jaya is now officially called Papua. Papua is therefore a province of Indonesia, while Papua New Guinea is an independent nation of its own having received its independence from Australia since 1975. They share a common border and are part of the same island, yet two different nations.

Therefore, if you would write Papua on your envelope, wanting to write to Rev. ’t Hart, you just might find it going to the wrong nation. Toronto and the supporting churches work both in Papua (having sent out br/sr Clarence and Jeanette Togeretz) and in Papua New Guinea (having sent out Rev. and sr. ’t Hart). Thus, the beautiful picture of Rev. ’t Hart and part of his family for the month of January in the Mission Calendar is taken in Papua New Guinea, not Papua. Now you can make the remaining four corrections yourself, for the months of April, July, October and December. Thanks for your attention and correction.

H. Versteeg,
Chatham, Ontario

Dear Editor:

The article of Dr. F. Oosterhoff, and the response of Dr. C. Van Dam, I read with interest because this topic came up some thirty odd years ago in other Reformed Churches. At that time I read it with dismay, thinking how is it possible to question the total validity of Genesis 1? And now we are doing the same today. Dr. Van Dam points out to

Dr. Oosterhoff that he is in disagreement with her and I appreciate his comments.

Dr. Oosterhoff’s response ends with the words: “It is our wish that our readers may benefit from the discussion and that the exchange contributes to yet a clearer understanding of Genesis 1.” In my opinion her article makes it very unclear. Why don’t the scientists, historians, and scholars let Scripture speak for itself? But if you must dig into the unrevealed mysteries of God, I would like to challenge you on a few more. When God put Adam into a deep sleep and created the woman as a helper for him, was Adam put to sleep for a thousand years or more?

Second, can you explain what is meant by the various places in Scripture where it speaks “about the day of the Lord’s return.” Are we to think that this day could be as long as one day in creation or possibly a thousand years? Matthew 25:13 states: “Watch therefore for you know neither the day or the hour”.

Third, explain 1 Corinthians 15:51-52: “The mystery that we shall be changed in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.” What is meant by a moment?

Last, in Revelation 21 God speaks about the new heaven and the new earth: how long will that process take? Will his believers be held in an unknown place while God is busy preparing the new heaven and the new earth? I always understood that to take place on the day of his coming.

Wouldn’t our God be better served by leaving the matter of time the way He has revealed it to us in his Word?

Bill Bartels,
Ancaster, Ontario

I appreciate Mr. Bartels’ interest in my articles on Genesis 1, but I am afraid he misread them. He assumes that I dealt with the length of the days of creation (at least, that is what I conclude from the questions he poses). In fact, however, I purposely avoided that issue, focusing instead upon the redemptive-historical meaning of Genesis 1. I did so in order to show the riches of this chapter – riches of which we remain unaware, I pointed out, if we focus single-mindedly on the question of the days. I am sorry Br. Bartels missed this.

FGO

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.



Year-end cover photo

Photo courtesy: Ank Knol

Village in Beregoro, Papua New Guinea where Caroline and Heleen Knol worked as volunteers. The baby on the photo, Lily, was named by Caroline.

Press Release of Classis Niagara, December 17, 2003 and January 14, 2004

1. Opening

On behalf of the convening Church at Attercliffe, Rev. D. Agema opens by reading Revelation 22:1-17. He then leads us in prayer and we sing Psalm 103:2, 4. All the delegates are welcomed, as well as the deputies of Regional Synod, Rev. E. Korevaar, a fraternal delegate from the URC, and candidates S.C. Van Dam and D. DeBoer.

2. Constitution of Classis

The credentials are in order and all the *primi* delegates are present. There are no instructions on the credentials. Classis is declared constituted. The moderamen is as follows: chairman – Rev. K. Kok, clerk – Rev. D. Agema, vice-chairman – Rev. J. Van Vliet. The agenda is adopted after a few alterations.

3. Peremptory examination of candidate S.C. Van Dam

The various documents necessary for this examination are read. All is in order. Br. Van Dam presents his sermon proposal in the auditorium of the church. Classis then goes into closed session to consider this proposal. It is deemed sufficient to continue with the exam. Next, we proceed in open session again with exams in the areas of Old Testament, New Testament, Doctrine and Creeds and Church History. We take a break from the exam in order to give our fraternal delegate an opportunity to speak.

4. Address from fraternal delegate from the URC

On behalf of Classis Southwestern Ontario of the URC, Rev. Ed Korevaar brought greetings from this Classis and expresses his appreciation for the work which is being done in Phase 2 with the hope that, under the Lord's blessing, the work towards federative unity may continue. On behalf of Classis, Rev. Van Vliet responds with some appropriate words. We break for lunch. Rev. Korevaar leaves the meeting due to other obligations.

5. Continuation of the examination of candidate S.C. Van Dam

After lunch the examination continues in the areas of Knowledge of Scripture, Ethics, Diaconology and Church Polity. Classis goes into closed session to consider the exam. The exam is deemed sufficient. The deputies of Regional Synod give their concurring advice. After reviewing the appropriate documents, classis approves the call extended to this brother by the Covenant Church at Grassie. In open session the chairman informs br. Van Dam of classis' decision. The Subscription Form is read and signed. We sing Psalm 85:3, 4 and Rev. Agema leads us in thanksgiving prayer to the Lord. Opportunity is given to congratulate br. Van Dam. His ordination will be, D.V., January 4, 2004.

6. Peremptory examination of candidate D. DeBoer

A letter from the church at Dunville/Wainfleet requests that Classis be reconvened on January 14, 2004 in order to administer this exam. After considering the reasons given, Classis accedes to this request, with the understanding that nothing new will be added to the agenda in the interim.

7. Question period ad Article 44 CO

The chairman asks the delegates the questions from Art 44. The churches at Dunville/Wainfleet and Grassie ask for advice in various matters pertaining to the government of their church. Advice is given.

8. Report concerning fund for needy churches

A letter from Classis Ontario West, December 10, 2003, expresses their preference that Classes Ontario West and Niagara cooperate for at least one more year in giving assistance to needy churches. Bearing this letter in mind, we discuss the Report on the Fund for Needy Churches submitted by the Church at Smithville. After one amendment the proposal of this report is adopted. The assessment for



2004 is \$45 per communicant member.

9. Appointments

Next classis

Date: March 24, 2004

Convening church: Bluebell

Place: Lincoln

Officers: chairman – Rev. Souman; clerk – Rev. Kok; vice-chairman – Rev. Agema.

The Church at Lincoln is appointed to represent Classis at the ordination of Candidate Van Dam.

10. Adjournment

Personal question period is used by a couple of brothers. The chairman judges that censure ad Art 34 is not needed. The acts of Classis thus far are read and adopted. The press release thus far is approved. We sing Psalm 68:1, 2. The chairman leads us in prayer and then adjourns classis until January 14, 2004.

11. Reconvening on January 14, 2004

The chairman reconvenes Classis, reading Joshua 23:1-16. Next he leads us in prayer and we sing Psalm 16:1, 2, 3. The roll call indicates that all the delegates are present, although some alternates have taken the place of *primi* delegates. A special welcome is extended to br. and sr. D. DeBoer, the deputies of Regional Synod and other guests.

12. Peremptory examination of candidate D. DeBoer

The necessary documents were examined. All is in order. We move to the church auditorium to hear the sermon proposal on Judges 3:31. We go into closed session to evaluate the sermon. Classis judges the sermon to be sufficient in order to continue with the exam. In open

session the candidate is examined in the areas of Old Testament and New Testament exegesis. Next we break for lunch. After lunch the roll is called. All are present. Br. DeBoer is then examined in the areas of Doctrine and Creeds, Church History, Knowledge of the Contents of Scripture, Ethics, Diaconology and Church Polity. In closed session classis judges that this candidate has sustained his examination. The deputies of Regional Synod concur. The call is approbated after

reviewing the necessary documents. In open session the chairman informs br. DeBoer of this decision. Then the chairman reads the Form of Subscription and it is subsequently signed by br. DeBoer. We sing Psalm 48:3,4 and the vice-chairman gives thanks unto the LORD in prayer. Opportunity is given to congratulate br. and sr. DeBoer.

13. Personal Question Period
Various brothers make use of question period. The Church at Attercliffe is delegated to represent

Classis at the ordination of br. D. DeBoer on February 1, 2004, D.V.

14. Adoption of acts and press release

The chairman thankfully concludes that censure ad Art 34 CO is not necessary. The clerk reads the remainder of the acts. They are adopted. The vice-chairman reads the remainder of the press release. It is approved. In closing we sing Hymn 58:1, 2 and the chairman leads us in prayer.

J. Van Vliet
(vice-chairman at that time)



Advertisements:
Announcements of Weddings, Anniversaries (with Open House) should be submitted six weeks in advance.

BIRTHS

Your hands made me and formed me, give me understanding to learn your commands. Psalm 119:73

With thankfulness to God, the giver of life, we announce the birth of our son

JAMIN RONALD

Born on October 29, 2003

Ben and Jodie Vanderzwaag

Proud grandparents are Ron and Debbie Vanderzwaag and Cor and Janine Lodder

Box 2027, Carman, MB R0G 0J0



We are thankful to the LORD for entrusting to us a covenant child, a son

JORDAN MARK

Born December 20, 2003 to

Mark and Sacha Hofsink (nee Vander Vegte)

First grandchild for Remmie and Linda Vander Vegte

Fourth grandchild for George and Susie Hofsink

923 22nd Avenue, Coaldale, AB T1M 1B5



Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts. Psalm 145:3, 4

All praise and thanks to God for making all things well! He has entrusted to us

SETH WILLEM

Born on January 13, 2004 to **Bernie and Joanneke Kottelenberg**

A little brother for Caleb, Rebecca, Josiah

13th grandchild for Rev. and Mrs. Willem den Hollander

12th grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. Ben Kottelenberg

Address: RR 2, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0

Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from Him.

Psalm 127:3

With thankfulness to the LORD, we may joyfully announce that our Heavenly Father has blessed us with *two* more covenant children

TITUS JACOB and JOEL MICAIAH

Born August 12, 2003

Rev. Julius and Karen VanSpronsen (nee VanderHorst)

Excited sisters: *Melissa, Elena*

7th and 8th grandchild to Dick and Alida VanderHorst

12th and 13th grandchild to Rev. Cornelius and Joanne

VanSpronsen

Box 2229, Smithers, BC VOJ 2N0



With great thankfulness to our heavenly Father who has given us another one of His precious gifts, we, **Leon and Sonya Hordyk** joyfully announce the birth of our fourth daughter whom we have named

EMMA FAITH

Born November 12, 2003

Proud big sisters: *Alexandra, Hannah, Kylie*

hordyks@sympatico.ca



Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15
We give thanks to our heavenly Father for another one of His miracles. He has blessed our family with another gift from Him!

CHRISTIAN PIETER JAYSSON

Christian was born on December 1, 2003, and received the sign and seal of His covenant on December 7, 2003

He is joyfully welcomed by siblings *Rianna, Tyler, Alexis*, and *John* and his thankful parents **Jay and Meta Koster**

Christian Pieter is named after Uncle Pieter Bosscher†

32nd grandchild for E. John† and Alie Bosscher, and

45th grandchild for John and Dirkje Koster

26318 Pioneer Line, RR 1, West Lorne, ON N0L 2P0