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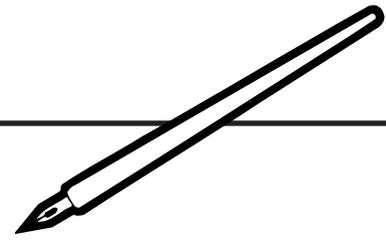


Studies in Calvin

Numbers

10:1-10

By J. De Jong



Just for the Record

Readers of *Clarion* will recall that on more than one occasion various writers, including myself, have interacted with church leaders in the Protestant Reformed churches. Repeated attempts to promote a meaningful discussion have not had promising results. Except for the occasional letter to the editor, there is little room for Canadian Reformed writers to defend their position in the *Standard Bearer*, the official publication of the Protestant Reformed churches.

I would not willingly return to these points were it not for another series of remarkable allegations published recently in *Christian Renewal* by Rev. B. Woudenberg.¹ Somehow the issue of the PRC's relationship to those whom they call "the Liberated" just does not want to go away. In fact, Rev. Woudenberg had a lengthy series of articles dealing with the 'Liberated' in the *Standard Bearer* in which many issues previously discussed in the pages of *Clarion* were again brought forward.² His remarks in *Christian Renewal* only summarize what he had said earlier in these articles.

Some aspects of Rev. Woudenberg's comments in *Christian Renewal* merit a response. I prefer to focus this time not primarily on doctrinal questions but questions of church history. If there is to be any progress in ecumenical discussions, we must at least have a proper view of what actually happened. My remarks should be seen in the light of seeking to promote understanding and unity in the relationship with the Protestant Reformed churches. In many ways we share a common history and common concerns! We can appreciate their warnings against the theory of common grace, and against the dangers of Arminianism! But to understand each other's position, we need to cover a good deal of ground, also in the exact sequence of events surrounding the early immigration.

The immigration situation

In his response to Rev. J. Tuininga of Lethbridge, Rev. Woudenberg reviews the early history of the immigration in Canada, and the effects this had on the Protestant Reformed churches. He says that the Protestant Reformed churches first welcomed the new immigrants with open arms. While Rev. H. Hoeksema had said that he did not agree with Schilder's concept of the covenant, he was willing to give Schilder and the Liberated a fair hearing. New immigrants coming from the Liberated churches in Holland were assured that they were welcome in the PRC. As Woudenberg says ". . . although we had no hesitancy about receiving their members, we were careful to inform them that, while they were free to believe about the covenant what they would, they could expect a different view to be preached from our pulpits."³

So far there is little disagreement about the course of events. There is no doubt that the early "Liberated" immigrants had a view of the covenant which differed from the one promoted by Rev. Hoeksema and Rev. Ophoff. But the PRC had other ministers with different views, and there was sufficient room for various views on the covenant. The only

requirement was that all be bound to God's Word as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity.

The letter of Prof. Holwerda

All this changed, according to Rev. Woudenberg, when a letter was written by Prof. B. Holwerda to one of the new immigrants concerning the course of action they ought to follow. As Woudenberg puts it:

But then it was discovered that Prof. Holwerda was privately advising those same immigrants ("Liberated," JD) to join the Protestant Reformed, but to ignore Hoeksema's covenant view and work their own into our churches – and even more, that certain of our ministers had privately expressed their approval of this. That, and not Schilder's ignorance of our differences was what brought about the breakdown of relationships between us and the Liberated, as well as causing a major disruption in our own denomination."⁴

I will bypass the remarks made about Prof. K. Schilder. Earlier in his article Woudenberg says that Schilder was not inclined to give definite answers on the differences between himself and Hoeksema. I would only ask where this information comes from; articles in *De Reformatie* appear to tell a different story. Yet my real concern is the letter of Holwerda. For in Woudenberg's view, this letter was the occasion for the rift between "Liberated" immigrants and the Protestant Reformed Churches. Is this true?

A look at the letter

Perhaps it should be noted first of all that Prof. Holwerda's letter was published without his consent, and in complete disregard of its stated intent. In this letter, written to brother J. Koster of Chatham, Prof. Holwerda only states that, in accordance with what he had learned from the PRC ministers Kok and De Jong, there was no binding to the opinions of the Rev. Hoeksema and the Rev. Ophoff.⁵ In the letter Holwerda expresses his disagreements with the hesitancy of the Synod of Amersfoort 1948 to enter into correspondence with the Protestant Reformed churches, and he also states, "The Protestant Reformed Church is the true church." He then expresses the hope that Liberated immigrants, having joined the PRC, might assist in a "deepening of insight." He quotes Rev. Kok who had said, "We can learn from each other." And Holwerda expresses the wish that the doctrinal riches of the Netherlands might be passed on to the Protestant Reformed churches.

It is clear from the letter itself that there is no substance to the rather coloured allegations of Rev. Woudenberg. For he reads Prof. Holwerda's letter as a distinct plan of attack against the Protestant Reformed churches, a pre-arranged strategy of infiltration.⁶ But that is entirely misconstrued, for Holwerda promoted *mutual* upbuilding and *mutual* correction. He wanted to give equal room to both views, and so let matters resolve themselves through process of learning, study, debate and interaction. If necessary, this

would lead to a new ecclesiastical consensus through discussion at the various ecclesiastical assemblies – although it should be noted that Holwerda himself does not mention this possibility. Holwerda simply followed the norms of Scripture regarding the gathering of the church as applied to the concrete situation facing the immigrants.

The later history

Was this letter the occasion for the rift? That appears to me as an inaccurate rendition of the facts. For this advice of Holwerda was followed by the early immigrants both in the Hamilton and in the Chatham area. Chatham was first instituted as a Protestant Reformed Church, and Hamilton also opened its pulpit to ministers from the Protestant Reformed Church. Much appreciation was expressed for PRC workers such as Rev. Cammenga and Rev. Petter. Thus, while the immigrants did not want to adopt the PRC view of the covenant they remained open to fellowship with these churches, and willingly accepted PRC ministers.

How did the rift come? It came through the adoption of the infamous *Declaration of Principles* by the PRC Synod of 1951. Before that time, that is, for two years(!) after the letter of Prof. Holwerda, there was ongoing fellowship with the PRC. Only when the Synod adopted the *Declaration* as a binding statement for the institution of new churches, only then did the breach come! At this point Chatham could no longer remain in the fellowship of PRC churches. The rift came not from a personal letter, but from the very *public Declaration of Principles*.⁷

If the thesis of Rev. Woudenberg was correct, there would not have been a two-year interval before the schism with the Protestant Reformed Churches actually took place. If the personal and private letter of Prof. Holwerda had the kind of effects as suggested by Rev. Woudenberg the rift would have taken place immediately, or at least shortly after the letter itself was written. Not only do we have the clear mark of the two year interval, we also have the official declaration of the consistory of Chatham confirming the exact reasons for their secession.

I write these lines not to needlessly provoke conflicts or to open old wounds. My only point is: should we not first be sure of the *facts*? We can always debate the issues, but the sequence of events should not be hopelessly skewed and misrepresented in favour of vindicating our theological

perspectives on the covenant. How can we ever make progress in Reformed ecumenicity if we do not accurately recount the past?

Even a neutral reader can see that the Hoeksema – Ophoff manoeuvres in 1949 and 1950 were an overblown and highly charged reactionary attempt to shore up Hoeksema's view of the covenant. Had the brothers been more cautious and less stringent in their approach, they would not have lost so many people to the CRC and the Canadian Reformed churches.

Prof. K. Schilder repeatedly said to Rev. Hoeksema: we have no special view of the covenant. Indeed, there were many different views on the covenant going right back to the early days of the Secession. It is true that the Liberation produced a crystallization of Reformed understanding regarding the covenant. But no one view was ever adopted as confessionally binding. In fact "Liberated" means that binding to one particular view on the covenant was explicitly rejected.

Since we have so much in common, we can only strive to keep channels of discussion open, and hope and pray that through continued study, prayer and dialogue, we may witness the growing unity of those who according to the norms of the Word belong together in the Lord.

¹This concerns a response of Rev. Woudenberg to Rev. Jelle Tuininga of Lethbridge, see *Christian Renewal* October 13, 1995, p. 3 (Reader's Forum). The same article appeared in *The Standard Bearer*, Vol. 72, No. 4, (Nov. 15, 1995), 89-91

²I refer to the series of articles "Taking Heed to Doctrine" as published intermittently in the *Standard Bearer* from May 1992 on.

³*Christian Renewal*, October 23, 1995, page 3.

⁴*Ibid.*, 3

⁵The text of the original letter can be found in *The Standard Bearer* Vol. 25, # 20, (Aug 1, 1949), p. 469. Rev. Woudenberg gives a (rather poor) translation of the same in *The Standard Bearer* Vol. 68, #15, (May 1, 1992), 355-356.⁶This is clear from what he wrote in 1992: "... Prof. Holwerda, rather than contacting our churches openly and discussing our differences, was secretly instructing the immigrants to infiltrate our churches and take them over for their view." *The Standard Bearer*, Vol 68, No. 15 (May 1, 1992) 356. Nothing of this can be found in Holwerda's letter.

⁷The decision of the consistory of Chatham is found in *De Reformatie* Vol 27, No. 9 (December 1, 1951), 79. The decision and further elucidation is signed by the brothers J. Koster, president, and J. Van Dieren, clerk. For more on the content of the Declaration of Principles and the decision of the consistory of Chatham, see W.W.J. VanOene, *Inheritance Preserved. The Canadian Reformed Churches in Historical Perspective* (Premier, Winnipeg, 1975), 64-67. C



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MEDITATION

By H.J.J. Feenstra

BE WISE WITH WISDOM

Originally published as
Wees wijs met de wijsheid,
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Ermelo 1989
Translated by T.M.P. VanderVen

Introduction

The purpose of these meditations is to make the reader enthusiastic for the book of Proverbs, that is, for wisdom which is the knowledge of the art of living contained in these proverbs.

Proverbs starts with an elaborate introduction: the first nine chapters. These chapters form a demanding set of warm-up exercise for apprentices in the study of wisdom. The meditations which will appear on the pages of *Clarion* for the next while will deal more or less with these chapters.

More than once it will become clear that the Bible contains much more wisdom than is found in Proverbs. In particular this will be the case when we study a few main themes in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. After all, Proverbs may be a climax, but it is certainly not the endpoint in our journey through the land of Biblical wisdom.

Remembering Proverbs 1:4-5, these meditations are written for young and old, and are intended for personal Bible study as well as for use by study societies. Perhaps they also may be useful in more advanced stages in the work of evangelism.

Under the heading *From Scripture*, various Bible passages will be mentioned that have been dealt with or quoted in the preceding section, or can function as additional study material. This arrangement has been chosen to make the text as easily readable as possible.

WHAT IS WISDOM?

A first exploration

Wisdom – a desirable matter

You have a problem and you do not know what to do about it. Or you have an important choice to make and somehow you must reach a decision. What should you do? How do you know what is right?

What a great good it is in such circumstances to be able to go to someone for advice, to go to a wise man who can help you map out your problem properly and find a thoughtful answer. What support can be given by a wise woman who can show you within what framework and on what grounds you can make your choice. Such help allows you to breathe again, to find again some room around you. You seem to have regained control and now you see through things. You are not being lived but you live yourself, consciously. You know what you are doing.

It is a great pleasure to have contact with wise people. Such contact always enriches you. Those people have insight; they see through things; they do

not let themselves be deceived easily. Such people make you jealous; you would wish to be like them.

That is indeed possible because you can learn to be wise! Wisdom can be practised; you can grow in it, although we will not all achieve the same level or depth. Variations will remain.

However, one thing ought to be abundantly clear: wisdom is not something that is quite exceptional, a commodity which you can find only in people who have a talent for it. Wisdom is not a matter of genes or character.

Wisdom is meant for all; it is the common good of all Christians because they live according to the Bible, according to the holy Scriptures which instruct, reprove, correct, and educate. These Scriptures change a man into the man of God, into the person who knows where he comes from, why he exists, and what is important in this world. Everyone who listens to God's revelation begins to walk along the road of wisdom.

Every christian who knows after Whom he has been named, knows that his LORD has been made our Wisdom. Considering this, you can only conclude that much philosophy – perhaps very clever indeed – is nothing but secularized wisdom; it is not true, genuine wisdom.

From Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Ephesians 1:17

1 Corinthians 1:30 **C**

What's inside?

Those of you who read the *Standard Bearer* and/or *Christian Renewal* will have sensed that a certain Protestant Reformed Church minister has been presenting a somewhat revised history of what transpired between their churches and some of our early immigrants. Dr. J. De Jong sets the record straight in his editorial.

In "The Spirit in Samaria and Caesarea," Dr. Hans Boersma, by a careful study of Acts 8-11, shows the contemporary charismatic position of "Spirit baptism" as a second blessing in addition to the gift of faith to be scripturally unfounded.

Dr. N.H. Gootjes reviews a book of speeches about aspects of the life and work of John Calvin. In the next issue of *Clarion*, Dr. Gootjes will make some further comments about one speech which deals with Calvin's view of the inspiration of Holy Scripture.

In order to train up our youngsters well equipped to live and work in the world, it is important that we have consistently Reformed Christian schools. And so we publish, with joy, the story of the opening of such a school in Attercliffe.

In this issue we are also pleased to begin publishing as meditations Rev. H.J.J. Feenstra's *Be Wise With Wisdom* – meditations on the first nine chapters of the Book of Proverbs. Rev. Feenstra is a minister of one of our Dutch sister churches. Happy reading!

GvP

The Spirit in Samaria and Caesarea

Theological reflections on the charismatic movement²

By J. Boersma

All believers have received the Holy Spirit. All believers are baptized with the Holy Spirit. This is the clear teaching of the apostle Paul. This teaching forms the solid bedrock for the unity of the church. The church is not divided between those who have and those who have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit. These were the conclusions arrived at last time. This position does raise a number of questions, however, questions that charismatics will be quick to point out. How are we supposed to square the narratives in Acts with the above position? If it is really true that Paul regards Spirit baptism not as a second blessing but as the initial one-time gift of the Holy Spirit, does this not conflict with the book of Acts? Does Luke's account not connect Spirit baptism with the event of Pentecost, rather than with regeneration? Moreover, is it not true that Spirit baptism in Acts usually follows *after* faith? The gift of the Holy Spirit seems to be a second blessing there.

"To the ends of the earth"

The first instance where Spirit baptism seems to be a second stage that *follows* faith is in chapter 8 in connection with a city in Samaria. Here the Holy Spirit appears to be given to people who are already believers. Does this not indicate that the gift of the Holy Spirit is a second blessing? In answering this question, the place of this particular event within the book of Acts may not be ignored. Already in chapter 1:7, the ascending Lord says to His disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." This verse contains the program for the remainder of the book. Throughout Acts the gospel of the kingdom of God spreads further: from

Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. In the conclusion of the book, Paul is in Rome ("the ends of the earth"). Then salvation is sent to the Gentiles, and Paul preaches the kingdom of God boldly and without hindrance (28:28,31).¹

Before arriving at this stage, Luke first describes how the Holy Spirit was poured out in Jerusalem, and how three thousand came to faith through the preaching of Peter (Acts 2). Luke then continues to describe how the gospel took a foothold in Jerusalem (Acts 3-7). In the beginning of Acts 8 God's Word informs us how "a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria" (8:1). By means of a persecution, the risen Lord brought to further fulfilment His promise which He had made when he ascended. The kingdom of God reached its second phase: Judea and Samaria. It is at this point that we read the story of Philip's mission work among the Samaritans. His work went accompanied with the "attestation" of signs. Through Philip's preaching people came to faith, so that they were baptized. Also Simon the Sorcerer "believed and was baptized" (8:12-13).

Philip in Samaria

At this point Peter and John went down to see what was going on in Samaria. The reason can hardly be that the apostles did not trust what Philip was doing.² After all, Philip was one of the seven who were "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3). Rather, Peter and John went "when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God" (8:14). The apostles were obviously aware that a critical stage in the spread of the gospel of God's kingdom had now been reached: the gospel had gone from

Jerusalem to Samaria. At this point, a delegation from the apostles themselves came from Jerusalem to pray for the Samaritans and to lay their hands on them, so that they might receive the Holy Spirit (8:15-17).

Had the Samaritans really come to faith prior to the apostle's arrival in Samaria? Many, often including Reformed scholars, do not think so. After all, the Samaritans were not the only ones who had come to faith and who had been baptized. Simon the Sorcerer had also come to faith. He had also been baptized (8:13). When he wanted to buy the ability to give the Spirit by the laying on of hands, however, it became clear that he was not a true believer at all (8:19,21).³ Moreover, the same Samaritans who first gave all their attention to Simon now gave exactly the same kind of attention to Philip. Some draw from this the conclusion that the Samaritans' attention to Philip was not an indication of true faith.⁴ The Samaritans displayed the same kind of superficial mass hysteria toward Philip as they had previously shown toward Simon the Sorcerer. This means that only after the apostles laid their hands on them did they receive the Spirit and so came to true faith.⁵

However, there are a number of problems with this position.⁶ In the first place, the arguments used to disqualify the faith of the Samaritans are not as strong as they may perhaps seem. The similarity between the description of Simon's "faith" and the faith of the Samaritans proves nothing. Some of this vocabulary is used not just for the Samaritans and for Simon, but also for Lydia who certainly did have true faith.⁷ In addition, the similarity in description may simply mean that it seemed that Simon the Sorcerer had the same true faith which the other Samaritans did have. As it turned out,

this initially favourable impression of Simon's faith subsequently appeared to be unwarranted. Furthermore, if Philip had the Samaritans baptized, do we really have to suppose that he was wrong in doing so? The text gives no indication that this is the case. Finally, while some exegetes are of the opinion that the Samaritans received faith after the apostles placed their hands on them, this makes the role of this symbolic act too important. Faith came through the preaching of the Word by Philip, rather than by the outward laying on of hands.

Extension of Pentecost

The conclusion must be, therefore, that the Samaritans believed before being baptized with the Holy Spirit. This may seem like a significant concession to the charismatic position. Does Reformed theology have to be embarrassed by such a separation between faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit? Does it indicate that Spirit baptism is a second gift, after all? Again, the structure of the book of Acts must be kept in mind. What is happening here is that the kingdom of God now extends even to the Samaritans. To be sure, they already had faith. This means that they had already experienced the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. But then again, so had the 120 who were baptized with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. As a matter of fact, throughout the period of the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was already at work in the hearts of all true believers. In other words, the question concerning the time difference between faith and Spirit baptism is a question not only when the gospel spreads to the wider circle of the Samaritans in Acts 8. It is a question which the events of Pentecost themselves raise. What is happening in Acts 8, is an extension of Pentecost from the circle of Jerusalem to the circle of Samaria.⁸ There is an expansion, a transition, from the first circle to the second. This also explains the involvement of the apostles in the delegation of Peter and John. The apostles themselves, as commissioned by Christ, had the task to proclaim the gospel (Acts 1:8). None of the Jewish believers would ever be able to say that the church outside Judea lacked the apostolic foundation. The laying on of hands indicates the apostolic authority, which ulti-

mately is the authority of the ascended Christ.⁹

Cornelius in Caesarea

A similar breakthrough in the spread of the kingdom of God may be noted in the story about the Roman centurion, Cornelius (Acts 10-11). Although a Roman, Cornelius had started to follow the Jewish religious way of life. He and his family were "devout and God-fearing" (10:2,22,35).¹⁰ He prayed to God and gave alms to the poor (10:2,4). These appear to be indications that Cornelius, just as the Old Testament saints, had faith. Before visiting Cornelius at Caesarea, Peter was already shown in a vision that the distinction between clean and unclean food had disappeared (10:9-16). The next day he came to Cornelius' house. Peter appears to have understood the vision, for he said to the people present: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean" (10:28). Peter now realized "how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right" (10:34-35). Again, therefore, the context is one in which the kingdom of God extended to another circle: from the circle of Jerusalem (Acts 2), to that of Judea and Samaria (Acts 8), now to the Gentiles.¹¹ While Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his family and friends, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. After receiving the Holy Spirit, they were baptized (10:47-48).¹² A number of times, Peter expressed that this was similar to what happened on the day of Pentecost (10:47; 11:15,17).¹³

Is there a time difference here between faith and baptism on the one hand, and the gift of the Holy Spirit on the other hand? Cornelius was already a God-fearer, and the Lord took note of his life-style. Cornelius had been tied to the Old Testament form of worship as he saw it among the Jews. However, like the Jews on the day of Pentecost, he still had not been transferred from this tie to the Old Testament worship of God to a connection with the risen and ascended Lord. It must be concluded that there is, in a sense, a separation between faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit, both in the case of the Samaritans and in the case of Cor-

nelius. To be sure, there is a slight difference between the two events. While there was a lack of apostolic presence in Samaria, there is no such lack in Caesarea. Peter is immediately there. No delegation from Jerusalem is necessary this time. If anybody wanted to argue that the Gentiles did not really share in the blessings of the gospel, the apostle Peter himself was there to rebut the charge. This is precisely what he did when, upon his return in Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him for eating with uncircumcised men (11:2-3). After Peter explained what happened, there were no further objections. Instead they said: "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life" (11:18).

The following conclusions may be drawn from the above:

- (1) In both cases (Acts 8 and 10), there was a widening of the circle of the kingdom of God: in the former case to Samaria, and in the latter case to the Gentiles.
- (2) The Samaritans needed the apostolic presence before receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. In this way, they were properly incorporated into the church of the ascended Lord, built on the apostolic foundation. This was not necessary in the case of Cornelius' household, where the apostle Peter himself was immediately present.
- (3) Cornelius' household – like the Jews on the day of Pentecost – had to be transferred from the Old Testament dispensation to the New Testament dispensation of the Spirit of the ascended Lord.

Considering these very specific salvation-historical circumstances it can hardly be argued that the course of events in Samaria and Caesarea is still normative for the church today. These two events, therefore, do not form an argument for two distinct blessings of the Holy Spirit. A provisional answer to the two questions raised at the beginning of the previous article can now be given. Is Spirit baptism a second blessing, in addition to the gift of faith? If it is, is it still normative today? Spirit baptism is a second blessing only in a very limited sense. It is additional in the salvation-historical sense of the word. It is an additional gift only where faith still had to be transferred from the old to the new dispensation. There it would be a gift of the ascended Lord. There it would be tied to the apostolic founda-

tion. There the gospel of the kingdom of God would spread from the one religio-geographical circle to the next. These particular transitional circumstances no longer pertain today. Considering this very limited sense in which Spirit baptism was a second blessing, the evidence thus far points in the direction that it is no second blessing for which we must look today.

¹Acts 13:47 makes clear that the phrase, “the ends of the earth,” goes back to Isaiah (11:12; 24:16; 41:5; 42:10; 48:20; 49:6). In Isaiah the phrase is used in connection with the return from the Babylonian exile. The eschatological implications of these prophecies demonstrate that when Luke speaks of “the ends of the earth” this ultimately reaches farther than the book of Acts.

²Cf. L. Floor’s comment: “We don’t get the impression that this apostolic visit from Jerusalem was necessary to check up on Philip’s work” (*De doop met de Heilige Geest* [Kampen: Kok, 1982], p. 86). Here, as well as elsewhere in this series, I render Dutch and German quotations in translation only.

³Luke says about Simon that he believed and was baptized (*episteusen kai baptisteis*) after exactly the same is said about the other Samaritans (*episteusan . . . ebaptizonto*).

⁴Luke uses the verb “pay attention (*prosechō*)” in 8:6 as well as in 8:10.

⁵Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in relation to Pentecostalism today* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970], pp. 63-68; J.P. Versteeg, “De doop volgens het Nieuwe

Testament,” in *Rondom de doopvont: Leer en gebruik van de heilige doop in het Nieuwe Testament en in de geschiedenis van de westerse kerk*, ed. W. van ‘t Spijker, et al. (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1983), pp. 50-51.

⁶For the position that the faith of the Samaritans was true faith, see L. Floor, *De doop met de Heilige Geest*, pp. 84-93; Michael Green, *Baptism: Its Purpose, Practice and Power* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987), pp. 131-32; J. Van Bruggen, “Baptism with the Holy Spirit,” in *Proceedings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches, June 12-28, 1989* [Winnipeg: Premier, n.d.], pp. 197-98; A.N. Hendriks, *Die alles in allen volmaakt: Een bundel praktisch-theologische opstellen* (Haarlem: AcaMedia, 1990), pp. 29-31; J.W. Maris, *Geloof en ervaring: Van Wesley tot de pinksterbeweging* [Leiden: Groen, 1992], pp. 226-28. Stott goes as far as to say: “There can be little, if any doubt that they were genuine believers; no hint is given that their response had been defective” (*Baptism and Fullness*, 2nd ed. [London: Inter-Varsity, 1975], p. 32).

⁷The verb “to pay attention” (*prosechō*), used in 8:6 and 8:10, is also used of Lydia in 16:14.

⁸George Eldon Ladd goes as far as to say that the gift of the Spirit to the Samaritans and to Cornelius “are not a repetition of the pentecostal experience but its extension beyond the circle of Jewish believers, first to the Samaritans and then to the Gentiles. We may say that there is a Jewish Pentecost, a Samaritan Pentecost, and a Gentile Pentecost” (*A Theology of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], p.

346). Cf. Floor, *De doop met de Heilige Geest*, p. 84.

⁹In Acts 6:6, the apostles also prayed and laid their hands on the seven chosen to alleviate their task. Again, in 19:6, Paul placed his hands on the Ephesian disciples, so that they received the Holy Spirit.

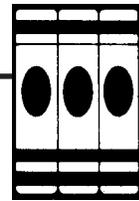
¹⁰“Godfearers” were Gentiles who had been attracted by the moral and religious values of the Jews but had not yet officially become proselytes. This meant that they were not circumcised (cf. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], p. 436).

¹¹Cf. 10:45: “The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.” Also, cf. 11:1: “The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.”

¹²This is different from the events in Samaria, where the believers were baptized under the auspices of Philip, before they received the Holy Spirit.

¹³Cf. Floor, *De doop met de Heilige Geest*, pp. 93-94. To me it does not appear to be correct when N.H. Gootjes suggests that Peter does not call this event in Caesarea a “baptism with the Holy Spirit” (“De doop met de Heilige Geest en de betekenis van Pinksteren” in *Radix* 13 [1987] 148). It is true that Peter is reminded here of Jesus’ words about *Pentecost*. But this does not limit Peter’s comment to Pentecost alone. It is precisely his point that there are great similarities between the events in Caesarea and those on the day of Pentecost, so that also in the former case there is a baptism with the Holy Spirit. 





Studies in Calvin

W.H. Neuser, ed. *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor: Calvin as Confessor of Holy Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994. (277 pages, \$ 24.99 US).

No one doubts that Calvin, who lived more than four hundred years ago (1509-1564), is still important today. His importance can be illustrated by the ongoing Calvin research. There are regional Calvin conferences, and once every four years an International Congress on Calvin Research meets. To date, five congresses have been held, most recently in Edinburgh, 1994. The papers of that Congress have not yet been published. However, a book containing the papers of the previous Congress, held in Grand Rapids, 1990, was sent to us for review. It contains not just the text of the main speeches but also summaries of papers presented at seminars.

The title of the book could give the impression that Calvin's doctrine of Scripture is the focal point of the articles. However, only one speech is devoted particularly to Calvin's doctrine of Scripture, namely, W.H. Neuser's discussion of Calvin's understanding of Holy Scripture. In addition, E.A. De Boer, now a minister of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated), introduces his study on Calvin's eschatology, based on Calvin's lectures and sermons on Ezekiel. Most speeches, however, deal with some aspect of Calvin's life or theology.

It is remarkable that so much attention is devoted to the early Calvin. H.A. Oberman presented an impressive study on the development of Calvin, closely connecting it with tendencies in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. Calvin was reticent to speak about his own life but in the introduction to his commentary on the Psalms he stated that God through a sudden conversion had brought him to submission. Ober-

man discusses this expression (115) and, later on, makes it more concrete:

Calvin was at once driven by the ever present awareness (meditation!) of the threat of drowning in the abyss of death, devil, and hell, and drawn by a deep-seated trust in the promise of God's saving intervention. To him applies not the expression "come hell or high water;" the diabolical abyss is hell and high water. Yet the mercy of God subdues the power of the Beast, so forcefully formulated in the outcry: May the abyss of my sin be drowned into the abyss of Your mercy. (140)

Two more articles discuss the early ministry of Calvin. R. Hörcsik deals with Calvin's first period in Geneva (1536-1538) and C. Augustijn discusses Calvin's stay in Strasbourg (1538-1541). These articles show how Calvin slowly, and not without making mistakes, became the reformer of Geneva. Calvin becomes more real when you see him trying to find his way to organize reformed church life.

W.J. Bouwsma published his controversial psychological approach to Calvin in 1988, two years before this Congress was held. Bouwsma portrays Calvin as a human being driven by terror, since he united in himself adventurous humanism and conservative scholasticism. It is indicative of the impact of Bouwsma's approach that it was decided to devote a special seminar session to it (209ff.). Moreover, several papers dealt with this issue. Notably Oberman gave much insight by providing the theological background for some expressions Bouwsma used (127-140).

The articles on Calvin's theology deal, among other topics, with his covenant view (J.B. Torrance), his view on Scripture (W.H. Neuser), the image of God (L. Anderson), his catechisms (N. Watanabe and A.D. Pont), the marriage laws of Geneva (J.R. Watt), and

the practical syllogism (K.W. Yu). R.C. Gamble summarizes the current state of Calvin research. It is impossible to go into all of these articles. In the next issue I hope to come back to Neuser's study of Calvin's view on Scripture. Here I would like to make a remark on some of the other studies.

J.B. Torrance, dealing with covenant theology, asks the question whether Calvin was a federal theologian (16). His article presents much information about federal theology in the 16th Century but is disappointing in the way it fails to answer Torrance's own question. It is mentioned that Calvin frequently used the term *covenant*, particularly in connection with the relation between the Old and New Testament and with baptism and the Lord's Supper (18). Since the article does not discuss these issues, however, it fails to help us understand Calvin's view on the covenant.

J.A. De Jong follows a now popular trend in discussing Calvin's spirituality. He investigates Calvin's commentary on the Psalms to get insight into Calvin's faith life. In his view, the Psalms are important for Calvin as a "mirror of his soul." De Jong brings out how Calvin emphasizes trust in God's promises, confident prayer, and even the call on God to punish his enemies. Calvin knows of the conflict between fear of God and trust in God and he is aware of the importance of corporate worship for the believer. De Jong uses this material to oppose the image of Calvin as cold and hard. The Commentary on the Psalms shows him as an experiential believer of considerable depth and warmth (4).

This is an interesting approach to Calvin's commentary on the Psalms. De Jong is, in my opinion, justified in his defense of Calvin's living faith. That his faith was heartfelt and not distant or rigid is easily seen in his letters, and in the Introduction to his Commentary to the Psalms. I wonder, however, whether

this can be proven from Calvin's comments on the Psalms. De Jong says often that the Psalms were important to Calvin as a mirror of *his* soul (see p. 2). Calvin, however, speaks here about the life of believers in general:

I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, 'An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul'; for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated.

It is true that Calvin compares himself with David, and in this connection speaks of "the small measure of experience which I have had by the conflict with which the Lord has exercised me" and that Calvin goes on to apply events from the Psalms to his own life.¹ But the explanation itself indicates that Calvin connects the Psalms with the lives of the believers, as many quotations in De Jong's article indicate. Calvin retains here his reticence; he is not so much discussing himself as well as the lives of every believer. I disagree with the conclusion of De Jong: "The Psalms commentary is primarily the anatomy of Calvin's soul" (14).

Two articles are devoted to the catechisms Calvin wrote for Geneva. N. Wanatabe concentrates on the differences between them. The first (1538) is in the form of positive explanation, the second (1541) presents the material in the form of questions and answers. In the first, the order is Law, Creed and Prayer, while in the second the Creed is discussed before Law and Prayer (225). Our Heidelberg Catechism follows the second Catechism of Calvin. Wanatabe does not mention that the second is much larger than the first. A translation of the later catechism stretches out over almost fifty full pages.² Small wonder that the children used a shortened extract for profession of faith, as A.D. Pont states (238). Noteworthy is his statement on profession of faith in Calvin's Geneva: "The test was not in the first place a test of personal faith but of whether everyone accepted the confession of the church" (238).

I am not so sure that this formulation is felicitous. Would Calvin accept a dilemma between personal faith and accepting the confession of the church? His catechism, however, often asks for belief in a doctrine. To give only one example, the discussion of God's creation and providence is followed by this question and answer:

What benefit accrues to you from the knowledge of this? Very much.



For it would go ill with us, if anything were permitted wicked men and devils without the will of God; then our minds could never be tranquil, for thinking ourselves exposed to their pleasure. Only then do we safely rest when we know them to be curbed by the will of God and, as it were, held in confinement, so that they cannot do anything but by his permission, especially since God himself undertakes to be our guardian and the captain of our salvation.³

The Catechism of Geneva does require personal faith, just like our own Heidelberg Catechism. On the other hand, Pont's brief discussion⁴ does show that profession meant agreement with the doctrine of the church. Calvin did not go for an abbreviated Gospel; his catechisms show an intention to keep the church together on the basis of the whole doctrine of salvation.

In conclusion, this book leaves no doubt concerning the importance of Calvin. Neglecting Calvin will be to the detriment of the Reformed church. The temptation is real, however, to treat a genius like Calvin as if he were a meteorite fallen from the skies. One of the things that can be learned from the studies in this book is that Calvin should be seen in the context of his time and the discussions of his time.

Calvin himself had to grow and develop. It also becomes clear that Calvin was a child of his time, addressing the situation of his time and discussing issues with the people of his time.

Reading this book, however, also does leave one with the question whether everything Calvin ever wrote and said was equally important. The studies reach out into the remote corners of Calvin's life and work, and hardly ever deal with his *Institutes*. Calvin, however, laboured over his *Institutes* all his life, and as he grew in understanding, updated it. He wanted to be known, first of all, by this book. We should not, through the proliferation of studies on every possible aspect of Calvin, lose sight of his main works, through which he intended to be known.

¹See J. Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (tr. J. Anderson; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) xxxix-xlviii.

²See J.K.S. Reid, *Calvin: Theological Treatises* (The Library of Christian Classics, XXII; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, n.d.) 91-139.

³Calvin: *Theological Treatises*, 94.

⁴Pont has elaborated on this issue in an article in the Afrikaans language: "Kategese, Kategismusse en die belydenis van geloof in Geneva in die dae van Calvyn" in *Herformde Teologiese Studies*, vol 42,2 (1991), 431-441.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I would like to take a moment to express my appreciation to the Editors for their excellent magazine. The content is thoroughly Reformed and pertinent to us although we are from the Independent churches. (I am especially thankful for your handling and reporting of what is going on in our churches). We pray for the unity of our two denominations the Lord willing.

Could you please send me the Internet Address of REFNET? I am very interested in being able to converse with others about Reformed Doctrine, etc. I've tried this in CompuServe's Religion section, but am greeted with a degree of exasperation by others. It seems they do not like Calvinists very much. They tell me we are too radical. Most contributors in the Christianity section believe Christ will accept any one who says they "believe" even though what they believe is contrary to what Scripture clearly says. I would appreciate any help you may be able to give me.

In His Service,

Norman Leenstra
Smithville, ON

Dear Editor:

Re: the article by Rev. De Jong, "The end of uniformity?"

I am pleased that from a younger generation (I am only 73) a voice is heard in recognition of the tremendous change in the last 50 years.

In changing from manual labour to an age of an almost total computerization of life, many seniors have difficulty coping. Although we do not want to persistently hang on to the past, the fast-paced transition is often not very easy.

This also has a great bearing on the Bible translations, for even the NIV is not the only one.

Among the immigrants in our churches are several who were educated in the English language and for whom it was common, for instance in the 1930s, to use *Thee* and *Thou* in addressing God. For myself, it has always had a meaning of reverence over against *you* and *yours*, which was regarded as *jij* and *jou* – an irreverent use, at least in reference to God.

The RSV was in my view acceptable, as it still used *Thee* and *Thou* in reference to God; but the last Synod

suddenly declared it useless and without difference in the meaning and use of it.

Does that mean that no professor or minister had ever come to that conclusion, and that our *Book of Praise* could be translated accordingly? A tremendous amount of work was involved in it, and all for nought?

Did we not learn that *God's Woord houdt stand in eeuwigheid, en zal geen duimbreed wijken*? And do we need to translate to make it more easily acceptable, like those who use the paraphrase instead of the Bible at table reading because it is easier to understand?

As the form for *you* and *yours* has apparently been in use for quite awhile in other churches, have our College teachers been so backward in their way of thinking as not to be aware of it? I simply do not believe this. Is not our first task to seek the honour of God, and to teach our offspring the same as was commanded by God Himself to the Israelites, regardless of what other denominations are doing?

If we believe that our church, as church of Christ, is a congregation which pursues to attempt to be the most pure revelation of the body of Christ in our worship, then we have the obligation from local church up to the General Synod (and in that order!) to walk according to God's revelation in His Word.

Are there not more important matters to deal with? E.g., many of us have lost contact with relatives overseas and here. We cannot converse anymore about the matters so dear to our hearts because we are not congregating together anymore. The communion of saints is lost and families are falling apart. One can avoid this by simply not speaking about these things anymore. If this is done for the sake of peace of mind on both sides, then something is definitely wrong, but often this advice is given.

Are we supposed to be silent when, e.g., the Synodicals continue to sail under our flag, or to overlook the schism of 1967?

Many questions arise. It would be religiously more profitable for a Synod to find a solution for those problems than to waste time and effort on unnecessary translations.

Yours in Christ,

br. H.J. Baker,
Coaldale

Dear Editor:

"In the editorial of December 1 ("The End of Uniformity?") Dr. J. De Jong criticizes the editors of the NIV for adhering to the principle of "accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the biblical writers." He alleges that to translate the meaning of the text to a *new* principle, one he find "questionable, to say the least." Truth bides me remind him and the readers of *Clarion* that this principle is not new, and that the translators of the NIV are in good company. Let me cite but two precedents.

John Purvey, the successor of John Wycliffe and the main contributor to the Wycliffite Bible read throughout England until the 16th century, advises translators "to translate after the sentence [i.e., "meaning"] and not only after the words, so that the sentence be as open [i.e., "plain"], or opener, in English as in Latin; and go not far from the letter; . . . let the sentence be ever whole and open, for words ought to serve to the intent and sentence, or else the words be superfluous and false."

More than a century later, Martin Luther, in a letter entitled "Defence of the Translation of the Psalms," writes the following about rendering the words and thoughts of Scripture in German: "[the translator] must see to it – one he understands the Hebrew author – that he concentrates on the sense of the text. . . . Once he has the German words to serve the purpose, let him drop the Hebrew words and express the meaning freely in the best German he knows."

The editors of the Authorized ("King James") Version, in defending their practice of using a variety of synonyms for the same terms in the original text, pose these questions to those who would translate only the very words of Scripture: ". . . is the kingdom of God become words or syllables? Why should we be in bondage to them, if we may be free? Use one precisely when we may use another no less fit as commodiously?"

The aim of a translator is to render accurately the thoughts in Scripture as well as the words which convey them; anyone wishing to discredit the NIV must *demonstrate* that the translators have not achieved the stated goal.

R. Faber
Fredericton, NB



Press Release of Regional Synod-West, December 5, 1995 in the Langley Canadian Reformed Church building.

Article 1. Opening by the convening church.

On behalf of the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley Rev. J. Visscher calls the meeting to order. We sing Psalm 68: 1,2. Rev. J. Visscher leads us in prayer after having read from God's Word Psalm 89:1-18.

Article 2. Examination of Credentials

The examination of credentials shows that all brothers are delegated as primi delegates except br. H.A. Berends, who attends as alternate delegate.

Article 3. Constitution of Synod

The Synod is constituted and the following officers are elected.

Chairman: G. Ph. van Popta

Vice-chairman: J. Huijgen

Clerk: J. Moesker

Article 4. Adoption of the Agenda

The adoption of the agenda shows that a report about the treasury must be added. Then the agenda is adopted as presented.

Article 5. Correspondence received.

The Synod goes in closed session for the dealing with two appeals.

Article 6. Reports

There is one report, namely that of the auditor of the treasury of Regional Synod. The report is accepted with gratitude and the treasurer of Regional Synod is discharged for the book year November 1, 1994 through to October 31, 1995.

Article 7. Appointments

Regional Synod make the following appointments

- 1) Br. H.A. Lubbers as treasurer
- 2) The church at Edmonton-Providence as Archive Church.
- 3) The church at Edmonton-Immanuel as Archive Inspecting Church

4) As deputies ad Article 48 C.O. for the Classis Alberta-Manitoba P.K.A. DeBoer and J.D. Wielenga as alternates:

E.J. Tiggelaar and R. Aasman for the Classis Pacific

C. VanSpronsen and J. Visscher as alternates:

E. Kampen and J. Moesker

Article 8. Arrangements for the next Regional Synod

The convening church for the next Regional Synod is the church at Neerlandia. Suggested Date: December 3, 1996, D.V.

Article 9. Question Period is held.

No one makes use of it. Except the chairman of the just appointed convening church who asks advice what to do in case of possible postponement. The decision of Regional Synod 1992 Cloverdale was read.

Article 10. Censure ad. Article 44 C.O.

Censure does not have to be exercised.

Article 11. Adoption of Acts

Rev. J. Moesker, the clerk, read the Acts prepared by him. Regional Synod accepts his work. Thereby the Acts of Regional Synod-West at Langley 1995 have become a fact.

Article 12. Approval of Press Release

The Press Release was approved.

Article 13. Closing

Rev. G. Ph. van Popta, as chairman, invites us to sing Psalm 122: 2,3 and then closes this meeting with prayer.

For Regional Synod-West 1995
Rev. J. Huijgen

PRESS RELEASE of Classis Alberta/Manitoba, Oct 17/18 and reconvened on Dec 18/19, 1995 in the building of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church, Edmonton, AB.

At the reconvening of Classis on Dec. 18 several primi delegates were

replaced by their alternates among whom was Elder H. Lubbers from Coaldale who replaced Rev. J.D. Wielenga because of illness.

1. OPENING. At 8:00 pm, on behalf of the convening church at Edmonton-Immanuel Elder L. Bol calls the meeting to order. He opens the meeting in a Christian manner. He welcomes the delegates and visitors. A special welcome is extended to Rev. G.A. Snip who is present to his first Classis in this region. In Aug 95 he was installed as minister of the Church of Edmonton-Immanuel. Elder Bol mentions that the church at Calgary is now vacant since Rev. R.A. Schouten left for Abbotsford, BC. Cand. J. Poppe declined the call to fill this vacancy. Rev. J. Moesker also declined their call. The Church of Edmonton-Providence is thanked for hosting this Classis.
2. CREDENTIALS. The delegates of the convening church check the credentials. They are reported to be in good order. All churches are properly represented. There are seven instructions. By instruction the churches at Barrhead, Coaldale and Taber give notice that they have not yet finalized the ratification process of the Acts of General Synod 1995 including Article 115 regarding appeals of the admittance of the American Reformed Church at Denver in the federation of Canadian and American Reformed Churches. This means that at the moment their position is unchanged toward the church at Denver and its inclusion in our federation of churches.
3. CLASSIS IS CONSTITUTED. The following officers are appointed: Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, chairman; Rev. K. Jonker, vice-chairman; Rev. W.B. Slomp, clerk. Classis is declared constituted. The officers take their place.
4. THE AGENDA IS ADOPTED. The chairman thanks the convening church of Edmonton-Immanuel for the preparations made for this Classis. The agenda is proposed and adopted.

5. SUBSCRIPTION by the Rev. G.A. Snip. Since this is the first Classis AB/MB to which Rev. Snip is delegated, he signs the Form for Subscription, pledging thereby his allegiance to the Reformed Confessions and to the Church Order in all his ecclesiastical work within our classical region.
6. REPORTS.
 - a. Committee Aid Needy Students. As mandated the Committee reports on work done. At the moment there are no requests for aid. The report is received with thanks.
 - b. Committee Aid to Needy Churches. The Committee reports on work done. The churches at Denver and Neerlandia request aid. The requests are granted.
 - c. Classis Treasurer report. The report of the new treasurer is not available. The Clerk is to inform the treasurer regarding his mandate. The cost-sharing formula Committee (with the mandate: to propose a formula for sharing the costs of ministers from Manitoba preaching in Alberta at the time of convening a Classis) did not yet have a report. Classis requests a report to be submitted for the Spring Classis.
 - d. In closed session the following Church Visits are reported: the visits to the churches at Denver, Calgary, Coaldale, Edmonton-Immanuel and Taber.
7. INSTRUCTIONS. The Church at Calgary requests pulpit supply twice a month. The request is granted.
8. QUESTION PERIOD acc. to art 44 C.O. is held. The churches of Denver and Edmonton-Immanuel request advice in matters of discipline. Advice is given in closed session.
9. CORRESPONDENCE:
 - a. Request Church at Taber. The Church at Taber requests Classis to rescind Art. 9 (a) of Acts Classis AB/MB Oct. 11-12, 1994. That Classis changed Art. 7.C.2. of the Classical Regulations from: "Any motion or election by ballot shall be considered adopted when it receives the support of more than half of the number of Classis members present and entitled to vote according to Art.32, CO" into: "Any motion or election by ballot receiving the support of

more than half the votes shall be considered adopted. Abstentions shall not be counted." Taber contends that the grounds for this change in our voting procedure cannot stand. Classis disagrees with Taber and denies the request.

- b. Appeal of a brother from the Church at Winnipeg is dealt with in closed session.
- c. Request Church at Coaldale. The Church at Coaldale requests Classis to judge that the chairman of Classis April 1995 should not have ruled that the motion recorded in its Acts Art. 4.4.c was out of order on the ground that the observer reports are not meant to be acted upon by Classis, and that Classis was in error when it upheld the ruling of the chair. Classis denies this request.
- d. Response from Presbytery of the Dakotas (POD) of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to the April 1995 Classis statements on our receiving Denver with its minister. Classis April 1995 requested POD to determine whether our statements are accurate. The POD mentions in its response: "we are encouraged that you have communicated with us about Rev. Pollock. We are disappointed that it has taken four years for this to happen." This latter statement is simply not true, and left unaddressed, it would indeed imply that Classis AB/MB does not hold the POD in very high esteem. There has been communication all along, and it was made exactly because Classis holds the POD in high esteem. The POD erased the name of Rev. Pollock from its rolls at its March 1992 meeting. The POD communicated to Classis AB/MB of that same month: "not to receive the American Reformed Church of Denver without first meeting with the representatives of the Presbytery of the Dakotas." This Classis decided not to accept either Rev. Pollock or the ARCD and communicated this clearly to the POD. One year later, this matter came again on the agenda of Classis of March 1993, and out of respect for the relationship which the CanRC have with the OPC an investigative committee

was sent to meet with representatives of the POD to "investigate the reasons why ARCD was convinced it could not be united with the POD of OPC." This committee went with the best of intentions to engage in open and frank consultation with the representatives of the POD. In hindsight, it is now clear that this committee should have been more careful in establishing that its meeting with representatives of the POD was an official meeting sanctioned by Presbytery. It is now clear that it was not the official meeting that the committee thought it was. Nevertheless, it is simply not true to say the Classis AB/MB has not communicated with the POD regarding Rev. Pollock for four years: Classis responded promptly to each communication from the POD and constantly informed the POD of any actions taken by Classis. Further in the POD's response it does not appear that the POD has studied the statements of Classis April 1995 and determined its accuracy. It is unfortunate that the POD did not do this. There is, for instance, no interaction on Classis's understanding of the Book of Discipline regarding a minister in Rev. M. Pollock's situation who requests to be erased from the rolls. Classis maintained that Rev. M. Pollock honoured the OPC Book of Discipline, he did not break his vows and there was never a charge against him of breaking his vows or an accusation of being schismatic. So, it is still the question which remains unanswered in the opinion of Classis: why was Rev. Pollock not warned that his intention to move to the CanRC constitutes a breaking of vows? Further it remains unclear to Classis why Rev. Pollock's name was erased without pursuing further discipline. Nor is Classis satisfied with the response of POD on its question why POD's allegations were not addressed right away when Rev. Pollock was seeking admission to the Canadian Reformed Churches at Classis Ontario South. Finally, the view of POD that Classis sinned by receiving Rev. Pollock is not sat-

isfactorily clarified in POD's response either. Classis decided to request further clarification on its statements of April 1995, to extend to Presbytery our sincere apology for not being more careful in engaging in official consultations which Presbytery requested, to pass on its report and the communication of the POD of Oct 9, 1995 to the Committee for Contact with the OPC.

e. Appeal of a brother and sister from the Church at Denver is dealt with in closed session.

10. APPOINTMENTS.

a. The primi and secundi delegates to Regional Synod (to be con-

vened on Dec. 5, 1995 at Langley, BC) were elected.

b. Next Classis: Convening church: Edmonton-Providence; date: March 12, 1996; alternate date: June 11, 1996 in the Edmonton-Immanuel church building.

The suggested officers are: chairman: Rev. G. Ph. van Poppe; vice-chairman: Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar; clerk: Rev. K. Jonker.

d. Appointments are made with respect to various committees, church visitors and examiners.

11. PERSONAL QUESTION PERIOD. The opportunity for asking ques-

tions is given. The questions asked are satisfactorily answered.

12. BROTHERLY CENSURE (art. 44 C.O.).

The chairman concludes that censure is not necessary.

13. ADOPTION OF ACTS AND PRESS RELEASE.

The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved.

14. CLOSING. The chairman speaks some words of thanks and wishes the delegates a safe trip back home. Rev. Slomp requested the singing of Ps. 42:1,5. He leads in prayer. Classis is closed.

K. Jonker

Attercliffe Canadian Reformed Elementary School

By Arthur R. Kingma

The official opening ceremonies for the Attercliffe Canadian Reformed Elementary School were held on the 10th of November 1995 at the church in Attercliffe. The name of the school, more commonly known by its acronym, ACRES, seems a suitable choice since the building's location is in the country and situated on over one hundred acres of land. The opening of the school, and the ceremonies of this evening, follows several years of planning, months of building construction, and a tremendous effort by members of the Attercliffe, Smithville, Lincoln and Rockway congregations. The establishment of this new school is the result of Christ's church gathering work in this area and is a wonderful gift from our heavenly Father.

With the church filled to capacity, the Master of Ceremonies, br. H.T. VanderVelde opened the evening by requesting the singing of Psalm 25:2,6,10, read from Proverbs 3 and led in opening prayer. Words of welcome were extended to all the members of Attercliffe and the many guests from the surrounding area. A special welcome was extended to the Mayor of Wainfleet, Mr. Stan Petit, and to Mr. John D. Maloney, the local Member of Parliament.

In his address, the Chairman of the Board, br. H. Homan gave a brief



Attercliffe Canadian Reformed Elementary School – ACRES

overview of the history of the school and the building process. The children attending ACRES are former students of the John Calvin School in Smithville. Because the school in Smithville was bursting at the seams, it was no longer possible for all students to attend this school. Expansion was inevitable and as a result the mother school gave birth to its first daughter. The school houses over 120 students attending grades one through eight, as well as a kindergarten class. The staff consists of five full-time teachers, a kindergarten teacher and several teacher's helpers.

Construction of the building began one wintry day, near the end of Febru-

ary and was completed in time for the new school year. Throughout the spring and summer, we were blessed with favourable weather conditions so the building could be completed without any interruptions. Many aspects of the building process were carried out on a volunteer basis and if one were to have driven by, especially on Saturdays, the building could be compared to that of a beehive, in this case, swarming with people. In his address, the chairman thanked the many volunteers for giving so freely of their time and talents making it possible to construct and complete the building well under budget.

Following the chairman's address we were all treated to a beautiful slide presentation put together by br. E. Reinink. This memorable trip took us back to the day the ground was first broken and all the way to the first day of school. In this instance, pictures certainly speak louder than words, we were visibly reminded of the many blessings the Lord in His mercy bestowed on us as congregation of Attercliffe.

Some of the first fruits of the instruction given at ACRES could be seen when the kindergarten class sang of God's providential care in "This is the Day that the Lord has Made," followed by "the Days of the Week."

The principal, br. A.A. Kingma addressed the assembly by comparing the function of the school to that of the field surrounding the building. As a farmer sows the seed and nurtures the crop, so the teachers must instruct the students in such a way that all subjects are saturated in God's Word. With prayer for growth, the students, as the crops outside, will come to maturity. Under God's blessing and obedience to His Word, may this always be a truly Reformed and functional school.

Following the principal's remarks, words of congratulations were received from several of our sister schools, the Ministry of Education and a letter, including a monetary gift, from a member of the Dunnville Grace Reformed church. A group of representatives from the school in Chatsworth (who seemed very familiar) hand delivered their congratulations in the form of poem recital. Mr. Stan Petit, Mayor of Wainfleet spoke words of congratulations on be-



Some school children singing

half of town council, and Mr. J.D. Maloney, MP, presented the principal with a Canadian flag and several portraits of the Queen. In addition, a painting was received from Eggar Excavating in appreciation for the contracts awarded to their company.

The chairman of the building committee, br. H. Kelly was given the opportunity to present the principal with a very large wooden key, representing the traditional transfer of the school key. A special gift was presented by the Chairman of the Board to sr. A. Bartels for all the work done as Volunteer Labour Coordinator. The members of the Building Committee were called upon to come forward and presented with a token of appreciation for the many hours spent in organizing, acting

as contractors and completing the building on time.

After the presentations we could again enjoy several selections of song by the students of the school, beginning with the primary grades, followed by the senior grades and finally by all. What a gift from the Lord to hear praises to God from the lips of children and be reminded of the responsibility the Lord has given us in the upbringing and instruction of His covenant children.

The evening was concluded with the singing of Hymn 59: 1,3 and with voices united we could offer our praises to God because He is our Redeemer, Creator. To Him alone forever be praise. The meeting was closing in prayer by Rev. D.G.J. Agema thanking the Lord that He has given us all things necessary to make this evening possible.

After singing the National Anthem, the ribbon cutting ceremony took place. Due to poor weather conditions, the ceremony was held in the church building instead of at the school. Surrounded by board members, Mr. Petit and Mr. Maloney, br. K. Linde, on behalf of all the members, cut the traditional ribbon, thus marking the official opening of the Attercliffe Canadian Reformed Elementary School.

Following the evening's ceremonies, an open house was held at the school building allowing everyone interested to tour the school facilities and enjoy some refreshments. Since parking at the school is limited, the wheels of the Attercliffe Shuttle Service (the school buses) rolled into motion, providing transportation to and from the school. It was an evening that will be remembered by all for many years to come.



Mr. K. Linde cutting the ribbon

Building in Faith

A Landmark Achievement for Guido de Brès High School

Last January the Guido fund raising committee began a feasibility study and made preparations for what was to be the largest capital campaign in the country ever to be conducted within the Canadian Reformed community. Twelve months later the minimum \$2.1 million minimum goal has been met and surpassed by more than \$400,000. About one-third of the \$2.5 million committed is now in hand as cash payments. Now plans are vigorously underway to construct a 15,000 sq. ft. addition to the school and renovate about 9,000 sq. ft. of existing space to accommodate growth to a projected 400 student enrollment by the year 2001.

How did Guido achieve the financial objective in such a timely fashion? Members of the BUILDING IN FAITH campaign executive committee feel the results were achieved because they were committed to follow a plan of action and a realistic program timeline. The plan of action involved clearly defined program objectives and parameters, a fully documented campaign case statement, committed volunteer workers and, of course, willing donors.

But there is another reason. If you ask any of the member of the BUILDING IN FAITH campaign team, they will agree that one of the most important aspects of the total program was the emphasis on the study of Biblical stewardship principles. From the very first campaign planning session, each meeting began with the reading of God's Word and a time of devotion to consider the meaning of Scriptures as it applied to those working on the campaign. According to the Campaign Chairman, Bill Smouter, "we wanted to be sure that our motivation and fund raising activities on behalf of Guido were in the proper perspective because we are the stewards of the time, talent and treasure which the Lord has entrusted to us. The study of Scripture,

with a stewardship emphasis, has been a helpful experience for all of us who worked on the regional and local campaign committee teams as we set about the task of raising a major and challenging amount of funds."

The BUILDING IN FAITH campaign attracted the attention of everyone in the 11 congregations in the region directly served by Guido. They all saw the opportunity to give and many of them did give. The campaign also attracted support from friends across the country. Executive committee member Tony Vanderhout notes: "it is gratifying to see Canadian Reformed members outside Ontario help share the costs of this important project. These members realize that Ontario is the only province in Canada which continues to deny funding to religious schools. Parents in Ontario pay about double the amount parents outside Ontario pay for their children to have a Reformed elementary and secondary school education." Approximately 10% of the \$2.5 million raised came from outside Ontario, including a major commitment from Holland.

Guido Principal, Hans VanDooren was pleased to see so many students and staff participate in the campaign. Collectively, the teaching and janitorial staff made personal gift commitments totalling more than \$75,000 and the students raised over \$5,000 through special events and activities run by the Students' Council. "We wanted people to know that we were serious in our commitment to deliver quality education and that, as staff, we weren't expecting parents and others to give to something we weren't prepared to contribute to ourselves. The BUILDING IN FAITH campaign provided an excellent opportunity to do this."

John VanderHoeven, Chairman of the Guido Board of Directors, says: "we stand amazed, thankful and humbled

by the Lord's goodness to us in the BUILDING IN FAITH campaign. We knew that \$2.1 million would be a major challenge. Now that we see more than \$2.5 million in commitments, we know that this is a result of gifts which, for many, have been made with considerable sacrifice. As Board Chairman, I want everyone to know that the Board respects the gifts and measure of sacrifice from every donor. The Board plans to use each dollar wisely, and we are committed to exercise good stewardship of the funds which are made available to us. We are mindful of our responsibility and accountability to the Society membership.

Since the BUILDING IN FAITH campaign has gone so well over goal in the commitment phase, it means that we can begin to address other capital needs for the school after new construction is completed. The Board will keep the lines of communication open to the membership with regards to recommendations for any additional capital expenditures from these funds.

May we all continue to maintain our primary focus in serving the Lord in providing excellent Reformed education for His covenant children entrusted to our care."

"I'll thank Thee, O my God and Saviour, and praise Thee in my even-song. . . ." This was the tone of thankfulness expressed among the gathering of some 170 people at a final campaign report meeting held at Guido on December 19, 1995. Among the formalities, festivities, accolades and fun, there were moments when many eyes were welled with emotion in realization of the Lord's blessing in the achievements of the diligent work of all campaign volunteers. It is the hope of these volunteers and the Guido Board that all members and friends of the Guido community will be encouraged to express thanks to the Lord in their personal prayers. 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

I hope your school work is going well. Do you enjoy learning new things? It is marvelous to see all the wonderful things God has made in this world. We can also see how He makes things happen in the world around us, and before our time, all in His way.

Do you think that school is the only place you learn new things? Only at school do you get tests and marks, right?

But you learn things all day, every day. Even when you don't go to school, you are learning. (Do you know what? Even your Mom and Dad learn things every day!)

Now that you know this, let me ask you a question. What are you learning?

You are God's child, and are you learning more about Him from the Bible, from talking about the Bible with Mom and Dad?

Here is a text from the book of Proverbs, ch. 6:20,21.

"My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart always, tie them about your neck."

The LORD says, Learn about Me, and listen to your parents when they talk about Me.

In another place in the same book, it says, If you listen to the LORD, and do what He wants you to do, then you will have life!

That means everlasting life! What a beautiful promise!

You can do your work every day, believing that promise!

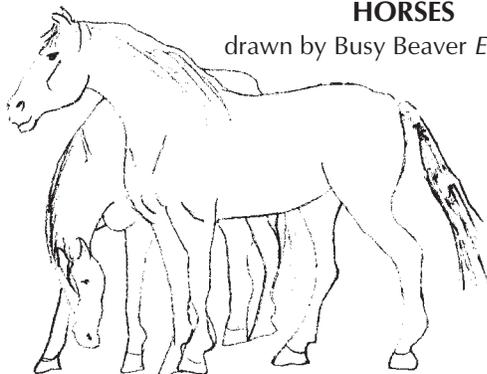
FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Here's wishing all you Busy Beavers who have a birthday in February a very happy day celebrating with your family and friends. May our God bless you in the coming year.

Sarah Nobel	February 1	Tanya Dehaas	20
Rosie Krabbendam	1	Nadine Barendregt	21
Melissa Hovius	5	Nelena Bergsma	23
Sophie-Ann Ravensbergen	6	Cara Faber	24
Dennis Van Oene	14	Francien Breukelman	24
Henriette Vandekamp	17	Tim Linde	25
Alicia Koolsbergen	18	Rianne Boeve	28
Jonathan Slaa	20	Amanda Zwaagstra	28

HORSES

drawn by Busy Beaver Eritia Smit



H.E.S.

Quiz Time!

Here's a puzzle to set you thinking! Busy Beaver *Deanna Wierenga* has made this puzzle using a text from the Bible. You have to fill in the blanks with the words you find in the *Book of Praise*, on pages you are given.

Let _____ light so shine _____, _____
may _____ your good works _____ give glory _____
_____ Father who _____ in Heaven.

<i>Book of Praise</i>	Page 587	Line 12	Word 3
	209	2	1
	444	7	8
	587	17	3
	3	11	9
	401	16	5
	244	6	1
	128	18	7
	632	24	3
	205	15	4

WOOD

The kind of wood used in building is very important. Name the wood used in building in each question.

- The ark of the covenant was built of _____ wood, Deuteronomy 10:1-3.
- King David's house was built of _____ wood, 2 Samuel 7:2.
- Solomon's Temple was built of _____ wood, 1 Kings 6:15.
- The cherubim, posts, and doors of the Temple were built of _____, 1 Kings 6: 23, 31-33.
- The floors of the Temple were made from _____ wood, 1 Kings 6:15.
- Ships were made from _____ wood with masts of _____, Ezekiel 27:5.
- Ship oars were made from _____, Ezekiel 27:6
- Musical instruments were made from _____ wood, 2 Samuel 6:5.
- Booths for the Feast of Tabernacles were made from _____, _____, _____, and _____, Nehemiah 8:15.
- The altar in the tabernacle was made of _____ wood, Exodus 27:1.
- Noah's ark was built with _____ wood, Genesis 6:14.
- Solomon's house was built of _____ wood, 1 Kings 7:1-3.

WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver *Christi Vandenbos*

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

Can you find these words?

person
 hair
 head
 eye
 nose
 mouth
 ear
 neck
 shoulder
 arm
 hand
 elbow
 finger
 chest
 stomach
 leg
 knee
 calf
 feet
 ankle
 toes
 nails
 heel
 chin

Where in the Bible?

It is important to know where certain passages are located in the Bible. See how many of the answers you can find.

- _____ 1. In what books of the Bible are the Ten Commandments found?
- _____ 2. In what book of the Bible are 150 songs to be sung with stringed instruments?
- _____ 3. In what book of the Bible do we find many wise sayings of Solomon?
- _____ 4. In what book of the Bible do we find the story of how God sent Jonah to preach in Nineveh?
- _____ 5. In what book of the Bible do we find the history of the first churches after Jesus' ascension?
- _____ 6. In what book of the Bible do we find the battle of Jericho?
- _____ 7. In what book of the Bible do we find the story of a queen who saved her people?
- _____ 8. In what book of the Bible do we find the story of a man in a lion's den?
- _____ 9. In what book of the Bible do we find Jesus' Sermon on the Mount?
- _____ 10. In what book of the Bible do we find the creation story?
- _____ 11. In what book of the Bible do we find the story of a runaway slave who returned to his master?



From the Mailbox

Hello, *Heidi deHaan*. I hope you had a wonderful holiday. What kinds of things did you do?

Thanks for the pretty card and best wishes. All the best as you continue your school work, Heidi. Bye.

Hi, *Eritia Smit*. You and your family must be very busy taking care of all the animals you have at your place. Too bad that your rabbit died! I hope your other pets stay healthy. Bye, Eritia.

Hello, *Lydia Penninga*. How were your Christmas holidays? What did you do at home? If it's still cold in Smithers, then maybe you can't stay outside very long, right? Bye, Lydia.

Hi, *Laura Kanis*. I hope you had a good Christmas holiday. Thanks for sending in the puzzle, too. Look up Matthew 2:11 in your Bible, Laura. There you will find the answer to your question. Bye.

Hi, *Laura VandenBos*. Would you like to be a member of the Busy Beaver Club? Please send me your birthday in your next letter. I hope you like living in Carman. Have you got some new friends already? Bye, Laura.

That's all for this time.

Love to you all, Aunt Betty 

CLARION

ADVERTISEMENTS

Births

With thankfulness to the Lord who made everything well we announce the birth of our first child

COLTER MARINUS

Born November 20, 1995

Bill and Lorraine Louwerse (nee Bosch)

2344 Grant Street, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2M7

Psalm 40:5

We thank our heavenly Father, Who has entrusted to us another covenant child, our daughter

ESTHER ROELI

Born December 5, 1995

A sister for *Yolanda*

Richard and Margareth Hoeksema

General Delivery, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0