

Clarion

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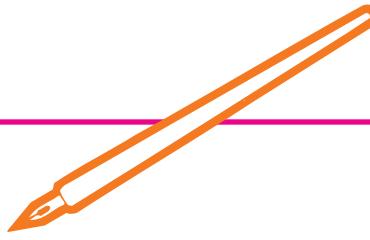
*Cooperation
in the Work Place*

Numbers

10:1-10

EDITORIAL

By J. De Jong



Keeping the Festival!

In recent years Reformed churches are increasingly dealing with questions of worship. The way things have always been done is now (once again) being subjected to an in-depth review, and in many cases, changes are being made. Especially in the Netherlands the process of liturgical change has advanced considerably with the decisions of the synod of Berkel en Rodenrijs.¹ In Canada we lag behind, but the same issues live among us as well. Questions concerning a responsive 'Amen', the confession of sins, and the place of the collection are all a part of the current discussions on liturgy. Have we been shortchanging ourselves? Do we need to rethink our approach?

The Lord's Supper

Perhaps one of the more thought provoking recommendations coming out of the report on liturgy as commission by the Synod of Ommen 1993 in the Netherlands is the issue of the liturgical texts of the early church and their function for the church today.² The report makes specific mention of the so-called Ordinary (Latin: *Ordinarium*, the term used on the European continent), the order of worship for the mass, with its five main parts: the *Kyrie*, the *Gloria*, *Credo*, the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*,³ and the *Agnus Dei*.⁴ The report raised the issue whether or not the texts for these parts of the communion service could not be reinstated in our services since they were an essential part of the liturgy of the early church, and the reformation did not need to abandon all elements of this liturgy of the early church.⁵

According to the report of the synodical committee of Berkel, the deputies of Synod Ommen 1993 also considered the question whether the old Ordinary and its parts were influenced by the Roman doctrine of the mass. They concluded that since the doctrine of transubstantiation developed from the sixth to the twelfth centuries and was not raised to an official doctrine until 1215, and that since the parts of the Ordinary date from a much earlier period, these texts did not grow out of the transubstantiation doctrine. Deputies therefore wanted to distinguish between the earlier use and the later misuse of the parts of the Ordinary.⁶

The deputies then considered the question why the reformers did not consider reintroducing the use of the Ordinary to a place of honour in worship. Their conclusion is that this is a question that cannot be answered. For example, Calvin at no point says a word about the hymns of the Ordinary. According to the report of the synodical deputies, this is seen as a question the Reformers did not occupy themselves with.

Were the fathers sleeping?

Here again we need to raise the question whether the Reformed fathers were asleep on this point, and simply overlooked a integral element of the worship of the early church in their work of reformation. If reformation means a return to the pattern of worship in the early church, why was this integral element overlooked? If the pattern of the Ordinary

predates the period of decline in the early church, why did the reformers not reinstate the order and why do we not have it incorporated in the life of the church today?

In my view, we need to confirm that the reformers were not asleep, but that in the reformation of the mass they very deliberately charted their own course, one which sought to capture the teaching of Scripture, and let this teaching determine the course of the celebration. For while it is true that the actual texts of the Ordinary were abandoned, the thoughts or pedagogical elements of these texts have been preserved and worked into the *Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper*. Here they are unfolded in a didactic way so that what once were loose texts now become a short Scriptural exposition of what the holy sacrament means. In other words, rather than work with loose texts, the reformers went back to the Word and put the instruction of the Word central in the celebration of the eucharistic feast!

The Form

A brief look at the Form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper will highlight some of these elements for us. Take for example the *Kyrie* in the mass.⁷ It represents the appeal for mercy on the part of the sinner. Our Form (which goes back to the Palatinate, and was translated by P. Dathenus) begins with self-examination and the realization of sin and misery. Here in effect the *Kyrie* is expounded and set forth to the congregation. Then follows the *Gloria* and the *Credo*, two elements which extol not only God's wonderful plan of redemption, but also His mercy and grace in the revelation of the forgiveness of sins through the blood of the cross. And one finds precisely this movement of thought in the further instruction concerning the Lord's Supper following the point of self-examination. Who are the worthy partakers?⁸ They who rely not on their own righteousness but on the merits and worthiness of Jesus Christ, and His mercy: "God will certainly receive in grace all who are thus minded and count them worthy to partake of the supper of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Besides retaining its distinct place before the fraction (the breaking of bread) in the Reformed service, the creed is also briefly set forth in the historical section of the Form. And in fact, this historical section already contains in it the prelude to the closing part of the ancient service, the *Agnus Dei*. For the Form reads: "First of all we must understand that the Lord Jesus was sent by the Father into this world and that He assumed our flesh and blood." Who cannot hear the echoes of the *Credo* and *Agnus Dei* in this historical section?⁹

Then the Form moves to assurance and the application of Christ's work to the believer. Here the strains of the *Sanctus* can still be heard in the wording crafted by Olevianus. For the focus of these words is on fellowship and thanksgiving, which were the dominant elements of the old *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*.¹⁰ These words also lead into the eucharistic prayer much in the same way the older *Sanctus* did. This eucharistic prayer, with its *epiclesis*, or special prayer for

the coming of the Holy Spirit was considered in the ancient eastern liturgy to be the point at which a special transformation took place.¹¹ This idea goes back much farther than the sixth century posited by the deputies of Ommen.¹² According to K. Deddens, the notion of a transforming *epiclesis* was already present in the fourth century! And in order to bring all these elements to reformation, what did Calvin (and following him, Olevianus) do? The prayer for the Holy Spirit has become an essential part of our eucharistic prayer: "Work in our hearts through the Holy Spirit so that we may entrust ourselves more and more to thy Son Jesus Christ."¹³ If one reads ahead in this prayer he notices that in effect the speaker now prays as if the "transformation" has taken place: "Grant that our contrite hearts may be nourished with his true body and blood, yes, with Him who is the only heavenly bread, that we may not live in our sins but He in us and we in Him." Of course, a real or physical transformation has not taken place; but spiritually the transformation is assumed! At this point the elements are referred to by what they signify, and not by what they are in themselves.

Then follows the *Credo*, which has already been briefly explained, but now expressed in order to highlight the aspect of proclamation that marks the celebration of the eucharistic feast (1 Cor 11:26). Thereupon one finds the table exhortation, which is really nothing else than the old *sursum corda* now filled with a Reformed perspective. For here the hearts of the believers are not directed to the elements as held up by the priest (as in the old rite), but are directed to heaven "where Christ our advocate is at the right hand of His heavenly Father."¹⁴

Then we have the post communion doxology. Although the actual texts are different, one can surely hear the strains of the *Benedictus* in the words of Psalm 103: "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" Further, the content and substance of the *Agnus Dei* is brought into words in a very pointed way with two quotations from Paul's letter to the Romans : "He who did not spare his own Son but gave Him up for us all . . ." and "But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

The hymns

One might wonder whether it still would not be appropriate to take the ancient texts and craft with them several responsive hymns for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In itself there are no Scriptural objections to this, since for the most part the prose texts of the Ordinary are passages from Scripture. But we should recall that the reformers, specifically Calvin, preferred to use psalmody in the responsive elements of the communion feast as well, just as they functioned at other places in the Reformed liturgy. And what better route can be followed than to choose psalms fitting to the occasion?¹⁵

This does not mean that hymns are to be excluded in our worship. On the contrary! We may sing of the great acts of salvation according to the great hymns of the New Testament as well! Especially the hymns surrounding the birth of our Saviour have found a place in the Reformed hymnal, since they form as it were a climax to the psalmody of the old covenant.¹⁶ Many of the New Testament hymns can also be used for the Lord's supper services. Besides the more obvious hymn choices (Hymn 44), several other psalms and hymns are specifically suitable for communion services.¹⁷ However, Calvin and other reformers leaned specifically to the songs of the New Testament, rather than to the singing of various (didactic or prophetic) prose texts. In this way our



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worship of praise most accurately reflects the specific praise patterns of the church of the Scriptures.

The Reformed Liturgy

It is, therefore, questionable for me whether such a detailed introduction of elements of the liturgy of the early church, i.e. the texts of the Ordinary, is really necessary in our liturgy. These elements are already in some form represented in the Reformed communion liturgy.¹⁸ This at least should make us more thoughtful, and may perhaps help to temper our zeal for change with some awareness of what motivated the Reformers. The fathers were not quite as forgetful as we might think! They wanted to get away from the practice of the rote repetition of texts, and so incorporated a more didactic element in the Form in which all members (including the children!) could be taught concerning what is actually taking place in the communion service.

Furthermore one might question the wisdom of introducing a term like the "Ordinary" into the Reformed liturgy. Regardless of its age, the term is indissolubly connected with the holy Eucharist, which from the sixth century was called the mass.¹⁹ But the reformers consistently wanted all attention focussed on the Word!²⁰ In promoting the development of a Reformed 'Ordinary-order' next to the existing orders of worship, do we not unwittingly open the door to a shift of emphasis away from the Word and more specifically on the sacrament of holy communion? The introduction of a special liturgy for the Lord's Supper, over and above the "ordinary"(!) Reformed liturgy can result in fostering an unwanted Romanizing tendency.

This does not take away that our liturgy needs continued attention. But as we approach this vast area, we need to be conscious of building on those who have gone before us rather than either tearing down their work, or developing disjointed and strange junctures in the road. Changes in themselves may sometimes initially appear attractive, and also appear to reflect Scripture, but in the end more can be lost that we realize.

¹⁸See *Acta van de Generale Synode van de Gereformeerden Kerken in Nederland. Berkel en Rodenrijs 1996* (De Vuurbaak, Barneveld, 1996), Article 63, 92-107. An English text of some excerpts of the decisions on liturgy can be found in *Diakonia* (September 1997), 49-51.

¹⁹I was not able to get hold of a copy of this report for this editorial, and simply had to

The ancient hymns of the mass:

<i>Kyrie eleison:</i>	Lord, have mercy! (see Matthew 15:22)
<i>Gloria:</i>	Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luke 2:14)
<i>Credo:</i>	I believe (see Mark 9:24)
<i>Sanctus:</i>	Holy, holy, holy, [is] the LORD of hosts: the whole earth [is] full of his glory. (Isaiah 6:3)
<i>Benedictus:</i>	Blessed [be] he that comes in the name of the LORD: we bless you out of the house of the LORD. (Psalms 118:26)
<i>Agnus Dei:</i>	Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

rely on the summary given in the Acts. Therefore my remarks should not be seen as specifically directed against this report.

¹⁸Sanctus and Benedictus are usually taken together, and in the Roman rite were sung and recited just before the Canon. See W.D. Marshall, *An Outline of Christian Worship. Its Development and Forms*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1936) 60

¹⁹The "ordinarium-order" includes all the elements normally present in a communion worship service, [especially in the Lutheran, Anglican and Roman traditions] including the Lord's prayer, gospel readings, responsive Amens, and individual short acclamations, salutations and benedictions.

²⁰The committee report for the Synod of Berkell gives the following reasons for reinstating the texts: The ordinarium included elements that go back to early Christian traditions; 2. elements of the ordinarium come out of the Scriptures but have not been taken over by the Calvinist tradition, cf. *Acta*, 257. Synod's ground is that "next to existing orders of worship, a so-called ordinarium order could result in an enrichment of the liturgy, if it appears that this order gives a good form to praise God in the worship services in our time" (my translation) of *Acta*, 96.

¹⁸*Acta*, 137.

¹⁹Kyrie eleison is the Greek expression for: "Lord have mercy", and it became a standard element of the mass, also in the musical renditions of the modern era.

²⁰The issue of the "worthy partakers" (Latin: *Manducatio indignorum*) was a much debated point in the Reformation period. Cf. G.C. Berkouwer, *De Sacramenten*, (Kampen: Kok, 1954) 327ff.

²¹According to C. Trimp, this part of the Form (called the *anamnesis*) replaces the canon prayer of the mass, with its emphasis on transubstantiation, cf. C. Trimp, *Formulieren en gebeden. Een beschrijving van de liturgische formulieren en gebeden in het Gereformeerde kerkboek* (Kampen: Van den Berg, 1978) 50.

²²The Sanctus (with its Trisagion, the three-fold Holy, Holy, Holy) has its roots in Is 6: 1-3, where we read of the majestic appearance of the Lord as He proceeds to reveal Himself for salvation and judgment.

²³In the later Roman or western rite, the transformation of the elements occurs during the words of consecration spoken by the priest.

¹²So K. Deddens, *Het begin in Jeruzalem*, (Goes: Oosterbaan en Le Cointre, 1976) 178-179.

¹³Here the essence of the old *epiclesis* is retained, but that which was formerly applied to the elements is now applied to the people. In other words, through the prayer for the Holy Spirit the elements are not offered to God, (as in the mass) but the people offer themselves to God, (with their oblations for the poor). The old *offeremus* or *offertorium* (oblation) can be noticed in the words: "... that we may entrust (i.e. offer, JDJ) ourselves more and more to Thy Son." C. Trimp says: "In fact this is the replacement of the *offerorium* of the mass, so detested by the Reformers." Cf. C. Trimp, 52.

¹⁴Here the detailed confession of Article 26 Belgic Confession must be kept in mind as the background to the Reformed phrasing of the *sussum corda*.

¹⁵For example the words of the Benedictus are taken from Psalm 118.

¹⁶The three most common hymns in the Reformed liturgies were the *Nunc dimittis* (the Song of Simeon), the *Benedictus* (the Song of Zechariah) and the *Magnificat* (the Song of Mary).

¹⁷Luther used Ps. 111 for the communion service, and Calvin made much use of Ps. 34: 3 and the Song of Simeon (at the end). The old *Agnus Dei* is also echoed in our Hymn 22, and is very suitable for a hymn of preparation or thanksgiving surrounding the communion service. This hymn also includes the Reformed idea of the old *offertorium*. See note 13.

¹⁸In this regard, Synod Berkell's statement with regard to the hymns and songs of the church, that we should not become too isolated with regard to other Christians, raises many questions, cf. *Acta*, 100. Especially in this area we need to be focussed on developing a specifically Reformed liturgy, not an eclectic one.

¹⁹The Ordinary has its origin in the Roman Sacramentary which in turn has its roots in service books of the fifth century, cf H.B. Swete, *Church Services and Service Books Before the Reformation* (London, SPCK, 1930) 75.

²⁰So G. Van Rongen, *Our Reformed Church Service Book* (Neerlandia: Inheritance Publications, 1995) 216-217.

By P. Aasman

Healings and Miracles Today

I live . . . also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit. Isaiah 57:15

Many people wish that the kinds of signs and miracles performed in crucial periods of the church's life, would continue today. Oh! to hear one like Moses tell us that tonight bread would rain down from heaven. Oh! to see one like Elijah who could strike a river and then walk right through it. What wouldn't we give to see one like Jesus Christ touch a leper and make him clean; to hear Him command a storm, "Be still!", and see it obey; to witness Him call to a dead man in a tomb, "Come out!" and to see him obey. That would be something.

We cannot read the Gospel narratives without becoming a little jealous of the people who lived in Palestine in those days. Some people so badly want to see these things today that they will imagine that the healings and the miracles are actually still happening.

Now, the thing that made many of our Lord's miracles so brilliant was that the people He healed were in agony. We are riveted by the story of the leper's plea for help when he said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean," because we cannot imagine a more horrible existence than that of a leper. We are in suspense with the woman who was subject to bleeding for twelve years, as she thinks, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed," and we secretly urge her on, because it must have been a very burdened life for her. We are moved to pity at the blind man outside Jericho crying out, "Son of David, have mercy!"

What makes the healing of each of these persons so brilliant is that these

people were suffering so much. When God heals those who suffer, our hearts are thrilled by the demonstration of God's compassion. The important thing, then, is this: At the centre is not so much the sign of power, but the deliverance from agony.

So we don't need to be jealous after all. The act of healing and the brilliance of divine miracles are happening every day. In the Gospel narratives, we read of a certain kind of pathos – that of the sick, the maimed, the mad and the demon possessed. In the book of Psalms, we read about a different kind of pathos, but one that is deeper and more painful. In Psalm 32 David reflected on the pain he felt after sinning against God, because he refused to confess his sin. He said that it felt as though his bones were disintegrating. Spiritually, he was in such agony that he groaned all day long. Even at night, he got no rest. In his effort to find an adequate illustration for the spiritual pain he experienced, he said, "It were as though the summer's heat had sapped all my strength." In Psalm 51 David describes perhaps the very same dark season in his life, and he says that it were as though God were crushing all his bones, one by one. When you consider the images David used to describe his spiritual condition, then we are left wondering: Is there anything more pathetic than a child of God who has sinned and refuses to repent?

In the Bible, there is no condition more painful, more pathetic, than that of

a sinner. And that kind of pain is one which each one of us absolutely must share. Our pain MUST be worse than that of the leper; our desperation must be deeper than the woman with the blood disorder; our hopelessness must be darker than that of the blind man. God says through Isaiah: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa 57:15).

This is where God lives – with the person who is broken because of his sin, who sees the true pathos of his sinful condition and needs to be revived. David says in Psalm 51 that the only sacrifice that ultimately is pleasing to God is a broken and contrite spirit.

God in Jesus Christ performed brilliant miracles in Palestine. But God performs even more brilliant ones today. When we go to God in the same way that the leper, the woman and the blind man and so many others went to Jesus Christ, then he will heal us. The miracle we enjoy is better because he does not just heal a physical problem that ends with death, but he heals a spiritual one that makes our life nearly unbearable, and furthermore, one that would have destroyed us in hell forever.

No need for us to be jealous. Healings and miracles happen in our lives every day!

Rev. Paul Aasman preaches the miracle of God's healing grace in Grand Valley, Ontario. C

What's inside?

Summer is waning. Many of us have had opportunity to get away for awhile and do a little travelling, sightseeing, and relaxing. The time for holidays is over. Photo albums are being updated. Summer tans will soon fade. Labour Day marks the transition from the holiday months to "back to work." Most will carry on with present work or employment. Some begin new work. Students face new challenges as they enter a new year of school. Labour Day in many ways signals a new start to our work. Labour Day ought to be especially important to Christians. Of all people, Christians have a good perspective on labour. They know that God created them to work. When we, as people redeemed by the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ, work hard in our daily calling – whatever it might be – then we please God. In this issue Dr. Van Dam introduces the Work Research Foundation, an organization which deals with labour issues. Accompanying this article is a review by Mr. H. Faber on a recent WRF publication.

We labour six days; we rest one day, the Lord's day on which we gather for worship. Our Dutch sister churches have, of late, been thinking about Sunday worship and introducing liturgical change. Dr. De Jong writes about this in the editorial. As well, Dr. De Jong introduces the topic of the covenant and the Christian life.

Have a good day!

GvP

The Work Research Foundation

By C. Van Dam

Committee for Justice and Liberty

During the 1960s and early 1970s, many members of the Canadian Reformed Churches supported the Committee for Justice and Liberty (CJL). CJL had been established in 1961 with the stated aim "to protect and advance the civil liberties of all Canadian workers and to safeguard their right to employment." It was especially their valiant fight against compulsory union membership as a condition for employment that earned enthusiastic and widespread support. In many ways the work of CJL was blessed and their efforts made the difference on the job site for not a few whose right to employment was upheld in the courts.

The CJL however gradually changed its direction during the 1970s and actively sought a wider constituency outside the Reformed community. This development was in part reflected in their name change from CJL to Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ). The focus shifted from labour relations to social concerns such as poverty, native rights, energy and pollution. I would be surprised if there are very many original supporters of CJL supporting Citizens for Public Justice in the Canadian Reformed Churches today. The current agenda of this organization has alienated many Reformed people and has caused social gospel activists to embrace it.

The continuing need to address labour issues

With labour relations and employees' rights no longer front and centre in the CJL/CPJ, discussion on these issues has largely died out in our circles. Although many in our midst are self-employed, the underlying issues of freedom of association for employees have not gone away. It would be foolish and shortsighted not to be concerned about the continuing injustices in this area. For this reason, I would like to call atten-



tion to the existence of the Work Research Foundation, an organization that does not appear to be that well-known among us. This foundation is of great significance for to my knowledge, this is the only think tank that is working full time on giving Christian arguments and answers to the type of labour issues that CJL used to deal with. With its work it hopes to influence for the better public opinion and eventually the law makers.

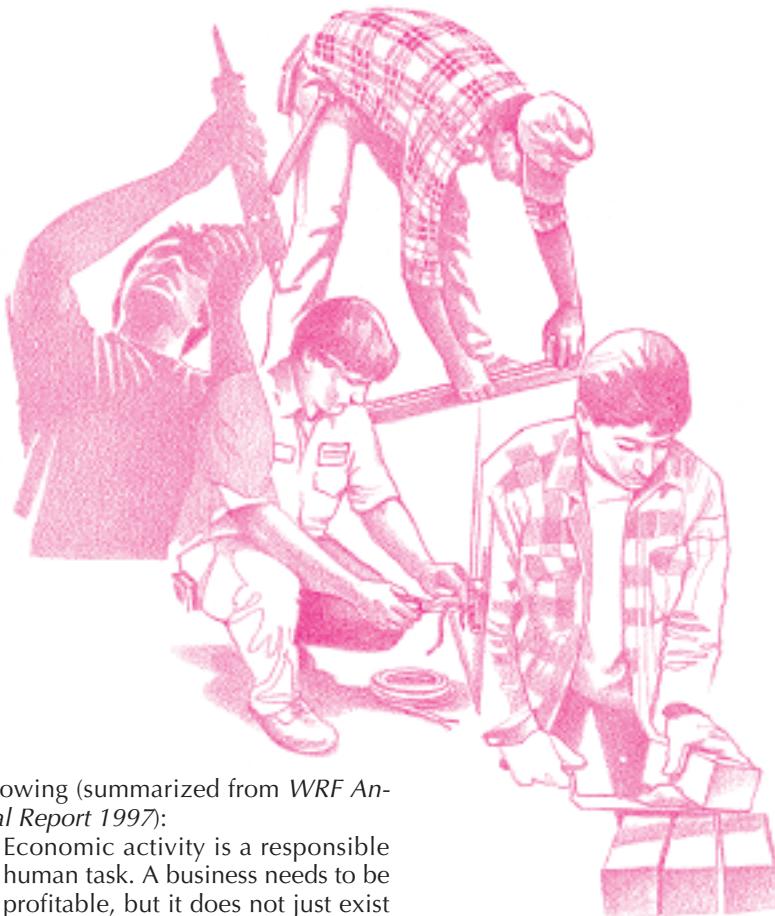
"The CJL gradually changed its direction during the 1970s."

In this context, it needs to be noted in passing that there is another organization which from time to time continues to work actively through the courts to support freedom of association for those who for reasons of conscience do not want to join a union at their place of work. It is the National Citizens Coaliti-

tion, a small conservative organization with no specific Christian pretensions. Their address is: 100 Adelaide Street West, Suite 907, Toronto, ON M5H 1S3 (internet: <http://www.citizenscoalition.org>). It also deserves our support, particularly since the Work Research Foundation is primarily a think tank and does not engage in court battles on behalf of workers struggling against compulsory unionism.

The focus of the Work Research Foundation

To come back to the Work Research Foundation (WRF), it was incorporated in 1974 for the purpose of doing research and education in economics and industrial relations from a Christian perspective. WRF is rightly convinced that how people view any issue ultimately depends on their religious pre-suppositions and worldview. Guiding principles in their work include the



following (summarized from *WRF Annual Report 1997*):

- i. Economic activity is a responsible human task. A business needs to be profitable, but it does not just exist for making a profit.
- ii. Cooperation between management and workers is vital to making an enterprise a success.
- iii. Workers need to be treated with dignity and fairness.
- iv. Employers have the right to be free from union harassment or intimidation.
- v. Workers must be free to join or not to join a union.
- vi. Unions have a legitimate function to represent and protect the interests of workers.

Ongoing research

As just noted, a major area of concern and research is the right of employees to be free from union harassment or intimidation and to have freedom of association. Last year, some of the work of the WRF received widespread media attention. The news concerned a WRF-sponsored survey of current attitudes in Canada towards labour unions. The most striking find of the survey (and this particularly made the press) was that while 57% of Canadians still approve of unions (down from 66% in 1966), between 75% to 90% disapprove of common union policies such as closed shops,

mandatory dues, restrictive bidding clauses, and the financial support of political and other non-union causes. Canadians clearly have strong objections against forced union membership as a condition of employment.

"How people view any issue ultimately depends on their religious presuppositions and worldview."

Labour of course tried to play down or discredit this survey but this is difficult to do. WRF had commissioned renowned Canadian sociologist Dr. Reginald W. Bibby of the University of Lethbridge to oversee the survey. This highly regarded social trends analyst made arrangements with the Angus Reid Group, one of the country's top pollsters, to carry out the data collection as part of their monthly national omnibus surveys. The Angus Reid Group collected data using a representative sample of 1,504 adults. Such a sample

size permits accurate generalizations to the Canadian adult population – statistically about 3 percentage points, plus or minus, 19 times in 20. The study was released under the title "Canadians and Unions. A National Survey of Current Attitudes" (March 1997). In concluding his survey, Bibby notes:

The mood of the country is one where freedom should be experienced in the workplace – where people and companies should be able to work when they are qualified to work, where individuals have a measure of freedom in joining unions and paying dues, and have input into how their dues are being used. And overall, Canadians are maintaining that, in the late 90's, cooperation between unions and employers is both possible and preferable to confrontation.

This published survey is the initial phase of a major public education project about the injustice of compulsory unionism. The future will probably see the WRF bring to the public attention specific instances of workers and employers who have been deprived of their right to go about their daily business freely.

Other activities

The WRF publishes a quarterly newsletter, *WRF Comment*, in which important trends in labour relations and economics are analyzed. It has also recently published *Three Faces of the Law: A Christian Perspective*, by labour arbitrator and law Professor Ian Hunter. In this publication Professor Hunter critically analyzes the expanded role of the courts and the subversive influence of *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. A review of this work appears elsewhere in this issue of *Clarion*. This month it is also sponsoring a conference in Burlington on "Unchanging Workplace; Unchanging Faith" in which Christian perspectives on shaping the workplace will be explored.

For the past 23 years Harry Antonides has served WRF with distinction as its Director of Research. He has recently retired and Ed Pypker has been appointed in his place. The director of the ongoing project described above is Ray Pennings.

Further information on the Work Research Foundation can be received by writing WRF, 5920 Atlantic Drive, Mississauga, ON L4W 1N6 (ph. 905 670 7386) or by going to internet website: <http://www.interlog.com/~wrf>. **C**

The Covenant and the Christian Life (Part 1)

Personal Appropriation

By J. De Jong

The following article was first presented as a speech at the opening of the study year in Ancaster on September 25, 1996. Some changes and additions to the text have been made as a result of the discussion.

Introduction

We wish to devote some time to a topic which has received an increasing degree of attention in church discussions today: the covenant and its role in the Christian life. With this title I wish to retain a more practical focus. I will not give an elaborate treatment of the doctrine of the covenant, but shift the attention to the question as to which way the covenant functions in the life of faith and the daily life of the believer.

This has been a problem for an increasing number of people in the Reformed world in recent years. The real question is whether or not the covenant is becoming a well-known cliché which really does not say too much for us today. It functions as little more than as a hallmark of orthodoxy. Is this the impression we wish to give? Is this the picture that the Canadian Reformed give to the outside world? If so, where does the misunderstanding arise? Are we projecting a skewed image of the faith?

In order to look more closely at these questions I have isolated three areas for consideration. 1. The covenant and faith, specifically concerning the personal dimension of the Christian life; 2. The covenant and assurance, and 3. the covenant and election. Looking at all three areas, we hope to see the importance of the role of the covenant and its promises and obligations in our daily Christian life.

Covenant and faith (the personal aspect)

One of the more critical questions that arises in many of our discussions

today concerns the issue whether we have forgotten the personal dimension of faith in our view of the covenant. Does not the doctrine of the covenant at times form a hindrance to the very integral aspects of personal faith and experience that are so important in the Christian life?

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Now I am among those who believe that the question of personal involvement and personal experience of faith is a legitimate one. The church has never promoted a faith that comes across as a cold, lifeless set of rules and dogma and that one must blindly and arbitrarily accept. On the contrary, the life of faith reflects a certain warmth and should also reflect a spirit of happiness and joy! After all, we share a rich gift! Christ gave his life on the cross for us, and the fruit of that cross is being worked in us through his Spirit. What greater reason for joy and thanksgiving could one find?

The real issue then is not whether we can speak of personal experience, but what kind of personal experience must we speak about? In our approach to doctrine, we often distinguish between redemption accomplished and applied. When we speak of the latter term, application, we are definitely moving in the personal realm. The other term used for this area of God's work is appropriation, a term focusing more on the human

side of this work. Christ applies His salvation to his chosen people one by one. And from our side, appropriation is a personal activity. But what kind of personal experience are we referring to? How must this personal appropriation in the covenant be qualified?

Personal appropriation

Appropriation is dealt with in a number of places in our confessions. One can notice in our confessions a remarkable connection between application and appropriation.¹ In Article 22 Belgic Confession it is clear that the Holy Spirit applies and appropriates salvation. For there we read: "the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith which embraces Jesus Christ with all his merits, makes Him our own and does not seek anything beside Him." However, later the article says: "Meanwhile, strictly speaking, we do not mean that faith itself justifies us, for faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ our righteousness." Here we confess appropriation as something we do! So in the one article we have the same act confessed as from God's side and from our side.

This same theme is carried on in Lord's Day 23, Heidelberg Catechism. After confessing the righteousness which Christ obtained for us by his death, question and answer 60 adds: "... if only I accept this gift with a believing heart." And in question and answer 61 the same point is made: "I can receive this righteousness and make it my own by faith only." Notice the element of personal appropriation. We must do it, or even better: I must do it. The call is personally directed. Appropriation is a human work, and it is a personal work. At the same time, it is a divine work. Lord's Day 25 asks: "... where does this faith come from?" And the answer is clear: (65): "From the

Holy Spirit who works it in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel. . . .”

So we have this structure in the confession: personal appropriation is both the work of the Holy Spirit, and our work. We can say that the work of the Spirit is prior, while our work is a fruit, a result (see Phil 1:29). We can never act without the indwelling Holy Spirit (Eph 2:8). But our role is by no means insignificant or secondary! It is postulated as a living element of our faith, and it even receives extra attention. This does not mean that we contribute to our own salvation. Rather, it means that through the working of the Holy Spirit we are co-workers with God in being made partakers of Christ’s merits. Essentially the Spirit’s work and our work go hand in hand, and you should not emphasize the one without the other.

The liturgical forms

The same line is found in our liturgical forms for the sacraments. In the *Form for the Baptism of Infants* we confess that the Holy Spirit promises us that “He will dwell in us, making us partakers of that which we have in Christ.” We also pray that God in his infinite mercy will “incorporate by his Holy Spirit this child into his Son Jesus Christ.” Here we confess that the Holy Spirit makes us partakers of Christ. He appropriates salvation for us. But at the same time, we must do it. For the same Form says: “we are called and obliged by the Lord to a new obedience. . . . We must not love the world but put off our old nature and lead a God-fearing life.”

In the *Form for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper* we confess that by the grace of the Holy Spirit “we are heartily sorry for our shortcomings and desire to fight against our unbelief and live according to all the commandments of God.” And in the so-called epiclesis or prayer for the Spirit at the table, we plead: “Work in our hearts through the Holy Spirit so that we may entrust ourselves more and more to thy Son Jesus Christ.” The Holy Spirit appropriates! Yet we too must appropriate salvation! For the same form says: “For the sake of Christ, who so exceedingly loved us first, we shall now love one another, and shall show this to one another, not only in words, but also in deeds.”

Now despite the differences in wording, and despite the two sides of appropriation that we confess in our creeds and forms, they have one thing in common. The appropriation is never

directed to oneself, but always directed *outside* of oneself. We are to cling to nothing else besides Jesus Christ.² This is the line of Art. 22, Belgic Confession: “This faith embraces Jesus Christ with all his merits, makes Him our own, and does not seek anything beside Him.” And Lord’s Day 23 says: “by faith we are righteous *in Christ*, and heirs to eternal life” [emphasis added].” The *Form for the Baptism of Infants* says that we must seek our “cleansing and salvation outside of ourselves [emphasis added].” The *Form for the Celebration of the Lord Supper* says: “On the contrary, we seek our lives outside of ourselves, and in doing so we acknowledge that we are dead in ourselves [emphasis added].”

The appropriation is never directed to oneself, but always directed outside of oneself.

Look to Christ!

Here then is the hallmark of personal appropriation in the Reformed sense. We are personally involved! But the direction or focus is always on Christ, and not ourselves. To be sure, as Calvin says, to know God we must turn into ourselves.³ But one can never turn into oneself without first looking at the cross. On the cross redemption is accomplished for us. From the cross we turn to ourselves. Then we are accused of sin! But in the act of the appropriation of Christ’s righteousness we are also acquitted of guilt!

If in the consideration of the personal aspect we begin to focus on ourselves we will end up in dangerous waters. In the history of Reformed Protestantism one meets with the danger of perfectionism on the one hand and defeatism on the other.⁴ Perfectionism sets in when we focus inordinately on ourselves and tend to be positive with what we see. Perfectionism does not build on the promises of God or the merits of Christ, but builds on certain experiences through which we have gone, whether it be a second blessing, a special experience of God’s presence, the sense of new life, and so on. The danger here is that we believe we can come to some form of freedom from sin above and beyond what God has promised, and over and beyond what He gives in Jesus Christ.⁵

The other danger is defeatism. We look to ourselves and see how weak we

are, and how small our faith is, and end up disqualifying ourselves, becoming totally discouraged, and laying down our armour. Carelessness with the things of God and an easy attitude are also the hallmarks of defeatism. For people who say to themselves “what is the sense of trying?” end up showing that they are giving up the struggle. The elements of precision and urgency are cast aside and we take the real situation for granted. We all too easily feel that we are not good enough, we stand under the judgment of God, and we are in danger of eternal condemnation. We are then looking to ourselves, not to the cross!

From personal to communal

Do we then need to think about a personal element, and a personal dimension in the life of faith? Indeed, we do! – but in the right spirit and in the right attitude. The focus must be Christ-centred, not man-centred. As soon as that focus is adopted one will invariably come to the communal aspect as well. For we all share the same riches and the same gift! How can one be focused on Christ, and not on His body? How can one look to Him, and not on those for whom He died?

We should not speak of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ with a neglect of the communal aspect in that relationship.

So we have every reason to highlight a personal element in order to guard ourselves against a dead orthodoxy. But as we do so, we realize we cannot isolate the personal aspect from its communal framework. We should not speak of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ with a neglect of the communal aspect, as if that personal aspect has the primary or all-encompassing significance in one’s life. The relationship with Christ has a personal aspect, but in that personal aspect you invariably come to the communal aspect. Indeed, conscious personal appropriation leads at the same time to growth in the communal bonds, and in the realization of communal obligations in the service of the Lord. You then see the communal aspect as the key element! That is the heart

of the relationship we share and live for! Is not this what church life is all about: the fellowship, the communion we have in Christ, and in the riches and treasures found in Him?

In Scripture one will find distinct personal admonitions and exhortations. Paul warns that each one should examine himself to see whether he is holding to the faith (2 Cor 13:5). He warns each not to boast in himself, but in the Lord. Each must make it his aim to please God "so that each may receive commendation for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Cor 5:10). But these personal directives

find their place within the room of God's specific admonitions and encouragement to the entire congregation. Within the context of the address to the church as a whole, more specific admonitions are directed to each one of the members. Therefore, for those in the church the road of personal appropriation normally takes place in the room of communal fellowship, and in the end you are drawn through personal appropriation to communal sharing and mutual giving in Christ!

¹This was pointed out by C. Trimp, *Klank en weerklank*, (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 2nd. ed., 1989), 129-130

²On this see A.N. Hendriks, "Hoe zijn wij zeker van onze verkiezing?" *De Reformatie* Vol 69, # 2 and 3 (9 and 16 October 1993) 17-19; 41-44

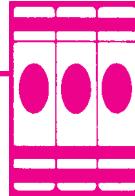
³*Institutes*, I.v.3. Calvin uses the phrase "to descend into oneself" when he deals with the road to know the true God, and the requirement for self-examination. In dealing with conversion he always speaks of a turning outside of oneself to God, cf. *Institutes* III.iii.7.

⁴For more detail on this see J. Kamphuis in "Gelegen – Ongelogen" *De Reformatie*, Vol 68, #14 (January 2, 1993) and following issues.

⁵This was the error of the Anabaptists, to whom Calvin reacts in *Institutes* III.iii.14 **C**

BOOK REVIEWS

By H. Faber



Three Faces of the Law

"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Ps 11:3

Ian Hunter. *Three Faces of the Law: A Christian Perspective*. Mississauga, ON: Work Research Foundation, 1996. 94 pages paperback, \$ 7.95 Can.

This booklet is an insightful and readable critique of the changes in Canadian jurisprudence since the 1982 Charter of Rights. Ian Hunter, professor of law at the University of Western Ontario, describes and illustrates the rapid secularization of the courts and society in the last decades, so that what is politically and socially correct has become the controlling factor in our courts. In three lectures, comparing Biblical truths of Justice, Liberty and Life with the modern day, secular "wasteland" of expediency and individual rights, Professor Hunter demonstrates how, in Canada, control of the moral and constitutional framework has passed to an unaccountable group of nine jurists, with far reaching consequences.

The different notions of "justice" are aptly illustrated by comparing Jerusalem and Athens. In Scripture, doing justice (Micah 6) is an honourable goal, and Paul exhorted the Philippians to think about "whatever is just" (Phil 4:3). Christian justice involves judgment, not compromise or "victimology." "We have a



charter of rights; we lack a charter of responsibilities," writes Hunter, and he warns that modern society is in danger of losing the faculty of judging: "at the end of this road is not tolerance, but tyranny" (p. 27). Christian justice also involves truth, to which Christ came to bear witness (John 18:37). But Canadian courts seem to follow Pilate, and put truth on a sliding scale of political

correctness. Lastly, Christian justice is tempered with mercy, as God's mercy is boundless towards those that fear Him (Ps. 103:11). The view from Athens, which has prevailed in the courts, is to fit justice to man's concept of a proper social organization.

The concept of "liberty" is the focus of the second section. Professor Hunter illustrates, by looking at the

modern universities, how liberty has been replaced with political correctness, where free speech can only be gender-neutral, and individual opinions which do not reflect the correct outlook, are repressed. Canadian society, likewise, has replaced the British rule of law with a code of rights – the 1982 Charter of Rights. It is noted that the British North America Act of 1867 does not refer to liberties or freedoms – these are implied in the parliamentary democracy. "Rights" in the 1867 BNA Act is a concept limited to private law, being civil disputes among individuals. By making the Charter of Rights the supreme law of the land, social issues are now defined by a Court which was never intended to be a constitutional court, and key issues such as abortion, euthanasia, cruise missile testing and homosexual rights have moved from the public forum of the legislature to the nine justices who are appointed by the government. This leaves the decision-making to individuals who are not accountable, and therefore, is undemocratic. Prof. Hunter points out that even given these flaws, the Supreme Court has the option of exercising "judicial restraint", but instead has become an agent for social change. As an example of such judicial activism, Prof. Hunter points to the *Askov* decision, where the court struck out a criminal conviction for delay in proceeding with the trial, which, according to the court, jeopardized the accused person's right to a fair trial under the Charter. The consequence of *Askov*, in the Province of Ontario alone, was that forty-seven thousand criminal charges, ranging from attempted murder to fraud, were thrown out. Justice Peter Cory of the Supreme Court, the author of the *Askov* decision, later said that the Court was shocked by this reaction, and had not foreseen these consequences. Clearly, the Court is not prepared to accept responsibility, according to Prof. Hunter, and may be out of touch with reality. Many other examples, especially in the area of criminal law, show how the Court's decisions under the Charter have curtailed the effectiveness of the police and allowed known offenders to go free because of "botched" investigations by police. This does not promote liberty, but fear on the part of law-abiding citizens.

In contrast, the Christian view of liberty is that service to God is true freedom, "the glorious law of liberty" (James 1:25). Unlike a human Charter,

which is judicially enforced, the Christian is called to stand fast in the liberty in which Christ has made him free, and avoid entanglement with man-made concepts (Gal. 5:1). That our Canadian society has traded in this heavenly concept for a human set of rules is truly a form of bondage.

The third area of discussion centres around "law and life." In this section, which I consider the best part, Prof. Hunter looks at the abortion decisions and the direction of the euthanasia debate, areas of life which have been left for decision by the Supreme Court of Canada. As of January 1988, with the stroke of a pen, Canada is the only country among civilized nations to have no law on abortion. The *Morgentaler* decision by a 5-2 majority of the Court, means that abortion is available on demand, even though all justices of the Court expressed the view that the state has a legitimate interest in the protection of the fetus. Prof. Hunter's analysis demonstrates how only one justice, Mme. Justice Wilson, based the decision on the substantive argument of the liberty of the woman to choose, while the other justices ruled on narrow procedural grounds. Nevertheless, with the developments since the Charter, the result has been no protection for the unborn for some nine years, with no indication of a political will to change the situation.

The *Borowski* case, which followed *Morgentaler*, sought to have the Court rule that the fetus had a right to life, under section 7 of the Charter of Rights, which states "Everyone has the right to life." As result of the Court's schedule, the *Morgentaler* decision was rendered first, making the key section of the Criminal Code unconstitutional, and the *Borowski* case was dismissed as no longer having any bearing on the Criminal Code. The *Borowski* case thus ended, "not with a bang, but (a child's) whimper" (p. 67, quoting Morris Shumatcher). Prof. Hunter also analyses the subsequent injunction cases, where the father sought to stop the mother from having an abortion, and the emergency hearing by the Supreme Court of the *Daigle* case. When during the arguments before the Court it was admitted that Ms. Daigle had gone ahead and obtained an abortion (contrary to the injunction), the same Court which dismissed the *Borowski* claim as being moot, continued to hear the matter, and ruled in Ms. Daigle's favour, sanctioning the abortion decision.

CHURCH NEWS



NEW EMAIL ADDRESS:

Rev. J. VanRietschoten

jvanriet@mb.sympatico.ca

CALLED and DECLINED to Denver, CO, U.S.A.:

Rev. J.G. Slaa

of Elora, ON

CALLED to Fergus, ON:

Rev. P.G. Feenstra

of Owen Sound, ON

In the area of euthanasia, Prof. Hunter sees the same developments of political inaction and judicial activism. He reviews the *Rodrigues* case involving the terminally ill Mrs. Rodrigues, who challenged the validity of the Criminal Code prohibition of assisted suicide, and sketches the secular wasteland in which the Supreme Court struggles to articulate "values". The reasoning in this case again demonstrates the relativistic approach of the court, and the lack of the application of principles. Only Mr. Justice Sopinka considers the "sanctity of life" a principle of fundamental justice, and draws a distinction in principle between active and passive euthanasia. The great concern is that the majority view (trading-off various concepts), will ultimately prevail.

In a short post-script, Prof. Hunter reflects on the discussions which followed each of his lectures, and especially the question, "What should we do?" Unfortunately, few answers are suggested, and the response seems to acknowledge our limited potential for improvement. Prof. Hunter focuses on the individual's responsibility to do right and to consciously distinguish right from wrong. Like the Belgic Confession, Art. 36, he also advocates prayer for those in authority. However, in addition to a personal response, we should also be aware of a corporate activity, such as political activity, pro-life organizations, petitions, letters to the editor, and similar ways to express to our government the need to return to Biblical principles, in a society which is adrift in a sea of expediency.

Mr. Herman Faber is barrister and solicitor in Hamilton, Ontario.

Sermons on Romans 10

By C. Bosch

D.M.Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, An Exposition of Chapter 10: Saving Faith*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997. Hardcover, 400 pp. \$35.99 U.S.

This excellent book, a comprehensive exposition of Romans 10, is a volume of thirty-five sermons originally preached by Dr. Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel, London, in 1963 and 1964. It is the tenth book in the series on Romans by this prolific writer and I believe it to be one of the best. This timely and patient explanation of an important chapter of Paul's letter is intended for all students of Scripture and would serve as an excellent resource book for any Bible study group.

The sermons are lively, to the point and give food for much reflection. It makes one appreciate something of the wealth that is ours in knowing the true doctrine of salvation. When these messages are taken to heart they can't but fortify us in our spiritual battle today. It is in this chapter that the apostle Paul exposes the futility of self righteousness while proclaiming the wealth of that righteousness which is a gift of God, appropriated by a living faith. That faith confesses the risen and exalted Christ. It is also here that we learn to know preaching as God's primary means of grace in bringing people to repentance and faith. God did not arbitrarily reject Israel as His people for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom 10:13).

Dr. Lloyd-Jones' method of proclaiming the Word is an outstanding example of what is called "expository preaching." The author does not only explain his text in the context of the whole of Paul's letter. His wealthy knowledge of Scripture and the history of the Christian church allow us to see the text within the framework of the whole Bible and the history of salvation. The author maintains that, "You can't believe that Jesus is Lord without believing the whole of Scriptures" (p. 128). Though we certainly experience truth we are exhorted to know why and what we believe (p. 134)!

There is a great deal of application of the Word that is relevant to our lives and our days. In a day when not a few

authors stress man's feelings and experience at the expense of doctrine, Dr. Lloyd-Jones resists this movement. Time and again we read such statements as: "We must be careful that we are not governed by our feelings. Rather, to put it positively, we must always be governed by Scripture and its teachings" (p. 8). The author takes no less than eleven sermons to show the riches of Romans 10: 9,10. It is here that he expounds the "content, character and nature" of "saving faith." He shows that believing is far more than giving "intellectual assent" to the Word of God. It is a matter of the heart and while that heart certainly involves our emotions "it is deeper than that" (p. 149) and includes the whole person "in the very depths of the personality."

Dr. Lloyd-Jones does not lose sight of the fact that the initial address of Paul's letter was the church of Christ at Rome. He notes Paul's great desire and prayer to God for the Jews, "that they may be saved" (v. 1). He shows how the Lord rejects all forms of work-righteousness and that haughty self-confidence which characterized so much of the Pharisees' words and deeds.

We live in a time when "church-shopping" is popular with some while others deny God's call to be gathered with His people altogether. In dealing with the vv. 9-10 of Romans 10, Dr. Lloyd-Jones shows that to confess God's name must mean that we long to be with God's people and our "delight is to be with them" (p. 205). In this way we simply confess that "Jesus is Lord" and that not our will but Christ's is decisive.

The author takes pains to show that Paul is not advocating a barren, lifeless, joyless existence. He shows that "faith" in this chapter is a gift that is full of joy in the Lord. He asks the question, "How much of this joy is there in the Christian church today" (p. 347)? He has no hesitation suggesting that many are outside of the church of God today because, "we have failed to have the impact that the first Christians had upon their contemporaries." While not advocating that we all go door to door in evangelizing our neighbours, he reiterates what we confess in Lord's Day 32 of the Heidelberg Catechism, viz. "That by our godly walk of life we may win our neighbours for Christ." Yet what must lead to such a joyful walk of life is not some quick and shallow spiritualism. On the contrary it must involve

a deep conviction of our sin and misery, a humbling of ourselves before the throne of God and amazement at the grace of God to us in Jesus Christ. In looking back on previous chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans Lloyd-Jones is not shy to suggest, "you will never get this joy until you have grasped the teaching of the first five chapters of this Epistle" (p. 351).

Reading this book with eyes of faith will certainly enrich your life. It was the author's prayer that God might write the message of Romans 10 "deeply on our minds, hearts and spirits in order that we all, examining ourselves may humble ourselves before Him" (p. 400).

Does all this mean that we must agree with everything Dr. Lloyd-Jones has written here? I don't think so. There is a hint of an attained perfectionism in the author's statement (p. 124): "You must not believe any teaching that tells you to crucify your old nature." Though he writes this in reaction to those who suggest it is man's power to crucify one's sinful self, nevertheless there is more to sanctification than only realizing that our old nature has been crucified with Christ. Though true Christians have been born again, as Peter writes in his first letter (1: 23) yet time and again they need to humble themselves under God's mighty hand (1 Pet 5: 6). They will need to die to their sins day after day.

I also don't think the author does justice to the importance of believing the doctrine of election. It is simply a false dilemma to suggest, as he does, that "You can be a Christian without believing it" (p. 138). The Lord does not allow us to be selective about his truth. Though the Spirit testifies that those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will surely be saved that same Spirit says that we are to watch our life and doctrine closely (1 Tim 4:16). Seeing all the right things the author has written about the content of faith these statements are unfortunate.

Having said this I nevertheless recommend this book heartily for study and reflection. May the Lord use it for good in our personal, family and church life and may we grow in the understanding of God's wondrous Word.

Rev. C. Bosch is minister of the Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church in Burlington, Ontario.

C

THE HI-LITER

News from Here and There

By J. de Gelder

Saskatoon

With regard to the developments in Saskatchewan I found the following update in the bulletin of Providence Canadian Reformed Church in Edmonton:

Recently two families moved from Abbotsford to Saskatoon. Their request is to be members of our congregation. They have advised us in careful detail that they would like to start a house congregation under the oversight of Providence Church. They plan to advertise extensively to let other church members know of the possibility of living in the Saskatoon area. Apparently it is very feasible for young families to start a dairy operation in this area. They have also committed themselves to doing this for five years. If there is no growth, then they would move to Alberta. The consistory received a serious commitment from these two families to the Lord and to the church. The consistory has decided to accept the attestations of these families and to encourage the development of a house congregation in the Saskatoon area. It is hoped that the Lord will bless this by allowing a Canadian Reformed congregation to be established in the province of Saskatchewan.

Barrhead

Study of liturgical matters leads to a better understanding of the nature of our worship services, which in turn can lead to suggestions for implementing certain improvements. In Barrhead the following has been proposed:

On the basis of the feedback received from the congregation regarding changes in the liturgy, the consistory comes with the following proposal and will ask the members to respond with Scriptural reasons why the various items should not be implemented:

1. Votum will be pronounced by the congregation
2. Salutation: the congregation will pronounce the Amen.
3. After the prayers the congregation will repeat the Amen.
4. After the proclamation of the Word the congregation will repeat the Amen.
5. After the blessing, the congregation will respond with singing a three-fold Amen.

Brampton

Turning east we learn that by now the church at Brampton may rejoice in musical enrichment of its worship services.

The installment of the organ will be completed this coming week and next Sunday DV [somewhere in the beginning of June, JdG] will be ready for use. We are grateful to a number of volunteers that, via the committee of administration, gave freely of their time to get things ready. We trust that this instrument with its many possibilities will enrich our worship services as we offer our songs of praise. However, with so many available

possibilities there is also a learning curve for the organists. We therefore request your patience and understanding over the next few weeks when we, as organists, become accustomed to this new instrument.

Toronto

The purchase of new pew Bibles for the Toronto church prompted the encouragement to handle them with care. They wrote:

Observation of practices and habits in this regard make it necessary to stress this point: Bibles are not there for knee support! Sometimes it is good to hear those who have come to us from different backgrounds, even from other cultures, for then you will find out that one of the offensive observations they make is the irreverent use of 'the Book!' Let this be no longer a stumbling block among us!

I am sure that this is not only applicable in Toronto.

Grand Valley

In Grand Valley the minister started an interesting initiative. Rev. Aasman wrote:

I have offered to give some help to a brother who wants to learn Greek. It really is a lovely language that is not as hard to learn as you might think. With a bit of hard work, one will be able to begin to work with the simple parts of the New Testament in the words as they were originally inspired. There are few things as lovely as reading the Bible in the language it was originally written. Text books are affordable and the lessons are quite manageable. It is nice, however, to have two or more people learning together in order to encourage one another in their work. If anyone is at all interested in joining our Greek club, please let me know soon.

Which minister is going to start a Hebrew club?

Watford

The church at Watford is looking forward to the possibility of building its own facilities, but things don't always go as smoothly as we would like to see. The Building Committee reported:

We had hoped that by now the property would have been in our hands. Due to matters out of our control, the process has been dragging on for an unreasonable amount of time. Though extremely frustrated, there is nothing we can do but be patient and pray that the Township lawyer will soon be satisfied with all his legal concerns. As soon as this happens, the property deal will close. May the Lord bless this hope.

Ancaster

Significant progress has been made in Ancaster with regard to the plans for a Home Mission Worker Project. In the Ancaster bulletin we read:

For the past while an ad hoc committee and the consistory have been studying the whole matter of whether we are ready to establish a home mission base in the Greater Hamilton area. The proposal was that we would work together with the church at Burlington South which has already approved a similar proposal. After many hours of discussion – in committee, consistory, in joint committee meetings with Burlington – and after fine tuning of reports, the consistory unanimously adopted the proposal to work together with Burlington South in appointing a mission worker who will work for the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ in this area. Later on a meeting was held to seek the approval of the congregation, and Rev. VanPopta reported on this meeting as follows:

... at the congregational meeting the consistory received approval to put into effect the Mission Worker Project proposal. This is a great development. Lord willing, by Sep-

tember 1 we will have someone in place to begin expanding and developing the work. May the Lord bless it! How encouraging to see the efforts in the Church to focus on the central mandate given by our Lord and Saviour!

Hamilton

All good things come to an end, as the saying goes. The bulletin of the Cornerstone church in Hamilton informs us:

Our dear pastor is nearing the end of his sabbatical. You may be interested to know that the book he has been writing is very near completion, as a matter of fact it is in the final editing stage.

From down under this time only one little note, from Kelmscott:

Church membership is somewhat like gardening – if you nurture it, you'll get a lot in return. **C**
A word to ponder for everyone of us.

Responding to God's Word

Women's League Day 98, hosted by the Surrey Maranatha Women's Society, welcomed 213 ladies from the nine churches in the Fraser Valley and Lynden, as well as guests from Vernon, Alberta and the Netherlands. The theme of the day was "Responding to God's Word," with an emphasis on both our outward appearance and our relationships to God and each other.

Everyone was officially welcomed by Mrs. Anne Vandermolen, who opened

the day with prayer and an invitation to sing God's praise. This was the first year that a change in League Day organization was implemented. The hosting society has traditionally done the morning topic as well as the lunch preparations, but due to the larger number of congregations in the valley, it was decided to divide the responsibilities more evenly. Consequently, Yarrow took care of the morning topic, under the capable direction of chairlady Mrs. Jenny Janzen. After

pointing out that women's issues are often front-page news today, she cautioned against the world's emphasis on self and individual achievement, rather than the biblical concept of service in communal relationships.

Mrs. Heather Aikema then presented her topic entitled "Adorn Yourself with Modesty." Heather detailed many scriptural references to clothing and the body, emphasizing that because we belong to Christ and are temples of his





I to r: Mrs. Linda Vane, Mrs. Fran Vanderpol

Mrs. Jenny Janzen

Mrs. Marian Nienhuis

I to r: Mrs. Karen VanSpronsen,
Mrs. Margaret Meyer,
Mrs. Fran Vanderpol

Spirit, also our outward appearance must witness to our commitment to lead a godly life. She pointed out that the New Testament believers were also surrounded by immorality, and had to be reminded that true beauty comes from within and not from fashionable or expensive clothing. Such beauty does not fade with age, because the believer is clothed with such lasting garments as righteousness, compassion, kindness, patience and humility.

The discussion touched on many points, including the training of daughters by their mothers, how we must maintain our femininity in the face of today's blurring of gender distinctions, and the responsibilities of both men and women in regards to provocative dress. It was pointed out that the world should not dictate our fashions, and that our young women must be encouraged by both word and example to avoid immodest attire. Parents have the authority to ensure that standards of modesty

are met, even though the task of ensuring compliance can be very difficult.

Mrs. Marian Nienhuis from Abbotsford then read a poem entitled "Mothers Apron Strings," after which we sang the League song, and Mrs. Jenny Van Driel led in lunchtime devotions. A delicious lunch of salads and buns was served in the festively-decorated basement. Old friends and new acquaintances exchanged lively conversations, and before long the afternoon session was announced.

Chaired by Mrs. Linda Vane, the afternoon featured three Aldergrove ladies who held a dialogue on the topic "Growing in Faith." Mrs. Fran Vanderpol, Mrs. Margaret Meyer, and Mrs. Karen Van Spronsen discussed how we were created to live in relationship to God and our fellowman. Sin has broken these relationships, but restoration has come through the renewal of the covenant in Christ the Redeemer. As wives and mothers we struggle to grow

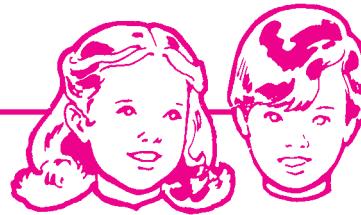
in faith as we work towards a common goal in our marriages and families. This requires patience, endurance and much self-discipline. It means giving up control over our lives, and learning to please God in his way, instead of our own. One of the issues raised during the question period concerned the definition of faith, as well as the connection between faith as a gift from God, and faith as it is worked out in our human relationships. Does faith grow only through struggles in our lives, or is it fed by hearing the Word? How does faith relate to obedience? Fran stressed that faith is not only what we believe but also what we do.

After some general business was discussed, Mrs. Corrie Geurts invited us to sing "Great is Thy Faithfulness," the day was closed with prayer. Teatime afford one last opportunity for socializing, after which all returned home under God's providential care.

C. Geurts C

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers

Did you have a good Sunday last week? Did you go to church, or did you stay at home because you were sick, or for some other reason? Did you go to your own church, or to the church of some cousins, or friends, or to the church where you are holidaying? Don't you think it is lots of fun being able to go to another church, knowing that these people believe in the same God as you do, read the same Bible, and pray just like your Dad and Mom, or Minister pray?

Yes, it is wonderful that in so many places in Canada you can find a Canadian Reformed Church, that you are able to go to church in freedom, without anyone teasing you about it. It is amazing, though, how many churches there are around the world, very similar to your own. If you go to Holland, you'll find the same churches, although they have their services in another language, of course. If you go to Australia, you'll find the same churches, although only in a few places. If you go to South Africa, you'll also find some churches. And there are some in China, Indonesia, Korea and many more places where you will find somewhere that you can go to church.

Do you believe that God looks after us in such a way that almost wherever we go, we can find a church to go to worship Him? I do!

ALL J'S

The answer to each clue below begins with the letter 'J'. How many can you identify?

1. He "sold pottage" and stole his brother's birthright.
2. The walls of this city fell down after the besieging Israelites had "compassed it about seven days."
3. This man was sold into slavery but rose to be the king's right-hand man whose organizing ability staved off the threat of famine.
4. His father was the first king of Israel and a great friend with the one who was to succeed his father.
5. The biggest river in Palestine.
6. The writer of a book of the Old Testament whose prophecy was quoted by Peter in his speech on the day of Pentecost.
7. He was eight years old when he began to reign, and he effected a great reformation in Judah during the thirty-one years before he was killed at Megiddo.
8. He came from Bethlehem and his most famous son was first a shepherd and later a king.
9. His rash oath led to the sacrifice of his only daughter after his victory over the Ammonites.
10. He was an unwilling messenger to Nineveh, but eventually, after being thrown into the sea and swallowed by a great fish, he converted the city by his preaching.
11. He commanded the sun and moon to stand still so that the Israelites could complete the pursuit and destruction of the Amorites.

BIRTHDAYS FOR AUGUST

1	Bernice Ravensbergen	17	Margriet Snip
1	Lydia Kingma	18	Rebecca Bethlehem
4	Melissa Tuininga	19	Amanda Tamminga
4	Michelle DeBoer	22	Christa Agema
6	Hannah Bergsma	22	Laurence Kingma
10	Debbie Olson	26	Arnold Kanis

WORD SEARCH

By Busy Beaver Kim Van Dyk

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

Find:

Hummingbird	Mallard	Swan
Morning Dove	Emu	Hawk
Gold Finch	Falcon	Eagle
Parakeet	Goose	Robin
Ostrich	Gull	Bluejay
Albatross	Heron	Pheasant
Owl	Loon	Cardinal
Swallow	Puffin	Flamingo
Chicken	Canary	Bluebird
Dodo	Blackbird	Parrot