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# Clarion

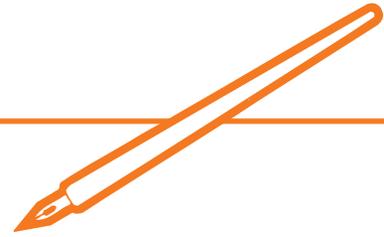
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE



Butt  
out!

## INSIDE:

- *Inclusive or Exclusive?*
- *The Reception of the Liberation of 1944 in the Christian Reformed Church*



By J. De Jong



## Butt out!

The arrival of a new year is traditionally also a time when people make new resolutions concerning changes in their life style and habits. People ask about the new year's resolutions that others have made, and relate their own resolutions as well. The problem, of course, is whether one can follow through and stick to the resolutions that have been made!

One area where we could use some encouragement and advice is the habit of smoking. There is no doubt that among our youth, smoking is still a problem. Here in the east Guido de Brès High School recently adopted an expanded *No Smoking Policy* which is to come into effect in September 2003. It is a zero-tolerance policy, and states that after the third infraction, expulsion from the school is the only proper consequence if you are caught smoking in and around school property, or in the school's neighbourhood.

*There are at least fifty chemicals found in tobacco smoke that are known to cause cancer.*

### Smoking and health

Why the strictness, one may wonder? Well, the evidence of smoking's harmful effects is overwhelming. Here are a few facts. There are at least fifty chemicals found in tobacco smoke that are known to cause cancer. Next to nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide, cigarette manufacturers are now obligated to put a broader list of toxic chemicals on the cigarette packages. And the list is long enough to make anyone wonder why a person would even want to start smoking! Other diseases caused by smoking are emphysema, chronic bronchitis, chronic destructive pulmonary disease, heart disease, strokes, and so on.

### Smoking and pregnancy

Government information brochures also make clearer that the use of tobacco during pregnancy can seriously damage the heart of the child in the womb. I quote: "Tobacco use during pregnancy increases the risk of preterm birth. Babies born preterm are at an increased risk of infant death, illness and disability." The gift of life through child birth is one of the greatest blessings God gives in this life. Should we then not be as careful as we can be with the blessing and riches He grants to us in our children?

### Whence the habit?

Cigarette smoking was introduced in Europe around the middle of the nineteenth century by French and English soldiers returning from the Crimean war. They saw the Turkish soldiers smoking "paper cigars" and picked up the habit themselves. From there it did not take long to spread to the new world, and from there it grew into a multi-million dollar industry as it is seen in the western world today. A living proof that nicotine is the most addictive chemical known to man!

### The effects

In the first place, smoking seriously affects one's level of endurance and stamina. Cigarette smoke paralyzes the cilia on the inner wall of the lung, and they then shrivel and become inactive. Once that happens tar particles penetrate through the outer tissue, then through the lining of the air passages of the lungs, and so can injure living cells, making them abnormal, and in some cases, cancerous. Once cells become cancerous, they multiply rapidly and crowd out the healthy cells. In some cases, medical treatment can save the day. But there are also too many cases where the doctors can only say: "Sorry, there is nothing we can do at this point."

### How to quit?

If you have tried to quit smoking and have had little success, you should pursue a planned approach to the problem. Set up a for and against column, then write down the reasons why you smoke and the reasons why you should not smoke. Review the list at regular intervals, and you will find the reasons on the right side make a lot more sense!

*Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit!*

Take a positive approach, focussing on your progress one day at a time. Share your approach and concerns with others, and solicit their help. If temptations persist, you can also appeal to professional services, special medications and various alternative therapies. And even more: bring the matter before the Lord in prayer. He will grant you the strength of his Spirit to follow through on the resolutions you have made!

Besides all this, take a scriptural approach. That should be our dominant motive! Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit! Should we not use them to the glory of God! Indeed, we may enjoy many blessing and benefits that the Lord gives. We may enjoy the fruits of the earth! But anything harmful to the growth and development of the human body should be strictly avoided.

### Dealing with addiction

The process of addiction in the area of alcohol, drugs and smoking is very subtle. It begins with a psychological dependence, but builds up to a physical dependence. The body gets used to the smaller amounts, and thus in order to retain the desired effect of calm and relaxation, you need to increase the intake. However, as intake increases, the body as well as the human psyche suffers increasingly. One ends up developing a physical dependence on nicotine and other drugs just to stay calm. Meanwhile the harmful effects of smoking on the body only increase. Recent studies have proven that nicotine is the most addictive substance known to man.

### Time to quit

New year's resolutions are, of course, old hat to many people. In the end not much comes of them. But I would suggest in this case: if quitting smoking is your aim, make the resolution and give it another shot! In Christ we are delivered from sin and slavery, and therefore also delivered from habits to which we are bound that are harmful to the body and to our minds. We share redemption in Christ, Ephesians 1:7. Therefore in the middle of struggle and temptation we can always turn to him! The Lord is near to the broken hearted, and lifts up those who are downcast in spirit, Psalm 34:19.

## What's inside?

Dr. J. De Jong writes about making New Year's resolutions. He offers compelling arguments for smokers to make a resolution to quit smoking. He also gives helpful and practical advice for doing so.

Recently, many of us read of a disturbing decision by a Christian Reformed Church in Toronto to welcome as full members gays and lesbians who are living in committed relationships. In addition, such members will also be able to serve as office-bearers. Dr. J. Visscher writes about this in his article, "Inclusive or Exclusive?"

We are starting a two part series of a speech held by a Dutch historian, Dr. G. Harinck, in the United States. He deals with the historical context of Dr. K. Schilder's deposition in the early 1940s, and how this was perceived by the Christian Reformed Church in North America. It may surprise you, or at least refresh your memory, to see what the CRC thought. Things could have been different.

We have our regular columns *Ray of Sunshine* and *Treasures, New and Old*, along with the press releases of three Classes.

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## A communal approach

Many struggle with their bad habits entirely on their own. They prefer not to speak about them, or to carry on the battle in their own way. And indeed, in dealing with sin there is and must be a personal dimension as well. We all have our own weaknesses and need to deal with them in our own way. However, in dealing with addictions, the help of the community can be and often is a positive and healthy factor. We are called to help each other, and to have patience

*If we want to be real agents of outreach,  
let's live healthy lives ourselves!*

with each other (1 Thess 5:14). We are warned not to judge each other (Jas 4:12). We are called to show others the right way (Gal 6:1). We are called to listen to each other, and to show mercy to each other. Is that not the way of Christ? So I would suggest: find a friend who can help you and hold you accountable to your resolution!

## Youth and peer pressure

All too often the smoking habit begins with peer pressure at the high school level. At least – let me be honest – that's the way it was with me. And it took a few years before I realized that the smoking habit was not doing my health any good. Therefore I would suggest that among our youth to-

day we need to develop a positive health orientation. A no smoking policy in and around our schools is a good thing. But this should also be filled out with promotional literature that encourages fitness, health and proper decorum in all extra-curricular activities.

## Outreach!

For many of our youth, the outreach activities of *Street-light Ministries* has been a real eyeopener. A two-day sojourn in a downtown neighbourhood gives you a fairly accurate picture of the grief and brokenness of many lives caused by addictions of one kind or another. If we want to be real agents of outreach, let's live healthy lives ourselves! We need to witness in word and in deed! Let the light shine, and be helpers to those in need!

Let's start off the new year with a new tone! Let's show that we belong to our Lord and that our bodies are temples of his Spirit! Let's also show that we care about the salvation of others, also those who are down and out, and about their health and restoration in this life as well! Living witnesses will stay clear of addictions, and help others with addictions. God in his mercy in Christ will also help all those who struggle with addictions. And all this will serve to mould us more as fitting ambassadors of his will in a broken world! 

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## Guido de Brès Christian High School Smoking Policy

A zero-tolerance smoking policy will be implemented by September 2003. Students are not to smoke or be in possession of cigarettes during school hours (8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.), or at school-sponsored activities. Infractions will result in suspensions that become part of the students' overall suspension record.

This policy has the following implications:

1. Students can no longer smoke anywhere on school property.
2. Since the smoking ban is in effect for the entire school day both on and off school property, students who smoke should leave their cigarettes at home.
3. Students who wish to participate on school teams or extended school trips or after-school activities will have to be non-smokers since the smoking ban is in effect for the entire trip or activity.

The ultimate purpose of this new policy is to encourage all students not to smoke, and encourage current smokers to quit. The school will provide information and assistance relating to smoking cessation programs.

By P.G. Feenstra

# The beauty of the way of a man with a woman

*Song of Songs 2:1-4*

A component that draws two people together in marriage is love. Men and women are to “live together in sincere love and holiness, helping each other faithfully in all things that belong to this life and to the life to come” (*Form for Solmnization of Marriage, Book of Praise*, p.636). Love is a relationship of mutual commitment and respect whereby two people walk together through this life – even if the road gets rough and there are trials and disappointments.

Song of Songs deals with a beautiful thing in God’s creation – the union of love between two people committed to each other for marriage – a relationship which, as Ephesians 5 says, is to reflect the wonderful union between Christ and his church. Song of Songs shows us a couple who prepare themselves for marriage and keep themselves pure for that day. The relationship they build is based on their love for the Lord.

Using very expressive language Song of Songs describes the devotion a bride and groom have for one another. It speaks of the physical attraction they have to each other. In this Bible book we have a description of what Proverbs 30:19 calls, “. . . the way of a man with a maiden.” The couple speak to each other with an abundance of imagery, metaphors and comparisons, in terms of fields, gardens, flowers, trees and animals. You picture them walking through the fields and the meadows and making use of all that they see. First the woman speaks, “I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.”

The woman’s view of herself in this passage has changed from a previous encounter. Earlier she was mindful of her appearance. “Do not stare at me because I am dark,” she said “because I am darkened by the sun.” But now she has been convinced by her husband-to-be that she is beautiful just the way she is. The rose

of Sharon characterizes simplicity and gentleness. It is a reference to beauty, delicacy and an unassuming, humble and modest character. In Isaiah 65:10 Sharon is described as a place of security, safety and nourishment.

Besides being a rose of Sharon, the bride-to-be describes herself as a lily of the valley. The lily symbolizes new life. In Hosea 14:5 we are told that Israel shall blossom like the lily, which is a reference to the restored beauty and abundance that comes after one repents and returns to the ways of the Lord. These are the characteristics the woman wants to highlight for her future husband.

After the woman has spoken her future husband speaks. He replies: “Like a lily among thorns, is my darling among the maidens.” The contrast he makes is not a matter of looks. The groom sees his future wife as one who belongs to the class of redeemed women, of those who are shaped and formed by the Spirit to walk in newness of life. He doesn’t want a woman who is associated with distortion and perversion. Self-gratification, selfishness, and sinful passions are the thorns he doesn’t want. The curse God invoked upon the chaos man created through the fall into sin was associated with thorns and brambles.

The imagery then switches to a description of the groom-to-be. He is as an apple tree among the trees of the forest. The woman is saying her lover is one of a kind. Not only is he a tree but he is one that bears fruit. He is one that is made useful in the service of the Lord. Scripture speaks repeatedly of the Christian life as one that bears good fruit. Every Christian man is to show fruits of the redeemed life in his love for the Lord but specifically here in the way he acts toward his future wife. Fruit of the Spirit is to be visible in how he will lead and assist her in all good things. He is

committed to provide and care for her. Moreover, it is delightful to have him around because she can sit and rest under his shade, under his protection.

Finally, the woman adds, he has taken me to the banquet hall and his banner over me is love. She proclaims that the love that her beloved has for her is evident to everyone. His commitment serves as a gigantic billboard. Everyone knows this man is committed to his woman and to her alone. He displays publicly that he cares for her.

What a wonderful picture of mutual love made possible through God’s initiative. It is because God has called us to return to Him that courtship and marriage is made possible. The LORD has become shade for us; therefore husbands may provide for and protect their wives. Christ’s love for his people allows the banner of love to be raised in the life of a couple. The beginning of renewed life, and the eternal joy of the new heaven and the new earth can already be experienced in the marriages of men and women who fear the Lord.

Today more than ever, the banner of love must sway above our courtships and marriages. In the Old Testament, the people of God lived in the hope and the expectation of the renewal of their life in the coming Saviour, Jesus Christ. We know this Christ has come and his love has been revealed to us. Married life takes on new dimensions in the Lord. Let us rejoice and humbly thank the Lord for Christian marriages and for young couples who already in courtship reflect God’s love for his people. 

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# Inclusive or Exclusive?

By J. Visscher

Two big words is what they are. Two big words that also need some definition. "Inclusive" refers, if you have not guessed it already, to the idea of including people or things. "Exclusive" has to do with keeping or shutting them out. In a sense you can say that these words represent opposite approaches.

## Accused of being exclusive

As such they can be applied to many things, but our interest in these words has to do not with many things, but with only one thing, namely the church. Some time ago it became popular to describe churches as "exclusive" if they engaged in certain practices. For example, you can hear it said that as Canadian Reformed Churches

*It means that this church has decided to welcome as full members gays and lesbians who are living in committed relationships.*

we are exclusive because we do not allow everyone free and automatic access to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This, we are told, is a very discriminatory and unchristian practice, because all who confess that "Jesus is Lord" should on the basis of that confession be admitted to the use of the sacrament. Not to do so results in discrimination against other true Christians and opens up a church to the charge of being "exclusive."

Obviously, what those who levy this charge want to see is not an exclusive church but an inclusive one. All and everyone should be welcomed without any conditions or restrictions.

## Openly opting for inclusivity – the case of First CRC Toronto

But that too is not without its problems. Take the case of the First Christian Reformed Church of Toronto, Ontario, which on October 10, 2002, sent an open pastoral letter to all of its brothers and sisters in Classis Toronto. In this letter the following question is both asked and answered, "were we willing to identify ourselves as an inclusive congregation, or not? We decided to do so."

Now what does this mean in concrete terms? It means that this church has decided to welcome as full members gays and lesbians who are living in committed relationships. In addition, such members will also be able to serve as office-bearers. In taking this step the church realizes very well that it will be running afoul of "Synod's view" and making some serious waves in the Christian Reformed Church.

At the same time it is also not prepared to discuss the issue of gay and lesbian members any longer. Its many years of pastoral experience, as well as "a beautiful ministry to and with both straights and gays" culminated in this decision. The letter goes on to state that "we are actually not very interested in debating the subject any longer or delving into it on some repeated basis. For we are actually significantly past that point. We have a wide-ranging ministry to do, that does not revolve around only one issue."

First CRC Toronto also admits that this decision did not receive the unanimous support of its members and that it has proven to be "a volatile issue." Still, it believes such tensions to be healthy and is determined to plunge ahead. It wants to be known as "a safe congregation."

Further to this, it also of the opinion that because of its experience in these matters, it can be "of some assistance

when the denomination feels worried the issue could bring turmoil at broader levels." More than that, the pastor of First CRC even extends the following offer, "we do have many really nice people in Toronto. If the issue is going to come to the CRC sooner or later, why not have it come with us on board as a helpful resource, a highly talented and very experienced congregation?"

*One can only conclude that as far as First CRC Toronto is concerned, what the Bible has to say about this ethical issue is either immaterial or unclear.*

In closing, a plea is made for understanding and tolerance. "We have no desire whatsoever to leave the CRC. We are not schismatic people. Many of us serve on boards of various Christian organizations filled with CRC members. Our church bulletin is full of CRC announcements. . . . We have no desire to go casting about looking for some other ecclesiastical tradition within which to set up our tent. We are sincerely Reformed in our outlook and theology, and we feel badly that some will take our recent decision on inclusivity as a painful betrayal."

## A deplorable decision

I am not sure what the reaction will be in the CRC to this new course being charted by the First CRC of Toronto. I surmise that it will lead to deep searching of heart, to anger, and even to demands for the expulsion of this local church from the federation. In a sense this church has thrown down the gauntlet. It remains to be seen how the CRC will respond to the challenge.

Notwithstanding all that, it has to be said that the open letter and the decision

it communicates is very distressing. That its location as a city church in a major Canadian centre brings it into contact with many different issues relating to sexuality and lifestyle is not to be doubted. But then, why does it opt for a position that not only lacks biblical support but is so obviously contrary to what the Bible teaches?

Indeed, it is most striking that in this entire open letter there is only one reference to the Bible, and it has to do with Romans 12:18 and living at peace with everyone. In other words, there is no interaction whatsoever with what the Bible says in Genesis about God creating male and female or about Sodom and Gomorrah, in Leviticus about unnatural sexual relations, in Romans 1 about sexual deviation, in Galatians about the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit, or in Revelation about those who are outside the city of God. One can only conclude that as far as First CRC Toronto is concerned, what the Bible has to say about this ethical issue is either immaterial or unclear.

Aside from this glaring omission, there are a lot of fine sounding words in this open letter. There is even some pastoral psycho babble about “minimalist hope” and “maximalist hope.” Yet in the end nothing can disguise the fact that this church has opted for a position that is blatantly at odds with the Word of God, with the Reformed con-

fessions, with the history of the Christian church, and even with the decisions taken by the broadest assembly of its own denomination.

### **Inclusive or exclusive?**

Yes, and that in turn brings us back to the issue of inclusive or exclusive. If being an inclusive church means welcoming gays and lesbians into the church as full members, even as office bearers, then that term will soon have a most odious smell attached to it.

*The church of Jesus Christ needs to be both. . . inclusive and exclusive.*

But does it deserve that? I would say that this business of pitting inclusive and exclusive over against one another is a bad business. For the truth of the matter is that the church of Jesus Christ needs to be both! When it comes to the call of the gospel it needs to be dynamically and obediently inclusive. This call is to go out to everyone, regardless of race, colour, class, sex, or language. All people are addressed by the gospel and all people are to be told the same gospel demand: repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ.

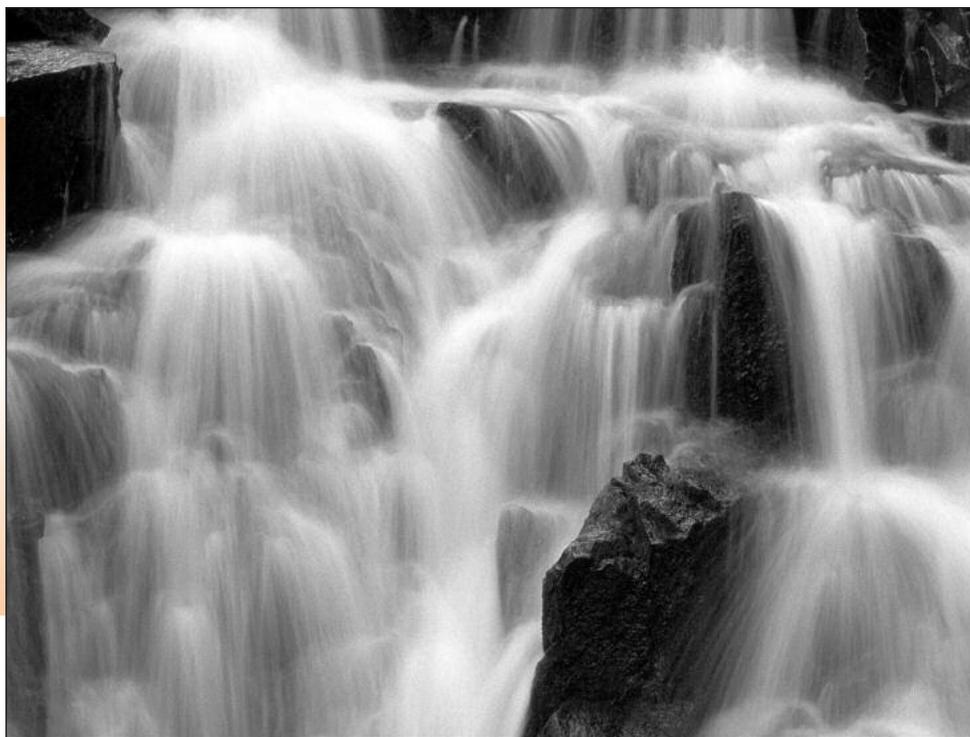
At the same time the church of Jesus Christ is to be exclusivist in the sense that it cannot admit to its membership

those who are unbiblical in either their doctrine and/or life. An even cursory look at Galatians 5 reminds us that flesh and Spirit are opposed and contrary to each other. What the gospel separates, no church has a right to tolerate! What the gospel forbids, no church has a right to condone! What the gospel condemns, no church has a right to approve!

And as for the matter of the Canadian Reformed Churches and its supervision of the Lord’s Supper, there is clear biblical support for the position that the table is holy and thus needs to be supervised. The apostle Paul says to the elders of the church at Ephesus, “keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers” (Acts 20:28). He says to Timothy that they have a duty to “direct the affairs of the church” (1 Tim 5:17). Such oversight and direction pertains to the sacraments and their proper administration as well. It even calls for a policy that is both exclusive and inclusive, in that it excludes all who are delinquent in doctrine or conduct, and includes all of those who are committed to the Lord and to living in newness of life.



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# The Reception of the Liberation of 1944 in the Christian Reformed Church (Part 1)<sup>1</sup>

By George Harinck

One of the most dramatic episodes in the 150 years of relationship between the Christian Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands is the matter regarding Klaas Schilder, a professor in dogmatics at the Theological School of the Reformed Churches in Kampen. When he was invited to the United States in 1939 by CRC people, several CRC professors and pastors feared turmoil and begged him to stay home. Schilder was disappointed in this reaction from his colleagues in the sister church. However, he made a successful visit to the USA. The relations with Calvin Seminary were cool, but he was revered among the people of the CRC and the Protestant Reformed Churches, and he was befriended by the leader of these churches, Herman Hoeksema.

Schilder believed the split between both denominations was unnecessary, and he and his friend William B. Eerdmans, the publisher, organized a conference in the Pantlind Hotel in Grand Rapids. There for the first time since 1924, pastors and professors of both denominations met. But in the end the CRC pastors refused to debate the issue on this meeting. That was in 1939.

When Schilder made his second trip to the USA in 1947, the CRC closed its doors to him. Again, CRC people were sympathetic to him, but it was the leaders that feared his influence. Schilder did preach and lecture in the USA, but this time only in the circles of that other CRC outcast, Herman Hoeksema.

Schilder's visits of 1939 and 1947 make up the context of our topic of this afternoon, the reaction of the CRC to the split in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, known as the Liberation of 1944. Though it is a bit of an ex-

aggeration to ascribe a secession of 80,000 people to the act of one person, Schilder's name is synonymous with that of the Liberation. When Americans heard about the Liberation, their opinion on this secession was determined by their appreciation of Schilder.

## Schilder's deposition

Schilder was deposed by the synod of Utrecht on August 3, 1944. The Liberation started later that month and the exodus of members and churches went on till about 1946. At that time, about 10 percent had left the Reformed Churches. One of the striking features of this secession was that it happened during the Second World War, when German terror was reigning in the Netherlands, at the eve of the so called "hunger winter." Nearly every church-paper was forbidden or had terminated its circulation because of lack of paper;

*The Synod of course never realized the deposition of Schilder would cause one the largest Dutch church splits since the Reformation of the sixteenth century.*

pastors were shot or imprisoned, and quite a few Reformed people were hiding from the Germans or were active in the resistance movement. It was not really the time to settle a church dispute. That is why many churches had asked the Synod to postpone the Schilder case till after the war. But the synod feared the growing influence of Schilder and judged it dangerous not to stop him immediately.

The Synod of course never realized the deposition of Schilder would cause one the largest Dutch church splits since the Reformation of the sixteenth century. When confronted with the immense and sudden exodus, the synodical party got furious. They lost control completely, and started complaining about a church struggle in war time which they themselves had caused. They criticized the Liberated people for being zealous, while they themselves could not be stopped in anyway in their dealing with Schilder. They deposed him, not because of his teachings, but for being publicly unwilling to agree with the synod. The Liberation, seen from the synodical point of view, was a question of authority. From the standpoint of the Liberated people it was a matter of freedom of speech and freedom of opinion, hence the name Liberation.

## Lack of knowledge

Initially, hardly anything was known in the United States about this sad fight in the Dutch church. The Liberation happened two months after D-day. At that time millions of Americans were deeply involved in the war in Europe, and many CRC boys and men fought and died for freedom in France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and in the Netherlands as well. There was no free press in the Netherlands and no open mail exchange between America and Europe. The war situation not only checked the development of the Liberation in the Netherlands, but also prevented any information on this split from reaching the USA.

The first news of serious problems in the Reformed Churches reached Michigan in August 1944, when Rev. E. Van Halsema in *De Wachter* referred to

some Dutch newspaper clippings printed in England, mentioning the suspension of Schilder. Van Halsema was not able to confirm the news. Schilder had indeed been suspended by the Synod in March, but that was yet unknown in the USA.

In the September 1944 issue of the *Missionary Monthly* Henry Beets speculated on the word suspension. He wrote: "If it means that, as a result of his loyalty to his country, the invader has again interfered with Schilder as happened in 1940 – we admire his bravery." But Beets considered it more likely that Schilder was suspended in the ecclesiastical sense of the word and ascribed this "to a certain leaning of our brother to disagree with his fellow believers."

*The 1924 statement of the CRC synod at Kalamazoo on common grace – the so-called three points – was the shibboleth of the CRC.*

After Van Halsema spread the rumour of Schilder's deposition in October, *The Banner* of November 1944 was more positive in its statements. *The Banner* editor, H.J. Kuiper, took it as a fact that Schilder had not only been suspended, but had been deposed as well. Why and when he did not know. But to him the name of Schilder was sufficient as an explanation. Kuiper shared with his readers some of his unpleasant memories of Schilder's visit to the CRC community in 1939. In those days, Kuiper had been the main opponent to Schilder's visit. He had written in *The Banner* that Schilder held opinions on common grace which had been condemned by the CRC in 1924.

### Common grace

The 1924 statement of the CRC synod at Kalamazoo on common grace – the so-called three points – was the shibboleth of the CRC: anyone who did not endorse these points was considered to be deviating from the Reformed doctrine. By 1944 the three points had reached a more or less confessional status. For Kuiper and several professors of the Theological School at Grand Rapids, this statement had become so vital to the identity of the CRC, that they turned a

Prof. K. Schilder



cold shoulder to Schilder on his 1939 visit, only because he did not accept this statement unconditionally.

Nearly six years after Schilder's visit, Kuiper admitted he had never been more severely criticized than on that occasion. "But," he now wrote in the November 1944 issue, "when Dr. Schilder was among us in 1939 and delivered his lectures on common grace and other subjects it soon became apparent that our appraisal had been correct." Neither Kuiper nor anyone else in the USA knew the reason of Schilder's deposition by that time, but – taking into consideration his 1939 experiences with Schilder – Kuiper considered it likely that what he called "Schilder's denial of God's common grace" was one of them.

### Hoeksema

Though he was no member of the CRC, I think it is right to include Hoeksema's reactions to the news on Schilder's supposed deposition in *The Standard Bearer* of October 1944. After all, the history of the CRC since 1924 cannot be written if Hoeksema would be excluded. Hoeksema repudiated Beets' suggestion that Schilder was a disagreeable person and reminded his readers that Schilder left Grand Rapids in 1939 deeply grieved because of the cold-blooded and unbrotherly way in which he had been treated in Christian Reformed Jerusalem. Hoeksema contended that the CRC's reaction to the news on Schilder was deeply influenced by what he called a "stubborn obsession with respect to the common grace theory."

So far the news releases of 1944. Let us halt here for a moment and point to

some characteristic elements in these first American reactions to the troubles in the Reformed Churches. First, no one refers in any way to the role of the Synod in the conflict. Remarkably, it is the single opponent who is the villain in the story. Secondly, the church papers give two reasons to plead that Schilder was guilty: one is his character and the other is his opinions. It is clear that from the outset that it was impossible for Schilder to gain even the benefit of the doubt: Allegedly, he was a difficult

*It was not shepherds, but soldiers who brought the news of the split.*

man, his opinions were deviating from current teachings in the CRC, and, most horrible of all, his opinions and character looked like Hoeksema's. I remind you that by this time the worst news was still on its way: there was no knowledge of a secession yet. By Christmas 1944, it was not silent anymore, but all still seemed rather holy around the CRC's cradle in the Netherlands.

### News from the soldiers

But let's continue. It was not shepherds, but soldiers who brought the news of the split. But they did live in the fields, in the liberated southern part of the Netherlands. *De Wachter* played a major role in bringing the news early 1945. It was still a Dutch language church paper and, together with Hoeksema's bilingual *Standard Bearer*, had stronger ties with the Netherlands than *Missionary Monthly*, *The Banner*, or *Calvin Forum*. From January 1945 on,

*De Wachter* editor Van Halsema published several letters from Christian Reformed American soldiers or Dutch soldiers who had connections in the USA or Canada. The letter writers had all arrived in the Netherlands after the Liberation had started and all lived in Dutch provinces that were mainly Roman Catholic. There were hardly any Reformed churches in that area, and liberated people could be counted on one hand.

The soldier-writers all considered the secession a very sad thing, especially because unity was needed so much in the devastated Netherlands. With acknowledgment of the great merits of Schilder, they all wrote that it had nevertheless been impossible to maintain him. His attitude had been too unbecoming and dictatorial. None of the soldiers had this knowledge first hand of course, but this was told to them by Reformed people who favored the synod.

Van Halsema withheld himself from comments until official sources had confirmed this news, but the news of the schism offered Beets and Kuiper the missing pieces to solve the puzzle. In February 1945 they both linked Schilder's doctrinal stance on common grace with the deposition of Schilder and the subsequent secession, and presented Schilder as a Dutch Hoeksema. Especially Kuiper, who was very much opposed to Hoeksema and to Schilder, elaborated on this theme in *The Banner*. Kuiper now even wrote he had known beforehand that a break would happen one day: "Prof. Schilder kept the Reformed Churches in constant turmoil through his pugnacious attitude toward all who could not agree with his views. Even before the war began it was evident that unless he would change his views or his attitude or both a break would come."

### The issue

Hoeksema was the only one who questioned the attitude of the synod and distrusted the impossibility of maintaining Schilder. He doubted that the common grace issue had been the reason for the Liberation and the charge that Schilder had been too unbecoming and dictatorial sounded in his ears as a well-known argument of synods that try to justify themselves, as he wrote in February 1945. While the CRC pastors tended to agree with the synod, Hoeksema sided with Schilder, though he

refused to make any decisive comment before he knew more.

Hoeksema seemed to be right. A new letter undermined the Hoeksema-Schilder similarity in the spring of 1945. Now a soldier stated in *De Wachter* that a dispute on baptism and presuppositional regeneration had been the reason for the schism. The soldier explained that there was room for a different opinion on these issues within the Reformed Churches, but that the problem was that Schilder and his Kampen colleague Prof. Greijdanus had criticized the synod in rude words and disputed its authority. This could not be tolerated, according to the soldier. Van Halsema concluded that the schism seemed rather complicated: it was not just on doctrine, but on church polity as well.

*As long as the war was going on, the Reformed people had no means and not much interest in communicating with the outside world.*

One soldier seemed to have spoken with some liberated people. The first news from this side was that these people hoped and expected the CRC would join them. Beets now started to reevaluate his own judgment. In February, *De Wachter* held the news that Prof. Greijdanus had been suspended as well, and had joined the Liberation. The confirmation of the news that "also our beloved and highly respected Prof. Greijdanus, had been deposed as professor of the Kampen School" led Beets in *Missionary Monthly* of April 1945 to the utterance: "Strange and sad, that while water, fire and snow is destroying the old Fatherland literally, theological quarreling persists." In *The Banner* of June 15, Kuiper had the news that more than sixty churches had joined the secession, and in July, *De Wachter* even mentioned the amount of a 100 churches! In July, Van Halsema published a message of the synod of August 1944 in *De Wachter*, and pointed to some sharp phrasing in it, like on the "shameful contents" of a declaration of the liberated people. Van Halsema just reported what he had read, but did not dare to give any judgmental comments.

By July 1945 it had become undeniable that the schism of the "talented but eccentric" Schilder also had some striking dissimilarities with the Hoeksema case of 1924, when only about five churches left the CRC.

### Other things on the mind

Let us pause here for a while again. We must not forget, that in the first half of 1945 the largest part of the Netherlands was still occupied. When the Netherlands were liberated in May 1945, the Dutch population was exhausted by a severe winter with food shortages and by Germans terrorizing the country for five years. To give one example, Schilder and his family had been forced to leave their house in 1943 and when they returned to it in May 1945 it had been looted by the Germans. As long as the war was going on, the Reformed people had no means and not much interest in communicating with the outside world. That is the reason why in the first half of 1945 the principal part in our story is played by the reporting soldiers. The editors were very grateful to them, but their letters also puzzled them. They were one sided at best and contradicting at worse. By July 1945 the editors had lost some of their initial certainty and started to wonder. Did the issue of common grace have anything to do with the case, and what were they to think of a synod that had to depose a disobedient Schilder, as if this was a natural law of cause and effect?

<sup>1</sup>Speech held on June 22, 2001 at the conference of the American Association for Dutch- American Studies. The conference was held on the campus of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI, USA. 

*Dr. George Harinck is a Dutch historian and Director of the Archives and Documentation Center of the Reformed Churches (liberated) in Kampen, the Netherlands*

*In LINK with you*



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<[premier.mb.ca/clarion.html](http://premier.mb.ca/clarion.html)>*



## Theological College Update

The first semester has come and gone. It is a good time to give an update on the happenings at the Theological College! Of course, our daily core activity of studying, lecturing and training for the ministry is hardly newsworthy. That defines us as an institution and can be expected. What needs to be passed on therefore are those special events that do not take place every day.

### Hearing the word in a visual age

On October 29, we were privileged to hear a special lecture on hearing the Word in a visual age by Dr. David Schuringa of Crossroads Bible Institute in Grand Rapids. This had been the topic of his dissertation under Dr. K. Runia in the Theological University in Kampen (Oudestraat). While studying there, Dr. Schuringa also followed lectures by Dr. C. Trimp on redemptive-historical preaching (at the same time that my colleague Dr. De Jong did) and so became familiar with and appreciative of our Dutch sister churches.

*How does preaching the gospel fit into an age of power point presentations and drama as found in many churches today?*

In his lecture, he noted that people today generally gravitate around what is seen rather than what is heard. How does preaching the gospel fit into an age of power point presentations and drama as found in many churches today? In answering that question our guest lecturer gave an overview of what Scripture and the history of preaching teaches us. He noted how Scripture places a high premium on listening to the Word that is proclaimed. At the same time, the Lord also used certain vi-

sual elements to reinforce the Word spoken. Over against the medieval abuse of the visual in images and morality plays, the Reformers sounded a clear clarion call for the primacy of the preached Word. The Lord himself provides a visual element in the sacraments that underlines and reinforces the Word preached. Dr. Schuringa clearly affirmed the primacy of preaching but did leave open the possibility on rare occasions for a visual element in the worship service, as long as the Word stayed central. The discussion that followed was very stimulating. It was also stressed that even in our visual age the power of the simple proclamation of the gospel should not be underestimated, for it is the means used by the Spirit to work renewal in human hearts.

### The Reformed faith in the Middle East

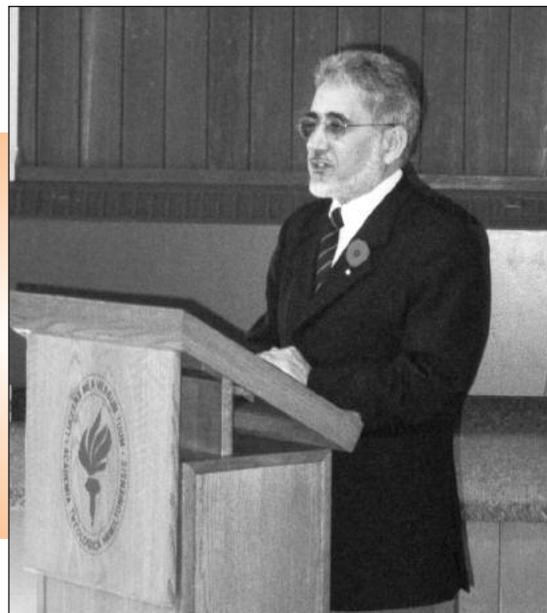
We were also privileged to have Rev. Victor Atallah of the Middle East Reformed Fellowship, based in Larnaca, Cyprus, tell us about his work on November 8. Born in Egypt in the Coptic Church, this missionary had an amazing

pilgrimage to the Reformed faith. He started his theological studies at the Near Eastern School of Theology in Beirut and eventually ended up at the feet of the Reformed apologist Dr. Cornelius Van Til at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

*Islam has no answers for the issues of the day, but Christ does!*

Exuding a tremendous warmth for the lost, he described the many programs under way to try to reach the predominantly Muslim Arab world for Christ. There are eleven weekly radio broadcasts that reach the Middle East and North Africa, as well as many training and deaconal programs. By God's grace, much fruit on the work is seen. The Reformed churches are growing in the Middle East, even where there is concerted persecution. To give two examples. In the Sudan, 1.9 million have converted to the Reformed faith.

Rev.  
Victor Atallah



The need for ministers and training of office bearers is staggering. In Iran the harvest is also plentiful and Reformed radio programs in the Parsi language have started.

When one hears a presentation like this one is in awe of the sovereign grace of God, who calls his own, also from the Muslim multitudes. Islam has no answers for the issues of the day, but Christ does! And the Lord gathers his church.

### Academic conferences

As in any line of work, also professors of theology benefit from special conferences that stimulate their thinking and bring them into contact with others in similar fields. During the last weeks of November 2002 there was a unique opportunity to do just that for the professors in biblical studies. Prof. G. H. Visscher and I were able to attend a good number of the sessions of the Evangelical Theological Society, Institute for Biblical Research as well as some sponsored by the Society of Bibli-

cal Literature. All these societies had their annual meeting in Toronto this time around (a first) and so we could take advantage of it. It was very encouraging to meet other scholars of like persuasion who wrestle with the challenge of teaching theology in a post-modern age. It was also an opportune time to see what new products the publishers had to offer.

### School children and students

Once again we were privileged to hear the sound of school children ring through the College building when the grade 4 class from Maranatha Christian School in Fergus visited us in November. It is good to see a lively interest in the churches' training school for the ministry.

May the Lord also give an increase in students coming to study here. It is a good idea for students contemplating the ministry to contact us at an early stage so that one's university education will be as beneficial as possible for the study at the Theological College.

Speaking of students, tax-deductible contributions to the student bursary fund are always welcome. Please make out your donation to the Theological College (110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON L9C 5A1) and earmark it for the Foreign Student Bursary Fund.

### What a privilege!

It is a tremendous privilege to know oneself to be a child of the Lord our God who has made and who will renew this world. We live in confusing times and we are very thankful that the work of the Theological College can continue so that preachers of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ can go forth to minister the Word! May the Lord continue to bless our work here as well as the ministries in the supporting churches of both North America and Australia. 

*Dr. C. Van Dam is principal and professor of Old Testament at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario.*  
[cvandam@canrc.org](mailto:cvandam@canrc.org)





By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose.*  
Romans 8:28

## Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We have come to another year of our Lord 2003. It is another year in which we are able to serve our God. It is but another day in the line of history of God's will and plans. When we pause to wonder what may all happen in this new year, we can only humbly say that God's will may be done. For even if we reflect on the past year, we can only say that God's sovereign will has been fulfilled. We may not know why some of God's people were faced with great burdens, sadness, or illnesses, while others may have experienced great joy and happiness. God is daily completing his Father's plans in us, which were set before the creation of the world.

We may richly confess as it says so beautifully in the Belgic Confession, Article 13: that after God had created all things, "He did not abandon them or give them up to fortune or chance, but that according to his holy will, He so rules and governs them that in this world nothing happens without his direction." No matter what evil Satan sends on our paths, or however chaotic our lives may be, we may rest in the truth that Jesus is Lord, and He is in control of everything. God is Sovereign! He is in charge!

When we make plans in our life, sometimes from day to day, or from week to week, we hope that they work out the way we planned them. If they don't, then it is easy to become frustrated and angry, and the questions come easily enough. But here again, we know from the Bible that "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps" (Prov 16:9).

We must daily in all we do, place God at the centre of all our planning. When we prayerfully ask God for guidance and wisdom in all we plan, and also in this new year, then we will not be disappointed.

"Now listen, you who say, 'today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'" (Jas 4:13-15).

We are but fleeting grass on this earth, and we must remember also in this new year, that we must keep our eyes focussed on the life hereafter when Christ will return to call home those who kept their faith and trust in Him!

*The life of man is fleeting like the grasses,  
And like a flower, when the stormwind passes,  
It soon is gone: its place knows it no more.  
But God's unfailing love shall never perish,  
For everlastingly the LORD will cherish  
Those who revere Him and His Name adore.*

Psalm 103:6

## Birthdays in February:

### 12: CONNY VANAMERONGEN will be 38

Anchor Home  
361 Thirty Road S.  
RR 2, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B0

### 18: CORA SCHOONHOVEN will be 52

180 Valleymede Road,  
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3J4

Congratulations to you both, Conny and Cora. We hope and pray that you may have an enjoyable day together with your family and friends, and above all that the Lord will guide and keep you in his love and care throughout this new year. Till next month,

### Mrs. C. Gelms and Mrs. E. Nordeman

Mailing Correspondence:  
548 Kemp Road East  
RR 2 Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2  
1-905-563-0380





## Press Release for Classis Ontario West held December 11, 2002 at Hamilton, Ontario

Rev. J. Ludwig, on behalf of the convening church of Grand Rapids, welcomed the brothers who had gathered and led the opening devotions. He welcomed Rev. H. Moes, minister of the Rehoboth United Reformed church of Hamilton, observing on behalf of Classis Ontario South of the United Reformed Churches of North America. The delegates from Grand Rapids reported on the credentials. All churches were lawfully represented. The church of Ancaster had two instructions. Classis was constituted.

Officers were appointed: Rev. D. Vandeburgt (chairman), Rev. Cl. Stam (clerk) and Rev. J. Slaa (vice-chairman). The agenda was established.

Question Period according to Article 44 of the Church Order was held. All the churches gave a positive answer to the first two questions asked. The church of Ancaster requested and received concurring advice regarding a matter of discipline. The church of Ancaster also sought advice on the matter of a position paper on homosexuality. Ancaster, which has adopted this paper, was asking whether it should proceed to have the churches as a federation adopt this paper, thus taking the proper ecclesiastical route. Advice was given.

Classis adopted the following proposals after amendments: 1. From the church of Kerwood regarding new regulations for Classis Ontario West. 2. From the church of Kerwood concerning a new declaration to students who have received permission to speak an edifying word.

A letter from Classis Central Ontario asked about the role of the church of Kerwood in arranging representation from the Canadian Reformed Classes to other ecclesiastical assemblies. A response will be prepared.

The church at Chatham, which administers the fund for Needy Students, received a request for support. It proposed that Classis approve an assessment to the churches of Classis Ontario West of \$10.00 per communi-

cant member to be paid in the 2003 calendar year. The proposal carried.

Classis received a report from Rev. J. Slaa, who represented Classis Ontario West at Classis Ontario South of the United Reformed Churches of North America held September 25, 2002 in Hamilton, Ontario.

Rev. H. Moes was given the floor to address Classis. He took the opportunity to speak about the existing relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches, in particular the positive reception of pulpit exchanges. He also mentioned Hamilton URC's decision to support Street Light Ministries. Lastly, he mentioned the ongoing concern of the Hamilton URC regarding the Christian education of their children, and expressed a growing need and desire within the congregation to work together with the Canadian Reformed Churches in this matter. He was thankful for the invitation to observe Classis, and wished the brothers and the churches the blessings of the Lord. Rev. D. Vandeburgt, on behalf of Classis, responded to Rev. Moes with appreciation and thanked him for his presence and participation.

The new form of subscription for Classis Ontario West was read by the chairman and signed by Rev. J. Ludwig and Rev. H. Versteeg. These brothers were not present at the previous Classis Ontario West when the other ministers signed it.

The convening church for the next Classis is the church of Hamilton. Suggested date is March 5, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. in Hamilton. Alternate date: June 11, 2003. Suggested officers are: Rev. G.Ph. VanPopta (chairman), Rev. D. Vandeburgt (clerk) and Rev. Cl. Stam (vice-chairman).

General Question Period was held. Censure according to Article 34 of the Church Order was deemed not necessary. Acts and Press Release were adopted. Rev. D. Vandeburgt led in closing devotions.

*J. Slaa  
Vice-chairman at that time*

## Press Release for Classis Pacific East held December 12, 2002

1. Opening: On behalf of the convening church at Abbotsford, Rev. R. Schouten welcomes the delegates. He requests the singing of Psalm 48:1, 3, reads Ephesians 4:1-16 and leads in prayer. Thanksgiving is offered to the Lord for his provision of a new minister of the Word for the church at Vernon in the person of Rev. J. Moesker. The delegates of the church at Yarrow report that all the delegates have arrived with proper credentials from their consistories. The officers suggested by the last Classis are invited to take their place. The chairman is Rev. P. H. Holtvlüwer, the vice-chairman is Rev. R. Schouten while Rev. C. Vandervelde serves Classis as clerk. Classis is declared constituted. With some minor changes, the agenda is adopted.
2. Correspondence received:
  - a) The church at Aldergrove proposes a number of changes to the Regulations of Classis Pacific East. Some of them are adopted by Classis while others do not gain approval. A revised copy of the Regulations will be sent to the churches by the clerk of Classis.
  - b) An appeal from a brother and sister against their consistory is declared admissible. After several rounds of discussion, this appeal is referred to a committee. The committee report is adopted after some amendments are made.
3. Approbation of call. The church at Vernon requests Classis to approbate the call extended to Rev. J. Moesker. As all the necessary documents are present and are found to be in good order, the call is approbated. Rev. P. H. Holtvlüwer is appointed to represent Classis at the installation of Rev. J. Moesker.
4. Needy Churches. The five-year agreement between Classis Pacific East and Classis Pacific West to jointly support needy churches within their classical districts is about to expire. Classis decides to request Classis Pacific West to

continue this agreement until January 1, 2005.

5. Church Visitors. Reports are read of visits made to the churches at Vernon, Abbotsford and Yarrow. In each case, the visitors could conclude with gratitude that all things in these churches are regulated and done in full harmony with the Word of God and that the office bearers are indeed fulfilling the duties of their office faithfully and that the adopted order is being observed and maintained in every respect.
6. Question Period according to Article 44, Church Order. The chairman asks the delegates of each church whether the ministry of the office bearers is being continued, whether the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured, and whether there is any matter in which the consistories need the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their church. Two churches request and receive advice in matters of Christian discipline.
7. Appointments: The church at Aldergrove is appointed to convene the next Classis on March 6, 2003 at 9:00 a.m. (alternate date: June 5, 2003). Suggested officers for the next Classis are R. Schouten (chairman), C. Vandervelde (clerk), B. Wielenga (clerk).
8. Question Period. Classis is reminded that the previous Classis decided that an invitation together with an agenda of each upcoming Classis will be sent to the appropriate address of the RCUS, leaving the RCUS to determine for itself how frequently they will send an observer.
9. Censure. The chairman judges that Christian censure according to Article 34, Church Order, is not necessary.
10. Closing matters: The Acts of Classis are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved. The chairman expresses gratitude for the brotherly harmony that could prevail at Classis. He requests the singing of Psalm 106:1 and leads in thanksgiving and prayer. Classis is closed.

*R. Schouten,  
Clerk e.t.*

### **Press Release of Classis Northern Ontario, December 20 2002, held in the Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church**

#### **Opening and constitution**

On behalf of the convening church of Owen Sound, elder G. VanDoornik called the meeting to order. He welcomed the delegates and guests including the students of the Reformed school of Owen Sound. He asked the delegates to sing from Psalm 66:1, 2. He read from Philippians 2:1-11 and then led in prayer.

The delegates of the church at Orangeville examined all the credentials and all the churches were duly represented. Classis was then constituted. The officers suggested by the last Classis were appointed namely: Rev. J. VanWoudenberg, chairman; Rev. J. Louwense, vice-chairman; and Rev. R. E. Pot, clerk.

The chairman thanked the church at Owen Sound for the preparations made for Classis and for hosting this meeting. The following memorabilia was noted: the marriage of Rev. and Mrs. J. Louwense, the calls extended to Rev. J. Louwense from the church of Albany and the church of Toronto for mission work in Papua, New Guinea, which were subsequently declined. The agenda was adopted.

#### **Classis dealt with the following reports:**

- a. Report of a visitation to the church at Fergus was read. This report was received with thanksgiving.
- b. Treasurer's report. Classis decided to set the Classis assessment at \$1.00 per communicant member for the year 2003.
- c. Church to Audit the Books of the Classical Treasurer – the church of Owen Sound. The books were found to be in good order.
- d. Committee for Needy Churches – Since there were no requests for assistance, Classis decided that there be no assessment for the Needy Church Fund for the year 2003.
- e. Church to audit the Books of the Fund for Needy Churches – the church of Fergus. The books were found to be in good order.
- f. Church for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry – the church of Guelph. Since there were no requests for aid, Classis decided that

there be no assessment for this fund for 2003.

- g. Church to audit the books of the Fund for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry – the church of Fergus. The books were found to be in good order.
- h. Church to inspect the Archives of Classis – the church of Orangeville. The archives were found to be in good order.

Question Period and Church Order article 44 was held. With thankfulness it could be noted that the work of the office-bearers is being continued and the decisions of major assemblies are being upheld. The church at Guelph requested advice on a matter of discipline. Advice was given. The church at Orangeville requested advice on matters of discipline. Advice was given.

#### **Correspondence Received:**

A decision of Classis Ontario West of June 12, 2002 re: inviting fraternal delegates to Classis was read. This Classis decided, "to appoint the church of Kerwood to function as contact for ecumenical relations to facilitate contact with neighbouring classes or presbyteries of churches with whom we have ecclesiastical fellowship." Classis took note of this decision.

A decision of Classis Central Ontario of June 14, 2002 re: inviting fraternal delegates to Classis was read. This Classis decided to adopt the following proposal: "to ask Classis Northern Ontario, Classis Niagara, and Classis Ontario West to adopt a schedule so that the two Classes nearest to the location of the URC Classis each send an observer who extend the fraternal greetings on behalf of all the Canadian Reformed Churches in the four classes." A proposal was made to not adopt a schedule of rotation as requested by Classis Central Ontario. Grounds: 1. The purpose of sending observers is to get to know the United Reformed Churches better which requires reporting back to our own Classis. 2. Our current regulations already provide for the appointment of observers. This proposal was adopted.

A letter received from the Grace United Reformed church of Simcoe County on behalf of Classis Southern Ontario (URCNA). In this letter thanksgiving was expressed for the contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches. The desire was expressed for closer contact, as we proceed to

full unity. Classis received this letter with thanksgiving.

### Appointments

1. Committee of Examiners: J. Louwse and J. VanWoudenberg.
2. Exegesis O.T.: P. Aasman.
3. Exegesis N.T.: R. Pot.
4. Doctrine and Creeds: P. Feenstra.
5. Knowledge of Scriptures: C. Vermeulen
6. Church History: B. Berends.
7. Ethics: J. Louwse.
8. Church Polity: B. Berends.
9. Diaconology: P. Feenstra.
10. Church Visitors: P. Aasman, B. Berends, P. Feenstra, J. Van Woudenberg.
11. Church for taking care of the Archives: Owen Sound.
12. Church to inspect the Archives: Orangeville.

13. Treasurer: F. Hoekstra. The mileage rate was set.
14. Church to Audit the books of the Classical Treasurer: Owen Sound.
15. Church for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry: Guelph.
16. Church for Auditing the books of the Fund for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry: Fergus.
17. Committee for Needy Churches: C. Lodder 2003, Jerry Hutten 2004, F. Westrik 2005. F. Westrik was reappointed for another three year term.
18. Church for auditing the books of the Committee for Needy Churches: Fergus.
19. Neighbouring churches were appointed.
20. Convening church for the next Classis is Brampton, D.V. March 21, 2003, 9:00 AM.

21. Suggested officers are C. Vermeulen (chairman), R.E. Pot (vice-chairman), J. VanWoudenberg (clerk)
22. The church at Brampton as convening church will invite Classis Southern Ontario URCNA to send a delegation.

Question period was made use of. Censure ad article 34 CO was not deemed necessary. The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved. The chairman read from Luke 2:21-35, after which Hymn 18:1,2 was sung. Then the chairman led the assembly in prayer and closed the meeting.

*For Classis Northern Ontario,  
December 20 2002.  
J. Louwse  
(vice-chairman at that time)*

