

faith in **focus**

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*"From the rising of the sun
to the place where it sets
the name of the LORD
is to be praised."*

Psalm 113:3

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STUDY INSERT:
Live The Life! #7

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Editorial



Sjirk Bajema

As I was tidying up various piles of Christian magazines going back a few years, I noticed a review for a movie, which was at that time the latest blockbuster. I'm sure you would find the words for that review similar to the way they review so many of the blockbuster movies. It went something like this, "As people remember the day John F. Kennedy was shot in Dallas, so they will remember where they were the day this movie opened to record audiences and reaped world-record sales."

The movie reviewed there has become a mere blip in the world of entertainment. But it does place so much of what this world worships in a strictly passing light. For what is a life worth when it is reduced to waiting through a cold night outside theatres or Box Offices to get tickets to a first screening? What an indictment on this world when its headline news is reduced to this? Because Hollywood will always have another thriller around the corner, and the next one will surely outdo whatever has come before it in special effects and the like. This is all simply escapism - it doesn't really help anyone - either now or in the future!

Christians are not immune from this either. The latest best-selling Christian books are right there - in a Christian bookstore near you. And if the shop is not near you you'll read all about it in their fancy brochures and through the Christian media. Read the superlatives - it's all so awesome, exciting, and gripping. You can't miss it!

Many churches have taken up this secular style into their Sunday services and other activities. The pressure is on. The range of phenomena shown in Christian circles over recent years is too numerous to name. There has been an emphasis on the spectacular, and certainly it has to be entertaining. Anything remotely connected with past practices is branded with the most terrible negativity. "I was in a traditional church the other day," one of these neo-evangelists was saying, "and a man died in the pew. The ambulance crews had to clear five rows before they got to him!"

Of course, he would never set foot in a 'traditional' church. They wouldn't pay him the six-figure retainer in the first place, and then he wouldn't want to hear anything that could give him the wrong vibes.

It is the traditional church, however, that will keep to the One who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever (Heb.13:8)." The lesson of church history quite clearly shows that when the church becomes wrapped up in itself it has effectively compromised with the world. The latest figures equating the divorce figures in secular America with those among confessing born-again believers tells that clear enough.

Sometimes it can be hard to gear up for another year of doing much the same. But just think, it is our regular and committed service for the Lord that He blesses. While other Christians can stun us with their amazing testimonies and experiences, and what seems to be such an incredible walk with the Lord, that's not what the Lord asks of us. Just as a marriage needs to be kept up by the commitment of each spouse, so we have to constantly focused - regardless of our feelings - upon the Great Lover of our souls.

May we all be encouraged to keep on going the Lord's way. And may this humble magazine be a help to you on that way.

*"It is not the possession of extraordinary gifts
that makes extraordinary usefulness,
but the dedication of what we have
to the service of God."*

F.W. Robertson

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not to be considered the official position of the Reformed Churches of NZ unless they expound the Biblical system of doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, or reflect the successive Acts of Synod of the Reformed Churches of NZ. On the other hand, care is taken to ensure that articles and opinions do not directly contradict the official position of the Reformed Churches as contained in the above sources without attention being called to that fact.

God's great gathering

Palmerston North's Church opening, 27th October, 2001

by Chris Kavanagh

I stand here with a doorbell. Not any old door bell, though: this is the one from the old white house at 203 Grey Street. We had moved out of Grey Street, our last service being 5th September, 1999. I had come down with the flu soon after, but just before the house arrived on the car park (?) (and while we were still technically the owners, I hasten to add), I was driving along to fill up the car with petrol, and although still feeling rather ill, I felt I just had to go to Grey Street to see the place one more time. I know I tell the congregation that it's no excuse to say, "I just had to do it", but there it is. You see, Grey Street held some memories, and a place in my affections, too.

When I got there, it was getting dark. I spotted the doorbell on the mantelpiece: it hadn't been used as a doorbell for a long time. In fact, I learned afterwards that the Sunday School used it to take up their collection. I'll have to give it back to one of its rightful owners one day, but for the time being, it sits on my desk, holding my Mainly Music badge—a dinosaur named Chris—and a few paper clips, and odds and ends.

In the gathering gloom, I went to stand inside the old church building. It was empty now: all our stuff had been moved out to store in the new building—in the Boardroom, here in Harmony House. The clutter had gone from the session room—it will take many years before we can gather a collection like that again, but at least we've made a start. In the waste paper basket were several old ashtrays, not used now, but dating back to the old days when session meetings were held in a haze of smoke. Yes, the old place held memories for everyone, but now it was time to move.

Harmony over harmony

We had made a successful tender for Harmony House before we left Grey Street. We thought it was very aptly named. The congregational vote to sell Grey Street was unanimous, and so was the vote to tender for Harmony House. We had great harmony at last about the buildings—which surely was from the Lord. However, the consent from the City Council for use of this building as a church was a lot longer coming than we anticipated.

We were six months without a building of our own, until April 2000, when we could occupy our new buildings. Our first service here was April 9th, 2000. During those six months, we wandered from place to place, like Abraham, or the children of Israel in the desert. We are thankful to the churches and community hall that gave us a place to meet. And now in the providence of God, we can open our new building today. We give thanks to the Lord for this provision, and the marvellous facility He has given to us here.

The church is not a building

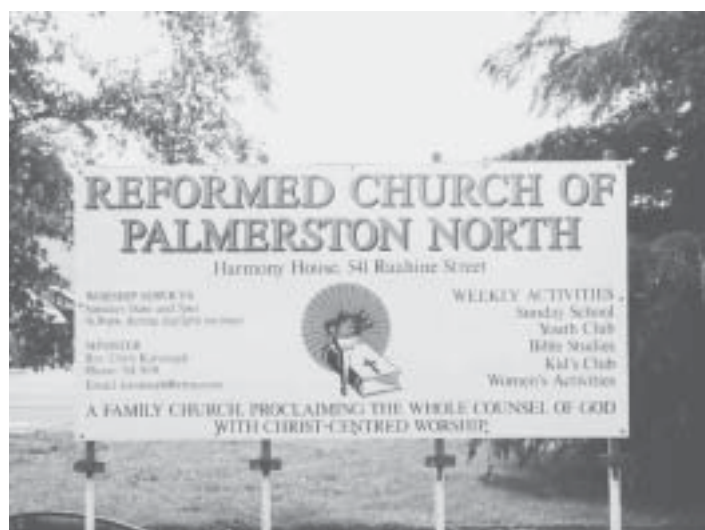
Buildings are necessary for us. But we can survive without a building, as a congregation of Christ's people, and through God's grace we have shown that. We can survive without a building, but the building cannot survive without the people. The congregation is the life and soul of a church building: it is the Church. We have many testimonies to this in Scripture, along with many descriptions of the Church of the Lord's people. We read one of them in Isaiah 56.6–8.

It speaks there of foreigners who join themselves to the Lord. We are in a way all foreigners in the Church. Many of you have grown up in the Church: the children will enjoy that privi-

lege. But spiritually, the Church is a community of people gathered together by Christ. The catechism puts it very well, when it says of the Church, *I believe that the Son of God, through His Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for Himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith.*

In a true spiritual sense, we are all called by God to become part of His people, the Church. And those who have come into the Church have bound themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, to love Him, to worship Him, to keep His Sabbaths and to hold fast His Covenant.

These are the ones God will bring near to Himself. In our New Testament terms, these are the ones saved by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. They have recognised in Christ, through the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God, that He is their Saviour. They have repented of their sins, they have believed in Him. And now they have joined themselves to





Him—to serve Him, to love Him, to worship Him—out of sheer love and gratitude.

These are the people of the Church. Christ welcomes them in with open arms. They must leave their sin outside the door, and not take it up again when they leave. For they come to worship God, and sin and worship are not compatible.

This church is for all

And all may come on these terms, which are Christ's terms. That is: **all**. He makes no distinction of race - it is for all nations. There are no distinctions of gender; nor of age; or wealth or social standing. In the Kingdom of God, the richest men, like Abraham and the Kings, will sit at table with Bartimaeus and Lazarus, destitute beggars. God welcomes and accepts all of them—all of us—on His terms of faith and repentance. And so should we accept each other, too.

Members of the Reformed Church of Palmerston North, I speak to you; but others may listen too. The church does not belong to us. We have obtained these great new buildings, and through God's grace and a magnificent effort on your part, we are well on the way to paying for them fully. We know we are stewards of God's good gifts, and of these buildings too. Let's use them as though not owning them, for they belong to the Lord. Let's use them for others as well as ourselves. Most of all, use them for the Lord's glory. Let us use them truly in worship of Him.

When we consider ourselves as a congregation, we realise that we own neither the church, nor ourselves. Christ owns us. He will bring to us those whom He wants to be part of our congregation, on His terms of faith and repentance. We do not own the Reformed Church of Palmerston North: Christ does. And those who have joined themselves to Him, and have joined themselves to us too, we must accept. Whatever race or family they come from, or age, or social background, or former church background.

The Lord says in verse 8 of Isaiah 56, that He has other exiles to gather in besides the ones He has already gathered. That's you and me, the ones already gathered. We should make room in our midst, and on the pews and at our tables and in our hearts for the ones He yet brings in. May He gather many more to Himself yet.





The mystery of the Magi (II)

Patricia van Laar

[In the Church Calendar, the season of Epiphany, especially intended by selecting incidents from the Lord's life to portray the radiance and glory of the Lord Jesus shown to men, has almost ended by the beginning of the month of February. Epiphany Sunday introduces the season with the visit of the Wise Men, so now is a fitting time to conclude thoughts on this visit.]

HOW DID THE WISE MEN KNOW OF THE BIRTH OF THE KING?

Did they learn of it from astrology, from studying the stars? In the New Testament, the word 'magi', or a verb from the same root is used in reference to the Wise Men in Matthew, and to one such as Simon, who practised sorcery in Acts 8.

As Christians know, sorcery, magic and superstition are forbidden absolutely in the Bible. Astrology has all the marks of these. In no way can the appearance of the eastern sages at the home of Jesus validate astrology as a means of foretelling the future, or be an excuse for diving into the newspaper or popular magazines to find exciting prospects opened to us on the astrologer's page, a dangerous and addictive practice.

Yet there is in Matthew's record no hint of condemnation of these impressive visitors. There must surely have been something different from the norm in the Magi: they had an unusual knowledge, sought the King of a nation not their own to bring Him homage, had an overwhelming appreciation of His importance, perhaps even of His divinity, and they received and responded to a dream from the God of this King. We must look beyond astrology for the answer to our riddle.

Did rumours reach them of the current Jewish expectation of a coming Messiah, rumours that tickled their ears and stirred them to act when they saw the unusual light in the eastern sky? Surely it would take more to awaken faith in a King of the Jews, more to enlighten their understanding of what such a phenomenon meant, more to arouse such determination to find a Baby, unknown and foreign to them as He was, a far more convincing reason than mere whispers of expectancy, even when such a startling sight as the brilliant star caught their attention. Why should they bother about a King of the Jews, of a completely different race and religion? This explanation might give a hint of superstition almost as strong as astrological guidance. We must look further.

Direct revelation?

Did God give a special direct revelation to these men? Such a possibility cannot be dismissed, for He did exactly that in the form of a dream when they were warned not to go back

to Herod. But we are explicitly told that God gave them such a warning. This was not the case in their initial action of searching for the Child. There must have been something else.

Did God show them by the same means He uses to bring us to faith today —by His Word?

The Magi came from the region of ancient Babylon. Two of the few writings of the Old Testament specifically connected to Babylon, the prophecy of Balaam and the book of Daniel, are related to the coming of the Messiah.

In Numbers 24:17, Balaam prophesied, "A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre out of Israel. He will crush...." Balaam's occupation was that of an astrologer. He came from Pethor, a city on the banks of the Euphrates River. So in this instance, the revelation of a star in relation to Messiah's birth came via a Babylonian astrologer.



Some commentators argue against associating the knowledge of the Magi in any way with the prophecy of Balaam. His prophecy foretold a Star out of Jacob, the Messiah Himself, not the star that in Matthew's story would lead to the birthplace of that Messiah. Matthew does not quote this verse in his account, only Micah 5:2, which names Bethlehem.

Some of these commentators plump for the second proposal above – the widespread belief that the time was ripe for the appearance of a king to be born in Judaea.

On the other hand, others see the prophecy of Balaam as quite significant. The revelation of a star in relation to Messiah's birth came via the Babylonian astrologer. Not a literal star, for this prophecy, in the form of parallel poetry such as is found in the Psalms and other Hebrew poetry, mentions also the sceptre which shall arise out of Israel. Both are symbolic of a royal Person, both sceptre and star. The proposition is that the Wise Men somehow associated the Star of Judah with the star they saw in the sky.

A difficult matter of interpretation

Elsewhere in the Bible, the only passage in the Old Testament concerning the date of Messiah's coming is found in the famous seventy sevens of Daniel 9. This introduces a difficult

matter of interpretation, but many Christians accept it in such a way as giving $70 \times 70 = 490$ (years), with its fulfilment being literally from the 'issuing of the decree' (Dan. 9:25) to the time of Jesus Christ.

The book of Daniel, conservative Christians in general agree, was the writing of Daniel himself, and so was written not in Israel but in Babylon. Much of it was in the third original Biblical language, Aramaic, the language of the Babylonian Empire. It is feasible that following the events of Daniel's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar, and being influenced by Daniel, a long line of Babylonian astrologers spanning many generations retained a knowledge of and worshipped the true God, Daniel's God. The ones Matthew tells of, looking into Daniel's prophecy and the timing of the seventy sevens, realised that the time had come for the Messiah's arrival.

As for Balaam, did Daniel, centuries after Balaam's death, expound to the Babylonian astrologers under his charge the teaching and timing of the Star of Jacob? Balaam, it is proposed, passed on the information to his colleagues and so to future generations of astrologers. Daniel would be able to expound to those of his day the time when the Star of Jacob would come.

So it is quite logical to conclude that it was from these Scriptures, first produced in their own land, that the astrologers knew the time the Messiah was to be born, and from these revelations that they looked for the coming of the King of the Jews. They were not surprised but prepared (*substitute ready and waiting, perhaps?*) to see 'His star' in the sky.

The Israelites as a whole were waiting for the Christ. It is most probable that Herod the Idumean, who was given the title King of the Jews in 40 BC through his friendship with Marcus Antonius, was well aware of their expectations. This would account for his anger and fear on the appearance of these sages from the Mesopotamian region seeking such a King.

Guided by Scripture?

The assertion that it was copies in Babylon of the Scriptures that guided the Magi gains support from the fact that the Wise Men were unaware of the exact place in which to look for the King. The book of Micah, which mentions Bethlehem, was not written in Babylon. Quite unaware of this book, the sages from Mesopotamia searched naturally enough in the capital, Jerusalem.

Herod himself had to enquire just where the Christ was to be born.

"In Bethlehem," the chief priests and teachers of the law replied, "for this is what the prophet has written ..."

The Wise Men believed the prophet's writing, and continued their search.

AND WHAT OF THE STAR ITSELF?

This part of the story, in particular, has been relegated by doubters to the realm of straight-out legend. We reject that position utterly. "God's Word is true from the beginning."

Many theories about the star have been offered. Among the seriously considered conjectures have been:

A planetary conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn and Venus.

Astronomers (not to be confused with astrologers) tell us that a conjunction occurred between Jupiter and Saturn three times in 7 BC, in the equivalent of May, September and December. If that is so, astronomers and astrologers would have certainly noticed them. But the duration of these conjunctions was brief, and could not be called a 'star'. And there is no way such an event could seem to hover over a certain house or even a village to pin point the home of any individual. Also, even taking into account the mistake in calculating the birth of Jesus, 7BC is possibly too early, although Herod the Great died in 4 BC, most likely not long after the flight into Egypt. We are given no indication of the length of the sojourn in Egypt. It may have been only a few months, but we do not know. (Maybe the gifts of the Wise Men were sufficient to support the family for the whole of this stay.)

An appearance of Halley's Comet in 11 BC, or some other comet visible in about 4 BC.

This is hardly likely. 11 BC is definitely too early, and a comet passes quickly, and is too insignificant among the stars for the purpose of this special star. Chronologically, it is doubtful if any comet can be fitted to the birth of Jesus. And how could one hover over a house?

A supernova.

Even though this is more of a possibility, it, too, is unlikely. A nova occurs when a faint star suddenly becomes brighter, then slowly fades. A supernova is a star that increases very greatly in brightness because of an explosion ejecting most of its mass. Supernovae are extremely rare. One occurring could temporarily dominate the night sky. However, apparently there have been none in our galaxy since the Dutch invented the 'spyglass' as a curiosity, and Galileo seized the concept, developing it into his famous telescope in 1609!

A special star

I believe it is time all Christians stopped looking for a natural phenomenon to explain the star of Bethlehem, and accept it as a special manifestation created by God for a special purpose—to announce the coming of His Son into the world. And indeed, why not? It was the most momentous occasion since the beginning of time!

This was no ordinary star. It was a remark-

able phenomenon, the exact nature of which has not been disclosed to us. It is named as HIS star, the star of the King of the Jews. That cannot be said of other stars, ordinary stars. A star that moves from east to west, from north to south, wandering where it 'will'. A star that hovers over a specific house in or near Bethlehem. No, this is no ordinary star, and anyway, an ordinary star in such close proximity would destroy everything. I have heard that the Greek word for star simply means 'radiance' or 'brilliance'. Be this as it may, and I am unable to confirm or deny it, the idea behind this assertion is feasible.

Showing God's presence?

Could the star, coming in the form of light, be the appearance of the Shekinah Glory - the manifestation of God's Presence? Whenever God became visible in the Old Testament, such a manifestation was referred to as the Shekinah Glory, which appeared most often in the form of light, fire, cloud, or a radiance that could look from a distance like a star. Was what these Wise Men actually saw—the Shekinah Glory?

Did they deduce from its appearance that it was in fact a signal that the King of the Jews, so long promised and awaited, had finally been born? Does this seem too fanciful, too fantastic? Why should it? The star must have been something! Something strange and wonderful! Something supernatural!

God's Glory was manifest in Jesus. How fitting that the Church should draw special attention to this happening during the Church's Year. Jesus made Himself a little lower than the angels, and, born in a stable, took upon Himself the form of a servant, but—angels sang at His birth, He was Emmanuel, God with us, the One we sing of as King of Glory, King of Peace! "Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

The biggest battle was about to begin. A manifestation at the start of the battle reminds all that this Child was no ordinary child, but One worthy of homage, devotion, worship, and unflinching loyalty.

Herod was unheeding. The Wise Men truly were wiser. Which are we?

Between You and Me!

The Oldies into the New!?

Although the reference in John 21:18—"When you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you're old you'll stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you don't want to go" is directed to Peter as to what would happen to him in his old age, I think it is not preposterous to apply this also to today!

New Zealand is catching up with the overseas trend to encourage the elderly to leave their homes full of memories for brand new retirement villages, serviced apartments, rest homes and private hospitals.

Colourful booklets guide and entice them to improve their lifestyles, with indoor swimming pools, lawn and indoor bowls, outings, Sky TV room, golf course, gymnasium, and so on. Just give us your money, and we'll spoil you and guide you to the end of your lives.

An uncle of mine, in his mid-eighties, was forced by his family to take a unit, and was offered one with a balcony on the ninth floor. "Thanks very much," he said, "I might have suicidal tendencies and be flattened on the concrete." He got one on the first floor, with a better chance to survive a dive! His sons sold his old car, as he had become a bit of a hazard on the road. Instead, they got him a battery-operated mobility scooter to move around the floors to visit his friends.

Years ago, I visited an old relative, who had just moved into one of those huge apartment blocks. She was happy, very happy indeed! Her small apartment with a tiny kitchen and toilet was chocker full with all her memorabilia. Walls with dozens of framed pictures of her children and grandchildren, in addition to some valuable paintings she treasured. A huge oak cupboard of drawers with heavy doors with locks, almost reaching to the ceiling, dominated her room. Proudly, she pulled out each drawer to show her wealth of linen, towels, pillow sheets, and a multitude of memorabilia of the past.

I could barely move around the solid oak dining table with six ornamental chairs. Not to forget her comfortable worn-out easy chair with footstool and a literature tray with a broken leg, leaning askew! On it was her "Statenbijbel" (comparable to the English King James Bible) with the date and place of her wedding day and two pages full of those born to her, their baptisms and public



Dick G. Vanderpyl



professions of faith. Lovingly she would stroke this treasure of God's Holy Word! A contented old lady, waiting patiently for the Lord to call her to her eternal home!

Being left alone

Theodore Plantinga in his book "Learning With Evil" wrote, " Old age is not in itself a disease, but it brings with it infirmities and limitations. Mental and physical decline accompanies them! There is a tendency to set the aged aside, to remove them to institutions."

The modern generation, thinking to do Mum or Dad a great favour, chucks out the old furniture and replaces it with the latest style, and artistically hang some modern impressions on the walls. Overwhelmed and afraid to disappoint their children, they then pretend to be happy and play that role when they pop in occasionally! Their children's lives are so occupied with long hours of work and outings. Gradually they lose contact with their grandchildren,

who are busy with studies and their mates!

Many of their contemporaries, friends from way back, having developed a history with one another (*whom they have known well for years?*), have moved away elsewhere, or passed away. And their circle of close friends narrows! Slowly, they lose contact with those with whom they had roots and history. (*This use of history must be a Dutch idiom – it doesn't translate well in English. Would dear old friends, or something similar, do better?*) In their old age, these relationships become more and more precious!

It is therefore more than important to have some things that are precious to them, things that trigger off memories – happy and sad.

Don't throw it out

In my teens, I visited one of my uncles and found him busy going through his albums tearing out old photos showing him with his knickerbockers (pofbroek), braces and suspenders

to hold up his trousers and socks. Anything that to him was too old-fashioned and outdated was thrown in the fire-place, with me lifting the lid off the stove each time! "Why?" I asked him, and this childless uncle replied, "No way would I want to be a laughing-stock after my death!" A strange sensitivity! Maybe we, too, have some strange, unexplainable quirks in our lives.

I too have them, with four 4-drawer filing cabinets with memorabilia, even two drawers with copies of all my tax papers since 1951. Fascinating research, and how simple it was then in those days of past years!

Never be too hasty to throw out the old stuff! It belongs to you to the end of your sojourn here! Each item has its precious story, and throwing it away stops the owner from recalling incidents in the still hours of the day, some with relish and others with a tear in the eye!

God's Word has some nice things to say in favour of the elderly, such as, "Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly, and revere your God. I am the Lord your God" (Lev.19:32). Solomon also gave some good advice: "Listen to your father, who gave you life, and don't despise your mother when she is old" (Proverbs 23:22).

And Timothy was advised by his mentor Paul: "Don't rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father" (1Tim.5:1).

A community worker once wrote that he never encountered more optimism, enjoyment of life, and resilience of spirit than among the elderly. Often, he finds them saying thank you, thank you! These words are coming more often from the lips of those who are critically ill and dying than from those who are alive and well. It applies to the smallest things and comes far more often than from others who are well off!

Ruling and caring *the task of the elder*

Cor Feyter

Elders in Reformed Churches carry an awesome responsibility. The form for their ordination states that the elders must rule in the Name of the ascended King and, as servants of the great Shepherd, care for His flock. It is therefore the duty of the elders to maintain the purity of the Word and sacraments, to uphold the good order of the church, carefully guarding the sacredness of the offices and faithfully exercising discipline. Indeed, it is an awesome responsibility.

Some years ago, my wife and I attended a worship service in the Reformed Church of Dunedin, where Rev. Willem Pieters, the Dunedin

minister at the time, preached on the work and responsibility of the elders in the Church. Of the many sermons I have listened to in my lifetime (it must be well over five thousand), I remember this one clearly. Mr Pieters pointed out that there are two distinct aspects to the work of elders: that of ruling, and that of caring. He compared the ruling position of the elders to that of the father in a household, and their caring role to that of a mother, who tends to her family's needs with constant and unlimited loving care and devotion. Ruling tends to appeal to the macho instincts of elders, and therefore may receive priority, but according to Mr Pieters, there are more passages in Scripture that compare the care of the Lord for His people to that of a mother than to that

of a father. Therefore, he urged elders to make sure that they have their priorities right.

Ruling AND Caring

I agree with Mr Pieters that ruling appeals more to many elders than caring, and I believe that, by and large, our churches are ruled very well. I would also like to believe that most elders manage to strike the right balance between the ruling and the caring aspects of their office. But when I repeatedly hear of elders who have trouble getting their home visits done, while it is rare for an elder to miss a session meeting, then I'm not so sure. Let's just have a look at what caring for the Lord's flock, as a servant of the great Shepherd, actually involves.

The comparison with a shepherd, caring for his sheep, probably painted a very clear picture in biblical times, but may not mean quite as much in today's urbanised society. Most people, when they hear of a flock of sheep, simply think of a whole lot of woolly heads and bobbing tails, but anyone who has ever had to care for sheep knows that they are just as individualistic as any other animals. When they are grazing, it's always the same ones who poke around to find a hole in a fence, and if they can't find one, they will try to make one. When being driven, the same sheep are always at the head of the mob; others are always at the back. Some sheep only need to be pointed in the right direction and they will go there; others will always try to explore places they are not meant to go to. Accordingly, some need to be handled firmly; others, very gently. The key to successful shepherding is to know the sheep, not just as a mob, but individually. Similarly, the key to successful eldership is to know the people, individually.



The Lord as our Shepherd

Our Lord, in John 10, refers to Himself as the good Shepherd, Who calls His sheep by name. So, He knows each one of them, individually. He knows everything there is to know about each one—their characteristics, their backgrounds, their histories, their strong points, also their weaknesses. So, elders should also strive to get to know all they can about the people in their care. That's not always easy to do, and it will take time. First of all, an elder needs to gain the confidence of those on his list. Then, he has to keep contact regularly to get an appreciation of what they are like. How do they get on within their family and with others? Are there any problems, whether of a family, economic, social or spiritual nature? If so, how can they be helped? In short, an elder must become fully familiar with those he is responsible for. He must consider each case separately, because no two people, no two families, are the same. So for an elder, there is no such thing as treating everybody the same.

Eldership takes dedication, commitment and time. Time needed for the elder to keep contact, but also to sit back and think about his people and, more importantly, pray for them.

It goes without saying that an elder may never put his own interests first, and in the final analysis, he is not even serving the church which has appointed him, or the people on his list, but his Lord. His Lord, Who told the parable of the shepherd, who temporarily abandoned the majority of his flock to go after the one sheep which strayed. I can think of no clearer indication than that as to what an elder's priorities should be.

A feminine focus

Live godly in Christ Jesus:

The bishop's life and advice

Where would you look for some good advice on living a practical, useful Christian life? Whose example would you choose to model your life on? Maybe not an Anglican bishop, a contemporary of Queen Victoria—and a man who grew up in the privileged circles of Eton and Oxford? What, you might ask, could such a person, living a life so removed from *my* experience, have to say to *me*? You'd be surprised. Even if John Charles Ryle was a man, a Victorian Englishman, and a bishop, he was a forgiven sinner, just like you and me, and he knew, from personal experience and from his love of the Scriptures, that Christ wants us to live lives like His. Whatever our cultural background, or age and station of life, we all need to love Christ, and, loving Him, serve Him with transformed lives.

His background

So who and what was Bishop Ryle? How could a life like his lead to books like his—books that deserve their praise as timeless classics on the Christian life? John Charles Ryle was born in 1816 and died in 1900—thus, his life spanned almost exactly that of Queen Victoria. The Ryles were a wealthy and successful commercial family, with Christian connections (John's grandfather had been a close friend of John Wesley). However, John's immediate family were not seriously spiritual themselves. The young John went from Eton (one of the best boys' schools in England, both then and now) and won an outstanding reputation as



Sally Davey

a sportsman. However, when he went from there to Oxford University, he put all his energies into his studies, and he excelled academically. It was at Oxford that he came under conviction of sin, and believed in Christ for salvation. His desire to live a less frivolous life upset his parents: they were offended at his growing interest in spiritual service, such as visiting the poor on his father's estate. On leaving Oxford, he had thoughts of joining his father in business, or pursuing a career in the law, and was somewhat undecided. But what did it matter? His family was secure financially—there was no need to make a quick decision, or to work for a living at all.

Changed circumstances

Then suddenly, out of the blue, a tremendous blow struck the Ryles. A disastrous commercial failure (related to the speculative "South Sea bubbles" of that period) led to a run on a family banking concern. In one day, they were completely ruined. All at once, there was no worldly future for John. The shock of having to leave his lovely family home remained with him, he recalled, for the rest of his life. What was he to do? At this point, he was surprised by the offer of the post of parish clergyman at Fawley, a poverty-stricken village where typhoid and scarlet fever were rife. Never having thought of a call to the ministry before, he was nevertheless qualified, as studies in the liberal arts at Oxford were designed to train men for the ministry (although many young men took up other pursuits). After some time in parish work, Ryle became convinced he had a call to the preaching ministry; and he never looked back. His own spiritual life deepened and deepened—and he could truly look back on that dreadful day when his family lost everything, as the turning point to his gaining of much greater, spiritual riches. Many a Christian will say something similar of their own experiences: when God takes away, He often gives back, in great abundance, in spiritual measure, far more than He has taken. Perhaps you can say the same?



A man who ministered

At first, Ryle continued to be terribly poor financially—he could not even afford to marry. But after a few years, he was offered a parish in Suffolk—and then another—and he served in this county until 1880. He was a very hard-working parish clergyman, and above all, a faithful preacher. He had a special gift of speaking plainly and gently to his congregations of simple country people, many of them farm labourers and servants. Through his wide reading, particu-



Bishop Ryle in later life

larly of the warmly spiritual 17th century Puritans, he became known as a leading evangelical in the Church of England. He championed many of the same theological causes as they had, and held that the first duty of faithful clergy was to shepherd their flock in the straightforward truths of the Scriptures (just as men like Richard Baxter had done before him). Throughout his ministry, he vigorously opposed the ritualistic and pro-Roman Catholic ideas of the High Church (or "Tractarian") party in the Church. During his years of ministry, personal sorrow brushed his life more than once. His first two wives were often ill, and both died at a young age, leaving him with five young children to bring up. During his ten years as a "solo parent", there were times when he struggled with loneliness and grief; and these times certainly heightened his compassion for those to whom he ministered.

At the age of 64 he was made Bishop of Liverpool, and served for 20 more years in his energetic, enthusiastic style. Liverpool was an intensely industrialised city with few parish churches, and in such situations in England, many of the working poor were alienated from the life of the Anglican Church. Ryle made it a priority to use the funds available to provide an additional 90 places of worship, and 136 extra clergy. For this he was much-criticised by those of High Church persuasion, as this action delayed the building of a cathedral for "beautiful worship" for many years. During these years Ryle continued to write a good deal, and his works reflected his chief concerns—the living of a devoted Christian life in service to Christ. This is remarkable, since busy men, important "leaders" in the church, have often become distracted by issues of church politics or church government. Instead, Ryle remained a humble, spiritually-minded man, for whom pastoral concerns and the building up of people in the faith were his primary focus. By 1897, it was said that more than 12 million of his shorter writings (tracts) had been sold. In addition, many had been translated into Welsh, French, German, Dutch, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Hindi, Chinese, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish. Throughout his life, Ryle continued to devote the royalties from his books to repayment of his family's creditors. Though the debts were huge, far beyond his own ability to repay them, he took it as his duty to relieve the losses of these creditors so far as he was able. He died, aged 84, a hard-working, humble bishop, full of Christian graces, much-loved in his person, and certainly living on in his helpfulness through the ministry of his books.

Ryle as a writer

What is Ryle like as a writer? He is above all a clear, friendly and practical man. "Kindly" would probably be the best adjective. As a pastor all his life, he delighted in helping people along in their walk with the Lord, and you get the sense he understands us with all our frailties. What he most wants to help us do is to progress along the path of godly living; to serve our Lord and Master better.

Ryle's best-known book, *Holiness*, came out of his concern at the misleading teaching of the "Higher Life" or "Holiness" movement in England. Popular (but often biblically ignorant) teachers told people that

sanctification—“holiness”—could be achieved perfectly and in an instant, if they would only surrender themselves entirely to God (the “let go and let God” idea). Instead, Ryle wanted to emphasize the biblical teaching that putting sin to death in our lives, and making progress toward Christlikeness, is a whole-of-life, gradual labour, requiring earnest effort on the part of Christians.

First of all, he outlines what true holiness is: it is the inward spiritual work that Christ works in a Christian as He makes him or her a more faithful believer. He uses primarily His Word, but sometimes afflictions, to make us more lovely and more practically godly in life. Ryle tells us that sanctification is the only certain evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s heart, it is the only sure mark of God’s election; *and it will always be seen*. He reminds us that we are also responsible to *work* at living holy lives. Lastly, he warns, sanctification is absolutely necessary in order to train and prepare us for heaven.

What does a sanctified person look like, he asks? What should we be aiming for? He explains: true sanctification does not consist in talk about religion, temporary spiritual feelings, doing outwardly “religious” actions (like simply “going to church”), or occasionally doing good deeds. It consists in ongoing habits of love for the Scriptures, of doing what Christ has taught, of living up to what Paul has shown us in his epistles, of becoming more like Christ in character, and of giving up our selves and our own desires to Christ and to others.

The Bishop then goes on to show us how to work at this holiness in our day-to-day lives. He explains that we should expect to make progress in our work at this task of holiness. It is not as if we are “back to square one” each time we review our hearts and confess our sins, as if we should give up in despair of ever putting to death our sinful desires.

Ryle encourages us: “every one of those graces [repentance, faith, hope, love, humility, zeal, courage, etc] admits of growth, progress, and increase.” The pace of progress may be different in different Christians, or proceed faster at some times than at others. But we have hope of improvement, and should look forward to it. We should *expect* to grow in our zeal for spiritual pursuits. We should *expect* to have changed tastes and interests as we progress in godliness. Empty, worldly activities should be less desirable to us from year to year—and if not? Are we really in love with our Lord?

Personal stories are so helpful in illustrating what the Bible’s teaching should look like when lived out. This is why Ryle explains the lessons of several biblical characters, to show us what true holiness, or the lack of it, can do. He shows us Moses, who lived by faith, and gave up the riches and position of life in Pharaoh’s court to suffer with his people, the Hebrews (Hebrews 11:24–26). He shows us Lot, who lingered within the walls of Sodom, rather than heed the angel’s warning. How like many Christians, who know there will be a Judgement, who know they should love Christ more and live to please Him; but they do so little to resist sin or to prepare themselves for heaven! He shows us Lot’s wife, who began well, but whose desires for worldly pleasures overcame her. She looked back—and her story has become a warning to us all.

This is a book that has helped many, many Christians along their way over the years. It is a tried-and-true treasure of the faith. It came, after all, from the pen of a godly pastor who had suffered much, and who knew how much God’s children sometimes struggle, too. But he wants us to grow—and mature—in our love for Him who has loved us so much.

Chicks and golf

A youthful perspective

Benjamin Hoyt

The world is a strange place. On our left we see women rising up, becoming the leaders of society, changing our language, and calling themselves feminists—all in the name of some modern politically correct foolishness. And on the right we see sparsely-clad women giggling at a rugby game, or floating in some southern draught, and hear men calling them “sexy chicks”.

Now, rugby is not a bad sport. In fact, compared to golf, it’s the only game worth playing. And even a dark draught can be quite tasty, at least when compared to dishwater (and I’ve done tests). Of course, *unicycling* is the best sport, and *a fine wine* the best drink. But now I want to talk about men and women, not sport and drink. And it is mostly those men and women on the right I’m going to be dealing with—we already know too much about those on the left.

Miss treatment

I’m sure men have been mistreating women for centuries. Since time began, in fact. The first recorded instance of this seems to be in

Genesis 3:12, when Adam blamed his wife for something he was certainly at least as guilty of.

And ever since The Fall, men have been abusing women and treating them as sex objects. Unfortunately, Christian men haven’t been exactly innocent either. We read of David murdering in his lust for Bathsheba, and the wise

Solomon amassing enough wives and mistresses to satisfy a ship full of sailors. It’s easy to see that this sort of behaviour was *not* taken lightly by God (read 2 Samuel 12 and 1 Kings 11:4).

The situation we have now is much the same, except that our society goes about it in different ways. On the one hand we have feminists crying for superior status and males going along with them just to keep the peace; we have families being destroyed; we have babies being slaughtered; and we have divorce thrown around as if it’s as harmless as smoking dope. And right along with that we have the media telling us how terrible child abuse is, how much children *do* need both of their parents, and how absolutely wrong it is for women to be mistreated.

Yes, the world is a strange place, but unfortunately many unbelievers can’t see the irony so clearly. The Spice Girls showed this well: they tried to be serious feminists, but dressed as if they wanted to sell their bodies—it just does not figure.

Very liberal arts

One of the ways society reflects this mistreatment is in the arts. We’ve got mounds of trashy writing, perverted artwork, and shockingly low-quality music about love that supposedly lasts forever (the music of that great teeny-bopping Britney Spears¹ comes to mind—check out her lyrics sometime, and try to smile grimly). Love that lasts forever is all good as far as it goes, but unfortunately it’s worse than this: the love of the popular song is all superficial, all skin-deep. In song love lasts forever, but in real life, these sorts of people (*change this phrase*) practically sign the divorce form before marriage. In short, it’s not hard to see that our sexy society has had an influence on our sexy music (or vice versa—one is never quite sure which came first).

Language

Anyway, while this love is lasting forever, in the real world the guys are still playing rugby (and even golf) and calling the girls “chicks”. Language, and especially slang, is another one of those things affected greatly by a culture of people who still mistreat women. The feminists have tried to get rid of some of these words, but instead have ended up ripping our language

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*Let's Understand our Times
and know what we ought to do!*

(1 Chronicles 12 : 32)

to shreds. And despite this, the bulk of our culture uses words that show a considerable lack of respect for women. It's Miss Treatment all over again (or Ms. Treatment, perhaps?).

In certain circles (hopefully not ours), a chick used to be called a "bird", a "bit of skirt", or a "piece of crumpet", expressions beside which "chick" seems relatively tame. The word chick was probably derived from bird, and seems to carry similar connotations of an object, a dizzy and fluttering animal, a thing that incites lust—in short, a thin, beautiful blonde. (If you are starting to sneer quietly at me about now, maybe fair enough, but keep reading.)

When someone speaks, we must take into account what they're like and where they're coming from. But although language has to be taken in context, it is *not* neutral or arbitrary. It has shades of meaning, connotation and nuance. Marxist Russia realised how powerful language was and banned certain words and books, then introduced others that were politically helpful to replace them. By doing this, they could begin to control what people read, said and thought. Thankfully, it didn't get too far.²

Much ado about nothing?

One point in all this nonsense is that words like "chick", "babe", or worse generally only speak of the external, the superficial and the sexual attractiveness of a woman. But is this all *much ado about nothing*?³

Possibly not. Sure, we Christians can use such words and simply mean "girl" or "female". And sure, mothers can use them to simply mean "cute wee thing". But the words don't *just* mean this. Once again, our culture at large uses these words to denote a young, sexy and attractive female. Qualities like this are not necessarily bad, of course, but the problem is that people don't get past the superficial. For Christians, that's not good enough—the Bible teaches that while beauty is important, it is not at all superficial. The way we speak and relate to girls and women is important, so let's check it out biblically.

The word

Biblical beauty covers a multitude of things: appearance, character, wisdom, and relationship to God. We can go right back to Day Six to discover this: in the beginning God created Adam, then Eve as a suitable helper. The first thing Adam does, no doubt, is get down on one knee and propose to Eve. But it's not your average "Yo, baby, I love you! Will you marry me?" No way! What is said is beautiful, serene and meaningful: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." The flirting Miss Treatment is nowhere to be seen.

We can turn over to Ruth for another example of how God-fearing men relate to God-fearing women. Boaz doesn't label Ruth an attractive spring chicken (though I'm sure she was beautiful), but instead says, "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter!"

Proverbs too is full of talk about wisdom and beauty, and the second-to-last verse in the book sums this up, "Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised."

Of course, we have to keep things in perspective. Attractiveness is far from worthless, and we just have to read the Song of Solomon to find this out. But that Song is not cheap, trite love. It is the beautiful love of true lovers, of a man and a woman who become husband and wife.

And the advice Paul gives in 1 Timothy 5:2 is timeless and practical: "Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity."

Don't chicken out!

Basically, modesty and respect, especially to young women, is something we often don't show. What can we do? We have to start reversing the trend, rather than following it. This will involve getting past the superficial and sexy. It may involve us removing certain words from our vocabularies, and adding others. It may involve the guys encouraging young women to dress modestly. It may involve the girls buying that extra bit of material for the upper and middle sections of their gar-

ments. (I can't speak from experience here, but one gets the idea that the amount of material a woman gets is inversely proportional to the amount she spends. The more you spend, the less you get—another thing that just does not figure.)

Now is the time we must start to really do something. Destroy Miss Treatment and her male counterpart! We need to stand out, rather than chicken out (pun!). This may mean being *different* as Christians: we often try to get as close to the "carnal coolness" line as possible, but now we must turn around and head for the Line of Christian Coolness (sounds cheesy I know, but *Christian Coolness* is godliness, respect, fun, fellowship, dignity, honour and wisdom.)

As Douglas Wilson put it, "We need a soon return to courteous masculinity, refinement of manners, and deep respect for women."⁴ (*Is this phrase correct? A soon return is not normal grammar.*) And this applies to both men and women. So get off to your rugby game, your local unicycling tournament, or whatever, and have fun. But in having fun, be godly!

Footnotes:

1. The Britney Spears Party Game™ goes like this. Take thirty seconds to think up a handful of over-clichéd words, e.g., love, heart, baby, speak, dark, night, forever, sun. During the next thirty seconds the aim is to compose and sing a Britney-quality masterpiece that tells of all these deep and meaningful things. Try it at your next church social—apart from singing in front of people, it's not hard at all!
2. For a writer's impression of what could have happened, read George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or *Animal Farm*.
3. I think Shakespeare's play by this name is quite relevant here. For one, I understand that "nothing" was pronounced like "noting" in the playwright's day—thus the title is actually quite witty. Also, it's interesting that the label "chick" seems to be as old as the hills. Don John, the bad guy in the play, calls the beautiful Hero "a very forward March-chick". A presumptuous spring chicken, you could say—not quite a compliment from him.
4. From a very worthwhile article entitled *Chick Flick*,s in a very worthwhile magazine entitled *Credenda/Agenda*, volume 9, number 4. Be sure to log on to www.credenda.org!

World news

New Arabic Bible debuts

A new Arabic Bible, in an easy-to-read version, was made available by the World Bible Translation Center earlier this month. WBTC President Dale Randolph says, "This may be one of the first times a text has attempted to truly utilize language that the Muslim population does not find offensive at all and communicates accurately the original text." Mr. Randolph hopes to be able to distribute more easy-to-read Bibles in additional languages spoken in the Middle East.

• *Mission Network News, HCJB World Radio; via ChristianNet World; World Bible Translation Center, Fort Worth, Tex., 888-54-BIBLE; www.wbtc.com.*

New for men on the net

ChristianFellowship4GodlyMen@yahoo.com was formed on Reformation Day (October 31) so Christian men may fellowship with others online. Designed to be like a local Men's Prayer Breakfast and Fellowship group, it will allow men the chance to grow in discipleship in Christ Jesus. Join at christianfellowship4godlymen-subscribe@yahoo.com.

• *Chip Freundt, Administrator*

Afghan churches seizing opportunities

Beneath the smoke of war, clandestine Christian congregations are spreading in Afghan villages, sources in Pakistan and the U.S. told United Press International early this month.

Three sources feed this growth, says Gary Lane, news director of Voice of the Martyrs: first, Afghans encounter local Christians in refugee camps in Pakistan; second, Christian shortwave radio stations broadcast in Pashtu, Dari and Farsi, the principal languages; third, thousands of Bibles in these languages are smuggled into Afghanistan by VOM.

A prominent Pakistani Christian said, "Af-

ghanis walk sometimes for four days to attend Bible classes in Peshawar and other places along the border." He said a clandestine Bible school exists for this purpose, adding that there is also a correspondence school for Muslims who want to know more about Christianity. Converts to Christianity risk execution, Lane pointed out.

• *United Press International, via James A. Ferrier, HCJB World Radio, jferrier@hcjb.org; 719-590-9800; www.hcjb.org.*

Jihad sets fire to Indonesia

Laskar Jihad attacked Pantangolemba village by Poso, a Christian village. The attack took place on November 10. Some 68 houses burned down, and 1.5 tons of rice were looted. At noon, another attack took place at Rononuncu village.

Laskar Jihad used AK47s as their weapons.

There are about 7,500 refugee at Palu, and 750 of them are small children. It is predicted that the conflict will only get worse as the Ramadhan is approaching. The army and police have made some arrests of both Christians and Muslims possessing weapons. Christians can be sentenced three years jail for machete possession, while Moslems are sentenced seven months for automatic gun possession.

• *International Christian Concern, 2020 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Box 941, Washington, D.C. 20006-1846 (301) 989-1708*

South Carolina "Choose Life" plates put on hold

Planned Parenthood of South Carolina won a request in federal court November 19 to prevent the state from making "Choose Life" license plates, until a lawsuit is heard next year. Judge Patrick Michael Duffy issued the preliminary injunction, which remains in effect until Planned Parenthood's case against the state is heard next year.

Pro-abortion (*Sjirk – is this correct, or should it be pro-life?*) Gov. Jim Hodges signed a law allowing the state to issue "Choose Life" plates in September. Planned Parenthood sued after lawmakers refused to offer plates with a pro-abortion message. "We are very pleased with today's ruling, and remain optimistic that the law creating these license plates will be found unconstitutional," said Chris Jueschke, chief executive officer of Planned Parenthood in South Carolina.

South Carolina Attorney General Charlie Condon, who is pro-life, said he is disappointed with the court's decision. He has also vowed to fight the suit in the US Supreme Court, if necessary.

• *Gov. Jim Hodges, PO Box 11829, Columbia, SC 29211*

Islamic group wants Graham meeting

A Muslim advocacy group wants to meet with evangelist Franklin Graham to discuss his recent statement that Islam is "a very evil and wicked religion," according to a report distributed by the Associated Press.

Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, said the group hasn't heard from Graham since its executive director faxed Graham a letter on November 19. "Negative impressions of Islam are most often based on a lack of accurate and objective information," CAIR executive director Nihad Awad said in the letter.

Graham didn't have an immediate comment on whether he would meet with CAIR officials.

Hooper wondered about the implications of Graham's comments. "If that is his belief, what does that say about him being accepted in mainstream Christian thought?" Hooper said. "You've got everybody from the president to the pope saying Islam is not evil and wicked."

Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham and heir to his father's ministry, prayed at Presi-

dent Bush's inauguration. On Sept. 17, Bush called Islam "a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world." But on Friday's "NBC Nightly News," Graham said: "We're not attacking Islam, but Islam has attacked us. The God of Islam is not the same God. He's not the son of God of the Christian or Judeo-Christian faith. It's a different God, and I believe it is a very evil and wicked religion."

• *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, PO Box 779, Minneapolis, MN 55440*

Human cloning announcement draws criticism

A company's claim that it is first to clone a human embryo has drawn opposition from the White House, the Vatican and other pro-life advocates, who see it as a step toward cloning human beings and the destruction of unborn children.

Researchers at Advanced Cell Technology in Worcester, Massachusetts, say they hope to clone human embryos to kill in order to obtain embryonic stem cells for research. But rival scientists pointed out that the ACT team did not even get close to creating embryos large enough to take stem cells from. Only one of the eggs survived as long as the six-celled stage, and they all stopped growing after a few hours.

"From what I saw yesterday, these guys didn't get very far," Kevin Wilson, spokesman for the American Society for Cell Biology, said in a telephone interview.

In response, President Bush said that the breakthrough was "morally wrong, in my opinion. We should not, as a society, grow life to destroy it."

Speaking Monday on NBC's "Today" show, the company's top executive Michael West replied that the work does not involve human life, but rather "cellular life, a fundamental distinction." "I consider myself pro-life, by the way, and I do not see this as a pro-life issue at all," West said.

Pro-life advocates vehemently disagreed with West's notion and numerous pro-life lawmakers and leaders of pro-life organizations held a joint news conference. "To manufacture a human being is a terrible human rights abuse," said pro-life Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) at the conference. "Mad scientists are still mad scientists no matter how white their lab coats are, and how many bioethicists they hire to justify their actions."

Poll numbers show most Americans oppose cloning humans.

By a 2-to-1 margin, respondents said in an ABC

News/Beliefnet poll in August they thought cloning a human embryo for medical purposes should be illegal.

• *Steven Ertelt, Women and Children First, PO Box 4433, Helena, MT 59604-4433*

URCSA proposes to DRCA=20

The Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) is seeking better relations with one-time fellow church members in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA).

Most congregations of the DRCA became part of the URCSA at its formation in 1994. However, more than 100 congregations refused to go along with the union. For four years, the two groups struggled over the right to the name, DRCA, and the right to the property of the DRCA. In 1998, an Appeals Court ruled in favour of the DRCA, granting it the right to the name and to ownership of the local properties of the congregations. At its recent synod, the URCSA gave full recognition to the DRCA. It recognised the teaching and sacraments of the DRCA, and saw no problem with the full exchange of members and ministers between the two churches.

The URCSA hopes that they can hold talks with the DRCA that might lead to reunification. They may even seek a mediator to help in that process. The DRCA, however, has yet to decide in that direction.

The DRCA is a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Council, while the URCSA declined REC membership at its formative synod in 1994. (Die Kerkbode) [REC]

• *Reformed Ecumenical Council News Exchange, 2050 Breton Rd. SE Ste 102, Grand Rapids, MI 49546-5547=20*

Appeals Court affirms Kevorkian's murder conviction

A Michigan appeals court has upheld the murder conviction of Jack Kevorkian in the death of a 52-year-old man whose suicide was televised on "60 Minutes." In the decision, handed down on November 20, the Michigan Court of Appeals rejected Kevorkian's argument that euthanasia is legal and that his conviction was unconstitutional. Kevorkian attorney Mayer Morganroth said he will appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court and the federal courts if necessary.

"Euthanasia is at the core of this case," the judges wrote. "But for defendant's self-described zealotry, Thomas Youk's death would, in all probability, not have been the subject of national attention, much less a murder trial. Defendant, in what is now apparently something of an afterthought, asks us to conclude that euthanasia is legal and, therefore, to reverse his conviction on constitutional grounds. We refuse. Such a holding would be the first step down a very steep and slippery slope."

The court also tossed out Kevorkian's argument that euthanasia involves a dying person's "right to privacy."

"We can find no meaningful precedent for expanding the right to privacy to include the right to commit euthanasia so that an individu-

al can be free from intolerable and irremediable suffering," it wrote. The ruling was handed down by Court of Appeals Judges William Whitbeck, Joel Hoekstra and Henry William Saad.

Kevorkian, who says he has assisted in more than 130 suicides, is serving a 10- to 25-year sentence in the 1998 death of Thomas Youk, who was terminally ill with Lou Gehrig's disease.

Kevorkian had videotaped himself injecting Youk with a lethal dose of potassium chloride and gave the tape to "60 Minutes." It was televised two months later, and prosecutors quickly filed a murder charge.

Kevorkian was convicted of second-degree murder in 1999. Acting as his own attorney for most of the trial, he said his actions were "a medical service for an agonized human being."

"The trial that he had was not a fair trial," Morganroth said then. "I don't think (his conviction) would have occurred had he had effective counsel."

However, Oakland County assistant prosecutor Anica Leticia argued at the time that Kevorkian "knew exactly what he was doing" when he represented himself with attorney David Gorosh advising him.

Kevorkian had told "60 Minutes" he hoped to push prosecutors to act. "They must charge me. Because if they do not, that means they don't think it was a crime," he said. "They don't need any more evidence, do they?"

• *Judge Joel Hoekstra, Third District Court of Appeals, State of Michigan Building, 350 Ottawa, NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503*

Sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism

A new collection of sermons on the 52 Lord's Days of the Heidelberg Catechism is available from Free Reformed Publications. Drawn from a variety of ministers in the Free Reformed Church, the series follows the traditional European preaching pattern, which allots portions of the catechism to each week of the year. The collection sells for US\$35 [C\$45] plus postage.

• *Free Reformed Publications, 265 King George Road, Suite #104, Brantford, Ontario N3R 7Z9 (519) 756-4384 BookOrders@frcna.org <http://www.frcna.org>*

American Reformation Presbyterian Church debuts

The Reformation Presbyterian Church met in its eleventh presbytery on November 17th, 2001. The name of the denomination was changed from Reformation Presbyterian Church to American Reformation Presbyterian Church as a demonstration of sister church status with the Myanmar Reformation Presbyterian Church. Also, the Dallas Presbytery of the ARPC was established for North Texas.

Guidelines were adopted for establishing fraternal relations with other churches. The proposal for joining the Alliance of Reformed Confessional Presbyterian Churches (the Manassas Plan) was returned in the negative. For copies of "An Answer to the Manassas Plan" and "Guidelines for Contact" write to Pastor Richard Bacon pastor@fpcr.org.

The general court also determined to seek closer ties with the American Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia, and the Protestant Reformed Churches of America.

• Rev. Richard Bacon, First Presbyterian Church, 8210 Schrade Rd., Rowlett, TX 75088

Dracula Park

Church leaders in Romania have condemned government plans for a 120-hectare Dracula Park to encourage tourist interest in Transylvania's legendary vampire. "The Dracula myth has nothing to do with the Romanian people or its history," said Costel Stoica, spokesman for the Romanian Orthodox Church's Bucharest patriarchate. "It gives a false image of our country, deriving from an Irish writer's fantasy."

The Orthodox priest was reacting to a vote on November 19 by Romania's senate, approving a tourism ministry ordinance setting up the park outside the northern town of Segesvar.

The Disney-style project is to be built by a consortium of German companies led by Westernstadt Pullman City, which operates an American Wild West theme park in the German town of Passau. Known as Schoszburg in German, the city was founded by Saxons in the 12th Century.

There are even plans for an international center of vampirology along with the park and golf course. Sighisoara's mayor, Dorin Daneşan, says the first phase is to open sometime in 2003.

• *Ecumenical News International*, PO Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland

Eliezer Shach Dies at 107

Rabbi Eliezer Shach, the foremost figure in Israel's conservative political field, died on November 2 in Tel Aviv at the age of 107. Considered to be the king maker among Sephardic Jews, Shach functioned as spiritual mentor to both the Degel Hatorah Party [The Banner of the Torah] and the Shas Party in the Israeli parliament. On its own, Shas holds 17 of the 120 seats in the Knesset. The Agudat Israel movement benefits from the fractional representation system, which is integral to the Israeli political structure.

Rabbi Shach frequently taunted the left. On

one occasion Shach denounced Labour Party leaders as apostates and "pig eaters." In 1990 he enraged the kibbutz dwellers, calling them ignorant of Jewish holidays and cultivators of unclean animals.

Shach began his amazing rise in a village near Vilnius in Lithuania. As a young person, he studied scripture under the leading minds of his movement, and eventually rose to become head of the Ponevezh Rabbinical Seminary in Bnei Brak near Tel Aviv. [GN]

Updated RP Constitution now available

The complete and up-to-date version of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (NA) Constitution is available for downloading from the Internet in Adobe Acrobat format. The Constitution contains the Westminster standards, the RP Testimony, and RP directories and forms.

• *Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America*, 7408 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15208 (412)241-0436 <http://rpcna.org/constitution.html>

Samuel – a wasted life?

John Steenhof

When you work at the counter of the Heersping bakery in Naenae, you meet a variety of people, with some interesting results. So like for my wife, Alice, at the bakery, was challenging to say the least.

One customer intrigued her. This older gentleman, named Samuel, would routinely saunter into the bakery, slowly take a seat at the table, and wait for his coffee. His clothes were shabbily layered, and on the dark side. A floppy hat perched on his head, one of those tatty avocado-green camouflaged types. It covered a balding head sparsely covered with fine grey hair. His grey-blue eyes, though lonely, could not disguise his sense of humour.

His conversation was rough, sometimes punctuated with swearwords. He even occasionally used God's name in vain. Yet there was always warmth, consideration, and a touch of class, glowing as an ember in an otherwise "low class" demeanor. He was almost completely unaware of the coarse edges in his speech at first.

He sat down where he could keep an eye on all the people, and could banter with the ladies, especially the pretty ones, at the counter. He sat, he relaxed, he listened, and he

conversed. You could see him sit in eager anticipation of the steaming hot cup of coffee, accompanied by one of Mr. Heersping's delights. Between conversation he devoured every last delicious morsel, savouring each bite of the delectable pastry, and enjoying every single delicious sip of the fresh brew. His life seemed to be measured in coffee sips. He seemed as starved for human contact as for the cups of coffee.

His sessions at the warm, cosy bakery seemed to be like returns of a son to a snug, relaxing home after some time away. Each entrance was marked by an avid arrival. He would excitedly grasp the handle of the door in eager anticipation of his "fellowship meal", and find his way to the table. Each exit was marked by a hesitating glance backwards, and a reluctant goodbye.

He took a liking to my wife. Sometimes he would joke around with her. But I understand that. My dear wife of 26 years is as beautiful and fresh as when I first married her. And she has grown in wisdom. So if Samuel felt attracted to her bubbly personality, I fully understood.

Little by little, she began to make acquaintance with Samuel. He slowly started to share more and more of his personal life. He was Scottish, and grew up in a good, stable home

in Scotland. Later, he had emigrated to New Zealand. For some reason there had always been a natural affinity between me and the Scottish, which transcended the proverbial ability to save a penny.

Evidently he lived in Stokes Valley, somewhere on one of the hills surrounding the valley.

When Alice had come to know him well, she felt free enough to invite him for dinner. He looked very reluctant. He answered apologetically, "Before I do that, I need to sort out a few problems." The ensuing conversation made clear that he was trying to "get his life right" before he had anyone in his home. Alice answered compassionately, "We all have problems, Samuel, but Christ came for the sick, and not for the whole." He agreed to set a date next time he was at the bakery. Alice requested his address since he didn't have a phone, and he very hesitantly left his address with her.

That next visit to bakery did not eventuate. A number of weeks went by, with no Samuel. With each screech of the opening door, signalling the entrance of a new customer, Alice looked for the old familiar face of the Scotsman, but he did not come. Hours turned into days, and days turned into weeks.

After what seemed like a very long and



nerve-racking time, we decided to visit his house to see what was up. Needless to say, we did have some morbid thoughts on his whereabouts. Was he overly busy? Was he sick? Had he been knocked down in the street? Was he lying in his house, sick (or even worse) deceased, unknown to his neighbours around him? We had to find out, so we finally made our minds to visit his house in Stokes Valley, naturally and necessarily unannounced.

Stokes Valley is only a short drive from where we live in Silverstream. We visit the Stokes Valley Swimming Pool every week with our Christian School, so the first part of the trip was on familiar ground. But all familiarity was lost after we made the first left past the petrol station at the mouth of Stokes Valley. From there the route was a series of tangled

curves and turns (these are becoming more familiar to resident Canadians) till we finally reached the top of the hill. We wondered that Samuel, so short of breath, tracked these hills every day.

We knocked at the door... No answer! Was Samuel lying on the floor somewhere, conked out or even worse? We knocked again, and—whew!!—we heard slow footsteps coming to the door. After some time, the door opened. There was Samuel in his bathrobe, having just come out of bed.

“Hello, John and Alice. I didn’t expect to see you here!” He looked like a grey phantom in a background of shadows. But we were relieved that Samuel was alive before us, even if he did look somewhat as if he had ascended from Sheol (the land of the dead).

He was hesitant, and yet insisted on showing us around the house.

The first thing we noticed was that no lights were on, and yet it was dusk. It was slightly cold when we entered the house. Close to the entrance was an opening to a bedroom, which was bare indeed. No pictures on the wall, a barren floor, a lonely bed standing unmade off by itself, and a cardboard box at the foot of the bed, which was inhabited by cans of beer. That presented a bit of a red flag.

Then we entered the living room. It too was barren, with one solitary couch at one wall. There was musty smell, like an old cottage (back) un-lived in for years. A few cobwebs hung here and there like musty fairy nets...not a feeling of being a home. We gazed at shades of grey, we listened to silence, we felt the dark air around us.

Finally, our journey to the kitchen. It was deathly quiet. No tick of a clock, no humming of a fridge, no sounds of any kind. Just dead and forbidding silence, which was all the more accentuated by the dark shadows. Again, everything was shades of grey, and black, with no colour, all lacking a woman’s touch. There was no trace of that after-dinner cooking smell that can pervade neighbourhoods, and would be normally permeating kitchens. No sign of post-dinner dishes, or a dishcloth to dry them. No washcloth at the sink.

The whole trip through the house had alternated between old cigarette smells and mustiness. And if any working electrical appliances existed, there was no evidence they were in use. Any nick-nacks seemed to have disappeared in one huge garage sale.

Who can describe all the thoughts which go through your mind in moments like these? *How can a life which has known so many people, end up as lonely as this....*

When a man is down, how his friends disappear... There stand we all but for the grace of God... Life without God... How it can end with no caring people to be there... Old age without the Lord is a lonely road... Thank you, Lord, for family and for church...

We could have joked with Samuel about being a real Scotsman, having the lights and heat off and all. He would then probably joke back with us. Thankfully, we sensed that there was something here that was unsuitable to humour. He turned and whispered with embarrassment. “My power has been turned off. I can’t afford it!” We both looked at each other, very sad indeed. Now we knew why his visits to the bakery were such an affair for him. He received warmth, warm coffee, fellowship, and love all wrapped into one visit. All these were lacking at home—if you could call it a home. No, it was a house... just a house.

Our hearts went out to Samuel, and wondered what had brought him to this. And would God give our church a chance to help him? Would he be willing to share with us? Would he be willing to be helped? Could we seemingly “hard-nosed” Reformed Christians be of any help to him if he was willing? Would we be able to remedy the power problem and the underlying financial need? Did the beer cans mean anything? Would he accept financial help from the church, assuming it was wise to help him? We did not know what the future held, but we knew we served a compassionate God who held the future. We knew that the wondrous breadth of God’s grace could reach even him, but would it? We sincerely hoped it would.

(To be continued.)

SYNOD 2002

Please note the following information regarding Synod 2002:

Synod is to be held, Lord willing, at the Reformed Church of Christchurch, 63 Cornwall St, Christchurch from Saturday 27 April 2002@ 3.00pm till Saturday 4th May. There will be a prayer service @ 7.30pm on Saturday 27th April 2002.

APOLOGY

The 50th Wedding Anniversary for Pieter & Elisabeth Wierenga is on the 11th February 2002, and not the 11th February 2003. (The family apologises for any inconvenience this has caused)

Missions in focus:

Happy New Year!



Janice Reid

This is the time of new resolutions, of reviewing the past and making decisions that will affect the way we live our future. In line with these "new beginnings," I'd like to tell you the story of a new beginning in mission work for a family in Canada. It's also a bit of a "new beginning" in the way we think about missions, because this isn't about outreach to a poverty-stricken third-world country. Oh, no. It's about a work in the so-called *first world*, where people have so many things but so little knowledge of the One in whom all things hold together. So read on....

We traditionally think of missionary outreach as coming *from* developed nations, and going *to* developing, or third-world, countries. But those days are past. "Developing nation" and "unreached" are no longer synonymous (although they sometimes are). Rather, "unreached peoples" exist in the most civilised of places....

Last year, Rev. Bernard Westerveld was appointed by the OPC and the Reformed Church of Québec (l'Eglise réformée du Québec [ERQ]), to the work of pastor-evangelist at the Reformed Church of St. Mark in Québec City, Canada. Together with his wife, Melanie, and their three children, he has moved to this French-speaking province to strengthen Reformed believers and bring a Gospel witness to the community.

Bienvenue au Québec!

Québec is one of the ten Canadian provinces, located in the eastern part of Canada, along the St. Lawrence River. Most of the seven million plus Québécois live on the banks of this river. Québec City is the capital of the province.

For the most part, Québécois are French speaking. They are proud of their language and culture, and seek to preserve it in the midst of an English sea that threatens to engulf them.

The distinctiveness of the French language and culture has created tension throughout Canadian history. Before the 1960s, Québec guarded its identity by aligning itself with the Roman Catholic Church. If you were a true Québécois, you were a French speaking Roman Catholic. The speakers of English were Protestants. You can well imagine the difficulty Protestants faced as they tried to plant churches in Québec.

But since the 1960s, things have changed dramatically. Because of the increasing abuse

of power by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and also a rising class of intellectual, liberal thinkers in mainstream society, Québec became secularised. Within one or two generations, people had turned their backs on the Church of Rome and embraced a political identity of language and nationalism. As one sociologist has noted, "the state replaced the hierarchy [of the Roman church], language replaced faith, and nationalism replaced religion."

In October 1995, the people of Québec nearly (49.6%) voted in favour of pursuing independence from Canada. The separatists promised not to give up the cause. This political tension continues to mark the popular perception of Québec.

The Kingdom of God in Québec

Québec, however, is much more than a hotbed of political foment. It is also a battleground for the Kingdom of God! Despite the predominance of the Roman Church in recent history, the early witness of the Gospel came through the Huguenots, the French Calvinists. When France first began to colonise New France in the sixteenth century, the Huguenots came in significant numbers.

Urged on by Roman Catholic cardinals and Jesuit monks, the king of France eventually banned the Huguenots from the colony. The Catholic clergy became the primary preserver of French language, culture, and religion, and exercised considerable political power and social influence. This dominance continued for nearly 200 years. Although Protestants had freedom to worship, they suffered the persecution of exclusion by the Catholic majority.

In 1853, the first significant Protestant missionary effort was undertaken in Québec. Workers from the Swiss Missionary Society aimed to establish a French-speaking indigenous church, rather than French-speaking congregations in a predominantly English denomination. Although the work was difficult and converts few, several churches were planted. In 1875, these were taken under the umbrella of the Presbyterian Church of Canada (PCC), and as many as twenty-five churches were established.

This growth continued until 1912. But then the PCC turned its attention to the provinces of western Canada. Liberalism also began to infiltrate the church. The mission to Québec was neglected. Many French-speaking Protes-

tants joined the larger English-speaking congregations, which in turn diminished their witness to French-speaking Catholics. By 1975, only three French-speaking PCC congregations remained.

L'Eglise Réformée du Québec

The Quiet Revolution of the 1960s not only gave rise to new political parties, but also fed religious reawakening in Québec. Some joined the religions of hedonism and postmodernism; others, various cults. But the Lord also called many to faith in Christ!

The renewed mission effort of the 1970s to the French-speaking Québécois came largely through Baptist, Brethren and Pentecostal

Frank Filippe
PLOEGER

7 November 2001

Aged 62

Psalm 34

Set free from his suffering, after a short illness, in this, his final walk through life, The Lord called home to be with Him, my loving and beautiful Husband, our caring, thoughtful and humorous Father and our very special and loving Opa.

Jitske Ploeger - Lubbers

**Linda and Gary
Ellen, Carla, Amy, Alice**

Robyn

**Correspondence address:
Clematis Straat 15
7741SP, Coevorden
The Netherlands**

churches, and parachurch groups such as the Navigators. But in the midst of this Protestant revival, many new believers realised that they needed a more solid grounding in the totality of biblical teaching. They sought out Presbyterian and Reformed pastors to instruct them.

In the late 1970s, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) worked together with the PCC to establish a single French-speaking Reformed church. Eventually, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism were adopted as confessional standards. A church order was written up.

The CRC and the PCA supported the formation of a separate French-speaking denomination, but the PCC did not. The two groups went their separate ways: the PCC towards a nationwide Presbyterian church, and the others to encourage a biblical and confessional, French-speaking denomination. The parting was not without its difficulties, but finally, on November 6, 1988, l'Eglise Réformée du Québec was officially inaugurated.

The ERQ Today

The years that followed inauguration were difficult for the ERQ, as they were for any Protestant church in Québec. The numerical growth of the seventies and eighties nearly ceased. Few new converts came to the churches. Two churches closed; another rejoined the CRC. Tension within the denomination provided a time of testing and maturing, but the Lord proved faithful through it all.

Presently, the ERQ is composed of six local congregations, with a total membership of about 300. The ERQ remains a mission work supported by the prayers, financial gifts and preaching support of other Presbyterian and Reformed congregations. There are three French-speaking pastors; others come from English Canada, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

The challenge before the Protestant church in Canada is huge. After nearly thirty years of evangelism, less than 0.5% of the Québec population is Protestant. The Roman Catholic Church can claim around 86% of the population, but the vast majority are non-practising. Organised religion is out. The spiritualism of the New Age movement is sweeping into the void.

As always, the Gospel must be proclaimed in this mission-field. Is Québec more needy than other places? Not likely. But without a doubt, too few Québécois have heard the truth of the Word of God. We need ambassadors of Jesus Christ sent to proclaim the Gospel in the French language.

Called to Québec

So, where does Ben Westerveld come into all this? As a Canadian, he has always viewed Québec in the light of its political problems. But the Lord changed all that.

During the referendum of 1995, when Québec nearly voted to separate from Canada, the Lord opened Ben's eyes to see that it did not really matter if Québec stayed a part of Canada, or separated. What mattered were not the kingdoms of men, but the Kingdom of God. Will the people of Québec be a part of God's Kingdom?

Ben says, "I prayed that night. I told the Lord that if He wanted me to preach the Gospel of grace in Québec, I was ready to go."

Five and a half years later, after theological studies and French language studies, the Lord has brought Rev. Westerveld to Québec City to preach the coming Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The Lord has not sent the Westervelds to Québec on their own. A work such as this requires significant support. Yes, financial, but more importantly, wise guidance, strong encouragement to persevere, and above all the constant prayers of many brothers and sisters, so that the Kingdom may come in Québec.

Calling all country boys and girls to become

NETWORKERS



If you have always wanted to be a Cadet or Calvinette but live too far away from a club, we would love to hear from you!

NETWORKERS is for children aged 9-15 years old, and you would be a correspondence member with the closest club, able to attend camps and any club functions that you could make.

Your counsellor and cadre would be your correspondent friends and leader.

INTERESTED?

Then write to me –
**Cr Betty-Ann Bajema, 17 Phoenix Place,
Papatoetoe, Auckland**

MIF Prayer Notes:

The **Overseas Mission Board** asks us to pray for safe travel for Derek Cressy and Anton Meister, who will go to Papua New Guinea this month. They hope, Lord willing, to determine how the Reformed Churches of NZ can contribute to the work done by Stephen 't Hart and his family as they minister to the fledgling Reformed Church of Papua New Guinea, who have just three congregations. Pray for a positive outcome, and for the opening of opportunities for members of our denomination to serve in PNG!

Liana Hoyt is back in New Zealand now, and has New Year's preparations of her own (she gets married soon) but she still has the believers in Mbale—and their children!—close to her heart. Liana asks us to pray for the PCU (Presbyterian Church in Uganda), that it will remain faithful to the teachings of the Bible. Pray also for the Covenant Primary School, its teachers and students.

Janice Reid is busy with radio scripts that are aimed at health workers, and will be broadcast on FEBC stations in various parts of Asia. Pray for her ongoing work on training manuals. She recently spent some time training a programme supervisor who will, in turn, train tribal programmers this month in a restricted country, introducing them to Firm Foundations.

Stephen and Dorinda 't Hart. Stephen has added responsibility in the Ekoro congregation since Br. Sarumi, the local pastor, died last year (while Stephen was on home assignment). Pray for the congregation, and also for wisdom as the 't Harts continue to settle back into life in PNG. Stephen asks prayer that the churches would have greater vision for the spread of the Reformed faith in PNG, and also that more national leaders would be raised up to serve the congregations.

¹ This article is an abbreviated version of one recently published by Rev. Westerveld in the OPC publication, *New Horizons*. Used with permission.

From the D.A.'s Office

Youth Camps

January is the month when National Youth Camps have always been held, so it seems appropriate to return to Youth Camps at this time. The very first 'From the DAs Office' highlighted the 9th National Youth Camp held in Eltham in 1977. Thanks to recent additions to the archives we are now able to look further back, to the 4th National Camp, held at 'The Narrows' near Cambridge in the Waikato in January 1971 (The photograph on our back cover). The theme was 'The Narrow

Way' and Harry Berends was the Camp Leader. The devotional leader was believed to be R Westera and the Camp Parents were believed to be the Rev and Mrs Tom Tyson. Bert Koelewijn and Elke Wesbonk provided the meals for the hungry campers. 107 campers are on the camp photo above.

Thanks to Roel Dykstra for supplying the photo. Roel has made a start at identifying the names. Perhaps you can confirm some, or add a few, or give some married names? I'd be very happy to hear from you. Note that there is also a dog in the picture – whose dog is it? What's the dog's name? Perhaps there is a story there.

Back Row	2 nd Row	3 rd Row	4 th Row	5 th Row	Front Row
14 Henry Alberts	29	33	52	72	88
15 Bert Verkerk	30	34	53	73 Ben Jongepier	89
16 Anton ten Hove	31	35	54 Jos Steetskamp	74	90 Tony de Graaf
1 John Verkerk	32 Arie Geerlofs	36 Donald de Vries	55	75 Joyce Kroon (Verkerk)	91
2 Wiebe Roffel?	17	37	56 Simon Gjaltema	76	92 Beppy ten Hove (Dijkstra)
3 Peter Verkerk?	18 Roy de Vries	38 Peter Bangma	57	77	93 Roel Dijkstra
4 Bert Kroon	19 Wim Bouman	39 Arnold Storm	58	78	94 Bill Berends
5 Bernie Bosgra	20	40	59 Rev Tom Tyson	79 Elanor Storm (Bosgra)	95 Henny Bosgra (Berends)
6	21	41 Ria Loef (Verkerk, Kuipers)	60 Peter Vijver	80 Charlie Bosgra	96
7	22	42	61 Robert Storm	81 Bonny de Graaf (Steetskamp)	97 Coleen van den Berg (Berends)
8	23	43	62 Michael McTigue	82 Caroline Trowbridge	98 Sietske Bosgra
9	24	44 Carol Voogt	63 Wessel ten Hove	83	99
10 Jacob Ploeg	25	45	64 Simon Couprie	84	100 Marieke de Rues (Smit)
11 Mr Westera	26	46 Margaret Dirkze	65 Jeltje Dijkstra (Loef)	85 Bert Koelewijn	101 Anne McTigue
12	27	47 Louise Storm	66 Joan Dirkze (Tepper)	86	102 Anneke Gorter (Kroon)
13	28	48 Linda de Geest	67 Andre van Rij	87 Elke Wesbonk	103 Tom Kroon
		49 Louise Geerlofs	68 Anita van Rij		104 Hans Berends
		50	69		105
		51	70 Tracy Jongepier (Landkroon)		106
			71 Albertjan Landkroon		107

Archives Statement of Policy & Procedures

And now the fourth instalment of the Archives Statement of Policy and Procedures, "Maintaining Archival Materials".

Maintaining Archival Materials

A. Sources

All administrative, historical and pertinent records and materials of the courts of the church, synodical committees, etc. shall be sources from which materials are drawn to the archives.

The minutes of all church courts are the main source of the Reformed Churches of NZ history; therefore, they shall be kept completely and adequately.

B. Transferral of records

The general principle governing the transfer of records is the following: if a record is used less than twice a year, it should be placed in the archives. Records are not to be tampered with before being deposited in the archives.

C. Restrictions

Ordinarily, members shall have access to their own files. However, to protect living individuals and their right to privacy, the following rules shall be observed:

- (1) Administrative records shall remain closed for a ten year period; they can be used with permission of the administrative officers and the archivist.
- (2) Personal records shall remain closed for a ten year period; controlled use may be made of these records with permission of the archivist.
- (3) Unpublished material shall be available to a researcher for legitimate use with permission of the archivist.
- (4) Published material shall be available to any one for research or reading.
- (5) Transcripts will be released when requested by the individual concerned; usually the signature of this individual should accompany the request. A form letter and a fee shall act as safeguards.

D. Retirement of records

(1) Administrative papers

Materials and records shall be kept for one administration for reference and shall then be sent to the archives - in the original folders - at the beginning of the next administration. The original filing order shall be preserved. These records shall be kept in the retention centre for one administration, then classified and filled in the stacks.

(2) Member records

Whenever a member publishes any material, two copies shall be deposited in the archives for preservation. Upon the death of a member, all records about him shall be sent to the archives. The archivist should be consulted regarding the disposition of letters, memorabilia etc. Members who have lived with the deceased shall be asked to send to the archivist a brief account of their association. When a member withdraws from the denomination, the entire file shall be sent to the archives.

Next month we'll look at section V- 'Procedures'

Synodical Archivist
 Roy Nugteren
 42 Bancroft Terrace
 Newlands
 Wellington
 Ph: (04) 478 6406
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