

faith in focus

Magazine of the
Reformed Churches
of New Zealand

VOLUME 30/3 APRIL 2003



Then Jesus came to them and said,
"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Then Jesus As you go, make disciples of all nations,
baptising them in the name *came to them*
of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
and said, And surely I will be with you always,
to the very end of the age."

"All authority ...
Matthew 28:18-20

CONTENTS

The high point in Christ's low point 3
Christ's Passion in Luke 22:44

A look back from back then 4
A reflection by the Rev. Deenick 40 years ago

Between You & Me 7
Supporting those in the household of faith

A tale of two pieties 8
Reformational Holiness

A feminine focus 11
Older Women and Younger Women

Should you have a family trust? 13
A follow up to our Senior Options

World news 14

Church news — Cleanings 16

Books in focus 18
'The Book Jesus Read', 'Soul Survivor'

Missions in focus 20
in Mongolia, Prayer points

Focus on home 22
Loving Someone with the Gospel
Wellington Home Mission

From the D.A.'s office 24
Reformed Church of Auckland's 50th Anniversary

All correspondence regarding editorial content and advertising should be sent to:

The Editor:
 Sjirk Bajema
 17 Phoenix Place, Papatoetoe,
 Auckland.
 Ph/Fax: +64 9 277 9360
 Email: thirty@paradise.net.nz
 Reformed Churches Home Page
<http://www.reformed-churches.org.nz>

Copy Deadline:
 Six weeks preceding the month of publication.

All correspondence regarding distribution and payment of subscriptions to:

The Secretary:
 Mrs Nicola Wharekawa
 79 McLeod Street
 Upper Hutt
richwhar@maxnet.co.nz.

Subscription per volume:
 \$40.00 (eleven issues)
 Bulk Rate: \$35.00
 Overseas: \$60.00
 Electronically Mailed (overseas only): \$40

Production Staff:
 Distribution: M. & D. van der Zwaag
 Design & Layout: Matrix Typography
 Printed by: Flying Colours

Editorial

Have a look at the cover text to this issue of Faith in Focus. Notice anything different about it? There's a difference there isn't there? A difference from all our major Bible versions. For the phrase "Therefore go" isn't there. Rather, this is translated as "As you go." And that's because the word in the original Greek conveys an ongoing action.

So, rather than the impression we can have that going out and making disciples is an action the church needs to start to do it conveys the sense of carrying on doing what we're doing. Which is precisely what the disciples were doing. They have followed Jesus to Galilee, they've obeyed Him by doing what He's told them, they worship Him. They are quite clearly part of His Church.

This puts an interesting perspective on whether or not it was in response to a clear call from the Lord that our forefathers came to this land fifty years ago. Our Senior's fellowship in Mangere couldn't recall that happening. They did remember, though, their desire for a new life in a world outside ravaged Europe. They had come essentially for economic reasons. A new start.

But they hadn't gone without their faith. Oh, it may have been a faith that was somewhat distracted by being away from home, a faith which needed to be challenged by the other Dutch Christians here, or by a visit from the Dominee, but it was faith nevertheless. As they went they were never away from their Lord. Or for that, not long away from His Church.

It reminded me of a news item about several Reformed Churches that had risen up in Russia. These had been formed as a result of a number of intellectual Russians coming across the writings of John Calvin. The item also mentioned that there had been no distinct Reformed presence before in Russia - apart from several Dutch churches in the pre-Soviet era!

You'll find that all over the world. Wherever our Reformed-Presbyterian ancestors went to, whether for economic, political, or religious reasons, there is a godly legacy. There has truly been a Calvinistic Diaspora.

This doesn't necessarily mean that those churches so formed will remain Reformed, or remain at all. There is a piece in this issue's World News about the Reformed Church of America's 375th of existence. But that name today doesn't necessarily tie them in with a biblical faithfulness. It can be far from it in later years!

But the Lord keeps His Church, that's the important thing. And that we have been part of His hand in this land is simply a gift of His grace. Let's thank Him for that.

+++++

"Christ's church is continuous to the point of the most glorious perpetuity. It embraces all the ages of human history and will extend through the boundless ages of eternity. Instead of being a temporary substitute for something better, it constitutes the very heart of the eternal plan of God. And instead of comprising the believers of but a few centuries, it is the communion of God's elect of all ages, the countless throng of all who are written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world and will dwell eternally in the city which has no need of the light of the sun, neither of the moon, because the glory of God lightens it and the Lamb is the light thereof (Revelation 21:23)."

R.B. Kuiper

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.

The high point in Christ's low point

Christ's Passion in Luke 22:44

Sjirk Bajema

The word translated in Luke 22:44 as "anguish" is not found anywhere else in the Bible. Luke reaches a point in describing Christ's 'Passion' where no previous word or description will quite fit. So unique is this word, and so terrible is the pain it describes in our Lord, some of the early scribes copying the manuscripts felt it didn't belong. Perhaps they saw this as saying that Jesus was too human, just as they would have had difficulty with the words in the verse before describing Jesus as being strengthened by an angel.

Was Jesus really so helpless? Is that what Luke writes, as though Jesus were some passive person, awaiting the inevitable end? Quite the opposite! Here we find inner tension and anxiety, true, but this comes out of a conflict. And because it is a conflict, with the two forces locked in struggle, "anguish" indicates that "supreme concentration of powers" which our Lord draws together in the face of this crisis event.

Don't think that Jesus is afraid of dying; this is His concern for **victory** as the decisive battle approaches for the fate of the world.

Earlier in this Gospel, in chapter 12, Luke quotes Jesus when He states, "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how **distressed** I am until it's completed!" (v49f.) Our Lord is most anxious to get all this over with; though not before everything is fulfilled which is meant to happen. And so Luke presents us with three parts showing that the fulfillment is happening **now**.

1 - The Passion is actioned in pain

One must be clear what is meant here by 'Passion'. Passion is a word we know usually as referring to a strong emotional response. A less-used meaning for this word, but one more closer to the original meaning is, 'to suffer'. That's why we use the expression in describing Lent, the time before Easter, as being Christ's 'Passion'. It concerns our Lord's doing and dying, which is His suffering. There is no scene like this in all history. Here is the very hinge and turning point in Jesus' life. He could have turned back yet. He could even have refused the Cross. The salvation of the whole world hung in the balance as the Son of God literally sweated it out in Gethsemane.

Klaas Schilder explains that, while Calvary - or, as we also call that place, Golgotha - is seen as the crunch point, already now, in Gethsemane, that's happening. The second

time, at Golgotha, Christ's blood was forced out by wounds inflicted externally. Then it was what was done against the Lord - those thorns on His brow, the whippings across His shoulders, the nails driven through His hands and feet, and that all culminated in the trust of the centurion's spear, which caused blood and water to flow from Jesus' wounded side. Here Christ's blood was expelled from within; it comes out as sweat. We will come, further on, to the details about that blood—like sweat, in considering the last phrase of verse 44.

But now we're beginning to see why He is in anguish; this extreme agony which is so unique to Christ here.

You see, the death Jesus Christ was facing wasn't one He could calmly face as many saints have, for His was the death in which He would be forsaken by God Himself, the death in which God made **Him** to be sin for us.

If Hebrews 5 notes that "during the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death", then wouldn't this time, of all the times of His life, have brought Him to His knees?

Someone once commented: There are three ways that prepare us for life's trials. One is the Spartan way that says, "I have strength within me to do it, I am the captain of my soul. With the courage and will that is mine, I will be master when the struggle comes." Another way is the spirit of Socrates, who affirmed that we have minds, reason and judgment to evaluate and help us cope with the enigmas and struggles of life.

Christ's way is the third way. He doesn't exclude the other two, but He adds, "You don't begin with **yourself**, **your will** or **your reason**. You begin with God, who is the beginning and the end." This is why Jesus prayed in verse 42, "not my will, but yours be done."

2 - The Passion is addressed in prayer

"And being in anguish, **he prayed more earnestly...**". Here Christ is the Great High Priest. For moving beyond and above the Old Testament task of the priests offering up the sacrifices and so praying for the people, He is **the sacrifice** and He is **the prayer**. To draw further that comparison between Gethsemane and Golgotha: In Gethsemane Christ offered His soul as a sacrifice; on Golgotha He sacrificed His body.

Allow me to illustrate what happens here in this way: A famous pianist said of Chopin's Nocturne in C sharp minor, "I must tell you

about it. Chopin told Liszt, and Liszt told me. In this piece all is sorrow and trouble. Oh such sorrow and trouble! — until he begins to speak to God, to pray; then it is all right."

That's the way it is with Jesus. He went into Gethsemane in the dark; He came out in the light - because He had talked with God. He went into Gethsemane in an agony; He came out with the victory won, and with peace in His soul - because He had talked with God.

It makes all the difference in what tone of voice someone says, "Your will be done." Because you could say these words in the way of helpless submission; like you're in the grip of a power which you just can't fight. You could say "Your will be done" as someone already battered into submission; then these words are your admission of complete defeat. Then again, you could say



these words as someone who's been totally frustrated, and you don't that it could ever come true anyhow! **Or** you may say it with the accent of perfect trust. That's how Jesus said it. He was speaking, communing, with His Father; He was with the God whose everlasting arms were underneath and about Him, even on the Cross. He was submitting, but that was submission to the love what would never let Him go. The hardest thing in life to accept what we cannot understand; but we can do even that we if we're sure enough of the love of God.

Again the word used is unique; this time it's the word 'earnestly'. While the root word is found in three other places, this particular compound is only found here. But looking at those other three we note that one of them is also written by Luke, in Acts 12 verse 5. That is the only other time in which it's connected with prayer as well. And the prayer spoken of there by Luke is the earnest prayer being offered up by the early church when Peter was kept in prison. They knew what fate awaited the apostle, so they were most

intense in prayer. This is why it can be helpful to know more precisely what it is we're praying for.

So the meaning is about an action or will which is certain of its goal. This, of course, was precisely the case with Jesus. He knew what was ahead.

Unlike Isaac who nonchalantly climbs the hill of sacrifice. "Father," he casually asks, "where is the lamb?" He doesn't sweat one single drop of blood. But Christ **knows** everything. The abyss into which **the Lamb** descends doesn't make Him a naive Isaac. And that's why He sweats blood.

3 - The Passion is answered in person

William Hendriksen shows how Luke, as a doctor, noted here a particular medical condition called 'hematidrosis'. Taking into account that the human nature of Jesus was sinless, and therefore very sensitive, and while Jesus, suffering intensely, was involved in earnest prayer, the resulting strain cause subcutaneous capillaries, the smaller sub—divided blood arteries, to dilate to such an extent that they burst. So what happens is that, from the sweat glands, blood and sweat come out together. It can happen over much of the body; and it results in thick drops or clots of blood, giving a red colour to the beads of perspiration, as they trickle to the ground.

When someone is nervous or apprehensive, they tend to sweat more freely. What's happening here is a much more involved and deeply tense expression of this. Again, this time with Luke's medical eye, we have further proof that this was written by him. But more than that, here is the thing we touched upon earlier; this is Christ's blood being shed from within. And while that's still part-and-parcel of the same suffering as Calvary, here there's no hand of man in it. For no one touches Him now but God alone. It's His own soul being sacrificed. It's here He finds His peace with God, as He gives Himself over. Christ said "yes" to the One who demands the blood sacrifice. With all His strength He fills the breach which separated **us** because of the righteous justice of God. Jesus Christ is here before God alone. The paradox about this is that He's not the victim of men who is the Saviour of men, but He who was punished by God receives His greatest endorsement from God.

And as we see Christ's blood forced out at the pores by God Himself, we could think that this must be a silly and offensive Gospel. As long as nails and hammers controlled by **human** hands are causing Jesus' blood to flow, we can clench our fists in protest against the men who wield them. Then we can still try copping out with blaming

someone.

But when I see God and the Holy Spirit, and all the angels drawing blood out of Jesus in Gethsemane, then I clench my fists in vain. All we can do is **believe**. If I don't do that; if I don't bow in faith then I'll have to rise in rebellion. Which way is it for you, my friend? Will you keep forever kicking against the goads; will you carry on going your own stupid selfish way? Then you'll say none of this is your fault at all; it's got nothing to do with you, and the sooner you can get away from hearing anymore about it, the better!

Or you confess. In the words of a hymn: "Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon You? It is my treason, Lord, that has undone you. 'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied You; I crucified you." "For me, dear Jesus, was Your incarnation, Your mortal sorrow, and Your life's oblation; Your death of anguish and Your bitter passion, for **my** salvation."

But, dear believer, what a comfort as well. We have the greatest encouragement to have patience. Only Jesus went this far because it was taken from within Him and not by anything pressing from without. He gave it freely. And He still does! The Passion is The Power! The Power unto salvation for **all** who believe in Jesus Christ! The Power which makes all the difference in your life, now and forevermore!

A look back then

The establishment of the Reformed Church of Auckland

Bill Deenick

It was in Epsom in the Dunkerron Avenue home of the Van Rij's that the possibility of the establishment of a Reformed Church was first mentioned and vigorously rejected.

For the young and boisterous community of Dutchmen in Auckland it was a rough time. Motorbikes and accidents, trying to speak English and finding their way under not

always sympathetic foremen, in trades which they still had to learn, kept them more than occupied and provided the necessary material for bitter criticism of the New Zealand way of life, its boarding houses and immigration camps – Waikaraka and Mangere.

The background

In the course of 1951 a group of mostly unmarried Dutchmen and several Dutch girls

began to rally round the Van Rij's. As many of them had a more or less Reformed background they naturally discussed the state of the Church in New Zealand. The Presbyterian Church, supposedly the church nearest to the Dutch Reformed tradition, found generally little favour in their sight. Its church services were too poorly attended, its church public was too old-lady-ish, the minister too unctuous, his sermon too vague and unchallenging. The Baptist church attracted more, had better attended services, more young people and a more evangelical sermon. Still, they were not Baptists and did not look favorably on the idea of being re-baptised by immersion.

It was into this atmosphere that the possibility of the establishment of a Reformed Church was suggested, but dismissed by the majority.

The dislike of the idea of church establishment must be understood in the light of the Dutch background. So many divisions and splits had troubled, and continued to trouble, the Dutch Reformed



community in the Netherlands that the popular sentiment was certainly not in favour of any unneeded breaks. Moreover nothing was desired less and more frowned upon than the set up of anything that was peculiarly Dutch. The emphasis was on assimilation not on isolation.

It was a somewhat paradoxical situation in those early years of Dutch immigration. Although many Dutchmen sounded extremely critical of New Zealand ways and customs they took on the other hand considerable pride in losing their Dutch identity and in being accepted in the New Zealand community.

In 1951 a Dutch Reformed clergyman of the National Church, the Rev. W. Van Wijngen arrived in New Zealand on the understanding that he was to work as a Presbyterian minister among Dutchmen. He settled in Wanganui and later in Christchurch. It is my impression that the Presbyterian Church made several tactical mistakes in that early period and that the Rev. Van Wijngen did not receive the confidence and the co-operation that he deserved and needed. This did not pass unnoticed among the Dutch, and discouraged many.

In that same year another Reformed Theologian from the Netherlands visited New Zealand. Dr. H. Holtrop, who made an orientation trip through the country, spoke with many immigrants – with the Van Rij's in Auckland – and on his return reported to the Deputies for immigration of the Reformed Churches, that as far as he understood the situation the Presbyterian Church suffered from a general lack of evangelical fervor, more than from an outspoken liberalism in theology.

Contacts made

It was mainly through the Auckland group that a certain contact with the Dutch churches was maintained and new contact with the recently organized churches in Australia established. In October 1951 the Reformed Church of Penguin, Tasmania, was instituted followed in December by Churches in Sydney and Melbourne. Inevitably the question arose: was the Auckland group to follow the Australian initiative?

Opinions being divided they found a compromise. It was agreed that a minister be called, either from the Netherlands or from the U.S., who would have to study the situation locally and advise on whatever steps had to be taken. It is remarkable that already at this early stage a call to an American man was proposed. It would take twelve more years for this vision to be realized. But it shows the trend. At that time however the contacts with the U.S. were not close enough, nor were the American churches sufficiently informed on the Australian or New Zealand situation.

A group started

Now in order to make such a move possible it was necessary to organize the rather loose group of Protestant Dutchmen into a more solid shape. A 'New Zealand – Dutch Protestant Community' was formed, the history of which will be written by others in this booklet, as also will the story of the call of Auckland's first minister. But in this context I would like to quote from the "letter of call" sent by the Community to the man involved.

It reads: "We, members of the Dutch Protestant Community in New Zealand, being of positive Reformed persuasion and accepting with a believing heart the Word of God according to the interpretation of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith call



the Rev. so and so for the spiritual care of the Community. The basic salary has been provisionally fixed on 520 pounds... annually, free accommodation and travelling expenses, as from the day of arrival. We extend this call with the fervent prayer that God may bless us herein and make us a blessing. May He preserve us, our children and posterity from wandering away from the faith delivered unto us by our fathers, and by His grace make us faithful to His Word and to the confessions in conformity therewith. Our help is in the Name of the Lord Who made heaven and earth."

An unusual call

This letter of call is remarkable from various angles. In this simple language it is a document of faith and vision. It mentions already the Westminster Confession and it testifies to the confidence in God that inspired those who promised a salary for which hardly a pound was available at the time but for which they among each other declared themselves responsible.

The minister involved was surprised but pleased when he received this unusual call. He knew little of New Zealand as a country

and less of the state of the Church out there, but for some reason his heart – as the hearts of so many in those days – seemed to hanker for the unknown regions beyond the horizon. The correspondence that followed made him gradually aware of the opportunities that God offered through this call and when his wife, though by no means as idealistic as he was, was willing to follow, the call was accepted.

At their arrival in November 1952 the discussion on the question whether a Reformed Church should be established was – for the time being – deferred. The minister was asked to study the situation across the country and to speak to as many New Zealanders and Dutchmen as possible. A trip was planned for him and already before Christmas 1952 he was able to speak with Protestant Dutchmen of a great variety of

persuasions in cities and country districts all over New Zealand. We had larger and smaller gatherings in Palmerston North and Wellington, in Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin, in the Waikato and the Hauraki Plains. I heard many opinions pro and contra. Many Dutchmen were members already of the Presbyterian Church or of some other church, with more or with less enthusiasm.

Understanding the Presbyterian situation

Particularly valuable were my contacts in the South Island. In Dunedin I met several of the lecturers in the Knox Hall, the Theological training center of the Presbyterian Church. With them and with a group of ministers, members of the Westminster Fellowship, I discussed the doctrinal position of the Presbyterian Church. I also obtained and studied several of the publications of Presbyterian authors in New Zealand, the Rev. J.M. Bates' "Manual of Doctrine", some of Prof. G.A.F. Knight's books, the Presbyterian Book of Order and various Bible Class booklets. All this revealed that the Presbyterian Church was and desired to be, especially since the adoption of the

Declaratory Act of 1901, a church allowing a wide freedom of teaching and that only a small minority of ministers adhered to the Reformed faith. It became also clear that membership in the Free Masonry Movement was an accepted thing among ministers and elders and that the nominal membership of the church was widely out of proportion with its actual membership.

Further discussions with groups of ministers in Dunedin and Christchurch and various personal contacts with individual Presbyterian and Methodist ministers confirmed these misgivings and on consultation with the Rev. E. Dijkstra – who had arrived in February, 1953 to serve the Wellington group – the conclusion proved to be inevitable that as the Presbyterian Church was not truly committed to the Reformed faith, membership in that church could not be recommended and I could not myself enter into its ministry.

Convincing others

The problem arose how I could convince my friends who had invited me to New Zealand of the necessity of establishing a truly Reformed church. Several were already persuaded that such a step could not be avoided but certainly not all of them. On the first Sunday on which I preached in New Zealand, in November, 1952 a young Dutchman had approached me with this welcome: "Sir, I am happy that you came, but only on one condition, i.e. that you do not intend to establish a new church in this country." Today he is an active member in a Reformed Church somewhere in New Zealand, but what he then said was typical for the attitude of the majority.

Moreover another development somewhat complicated matters. Some Auckland Baptists, aware of our hesitation to join the Presbyterians, arranged a meeting in which some leading Baptist ministers proposed to investigate whether there was a place for us in the Baptist communion. This move was supported by some from our own circle and the idea behind it was that a Reformed congregation be incorporated in the Baptist union on the understanding that those who did not favour re-baptism by immersion could enter the fellowship via a sort of open-membership system. I have never been able to assess in how far these Baptist brethren seriously considered this as a possibility, but from our point of view the matter of Baptism alone made it already impossible to enter in further consultations in that direction.

Unanimity

In February, 1953 we began to discuss the matter within the, then enlarged, committee of the Protestant Community. I reported on my experiences and gave my decision that

this committee would proceed to the establishment of a Reformed Church. It was a moment of great consequence and we all were well aware of it. But we thanked God for the unanimity in the Committee and pledged ourselves to this prayerfully considered cause. We decided however, that two things had to be done first: we would have to advise the members of the Community why we proposed to take this step, and we would have to draft a written statement in English to give account of our decision and to let the Auckland Presbytery know why we believed that we had to stand apart.

Now I was scheduled to preach in Christchurch on Sunday, 8th March. In the week before that Sunday I attended a meeting of the Christchurch committee, where the members explained that they were



ready for the step of church establishment and asked me to lead them in this move. On Sunday afternoon I preached in the Central Baptist Church (Mathew 17:19-21) and announced a members meeting for Tuesday night.

Institution of the Christchurch church

On that Tuesday, 10th March I first preached on Ephesians 3:20 and 21 and then explained the purpose of the meeting. It was agreed that the meeting proceeded to the establishment of the Reformed Church of Christchurch and that the first office bearers be chosen that night. We joined in prayer very much aware of our weakness and unworthiness and then offered the Church establishment protocol to be signed by those who believed in their heart that God wanted them to do so. I still see them coming forward, those young members ready to take a stand. They were not so many, 24 in number, but sufficient for the institution of a

church and the election of elders and deacons. A few weeks later the Rev. E. Dijkstra came down from Wellington for the ordination service.

Coming back to Auckland I reported on what had happened in Christchurch. The Auckland committee then decided that for them also the time had come to set a date for the actual establishment of the church. With the help of Sake Rijnsdorp, I finished the drafting of the revised form as the pamphlet: "Why did we establish the Reformed Church?" In a meeting with several representatives of the Auckland Presbytery in the Presbyterian Mission Center we explained and confirmed our decision.

A meeting of the members of the Protestant Community was called together for the 28th March to be held in the Grange Road Baptist Church. Several people from Hamilton were also present, among others Mr. A. Everaarts. I read a paper on: "The question of the Church in New Zealand". A lively and frank discussion followed in which I explained the committee's decision and asked the members to make this a matter of serious consideration and prayer. I remember that it was a good meeting.

As the date for church establishment and the election of office bearers we chose 4th April, the Saturday before Easter, and as the meeting place the old Methodist Church in Newmarket.

Institution of the Auckland church

Those who were there will still clearly remember the occasion. It was a small, old church, it was a quiet evening and the church was well filled. Most of them present were in their twenties, a few were in their thirties. All were immigrants from the Netherlands and no one was financially well off. There were some who owned a motorbike, possibly one or two who owned a second-hand car, none who owned a house or a business. Yet everyone knew that to establish a church would mean considerable financial commitments. Some had come from various places in the Waikato knowing that a church in Auckland could mean very little to them.

Still, there was a great spirit of unity and of humble resolution. I preached on Hebrew 13 : 20 and 21. The main theme of the sermon was that only if the great Shepherd of the sheep our Lord Jesus Christ made us perfect in doing His will we could succeed.

The protocol was signed by 60 Communicant and 7 Baptised members, representing a total membership of 90 souls. (Including children).

How happy we were when so many appeared to be certain about what had to be done. First came the Van Rij's, then the others, one brother from as far away as Hastings. It was good that a number of Hamiltonians were present. They would form

the nucleus of the Hamilton church to be organized within a year. Dirk Meyer and Jack Greydanus were among those who signed the protocol. They are no more with us, but have – we believe – exchanged the fellowship with the Church Militant for that with the Church Triumphant.

Among the names of those from the city area there are many now familiar in the Auckland Reformed circles: Van Weerd, Kramer, Ploeg, Van der Pijl, Westerkamp, Van Dalen, Schellingerhout, Kooperberg, Gjaltema, de Jong, Voogt, Kant, Koopmans (Mrs. Bijlsma), Fidder (Mrs. Kooiman and Mrs. Vellekoop), etc. Some left for other Reformed Churches in New Zealand: Minnee, Van der Wel, Van Rij, Tony Van der Pijl, Voschezang, Van der Hoek, or left the country: Punt, Luymes (You will find a complete list of all those who signed the Protocol elsewhere in this issue).

Not all who signed the original protocol remained faithful, where-as others joined in the first weeks after the establishment: Van den Burg, Van de Ven.

Humble awareness

Although we were all very happy after the decision had been taken, there was no spirit of presumption or of self-confidence, on the contrary we were humbly aware of our insufficiency. Someone said to me after the evening: "I am very happy, Dominee, it was as if I renewed my choice for the Lord Jesus and His Church, but I am so very much concerned about what the future will really bring. Will we really succeed?"

We all were concerned about the consequences. People told us that if we would do this, we would endanger the whole Dutch immigration scheme for New Zealand. Others said: You will isolate yourselves from New Zealand Christian life and hinder the so necessary integration of the Reformed Dutchman in the New Zealand community.

It was in these circumstances that I chose as my Easter sermon text for the next day Revelations 1:17b and 18. "And He laid His right hand upon me and said: Fear not.... I am he that liveth".

In this service, that was held in the Grange Road, Baptist Church in the Sunday afternoon, many visitors were present from far and wide. Mr. H.Huisman from Hastings played the organ. After the sermon I ordained the elders elected the evening before: the brethren Punt, Rijnsdorp, Van der Wel and Van Rij. The deacons – Brilman, Rinze Gjaltema and Van der Pijl - were ordained a few weeks later. After the ordination of the elders, the oldest among them, Br. W. Van Rij, took over and asked me the questions on the installation of a minister in a particular church, after which I was covenanted to serve in the Reformed Church of Auckland.

It was a great day. Now that I think back

I say: Praise God, that we had enough faith to do it.

First baptism and communion

A few weeks later the Grange Road Baptists asked us to look for a different meeting place. We found one in the Y.M.C.A. chapel. It was there that John Van Weerd was baptized, the first baptism in the Church. On the 7th June we held our first communion service in the main hall of the Y.M.C.A. (Then Wellesley Street). We borrowed some glasses, plates and a tin can but it was a very blessed celebration of the Lord's Supper. After the service someone said: "I

enjoyed this service, Dominee, even more than the Sunday of the institution. Now I know that God gave us a real church."

The second Sunday in August I preached my first English sermon in the Reformed Church. But that is a separate story.

Conclusion

This is how by the grace of God the Reformed Church of Auckland came to be established and began to function.

(This article was originally written in 1963, in the booklet commemorating the Auckland church's 10 Anniversary)

Between You and Me!

Support those who are of the Household of Faith!

Dick G. Vanderpyl

In my childhood days our parents and grandmother, who lived with us, indoctrinated us to purchase from those who belonged to our church! We lived on a corner of a housing block. Within range of our home were two grocers opposite each other. A member of our church owned one, and the other belonged to a Catholic family. We kids were told to go to the "Reformed" grocer. However, there was a problem! The 'Catholic' grocer gave out lollies while those of the household of faith did not. Our Oma watched us from her window to make sure we entered the Reformed grocery-shop and then removed herself from her window. We counted between 7-10 seconds and then rushed out to the one across the road for those Catholic lollies.

We also had two bakers calling on us for bread delivery! One loaf from the church-member and more from a non-churchgoer baker, whose bread was much cheaper and especially during the war-years a much better supply. It sometimes happened that both arrived at the same time! This arrangement appeased our mother's conscience!

Arriving in New Zealand, I expected a similar policy! However, to my surprise this was not generally the case. Even one of our New Zealand-bred pastors thought it ludicrous. That was in the sixties!

But Paul spelled it out quite clearly when he admonished the Galatians "not to grow weary in well doing," and he adds the promise that at the proper time they will reap a harvest if we don't give up. "Therefore",

Paul says, "as we have opportunity, let us do good to **all** people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." (Galatians 6:10).

The first wave of Dutch migrants in the early fifties also applied this principle. With little money in the bank, we helped each other in our church community at no charge.

Old cars (bombs) were happily repaired at no charge; and carpenters helped putting up a car-port. Painting an old house of one of our members was no problem: we turned up to give it a good coating, and so on. We were a community, willing to help each other. It worked like a charm.

However, there came a change A second wave of migrants landed on the wharves of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. They saw us driving around in old pre-war bombs, buying quarter-acre sections ready to build a four square or L-shaped weatherboard house (bricks were scarce) with a small deposit and a lovely loan from the State!

Many of them looked green with envy, and were in a hurry to catch up with the early arrivals. Almost at an instant, free labour ceased and instead scraps of paper were handed in. Many hours of labour of love were transferred into an account. It did not happen at once of course, but Pounds, Shillings and Pence were one mode to catch up with the early arrivals. Of course, no one now expects cheap labour or a bargain!

As one commentator expressed: "Of course, the church has a responsibility to help the suffering of those outside its Fellowship." No question about it; we also have a special responsibility to help our brothers and sisters in Christ.

At one home-visit we, youngsters, questioned this biblical principle! One of the elders gave us a good reason for it! **"If the membership fares well, so will the church!"** And that concluded the argument!

A tale of two pieties

Reformational holiness

Michael Horton

Many of us were reared in pious evangelical homes and churches where "Christianity" and "Churchianity" were regularly contrasted. Christianity involved having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, whereas Churchianity involved an attachment to mere externals. This contrast could also appear in terms of the informal versus the formal, real versus nominal, born-again versus dead religion-or as an inward, individual, direct, and deeply personal experience with God as contrasted with an external, corporate, mediated, and sacramental faith. In these sharp antitheses between personal experience and churchmanship, unnecessary divisions occur that rob us all of what each side of genuine piety provides.

It is well worth exploring Christian piety as a cascading phenomenon. Reformation piety, I will argue, rather than expressing Christian life as flowing outward from the individual to broader relationships (i.e., the Church as the aggregate of the individually regenerate), sees it as cascading down from the Church and the family to the individual. And, thus, authentic Christian piety never requires choosing between a personal relationship with God in Christ and a commitment to the duties of Church and family.

In defense of duty

In contemporary culture as well as in evangelicalism, a great deal of time and energy is spent on an apparent duty to ourselves and our personal growth. Yet in other contexts, duty is almost a dirty word. Partly out of reaction to a stultifying legalism and rote traditionalism, evangelicals tend to avoid the word duty in nearly every reference to Christian growth. We find it particularly difficult to speak about our duties to family and church. If we want our children to go to church, then it cannot under any circumstances be out of a sense of duty. If Sunday evening worship is to be defended these days, then the argument must not invoke duty.

Yet duty is a crucial word. Think about how "disciple" relates to "discipline" and about how the Apostle Paul thinks of the Christian life as a race that requires serious commitment to exercise. How many things do we in fact make ourselves do-even when we don't feel like it-precisely out of duty and in the best interest of others as well as ourselves? If we are successful at anything, we have to concede that it is at least in part

because we have denied ourselves a little leisure or pleasure by forcing ourselves to exercise, to practice, to study, or to do whatever was necessary for reaching a goal beyond our immediate gratification. In the aftermath of 9/11, Americans are coming to appreciate again the duty of citizenship. We can only hope that we will not have to wait for disaster in our churches or families to awaken our sense of duty in these spheres.

Without a sense of duty, we are left to our own whims. As the most superficial of reasons for doing or not doing this or that, decision-by-whim-spontaneity-leaves us forever in the shallow end of the pool. And as those who claim to believe that even Christians remain simultaneously both sinful and justified, we should need little convincing that if we are to wait for the spontaneous



upwelling of desire for good works before we love God and our neighbors, we will live passively, surrendering to our selfishness. To be sure, the gospel's indicative-what God has done in Christ to save us-drives all of its imperatives-all of the commands of the Christian life; nevertheless, just as duty to our athletic goals requires sustained effort, so we cannot expect to grow in our faith over our lifetimes if we refuse to act on duty. The difference for those who understand the gospel of God's free grace is that we know that our salvation has already been objectively secured by Christ and subjectively applied by the Spirit. We know that fulfilling our duty contributes not even in the slightest toward our redemption.

Which piety?

Our view of piety is shaped not only by how we conceive of the spontaneity/duty contrast. A brief look at Church history reveals even deeper contrasts.

Advocates of pietism and early American revivalism saw themselves in continuity with the Reformation, but they were also self-consciously critical of that tradition. Not only doctrinally but also practically, pietistic revivalism and reformational piety are quite distinct. In the late nineteenth century, the great American Presbyterian minister and theologian Charles Hodge was among those voicing concern that the revivalistic spirit in American Protestantism had eroded the Reformation's covenantal approach to Christian formation. Children reared in Christian homes were no longer being considered heirs of the covenant but targets of conversion. Instead of growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were expected to have a radical experience that they could relate to others with distinct "before" and "after" pictures of themselves. Beyond relying on God's ordinary means of grace and family nurture, parents were to seek extraordinary means or to avoid means altogether in attempting to bring their children to a supposedly immediate encounter with the God of blinding glory.

These two quite contrasting visions of piety create divergent approaches to practical devotional exercises. Governed by the covenantal mentality, Reformed and Presbyterian churches at least used to conceive of piety as a family affair. Its center was family worship, with Bible and catechism reading, singing, and prayer. Such daily exercises fed off a churchly piety in which the Lord's Day blessing cascaded down to each family unit and was renewed and increased throughout the week. These practices are still central in many Reformed and Presbyterian homes with which I have become familiar.

Coming as I have from a quite different background, they are a constant witness to me of God's faithfulness "to a thousand generations" when I see the truth of God and praise of his name on the lips of babes.

At least in its American version, pietistic revivalism has generated a completely different conception of proper Christian piety. Instead of God's blessings cascading down from church to family to individuals, it tries to work the other way around. But, then, just as the focus of salvation falls almost exclusively on the individual, piety is largely regarded as a private affair. One's personal

relationship with God is too intimate, too personal, to be regarded as mediated within ordinary social structures—even if they are structures such as family and Church, which God himself has founded.

To be sure, any defense I would wish to make of the covenantal model of piety would have to include a defense of infant Baptism. However, I believe that even those brothers and sisters who do not view that practice as biblical can agree with me about the dangers of American individualism when it affects our practice of piety.

The individualistic approach does not actually do away with means or methods. In fact, it multiplies them. Since each person is supposedly unique, a multitude of techniques must be available. Nineteenth-century Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield speaks of the Higher Life Movement, enormously formative in twentieth-century evangelicalism, as representing an “infection” arising from Wesleyan perfectionism rather than from Reformation Christianity. “These two religious systems,” he declares, “are quite incompatible. The one is the product of the Protestant Reformation and knows no determining power in the religious life but the grace of God; the other comes straight from the laboratory of John Wesley [Eighteenth-century Anglican reformer and founder of Methodism], and in all its forms—modifications and mitigations alike—remains incurably Arminian, subjecting all gracious workings of God to human determining. The two can unite as little as fire and water.”

Everyday – in everyday

Seeking spectacular conversions requires embracing spectacular means; and the more we concentrate on these, the less stock we put in the ordinary means that God has promised to bless. To be sure, extraordinary means are initially more attractive; they offer shortcuts like “How to be Filled with the Spirit in Seven Easy Steps.” Like new diets—“At least 3 inches off your waist in your first week or your money back!”—new strategies for spiritual discipline and warfare are marketed almost daily. These spiritual shortcuts appeal to us for precisely the same reasons that dieting and exercising shortcuts do. And yet, as any good dietician, coach, or weight trainer will say, “No pain, no gain.” Shortcuts end in disappointment and despair. The same is true in the Christian life. You can’t become a master of English literature by attending a seminar or reading Cliff’s Notes. Good parents do not set their children in front of a television all day. Everything worth having requires cost-counting—and discipleship is framed by Jesus explicitly in these terms. Becoming an English literature scholar requires years of hard work, not all of which is always interesting or exciting. But with the

goal in mind, one works at it. Similarly, we come to think and to act in Christian ways by long years of pursuing that goal. Coming home from work each evening to lead the family in worship often seems tedious. It’s easy to say to ourselves, “Hey, it’s been a long day at work today. Let’s just take tonight off.” But whether it is family training or bodily exercise, there is a very simple law of cause-and-effect in play here. We must be willing to pay the price. Those who work at a goal have a better chance of reaching it than those who don’t.

This does not diminish grace at all. But it does underscore that ordinarily God fulfills his covenant promise through the diligent care of parents, pastors, Sunday school teachers, and the larger covenant community.

So when some of our Christian brothers and sisters think that we Reformational folk do not care particularly about piety or life in the Spirit, they could not be more mistaken. It is just that our understanding of piety and life in the Spirit contrasts markedly with American Christianity’s prevailing patterns. As we search the Scriptures together, we become aware of a piety that runs deeper and further than anything we have seen in pietism. By seeing the Spirit’s work as intertwined with the ordinary means of grace we do in fact see him as crucially active in the everyday lives of his people. We see him at work whenever we encounter the Word of God preached and read, whenever we witness a Baptism, or receive the Supper. We also see him working in the fruit he produces when his people think of others as more important than themselves—even when it comes to cultivating piety.

A personal illustration

I want to close with a personal story. Although I have been Reformed for many years and a church planter in the United Reformed Churches (URC), I have only recently become a parishioner in a predominantly Dutch congregation. This happened when my wife and I moved to Escondido, California, to take up my new post teaching at Westminster Theological Seminary in California, and we joined the URC church there. I occasionally had visited this church as a seminarian and had seen it as seemingly ethnically ingrown, unconcerned about outreach, and its members as somewhat nominal in their commitment to “real Christianity.” There just wasn’t the excitement I had known in other churches. “Are they really converted?” I sometimes wondered, although I knew theologically that such a question was not for me to answer.

Over the last three years, my wife and I have become involved in the life of this congregation. My parents, upon moving to the area, joined as well. During this time, I



These pictures are taken from “The Golden Age” by Bob Haak

have had the pleasure of revising my earlier opinions.

This has occurred in the midst of personal trials. In addition to my wife’s difficulties with pregnancy, my father has had brain surgery to remove a benign tumor. This surgery has resulted in severe paralysis that makes it quite difficult for him to communicate. In our distress, God heard our cry, and he has used his people to nurse our wounds. Cards have promised to remember the family in prayer. And tangible expressions of service abound, such as the pastors and elders bringing God’s Word and the Lord’s Supper to my father, the deacons moving my mother closer to us, and meals being provided for her until things return to normal. More recently still, there has been a steady outpouring of love and assistance with the birth of our son. I have never seen a church so prepared to care for its flock.

As we have become closer to the church families, we have learned, in spite of their Dutch reserve, that they are deeply pious and committed to expressing it. But they express it in covenantal terms, as the long-term piety that James talks about in his epistle, rather

than in the individualistic, self-directed way so prominent in the churches of my youth.

Perhaps this is why I did not see it before. These folks do have a personal relationship with Christ, and they display just how real Christ is to them in fairly mundane, practical ways each day. They may not talk about the "spiritual disciplines" and how much time they spend alone with the Lord daily, but most of them attend church twice on Sunday and nurture their family's spiritual growth throughout the week. Their own private time in God's Word and in prayer is enriched by the substance that God provides in these communal contexts. When we dine with them, we hear their children recite the Catechism with its supporting Bible verses. They pray with knowledge and understanding as well as with zeal and familiarity.

Countering a low view of the Church

So what should we make of Churchianity? If it is a merely external commitment to an institution, then our evangelical brothers and

sisters are right to reject it. A personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ is essential, and no matter how pristine one's external standing in the Church or in a commitment to his or her family, each child of God must be related individually and personally to him. We must make time for our own refreshment, for our own opportunity to be confronted with the Word of God and to talk to our Heavenly Father in prayer. If, however, the Church is God's gift through which he promises to deliver on his gospel and sanctify a people for himself, then there can be no proper piety apart from churchmanship, family worship, and catechesis. As Scripture itself corroborates (see, e.g., Heb. 10:24, 25; Acts 2:42), there is no place in Christian discipleship for a piety that expresses itself in various routines of private devotions but is willing to forego membership in the visible Body of Christ and regular attendance upon the public means of grace even while it lays aside essential duties to the covenantal nurture of one's family.

There is good reason why the New Testament speaks of God's people in covenantal terms, a temple of living stones, an assembly, an ark, a body, a holy nation, a vine, a tree, a spouse, and so forth. For the Church and the family are regarded as much more than mere aggregates of individuals who have a personal relationship with God. We are supposed to see our individual piety as resulting from our belonging to the people of God, at church and at home. We are "living stones" only as we are "being built up" into "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:4-5). It is by being grafted onto the Vine that we who were dead and fruitless are made alive so that we may bear fruit to God. It is only by virtue of our connection with the body whose head is Christ that we are anything but lifeless, amputated limbs.

Authentic Christian piety is expressed with others over a lifetime, as God's people are exposed to the work of the Spirit through Word and Sacrament, so that their union with Christ is concretely experienced in this life by their union with each other. This piety is not as flamboyant as the individualistic piety encouraged by spiritual fads, but it runs deeper and further under God's promised blessing. Then, instead of concentrating exclusively on our own spiritual blessing, we become instruments of blessing for others wherever God has placed us in this world and in the flock he has purchased with his own blood.

(Dr. Michael Horton is the chairman of the Council of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, and is associate professor of historical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. Dr. Horton is a graduate of Biola University (B.A.), Westminster Theological Seminary in California (M.A.R.) and Wycliffe Hall, Oxford (Ph.D.). Some of the books he has written or edited include Putting Amazing Back Into Grace, Beyond Culture Wars, Power Religion, In the Face of God, and most recently, We Believe. ©1992 - 2002 Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals)

JUBILEE

THEN, NOW AND TOMORROW!

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bucklands Beach
(one of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand)
plans to celebrate 50 years of the Lord's goodness to us
on 13th and 14th September 2003

The programme will include:
Saturday afternoon – Recreational Entertainment for all ages
Saturday evening – Family Anniversary Dinner
Sunday – Celebratory Service followed by Luncheon

Guest Preacher: Dr Murray Capill

Links with Bucklands Beach?
Don't miss this opportunity to renew old
friendships this side of Glory!

To help us with planning, expressions of interest
would be appreciated

Please return the slip below by 17th May to:

"Anniversary"
Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bucklands Beach
PO Box 39 275 Howick Auckland
or email: mbrooks@clear.net.nz

I am interested in attending your 50th Anniversary Celebrations

Please send me further information as it becomes available

Name.....

Address.....

Phone No.....(please print)

Number of people(over 12 years)
.....(under 12 years)

Reprints of articles in

Faith in Focus can be obtained

by contacting the Editor

A feminine focus

Older women and younger women

Sally Davey (with the help of some inter-generational friends!)

Pilgrim's Progress reminds us that we are all on a spiritual journey through life; and that the experiences that God puts in our paths teach us many things. As with *Pilgrim*, our encounters with danger, temptation and our own sin take us through stages of maturity as we move from young womanhood to marriage, motherhood (for many of us), the prime of life and "senior sainthood". Always, the theme is moving onwards—becoming *more* mature, and *more* useful as a servant of God as the years go by. We don't simply work hard and have our successes at one stage (eg. young motherhood), and then rest on our laurels as it were; treating the later years as time to look back on our achievements and enjoy the fruit of them (children and grandchildren growing up while we bask in their achievements). No, there is work to be done—both with our own stubborn, sinful natures, and by help and encouragement, with the struggles of other, younger women on their own pilgrimage of faith!

Naturally, we work first of all with our own daughters. God has given us the privilege of teaching them to follow Him, should He bless us with children. But we're also called as Christian women to show other younger women, by our word and example, how to live as His servants in the world. In fact, the work we are able to do with younger women who are *not* our own physical offspring may well be more valuable. There are times when a young person will listen more receptively to an older friend who is not her parent than she will to her own mother. As one of my favourite writers has asked, "Are you disappointed at the thought of never having a son or daughter? Do you suffer the agony of being childless? Do not despair. Just as Paul called Timothy 'my true son' (1 Timothy 1:2), you can reach out to others with the gospel of Christ and become spiritual mothers and fathers to many children."

(Richard Pratt, *Designed for Dignity*, p. 32). So, I have two themes this month—the things we can learn at each stage of our lives, and the ways we can use these lessons to help other women, less advanced on their own pilgrimages.

The wisdom of other women

If you've read or heard Susan Hunt you'll know that these are subjects close to her

will I serve Christ better by doing one of these instead of the other? Am I good enough at any of these things to succeed in life? What if I don't succeed?" And so on...

The important priorities

But all of these questions are outweighed by the more important question of what am I doing to set the right spiritual priorities for my life? These young, single years are the



heart. To make this discussion more interesting to you, and to include the perspective of others who've also given some thought to her ideas, I thought I'd ask a number of women in different stages of life to share their pearls of wisdom with me. What follows is a combination of their thoughts and mine.

Young single women (teenage years and twenties) face some important decisions and choices. They are at the stage of life when they decide what they will study, what career path they will follow, and whom they will marry. This can be the cause of some insecurity. Questions like, "How do I know whether this course of study, or this career choice will really mean serving God? Is engineering better than teaching; or psychology worse than biochemistry? Should I go straight from school to an unskilled job, or should I do a course in hairdressing? How

prime ones for getting to know the Lord. Apart from our studies, and duties to our parents, we have very few responsibilities. We have more time to read—usually—than we will have later. We have the opportunity to set patterns of regular bible reading and prayer; and being young, have fewer ingrained bad habits of slothfulness to overcome. "*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth*" (Ecclesiastes 12:1) is an instruction that we will have overlooked to our peril later in life. If we've learned the discipline (and blessings) of a close walk with God early in life, we've got much more likelihood of keeping it going when small children, and all their demands, come along. Furthermore, we're able to feed, if necessary, on the store of what we've learned in the few years earlier.

Keeping focused

Younger women also talk about the

temptation to be distracted by boys, clothes and the materialistic side of life. This, of course, is what the world gears young women to think about—and these are the very thoughts that compete with our devotion to God. Sometimes, young women struggle with the sinful desire to dress immodestly; to attract attention to their bodies in an unhelpful way. As with all of God's gifts, there is nothing inherently wrong with either boys or clothes; but to everything there is a time—and the truth is, we are far more likely to find the *right* man to marry when we are giving ourselves wholeheartedly to God's work and not thinking too much about the man!

When one marries, if that is God's blessing for us, some of these anxieties and uncertainties are replaced by the certainties of commitment to the life's path of our husband. But, of course, as every married woman will tell you, that involves new challenges—adapting our desires to someone else's, sharing his interests, friends and so on. It means finding ways of serving God together—looking for the spiritual strengths we have in common so that our service as a couple matches the gifts of us both. For most married women, children are part of their life's work; and that entails a giving up of self unlike almost any other calling in life. I always think of this point when I read Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2:15. (*"Women shall be saved through childbearing"*) This does not mean salvation through the act of having a child; but the day-by-day outworking of that salvation in the form of faithful motherhood—in other words, the ongoing work of sanctification. And what an effective way to learn godliness! Bringing up children surely must teach patience and the putting of others first in a way that nothing else I can think of in life can. But of course, as sinners, this is frustrating at times. Tiredness, irritability, longing for "escape" from the constant presence of small children are all part of the struggle mothers face with their own hearts and circumstances.

Modelling

As children grow up there is the challenge they pose in their teenage years. Often, a mother needs a good memory of her own teenage years (and the spiritual lessons she learned then) to talk her daughter through them. This is the time when a close, strong



walk with the Lord; and solid knowledge of Him, won through many years of experience of Him, are of special importance to a Christian mother. Teenagers are testing, questioning and curious to see if their parents' desire that *they* follow the Lord is backed by solid understanding and a credible example of the Christian life in their parents. Are we a model of what we want our children to be? This often depends on the choices we have made, and the way we have lived, at earlier stages of our lives!

The forties and fifties could be called "the prime of life", since we are often at our most useful to others in His service. We have gained considerable insight into God's Word if we have studied it faithfully over the years; and our experience of life should have given us

plenty of practical wisdom when viewed through the lenses of the Word. But there are new challenges at this time of life. We start to have a little less energy than we had at 20 or 30; and with these premonitions of aging come, for some anyway, a little insecurity. We're not so sure, perhaps, of our calling in life. Children have grown up and left home; we're a little less employable than we used to be. And, while teenagers seem to have few doubts about how they should dress, many "middle-aged" women (I think) are confused. What's appropriate for 20 isn't dignified at 40 or 50; and while we might be anxious about not seeming "old", we can look a bit silly in fashions designed for extreme youth. The prime of life needs to be appreciated, seized with open arms; and accepted with the dignity that is becoming to it.

Finally, the senior years, those when many enjoy grandchildren and the sense of fulfilment that comes when God establishes for us the work of our hands (Psalm 90:17), are the ones we can look forward to with hope and confidence, if we have made it a habit to put the Lord first all our lives. Our relationship with Him will have deepened, grown, flourished; and the time when we go to be with Him forever will be coming soon. But of course, from the perspective of *this* life, these things are not easy. As Ecclesiastes 12 warns, we tend to suffer physical infirmities; and they are uncomfortable, annoying, even distressing. But, if we have worked on our hearts at earlier stages in life, we will be able to cope with

these testing experiences even though decreasing energy weakens our will to resist. (A fear I have in my middle years is that I won't have learned to curb my sinful reactions to difficulties before old age decreases my defences against them). "Does the struggle against sin get any easier as you become older?" someone once asked a very senior saint (Cornelius van Til). "No", this wise and godly old man replied, "it gets harder."

Being sisters in the Lord

Well, the question we all need to have as we review the stages in life that we women will pass through is—how can we assist each other as sisters in Christ to serve God more faithfully in each of them? It's clear from Titus 2 that older women can—and ought to be—helping their younger sisters in the church to live for Christ. This is an extremely desirable way for women to live together in the church! Friendships across the generations are something all the women who've shared their thoughts with me hunger for. Younger women said they'd just love the interest and the time of older women in the church. One thing that would particularly help is becoming a prayer-partner with a younger woman. Doing this is offering to take a deep interest in the concerns, struggles and joys of a young woman, and is a way you can share your wisdom and develop a friendship. Younger women can be a big encouragement, too. Somebody told me one younger woman asked, "Could we come around to your house sometimes and cook a meal?" (It's more fun to do this in someone else's kitchen than Mum's!) For a busy, tired mother of a young family, wouldn't this be a little bit of fun as well? For those in the middle years, wondering about their current calling in life, the company of young women can be very energising. It's great to talk over the choices and challenges faced by a young friend, and to offer, from experience, some perspective on the benefits—and the consequences—of different important choices made when you're young. Last year, I enjoyed the experience of talking about Josh Harris's ideas on courtship, marriage, and remaining healthily single, with two lively young ladies from Germany (yes, these incredibly popular books have been translated into German as well, and the initiative for these discussions was theirs!). It does you a lot of good to realise that younger women actually want and value your insights. And their freshness and excitement is infectious!

A teacher has to have learnt

But there are some qualifications for being a helpful older friend. We need to have something to impart, for a start! Have we learned our lessons in the school of Christian life as we've become older? Are we, in fact,

wiser as a result of our experience than we were twenty years ago? Are we better able to discern right from wrong? Do we serve God with more clarity of purpose? Are we more content with our circumstances than we once were? And most important of all, can we articulate these things, and show our younger friend where to find directions for them, as they occur in her life, in the Scriptures? We do need to be able to communicate, *in words*, the lessons of the faith.

The desire

Secondly, we need to be warm and approachable. When asked what things

hinder older women-younger women friendships in our churches, most said things like, "Oh, everyone seems so busy doing 'church activities,'" or, "The older women seem so busy with their own families," and, "Some think the younger women won't listen anyway." But we have to ask ourselves if we make it obvious we'd like to help, and be friends with women of other generations. If we're older, do we go out of our way to chat with younger girls in the church? Do we take an interest in their daily activities? Have we thought about inviting them into our homes, on their own, without their mother or sisters or older brothers? If you're younger, do you ever detach yourselves from your circle of

teenage friends to talk with, or even help, the younger mother or elderly lady? Have you thought about the impression row upon row of young people sitting in impenetrable ranks at the back of the church gives to those of us in other age-groups? Why not break out of the mould and go and sit with a middle-aged couple, or a young family, or a lonely elderly widow? Put your warm smile to good purpose!

So how do we get started with inter-generational friendships? By setting up another organised church activity for it, or a committee, or a roster? No, all it takes is willing women whose desire is to befriend others and see them mature in Christ.

Should you have a family trust?

A follow up to our senior options

Robert van Wichen

More and more people are putting their assets into family trusts. You may have asked yourself whether you should do the same. However, you are not sure what this involves, and you are hesitant to go to a lawyer or an accountant just to find out more. This article will give you some idea whether you should consider having a trust, and whether it is worthwhile seeking professional advice.

What it is

What is a family trust? It is essentially a relationship between three groups of people: the settlors, the trustees and the discretionary beneficiaries. These groups usually overlap; for example, the settlors are often trustees and beneficiaries. The settlors set up the trust. They decide for whose benefit and for what purposes the trust is being formed, and appoint the first trustees. Ordinarily this is set out in a document known as a deed of trust. The trustees are responsible to manage the trust assets for the benefit of the beneficiaries strictly in accordance with the deed of trust and any relevant law. The beneficiaries are those who are entitled to benefit from the trust. It is fairly standard for the beneficiaries to include the settlors, their immediate family, and charities.

Let me illustrate how this all works in practice. Mr and Mrs Jones have their own home worth \$250,000. They decide to form a trust for the benefit of themselves, their children and grandchildren, and any charities the trustees choose. They appoint themselves and a close friend as trustees. They then sell their home to the trustees for

its market value. If Mr and Mrs Jones simply gifted the house to the trust, they would be liable to gift duty (a form of tax) in the vicinity of \$50,000. So the trustees own the house, but owe Mr and Mrs Jones \$250,000. Each year Mr and Mrs Jones forgive part of the amount owing by the trustees to them. The maximum amount they can gift in any twelve month period free of gift duty is \$27,000 each. They will continue to live in the house, not as owners, but as tenants.

Advantages

It will already be clear that it is not a simple process to set up a trust. So why bother doing it? There are a number of advantages that may result from having a trust. The common ones are as follows:

- 1) Protection from personal creditors. For example, if Mr Jones went bankrupt several years after the trust was formed, the house now belongs to the trust, and would usually not be available to meet the claims of Mr Jones' creditors. But is it moral to do this? My view is that it all depends upon the intent at the time of forming the trust and the circumstances in which the debts were incurred. However, it would be both immoral and illegal to transfer assets to a trust in order to defeat the claims of current creditors.
- 2) Potential for reducing tax. However, it will be illegal to form a trust for the primary purpose of reducing the amount of tax that you pay. Two further cautionary notes are also in order here. Firstly, the formation of a trust will not necessarily save tax. Secondly, tax laws change frequently, and a tax saving can quickly evaporate.
- 3) Greater ability to aid charitable

organisations. All trust income that is distributed to charities is effectively tax free.

- 4) Avoidance of government charges. Many elderly people transfer their home to a family trust in case they end up a rest home. But this must be done many years in advance of going into a rest home in order to be effective. The government has been aware of this practice for many years and by its prolonged inaction has effectively endorsed it. Apart from that, the law in this area is highly capricious, and tends to penalise those who have been prudent with their money.
- 5) A different form of ownership. A family trust is usually formed for the benefit of your family as whole, and can continue in existence for up to 80 years. As Christians we do not just live for ourselves, but seek to provide for our children, grandchildren and wider families, and a trust can be a very effective way to achieve this.
- 6) Achieving specific goals, such as setting up an educational fund for children and grandchildren, or a trust for a disabled or handicapped child.
- 7) Avoiding the Family Protection Act. The courts have considerable power to revise a will in certain circumstances. Trust assets do not comprise part of the assets of an estate of someone who has died, and therefore are not available to meet any claims under this act.
- 8) Protection of assets in the case of marriage, divorce or remarriage. For example, you may wish to help your daughter financially, but you are concerned about the stability of her marriage. One possible solution is to set up a trust for her benefit. A trust can also

be very useful where you wish to set aside property for the benefit of children of a first marriage.

Disadvantages

But you must be realistic. There are disadvantages as well. Trusts are not cheap to set up, have the potential to make your

life more complicated, and are likely to result in ongoing administration costs (for example, legal and accounting advice). But more significantly, when you put assets into a trust, they are no longer your assets, and you lose control over them.

If you are interested in finding out more, there are books written for laymen on the

subject. A good start is *Family Trusts: A New Zealand Guide* by Martin Hawes. Other books include a number by Ross Holmes including *Trusts*, *Success with Trusts* and *Sham Trusts*. But proceed with caution! Never forget the adage, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Ultimately, there is no substitute for personal, professional advice.

World in focus

BJP electoral win a blow to Christianity

Fundamentalist Hindus won a landslide victory in a state election in India with anti-Christian and anti-Muslim rhetoric. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi, won 126 seats in the 182-seat state assembly in the December 12 election, giving it a two-thirds majority. This followed the worst genocidal attacks against the state's religious minorities since India's partition 50 years ago. The victory is a harsh blow to Christians and other religious minorities. Fundamentalists vow

to turn India into a Hindu nation within two years, threatening a death sentence against all who oppose nationalist Hinduism. [CD]
+ *Compass Direct*, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana CA 92799 (949) 862-0314

Reformed Church in America turns 375

In 1628 Dominie Johannes Michaelius, a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, celebrated the Lord's Supper with about 50 worshipers at a gristmill. This service, which marked the birthdate of the Reformed

Church in America, was bilingual: Michaelius conducted it in both Dutch and French. Another minister in the early Reformed Church in America, Samuel Drysius, preached in English, French, Dutch, and German. Among the early members of the Reformed Church were African-American slaves, and Mohawk Indians. Today, 375 years later, "The fastest-growing churches in the RCA are Asian and Hispanic," says Roger De Young, supervisor of Native American Ministries.

+ *Rev. Mr. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson*, Reformed Church in America General secretary, 475 Riverside Dr., 18th Fl. New York, NY 10115 (212) 870-2841

Free seminary course audit policy for M.A., M.A.R., and M.Div.

Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is offering one free audit course per semester for teaching and ruling elders and deacons, for up to four people per church. Some courses may be closed out due to high enrolment. All language classes are excluded for audit.

To reserve your space:

1. Review the course selection from the M.A., M.A.R. or M.Div. program for the term and campus (Pennsylvania, Texas, and New York).
2. Request your church to send a letter on church letterhead stating that you are a ruling elder or deacon and are thus eligible for the free audit program.

+ *Rosemarie Green*, Registrar's Office, Westminster Theological Seminary, PO Box 27009, Philadelphia, PA 19118 (215-935-3881) rgreen@wts.edu

UN now projects drastic population decline

United Nations demographers warn that the decline in fertility rate shows no indication of stopping at 2.1, which is the replacement rate. According to a February report UN, the average fertility rate will decline to 1.85—lower than the replacement rate—by 2050.

Thailand's fertility rate went from 5 in the 1970s to just under 2 today. In Iran, the rate fell from 6.5 children in the 1980s to 2.75. In the West the average is much lower, with countries such as Italy currently at 1.2 children per woman.
+ *The Sunday Times*, New York Feb 2, 2003

50th Anniversary Celebration

The Reformed Churches of Auckland celebrate the 50th Anniversary of their institution as the original Reformed Church of Auckland on the 4th April 2003. The Reformed Church of Auckland became the Reformed Churches of Avondale and Mangere on the 1st of January 1964. The Reformed Church of the North Shore, a daughter of the Mangere congregation, was instituted on the 27th of April 1980, with the Reformed Church of Pukekohe, a daughter of the North Shore congregation, being instituted on the 5th of February 1989.

To thank the Lord for His goodness by remembering His great help in the past, there will be an open morning, D.V., on Tuesday the 1st April 2003 in the Reformed Church of Mangere, especially for our Senior members, with an open day on Saturday the 5th of April, in the Reformed Church of Avondale. The Rev. J. W. (Bill) Deenick, our founding minister, has been invited to attend and speak at these events and to preach at a number of worship services.

For further information please contact the Rev. Sjirk Bajema on (09) 277 9360 or email him on thirty@paradise.net.nz.

We really mean it this time in Sudan too

American president George W. Bush signed the Sudan Peace Act, charging the Khartoum government with genocide, on 21 October. If Khartoum is found not to be negotiating honestly, sanctions are to be imposed, including the US government opposing international loans and credits to Khartoum, and getting the UN Security Council to impose an arms embargo on the National Islamic Front government.

On 16 January, Agence France Press reported a Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) claim that the Islamic government is still using helicopters and field artillery against Black Southerners to test whether the international community is truly committed to peace. A Christian Solidarity International dispatch the following day revealed an 18-day "ethnic cleansing" offensive by government troops to clear land to provide security for Canada-based Talisman Energy oil interests.

A senior SPLM official is quoted as saying that more than 200,000 Sudanese Blacks have been displaced since the offensive began, and neither the United Nations nor other relief agencies have delivered emergency humanitarian aid. In the village of Lare, the humanitarian facilities of the World Food Program and other relief agencies were torched.

Scottish missionary Roderick Campbell highlighted the misery stating, "The Highland clearances of Scotland pale into utter insignificance against the brutality of what's been happening in Sudan."

+ *Christian Solidarity International-USA, 870 Hampshire Road, Suite T, Westlake Village, CA 91361*

Secularists coming in third in a field of two

Islam is surging. Orthodox Judaism is growing among young people, and Israel is getting more religious as it becomes more affluent. The growth of Christianity surpasses that of all other faiths. In 1942, *Atlantic Monthly* published an essay called, "Will the Christian Church Survive?" Sixty years later, there are two billion Christians in the world: by 2050, according to some estimates,

HAMILTON EASTER CONVENTION

We hereby extend a warm welcome to any and all readers of Faith in Focus to attend the annual Hamilton Easter Convention. We are delighted that we were able to persuade the Rev Dr Murray Capill to be our guest speaker this year. His theme will be 'The Gospel of Isaiah' and the particular subjects the Servant Songs. The five addresses will be given on Friday 2.00pm & 7.00pm, Saturday 2.00pm & 7.00pm and Sunday 2.00pm. Accommodation can be arranged if required. Phone me on 07 846 4686.

Bill Wiersma

there will be three billion.

As Philip Jenkins, a Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University, has observed, perhaps the most successful social movement of the age is Pentecostalism (see "*The Next Christianity*," October *Atlantic*). Since starting in Los Angeles about a century ago, it now embraces 400 million people—a number that, according to Jenkins, could reach a billion or more by the half-century mark.

Moreover, it is the denominations that refuse to adapt to secularism that are growing the fastest, while those that try to be "modern" and "relevant" are withering. Ecstatic forms of Christianity and "anti-modern" Islam are thriving. The Christian population in Africa, which was about 10 million in 1900 and is currently about 360 million, is expected to grow to 633 million by 2025, with conservative, evangelical, and syncretistic groups dominating. In Africa, churches are becoming more influential than many nations, with both good and bad effects. + *David Brooks, The Atlantic Monthly, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114*

Attack in the Philippines

Information has come from the Philippines of an attack against Christians in the south. According to reports, 14 Christians - including three children — were gunned down recently on the island of Mindanao.

Jerry Kitchel with Open Doors Ministries reports: "An estimated 50 rebels had come into the village and began to just gun them down. They had also thrown grenades into homes and just blazed the area with bullets. It's not known at this point what particular extremist group was responsible for that." Kitchel says this violence shouldn't have an impact on the church. "Often times, it's these types of

tragedies that really undergird the church and cause them to get closer to God. Many of them come out of the Muslim belief into a close relationship with Christ. And so, they have an eagerness to share their faith with their neighbors."

+ *Mission Network News*

Abortion pays well for Planned Parenthood executives

In June 1971, Dr. Alan Guttmacher, then-president of Planned Parenthood, mapped out the future of his agency. "Service to the unmarried minor on her terms should be expanded. If we don't do it, no one else can or will. Abortion-referral services, and in some instances performance of abortion, is our special responsibility."

Three decades later, Planned Parenthood thrives on delivery of birth control and abortion to women whom the sexual revolution has failed—women who are, on balance, young, unmarried, childless and, all too often, abandoned and afraid. In 2001, its 129 affiliates

nation-wide had a combined income of more than US\$670 million. The inflow was so great that over a five-year period (1997-2001), Planned Parenthood generated net income of more than US\$300 million. Congress helped drive this increase in revenue by committing US\$254 million annually to the federal family-planning program known as Title X, of which Planned Parenthood is a major beneficiary, nearly doubling its size.

Planned Parenthood's senior officials receive generous salaries. One Indiana affiliate paid its medical director more than US\$265,000 and another US\$24,000 in benefits. Another Indiana affiliate reported paying its president and CEO US\$357,000 in 2000.

Planned Parenthood is recognised as a charity by the federal government.

+ *Dr. Charles A. Donovan, Family Research Council, 801 G Street NW Washington, DC 20001 (202) 393-2100*

I lift up my eyes to the hills —
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:1

With grateful hearts and with
real joy we announce the

50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

of our Parents and Grandparents

Simon and Trudy van den Burg



Married in Auckland on
4th April, 1953

Bill and Marian
Julia, Simon, Lisa, Sandra – Auckland

Ron and Dorothy
Eric, Josie, Natalie, Siemon – Toronto

Marion and Ray – Auckland

Alison and Albert

Thomas, Emma, Danielle – Queenstown

No. 218, 66 Avonleigh Road,
Green Bay, Auckland

Gleanings in focus

by **Andrew Reinders**

Bishopdale

Living Proof Evangelism Training Course: This year I will be running another Living Proof course that aims to motivate and equip people in the work of personal evangelism. These sessions will be held on Tuesday mornings from 10.30 am – noon for terms 1 and 2 beginning on Tuesday 11th of February. If you are interested in joining this please see me today so I know how many books to order. J.H.

Session Report

It was decided to encourage a Scripture memory programme through the district meetings and through a voluntary pairing of church members. More about this later.

Elder Jos Bosma has been relieved of a district this year to concentrate on the needs of international visitors to our church. He will be visiting members and visitors and conducting Bible studies with individuals and groups, both during the day and in the evenings. If you know of further needs or opportunities in this area please pass these on to him.

Christchurch

50th Anniversary of Reformed Churches in Christchurch: In March of 2003 will be the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Reformed Churches in Christchurch. We are wanting to invite as many of the past members of our churches as possible to join us in these celebrations. Names and addresses are urgently required of past members—in New Zealand and outside of the country. Please dig into your archives and assist the committee to share far and wide our celebrations. Pass on your contacts to Gerard Haverland, 333 Wigram Road, Christchurch—or phone him on 322-7981.

Combined Worship Service: On Sunday 16th March, there will be a combined afternoon worship service for the three congregations in Christchurch. It will be held at the Aurora Centre (Burnside High School) at 3.00 p.m. and will celebrate 50 years of Reformed witness in the city. More information will follow, but please take note that this is where we will be gathering for worship on Sunday afternoon, 16th March.

FROM THE PASTOR... On a personal note, I would like to thank all of you for your prayers for our family during our recent holiday. We had a wonderful time travelling around this

beautiful island and experiencing some of its wonders. Truly, the rivers and mountains, lakes and hills give glory to the God who created all things! At the same time, it is also good to get settled back into a routine where we can engage in the work we have been called to do. We are very thankful for our church family, and we rejoice to be among you once again.

Dovedale

Youth Group: Car Rally - Bishopdale / Dovedale combined: The Youth Car Rally Cup is once again up for grabs for 2003. It's that time of year when teams of 3-4 people hop in a car, go mad finding crazy items, solving wacky clues, and launching waterbombs at other teams! Be sure to bring water pistols, buckets, towels and clothes that you don't mind getting wet in, because you WILL get wet! Rain or shine, meet at the Bishopdale Church carpark at 1:15 p.m. Saturday, 15th February 2003.

Dunedin

Pastoral Notes... We extend a hearty welcome to Rev. Harry and Mrs Ann Hoving. Rev. Hoving has agreed to act as our 'locum' in Dunedin and Oamaru for the next six weeks. We greatly appreciate this kindness, and look forward to the opportunity to renew old friendships and form new ones.

News From Other Churches. We have received news that Mr John Steenhof Snr of Silverstream, a former minister in our churches, was due to be admitted for specialised heart surgery (the 'maze operation') at Greenlane Hospital, Auckland, last Tuesday. Lord willing, his stay in hospital will be about a week, followed by the main recuperation period of around three months.

Rev. John Rogers (North Shore) has been overseas recently, representing our churches at the Synod of the Reformed Church of South Africa (GKSA). He is now on long-service leave.

Foxton

SESSION NOTES: Session has sent on behalf of the congregation a letter of call to Reverend John Zuidema. May the Lord be near him and his wife, Trudie, during this time of consideration. He has appreciated the communication he has had so far from our congregation. (Ed. He has subsequently accepted this call.)

A Prayer:
Dear God
So far today, I've done all right,

*I haven't gossiped, lost my temper,
Been greedy or grumpy, been nasty,
Selfish or over indulgent,
I am very thankful for that.
But, in a few minutes, God,
I'm going to get out of bed.
And from then on, I'm probably going to
need a lot more help.
Amen.*

Hamilton

LEPROSY MISSION BOXES Dear Leprosy Mission boxholders, it is time again to return the contents of your boxes to David & Nicolette ten Hove. Other donations are gratefully accepted and all will be issued a receipt. Together let us make a Positive difference to lives affected by Leprosy.

PRAY FOR THE CHRISTIANS IN VIETNAM, PLEASE! Vietnam is announcing new measures to control religion. According to Open Doors, this is the first time the Central Committee has passed a resolution specifically on religion. It calls for Communist Party cells within the six approved religious organizations. Open Doors' Terry Madison believes the government wants to control the active church growth in the Central Highlands. Please pray for the Christians: many observers believe this law will create zealous government persecution. Source: Mission Network News

SMALL GROUP LEADERS' MEETING. A meeting of all the small group (fellowship, cell, bible study etc) leaders will be held at Hukanui Church on Monday 10th February at 7.30pm. All present leaders are encouraged to attend, for a time of mutual encouragement. Anyone who feels that they would like to lead a group in the future, is also encouraged to attend. Any queries may be directed to Wally Hagoort

Hastings

CONGRATULATIONS. We rejoice with Eric and Annemiek Meinsma with the birth of their third daughter, whom they have named Marlies. She was born on Thursday morning and weighed in at 8lbs. Mother and baby are both fine. Again as a congregation we are able to rejoice in the addition of another covenant child to the family to God.

CADETS AND CALVINETTES. Here are the promised reports from some of the Cadets and Calvinettes of the recent National Camp.

National camp was awesome. It started out great, although we were all disappointed when we were told that bedtime was at 9:30

and lights out at 10:00. We made up for that by the talking that went on at nights! (The counsellors were complaining that they couldn't get to sleep!) We found that after the short nights the wake-up call was way too early. Food? Well the lunches were nice, as well as the desserts... The activities were fun and the devotions were interesting. I met heaps of new people and now, after having experienced the thrills of camp life, I can definitely say that camp was really good! Thank you – From Nicola Verbokkem.

On the 3rd of January (Friday), the oldest boys left for Otaki, near Palmerston, to set up the tents for the rest of the Cadets and Calvinettes. When the rest of the Hastings people arrived the next day, they set up their stuff (sleeping bags and stretchers or foam mats) and then went off to find and catch up with their friends from other clubs. On Monday the activities started and ran every day till Friday. Some of these activities were kayaking, abseiling, wind chime making, archery and horse riding, to name a few. Some of the activities which involved going out of the camp were trips to the car museum, Alcatraz (a place where there were lots of cool animals) and also Lindale Farm, which was a mini village with a chocolate shop. Along with these activities, regular sports games were played. This gave people a chance to compete against other clubs in their various teams. Some of the sports that were played were soccer, basketball and volleyball (which our club came first in). A good part of the camp was meeting new people and catching up with the people who we hadn't seen in ages. Overall the camp was great fun and was enjoyed by all!!! - Reuben Saathof.

Palmerston North

Prayer Meeting Our monthly prayer meeting will be on this coming Friday morning, 24th January, 7am, at the church.

OPERATION FRIENDSHIP GIFT PACK ASSEMBLY this coming Wednesday afternoon, 5th February, 1pm, here at the Church Hall. We need volunteers to join with a team from other churches, to assemble 600 gift packs to be presented, on behalf of the Palmerston North Christian community, to the international students soon to arrive to study at Massey University this year. Is there also a volunteer who could serve afternoon tea, and wash up dishes at approx 2.30pm? Please see Julie if you can help.

PLEASE PRAY for Janice Reid, whose travel plans have been caught up in the trouble in Cambodia. She is in Manila at present, but planned to go to Cambodia early this week, then on to Thailand for the ICRC conference. However, Thailand has closed its borders to

Cambodia after its embassy in Phnom Penh was burned down. Anton Meister will be going to the ICRC conference also, to present a paper, and Rev. John Goris will be going to chair the meetings. Next week, Rev Bruce Hoyt will go to Myanmar to present a series of lectures to Reformed Churches there, and to preach in some of the churches there.

Pukekohe

PASTORAL: Congratulations to the Loef family on the birth of another grand-daughter and niece. Last Friday, 7 February, Jan-Erik and Georgina Stolte were blessed with the arrival of Rebekkah Rose, weighing 8lb 13oz. Oma and Auntie Geraldine are there at present.

Rob Darby, in his usual quiet and understated way, informed us that he has found a new soul mate with whom to share the future. The bride to be is Seae, a Korean from the Manurewa Korean Presbyterian Church. They are planning to marry on Saturday, 1 March. Congratulations Rob and the Lord's Blessings on you both...and by the way Rob, when will you introduce her to us?

Session notes: Session will have a strategic planning meeting on Friday, 28 February. This will be a navel gazing exercise that will look at the longer-term direction but also things such as training of elders/

deacons, ministries, etc. If you have any insights or ideas relating to this then please feel free to share them with a session member.

Wainuiomata

Solemnisation of Marriage: Mr Jerramy James and Miss Fiona Marinus have signified



A quartet in Wainuiomata

their desire to be united in marriage on 15 February 2003. If there are no lawful objections, the ceremony will take place on that date. The Session.

Frank Van Dalen will be speaking at a day conference on missions topics at Masterton, on Saturday 26th April, as part of his time in New Zealand. During April and May he hopes

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

singles convention

Attention all singles who want to share a time of Christian fellowship and enjoy a holiday in our nations Capital Canberra. That's right planning is well underway and we like to see as many of you there to share this time with us, so put in for your holidays and start saving now.

When: 3rd Jan - 10th Jan 2004

Where: Greenhills Murrumbidgee Conference Centre, 1437 Cotter Road, Cotter (Canberra) ACT, Australia.

Cost: \$300-\$350 dollars (to be determined)

Activities: Generally include- Topical bible studies, Sports, Sight seeing, formal dinner, leisure time etc.

Transport: Own, Air, Rail or Bus.

We will keep you posted as more information becomes available. If you want to know what Canberra has to offer you can visit www.visitcanberra.com.au

We asked that you remember the planing committee in your prayers, that we may honour God and serve you well in the preparations we make for this convention.

On behalf of the planning committee,
David Vander Reyden - contact number 02 45765469
(ndavidv@bigpond.com)

to visit the Reformed Churches while he is here in New Zealand. Further information about the Day Conference, which is being organised by SPROUT, will come soon as it is available. E mail: sproutnz@egroups.com for SPROUT

Wellington

CHURCH ANNIVERSARY Our church will celebrate DV the anniversary of the institution

of the Reformed Church of Wellington during the month of May this year. Some people have been working on this coming celebration but no definite plans have been agreed to. So this is an invitation to young and old to volunteer to serve in the organizing committee. If you are interested, please see Dirk Spoelstra as soon as possible, like this Sunday perhaps! Thank you. A meeting will be called shortly to start the proceedings.

Books in focus

Is the Old Testament worth the effort to read?

Many Christians avoid reading the Old Testament. Why bother with writings that can be so baffling, boring, even offensive to the modern mind? After all, we live in the 21st century, in the "fulfilled" era. Was Jesus not the fulfilment of the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms?

In his book *The Bible Jesus Read*, Philip Yancey has a way of confronting our most cherished and misguided notions about faith. He challenges the perception that the New Testament is all that matters and the Old Testament isn't worth taking the time to read and understand. You will be surprised to discover in exploring the Old Testament how this relates to your life today, portraying a passionate relationship between God and His people against the backdrop of human experience.

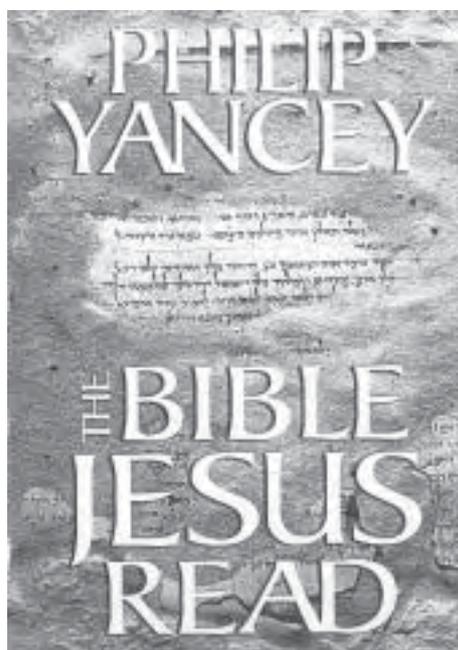
Like nothing else, the Old Testament depicts the cries, the complaints, the questionings of the heart, and our deeply personal journey of life. From Moses, the prince of Egypt, who had to flee to Midian because he murdered an Egyptian overseer, to the sufferings of Job, a righteous man, to the turbulent emotions of the Psalmist and the Prophets.

Yancey fills in the blanks of a solely New Testament vision of the Almighty God.

Probing some carefully selected Old Testament books, Yancey reveals how the Old Testament deals in astonishing depth and detail with the issues that trouble us most.

The Old Testament, in fact, tackles what the New Testament often only skirts. But that shouldn't surprise us.

This book will give you an amazing and abundant new insight into the heart of God



the Father. And as you read with a fresh eye the prayers, poems, songs and stories that Jesus so revered, you will gain a profound new understanding of Christ. The more we comprehend the Old Testament, the more we comprehend Jesus.

Yancey finds it remarkable that the diverse collection of books written over a period of a millenium by several dozen authors possesses as much unity as it does. The Bible's striking unity is one strong sign that God directed its composition. By using a variety of authors and cultural situations, God developed a complete record of what He wants us to know. Amazingly, the parts fit together in such a way that a single story does emerge.

The more Yancey persevered, the more passages he came to understand. And the more he understood, the more he found himself in those passages. Even in a culture as secular as we live in today, there is a deep hunger for spiritual guidance. The Old Testament speaks to that hunger like no other book. It does not give us a lesson in

theology, but it gives us an advanced course in a life with God expressed in a style at once personal, passionate and intimate.

Of the whole of the Bible there are two parts: The Law and the Gospel. The law indicates the "sickness" and the Gospel the "remedy". What exactly does Jesus in the Gospels remedy? To what questions does Jesus provide the answers for us? Are we hanging on to our faith out of habit, or does Jesus indeed provide the answers to some fundamental questions of our existence?

Yancey concludes his book with his experience of Handel's *Messiah*. Handel begins with a collection of Prophecies from Isaiah about the coming King who brings peace and comfort to a disturbed and violent world. "*Comfort ye my people*" swells to a full chorus celebrating the day when "*The glory of the Lord shall be revealed*."

At the beginning of Part 2 Handel telegraphs the darkened mood as he describes the world's response to the Messiah, and the story is tragic beyond telling, relying mostly on the words of Isaiah 52-53: "*He was despised and rejected of men*".

At Calvary, history hung suspended. The bright hope, the long-awaited deliverer of Israel, collapsed in darkness that fateful night. "*All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn*." But then there is the first glimmer of hope. "*But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell*", for the defeat at Calvary was only an apparent defeat. After all, Christ was the King of Kings. "*Halleluja.h*"

Handel himself stated that when he wrote the Hallelujah chorus, "I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the Great God Himself." "*King of Kings.....Lord of Lords.....reigns for ever and ever*."

In a brilliant stroke, Part 3 of *Messiah* opens with the quotation from Job. "*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth*." Overwhelmed by personal tragedy, with scant evidence of a Sovereign God, Job still manages to believe, and so should we, Handel implies. "*For now is Christ risen from the dead*." "*The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised*." Christ's death and resurrection represented at once a decisive defeat of evil and an "advanced echo" of what will someday happen to all who are in Him.

God has acted once to come and live amongst men on this planet. God will act again, by returning in power and glory to restore it to its original design. Just as the tragedy of Good Friday was transformed into the triumph of Easter Sunday, one day all war, all violence, all injustice, all sadness likewise will be transformed. Then will we be able to say: "*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*" Only then will

the urgent questions from the Old Testament be resolved: "Do we matter?" "Does God care?" We must live in faith, aware that those questions will lack a final answer until that very day when God does act at Jesus' Second Coming.

Writers of the Old Testament looked back at the God of the Covenant who had expressed His love for His people so many times, and also forwards to the time when God would send a Deliverer. We look back to the first coming of Jesus, and see unmistakable proof that individuals matter to the God of the Universe, and proof that God cares. We continue to look forward, to the Creator's unfinished business—to the unfulfilled promises of the Prophets.

Handel's masterpiece ends with a single scene frozen in time: his text concludes with the most vivid image of Revelations 4-5. An

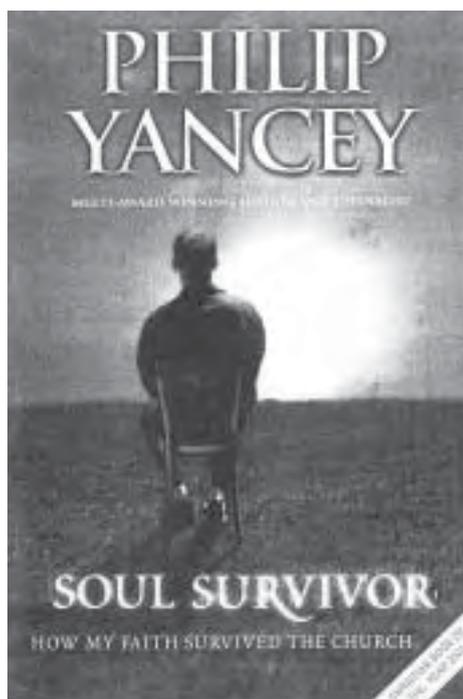
angel asks who is worthy to break the seal that will open the scroll of history. John writes: "Then I saw a Lamb looking as if it was slain..."

Yet John in Revelation and Handel in *Messiah* sum up all history in this one mysterious image. The Lord God who became a baby, who became a lamb, who became a sacrifice—this God, who bore our inequities and died our death, this one alone is worthy.

That is where Handel leaves us with the great "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing...for ever and ever...Amen."

Yancey's book is challenging, provocative and soul-searching. It makes you think! It is obtainable in many Christian bookshops.

Hans Voschezang



A Glance at Yancey

Review of Philip Yancey, *Soul Survivor*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2001.

When I read my first book by Philip Yancey - *Where is God When It Hurts?* which was published in 1977 - I had no idea that he would become as popular as he has. His work on suffering was well-written, and made some helpful points, but it was permeated with a defective view of the sovereignty of

God, and at times seemed to imply universalism. There seemed little point in giving it to suffering saints when Joni Eareckson's books were available.

Only occasionally did I get around to reading Yancey's other works - and that was only when they became so popular that I felt obliged to catch up with the trends. Yancey has the style of a good journalist - he writes well, he stimulates, he sometimes irritates, he repeats stories, and he makes mistakes. In *What's So Amazing About Grace?* he portrays Calvin's Geneva in a way which is demonstrably inaccurate. He writes as though Calvin were the dictator of the city, and the Consistory were there to do his bidding. He even trots out an old chestnut - the oft-quoted but erroneous claim that 'The Consistory beheaded a child who struck his parents.'

It is revealing that Yancey is regarded as an evangelical believer, who serves as editor-at-large for *Christianity Today*. The reviews which he has received in evangelical magazines and journals have been warm to the point of being overdone. *Soul Survivor* has received more than its fair share of accolades, but it is a strange, albeit moving, book. It is supposed to consist of 13 little biographies, but its over-arching theme is autobiographical: *How My Faith Survived the Church*. In fact, the work is as much about Yancey as anybody else, and is almost a kind of autobiography in the guise of 13 little biographies.

Yancey's strictures on the church are so savage in places that it is difficult to see how Yancey could fit into any church which taught anything in a definite way. He launches this work with ten pages on 'Recovering from Church Abuse'. Perhaps he

could commence his next work with 100 pages on 'Recovering from Journalists' Abuse'. Honesty is praiseworthy, but Paul still gave thanks for the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:4), and Hebrews 11 does not wallow in the sins of the saints. In Yancey's view, modern churches simply condemn sinners. One wonders how many churches Yancey has visited recently. These days one is more likely to have to endure a sacred dance than a tirade against homosexuality.

Yancey's subjects constitute an odd, if interesting, collection. Yancey does not hide Martin Luther King Jr's immorality. King is said to have derived his inspiration from Gandhi and the Sermon on the Mount, but sometimes his rhetoric resembled that of Churchill on a bad-hair day. In his last speech, delivered in Memphis the night before his tragic assassination, King indulged in all the tricks of oratory: 'I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land.' Many have found this speech very moving, but it is the sort of windy rhetoric which means whatever one wants it to mean.

The chapter on G. K. Chesterton is both amusing and stimulating. Equally fascinating, albeit in a different way, is the chapter on Dr Paul Brand of Vellore Hospital. Dr Brand makes the thought-provoking comment that pain is necessary in a fallen world: 'I thank God for pain. I cannot think of a greater gift I could give my leprosy patients.' Even more startling - and profoundly moving - is the comment by one patient that he was grateful for his leprosy because it was this disease which led him to know Dr Brand and the other Christian doctors, and the God who lives in them.

Yancey has an ear for the penetrating comment. Robert Coles maintains that novelists understand life and psychology better than do the social scientists - although that is probably to state the obvious. Kierkegaard's remark concerning the philosophy of Hegel is along the same lines: 'Hegel explained everything in life except how to get through an ordinary day.' The strength of Yancey's observations is precisely this refusal to be side-tracked or impressed by academic jargon, and his willingness to deal with reality.

The chapter on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky is full of suggestive insights. It is all set against the background of the murderous Soviet empire, and Solzhenitsyn's explanation in 1983, when he looked over a regime which had massacred 60 million of its own people, and concluded: 'Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened.'

Yancey's capacity to summarise a person's life and work comes to the fore in

his treatment of Gandhi. Barely five feet tall, weighing about eight stone, wearing the same loincloth every day, Gandhi had some intriguing habits. His ritual ablutions and his testing of his vow of celibacy by sleeping next to naked young women have been rightly criticised - although in the West we listen to Eminem and watch *South Park*. Gandhi professed a love for Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, but he refused to accept Christ's deity and perfection. He declared: 'I cannot concede to Christ a solitary throne.'

The most dangerous feature of Yancey's work is his separation of doctrine from spirituality. For example, he writes of the wonders of life - the tiny, delicate flowers on the mountains of Colorado, the coral and tropical fish of the Great Barrier Reef, the gorgeous butterflies of Brazil, the whales of Alaska, the giraffes and wildebeest of Kenya, and the musk oxen of the Arctic. Then he adds: 'I have also sat in hot classrooms and listened to theology professors drone on about the defining qualities of the deity - omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, etc. Can the One who created this glorious world be reduced to such abstractions?' It is a loaded piece of writing, and somewhat beyond the canons of fairness.

Yancey writes sympathetically about each of his subjects - perhaps too sympathetically. One can empathise with Dr C. Everett Koop, as the Surgeon-General under President Reagan. His appointment in 1980 set off a storm of protest and a campaign of vilification against him by pro-abortion feminists. By 1989, when Koop naively concluded that there was little evidence that abortion greatly affected the women who had them, he had also disappointed, if not alienated, many of his fellow evangelicals.

Chapters on John Donne, Annie Dillard, Frederick Buechner, Shusaku Endo, and Henri Nouwen conclude the work. Two quotations will illustrate the dangers in Yancey's approach. Frederick Buechner is cited with approval: 'Faith is homesickness. Faith is a lump in the throat. Faith is less a position on than a movement toward, less a sure thing than a hunch. Faith is waiting. Faith is journeying through space and time.' According to the apostle Paul, faith is a bit more than goose-bumps on the sky-dive. It is not resting on our own righteousness, but depending wholly upon the righteousness of Christ (Phil. 3:8-9). One would like Yancey to point that out occasionally.

The second quotation comes from Henri Nouwen: 'what makes us human is not our

mind but our heart, not our ability to think but our ability to love.' Nicely put, but if dogmatism can be unhealthy so too can being warm and fuzzy. Love is greater than knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1), but that does not mean that one doctrine is as good as another - as the epistle to the Galatians makes clear.

Yancey gives some splendid illustrations of the Christian life but he often fails to work from the Bible outwards (he rarely refers to the Bible); he delights in confusing depth with a failure to give clear biblical answers (an appreciation of life's complexity is no excuse for being foggy); and he separates doctrine from spirituality (the implication is that all his subjects are Christians simply because they are interested in spiritual things). One yearns for a definition of grace which would set it apart from lawlessness with spiritual overtones. Yancey says that he writes as a pilgrim. One wishes that he could write too as a theologian. After all, John Bunyan managed it.

(The Rev. Peter Barnes is a minister in the (continuing) Presbyterian Church of Australia. This review is taken from The Australian Presbyterian under a reciprocal arrangement)

Missions in focus

Greetings from the body of believers in Mongolia

Hello, my name is . Until recently I was worshipping in the Reformed Church of Bucklands Beach in Auckland, but since August last year I have in Mongolia. I am working for a Christian teaching agency called ELIC (English Language Institute China).

ELI was founded in 1980 and since then has sent over 5000 Christian workers into Asian countries including China, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Tibet and Mongolia, with the majority working in China. ELI is able to send Christian teachers to countries where Christian workers are not welcome and believers barely tolerated by local governments.

ELI in Mongolia

Mongolia is the largest land-locked country in the world and has one of the smallest population densities in the world. Currently

2 million people live in Mongolia with over half living in the capital of Ulaan Baatar.

The first ELI teachers arrived in Mongolia's capital in 1990, shortly after the collapse of the communist regime and the departure of the Soviets. These were possibly the first western Christians to have lived in Mongolia for the last 80 years or so. Currently there are 30 teachers working for ELI spread throughout the country.

Starting out

I first became involved with ELI through a pastor who had met two ELI teachers and thought I may be interested in working for such an organisation. After talking to the organisation, and with much prayer and consideration, I felt this was where I should be at this time in my life. I asked to be placed where the need was greatest and at the moment this is in Mongolia.

Life in Zuumod

I live in a small town of 15,000 people about 60km south of the capital. I love my little town, it is very relaxed, hardly any noise and people are friendly. Zuumod is very poor and this is evident wherever you look. Most people make under \$40NZ a month, and an educated person such as a doctor will make \$60 a month. However people make do with what they have, and they're very friendly and hospitable.

In my town there are about 20 cars; most people ride horses if they have to go any distance. Sheep, cattle and dogs roam the street (watch out for those packs of roaming dogs at night). The town's infrastructure is poor, with inadequate health care, no hot water (sometimes no water at all, for weeks on end), and an erratic electricity supply. There is also high unemployment, and high rates of abuse and alcoholism.

Living here helps you to see how Mongolian culture has developed. Many things are different, and yet not wrong, when compared to our own western culture. Some things I've found hard to adjust to and other things I really enjoy—like going horse-riding and helping out the herdsman in the middle of winter, when it's so cold that ice forms on the horse's coat as it sweats. Zuunmod has been cold this year with lots of snow storms. Temperatures get down to -40°C at night and only creep up to -28°C during the short winter days.

Teaching English

I have two jobs over here under the guidance of ELI Mongolia. The first one is to teach a community English Class 2 hours a day. I really enjoy these students. They're all adult learners; many are professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc) taking this class as well as working a full time job, just to try and get ahead in life. These students have a thirst for learning and I believe Mongolians really have a gift for language.

My second job is to run a two year course retraining Mongolian English teachers. This involves travelling out to remote villages to

watch my students teach, marking their homework assignments and teaching seminars a few times a year. All this keeps me fairly busy, but I still have time to get involved in the community—playing sports, going hiking and just hanging out with my Mongolian mates.

The church in Zuunmod

In Zuunmod we have two bodies of believers. One was established some 8 years ago and has 60 to 100 members. This is where I worship. Currently I'm meeting with a small group once a week for prayer and Bible study. I also attend the youth services, and have been meeting with the youth leadership team to assist in any way possible.

My greatest joy comes from the one-on-one times I'm able to spend with young believers as we talk about who our Saviour is and how He can impact our lives. In my role as a teacher, I am able to talk to students about the light that is inside me. I am not alone in my town we have an older American couple who have been faithfully present here as teachers for the last 8 years. Together we work as one team.

The second church in town is quite new,

founded by Korean workers. This small group has experienced many difficulties and we continue to surround it with prayer.

Looking back, looking forward...

I have been here for 8 months now, and have enjoyed my time immensely. There is still an enormous amount of work to be done: Mongolian believers are still immature and relatively young in their faith; they are constantly being tested and face many trials and temptations. Please pray for the work of ELI in the small townships. Pray for the body of believers in Zuunmod, that they can see through any misunderstandings and focus on their Saviour. Pray that believers in Mongolia, particularly in Ulaan Baatar, will have a vision for reaching out to the lost in the towns and in particular the small remote villages.

I have had many different and interesting experiences while living over here. I have been stranded in snow storms, locked in hotels for days, attacked by drunks, lived in gers (traditional Mongolian tents) with herdsman...but our Father has protected me through it all.

Country profile: Austria



Austria is a cultured nation famed for its music, art and beautiful scenery. Yet Austrians need a personal faith in Christ, and only a small minority have clearly heard the Gospel message. Over 75% of the population is Christian in name, but with no meaningful link with any church, yet an estimated 80% have had dealings with the occult. The high suicide, abortion and alcoholism statistics indicate the spiritual need.

Pray for Austria:

1. Austria is Catholic by culture, not commitment. The annual membership loss accelerated in the 1990s to 35-40,000. The number of priests has declined and the priesthood has been stained by prominent sex scandals. In 1539 over 90% of Austrians were following the Reformation; today 3% of the younger generation go to church.
2. Recent legislation has been passed that restricts the rights and privileges of smaller religions and churches. Pray for legal and social barriers to the gospel to be demolished.
3. The Lutheran and Reformed Churches are declining by nearly 1% each year.
4. Pray for more Pastors for the congregations that do exist. Too few Austrians enter full-time Christian service, and even fewer go as missionaries to other lands.
5. Less reached sections of the population, including southern and eastern provinces where there are few evangelical believers. Pray for the dozens of towns that have no evangelical witness, and for the many Austrians influenced by the cults and false religions.
6. There are many refugees in Austria, particularly from Central European nations which have faced much hardship in recent years. Pray for an effective outreach to these people, especially by Austrian believers.
7. Pray for student ministries, which reach out to the more than 222,000 students and which are one of the most fruitful ministries in Austria today.

Information from Operation World CD-ROM, Copyright ©2001 Patrick Johnstone. Used with permission.

Getting involved

If you'd like to learn more about ELI or support its work in Mongolia; or if you'd like to receive my newsletters, please contact me. Email: jberends@elic.org.

MIF prayer notes

Rev Barry and Anne James continue to need our support in prayer, as they minister at Westmister Theological Seminary in Mbale, Uganda. Pray for safety and good health for Barry and Anne. Pray also, for effective teaching and learning at the seminary, and for good relationships with the students and other Ugandan believers with whom they come in contact.

Pray for **Janice Reid**: for his safety; for effectiveness in his language teaching. Pray also for wisdom and strength as he spends time with people in his church, teaching young believers what it is to live mature in Christ. Pray for Mongolian Christians to grow in grace and maturity as they learn more about Him Who is all in all.

Janice Reid is busy developing training materials for use by FEBC radio announcers and their supervisors. Please pray for wisdom in decisions regarding these manuals, and also for clear and effective communication of principles of good radio as Janice seeks to help these announcers enhance their effectiveness in reaching out to people with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Stephen and Dorinda 't Hart continue their ministry in Papua New Guinea, working from a base in their village of Ekoro, but also spending significant amounts of time and

effort with the struggling church in Moresby. Please pray for wise planning and decision-making for those who are considering going to PNG to work with Stephen and Dorinda; also pray for health, strength, and joy in service for the 't Harts themselves. Pray that they would rejoice to see the growth of believers among whom they serve.

The **OMB and SPROUT** are hosting a visit by Frank van Dalen this month. Pray that all goes well with Frank's planned travel throughout New Zealand, and also with the conference that will, Lord willing, be held in Masterton later this month. Pray that many who attend would be encouraged to support mission-work more, either through prayer, or financial support, or personal commitment.

Focus on home

This month's contribution includes a rundown of evangelistic activities by the Hastings congregation prepared by Nigel Cunningham and a review of the evangelism course, *How To Love Someone With the Gospel*, by Julian Batchelor.

How to love someone with the Gospel

By Julian Batchelor, Why Ministries International

This evangelistic tool has been produced by Julian Batchelor, director of Why? Ministries International.

The rationale behind this gospel presentation is summed up by the name of the organisation, Why? Julian challenges Christians to ask themselves why they go to church, attend home groups, youth groups, and other church events. He then maintains there is only one reason why the church exists on earth and that is to proclaim the message of the gospel to the lost. It is maintained that the gospel comes to people in six steps: ploughing, sowing, watering, growing, harvesting and discipling. According to Julian's research, churches in Western Countries like New Zealand do a lot of ploughing in the sense that we are forever teaching ourselves and attending this seminar or that church event, but rarely do

we go out to sow the seed. As a result, one can expect little growth or harvest. It is acknowledged that God is the One who "grows" Christians—i.e. produces converts—but the church is failing to sow the seed. Thus Julian Batchelor in his rationale for the course, a series of ten lectures, has given it the title, *Why we are failing with the Great Commission*, and urges churches to go out and do evangelism.

A companion video entitled *The Little Black Book Training Video* includes a step-by-step presentation of Julian Batchelor's method of evangelism. He emphasises friendship and one-to-one evangelism. The presentation begins with a ten question survey asking such questions as: How often do you pray? How often do you give to charities? How often do you read your Bible? Are you loyal to your family and friends? and so on. With each question scaled on a score of one to seven, points are tallied up to see whether or not you are "angelic, saintly, good, average, or in need of help". The next part of the presentation points out that God is a Holy God and requires perfection, so even if one scored 69 out of 70, he or she would be less than perfect, unable to satisfy God's demand of perfection and would therefore go to hell upon leaving this earthly life. However, the good news is that because God is a God of love He sent His son Jesus Christ to take away the sins of those who accept Him as Savior and Lord. The person or persons being interviewed are then given a booklet about what it means to be a Christian, i.e. that Jesus must be savior and

Lord. The important elements of a gospel presentation; sin, righteousness, judgment, Jesus as Savior and Jesus as Lord are included.

Evaluation: Julian Batchelor has provided an easy-to-use, quick, one-off presentation of the gospel which is ideally suited to those who want to try one-to-one or street evangelism. The survey is not in any way offensive or intrusive, and the gospel presentation itself only takes about six minutes. Based on his own experience, Batchelor also provides a great number of useful tips and skills on how to approach people and share the gospel in a relaxed way that doesn't put people off. He shows us what to say, how to start and finish, and even gives some helpful tips about body language. There is however a distinct man-centred emphasis throughout the course. Statements such as, "if the two million people in New Zealand who call themselves Christian but who never attend church or live the Christian life go to hell, then their blood is on our (practising Christians') heads" (because we haven't warned them), ignore the fact of God's sovereign choice in election and reprobation. Furthermore, Batchelor's definition of the church's task is too narrow. His statement that we exist to "seek and save the lost" overlooks the four other important tasks of worship, nurture, works of mercy and fellowship. Moreover, in a society that is becoming increasingly secular and where there is little knowledge of the gospel left in the minds of many, a quick, one-off approach is not able to impart much

important knowledge about the person and work of Christ, the fact that we are saved by grace, or about the important concepts of faith and repentance, all of which are profound and take more than six minutes to explain thoroughly.

Nevertheless, there may be times when a six-minute gospel presentation is just the thing to share with a friend, a classmate, a man sitting on a park bench, or in a plane. It is available from Why Ministries International, PO Box 21-925, Henderson, Auckland, email, Lynette@why.org.nz.

HV

News from the Reformed Church of Wellington

Kapiti-Mana preaching posts

In the year 2002, the Reformed Church of Wellington offered in addition to their regular two Sunday services in Brooklyn-Wellington worship services in the Kapiti-Mana outreach post in Waikanae. Two different services were conducted: a weekly English-language evening service and a monthly Afrikaans-language morning service.

Both services are led by the Rev. Jan Lion-Cachet under the supervision of the eldership, and are regularly and faithfully attended. The English language evening worship service is longer established and offers Sunday school as well as Catechism classes.

Under the faithful preaching and leadership of Rev. Lion-Cachet these services have been very beneficial, and many have joined to worship together in the Reformed Church.

The English language worship service (evening) has seen only a modest numerical increase compared to the Afrikaans language service (morning), where numbers attending have mushroomed. The attendance here is made up of members attending the English language services and regular visitors from Reformed backgrounds who wish to worship in a Reformed Church.

Afrikaans language services transferred to Porirua

On the 5th of January 2003, the first weekly Afrikaans-language worship service (morning) was held in Porirua. This worship service is the start of the planned outreach action to Afrikaans-speaking expatriate South Africans living in the Kapiti and Mana area.

On review of our regular monthly Afrikaans-language services in Waikanae, several South African families expressed the wish to have access to more comprehensive

services than what had been offered to date. Their express wish was for access to the Holy Sacraments, Catechism, and Sunday school, and more regular worship services. Although the Afrikaans language is not the key issue but rather our Reformed belief, the Afrikaans language provides us with the necessary vehicle to reach out to the South African immigrants and provide in their need for services in their native language. With the arrival of Rev. Jan Lion-Cachet in our midst, who is working as a Home Missionary in the Kapiti-Mana area, the Reformed Church of Wellington has the ability to provide for this need, and we wish to do so in the service of our Lord. This outreach action is proving to be very worthwhile, with nine new families having joined the membership of the Reformed Church within the first month of existence, and more to come. To date, we are thankful to the Lord that we can report that a total 47 professing and 38 baptised members have joined the church.

On further analysis it was found that many of the regular attendees at the monthly services in Waikanae came from the Lower Hutt, Tawa, Johnsonville and Porirua areas. It was found that there is a greater concentration of South Africans from

Reformed backgrounds in the greater Wellington area than in the Waikanae-Paraparaumu area. It was therefore decided that Porirua might be a more central preaching point for regular Afrikaans-language services than Waikanae.

It is imperative that the services remain under the auspices of the Reformed Church of Wellington, and that all new members would become members of the Reformed Church of Wellington before gaining access to the sacraments and other membership privileges. The usual vetting process will take place, with visits from the elders, and where necessary, reaffirmation of faith. It has to be stressed that this outreach will not affect the regular weekly evening English-language services that will continue at the current venue in Ngapaki Street, Waikanae.

Our prayer is that this outreach would develop into (a) self-sufficient congregation(s). May the Lord bless us with this work in His Kingdom.

On behalf of Reformed Church of Wellington

**Rev. Dr Jan Lion-Cachet
Leen van Vliet**

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**

From the DA's Office ...

Reformed Church of Auckland

This month, it is the turn of the Reformed Church of Auckland to celebrate 50 years of existence. This church no longer exists today, having split 10 years later into the Reformed Churches of Avondale and Mangere. On 4th April 1953, in a meeting at the old Methodist Church on Broadway, Newmarket, a protocol was signed by 67 adults, thus forming the Reformed Church of Auckland. Together with their 23 children, a roll of 90 constituted the new church.

Here is a list of the names of those who signed the protocol that evening, as found in *Trust and Obey*:

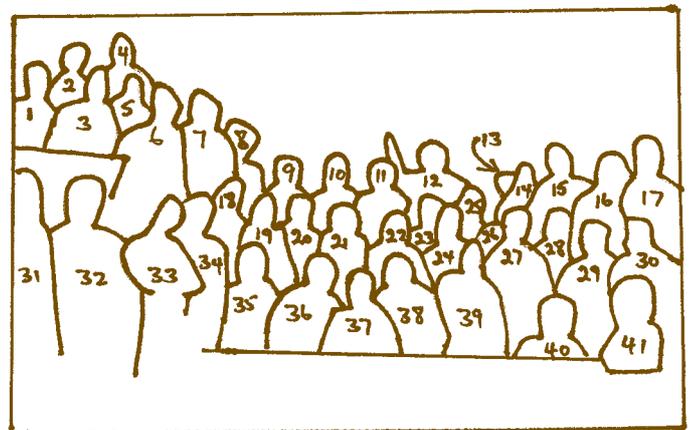
Mr and Mrs J. Boot; Mr and Mrs H. Brilman with one child; Rev. and Mrs J. W. Deenick with four children; Mr and Mrs W. DeRuyter; Miss A. Fidder; Miss E. Fidder; Mr and Mrs R. J. Gjaltema; Mr J. Greydanus; Mr G. Heeringa; Mr H. S. Huysman; Mr and Mrs H. G. Kant; Mr P. Kok; Mr and Mrs B. W. Kooperberg; Mrs L. Koopmans; Mr J. Kramer; Mr and Mrs H. Luymes with one child; Mr and Mrs D. Meyer with six children; Mr and Mrs C. A. Minnee with one child; Mr and Mrs N. C. Ploeg with four children; Mr A. Pousma; Mr E. Punt; Mr J. Ritsema; Mr and Mrs S. Rynsdorp with one child; Mr H. Schellingerhout; Mr J. Sinke; Mr and Mrs W. F. P. Slegh with two children; Mr L. Stam; Miss L. Terwee; Mr M. G. VanDalen; Mr and Mrs G. VanderHoek; Mr T. VanderPlas; Mr D. G. VanderPyl; Mr J. A. VanderPyl; Mr and Mrs N. VanderWel; Miss A. J. VanNamen; Mr and

Mrs J. VanNoordt; Mr R. VanOmmeren; Mr and Mrs W. VanRij with four children; Mr and Mrs A. J. H. VanWeerd; Mr and Mrs R. C. VanWerkum; Mr and Mrs J. G. Verhoeff with one child; Mr Albert Voschezang; Mr Alex Voschezang; Mr W. C. Weeda; Mr and Mrs A. Westerkamp; Mr A. Wolders

The photo shown here has 41 people on it, and is supposedly taken at the institution of the Reformed Church of Auckland. Can anyone explain why all 67 signatories are not on the photo? Can anyone put any of the above names to the faces in the photo?

If so, I would love to hear from you.

Praise the Lord for the foresight of these founders of the Reformed Church of Auckland, and to our God for instilling this 'step of faith' in them.



Synodical Archivist
 Roy Nugteren
 558 Everett Road
 R D 8 Inglewood
 Taranaki
 E-Mail: archives@reformed-churches.org.nz