

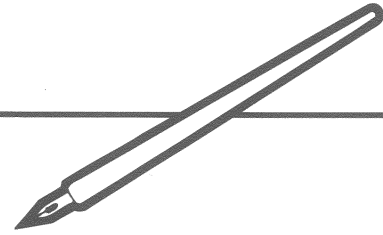


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By J. Geertsema



The Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra

The first meetings

From February 7 to 20 the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) met in Canberra, in Australia. The WCC has three hundred and eleven member churches, now that it received back the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduits Gereformeerde [= Hervormd] Kerk) of South Africa, since it has rejected apartheid. The constitutive meeting of the WCC was held in 1948. There is a parallel with the political world organization of the United Nations, established, also after the Second World War, to express and to maintain unity between the nations and to prevent or stop another outbreak of war. In line with this, churches organized in the WCC wanted to express (again) and promote the unity of Christianity.

This seventh meeting was attended by about eight hundred and fifty delegates from about one hundred countries. It took place at the time that the United Nations were in the process of getting Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi army out of occupied Kuwait. One of the first things (later repeated) which the assembly did was calling both parties in the Gulf War, the allied forces and Iraq, to a cease-fire. Dr. Emilio Castro, the secretary-general, declared that this was all the assembly could do, since the politicians had to make the decision. One of the delegates of the Anglican Church in Great Britain, Bishop George Carey, who will succeed the present leader, Dr. Robert Runcie, stated that, in the opinion of the British delegates, the war to free Kuwait was a just one. The Australian premier, Bob Hawke, who attended the opening ceremonies, also defended the war against Iraq. This stand was criticized by the Metropolitan of India, Paulos Mar Gregorios, who disapproved of the occupation of Kuwait, but not less of the violence of the allied forces. There was no unanimity.

Other impressions

The theme of this assembly had to do with a combination of the Holy Spirit and creation and was formulated in this way: Come Holy Spirit and renew the entire creation. Bishop Carey said at a press conference that more attention must be given to the milieu, the environment, in which we live. He pointed out that a whole forest has been cut for all the paper that is used at the assembly. "The amount of ecumenical paper is inversely proportional to the ecumenical progress", he said. Bishop Carey spoke also against the feminist movement in the church which wants to "change the theology" of the church and speak about "God the Mother." He was critical on another point, too. He said that the unicity of Christ as the only Saviour has to be maintained in the discussions with other religions, and the WCC "should not uncritically embrace every form of spirituality outside the church as an expression of the Spirit."

There was reason for this warning. A Korean lady-theologian, Chung-Hyun-Kyung combined motives and ideas from the old Korean (pagan) religion with elements of the Christian "faith". She connected the Holy Spirit with (the revering of)

the "Han-" spirits, spirits of deceased martyrs, and called this "inculturation". Christianity must be adapted to the culture of the different nations. She asked, "Why must churchfathers and male theologians from the West determine what the Spirit has to say to us?" This found applause from the Canadian feminist, Dr. Lois Wilson, about whom more will be said later. Another theologian, Wesley Ariarajah, from Sri Lanka said, "God is not only present in the Christian faith, but also in Buddhism, the Islam, and other religions. That is why mission is not necessary. We must not bring God to other places. He is there already."

On the one hand, this syncretism found more opposing voices among the delegates than only from Bishop Carey. Words like "heresy", "syncretism", and "apostacy from the faith" were used. On the other hand, the opposition to this syncretism caused bitterness by those favouring it. The mood of the president of the Canadian delegation, Lois Wilson, one of the women-members, was quite negative. Besides, when from more orthodox side objections were voiced against women in office, and when it appeared that fewer women were nominated for a place in the central committee, she complained: "Women are intimidated and threatened with excommunication. Some women are crying in the washrooms". It underlines that there was not much unity at the WCC assembly.

We can repeat the question expressed so often already by those opposed to this world organization: How can an organization call itself by the name of Christ Jesus, when it denies the teaching of the Scriptures regarding Him, or allows such a denial among its members and delegates? God's Word claims that Christ is the only Saviour, and that only the God of the Scriptures is the true God. The WCC still is the same as before: it combines "yes" and "no", truth and lie. Protesting against, and yet allowing, syncretism that dishonours the God and the Christ and the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures is an attack on the Name of the LORD. The message of the Scriptures is clear. To mention here only two texts, in Acts 4:12 we read: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." And I Tim. 2:5 says: "For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all."

The wrong of combining truth and lie was felt. The result of the meeting was that, in the end, delegates of orthodox and conservative churches said in a common declaration: "As orthodox churches, we have to ask ourselves the question whether the time has come to review our relation with the World Council of Churches," because "we notice a growing distance from the biblically founded Christian truths, as the divine Trinity, salvation, the 'good news' of the Bible itself, the thought that people are created after the image of God."

During the last three days, discussions were closed and reopened, decisions made and retracted, both with respect to the Gulf War and theological matters. It had the result that, at the

conclusion of the meetings, the assembly was characterized with qualifications as "a ruin", "a mad house", "a mockery."

The theme

The theme of the assembly was the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, especially in connection with creation. Because of the rise of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements with their emphasis on special gifts of the Holy Spirit, and because of the modern trend toward a new religious, often pagan, spirituality, new attention is given to the Holy Spirit. However, also here the work of the Holy Spirit was connected with modern revolutionary movements of humanistic liberation. The antithesis, put by God in paradise after the fall in sin, and revealed by the Spirit of true prophecy in the Scriptures, was not reckoned with. It is the antithesis between Christ and Satan, between truth and lie, between true religion and false religion. It is against Scripture to connect the Holy Spirit with idolatry and paganism and unbiblical revolutionary movements.

The matter of creation was also in the center of attention, specifically that of the environment endangered through the pollution of land, water, and air. Nevertheless, the political aspect received all the emphasis, it seems. While the downfall of the communist market system was noticed, the so-called free market system was declared to be in sharp contrast with the will of the Holy Spirit. Further, it was said that there has to be equality of women, also with respect to the offices in the church, while, nevertheless, churches which do not allow for women in office must be respected. Such a declaration, which tries to please all sides, shows again the disunity. We get the impression that the Seventh Assembly of the WCC was a debacle.

Some remarks on the tie between the Holy Spirit and creation

There is Biblical ground for making the connection between the Holy Spirit and creation. When God made heaven and earth in the beginning, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters (Gen. 1:2). In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is specifically connected with the regeneration and sanctification of those who believe. Being sanctified through Christ's Spirit, these believers consecrate their life to God. Their life is part of this present creation. Paul writes to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:4, 5): "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the Word of God and prayer."

Important is that Paul speaks here about a consecrating (making holy) "by the Word of God." Therefore, this consecrating is done in humble, obedient, submission to the Word of God, acknowledging Him also as Creator. This means, indeed, that such believers will see themselves as God's servants and stewards on earth, as guardians for God over what God has created. They reckon with God's command to till and guard or keep the garden, and thus the whole earth (Gen. 2:15). It is our calling to work for a "clean" environment. It is our calling to protect life that is created and given by God in all its forms.

However, another aspect of such a pollution-and-destruction-opposing care for the environment, for creation, for life, is opposition to abortion and all things that break down what God created and as He made it. The bond between the Holy Spirit and creation means therefore also opposition to aberration from God's creation order. It means opposition to homosexual relationships and the equalization of the role of men and women. All true sanctification of life to which the Holy Spirit leads is always submission of life to what God has revealed in His Word.

Not all the member churches of the WCC maintain God's Word. This is obvious in the fact that there are quite a few member churches that officially accept those who maintain a homosexual relation as members and even office bearers in

their church, as, e.g., in Canada the United Church, and in the Netherlands the synodical Reformed(?) Churches.

One can be thankful that there was an open conflict in the WCC between the syncretists and the more orthodox delegates, and pray that there may be a total return to faithfulness to God's Word. C



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Good Friday - God's incomprehensible love for lost sinners

By J. Geertsema

Darkness

On the day which we call Good Friday, at noon, suddenly the light of day faded away. It became dark as in the middle of the night. This must have been frightening for the people who were standing just outside Jerusalem to watch the crucifixion of three men, two criminals and the man in the middle, Christ Jesus. The darkness at noon, with the sun in its zenith, was specifically for Him. Or rather, it was an act of God against Him.

In the beginning, when God clothed the earth and prepared it as dwelling place for man, the first thing God made was light. Life on earth depends on light. Without light nothing will grow and life will fade away. Besides, in order to be able to fulfill his task on earth, man needs light. Thus, light is the first and basic gift of God for man. The gift of light shows the wisdom, the goodness and favor of God for man. In contrast with it, the Scriptures often connect darkness with the wrath of God, and with powers of evil and hell.

Therefore, this darkness at noon was frightening especially for Christ Jesus. He knew that it was a sign of the terrible wrath of God. God took His light, and, with it, all His gifts for man, all His favour, away from Him, because He had taken the place of sinners who, through their sin, had forfeited all God's gifts of life and deserved only death, darkness, hellish agony.

There is an increasing line of isolation for Christ. Almost from the beginning of His ministry the leaders of God's people had turned against Him. While Christ Jesus wanted to do only good and did only that, the opposition against Him had grown stronger all the time, until the rejection had culminated in the decision of and the cry for His death. And the people, first enthusiastic, had, in the end, more and more followed their leaders, until they, too, cried for His death at the cross. Then, in the night of His betrayal, even His disciples had fled away from Him, forsaking Him. For Scripture had to be fulfilled. He, being the Mediator, had to go His way all alone.

Forsaken by God

And now, hanging there in terrible physical pain, Christ has even the gifts of creation taken away from Him, and, instead, the punishment and curse for sin is brought upon Him. The outer darkness proclaims to Him the utter darkness of hell, of being forsaken by His God. Being forsaken by God is a terrible thing. It means that God withdraws from you; that God abandons you and gives you over to the powers of evil, to hell. God will not longer help you. God's wrath is upon you.

Imagine how a child must feel that having done something wrong, sees that his father or mother abandons him and turns completely against him and refuses to have anything to do with him anymore, while the child loves his parents. Such an experience must be truly terrible.

God's Word speaks about God's children in a condition in which they feel forsaken by God. They describe this as a terrible experience. We can read about this, e.g., in Psalm 22. However, we are all sinners. Our feeling, our experiencing, of both God's nearness or His anger against us when we are sinning or even living in sin, is never complete or full in this life. Sin has broken our being tuned in finely and precisely with God. Instead, we are easily out of tune with God. We easily damage and break this relation by our sins and sinfulness. Although, therefore, a feeling forsaken by God can be experienced by God's sinful children, specifically in a situation of sin, our sinfulness as well as our being merely creatures, make it impossible for us to comprehend what this being forsaken must have been for Christ Jesus, our Lord.

He was perfect, separated from sinners, unstained, always perfectly in tune with the Father, not hindered by the distortions of sin. Also at the cross, He loves His Father with His whole, undivided heart. He cannot live without His Father, and He does not want to either. Outside the fellowship, the communion, with His Father, there is only darkness, only hellish agony. Indeed, we can simply not imagine and comprehend how awful it was. Fortunately, we do not have

to comprehend it either. Christ Jesus went through it, all alone, in our place.

The outer darkness around Him, and what it symbolizes, causes a profound darkness in Christ Jesus' soul. This inner darkness is expressed by the Lord of heaven and earth in His loud cry to God, spoken after three hours of living through it: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Forsaken in passive and active obedience

The cry out of the depth of darkness contains the question "why"? Does Christ not know why He is forsaken by God? The answer is simple. Of course, He knows. He knows that He suffers in the place of others, His people, as their Mediator. He said to the disciples that He, as their Saviour, had to suffer and die at the cross (Matt. 16:21, 17:22, 20:18, 19). Christ had given the reason, too: "The Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life (lit. His soul) as a ransom in the place of many" (Matt. 20:28). He lived by the OT prophecies, one of which was Isaiah 53, about the suffering Servant of the LORD. Sure, Christ Jesus knows why He is forsaken by God. It is because He takes the place of His people, the lost sheep who erred, each on his own way (Is. 53:6).

Why, then, does He speak these words? It is to show to His God, and to us, His obedience. Christ had said to the Jews (John 5:39) that it is the Scriptures that bear witness to Him. He has come to fulfill all that was written about Him, including this cry of David, spoken a thousand years ago, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me!" Christ Jesus understands that He has to be forsaken in the full sense of this word, because He has accepted to bear the sins of His people and, with it, the condemning wrath and curse of God against the sinners. He has accepted it. Therefore, He is undergoing, suffering, it. Being forsaken is, therefore, His passive, His suffering, obedience to God.

However, there is not only His passive obedience undergoing the anger of God against sin. He is active, too. It is this active obedience to God, for us and

in our place, which He shows in this speaking. Speaking is an act. In speaking these words of the Scripture, He offers to His God the sacrifice of His total surrender in obedience. He says: I keep and fulfill Thy Word, O God. And He shows to those standing there (and through the apostolic witness also to us): I am forsaken in your place. I am obedient for you.

This obedience is evident also in the words "My God." Although forsaken, He does not forsake His God. He holds on to Him "for whom and through whom all things exist", (Heb. 2:10ff.). Sure, Christ does not say at this moment "Father", as He did before and will do hereafter. He says, "My God", because that is what David said, and because He is hanging here before the Judge, the God of heaven and earth. At this moment, being forsaken, He cannot say, "Father." Thus, His speaking, as well as what He says, is an act of loving obedience.

In this way we can see that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews can correctly say that, through His sufferings, Christ Jesus learned obedience, and that, through it, He was made perfect (Heb. 2:10, 5:8). In this active and passive obedience, our Mediator presented to His and our God and Father the perfect love we owe Him. With this perfection, this total righteousness, our Mediator covers our righteousness and disobedience before God. His obedience is propitiation: it takes the wrath of God away. It is expiation: it covers and erases sin. This righteousness of Christ Jesus is imputed to those who, in and through faith, embrace Him as their Saviour.

This gospel of the obedient, suffering, forsaken Mediator, speaking the words of David, fulfilling the condition they speak of, must be believed and, therefore, preached. But in order to be preached it must be known through revelation. Christ's speaking the words of Psalm 22 is an act of revelation of the gospel. He speaks those words to God, in obedient love for God and for His people. They must hear how He fulfills the Scriptures for them, for they must believe in Him as the One who gives His life as ransom for them. This, too, is God's will. Christ has to make this gospel known Himself. He is, also at the cross, not only our King and Priest, but the highest Prophet and Teacher as well. This is why He cries out these words. We must know this miracle of loving obedience to God and this redeeming love of God's Son for us. We must know that here God's will is done, and that here God's heart is open, miracle of divine incomprehensible mercy, for lost sinners. His wrath is taken away. No sin is greater than the power of forgiveness in this obedience. No sins are too many for which this obedience would fall short.

Christ Jesus is made perfect for our salvation. And through this single offering of Himself He has once for all made perfect those who are being sanctified (Heb. 5:9, 10:14). We can be sure of this gospel, for He suffered according to the prophetic Word of God (2 Peter 1:19).

According to the Prophetic Word

There is something remarkable about this citing the opening words of Psalm 22. These words do not stand on their own. They are the beginning of a Psalm of which we find so many parts back in the situation of Christ Jesus at the cross. David says in the verses 6-8

But I am a worm, and no man;
scorned by men, and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me,
they make mouths at me, they wag their heads:

"He committed his cause to the LORD; let Him deliver him,
let Him rescue him, for He delights in him!"

In Matthew 27:39-43 we read about what happened to Christ Jesus:

And those who passed by derided Him, wagging their heads

So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked Him, saying, . . . "He trusts in God; let God deliver Him now, if he desires Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Also what is said in Psalm 22:9-11 was true for Christ in a unique sense:

Yet Thou art He who took me from the womb;

Thou didst keep me safe upon my mother's breast.

Upon Thee was I cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me Thou hast been my God.

Be not far from me, for trouble is near,

and there is none to help me.

The same counts for the next verses (12 and 13) in which David complains,

Many bulls encompass me, . . . they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion,

so that Christ, hanging at the cross in a cramped posture, felt as David described his condition in the verses 14 and 15,

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast;

my strength is dried up like a potsherd,

and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
Thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

We can compare Matthew 27:35

And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments among them by casting lots.

with Psalm 22:16-18:

Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced my hand and feet — I can count all my bones — they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them,

and for my raiment they cast lots.

The clear fulfillment continues with the second part of this Psalm. Verse 22:

I will tell of Thy Name to my brethren;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee,

is quoted in Heb. 2:12, in the context of speaking about God "for whom and through whom all things exist" and who wants to "bring many sons to glory". It says that, in order to reach this goal, it was necessary for God to "make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are of one."

Then there follows: "That is why He is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. 2:10-11), saying,"

I will proclaim Thy Name to My brethren,
in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee.

Amazing is this gospel. A Psalm of David is written a thousand years before its fulfillment began, expressing how David felt in anguish and in thankful joy. Amazing is the fact that both the Psalm and its fulfillment speak in such detail. It is for sure, here is Word of the eternal God, His revelation. David spoke through the Spirit of the coming Christ, who, beforehand, revealed the way He had to go. How could the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, even themselves, in their mockery, using the words of this Psalm, continue in their unbelief? This, too, is amazing. And it is terrible.

Conclusion

If, then, Christ suffered in obedience unto redemption, according to the prophetic word,


and if He revealed this redemptive work by speaking this prophetic word of David,

because it is God's will of command that all may hear it and read it, and believe it,

no one has a valid excuse for his unbelief. Unbelief is the sin of rebellion.

But blessed are those who do believe and trust in this God of mercy for sinners,

and who, in faith, embrace His Son, Christ Jesus, as their Saviour and Lord.

For this faith is a work of the Holy Spirit; it is the free and sovereign gift of God's pure grace for sinners unto salvation, to the praise of His glory. 

The Image of God and the “Cultural Mandate”²

By R. Gleason

This is the second part in the series on sexual abuse

The Authority of the Word

In this article we want to examine what the Bible has to say about sexual abuse that takes place within families. In doing this we want to remember that all Scripture is *God-breathed* (2 Tim. 3:16) and comes to us with divine authority which binds our consciences and actions. Putting the same notion into the words of the Belgic Confession we confess that all the canonical books are holy and are profitable for the *regulation, foundation and confirmation* of our faith.

The Belgic Confession proceeds to state the following:

We believe without any doubt all things contained in them (the canonical books - RG), not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they contain the evidence thereof in themselves; for, even the blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled (Article 5, *Book of Praise*, p. 443).

We cannot take these truths seriously enough. We must listen obediently and attentively to the Scriptures as they speak to us about *our* sins. As has been true through the ages, sexual abuse is a sin which is found within the church. Yes, it is sad to admit this. Yes, it is frightening to admit this. Would that it were not true! Unfortunately, it is.

And we, brothers and sisters in the Lord, by God's grace, must have the courage to deal Biblically with it - for the sake of the victims, for the sake of the abusers and, ultimately, for the sake of the whole body of Christ and the glory of God.

Where do we begin? First of all, we need to understand the position of both victim and abuser. The pain, suffering and sheer shame of the victims ought to cause us to weep for them. Sometimes these acts of violence and violation have been committed by some cruel stranger. More often, however, victims have been sexually abused by the very people who represented all that was Christian to them. The victims have had to survive harbouring the grotesque knowledge that some trusted person in their lives who was publically professing Christ was, at the same time, the very one who was privately dishonouring Christ through the sin of abuse.

The abuser, on the other hand, must struggle with the knowledge of his or her heinous acts and the guilt they have incurred before God in performing these acts, sometimes over an extended period of time. In the cases of both the victim and the abuser spiritual destruction has occurred.

In the passion of the flesh, the abuser has forgotten a very important truth: both he or she and the victim(s) are made in the image of God. Why is that so important? Let us investigate that for a moment.

Genesis 1:26, 27 and the Imago Dei

The words *Imago Dei* mean “image of God”. In Genesis 1:26, 27 we read what Moses wrote concerning the particular value that God gave to man in Creation.

Writing in the *Reformed Dogmatics*, Dr. Herman Bavinck states that the very essence of man is focused in the fact that he is the image of God. (*Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, II, 491). One of the thoughts that one encounters repeatedly in the *Gereformeerde Dog-*

matiek is that man does not merely possess the image, but that he *is* the image. Whether he knows it or not; whether he acknowledges it or not man is made in the image of the Creator God.

This stamps man with a certain uniqueness. No other creature is made in God's image. This stamps man with a unique value. Every encounter that we have with people has to do with this image of God in them. Nothing or no one can eradicate that image from man.

The Reformers often spoke of the radical depravity or corruption or, to use one of Calvin's favourite words “vitiation”, of the image. What the Reformers went on to explain is that this radical corruption does not annihilate God's image in man, but that the important qualities of true righteousness, holiness and knowledge are restored in faith in Christ (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).

For the victims this must be of great comfort. In this day and age with all its talk about “self-esteem” it is virtually impossible for the victims to muster up any. What the Word of God tells us is that our “esteem” does not come from ourselves, but from the truth that we have been created in the image of our Creator/Redeemer/Sanctifier.

We have an intrinsic value and place in God's created order that no amount of “self-esteem” could possibly give us. In Isaiah 66:2 the Lord is speaking and He says, “*But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My Word.*”

The NIV translates the meaning of God's looking at this man with the word “esteem”. The Hebrew word in its particular form can be translated as “look at,” but also carries the connotation of “regard (approvingly)”, “heed” or “(be pleased to) see”.¹

One other point needs to be made before we proceed. The very fact that man is the image of God means that he receives both a *gift* and a *task*.

The image of God in man is not a static quantity. Precisely because I am made in the image of God I know not only from where I come, but because of God's gift and speech to me in Scripture, Christ and the Holy Spirit, what my destiny is.²

My "esteem", in every situation and circumstance, must be found in the manner in which God reveals Himself to me in Jesus Christ. Through Immanuel — God with us — I have a personal relationship with God. He cares about me! (Galatians 2:20).

Cultural Mandate

Thirdly, we must understand that because man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:28), God gave man certain tasks to fulfill in Paradise. He told them to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it and to have dominion over the earth.

This is not a mandate that is given to the male alone, but also to the female. They receive this mandate — even though Eve had not yet been created — in the unity of male and female, both equally image of God. This mandate is meant to be taken by both in mutual binding to God and to each other.³

In their unity as husband and wife the two are one. Each has their own nature, character and personality. Both are to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. They are to protect the earth and its creatures against enemy powers that attempt to destroy it. But man can only be lord over the earth as he serves God and follows God's will for man's life.⁴

Part of the lordship that the man and woman must exercise is the protection of their children. Children are given to them as a blessing. Those children are dependent upon the parents for physical and spiritual nourishment.

Try to imagine what torment and shame — not to mention confusion and revulsion — goes through a child's mind when they are molested by the very ones who are supposed to be protecting them from this type of perversity.

Think about the psychological damage that is done when a young child is fondled or otherwise molested. Even if this molestation does not result in the sexual act, there is so much shame and hurt! There is a loud, loud scream that

fills the lives of the victim which is sometimes never let out. It is a scream that rends the very soul.

Very early in Scripture we are given the proper, divinely authoritative relationship between the parents and the child. The dominion that man is to exercise includes protecting their child from exposure to perversity.

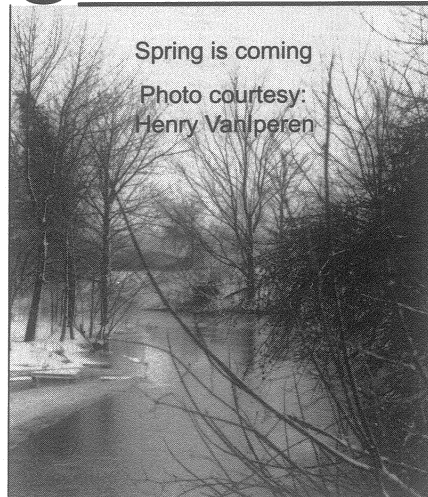
Sin - Grace

Fourthly, we must understand the relationship between sin and grace. Many might plead the fact that sin has entered the world and that man is now radically corrupt. This is true. The Reformed have always taught the doctrine of "total depravity". I think what we need in our churches today is a strong emphasis on the sinfulness of our sins. God calls us to be the *healing* church of Christ and not the *hiding* church of Christ.

Our confessions follow the Scriptures closely in teaching the truth of indwelling sin in every Christian. Luther taught that we are both sinner and justified. The articles 1 and 2 of the Canons of Dort give us a most beautiful practical outline of practical holiness with a view to our sins.

This depravity is of such a nature that we are able to commit gross and heinous sins (Art. 5, Canons of Dort). Are there members of our churches who have been sexually abused? Indeed there are. We, of all people, must provide an atmosphere where victims can tell their story and be believed and be supported in their struggle in life and be loved in that process.

OUR COVER



There must be help for all parties involved. There must be help for the victim. There must be help for the abuser(s). For the Scripture does not merely relate the woeful tale of the entrance of sin into the world through Adam and Eve, but it tells us of God's wonderful promise to overcome sin by His grace (Genesis 3:15).

The Scriptures speak clearly of the triumph of grace over sin and misery. That is why we have such hope! He has overcome! I am more than a conqueror in Him. But it is *only* in Him that I am a conqueror. No one is a conqueror who hides sin and does not confess it.

There is Biblical, spiritual healing for the victims when they are freed from the false guilt of the abuse being their fault and from the fear of their secret shame. God wants to bathe them in His love as He holds them in His everlasting arms and gently leads them along the path to spiritual wholeness. There is great hope for all victims.

Biblical, spiritual healing can come to the abuser through confession of sin and Biblical repentance. For the Lord sin is sin and it would be both unwise and unfair to declare that God would elevate one sin above another. But it does seem that our Lord was especially angry in the face of hypocrisy. He uses the strongest language when He addresses this particular sin in the religious people.

Hypocrisy not only eats away at the abuser spiritually but also deeply affects the victim as well. There is no sin so small that we do not need to ask God's forgiveness. There is no sin so great that God will not forgive the penitent sinner; that God will not forgive the one with a broken spirit and a contrite heart. We are to confess our sins to God and to each other. God's grace can conquer all. To hold on to hypocrisy is to quench the work of the Spirit of God. To hide the sin is to refuse to act upon the truth of the healing that the God of Scripture offers.

In the next installment we shall look at some of the Biblical accounts that deal with incest and at two crucial chapters in the book of Leviticus.

¹ L. Kohler & W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1958, p. 588.

² Comp. H. Thielicke, *Theologische Ethik, I*, Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1972, p. 267.

³ H. Bavinck, *Het Christelijk Huisgezin*, Kampen: Kok, 1912, p. 12.

⁴ H. Bavinck, *Huisgezin*, 15.



A Schilder Symposium

By C. Van Dam

On Wednesday, December 12, the Theological University in Kampen was host to many guests from all over Holland and the world. Near the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of K. Schilder, the University had organized an international Symposium dealing with the thought and work of this important theologian. Dr. J. Faber and I had the privilege of representing the Theological College at the Symposium. Dr. Faber was a co-referent dealing with a paper by Prof. B. Kamphuis on Schilder's view of history, and I served as co-referent to Dr. W.G. de Vries, who wrote a paper on Schilder's relationship to the Reformed confession. Other international participants in the Symposium were Dr. Nelson Kloosterman of MARS in Sioux Centre, Iowa, and Dr. Sybrand Strauss of the University of Bloemfontein, South Africa.

Social Evening

The evening before the Symposium was set aside by the students for a more informal get together and commemoration of K. Schilder. Particular attention was given to Schilder's relationship to the Student Society *Fides Quaerit Intellectum* in the period that led up to the Liberation. Rev. J. Arnold of Amersfoort introduced this topic, and stressed that Schilder eschewed the formation of a Platonic personality cult among his students. Schilder fostered relations built on trust and honesty. As a lecturer, Schilder was "professor" to his students, but among them and as honorary member of the Student Society, he was a "fellow worker" (*fideles*) among them.

Next, the mayor of Kampen spoke a few words concerning the importance of the work of Schilder during the occupation period. Schilder, he said, belonged to a small and rare group of Dutch leaders who continued to resist Nazi occupation even in dark times, and even when their own lives were in danger. He expressed gratitude that the city of Kampen was able to honour Schilder with a memorial plaque in 1987 in which the letters of the Student Society were engraved. Schilder was a much needed figure in the turbulent time of the war, and future generations should also express their gratitude in his courageous stand.

Another highlight of the evening was an introduction to the Student Society theme song given by Rev. H. Pool. In 1947, Rev. Pool, a student at the time, composed the melody to the song, while Schilder composed the words. The song

is written in Latin and is acrostic: together the first letters of each line spell the name of the Student Society: *Fides Quadrat Intellectum*. Pool went on to explain how the name changed from *Fides Quaerit Intellectum* to *Fides Quadrat Intellectum*. There never were major objections to the old name. However, in a court battle after the Liberation, the Student Society of the Liberated churches lost their title to the name, as well as to other properties of the Society. Hence a new name was required. Schilder pointed out that the old name reflected the spirit of its time. It stemmed from the time of Anselm, and reflected an exaggerated claim of reason with respect to matters of faith. "Faith seeks knowledge" stems from a world of thinking in which bare faith is secondary, and where the highest form of communion with God is through knowledge (*intellectum*).

The new name, *Fides Quadrat Intellectum* means: Faith completes or perfects knowledge. Faith puts knowledge in its proper order, properly joins its elements together. According to Schilder, this is a much more Scriptural description of the relationship between faith and knowledge. Thus, the events surrounding the effects of the Liberation in the Student Society led to a reformational improvement with regard to its name. Rev. Pool played both a prelude and postlude to the song, while the song itself was sung by the student choir *Cantorij Kampen*.

The rest of the evening was filled with a more light-hearted look at Schilder by the students. In true Dutch cabaret style they acted out important moments in Schilder's life, complete with musical accompaniment. Attention was also given to his assessment of various musical, poetic and literary works of his time, both positive and negative. It was all well done and well meant, but it went on too long, certainly in the presence of the city mayor, who politely sat through the fun right to its finish.

The Symposium

The Symposium began with an opening address by Dr. J. Douma. He highlighted the close relationship of Schilder to Kuyper, and stressed that Schilder was a theologian working in the broad tradition of Calvinism in Holland. He noted that Schilder himself always retained a high regard for Kuyper and the thrust of his work, even though he was critical of certain elements of the Kuyperian theology. Douma noted that both Kuyper and

Schilder stood on the basis of recognizing Scripture as the inspired Word of God, and this gives their theology a unique stamp in the world today. He also expressed the hope that the Symposium would critically examine Schilder's work for the benefit of future generations.

Work Groups

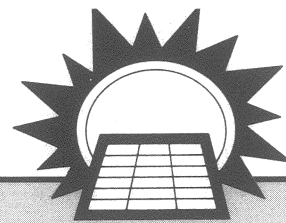
The basis of discussion was the book *K. Schilder: Aspecten van zijn werk*, edited by J. Douma, C. Trimp, and K. Veling (De Vuurbaak, Barneveld, 1990). This book is a collection of nine papers dealing with various aspects of Schilder's work. Discussions were held in several rooms of Kampen's beautiful *Stadsgehoorszaal* (the city theatre) and in the *Broederkerk* around the corner. Participants were able to choose any four of the discussions. Discussions on the nine topics took place four times in the day, giving a total of thirty-six discussions. The total of 370 participants were equally divided among these groups. The day was closed with an inspiring address by Dr. C. Trimp. He stressed that there were many areas in Schilder which needed further attention. He reviewed some essential points of criticism given in the book *Aspecten*, and reechoed the need for collective team-work in dealing with Schilder's heritage, and in re-examining recurring questions such as the appropriation of salvation and the marks of the church in the light of a new time.

After singing "The Church's One Foundation" and prayer, the Symposium ended with an informal get together in the hall of the *Stadsgehoorszaal*. My impression was that the day proceeded very successfully, due primarily to the excellent organizational work done by the University registrar, Mrs. Breteler.

Topics dealt with on the Symposium were: Schilder as defender of freedom (J. Kamphuis), Schilder in his maintenance and evaluation of the Reformed confession (W.G. de Vries), Schilder on the church (H.J.D. Smit), Schilder on history (B. Kamphuis), Schilder's eschatology (L. Doekes), Schilder on the experience of faith (bevinding) (C. Trimp), Schilder on culture (J. Douma), Schilder's significance for political and social life (J.P. de Vries), Schilder's philosophical principles (K. Veling). If time permits we will examine some of these topics in future articles.



RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. J. Mulder

*"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . .
But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead"*

I Corinthians 15:14, 20

Dear brothers and sisters,

Is it really so important for us to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead? For many people the resurrection of the Lord Jesus has only a symbolic value. Whether the same Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem and died on the cross, truly rose from the dead on that first day of the week years ago, is immaterial to them. As long as we believe that the cause of Jesus continues in the faith and the preaching of His followers. That is, according to them, what resurrection and Easter is all about!

Already in Paul's days there were people - also within the congregation - who did not believe that their bodies once would be raised. Therefore they also had problems to believe that Christ Jesus truly had been raised. They did believe in some kind of salvation after this life, but their bodies, their "flesh" would never share in that new life. Heaven and salvation is only for "souls", they thought. For our body and our life in the body, there is no hope! When we die, our body turns to dust and will be gone for ever.

Now Paul says to these people, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then indeed Christ is not really raised either. And if that is the case, so Paul continues, my whole ministry is of no value; then I am giving constantly false testimony. For we preach that God did raise Christ from the dead.

If that is not true then also our faith is senseless. Then we are stilled covered with our sins and we are still living under God's curse. Then we are of all men most to be pitied.

But Paul may proclaim it triumphantly, **Christ has been raised** from the dead. Truly! He was the "first fruit". That means the whole harvest will follow. All those who love and serve Him will once be raised; although turned to dust, their bodies will be raised and be clothed with immortality.

Impossible? Nothing is impossible for our Saviour, Jesus Christ. He has made up for all our sins through His suffering and death. Therefore death could not hold Him in its grip.

Not resurrection is impossible, but it was impossible that Christ would be for ever held by the power of death. (Acts 2:24) If someone wants to talk about "impossible", - it was impossible that our Lord would not be raised.

Because of His atoning work our death is not a payment for our sins but an entrance into eternal life. Also our body will share in that eternal life. There is a glorious future; not only for our soul, also for our body and **our life in the body.**

Some of you still remember perhaps that Dutch hymn:
"Al wat gedaan wordt uit liefde tot Jezus,
dat houdt z'n waarde en zal in de opstanding staan."

Whatever we do in fellowship with and obedience to Christ, keeps its value for ever. Through the grace of God and the power of Christ's resurrection.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord . . . they may rest from their labours, for **their deeds follow them!**" Rev. 14:13

That good news gives meaning to our life and work. Yes, as long as we live on this earth, there is much that is futile. Isaiah speaks of an infant that lives but a few days. Someone plants and another eats. (Isaiah 65:20, 21) But that is not all!

Believing Christ Jesus, we know that nothing of what we do or suffer in fellowship with Him and in obedience to Him, will ever be in vain.

Through His grace and Holy Spirit it is cleansed and it will bear fruit for ever.

For Christ Jesus has been raised. He lives and we will live.

"Therefore be steadfast and stable, always abounding in the work the Lord assigns to you, trusting that in the Lord your labour is not in vain." (I Corinthians 15:58)

Our Birthday Calendar for April

DEREK KOK

"Anchor Home", 30 Rd., RR #2,
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

Derek will be 21 on April 2

MARINUS FOEKENS

"Epic North", Communication Unit, S.W.,
Regional Centre, Box 1000,
Blenheim, ON N0P 1A0

Marinus hopes to celebrate his 39th birthday on April 19.

ARLENE DEWIT

c/o Mr. P. Dewit,
Barnston Island, Surrey, BC V3T 4W2
Arlene has her 30th birthday on April 23.

Congratulations to you, Arlene, Marinus and Derek.
I hope you have an enjoyable day!

To our God be thanks and praise:
He through Christ made us victorious,
Be then steadfast all your days;
See how death's defeat assures us
That in Him who comes again
All your toil is not in vain.
Hymn 51:8

Greetings from

Mrs. J. Mulder
1225 Highway 5, R.R. #1,
Burlington, ON

Task of the Federation or of the Foundation ?

By W.W.J. VanOene

The response to brother Berends' letter should begin with an expression of appreciation for his criticism of what I put forward in the relevant news medley. He tries to refute seriously what I posed there and puts his case quite clearly. I am thankful for the opportunity he provides me with to elaborate on what I wrote and to make clearer what my objections are against the proposal put forth. It is possible to do this in an article, more so than in a news medley.

My reply proper to the letter must start with the remark that in his letter he brings arguments to the fore that clearly support my thesis that in this particular proposal the task of the church federation has been taken over. It was not so much his intention to convince me but to assure the membership "that there is some sense behind the proposal." My question is: "Where did I in any way deny that there is some sense behind the proposal?" It is the very "sense" behind the proposal to which I object. I can fully appreciate the concerns expressed in his letter, and I have no quarrel with that. The difference is in the manner in which these concerns are to be met and overcome.

The churches have established the Foundation for Superannuation indeed "to assist the members in fulfilling their financial responsibilities with respect to their ministers, missionaries ... in so far as they result from the provisions of Article 13 of the Church Order of the Canadian Reformed Churches." The churches did this to form a fund from which they could draw as soon as their minister retired. The purpose of this Fund was together to carry the risks of "early retirement" as well as to have some reserves to fall back on by the time their ministers reached "retirement age." The letter describes this correctly.

What is wholly incorrect is the sentence: "Another great advantage in administering our own fund is that ministers can move from place to place without having to be unduly concerned about their pension plan." *Ministers do not have a pension plan that they carry*

along from place to place. All that ministers have is the promise of the church which they serve that this church will honourably provide for their needs, and this promise covers *all* their days, till the very last one. Both when a minister has to retire long before an official retirement age and when he is able to continue working till he has reached that age and then is released from the obligation to do the work of a minister, he *is this church's first responsibility and remains this for as long as he lives.*

It is my thesis that a church can *never* get into financial difficulties when it has a retired minister to support. How could it ever? Let me give our readers some figures.

I do not know what each church's expenses are when it has a ministerial family to support. Let us, for the sake of argument, take a low figure and say that it needs \$ 30,000.00 per year for that. Apparently the church is able to afford that, otherwise they would not have a minister. Now their minister retires at age 65. All of a sudden the church's financial situation becomes much brighter. It no longer pays a car allowance or study and library allowance. It takes into account that the minister receives the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Pension payments for which the church paid the premiums. Besides, it receives \$13,500 per year from the piggy-bank of the churches in the Superannuation Foundation. All this basically means that the church's expenses for the support of their minister drop from thirty thousand per year to, let's say, four thousand, which they add to the above. How could a church that could "afford" ministerial expenses of thirty thousand or more per year get into financial difficulties now that their yearly expenses insofar as they must come from the local treasury have dropped to four thousand? And then a church should receive five thousand dollars per year more than the other churches because it is small, having fewer than fifty communicant members?

I know what will be interjected here: "But this church has to call another min-

ister, and how can they afford that if they have to pay four thousand dollars per year extra to their retired minister?"

Here we touch upon the basic point. The purpose of the Foundation is *not* (see the quotation from the Constitution in brother Berends' letter) to enable a church to call another minister, but to enable a church to take proper care of their first (and now retired) minister. If a church should come into financial difficulties because it cannot afford to call another minister due to the four thousand per year it has to add to the support for its retired minister, it is not the task of the Foundation to chip in an extra five thousand dollars per year to enable it to call a second minister. See the Constitution. Then the proper way is to approach the sister churches via the federative organs, for then it has become a needy church. Repeat: it has *not* become a needy church because of the four thousand per year it has to add to bring the retired minister's stipend up to par, but because it is four thousand per year short for their new minister. For this it is to go to the sister churches in the regular way.

Nowhere did I claim that Scripture forbids "personal initiative" or that it says that "in *all* cases of need we must resolve matters via the Church Federation." I have never raised any objection when brothers or individual churches contributed on their own initiative and accord to help alleviate the needs of sister churches. I mentioned with joy and gratitude the extra donations received by the churches at Calgary, Ottawa, and Vernon. Regular readers of the news medleys will recall this. But all these questions in brother Berends' letter are rhetorical and totally irrelevant here.

The point here is: is it correct when the Foundation for Superannuation takes the size of the congregation into account and pays out an extra five thousand dollars so that "the 'smaller' church would then not become a needy church"? A church can *never* become a needy church when its obligations towards its (now retired) minister drop from some

thirty thousand odd dollars per year to some four thousand.

It is therefore incorrect when brother Berends puts that perhaps one of the reasons why not many ministers have retired in small congregations "may be that smaller churches cannot carry the burden of the extra funds needed to bridge the gap between the benefits of the Fund and the Canada Pension Plan on the one side and the overall financial needs for a retired minister on the other side." Which church would be unable to bridge a gap of \$4,000.00 when it was "bridging a gap" of thirty thousand or more?

The underlying reasoning in brother Berends' letter is, no doubt, that a church has to call another minister, and I can appreciate that. I also understand that this was the thought behind the proposal. I can only commend the brothers for their concern, and my evaluation and rejection of the proposal has nothing to do with a lack of appreciation. But I remain convinced and must still uphold the statement that thereby the Foundation has acted as if it were the church federation that has either to prevent that a church becomes a needy church or has to provide assistance to needy churches.

I do know that few ministers have retired from smaller churches. I do not know why not more smaller churches called ministers from larger churches, nor do I know why, if called, not more ministers from larger churches accepted a call to a smaller church. But I definitely do not dare to intimate that this had

something to do with the finances or financial security. I am therefore not sure either that an extra subsidy of five thousand dollars would change the pattern.

Certainly, "hardly any 'smaller' churches benefited directly from the Fund," in this sense, that they received the annual amount the Fund pays out to the member churches that support a retired minister, but they still did benefit from it: the members of the Foundation guaranteed their support if a church's minister should become disabled, perhaps even shortly after his ordination, or if he would have to retire for another reason. Whether a church is large or small, it can rest assured that the Foundation is there and that the members together guarantee financial protection in accordance with the aim of the Foundation. Together they carry the "enormous risk" also the smaller churches are exposed to. This is a great benefit indeed, as I see it.

All in all, I am rather strengthened in my conviction that, in spite of the good intentions which I fully appreciate, the Foundation will go beyond its "framework" and will take over the task of the church federation if the proposal in question becomes reality. I am happy that brother Berends writes that changes still are possible and hope from the heart that the above may contribute towards such a change.

Insurance


The Foundation is, for all practical purposes, a body that serves as an in-

strument to administer the mutual insurance between the churches.

This brings me to another point.

Once in a while a financial statement is enclosed when I receive church bulletins. One of the items is always "Insurance premium." In many cases the churches pay well over two thousand dollars per year in premium for the church buildings. Add to this what they pay for the parsonages, and multiply this by the number of churches. Then we come to a respectable amount.

We also are privileged in having our school buildings. How much premium do our school societies pay per year? Multiply this by the number of school societies, and we have another respectable amount.

Is there no way to keep this money among ourselves and to establish a Fund from which possible claims can be paid? Perhaps those among our members who are in the insurance business will shake their heads when reading this. But it is my guess that among the churches and the schools at least \$ 100,000.00 per year are paid for insurance purposes. There are some among our fellow-citizens who do not carry any insurance but are there right away to help when one of their number has suffered a loss. Could we not do this? We could ask some of our knowledgeable members to administer such a fund and remunerate them for their time. I think that in the long run we come out ahead. Please give it serious consideration. 

Sunday morning impressions, revisited

By R. Koat

It was as if time had been standing still. The same month, the same Indian-summer sunshine as two years ago, the same shifting to yellows and golds of the leaves, and their first whirling down and drifting on the mirror surface of the pond.

Unfortunately, after crossing the bridge I made a hasty right turn at the first stoplight, rather than at the second. This faulty maneuver added eight minutes to our travelling time to church. Once there, all nearby parking places were occupied. Our looking for one made us a bit late, but not too late. Quietly we sat down on the two empty chairs in the very back, near the door to the hallway.

The office bearers entered, then the traditional handshake, and after the vo-

tum the first Psalm. The organ playing was not of the same class we had learned to anticipate in Holland, but the solo stop sounded glorious. Could be a sesquialter, I thought, or perhaps a cornet. Better check that out after the service. The singing without the accidentals took some getting used to, but if the purists insist that this is the way the melody should sound (in the old church modes) who was I to fight them, being retired and peace loving.

The last pew of the middle section was occupied by boys of high school age. They were good at communicating among themselves by miming and grimacing, but did not sing. The boy on the far left held an open psalm book in his

dangling left hand, while three closed books were lying evenly spaced on the slanted support in front of them.

Just like on that Sunday morning two years ago, the minister began his sermon with an attention-grabber for the children. The text was based on Lord's Day 6. A short contemporary parable served to illustrate the principle of man having to make satisfaction for his sins. It seemed that two brothers, Wim and Gert, had in the past been sneaking occasional joyrides in Dad's old Renault. They didn't get caught. Their Dad had just bought a brandnew Alpha Romeo that was now standing seductively in the garage, and the parents were gone for the evening on a visit....

Yes, you guessed it! The repair bill came to three-thousand guilders. What to do? Who was to pay? The boys didn't have that kind of money. So, after their Dad had severely reprimanded them, they were told that he was going to foot the whole bill.

At this point a smooth transition led the congregation from the milky fare to the meaty portion of the sermon.

It so happened that wherever we went to church in the Netherlands the catechism sermons were held in the morning services. No covert criticism intended here, no statistical significance implied, just for the record.

After the service I let my wife know that I would like to take a quick look at the organ, which was situated right above us on the balcony. After scurrying up the curving staircase, I saw the organ: massive, boxy, blond oak finish, two manuals, pedal, and about twelve stops, obviously tracker action. Its volume was remarkable for its size. The whitish organ keys appeared to have tiny copper nail-heads imbedded in the ivory. A lanky teenager organist resplendent in a T-shirt emblazoned with a stylized red and black racing car and "Zandvoort Circuit 1990," compulsory blue jeans and Adidas, reached out with his right hand and pulled out a stop labeled (in elegant ornate script): Sesquialter.

After briefly introducing myself as an amateur musician and quasi-organist from a sister church in British Columbia, I was treated to a one-minute demonstration of two other stops, which musical

offering was ended by an efficient click of the electrical switch on the console. I hoped that my murmur of thanks sounded sufficiently sincere.


Several grown-ups stood around in the lobby, and squealing children chased one another in and out of what looked like a nursery. Flurries of numerous voices increased and decreased in the courtyard, which at the six-foot level trailed wisps of blue smoke. The throng was packed solid, much like back home in Langley, except for the drifting haze. Some faces looked familiar. I always had a good memory for faces, but the poorest for names. Over there, on the edge of the crowd near the road, stood my wife, alone, looking a bit puzzled and forlorn, her hair backlit by the October sun.

Through the hall, and carefully squirming my way through the crowd outside, I kept up a non-stop mutter of "excuse me, please" (in English yet, old habits are hard to shake). In my slow progression I didn't catch one inquisitive look, no "hi-there" smile, and certainly not the self-conscious bashful look of someone who might strike up an acquaintance but doesn't quite know how to go about it. No "goeie morgen," no "hello, haven't I seen you once before?" Not the faintest attempt at socializing with foreigners. The intervening period of two years since our last visit to the usually amicable South had not altered behaviour in the least.

We talked about this on our way to the car. Next to ours stood a man who

was about to unlock his Opel Kadett. To make absolutely sure, I asked him if he had just attended the morning service. He had. After having introduced ourselves I asked him whether the topic of greeting or meeting strangers after the service had ever been broached on one of the congregational meetings. He studied his car keys for a moment and said "No, not as far as I know." I suggested that at the next meeting he could perhaps make mention of what we had experienced today and two years ago.

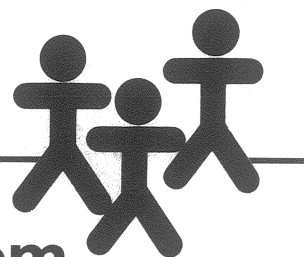
The brother took a step back and looked at me as if I was dangerous or deranged or both. I tried to ease his discomfort by telling him that we considered ourselves to be of the household of faith, and that we came equipped with charitable built-in shock absorbers. Besides, next Sunday we hoped to be back again in our own congregation in Canada. But, I asked him, what about the possibility of their church being visited by some tenderfoot outsiders? Would they ever bother to come back after their first taste of what seemed to be congregational self-concern or unconcern? He did not agree or disagree or commit himself. He was unaware of the situation he said, and opened the door on the driver's side.

This was the signal to unlock the car. We waved farewell. The pace set on the return trip was rather brisk: back to our temporary home, back to warm hospitality and hot coffee. 

SCHOOL CROSSING

By A. Witten

Changes in the classroom



The process of teaching and learning continues to undergo changes. The traditional image of the teacher in front of the class in an authoritative manner instructing students is not the only way in which teaching and learning is taking place. Helping and guiding children in actively sharing the wonders of God's creation remains our task in all subject areas. But the manner in which students learn is a topic of much discussion and has given educators renewed perspectives on the teaching and learning process.

In the Smithers, BC school bulletin (October 28, 1990) an insightful com-

ment is made about educational practices in "From the pen of the president."

Our great Master-Teacher Jesus taught His disciples many things during His three years of ministry on earth. He used the "Socratic" method, that of the question-answer method. For in answering His masterful questions, the learners were forced to realize something about Christ, the Triune God, about others, and about themselves. He also taught them in other ways, the "lecture" method. The Sermon on the Mount is an example. He used con-

crete visual aids (when He drew something in the sand, saying nothing) and of course His wonderful miracles. "Story telling" was also an effective way to teach His disciples, and who can resist a good story like the "Lost Son," the "Good Samaritan," "The Lost Sheep" and the "Good Shepherd." He also sends them out by twos, field trips so to speak, to experience the message of the Kingdom in real life.

In short, He used all the God given techniques and methods to penetrate the hearts and minds of His

hearers. Above all, he showed Himself a living example in doing the will of His Father in Heaven. How can anyone express in words the lesson He taught His disciples and us, when He washed their feet?

The principal of the same school in reflecting on the changes in classroom methods used, makes the following thought provoking observations (November 25, 1990) under the heading "Food for Thought":

"There are many things going on in education these days. Traditional philosophies and methods of teaching are once more thrown by the wayside. We are moving again from a product oriented method of teaching to a process oriented one. The teacher is now told to be a facilitator of learning rather than a filler of empty vessels. I myself still have not made up my mind and often vacillate from the one to the other depending on the article I am reading, or the person I am talking to. I would like to share with you an experience that makes me, for the time being at least, less critical of the new learner centred methods of teaching. In our Literature 12 class we were dealing with sonnets from the time of the Renaissance. The assignment relat-

ed to this activity was either to compare a number of sonnets or to write a sonnet. Three students decided to write a sonnet. All three of them were excellent but one is of direct relevance to what we as educators (parents, office bearers, teachers) try to do. Please read this poem a few times and then relate it to how you are trying to educate your children.


People try to push me around and around
What clothes I should wear, and how I should sound.
They know what's best, it's my life to decide
Questions dismissed, I'm along for the ride
Going through the motions, time after time.
Trying to conform, is an uphill climb.
A dazzling surface with inside tainted.
An empty shell with its outside painted.
That's how I feel, by all mortals compressed,
Dictators and monarchs, words to be stressed.
The problem's easy, the solution's not.
Is it in your beliefs or what you're taught.
No answer's found in one's own sen-

sations;

The solution is communication.

Perhaps those new methods aren't all that extreme. Should we continue to cram the students with all the "good stuff" we want to pass on or should we more than in the past, limit our teaching to guiding them in discovering the "good stuff" for themselves.

If we use the former method do we just create students who can regurgitate knowledge, but whose hearts are not touched? Would the latter method indeed be more likely to create a response from the heart? Or as the poem says it, do we want the student to convert knowledge to beliefs of his own or are we satisfied with a student who accepts things as true just because we, educators tell him? These are just a few of the thoughts that came up in my mind when reading this poem. (H.v.B.)"

As the above suggests greater flexibility and interaction between teacher and students and students and students is in evidence in classrooms today. Indeed what would be more normal in Reformed schools than to assist students in collaborating with each other in their learning! We need to know and live the incomprehensible richness of our faith with "heart and mind." 

Video Review

By C. Van Dam

El Camarada Jesús. Liberation Theology, Reality or Fiction? Video (VHS) Foundation for Christian Studies, P.O.B. 1226, 7301 BL Apeldoorn, The Netherlands. Cost \$12.50 (U.S.) postage included.

Recently I had the opportunity to see a video for review purposes. It addresses the issue of Liberation Theology in a very popular and effective way. Although such a presentation cannot be expected to do full justice to all the nuances and aspects of such a way of thinking, this video successfully deals with the major tenets of this "theology" as it relates to political liberation. As is probably inevitable with this type of presentation, the more extreme representatives and consequences of this ideology tend to take centre stage. This does however, have the advantage of clearly showing where Liberation Theology takes us.


The point is made that liberation theologians reinterpret the Bible in a radi-

cally different and unjustified way. This new "theology" tries to create a new Christianity which has very little to do with the Christian faith given to us in Scripture. This is a new religion. Sin is seen as structural in society. Whoever is a slave of an offensive societal system must be set free from that. The church's mission is to destroy the oppressive structures of society, for God's people must be set free from all that is less than God wanted them to be. How is all this justified? The model is the Exodus. Then God set His people free from social distress. Christ is seen as a political comrade (hence the title of this video) whose death on the cross is the climax of His struggle against the oppressive system of His time.

The video relates how the World Council of Churches, infected by liberation theology, has financially and morally supported revolutionary movements in many parts of the world. South Africa receives quite some attention with repre-

sentatives such as Boesak and Tutu highlighted with sermon clips in which they preach violent revolution. According to such radical preachers, to negotiate with the government is to acknowledge bad structures in society. Thus armed conflict is the only way out. The bitter irony is that their so-called model, the Exodus, was accomplished without any weapons or revolution! It is to be hoped that the far-reaching changes taking place in South Africa will antique this "theology."

The video ends with a plea for the reaffirmation of historic Christianity. The Biblical doctrines of sin, atonement and reconciliation must be preached.

Although recent press reports have indicated that the founder of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez, no longer stands behind it, this revolutionary ideology remains very influential. This video can be recommended as a popular exposé of this thinking. 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

It was Easter morning. The women, the disciples, the Lord Jesus' friends didn't know it, but the grave was *already empty!*

But where *are* the disciples?

They are afraid.

They are together behind *closed* doors!

Now look at what the Saviour, the Good Shepherd does!

He gathers His flock around Himself.

He proves to them that He is *alive!*

He tells them "All power in heaven and earth has been given to me" (Matth. 28:18).

And now what happens to these disciples?

They become changed men.

They were different.

They were strong.

They were bold.

Listen to Peter preaching that Pentecost sermon!

Listen to Peter preaching in the temple after healing the lame beggar at the Beautiful Gate.

"Men of Israel," he says, "Repent and turn again . . . !"

No, Peter is no longer afraid.

And *all* the apostles became fearless preachers of their risen Saviour.

What was their secret?

Peter himself wrote about it in his letter to the churches.

You can find it in I Peter 1:3.

And this is the *Easter secret*.

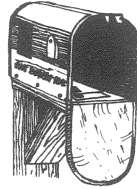
" . . . we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"



HYMN 26

Christ has risen! Hallelujah!
He is our victorious Head.

Sing His praises! Hallelujah!
Christ has risen from the dead.
He has conquered sin and Satan.
Where, O death, is now your sting?
Jesus Christ alone is King!
Christ has risen! Hallelujah!
He is our victorious Head.
Christ has risen from the dead.



FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Brad Bergsma*. Thank you for a very neat letter! I see you are looking forward to playing baseball, Brad. Write again soon.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Alana Bergsma*. Thank you for a pretty letter. Will you share some of your pictures with us sometime, Alana? How did you enjoy Spring break?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Julie Bratcher*. We are happy to have you join us. Yes, please send us the puzzles you would like to share with us. *Clarion* #24 dated Nov. 23, 1990 tells you names to write to get a pen pal, Julie. I hope you have success!

And a big welcome to you, too, *Marjorie Vanderwoerd*. Thank you for the pretty card and the puzzle, too. Do you think it would be fun knowing everything, Marjorie? I hope you had a super Spring break!

Welcome to the Club, *Amy Vanderhorst*. Thank you for the picture. What book are you reading now, Amy? Will you write and tell us about your favourite book? Bye for now.

Welcome to the Club, *Cheryl Jelsma*. Thank you for a neat letter! Maybe you will want a pen pal, too! How did you enjoy Spring break, Cheryl?

Hello, *Earl Van Assen*. Thank you for your note. Did you do something to celebrate your grandparents golden anniversary?

I see you are keeping very busy, *Sarah Vanderzwaag*. Have you had time to do any cross stitch? And how's your skating coming. I'm curious to hear!

So what are you doing on the new computer, *Jessica De-Haas*? I'm glad you're enjoying our puzzles. I think you will have been able to keep busy during Spring break, right, Jessica?

Hello, *Carin Meliefste*. It was good to hear from you again. Thank you for the puzzle. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it. Bye for now, Carin.

I see you have been very busy too, *Trina Jelsma*. Did you enjoy doing your project on drums? Thank you for the puzzles, Trina. I hope you enjoyed your Spring break.

I hope you get a pen pal soon, *Bradley Bartels*! Did you write some of the Busy Beavers whose names are in the #24 *Clarion* of Nov. 23, 1990? Don't be shy! You write first!

Busy Beavers here are two more people who would like a pen pal:

Bradley Bartels (age 9)
RR 1
Dunnville, ON
N1A 2W1

Julie Bratcher (age 7)
5732 North 4th St.
Philadelphia, PA
19120 USA

Quiz Time!

THE DISCIPLES

Fill in each blank with the name of one of the twelve disciples the Lord Jesus chose to help Him in His ministry.

- _____ and _____ were good friends. (John 1:45)
- _____ was a tax collector before becoming a disciple. (Matth. 9:9)
- _____, _____, _____, and _____ left their jobs as fishermen to become disciples. (Matth. 4:18-21)
- _____ betrayed Jesus. (Matth. 27:3)
- The son of Alphaeus was _____. (Matth. 10:3)
- The disciple Lebbaeus was also known as _____. (Matth. 10:3)
- _____ wanted to see the nail prints in Jesus' hands. (John 20:24)
- The name used to differentiate between Simon Peter and the other Simon was _____. (Mark 3:18)
- _____ took the place of Judas after Jesus ascended into heaven. (Acts. 1:26)

MYSTERY CODE

by Busy Beaver Carin Meliefste

8	16	64	18	16	54	18	20	54	16	24	63	18	45
□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| A = 4 x 5 = ? | L = 2 x 4 = ? | R = 5 x 9 = ? |
| E = 6 x 3 = ? | N = 9 x 6 = ? | T = 6 x 4 = ? |
| H = 9 x 7 = ? | O = 4 x 4 = ? | V = 8 x 8 = ? |

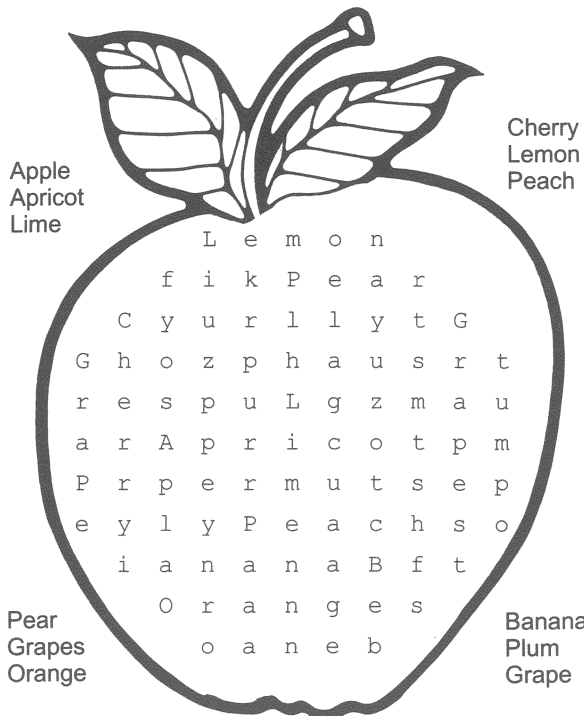
"Happy Birthday" and "Many Happy Returns" to all the Busy Beavers who have an April birthday. Here's hoping you all have a super day celebrating with your family and friends! Above all, may our heavenly Father guide and keep you in His care all the year ahead!

April

Janine VanderHoeven	1	John Witten	16
Clifford Vandersluis	2	Jeremy Vandenbos	17
Brad Bergsma	3	Jessica Beintema	19
Jennifer Van Pykeren	4	Carrie-Lynn Poort	21
Jessica Vandergugten	6	Diana Flokstra	22
Melanie Peters	10	Bonnie Van Laar	22
Alisha Stroop	10	Jim Spoelstra	23
Wendell Huttema	14	Elissa Faber	27
Henry Sikkema	14	Carrie Schuurman	29
Tony Van Oene	14	Marlaine Vander Horst	29

FRUITS

by Busy Beaver Carrie Lynn Schuurman



Apple
Apricot
Lime

Cherry
Lemon
Peach

Pear
Grapes
Orange

Banana
Plum
Grape



FOR YOU TO DO

Remember how long ago monks *illuminated* handwritten books with beautiful borders and letters? They used rich colours and gold leaf. They made lovely designs of flowers and plants or patterns of circles, squares and triangles. Sometimes they made little pictures of Bible scenes!

Make your own colourful border around this Easter song. Your *markers* should make an *excellent* job! (Sing the song to yourself as you are working on the border! Some people call Easter Sunday "Sunday of Joy." But every Sunday is that, right?)

Enjoy doing the puzzles, Busy Beavers! And making your border! Write and tell me how yours turned out, O.K.?

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty