

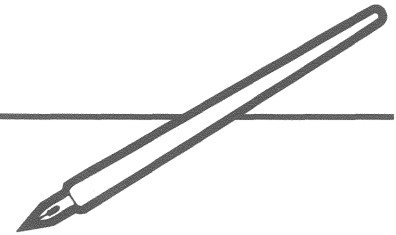
A black and white photograph of a rocky riverbank. In the foreground, several large, smooth boulders are scattered across the riverbed. The water flows between the rocks, creating small rapids. In the background, a dense forest of tall, thin trees lines the banks, extending up a hillside. The overall scene is serene and natural.

Clarion

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How Important are Sports?

In modern society sports tournaments are important social events. Teams of professionals draw thousands of spectators who want to see their heroes win. When amateurs play, because they like the sport, many come to encourage them. They rejoice with the winners, or they comfort the losers. After all, it's not a matter of winning or losing, but how you play the game.

Not only are sports enjoyable, they are also healthy. When, therefore, community, school, or neighbourhood teams are formed by people who like a sport, this can be met with our appreciation. The same is true when the community is a congregation and church teams are formed. The different church teams come together for a tournament, to compete with each other for the trophy and the honour of being the winning team.

Such a church tournament is not only a sports event but also a social gathering. Friends and acquaintances, brothers and sisters, from near and far, meet each other on an occasion like this, perhaps not having seen each other for quite some time. They enjoy meeting again. In this way, such social sports events serve a good, positive purpose.

However, sports must remain a matter of leisure and entertainment. Sports, as everything else in life, must be approached from a biblical point of view. It cannot receive a primary place, but has to remain of secondary importance in our lives. The apostle Paul writes to Timothy: "Train yourself in godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Tim 4:7, 8).

The training which is part of sports can result in both a healthy body and a well-functioning mind, for body and mind form a unity. However, a healthy body and well-functioning mind are not automatically a blessing. The question is: What do we do with our body and mind? or rather, Whom do we serve? If we serve ourselves instead of God, we cannot expect God's blessing on our life. Our involvement in sports becomes idolatry. Only when we serve God in faith, according to what He teaches us in His Word, may we expect His blessing. A godly life is pleasing to God. This applies also to sports. It is within the framework of this godly life that the apostle Paul shows the proper place for the training of the body, including our occupation with sports. Now, Paul writes that such a godly life with and for the Lord, in faith, also has the promise of eternal life. This teaches us that a biblical attitude to sports is important even for our eternal salvation, or rather, for our continuation in the fellowship with God through Christ.


This instruction of the Lord through His apostle Paul clearly shows what has to have priority in our life: not sports, not the training of the body, but godliness and the training in it.

In the practice of daily life, there should not be a conflict between these two training programs; they can easily be combined. This applies also to the social aspect; training in godliness can go together quite well with partaking in the social event of a sports tournament or of any other special occasion. Of course, combining the physical training and its social aspect with the training in godliness needs careful planning. For instance, attending catechism classes, a form of training in godliness, has priority over physical training in a certain sport. Sports on Sunday remains unacceptable. Parents and officebearers in the church keep these rules for themselves and teach them to their children.

Careful planning means that we avoid setting a meeting for training in godliness and a sports event on the same day. We should know from each other when the different events are scheduled. We should not make it difficult for each other. But if a choice must be made, it is clear what should take precedence.

In general, I would like to ask the question whether the things of the Lord still excite us. There is great interest in sports, as well as in other forms of entertainment. But are we also eager to attend meetings where we study God's Word together to receive training in godliness? Do we, as parents, as adults, also as officebearers, give a good example of godliness to our young people? Does seeking first the kingdom of heaven have priority in our life? Do we attend meetings of church and school with dedication and commitment because we are aware of our responsibilities? It is good to hear that youth rallies, league days, conferences, and so on, are generally well attended. But are they important for ALL who are able to attend?

I am thinking here not only of special meetings or events. Also the regular gatherings should be taken into the picture. Do we see our duties and obligations regarding the joint study of God's Word and the confession of the church in our society meetings? Sports events get us out of bed early and make us drive many miles. But do we have the same dedication and involvement when it comes to training in godliness, or does that easily become too much for us?

Let us watch our lifestyle also in this respect. Let godliness and the training in it remain the predominant factor in our life. For it is true: training in godliness is of value in every way. It holds a promise for the present life and for the life to come. Paul added: "For to this end we toil and strive, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe." Training in godliness builds holy lives for the Lord. It builds faithful churches for God. It causes the light of Christ to shine brightly in a dark, ungodly world. 

How does God Reveal Himself in His Works and Word?₂

By C. Van Dam

In the first installment, it was noted that general revelation reveals God, His glory and His handiwork. It was noted that Psalm 19 moves to a climax from God's glory in creation (vv. 1-6) to the glory of the LORD, the covenant God, revealed in His Word (vv. 7-14).

In the first article we left with the question: how does God reveal Himself in nature, in creation and why can one not understand creation properly if one does not know of the God of creation and recreation? In order to make the answers to these questions as concrete as possible (so that we do not get lost in theory), let us concentrate on the matter of "laws of nature" and see how Scripture deals with this. As you know, "laws of nature" are a key element in the modern quest for understanding the world in which we live and from which general revelation is received.

The laws of nature

Let us go back to Psalm 19 again for it has something to say about our subject. This Psalm tells us that "the heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork." How is this done? This is done without words. In quiet majesty the heavens proclaim the glory of God. "There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard" (v. 3). But how do the heavens and the firmament then declare the glory of God? The answer is by doing the task God has given them to do. What is that task? The firmament was created to separate the waters which are under the firmament and the waters which are above the firmament (Gen. 1:6-8; cf. Job 38:8-11). The heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars determine the separation of day from night and are there for signs, for fixed times and for days and years (Gen. 1:14). By doing these things, the heavens and the

heavenly bodies function as a measuring line, a rule, a norm. (The RSV does not follow the Hebrew here and like the Greek translation renders "voice.")

We read in the Hebrew text: "Their line goes out through all the earth." By determining the separation of day and night and doing other functions, the heavens control certain things without saying a word. This measuring line of control goes out over the whole earth and their unspoken words to the end of the earth (Ps. 19:4). So God's glory is shown by the heavens and the heavenly bodies throughout the whole world by their doing their task.¹ Psalm 19 then

goes into detail and gives us an example of what was mentioned, namely, the sun. The sun follows God's decree for it without wavering. It obeys with joy the will of God by coming

forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and there is nothing hid from its heat. (vv. 5-6)

Thus by obeying God, it shows God's glory and majesty by fulfilling the de-



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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Geertsema
Coeditors: J. De Jong, C. Van Dam
and W.W.J. Van Oene

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CLARION
41 Amberly Boulevard
Ancaster, ON, Canada L9G 3R9

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signs of the creator for its place and function.

We touch here on an important point. Everything runs and is established in creation by God's commands. What we call laws of nature are therefore in reality nature obeying God's commands and decrees. This is an important aspect of the comparison in the two parts in Psalm 19. As the sun obeys God's law to creation, so the believer also wants to be God's servant. The glory of God is seen in creation and specifically in creation's and the heaven's obedience to God's decrees for creation; but in a far richer way the glory of God is seen in the written law and specifically in the obedience to that law.² For that reason the Psalm ends with the prayer that David keep the law and be acceptable in God's sight. Although the law is perfect, his obedience to it is not. Forgiveness is needed.

What we find in Psalm 19 is also found elsewhere in Scripture. Creation obeys God's commands. Because God's commands are good, we have a stable universe and world and we speak of laws of nature. But there are no autonomous laws. What we see is creation obeying the will of God as He directs creation as His servant. Indeed, Scripture speaks of God having a cove-

nant with creation. Let us see how all this is found in the Bible.

With respect to God having a covenant with creation we can think of Jeremiah 33 which speaks of God's covenant with the day and with the night so that day and night come at the appointed time (v. 20). This covenant is also paralleled with "the ordinances of heaven and earth" (v. 25), i.e., the obligations heaven and earth have received from God. Literally the word translated ordinances means "that which has been prescribed" (*huggôt*). We find a similar thought in Jeremiah 31, although the word covenant is not expressly mentioned. There the LORD's giving the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, as well as God's stirring up the sea, are called the statutes, the ordinances (*huggôt*). Notice how God continues to be involved in the world He made. We read in Psalm 199:

⁸⁹ For ever O LORD, Thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

⁹⁰ Thy faithfulness endures to all generations; Thou hast established the earth and it stands fast.

⁹¹ They stand this day according to Thine ordinances; for all things are Thy servants.

He gives His orders to the sun, moon, stars, seas and all creation (e.g., Job 38:31-35; Ps. 148:5, 6; Prov. 8:29; Jer. 5:24; cf. also Ps. 65:5-10). He makes the wind His messengers, fire and flame His ministers (Ps. 104:4). God does not give these orders haphazardly. No. He does so as God who is faithful to the promise spoken to Noah. "While the earth remains, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). There is therefore a certain regularity and predictability in nature. But, and this must be clear, it is only predictable because God is faithful and is consistent in His wishes for His creation. What we therefore can conclude as recurring and predictable from a study of nature are strictly speaking not laws of nature, but evidence of the faithfulness of our God to His creation

work as He designed, a work He is still involved in moment by moment, seeing to it that it carries out what He has ordained and commanded.

Because God is in total control at all times, therefore, the "laws of nature" cannot be treated as autonomous and unchanging. Phenomena of creation are God's servants. God has therefore used the heavens in order to have them serve His people in special ways. Think, for example, of how God threw great stones down from heaven on the Amorites and caused the sun to stand still in the sky so that Joshua could achieve a full victory (Josh. 10). Or think of how the stars were involved in the battle against Sisera (Judges 5:20).³ God also used the heavens to punish Israel. Thus, for example, God kept the rain from falling in Israel for three and a half years in the days of Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17).

These examples warn us not to look at the created world as running more or less independently like a clock that has been wound up and is now ticking its time away. We must retain the personal God in our view of creation. He is active there. The order and regularity we see in creation does not reside in the creation but in God who commands the regularity, but who can also command irregularity! Remember, God even used His position as creator to destroy and cleanse the world with a great flood. The separation between land and water set at creation was erased while the deluge lasted. God made a covenant with Noah and every living creature⁴ that this type of destruction would never happen again (Gen. 9:8-11). But, we do know that God will one day make



Photo Courtesy – Annette Leffers

God's wonderful creation
Mt. Lorette Ponds, Kananaskis Country

all things new by the judgment of fire (cf. Hosea 2:18; 2 Peter 3:5-10). But this our God has and can also act in less momentous ways. For example, we are all familiar with wear and tear. Things get older, not newer. Books get tattered, clothes get worn, and shoes get holes. But this is not an absolute law, operating independently. God can also command otherwise. And He did that when Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years. God could say to His people, "your clothes have not worn out upon you and your sandals have not

worn off your feet" (Deut. 29:5). This fact must be taken into consideration by present day science. One can never assume that as things are today they have always been. For instance, if a river bed erodes at a certain rate today, this does not mean it has always done so. There may have been droughts and there may have been much more water. For this reason, to take geology as an example, one can never simply measure layers of sediment on the basis of present rates of deposit and come up with an age. God and His Word must

also be reckoned with and it could very well be that the great deluge of Noachian times may be relevant for the particular geological problem that is being studied.

¹ For the above see N.H. Ridderbos, *De Psalmen* (KV; Kampen: Kok, 1962) I, 210.

² The words used for law are those emphasizing the demands of God. See further N.H. Ridderbos, *Psalmen*, I, 212. Cf. on creation's and man's being servants, Ps. 119:89-96.

³ Also see, e.g., 1 Sam. 7:10; 2 Sam. 22:8-16 [Ps. 18:7-15].



REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

Mothers

God is your Creator. He brought you forth from your mother.

Every year, one of the Sundays in the month of May is designated as Mother's Day.

Do you honour your mother? Do you revere your mother?

The office of mother does not receive the respect the Bible demands. Secular society peers down its arrogant nose at the venerable institution of motherhood. Choosing not to have any children is commonplace. The benefits provided by the "Double-Income/No Kids" philosophy are thought to offer the most desirable lifestyle. "Stay-at-home-moms" are the objects of society's subtle scorn.

Contemporary society is not the first civilization to look down at mothers. Solid evidence indicates that the ancient world considered the mother as inferior to the father. Its literature reflects this. The fifth century B.C. poet Aeschylus in his dramatic production, the *Oresteia*, has Clytemnestra murder her husband Agamemnon. Their son, Orestes, then avenges the death of Agamemnon by killing Clytemnestra. He feels remorse for killing his mother. But then Aeschylus has Appollo defend Orestes by saying:

*The mother is not the parent of the child,
Only the nurse of what she has conceived.*

*The parent is the father, who commits His seed to her, a stranger, to be held
With God's help in safekeeping.*

(*Eumenides*, 658-661)

This assessment of mothers turns them into chattel. If it were the correct analysis, then there would be no reason to esteem mothers.

Aeschylus reflected fifth century B.C. pagan thought. Although in a different way, it did not regard mothers more favourably than contemporary thought. Neither did the Judaism of 700 years later. Rabbi Judah in the second century A.D. said that every Jew should daily utter these three thanksgivings:

Blessed be He who did not make me a Gentile.

Blessed be He who did not make me a woman.

Blessed be He who did not make me an uneducated person.

(*Tosephta Berakhoth*, VII, 18)

The LORD speaks differently than both Aeschylus and Rabbi Judah. The LORD commands us to honour, revere, and obey our fathers and our mothers.

Every Lord's day we hear the fifth commandment in the morning service:



"Honour your father and your mother." You honour someone who is important. If you were in the presence of the Queen, you would be impressed. You would honour her. We are to honour our mothers no less than we would honour our gracious Queen. God has given our mothers a position over us which demands recognition.

In Leviticus 19:3 the LORD said: "Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father." The LORD commands us to have a godly fear and respect for our mothers, to hold them in very high esteem and reverence.

In the O.T. church, motherhood was honoured and desired. So high was the regard for faithful motherhood that the inspired authors often used the con-

cept to express the idea of deepest loving attachment. When the LORD God expressed His deep and profound love for His people, then He compared His love to the tenderness which a mother feels for her child (Isaiah 49:15; 66:13).

In the Bible, we come across faithful mothers. We read of Lois and Eunice. Lois instructed her daughter Eunice in the true faith. Eunice, then, taught her son Timothy the sacred writings and instructed him in the Christian faith (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). The mother of King Lemuel also comes to mind. Proverbs 31 records the wise words she taught her son.

The Proverbs speak repeatedly of a mother's instruction and one's duty to accept it and live by it. This book contains sayings like: "Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching; for they are a fair garland for your head, and pendants for your neck" (1:8, 9); "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching" (6:20).


Proverbs 31:10-31 describes the wonderful task of a mother like no other passage of Scripture. A mother nurtures and clothes her family. She is a rich blessing to her family as she applies her skills and talents. She is enthusiastic about her work. She makes the home a

safe haven for her family. She teaches her children and comforts them.

Not only does her husband praise her; her children rise up and call her blessed. Her children revere her, honour her, accept her instruction, and obey her. Never will they despise her, even when she becomes old (Proverbs 23:22).

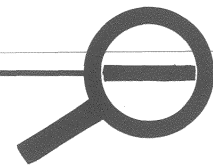
Happy Mother's Day, O Mothers in Israel!

Do you honour your mother? Do you revere your mother?

Remember your Creator, and the mother from whom He brought you forth. 

PRESS REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



Fencing the Lord's Table

In discussions with concerned brothers and sisters in the Christian Reformed Church or with those who have already left, the matter of the Lord's Supper celebration and of the "closed table" repeatedly come up. One argument in defence of an admission to this sacrament which is more restrictive than is usually the case on this continent is that the practice generally found in the Canadian Reformed Churches is really nothing new in the history of Reformed churches. Carefully guarding entry to the table is an old Reformed practice with much historical precedent.

The matter of admission to the Lord's Table also appears to play a role in contacts our Australian sister churches have with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. Recently, the Rev. G. Van Rongen, minister emeritus of the Reformed Church (Liberated) of Steenwijk, the Netherlands, but now living in Western Australia, wrote a historical summary of how Reformed churches have dealt with this issue in the past. This article appeared in *Una Sancta* (14 March 1992) and since it is of interest in our present situation, it is

reprinted here in its entirety. Our title is borrowed from this article as well.

Recently from outside the bond of churches I was asked for some information on the decisions made by the early Reformed synods concerning admission to the Lord's Supper.

Since in our contacts with other churches the matter of the "Open Table" or the "Fencing of the Lord's Table" plays a certain role, it may be useful to present our readers with the text of these decisions.

In our translation they are the following:

1. "Articles of (the Convent of) Wesel," 1568 (an unofficial meeting of Reformed ministers, which made some arrangements for an orderly church life in the Netherlands, to be introduced as soon as the persecutions stopped), Caput VI, De Sacramentis:

No one shall be admitted to the Table of the Lord, unless he has first made profession of his faith and has submitted himself to the discipline of the church.

2. National Synod of Dordrecht, 1578, Acta Caput VI, Of the Doctrine, Sacraments and Ceremonies, Article 11:

No one shall be received into the congregation unless they have first been interrogated by the consistory or by a minister and an elder regarding the summary of the Christian doctrine. And before they attend the Lord's Supper they shall, either in the consistory or in (the) church (service), after the sermon which will be delivered prior to the administration of the Lord's Supper, publicly profess that they hold for the truth (literally: as good) the doctrine received in the congregation and briefly explained by the minister, and desire to persevere in the same with the help of the Lord, and that they will submit themselves to Christian admonition.

3. National Synod of Middelburg 1581, Church Order Article 43:

One shall not grant admission to the Lord's Supper except to him who according to the custom of the congregation which he joins has made profession of the Reformed religion, and also has a testimony of a pious walk, without

which also those from other churches shall not be admitted.

4. National Synod of Middelburg 1581, "Particular Questions' No. 24:

Which is the most suitable way of receiving those who want to participate in the Lord's Supper?

Ans.: They shall be examined by the consistory, or otherwise by a minister together with an elder. After that they shall sincerely testify that they confess the doctrine as being good (= the truth), and that they submit themselves to the ecclesiastical discipline (literally: punishment, "straffe"), either in public after the sermon which is delivered in the congregation as a preparation for the holy supper, or in the consistory.

5. National Synod of The Hague 1586, Church Order Article 54:

As Article 43 of the Church Order of Middelburg 1581.

6. National Synod of Dordrecht 1618/19, Church Order Article 61:

As Article 43 of the Church Order of Middelburg 1581.

It may be clear that our current practice is based on the same two "pillars":

1. Admission to the Lord's Supper is granted to those who accept the "Reformed religion," and

2. It is granted to those who submit themselves to the supervision of the church.

A different practice would mean that the "Reformed religion" and church discipline are not taken seriously.

The rule that guests shall present written proof of their membership-in-good-standing of a sister church is only one of the implications of these fundamental requirements.

Another implication is that our churches insist on an official relationship with other faithful churches, and are not happy with a kind of "unofficial" tie, let alone with a vague recognition. Also in this respect the apostolic rule of 1 Corinthians 14:40 must be obeyed which says: "all things must be done decently and in order." **C**

The Meaning of the Lord's Supper⁴

By N.H. Gootjes

When Jesus Christ, in the institution of the Lord's Supper, spoke of His body and blood, He referred to His death. He would not die for Himself, however, for He had no sins. The central message of the Lord's Supper is that Jesus Christ would die for His people, that they could live in communion with God.

Let us from this vantage point look at the way in which this is represented in the symbolical language of the sacrament.

The bread

Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper at the passover meal. This meal consisted of several elements: the meat of the passover lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, green herbs, mashed fruit and wine. Out of these elements Jesus takes the bread as an element in His new sacrament. Why?

Bread was in Israel the common staple. The Old Testament speaks of the staff of bread (Lev. 26:26, Ezek. 5:16, 14:13), a clear indication that bread was their life support. In the Lord's Prayer it represents the food man daily needs: "Give us this day our daily bread," Matt. 6:11. Jesus Christ uses this daily food in His sacrament. By mak-

ing this bread the symbol of His body He shows that we need His death as our daily food. Our daily life before God depends on Him.

Should this bread be unleavened? Unleavened bread had to be used at the passover meal, we can therefore take it for granted that unleavened bread was used at the institution of the Lord's Supper. However, the New Testament nowhere emphasizes that special bread had to be used. It is true that in the New Testament leaven is used as the symbol of malice and evil (1 Cor. 5:8). But this text is not applied to the bread in the Lord's Supper. Nothing specific is prescribed concerning the bread. Unleavened bread can be used, but leavened bread will do just as well. The Roman Catholics, however, have changed the unleavened bread into paper thin wafers. Reformed theologians have correctly objected to the use of wafers in the Roman Catholic Mass. For there the idea of food has disappeared.¹⁵

Another question that could come up is, what this bread should be made of. Our tradition prefers the use of white bread, but this is not prescribed in Scripture. Neither is there a rule con-

cerning the grains to be used for the bread.

The function of the bread in the Lord's Supper is to show that we need Christ's death as the daily food on which we stay alive.

The breaking of the bread

Several theologians today no longer consider the breaking of the bread as belonging to the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Ridderbos is one of them. He gives the following arguments:

1. The texts about the institution do not support it. The expression "the bread which is broken" is absent in the Gospels; in 1 Cor. 11:24 these words are mentioned in a number of manuscripts, but not in the most important ones.

2. The breaking of bread does not suggest a violent death; it was also not a part of a sacrifice.

3. John 19:36 says that "not a bone of Him shall be broken." The breaking of the bread mentioned in the gospels is no more than the customary act of a father at every meal.¹⁶

This opinion is connected with the fact that, according to Ridderbos, the death of Christ is not as such presented in the Lord's Supper. We have already

said in answer to this that the words “body” and “blood” directly refer to Christ’s death. Within this context, does the breaking of the bread have a specific meaning? Reviewing the evidence we will see that the breaking has a prominent place in the institution.

1. All three gospels mention it. Matthew 26:26 says: “As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples” (see also Mark 14:22, Luke 22:19). If breaking the bread were no more than a customary action, there would be no reason for it to be mentioned so emphatically at that point – between “blessed” and “gave.” All three actions were customary; the father of the family blessed, broke and handed out. Ridderbos would not deny that it has special significance that Christ Himself distributed the elements under His disciples. In the same way it can be maintained that the breaking of bread can have a special meaning in the Lord’s Supper, even though it was done at every meal.

2. The Lord’s Supper can summarizingly be called “the breaking of the bread.” Acts 2:42 says about the congregation of Jerusalem: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Within this context of the liturgy of the church, the “breaking of the bread” must refer to the Lord’s Supper. This name will not have been derived from an unimportant detail, but from a meaningful symbol.

3. In 1 Cor. 11:24 we are confronted with a text critical problem. Does the text say: “This is my body for you,” or: “This is my body broken for you”? The evidence of the manuscripts suggests that the word “broken” is original. We can then explain the omission in a few manuscripts as caused by the concern that this word “broken” would create a contradiction with John 19:36.

Jesus Christ makes the breaking of bread, even though it was a part of every meal, into a meaningful part of the Lord’s Supper. Just as He did with the whole sacrament. Even taking bread and eating it are customary actions, and yet Christ gives important meaning to these actions in the sacrament.

What does the breaking mean within the whole sacrament? According to the gospels Jesus Christ breaks the bread and says that this bread is His (dead) body. The breaking shows that His death will not be the result of natural causes, but that it will be a violent

death. The same applies to 1 Cor. 11:24, where the word “broken” is connected directly with the “body.” The sentence that Christ’s body is “broken for you” means that Christ is put to death to their benefit.

We can conclude that the breaking forms a part of the meaning of the Lord’s Supper. It is a visible representation of the violent death of Jesus Christ. The breaking should be maintained as part of the symbolic actions at the table.

The one bread

In 1 Cor. 10:17 yet another element of the Lord’s Supper is emphasized: the unity. “Because there is one bread we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same bread.” The one bread teaches us the unity of the partakers. But how? A brief survey will show that the interpretation has changed in the course of the centuries.

Already in the *Didache* (an exhortation dating from the first or the beginning of the second century) we find an interpretation of the one bread. In the instructions for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper we read: “As this broken bread was scattered over the mountains and after having been gathered, became one, thus Thy church must be brought together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom.”¹⁷ The comparison goes as follows: the grain of which this bread was made grew on many hills but was brought together to form this one bread. Similarly the church which is now spread over the whole world, must be brought together into the Kingdom. The

unity symbolized here, is eschatological: it will be realized with the final gathering of the church.

In Calvin’s explanation the emphasis is on unity of faith: “As [the bread] is made of many grains so mixed together that one cannot be distinguished from another, so it is fitting that in the same way we too should be joined and bound together by such a great agreement of minds that no sort of disagreement or division can come between us.”¹⁸ Here, too, the call for unity is based on the one bread which is made out of many kernels of grain. But the unity is not something of the future, but something for today, and the unity is threatened by quarrels.

In the Form for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper this call for unity has been expanded to include the wine. I quote the old version of the Form: “For as out of many grains one meal is ground and one bread baked, and out of many berries, pressed together, one wine and drink flows and mixes together, so shall we all who by true faith are incorporated in Christ be all together one body, through brotherly love...and show this toward one another, not only in words but also in deeds.”¹⁹

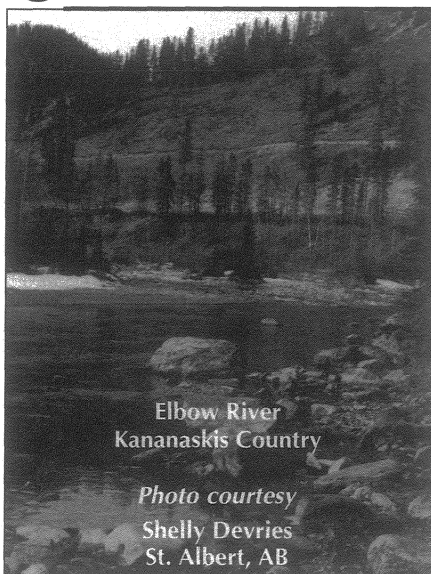
There are, however, several problems connected with these elaborations on 1 Cor. 10:17. When this chapter speaks about the unity, only the bread is mentioned. The inclusion of wine is probably due to the tendency to make a complete parallel between the bread and the wine.

In the second place, the idea that bread consists of ground grain is absent in this text. The text takes its starting point in the result: the one bread, and does not take into consideration how this bread was made.

In the third place, the main problem with this application is a shift in the comparison. The bread, as Jesus Christ has said so clearly, represents His body as it was given up to death. But in this application the comparison suddenly goes into a completely different direction. The bread is no longer Christ, it represents the congregation.

This brings us back to the question how the unity is expressed in 1 Cor. 10:17. A closer look at the text reveals that the unity is expressed in the participation of the one bread. Paul does not say: We *form* one bread, but: We, many are one body, because we all *partake* of the one bread. This bread is the bread of the Lord’s Supper, mentioned in v. 16, the bread which symbolizes Christ’s death for us.

OUR COVER



Elbow River
Kananaskis Country

Photo courtesy
Shelly Devries
St. Albert, AB

The unity of the believers is not expressed in the fact that so many people have been brought together as grains to form one bread. 1 Cor. 10:17 says that they receive the same bread which refers to Christ's broken body. This constitutes their unity. In other words: The unity is based on the fact that they share the same bread and so receive the same benefits of Christ's death.

When we take "bread" in this sense, we have solved the problem of the double meaning of "bread" in the Lord's Supper. There is actually only one meaning of bread: it always refers to Christ's body given over to death. The special emphasis in 1 Cor. 10:17 is that those who participate of this one bread form a unity.

Should this unity be expressed at the Lord's Supper by sharing in one

loaf? There is no need for that. Paul, in 1 Cor. 10 does not emphasize that the Corinthians share one bread, not two or three. He draws their attention to the fact that they share the same bread. It is, therefore, not necessary to place the bread on the table in the form of a loaf.

But I would like to emphasize that Paul says: "Because we partake of one bread, we many are one *body*." This word "body" reminds us of what Paul says in 1 Cor. 12: "For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say..." v. 14ff. "Body" is not an invisible entity or a group of persons who accidentally met. It is a structured community of people who have different gifts and different duties within that community. The church at Corinth is such a body.

Eating of the bread which represents Christ binds different people together as members of one body. Participating in the celebration of the Lord's Supper means that one takes one's place within the community of the church.


¹⁵See e.g. W. à Brakel, *Redelijke godsdienst* (repr. by J.H. Donner; Leiden: Donner, 1882) vol. 1, p. 997.

¹⁶H. Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, p. 429.

¹⁷*Didache*, IX.4. Hymn 46:2 has taken up this very old expression: As grain, once scattered on the hillsides,

Was in the broken bread made one,
So from all lands Thy Church be gathered
Into Thy kingdom by Thy Son.

¹⁸*Institutes* IV, 17, 38.

¹⁹The expression used in the revised Form, is simplified, but essentially the same. 

Outside Instructors

By G.Ph. van Popta

Response to Rev. VanOene

I was asked to make some comments about the letter of the Rev. VanOene. Although I happened to serve as a delegate at both Classis Ontario North, Dec. 14, 1990 and Regional Synod East, Nov. 13-14, 1991, what I write is not meant as an apologia for any broader assembly. What follows are personal remarks and observations for which I alone am responsible.

Rev. VanOene accuses these assemblies of condemning a consistory on the basis of a fallacy. As well, these assemblies are, according to Rev. VanOene, guilty of having lorded it over a church.

First a relatively minor point: Neither assembly "condemned" a consistory. The classis judged an appeal which a member of one of the churches brought against a consistory; the regional synod judged an appeal which the consistory brought against the classis. Judgments were made concerning appeals. There was no condemning of anyone going on at any time.

The Rev. VanOene's main point is that the decisions of these assemblies were based on a fallacy. The fallacy

committed by these assemblies was to consider that the teachers speaking on the series of tapes in question ended up, de facto, being instructors of the catechism students. Is that a fallacy? Or is it a logical inference?

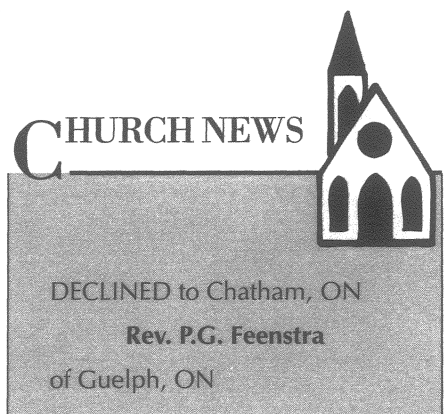
Let me paint a scenario.

Imagine there was a very dynamic school of Christian theology in the city where I live. Its goal was to bring the teachings of the Reformed faith into the Arminian and Neo-Evangelical atmosphere prevailing in our country. It did so at a popular level. The teachers were from a variety of Reformed churches. The lecture series dealt with various aspects of theology. I decided to send my catechism students to take in the lectures as supplementary material. This would be additional to my hour per week with them. But it would be part of the curriculum. They would take in one or two lectures per week.

Would the teachers at that school of theology be functioning as instructors of my students? I would think so. They are providing supplementary instruction, but instruction it is; instructors they are. The instruction the children received there would be more than just

an aid to my teaching. I would probably be challenged, despite my laudable intentions, if I made this part of my catechism curriculum.

I would ask: What is the difference between sending the catechism students to hear an outside instructor live, and bringing him in via electronic media? There is little difference. In the first case the children go to the school and sit in the teacher's lecture theatre; in the other case they plug the same lecture into their Walkmans. The medium is irrelevant.



The assemblies did not perpetrate a fallacy; they made a logical inference. They simply considered that it matters little whether you bring in an outside instructor in the flesh or via electronic media.

Now the question is: Should we bring in outside teachers, whether live, or via audio or video tapes, to instruct the youth of the church? I don't think we should.

There should be a line of continuity between the preaching done on the Lord's day before the whole congregation and the catechism instruction given to the youth of the church. We do not allow "outside ministers" who have not signed the Form of Subscription and bound themselves to the Three Forms of Unity into our pulpits, no matter how Reformed they are. We don't allow them because they are not under the supervision of any of our consistories nor of the consistory of any sister church with whom we have understandings. If we do not allow an "outside minister" to preach to us when we are sitting in church with our children, why should we allow "outside instructors" to teach our children when we, most likely, are not right there with them? This is no brainless rattling of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This is trying to be consistent.

Some suggest that this line of reasoning disallows the use of every teaching aid not published or produced by Canadian Reformed people or organizations. It doesn't. It neither prescribes nor proscribes a certain textbook. It does not disallow the use of any teaching aids whatsoever. What this line of reasoning would consider inappropriate is having the youth of the church instructed on a weekly basis by people who are not responsible to the consistory of the local church. Rev. VanOene will say that I am perpetuating the fallacy perpetrated by the broader assemblies. I would maintain that my conclusions are based upon sound inference.

The Rev. VanOene says that a classis lorded it over a church and that a consistory's right to be "boss in its own house" is no longer recognized. Did a classis lord it over a church? Are the relevant decisions in fact so hierarchical that we should wonder how this is possible in truly Reformed churches? Our resident expert in church polity has pulled out the big guns. We do well to take heed. And yet I am not convinced that a classis did lord it over a church.

One might quibble about whether it is felicitous to speak of a consistory having the right to be "boss in its own house." I thought the elders were stew-

ards, not bosses. But let us not quibble over words. The question is: Have the broader assemblies impinged upon the authority of the local church? No. A judgment was made in an appeal. A member of a church appealed to classis in the matter of catechism curriculum and methodology. This was a matter which could not be finished in the local assembly. Should that classis have said: "Sorry; anything to do with catechism instruction is hands off for a classis"? Should it have declared the appeal inadmissible? I don't think so. Rev. VanOene seems to suggest that it should have. He says that one can only appeal something to do with catechetical instruction if it is a matter of the propagation of doctrinal error. Why? Why can a person not appeal if he feels wronged by a consistory decision regarding curriculum and methodology? Why should a classis not deal with such an appeal and render a judgment?

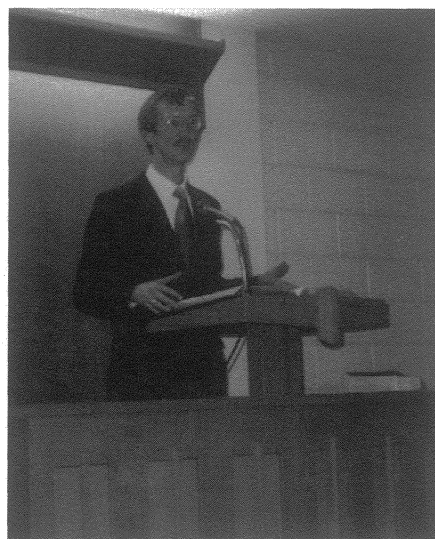
I stand with my teacher of church polity when it comes to hating hierarchical and synodocratic systems of church government which come into violent contact with the autonomy of the local church and rob the consistories of the authority our Lord Jesus Christ vested in them, but I do not see these things happening in this case. **C**

Ordination and Installation of Rev. R. Sietsma

Sunday March 29, 1992 started with a wonderful crisp sunny morning in Southern Ontario. It was a morning that held the promise of a beautiful day. And a beautiful day it was, for on this day we could witness the ordination and installation of a new Missionary as Minister of the Word. The sign in front of the Hamilton church building proudly displayed a message welcoming our new Missionary, Rev. Roel Sietsma. While inside the building, God's people gathered to hear God's Word proclaimed, and to witness the ordination of one of His servants.

Rev. Cl. Stam conducted the worship service using as text the verses 10 and 11 of Isaiah 55. In his introduction

Rev. Stam posed the question, "why two missionaries? does this have any effect on world development? is the time, money and effort well spent?" After 20 years of mission work in Brazil (by the churches at Surrey and Assen) there are still no instituted churches in Brazil. Rev. Stam now points us to God's Word, for mission is a mandate of the Lord Jesus Christ to His church and we are to look to God's Word for guidance and comfort. In Isaiah 55 the exiles of Judah are called to believe the restoration spoken of in chapters 53 and 54. Rev. Stam formulated his theme as follows: The Lord calls His church to faith by assuring the exiles of Judah of the power of His Word. Rev. Stam stresses



that God gets results simply by the power of His Word. We read in verse 10 that the soil and the seed need rain to get results. And so the Word of God is like the spring rain that moistens the dry soil and will not return empty. The Word of God works in a wondrous manner, often unseen by us, inexplicable, but it works because God tells us that it



works. God's Word changes, guides, controls and comforts us, and so we never worry about the effect of God's Word, for it never returns to God empty. This gives certainty and joy in the ministry, for the Word will do all that God wants it to achieve, not necessarily what we want, but always what God wants. Preaching will lead to repentance in some and in the hardening of the hearts in others, the same in Brazil as in Canada. The calling to preach belongs to us, but the outcome belongs to God, and God blesses the preaching according to His good pleasure. Rev. Stam made it clear that also Rev. and Mrs. Sietsma may go to Brazil in faith,

believing in God's promise that His work will prosper. For God assures His people that there will be a harvest. And we of all people should know that God's Word does not return empty.

After the sermon we could witness the ordination and installation of Rev. R. Sietsma. Rev. Snip joined Rev. Stam in the laying on of hands.

In the afternoon service, Rev. Sietsma delivered his inaugural sermon on the text of Romans 10:14, 15. How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. The preacher's feet as such are not important, but their function sure is, as they carry the preacher, and in turn the preacher himself becomes the feet of the gospel. Rev. Sietsma's theme for this sermon was "God wants to rescue people by the Gospel which has to be preached." Jesus came to the world for the world and we have been taught that whoever believes in Him will be saved, and also "How are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?" It becomes clear then that the gospel must be preached. Rev. Sietsma made it clear that when one hears the Gospel proclaimed then one hears Jesus Christ Himself, for the preaching is done by a messenger and a messenger can only bring good news if he is sent out. The messenger cannot announce any message that he has not first received. If the preacher speaks this way, then he speaks the words of Christ. This makes

us firm and convinced in our faith. Rev. Sietsma stressed that the messenger should only preach Christ and Him crucified, we need nothing from the messenger himself. This is possible only because God sends the preacher; God Himself authorizes the preaching. God sends people to make His Gospel well-known, for we are all worthy of condemnation, but everyone who believes and confesses will be saved!

Several delegates were present at this inaugural service of Rev. Sietsma, and when given the opportunity spoke words of wisdom, encouragement and congratulations.

Br. G. Hart spoke on behalf of the churches in Ontario South, while Rev. Snip spoke on behalf of the church at Lincoln. Br. Donker represented Rockway and br. Vandergaag was the delegate from London. Rev. Mulder did not represent anybody but spoke some kind words of encouragement anyway. It was nice to see so many delegates present and it made it seem very real that our missionaries are supported by a broad circle of supporting churches. Not only were many delegates present but many letters were received also, from Dr. Faber, Dr. DeJong, the church at Attercliffe and the church at Chatham and of course from Rev. Sietsma's immediate colleague, Rev. J. Kroeze and family.

Indeed it was a beautiful Sunday.

H. Vanderbrugghen 

PRESS RELEASE



Press Release Ad Hoc Classis Ontario-South, April 22, 1992

1. Brother J. Kooistra of the convening church at Grand Rapids opened classis in a Christian manner. He welcomed all the delegates and guests, especially Rev. and Mrs. de Gelder.

2. Classis was constituted with the following moderamen: chairman - Rev. Agema, vice-chairman - Rev. D. Moes, clerk - Rev. Cl. Stam.

3. With regard to the memorabilia, the chairman noted the ordination and installation of candidate Sietsma; the

fact that Rev. Feenstra had declined a call from the church at Chatham and that Rev. Stam had done the same with a call from the church at Abbotsford.

4. The agenda was adopted with one addition.

5. A colloquium was held with Rev. J. de Gelder, minister-elect of the church at Smithville. This colloquium was blessed with a favourable outcome.

6. After reviewing the appropriate documents, classis approved the call the church at Smithville extended to Rev. de Gelder, upon which Rev. de

Gelder signed the Form for Subscription. The church at Lincoln was appointed to represent Classis Ontario-South at the installation.

7. Question Period was made use of.
8. Christian censure according to Art. 44 C.O. was not needed.

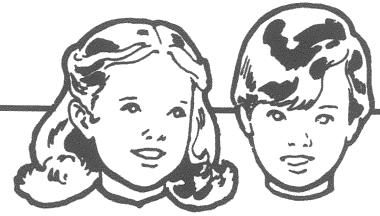
9. The Acts were read and adopted. The Press Release was approved.

10. The chairman closed classis in a Christian manner.

For the Ad Hoc Classis Ontario-South of April 22, 1992

D. Moes, vice-chairman e.t. 

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

Know what I'm doing for Mother's Day?

I'm giving my Mom flowers.

And I'm going to say to her, "Mom, I love you. I'm thankful you taught me to love the Lord. I'm glad you helped me to become the person God wants me to be for Him."

That's what I plan to do.

Now, what did YOU plan for Mother's Day?

How did YOU let your Mom feel your love?

Did you cook for your Mom?

Did you make something for her?

Did you earn a present for her?

Maybe you gave her a promise to help her?

Will you share your Mother's Day story with us Busy Beavers?

Send it to:

My Mom's Day
c/o Busy Beaver Club
Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5



Quiz Time!

MOMS AND SONS

Can you *match* the mothers with their sons?

Some are tricky!

You may use your Bible or a Bible handbook or dictionary. The first one is done for you.

Eve	_____ Seth _____	Mahlon
Bathsheba	_____	Obed
Rebekah	_____	Hezekiah
Hannah	_____	John & James
Ruth	_____	John
Salome	_____	Joab
Abi	_____	Josiah
Sarah	_____	Solomon
Elizabeth	_____	Isaac
Jochebed	_____	Jacob
Naomi	_____	Judah
Zeruiah	_____	Seth
Rachel	_____	Moses
Jedidah	_____	Joseph
Leah	_____	Samuel

"I LOVE SPRING"

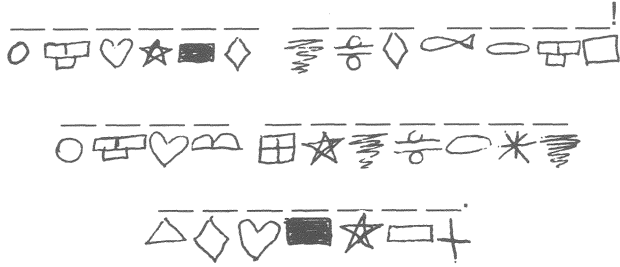
by Busy Beaver Heidi DeHaan



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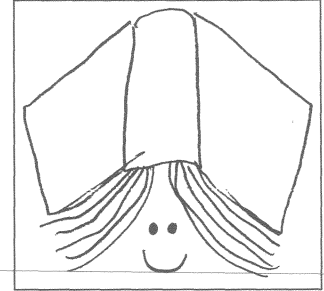
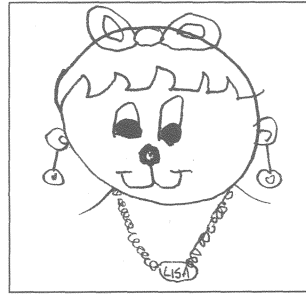
by Busy Beaver Jodie Lodder

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CARTOONS

by Busy Beaver Vickie Aikema



ANIMAL PUZZLE

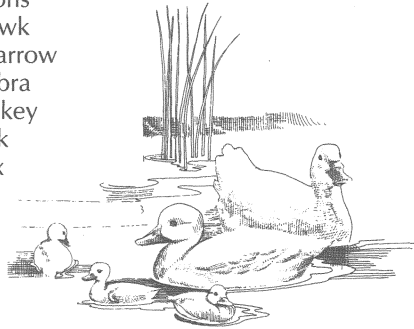
by Busy Beaver Nelena Bergsma



Look for:

- | | |
|----------|---------|
| chicken | rooster |
| owl | pony |
| cat | ducks |
| dog | goat |
| lamb | whale |
| cow | kitten |
| pig | loons |
| elephant | hawk |
| horse | sparrow |
| monkey | zebra |
| calf | turkey |
| bird | yak |
| chick | fox |

O A B E C R O S T E R V
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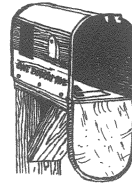
TONGUE TWISTERS

Fun to say

from Busy Beaver Laura Breukelman

1. One slick snake slid up the slippery slide; the other slick snake slid down!
2. Six silly spiders silently sat side by side.
3. I never felt felt that felt like that felt!

FROM THE MAILBOX



Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Hester Barendregt*. We are happy to have you join us. I'm sure your Mom was happy with those pussy willows, Hester! Write again soon and tell me your birthday, please.

Welcome to the Club, *Cindy Beijes*.

Thank you for your letter. Do you have a story you wrote that you will share with the Busy Beavers, Cindy? Bye for now.

What are you planning to do with your stickers, *Marcia Rook*? Did you use your magic markers to make a picture for the picture contest?

Thanks for your pretty letter and the pictures, *Nelena Bergsma*. I see you really have been watching for spring. Write again soon, Nelena.

I'm glad you had such a fun trip during the March break *Trisha Van Woudenberg*. I guess you were glad to see your sister. Thanks for the poem and picture, Trisha.

Hello, *Joanna Vink*. Thank you for a newsy letter and the riddles. I think you really did have fun at Pizza Hut, didn't you, Joanna.

Congratulations on your new sister, *Jodie Lodder*. By now she will be smiling and cooing, and lots of fun to take care of, right? You're lucky to have such a beautiful bird as that pheasant around your house, Jodie!

Thank you for your letter and the pretty picture, *Jessica DeHaas*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you have really enjoyed watching for spring. Bye for now, Jessica.

I see you've been a real Busy Beaver, *Miranda Barendregt*! Thank you for all the "goodies" you sent! I just loved your little book. Write again soon, Miranda.

Busy Beavers, I will be sending rewards to everybody for his/her Mother's Day story and the Moms and Sons quiz. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty

