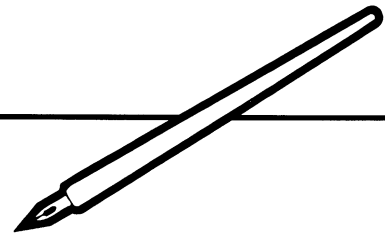




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Labour Under God's Curse

Labour Day 1992 is coming near. The two vacation months of June and July have come to an end. A new season of work is waiting. In North America this new season of work begins with an official holiday to honour the laborers. By their labour the workers try to build their world into a paradise. Idealists aim at making the whole earth a paradise for mankind. The down-to-earth labourer seeks to perfect his own little world. In our society the latter is mostly focussed on. Is not having a good life here on earth as a result of our labour our human right?

God tells us a number of things about labour and paradise in His Word. The first thing is, in the beginning, God made the earth a paradise. It was thus, as a paradise, that He gave it. Man was placed in it with a position of dominion and with the task to maintain and guard it. It must serve man, in order that man might serve his Creator.

God tells us, in the second place, that we rebelled against Him. We listened to the great Serpent, Satan. He suggested to us that we could be like God, knowing (and determining) good and evil, through the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In yourself, he told Eve, you will have the necessary wisdom for ruling and building the earth. Independent of God, he said, we could build our world into a paradise for ourselves with our labours, and within our dominion.

However, our rebellion had the opposite result. It destroyed the paradise which God had made for us. And building our own paradise with our own rebellious "wisdom" was impossible. God cannot and does not allow man to build himself a paradise in his rebellious, sinful ways. Man is never able to build his paradise by following the advice of Satan, the deceiver and murderer from the beginning. God punished man in what was most characteristic for him; his labour, the daily work of his hands: "... cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:17-19). Man's labours for his food would be painful toiling day after day. He would do this in a constant fight against that which threatened to destroy the results of his painful toiling. And the end of all this toiling would be death.


Man has destroyed paradise by his sin. Therefore, his punishment remains with him as long as this world exists. In the book of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher expresses this with his constant "vanity of vanities, all is vanity." And the apostle Paul, in Romans 8:20, writes, "For the creation was subjected to futility" that is, to vanity. Man has to toil in heavy labour without lasting result. Man will never be able to

create a paradise for himself on this earth. His labour will always be in pain and in vain. God's curse rests on his work. Therefore, this work will be a constant toiling in an unceasing fight against powers of destruction. But destruction he cannot avoid. His work will time and again be broken down, however hard he tries to build it up. Sometimes, for a while, it can seem as if man can build up with lasting result. But in the end, it falls to pieces. This is the picture of reality as the Preacher has painted it before our eyes.

If all this is so, what should our attitude be? Should we, living under God's curse, try to make the best of our life for ourselves so that our life is not too bad? Should we try to build, as much as we can, just as everyone else, our own little paradises here on earth, so that we still have a good time during this our hard life? Should we try to escape the curse as much as we can? Is this the way of a true faith in God?

Let us listen to the Preacher. When he comes to the conclusion of his investigation, he gives us this message: "The end of the matter: ...Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil." Adam's lack of fear, and disobedience of God's commandment caused God's curse. The calling under the curse of vanity is: fear God and keep His commandments. Fear God. This means that we accept the punishment of vanity; that we accept, without rebellion, the painfulness and hardship which accompany our daily work, and that our work so easily is broken down. Keep God's commandments. This means that, to the best of our ability, we continue doing our painful daily labour in obedience to God and His labour laws.

God's commandment to man in paradise was: till and keep the garden, and later the whole earth. The curse came because of sin. However, it did not take away the divine calling. The task remained. Thus the commandment is also: no longer listen to Satan when doing your daily labour. Do now not seek your wisdom regarding good and evil in yourself. Seek this wisdom in God's Word. For every deed, also every secret intention behind it, whether good or evil, will be brought into judgment by God. We must not aim at making our own little paradise here on this earth. We must acknowledge God and live our life for Him also in our daily labours as He wants us to do it. This means, through faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord.

When the apostle Paul writes that creation was subjected to vanity, he added the words "in hope." Let us do our work in hope, even though it is so much subjected to vanity. Let us look forward to the new paradise that will also come from God, namely at the return of Christ: the new heaven and the new earth, with the city of God, the new Jerusalem. 

Reformed three times over?₂

By H.J. Boiten

Appropriation of salvation

One of the first subjects to come under discussion after the Liberation was the appropriation of salvation. In the discussion of June 30, 1950 Rev. J.H. Velema expressed concern over (unintentional) armenianism. According to him, the (Lib) Reformed Churches so much identified the Word and the Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is at work when the Word is believed. (Report H.J. de Vries, Acts Hoogveen 1969-1970) It is not only to be seen as an act of man, but also an act of God. Distinction must be made between a general and a special working of the Holy Spirit. Later again the objection was raised that in the (Lib) Reformed Churches the promise and the fulfilling of the promise are identified. There are more such objections.

The deputies of the (Lib) Reformed Churches denied the allegations and repeatedly asked for a judgment appealable to the confessions and the adherence thereto. They tabled a paper on the issue of the appropriation of salvation. They considered that there was no ground for the objections and furthermore, they deemed the differences under discussion not of such a nature that they would justify continued separation. But the Christ. Geref. Churches' deputy Rev. J.H. Velema judged differently. And while the committee members were not ready to make a definitive judgment, the synod of the Christ. Geref. Churches in later years was.

The topic "appropriation of salvation" was again under review after the synod of Spakenburg 1987 of the (Lib) Reformed Churches. This time the discussion focused on the place of the work of the Holy Spirit in the sermons. Must the appropriation of salvation explicitly come to the fore in every sermon, or does the text dictate when this is the case? Must the congregation be addressed in distinct manners or must this distinction only function in the case of Christian discipline? On these points there remained a difference of insight. That different view became also appar-

ent on the question whether the work of the Holy Spirit, when through the Word He regenerates the elect and works faith and repentance in him, is in nature and effectiveness distinct from His work when He comes with His Word to those who do not come to faith.

The Reformed deputies underscore the distinction in effectiveness, the Christ. Geref. deputies emphasize the distinction in the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Again the Reformed deputies pointed at the fundamental agreement on this issue. There are differences, but they remain within the parameters of the confession, and accordingly ought not to remain a church dividing factor.

But the Synod of the Christ. Geref. Churches of Groningen 1989 disagreed. These differences are of such a serious

nature, that the discussions must be continued in order that the differences which are obstacles on the way to unity, may be removed. During the latest round of discussions the Reformed deputies asked again for a clear definition of those serious differences, and for an explanation in what manner precisely those differences blocked the way towards unification. A memorandum on this issue, which had been promised was not forthcoming because the deputies of the Christ. Geref. Churches also had the mandate to reflect on the question of how much tolerance there must be in a church of Reformed persuasion. The deputies wished to report to synod on the result of their reflections, in order to deal with the "serious differences" afterwards. The deputies of



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the (Lib) Reformed Churches had no choice but to acquiesce.

Thus, after 46 years, very little has changed. The assemblies of the Christ. Geref. Churches judge that the differences about the appropriation of salvation is an issue that keeps the churches divided. Now we could say that it is unreasonable that a synod speaks of serious, unity obstructing differences, but meanwhile fails to give a clear indication of what those differences are and why they block the road to unity. And indeed, it is anything but a wholesome, admirable ecclesiastical style. But is it not also very understandable, in view of their inner conditions? Within the Christ. Geref. Churches there are movements that deny each other access to the pulpit and to the Lord's Supper. Mutual denial of access to the pulpit is no small matter. And neither is the fact that the church members can select to attend a congregation of their choice. It is a LAT relationship of sorts, (Living Apart Together): Apart in the worship service and at the Lord's Supper, but together in the church federation on the major assemblies and in several other relationships. The synodical mandate about the degree of tolerance acceptable in a church of Reformed confession is understandable in those circumstances. The synodical objections in respect of the appropriation of salvation find their origin in the movement of "Guard what has been entrusted." In the internal relations the closed pulpits are evidence of that fact. In the relations with the Reformed Churches it is the synod that makes its statements.

It would be improper to disregard this state of affairs. In our official communications we could act as if nothing were going on. But that does not bring us one step closer together. It would also be wrong to legitimize this status quo. Legitimizing this situation will only enhance a rapid growth into the direction of a church of "modalities." A healthy ecclesiastical unity is only possible on the foundation of God's Word and the Forms of Unity. It is only on that basis that the Christ. Geref. Churches and the (Lib) Reformed Churches have a common ground for discussion.

Pluriformity?

During the first discussions after the Liberation the matter of pluriformity of the church was also an issue under review. Neither church wanted to have anything to do with Kuyper's doctrine of pluriformity. But the Christ. Geref. deputies, on the ground of human nature, accepted as basis a "pluriformity necessitate coactus" (compelled

by necessity). And they reproached the Reformed deputies about their ecclesiastical exclusivism.

The Reformed deputies denied that circumstances and present day realities may be ground for a pronouncement on the truth of God.

They also denied that they held out to be the only true church, but at the same time they held up the calling: "Together with us bow under the Lordship of Christ, to let us be gathered by Him in the unity of the faith."

After more than forty years of discussion and correspondence, the positions on this sore point have not changed noticeably either. Also during the latest exchanges after the synod of Groningen 1989 and of Leeuwarden 1990 the Christ. Geref. deputies officially state as objection that the impression is given as though the (Lib) Reformed Churches are the only true churches in the nation, and that everyone would have to join those churches. The Reformed deputies pointed again at the fact that their churches, after the Liberation, had forthwith made contact with the Christ. Geref. Churches as churches of Reformed confession. When then the parties recognize each other as Reformed churches, we may not acquiesce in continued separate existence. It has never been said: "You must join us;" it was always: "Together we must come to unity." That in the meantime the (Lib) Reformed Churches were shaken by the leaving of those who went "outside the federation," and that it became necessary to reject the heresy about the doctrine of the church were factors to make the process more difficult.

Christ. Geref. deputies also perceive as objectionable that the (Lib) Reformed Churches put more emphasis on being true church than on being true church members. The Reformed deputies can do all the assuring they want, that speaking of the church according to the confession does not diminish the need for living in true piety – the Christ. Geref. brothers stick to their objections. These things are not only related to the issue of the appropriation of salvation. They have also to do with the relation of the Christ. Geref. Churches with the Ned. Geref. Church.

Relation with the Nederlands Gereformeerde Churches

The objections of the Christ. Geref. Churches with respect to the appropriation of salvation and the confessional vision of the church have been with us since the earliest date of the discussions. The matter of the relationship

with the Ned. Geref. Churches is of more recent times. In the discussion of April 25, 1962 the deputies of the Christ. Geref. Churches asked some very pointed questions about the publication of Rev. B. Telder's book: *Sterven en dan?* In the foregoing we have already made mention of the departure of the "churches outside the federation."

After that painful separation there have been intensive forms of contact between the Christ. Geref. Churches and the Ned. Geref. Churches.

The successive (Lib) Reformed Churches' Synods of 1978, 1981, and 1984 have appealed to the Christ. Geref. Churches about this matter. The Synod of Spakenburg North 1987 instructed its deputies to persevere with the discussion of this matter. In a memorandum written by Rev. T. Dekker the separation was called both painful and sad. Deviation from the confessions went hand in hand with an independent disregard for the accepted church order and church federation. The accord of ecclesiastical fellowship, the new church order of the Ned. Geref. Churches, presents no assurance for the preservation and the purity of the doctrine. If the Ned. Geref. Churches were to return to the Reformed church order, and so to the maintenance and preservation of the unity of the true faith, contacts, aiming at reunification, would come back in sight.

Remarkably, the deputies of the Christ. Geref. Churches deputies shared the concerns of the deputies of the (Lib) Reformed Churches. But they desired to take into account the historically grown situation. Established contacts cannot be terminated that abruptly. The Synod of Groningen of the Christ. Geref. Churches suspended further proceedings with the Ned. Geref. Churches. Questions regarding the appropriation of salvation remained, but so remained the recognition of the Ned. Geref. Churches as churches who in all respects place themselves on the foundation of the Reformed confession and desire to live accordingly.

This again was a decision of the synod of the Christ. Geref. Churches in which the reality of the different movements and directions within its own churches are taken into account. On the one side there are severe objections; on the other side there is very close cooperation in some places. Furthermore, the Christ. Geref. Churches continually suspends judgment about the Ned. Geref. Churches in its dealings with the (Lib) Reformed Churches. During the latest rounds of discussions the deputies of the Christ. Geref. Churches consid-

ered it premature at this time to come to an appraisal of the situation in the Ned. Geref. Churches. The synod did not reiterate the call to local cooperation. Further discussion is to take place.

Still, the Christ. Geref. Churches will not be able to suspend its judgment on these matters for ever. Not on account of pressure from other churches, but because of the Divine calling to do so, by virtue of the accepted confession of the truth.

Publications of Prof. Dr. B.J. Oosterhoff

In its letter to the Christ. Geref. Churches the (Lib) Reformed Churches' Synod of Arnhem 1981 complained that there was an inadequate disposition of errors. Especially some publications of Prof Dr. B.J. Oosterhoff were mentioned in this respect. The governors of the Theological College have discussed this matter with Prof. Oosterhoff. They reported to the general synod of 1974 that the matter had been discussed and come to a conclusion: Dr. Oosterhoff does not question the authority of the Scriptures, only certain exegeses of certain parts of Scripture. The synod accepted this explanation and considered the matter closed.

Needless to say, the complaint of Synod Arnhem of the (Lib) Reformed Churches has not been refuted thereby. After all, Prof. Oosterhoff's opinion that Genesis 2 and 3 deals with symbolical figures, was never publicly contradicted or denounced as a violation of the confessions. According to the Synod of Arnhem of the (Lib) Reformed Churches, it was not a matter of exegesis; what was at stake was hermeneutics, the authority of the Bible. That this is of great importance has been proven in the history of the Reformed Churches. The decision of Assen 1926 in the matter of Geelkerken has been annulled in the Synodical Reformed Churches. This is evidence enough for the idea that the historicity of the beginning of Genesis remains of great importance also today! And in the Christ. Geref. Churches ministers can freely continue to use the publications of Prof. Oosterhoff, including, for example, in their catechism classes.

Not everybody within the Christ. Geref. Churches will be very happy with these opinions of this instructor of future ministers of the gospel within the Christ. Geref. Churches. And the position taken by the majority, that this matter must now no longer be talked about, will do very little to bring clarity, to reassure, and to bring back wholesome peace.

What now?

Could churches like the (Lib) Reformed Churches and the Christ. Geref. Churches not live side by side with each other, in harmony and peace? Would it not be proper to accept the fact that the Christ. Geref. Churches are not interested in unification? One could regret that fact, but aren't we called to make the best of it? This attractive suggestion has been made more than once. Recently in an interview in *Nederlands Dagblad*. (March 14, 1992). Up to the present the (Lib) Reformed Churches have never chosen for that direction. In the contacts they insisted on holding on to the norm. The very first deputies of the (Lib) Reformed Churches after the Liberation stated at the outset of the discussions: God forbid that we would take for granted a way of life side by side each other in good brotherly harmony and with a broad correspondence. Only one thing is permitted: To bow together under the Lordship of Christ and to let us be gathered by Him in the unity of true faith (Report H.J. de Vries [Acts GS Hooegeveen, 621]). We could also say it differently: "If through one Spirit we adore one Lord, if we confess the same Christian religion, then continued ecclesiastical separation is unacceptable, is sinful."

The Bible never ceases to teach the duty of maintaining the unity of the church: The bringing together, the coming together, of the church as the body of Christ, the house of the Lord, the flock of the Good Shepherd... it never ends.

If then, after more than forty years of discussions and correspondence, the result is nothing better than the suggestion that we take for granted an unlawful ecclesiastical separation then there is every reason to be humble. But take it for granted, we may not.

Should the contact then be terminated? That suggestion is being heard in the (Lib) Reformed Churches as well as in the Christ. Geref. Churches. From within the (Lib) Reformed Churches there is an insistence on clear statements. And that, if they fail to come, the justification for further contact becomes debatable. Within the Christ. Geref. Churches the Rev. Den Butter suggested recently (*Nederlands Dagblad* March 25, 1992) to suspend the contacts, in view of the fact that the different factions within the Christ. Geref. Churches are growing further apart.

The idea to suspend the negotiations comes from the desirability at least temporarily, to live peacefully side by side.


But to stop negotiating, even temporarily, means that the first step in the process towards ecclesiastical unifica-

tion is no longer being taken. If one wishes to climb a stair, one is certain never to reach the top unless the foot is placed on the first step. If one wishes to reach a certain destination, but fails to go on the way, one will be sure never to arrive.

But is there then still room for discussions and are there possibilities of coming closer together? In the first place there is agreement on the purpose of the negotiations, i.e., the long-term purpose. The (Lib) Reformed Churches speak of ecclesiastical unity. The Christ. Geref. Churches speak of removing obstacles on the way towards such a unity. The distance to reach that goal is estimated to be greater by the Christ. Geref. Churches than by the (Lib) Reformed Churches. But there is still a mandate of the Synod of Leeuwarden 1990 of the (Lib) Reformed Churches which has not been fulfilled, namely together to take stock of what unites – and what keeps the churches apart in respect of the desired union on the basis of the Holy Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity. We look forward to the forthcoming Synod of the Christ. Geref. Churches at Apeldoorn. And we express our heartfelt hope that the Christ. Geref. Churches will make decisions which will enable continued negotiations.

Then there are also the local contacts. These have begun at several places. Of course it would be wise at the local scene to take into account what happened at the major assemblies. That means that the synodical discussion points are excellent entries on the agenda for local negotiations. If then in the local discussions there is agreement, either towards the one or towards the other side, then that in turn can affect the process at the major assemblies.

If then on the local scene it has become apparent that there are no further hindrances to ecclesiastical unity, then, with approval of the classes, certain steps could be taken towards cooperation, for example, in the mutual acceptance of attestation, the opening of the Lord's Supper table for each other, the mutual recognition of the Christian censure or discipline, and eventually pulpit exchange, and joint church services.

But it is not that far yet. Still, the road toward ecclesiastical unity is one that must be travelled step after step. And whereas the last paces may well be difficult, the first uncertain steps are apparently no less troublesome. Going on that road is an exercise that takes practice and patience. 

The Second Sermon

By G. VanDooren

Disappeared?

If there is a “second sermon,” then there must be a “first sermon.” If the “first sermon” has disappeared, the bottom has fallen from under the “second sermon.”

A younger generation that grew up with the 1984 edition of *The Book of Praise* may wonder what we are talking about, and – also maybe – they are not the only ones.

First of all, in this edition the Public Prayers, originally at the head of the Liturgical Forms, have been moved to the back, coming even after the not-so-liturgical Form for Weddings (a wedding is a family affair and not an official public worship service).

This article deals with the headings of some of those prayers, plus something.

In the name of the first prayer, *A General Confession of sins and Prayer Before the Sermon*, the words “before the sermon” have been maintained. It would be a good thing if all leaders of the liturgy kept that in mind. Before the sermon a brief prayer, because the so-called “long prayer” comes *after* the sermon according to the Reformed tradition of centuries. That is then the second prayer.

In the 1984 edition the name has become, “*A Prayer for all the Needs of Christendom*.” That is, however, not its original name since the age of the Reformation; this original name, now lost, was,

A Prayer for all the Needs of Christendom, to be Used on the Sabbath After the First Sermon.

The reader notices that two elements of this old heading have been lost in the new one.

The first one, “after the sermon.”

The second one, “after the first sermon.”

Thus the official *terminology*, “the first sermon” has disappeared, and with that also “the second sermon,” and not only from the Forms of Prayers, but also from the Church Order.

Minor matter?

Yes, one may say that: “a minor matter;” why waste paper and ink on it?

But Dr. Huh (now Hur) in his doctoral dissertation tells us that once a church split occurred because of a controversy on the names and place of these two prayers. In some Southern Presbyterian Church the one party, in favour of the long prayer *after* the sermon, accused the other party, who used it *before* the sermon, of subjectivism, pietism and some more of these – isms. To them “storming the mercy-seat” with a long story of all that we think we need, before having given the LORD the opportunity to speak to us and instruct us regarding all our needs, was not right. So they split, and history proved them right.

Indeed, in all the liturgies of the Reformation the order is: brief prayer before the sermon: “open now the mouth of thy servant”...“prepare our hearts to receive thy Word;” and the long prayer after the sermon.

But more has disappeared. One gets the impression that the deletion now to be mentioned, is related to the ones already noted, i.e. no longer “after the sermon” nor “after the *first* sermon.”

“Ordinarily” or “usually?”

It is a good thing that now the Church Order, updated and adjusted to “the Canadian situation” is added to the *Book of Praise*.

“Updating” was a good thing. However, not all change is an improvement. As to the topic of this article, since the Synod of Dort there has always been an article on what is commonly called “Cat-

echism preaching.” In the centuries old Article 68 (now it is Article 52) the churches agreed on the rule that everywhere all ministers should preach the sum of Christian doctrine, given in the Catechism “ordinaarlijk in de namiddagsche predikation” (ordinarily in the afternoon services). From these words comes the name “second sermon.” Indeed, not “the first sermon,” as we found in the name of the “long prayer,” but in the afternoon, that is the second service.

In the present Article 52 one will look in vain for this “afternoon.” It says,

“The consistory shall ensure that as a rule once every Sunday the doctrine of God’s Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism, is proclaimed.”

It is not the same to say “ordinarily in the afternoon” or “as a rule once every Sunday.” One may doubt whether the use of “Sunday” sits well with all who prefer to speak about “the Lord’s Day.” Apart from that, now the “ordinarily” (a good English word) is applied, not to the afternoon, but to “every Sunday.”

Again: a minor matter! Any principle involved?

The answer to that is a reference to what happened in “the forties,” War and Liberation.

A General Synod in those days overstepped its boundary of three years, continued itself “for the benefit and safety of the churches....” In that way it prevented its successor to convene according to the rule of (then) Art. 50 of the Church Order, “ordinarily once every three years.” In the process this synod became a judge in its own cause and a tyrant over the churches.

Not all consistories took that. The consistory of which the present writer was a member, protested to synod that they did not act in accordance with the rule of Art. 50, “ordinarily once every

three years." In the present Article 49 on General Synod one looks in vain for this term "ordinarily." You know the answer? A reference to Art. 68, about Catechism preaching! Synod wrote, among other things, that a consistory does not "sin" against the C.O. when it moves this afternoon preaching to the morning service. "Ordinarily," so said synod, means "usually," but one is free to deviate from this "rule." So it is with this synod in wartime. Usually there is a new synod once every three years; but because we live in difficult times, synod is free to continue its life as long as it is good for the churches.

Of course, this "rule" of Art. 68 about the afternoon services is a bit off centre, one would say. It is not as important as for example Art. 31! But there came the late Dr. Dam, and others with him, and they wrote a booklet about this "ordinarily." With a lot of latin they proved that "ordinarily" is not the same as "usually." "Ordinarily" comes from *ordo*, the rule, in Article 50 as well as in Art. 68. The above mentioned consistory reacted to the answer of that synod by stating that indeed in both articles the "ordinarily" involves a principle. As to the difference between "first sermon" and "afternoon sermon," the underlying principle is that in Scripture the order is always "preach and teach," "pastor and teacher," never the other way around. "Attend to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching, to teaching," 1 Tim. 4:13. The order is, "believe with your heart and confess with your lips."

This is not to say that there is no teaching in the first sermon and no preaching in the second sermon; but the stress is different. In the morning it is: "thus says the LORD;" in the afternoon, "as we confess in the Catechism."

The need for this kind of preaching is sometimes questioned. It may have been a need in those first decades after the Reformation, but is it still necessary after so many decades? Didn't we grow up?

But solid doctrinal knowledge among the membership today is certainly not higher than in the days of the Synod of Dort. It might well be the other way around. One stumbles repeatedly over all kinds of heresies that infiltrate the churches. Infection with humanism, subjectivism, evangelicalism and pentecostalism, not to forget arminianism is rife, because all these

"-isms" agree with our sinful hearts. Dr. M. Lloyd Jones may not have much appreciation for our "Catechism preaching," in his own preaching schedule this great and gifted preacher always made the distinction between proclaiming the Gospel, at the one hand, and expository preaching at the other.

The Catechism ever "the text?"

In his book on the Church Order, *With Common Consent*, the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene writes about how to announce the "Catechism sermon." He rejects two different forms of such announcement.

The one is, that a preacher introduces his "catechism sermon" with the words, "we shall listen to what we confess in Lord's Day..." Our colleague obviously knows that sometimes a minister says, "my text is Lord's Day 12, 32 or 52." Yours truly heard it himself, and according to the testimony of others, that was not the only time.

That is, of course, a very bad thing. It is in direct contradiction to what we confess in Art. 7 of the Confession of Faith. "We may not consider any writings of men, however holy of equal value with the divine Scriptures.

Although no one may blame a minister when he explains the wording of the Catechism, he is not supposed to treat the Catechism text in the same manner as he explains the text for the first sermon.

Catechism preaching should therefore not consist of a running commentary of the Catechism. It is not a text, and we plan to come back to this.

A "fallacy?"

The author of *With Common Consent* mentions another introduction of the second sermon. I quote, "It is a fallacy to say: "this evening we profess our faith as formulated in Lord's Day..."

Is it? "Fallacy" is a heavy word; it borders on deception.

We agree with him that it is not right of the minister to read one or two texts in addition to the Lord's Day, and then preach about those texts. Dr. A. Kuyper already fulminated against this wrong approach and practice.

But it is not a fallacy to use the "we profess" as an element in the announcement of the second sermon. That is, by itself, an interesting topic. The first sermon is introduced with the words, "Thus says the LORD."

In introducing the second sermon, one cannot repeat the same.

One need not worry whether it would take away anything from the glory of our God by letting His people "confess." Is that not also His work, His glory, that we believe with the heart and confess with our lips? One does not promote His glory by making His people "mouth-dead."

There is a lot of confessing in Reformed liturgy! The service even starts with it. Before the LORD blesses His people, we say, "Our help is in the Name of the LORD..." Then there are the prayers: the man in the pulpit is the mouth of the congregation. He does not, should not, recite Bible-texts when he leads the people of God in prayer. And think of the Psalms; of our singing, which is for the greater part, or even in all parts, "confessing." On top, in the second service, we recite or sing the Creed: we confess.

More will be said in the next paragraph, but is behind any protest against confessing elements possibly the old fear, or adage,: "In God's House nothing but God's Word?" Dr. "K.S." once wrote: if you take that literally, then nothing but reading God's Word, and even that in the original languages, (because all translations contain human elements) should be allowed.

But Reformed liturgy is a *covenantal* liturgy. In all covenants there are two parts. The LORD speaks to His people; His people speaks to Him, and to the world.

This "confessing element" may even show up in the theme of the second sermon, as for example in a sermon on Lord's Day 13, which the present writer is preparing right now: "We joyfully confess that through the One and Only Son we have been adopted into the divine household."

No second sermon without professing!

If "we confess" may not have a place in "Catechism preaching," but only "thus says the LORD," then we have to omit a lot from the Catechism! The LORD does not say, "My only comfort in life and death..." Let alone, "I am inclined to all evil." Nor, "we are so weak in ourselves....," nor "we have only a small beginning" – and so on.... The reader knows that similar professing elements sound throughout the whole Catechism, be it in the plural "we" or in the singular "I."

Most surely, we confess all this as having been taught us by the LORD, but we confess it. We ask the questions, "How can we escape this punishment?;" "what does it benefit us?;" "why do we yet have to die?," and so on. The late Rev. M.J.C. Blok gave the proper name to his collection of "Catechism sermons:" *Beleden Beloften* (Confessed Promises). In this name the two parts of the Covenant are expressed: "Beloften," i.e. Promises; but then these promises not as they are proclaimed in the first sermon, but "Beleden," i.e. confessed by God's people.

The Free Reformed Churches have against the preaching in "our" churches, that we do not give sufficient room to "experiential preaching." Well, their criticism is unfounded when the second sermons stay close to the "experiential language" of our beloved Catechism.

Variation in Catechism preaching

Speaking about Catechism preaching is like opening a box of Pandora. All kinds of things pop up, and – as in Pandora's box – at the bottom there is, according to Webster, "hope that is the comfort for all mankind."

Thus, exercising self-control, we conclude with some remarks on *variation* in Catechism preaching, and an attempt to offer some elements for a *definition* of it.

When one has to preach, 40, even 50 and more years "about the Catechism," variation and variety is needed, for the man in the pulpit as well as for the people in the pew. It really won't do to repeat year after year the running commentary on the catechism text, every year the same.

Variation is needed, and variety, in order to bring forth out of the treasure house old things and new.

But how to attain such variation?

It is quite unsettling to discover that three Reformed homiletics in a row, P. Biesterveld, T. Hoekstra and K. Dijk sought this variation in the inventiveness of the preacher. He has, so they taught, to "approach" the Catechism from various points of view, corners, perspectives, and whatever else he can bring in. He may preach the Catechism for a starter in such a "running commentary;" he may also put the stress on the one part of the Lord's Day, next year on the other; he may deliver 3 sermons on Lord's Day 3 (certainly enough material!), or set up a series on Lord's Day 26, 27, on the Bible as the book of baptisms, but from there on he should achieve

"variation" by such different approaches like, from the view of the covenant, or of the only comfort, or of love (a Rev. Feringa saw a chance to write a complete book on the Catechism, with, in all his themes and heads, the concept of "love") and so on....

But variation in catechism preaching does *not* proceed from the inventiveness of the preacher. He has the treasure house of the Scriptures, to which the Catechism points (think of the reference texts, a rich source but not by far complete).

The apostle Paul uses in Ephesians 3:10 a beautiful word, "*polypoikilos*" which may be translated with "many-coloured." He says, "that through the church (! vD) the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places," and we add: to the people of God here on earth.

Catechetical instruction which aims at the public profession of faith, should always consist in two parts: teaching the young members the contents of the Reformed Creeds, and, with those Creeds, teaching them to find their way in the Scriptures. A catechism class where not the Bible is always open, may become a curse, instead of a blessing. We have to watch out that we may not fall into the trap of reasoning that "the fathers" have searched the Scriptures and put what they found in the Bible into an easy summary for our benefit; thus we do not have to do that all over again: we have the Three Forms

of Unity! Catechism teaching will be a joy for both teacher and student, when – with the guide of the Catechism – we together find our way in God's treasure house. In the second sermon always back to the overflowing fountain of the Scriptures; then we can easily "preach catechism" for forty, even for four hundred years, and never be burned out, and always remain fresh and new. Also for "Catechism preachers" the LORD wrote, "they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint," Isaiah 40:31.

Definition: an attempt

Just in case someone fears that the above remarks on the confessing element in the second sermon might endanger the essence of "preaching the Word," here follows an attempt to define the special character of the second sermon.

In the "first sermon" the preacher proclaims, "Thus says the LORD!" The stress is on "preach," although the element of "teach" is never absent.

A "catechism sermon" is a sermon in which the preacher endeavours to help the congregation in a better understanding of her confession, and how to live her confession. The stress is on "teach," although the element of "preach" is never absent.

The only way for the preacher to achieve this goal, is to lead the flock into the green pastures of the Scriptures. The "Lord's Day" is like a cup filled from the stream of living waters; or a guide to the Source.

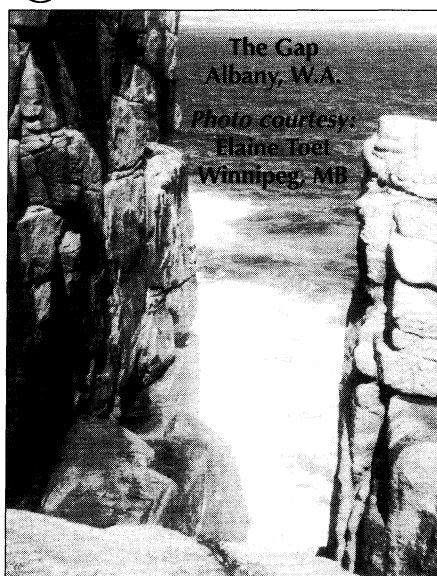
In fulfilling this shepherding task the preacher/teacher lets himself be guided by the selfsame Lord's Day (and other creedal elements pertaining to it) as he has promised with an oath, when he was ordained. This preaching should, therefore, be preceded by the public reading of some Scripture passages relevant to the contents of the Lord's Day. After all, the public reading of Scripture has been, since the Reformation, even since Paul, even since Ezra and farther back, the most-important part of biblical liturgy, of 1 Tim. 4:13.

As Stevenson-Diehl once wrote, "our sermons are no more than footnotes to the divine Word."

P.S.

Where is the balance between "updating" and "outdating?" A philosophical question only? vD

OUR COVER



A Christian Attitude Toward Sport

By J.E. Ludwig

I. Introduction

The pages of *Clarion* have not been silent with respect to this important topic. Recently Prof. J. Geertsema wrote an editorial entitled "How Important are Sports?" (Vol. 41, No. 9, May 8, 1992). He asked some very probing questions as to the dedication we have for "training in godliness." I fully concur with the thrust of his editorial. We should all truly examine our lifestyle in light of the questions he raised. This submission on the same subject is intended to complement what he has written. This is a particularly pointed issue right now seeing that the eyes of all the world are glued on what is happening or has just happened overseas in Barcelona. Olympic fever has gripped our country as millions soak in two or more weeks of nonstop drama, thrills, and athletic excellence. Even amongst Canadian Reformed people this is the hottest news. Names like Mark Tewksbury, Silken Laumann, Mark McKoy, Chris Johnson are bandied about with pride and admiration. These apparently are the real heroes. One steps out of church on Sunday only to hear the excited chatter, especially among the younger members, about the final chapter in the Ben Johnson saga and the number of medals Canadian athletes have won. Especially at such times we ought to step back and ask ourselves what is our perspective, as *Reformed* people, on sport.

This article does not attempt to cover the aspect of "passive sports" – watching them on television. That is a topic in itself which also needs to be addressed but falls outside the scope of this article.¹ The intent here is to define to what extent we may participate in sports, what our attitude toward sport must be. In determining a Christian attitude toward sport one must establish a foundation upon biblical texts if possible, and if not, then upon general principles derived from God's written revelation.

II. The "Spirit of the Age"

Before we can do that we ought to be acutely aware of, and take into consideration the prevailing attitude toward sport of the society in which we live. This attitude will vary throughout history as the politico-economic and other structures change. There is a drastic difference between sport and the perception of it in the feudal, agrarian society of the Middle Ages and in the industrialized, urban society of the twentieth century. More importantly, the prevalent "climate of opinion," the view of life, man, and the world, greatly influences a society's perception of sport.

A. THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

One strand of the fabric of the early Middle Ages, for example, was the flourishing growth of asceticism and monasticism. The world, its values and opportunities were counted (wrongly so) as things to be spurned for the sake of the kingdom of God. All emphasis was placed upon the soul, contemplation, and the life hereafter. Groups of men and women withdrew and isolated themselves from the world, devoting themselves to a life of prayer, fasting, vigil, recitation of Scripture, and constant work. Most games were considered as worldly and evil, as detrimental to the spiritual well-being of a person. One had to deny the leisure and pleasure of this world for the sake of reward in the next. There was a systematic renunciation of all attachments to this world – to the point of contempt for civilization and culture generated outside the monastery. Admittedly, not everyone became a monk or a nun, but the universal spread of monasteries and nunneries speaks volumes about the "spirit of that age." The leaders of the churches themselves became sponsors, organizers, and in the end, products of this movement.

B. THE PRESENT AGE

Twentieth-century society, however, is the antipode, the exact opposite of

the one delineated above. The humanism of the Renaissance, the rationalism and empiricism of the Enlightenment, the romanticism of the mid-eighteenth to nineteenth centuries have all contributed to the present "Zeitgeist." Society has become thoroughly secularized. The massive cathedrals have been replaced by equally massive sky domes, stadia and other multi-million dollar sports complexes that can seat up to 60,000 people. Athleticism has superseded asceticism as the order of the day. The body and physical fitness receive all the attention. "Body language" and "body culture" are the slogans of our society. Instead of monasteries, fitness clubs abound in every major city.

Recently a local newspaper advertising for fitness clothing sported (no pun intended!) the caption: "Physical fitness is no longer a craze, its a lifestyle."² How true indeed! One is bombarded daily with commercials by the press, radio, television, and billboards featuring specials on aerobics classes at "Solid Gold's" and "Nautilus Fitness Clubs." Combined with this is the continual advertisements for "Weight-watchers" and "Nutri-sweet dieting." All this just so that one can feel at home in a society that adores the slim and trim look. The "Get-in-shape-with-Jane Fonda" records, tapes, and videos are the hot items for Canadian and American women. Almost every township boasts a community centre featuring a hockey arena, soccer field(s), baseball diamond(s), tennis and basketball court(s), and a golf course, and practically every school (elementary or secondary) has its own gymnasium. Parents can enter their children in almost any sport, sponsored by the local community, that ranges from "pee-wee" T-ball to "junior A" hockey. On top of that the industrial sport leagues (particularly baseball and hockey) are thriving. The Hamilton based steel company, Dofasco, for example has an

expensive and elaborate sports park for exclusive use by its workers.

Speaking of Hamilton, how many sports teams (amateur and/or professional) does it not have for entertaining its citizens? Without attempting to be exhaustive allow me to only mention the Skyhawks³ (basketball), the Redbirds (baseball), the Tiger Cats (football), the Steelers (soccer)⁴, the Steelhawks (hockey) and most recently the Canucks⁵ (hockey). The latter team made the headlines of the front page in the *The Hamilton Spectator*: "The Canucks are coming!" As if Hamilton has a scarcity of sports teams! To put it in an even broader perspective: Hamilton has all these teams and this city is only a forty-minute drive from Toronto with its Argos, Blizzards, Blue Jays, and so on. And then there's Buffalo.

It is not necessary to physically attend such games to find out exactly what is going on. The press⁶ gives full coverage to them all in a special daily "sports section." Radio and television offer live broadcasting of most professional games. Consider the media attention created by sporting events such as the Olympics, World Series, Super Bowl and Grey Cup, Stanley Cup, and the NBA Final Four Basketball tournament. Today sports fanatics can watch every imaginable game, 24 hours a day, on a recently established cable network: TSN.

Trading cards of various professional sports are now in vogue. These cards bear a picture of the player, his team, number, and life's statistics. Special societies have been formed where cards can be traded and bought. For adult men this has become a hobby, a life-time devotion. They are willing to

spend big money⁷ for a card that will complete an old collection. A rare card can easily cost over \$500.00. Children especially are encouraged to join in this fad. Breakfast cereals have cards of present day players printed on the back of the boxes which can neatly be cut out along the dotted lines. Bags of Hostess potato chips contain mini-cards of NBA players as a bonus.

In light of the above it is not an overstatement to say that we are presently living in the midst of a "sports explosion" or an "athletic boom." Our society is saturated with sport both as spectators and participants. Perhaps Marx's dictum ought to be rephrased to read: "Sport is the opiate of the masses." It is not without reason that secular critics often designate sports as "the new religion." Christianity, it is said, has been replaced with "Sportianity." There is some truth in this rather glib remark. Sociological studies of sport have noted the following features that sport and religion have in common:⁸

- a. "what sport/religion has done for me" testimonials
- b. responsibility vested primarily in men
- c. "saints" – exemplary, departed souls who achieved immortality
- d. scribes to disseminate dogmas
- e. shrines = halls of fame
- f. houses of worship = stadia, arenas, etc.
- g. symbols of the faith = artifacts, autographed baseballs, etc.
- h. a body of formally stated beliefs accepted by faith = rules

Without wanting to push this analogy, it is nevertheless worthwhile to observe that our society has a religious obsession with sports, an overwhelming fascination with the body, the "body image," and physical fitness. It is neces-

sary to keep this in the background as we attempt to come to an understanding of what a Christian's attitude should be toward sports. We live in this world and some of us, particularly the younger generation (though not solely) may very well have become imbibed with its view of sport either consciously or unconsciously, through a process of osmosis as it were. One incident comes to mind that really brings this out. A catechism class (17 years and up) wrote their spring review for the year covering the Lord's Days 36-39. While writing many motioned for the teacher and in a low voice asked: "What is the third commandment?" and "What is the fifth commandment?" Without answering their questions he sat down and about 5 minutes later asked rather nonchalantly: "Does anyone know the current record of the Toronto Blue Jays? Everyone of them promptly and proudly responded: "15 and 5!" Rather sheepishly they resumed writing when the teacher replied: "The baseball season has hardly begun and you know the Jays' record, but you do not know the commandments which you have learned and studied in school, in catechism class, and heard in church every Sunday morning since you were a toddler?"

III. A definition of "Sport"

Before beginning the discussion of a Christian attitude toward sport we must come to an understanding of what sport is. What is a proper definition of sport? To define it is no mean task. It has led one writer to remark: "The meaning of sport, like time, is self-evident until one is asked to define it."⁹ Many theorists have expended much effort in attempting to rid the term "sport" of its ambiguity, yet little consensus as to its meaning and character has been forthcoming. Perhaps the most confusing aspect of sport is its relationship to similar concepts, principally play, games, athletics, and by implication work, leisure, and recreation.

Our dictionary definition of sport leans upon its root or etymological meaning about which linguists and philologists are not one hundred percent certain. "Sport," we are told, is an abbreviation of the Middle English *desport* or *disport*, themselves derivatives of the Old French *desporter*, which literally meant to carry away from work.¹⁰ Others derive it from the same Old French verb but connect it to the jargon of sailors in the Mediterranean Sea: *stave de portu* (to be in the harbour). This "to be in the harbour" meant



relaxation in the form of games and social activities undertaken by the sailors.¹¹ Following this lead the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* gives as first meaning: “amusement, diversion, fun.” Hence the expressions “make sport of,” “be a good sport,” and the adjective “sportive.” These show that the element of “play,” not work, is integral to the word “sport.” This, therefore, excludes the whole category of professional sports,¹² for in this category sport has become a full-time job, with contracts, salaries, strikes and all the other elements of “work.”¹³ It would seem better then to start the definition of sport, not from etymology, but from the work/leisure distinction. If it is not work than sport must belong to leisure, to free time, that is, the time in which one is free from his daily occupation.

Leisure is a broad and neutral term. Professor J. Douma has subdivided leisure into two categories: 1) sleeping, social activities (e.g., visiting, birthday parties), observing the Sabbath; and 2) recreation.¹⁴ One critical remark can be raised concerning this division. Although the Sunday is a day set apart from our daily work for physical relaxation and formal public worship of God, it should not be placed under the rubric “vrijetijdsbesteding” because we are COMMANDED by God to “remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.”¹⁵ When we think of leisure we do not think of something we are commanded to do but of something that we want to do, a hobby, sport, or game that really appeals to our personal interest and desire. For that reason it would be better to distinguish between four basic categories:

- a. the Sunday worship
- b. our daily work
- c. activities necessary for life: sleeping, eating
- d. leisure

Thus four rather than two categories as Douma schematically presents, that is, 1) work and 2) leisure – with the Sunday as a substrate of the latter.¹⁶

Leisure is generally associated with recreational activities.¹⁷ In such activity one “recreates” himself. He refreshes, relaxes, entertains himself either by games involving physical exercise (e.g. baseball) or intellectual ability (e.g. chess) or chance (e.g. Yahtzee), by hobbies (e.g. stamp/coin collecting), by pleasurable work (e.g. landscaping around one’s own house) or simply by physical activities (e.g. hiking, walking). In all these activities the so-called “play element” is what distinguishes them from the daily occupation. This, of course, necessarily begs a definition for “play.” The Dutch historian, Johan

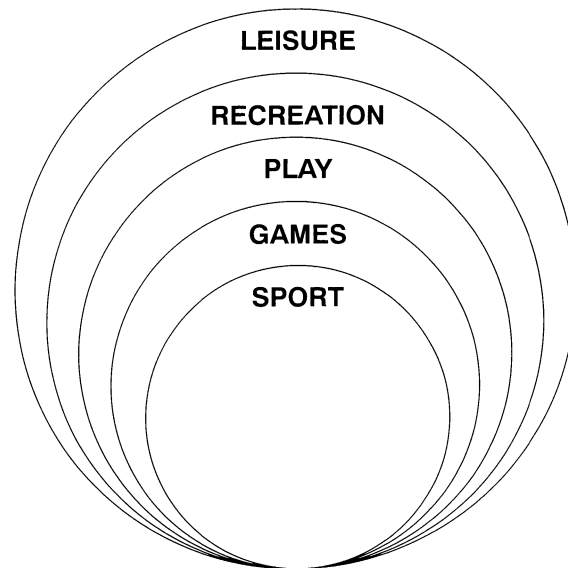
Huizinga (1872-1945) has written a seminal work on this subject entitled: *Homo Ludens: A study of the Play Element in Culture*.¹⁸ His contention is that play is a cultural phenomenon. The drive or instinct for play is, for him, one of the most fundamental elements of human culture.¹⁹ He defines play as a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and the consciousness that it is “different” from “ordinary life.”²⁰

It is not my intention to give a critique of Huizinga’s definition or view of play.²¹ Certain elements in his definition, however, are helpful in ascertaining the meaning of sport. The most important is that play is an activity that is voluntary or free. Someone who is forced to participate in a game against his will does not really want to play. For him the game is at best a waste of his free time and at worst a form of punishment. Secondly, if by “having its aim in itself” Huizinga means that play is an activity that has no material interest, that no financial profit can be gained from it, then we concur.

The scheme, then, that I am suggesting is that of ever-widening relationships: sport is a subset of games, games a subset of play, play a subset of recreation, and recreation a subset of leisure.²² Thus sport includes various ingredients from leisure, recreation, play, as dealt with above, and games. Sport is a subset of games, namely, those involving the movement of the body. This limits the meaning even more, for certain board games (e.g., monopoly), games of chance and intelligence are excluded.²³

Scholars generally are agreed that physical activity is essential to sport. That is where the unanimity stops. C. van den Berg, for example, has an all-inclusive definition of sport: “...all activities of physical movement, whether organized or spontaneous, practised within a context of a contest or not, out of pure pleasure or as a profession.”²⁴ We have already decided to exclude from the definition professional sport since it does not entail leisure, recreation and play, although it has the constituents of a game. We also must leave out physical education. By this is meant the education that is compulsory for elementary and secondary schools. Notice that the voluntary element of play is absent – all the students must participate. Physical education strives to develop all the gifts and abilities by both calisthenics (e.g., sit ups, stride jumps, push ups) and many games, whereas those who participate in sport usually only choose one game which is the game they enjoy the most.²⁵ Sport can be a part of physical education, but not all sport is physical education. The latter is a much wider concept which includes instruction in hygienic care, food, clothing, sexuality etc.²⁶

Van den Berg’s definition also includes all recreational physical activities, such as jogging, hiking, camping, swimming, canoeing, aerobics – activities that one can either do alone, with a family or a group of friends. However, such activities are lacking the components that are integral to “games,” namely, competition, the observation of rules, a specific area for playing, and some form of organizational structure. One who decides to go hiking or walking may do so however, wherever, and whenever he wants. He has no rules to follow. There is no one to compete



against or contest. This does not mean that hiking cannot be relaxing and great fun. Nevertheless, because it lacks the character of a game it belongs to a different sphere than sport.

Douma's definition of sport is more focused and for that reason better. He defines sport as "play [game?] that is exercised in an organizational context, bound to precise rules, and based upon achievement."²⁷ His definition lacks other elements that we have introduced above, for example, it does not specify that these games are ones of bodily movement, or physical exercise. From what has been emphasized to this point, then, sport can be defined as: *The voluntary participation during one's free time in organized, competitive games of vigorous physical activity.*

With this definition certain distinctions still need to be drawn. The degree of organization and competitiveness may differ from one situation to another. Thus, it may be best, with Douma, to differentiate between "recreational sport" and "general contest sports."²⁸ Under the former are included those games in which the organizational and competitive elements are much looser. Examples that come to mind are the family volleyball tournaments held yearly at Guido de Bres highschool or beach volleyball, water polo, table tennis among a group of friends or fellow workers. There is no set schedule, no training, no posting of records, no coaches, no championships with other groups. Just the same people meeting together whenever it best suits their schedules for a few evening hours of fun and competition. Under "general contest sports" is grouped everything from church leagues in baseball and hockey and community run sports to amateur sport.²⁹ In this category schedules are planned for the whole season well in advance, including exhibition games. Teams from various churches or cities compete against each other. Wins and losses are meticulously recorded. Referees and umpires are hired in order to ensure that both teams stick to the rules. Rigorous practices are held at least one night a week, games often twice a week. Players are disciplined (e.g. benched the next game) if they arrive late or miss a game without prior notification. And so the list could go on.

¹Originally submitted to Dr. N.H. Gootjes for an assignment in the Ethics course taught at the Theological College. It has been revised and edited for publication in *Clarion*.

²Insert in the *Hamilton Spectator*, April 22, 1992.

³The World Basketball League has folded as of Aug. 2, 1992 due to financial difficulties.

⁴On hold for this year.

⁵Affiliated with the Vancouver Canucks (NHL). The Hamilton Canucks will be their so-called "farm team" (AHL) that will play at Copps Coliseum. City officials estimate that the acquisition of this team will pump 15 million dollars per year into the local economy. The financial aspect of sport is not dealt with here nor the ethical question concerning the exorbitant wages of professional athletes (e.g., R. Sandberg, the Chicago Cub second baseman who will be paid 7.1 million dollars this year. Only \$43,000 per game!).

⁶Even the *Nederlands Dagblad* has a sports page now in order to compete with other dailies that are attracting the attention of the youth of the church.

⁷Also lucrative for the professional players who receive royalties on the sale of these cards – a contentious issue in the National Hockey League's player strike which was resolved at the beginning of this spring (April).

⁸D.W. Hiebert *Prevailing Protestant Ideology Concerning Sport: A Theoretical Analysis* (Windsor, 1981), pp. 39-40. He in turn draws on H. Edwards, *Sociology of Sport* (Illinois, 1973).

⁹Cited by Hiebert, p. 10.

¹⁰J.W. Keating, "Sportsmanship as a Moral Category" in W.J. Morgan/K.V. Meier, ed. *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport* (Illinois, 1988), p. 243.

¹¹J.C. Van Asch, *Physical Education from a Christian view of Anthropology*. Translated from the Dutch by K.J. Boot (Dordt College, nd.), p. 30.

¹²Which J. Douma terms as "topsport" or "beroepssport" in *Christelijke Ethiek: Capita Selecta III* (Kampen, 1981), p. 5.

¹³This is not to deny that professional sports players can also have fun in the game for which they are paid to play.

¹⁴Douma, p. 4.

¹⁵At the same time we confess that the renewing power of the Holy Spirit and the Word in our hearts is so great that we earnestly desire to obey this command, that we want to observe the Sabbath ordinance.

¹⁶Though in his explanation of the scheme he does acknowledge that the character of the Sunday is very distinct, p. 4-5.

¹⁷For some it is a time period in which they do nothing. It amounts to intellectual and physical inactivity (not sleeping). The modern slang expression, "just veg out" expresses this type of leisure.

¹⁸The edition used in this essay is the Beacon Press publication, 1955 which is based on the German edition of 1944 and the author's own English translation of the text.

¹⁹Huizinga, p. 4.

²⁰Huizinga, p. 28.

²¹See for example, R. Caillois, "The Structure and Classification of Games" in *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport*, pp. 7-15.

²²Adapted from J.W. Loy, et al, *Sport and Social Systems: A Guide to the Analysis, Problems and Literature* (Mass., 1978).

²³This is not to say that intelligence and chance are absent from sports. An intelligent baseball player knows the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing pitcher, and when he faces him he engages in a



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"battle of the wits" as he tries to determine what type of pitch he will be served next. By the same token a soccer player can shoot at the net, by mistake hits a defenceman from the opposing player and the ball ricochets into the net for a goal. The point is these two characteristics are not the predominant factors in sports.

²⁴C. van den Berg, "Jongeren en Sport," *De Reformatie* 64/4 (1988), p. 81.

²⁵G. van der Tas, *De Lichamelijke Opvoeding in het Licht der Schrift* (Goes, 1978), pp. 112ff.

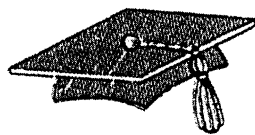
²⁶van Asch, p. 36. Douma also classifies physical education (and sport as a means of rehabilitation) separately, p. 5.

²⁷Douma, p. 5.

²⁸Douma, p. 5.

²⁹This excludes high risk sports such as skydiving, bobsledding, bull-fighting, race car driving etc. These would obviously be out of bounds for any Christian since these sports involve the thrill, the enjoyment of flirting with life-threatening danger. To do so would be sin against the six commandment. The catechism aptly includes in its explanation of this commandment: "Moreover, I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself" (LD 41, Q.A. 105).





Credo Christian High School Graduation

June 22, 1992

It was a lovely warm summer evening. From every direction vehicles pulled into the parking lot at Central Heights Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C. Families large and small, from grandparents to babes in arms, traipsed into the foyer and were led to their seats by the ushers. Out in the parking lot the 1992 Grads gathered, resplendent in their gowns and caps. Up high on a step ladder, the photographer perched precariously, finding the perfect angle for one last group picture.

But it was time to go in...

"Come on everyone; it's almost 7:30."

"Can you believe it? This is it! School's over!"

The Grads ran in single file toward the church building, only slowing down as they reached the foyer. The processional march resounded through the building. Slowly the Grads filed in. The audience rose. Cameras flashed. The Grads took their places on the stage. It was time to begin the evening of celebration.

On behalf of the students, Richard Kobes welcomed the parents, other relatives, friends, and special guests to this happy event.

In his opening remarks, Mr. E. Vanderboom, principal, encouraged the students with the words of Ephesians 6:10-20. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes...." He noted that these images of war may seem incongruous at a time of celebration, a time when the door opens to life beyond graduation; yet they are most fitting. These words of Paul should motivate the students to rely on the Lord as the only source of strength as they encounter many worldly philosophies and ideas beyond the walls of Credo. "Pray at all times." And then step with confidence into the future, assured that in

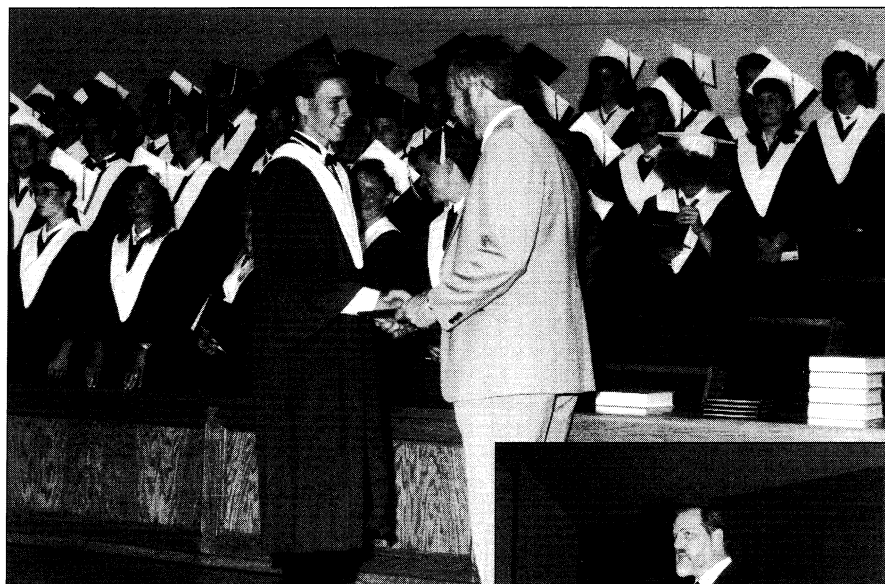
essence the battle has been won for all who find refuge in Him.

Dr. John Vanderstoep addressed the students on behalf of the parents. He acknowledged that graduation is quite an achievement, a milestone worth celebrating. However, he hoped the students realize that they are but partially along the road of a lifetime of learning.

Dr. Vanderstoep illustrated from his own experience how quickly knowledge becomes outdated. In the couple of decades since he graduated, scientists have unravelled the mysteries of DNA and are able to synthesize it. When he was in high school, the first Sputnik went into orbit. In his teenage years a muscle car had no computer. It

has been barely a decade since affordable desk top computers have become available. Now computer studies are an integral part of the curriculum. Sophisticated telecommunication equipment allowed the recent Gulf War directly into our livingrooms. The students' grandparents, as new immigrants, relied on surface mail. Now we pick up the phone to call anywhere in the world. Formerly, we built our houses of wood. Now a wide array of materials is available, each with its unique properties.

These are but a few examples of how advances in knowledge impact on us and our society. These advances will continue and will provide a challenge to this graduating class for the next 30 or



Graduating class and student Cameron Aikema receiving a diploma from principal, Mr. E. Vanderboom

Dr. J. Vanderstoep addresses students on behalf of the parents





Martina Byl receives the Governor General's Bronze Medal for highest academic achievement from Rev. D. Vanderboom

40 years. They will continually need to re-educate themselves to prepare for various responsibilities in society.

However, a second message encompasses the first. Dr. Vanderstoep read an excerpt from Proverbs, chapter 1: 1-7, culminating with the eternal truth that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." This verse is the motto or theme for the book of Proverbs. It is also a challenge to each of the graduates. To gain true knowledge and understanding, they must first of all fear God and know Him. Only then will they be able to discharge their responsibilities. True enough, they must continually equip themselves with knowledge about things around themselves, but paramount is the continual quest for a further and deeper knowledge of the one Lord and God. And only God's Word provides that. It reveals God as the one unchanging, dependable anchor in life. Only knowl-

edge with this as foundation will equip the graduates of 1992 to take their rightful place in society.

Mr. Vanderboom and Mr. Jake VanLaar (chairman) presented the diplomas and board presentations. Mr. Harry Moes (assistant-principal) introduced each student, revealing a wide array of post-graduation plans. Mr. Bob Hellewell and Mr. Jack Marissen read an appropriate Bible text for each of the students before they proceeded across the stage to receive their diplomas. The students responded with an enthusiastic rendition of "Let Us Celebrate."

The ebullient Martina Byl provided the valedictorian address. She revealed that the Graduating Class of 1992 possesses exceptional talent. Many were enrolled in purely academic subjects. Five students are graduating with a 4.0 GPA. Athletically, this class excelled, earning various trophies and even a provincial title. With the inception of a

long-awaited art program, many artistic talents were brought to light. This class enjoyed the musical talents of a number of pianists, organists and flutists. Many participated in Student Council and various committees. And then there were the comics, the entertainers who lightened up classroom routine and bound the whole class together with the common bond of laughter.

Martina was quick to point out that this was no reason for conceit or pride. It was only through the hand of God that these achievements were possible, or even worthwhile. Thanks goes above all to God, who via committed parents and teachers has brought the Grads where they stand this evening. This class has potential, but just as in sports, one wrong move can lead to disaster. Martina reiterated the utmost importance of applying God's Word to every area of the students' lives. Only then will their journey lead to the ultimate goal, Eternal Life with Him.

In closing, Martina noted that this was the last of the "small" graduating classes (40 students). Next year, D. V., there will be 64 Grads. This class enjoyed a real togetherness. Martina expressed appreciation for this and urged her peers to develop their talents for the glory of God.

The students once more demonstrated their musical abilities with a harmonization of "Shine Jesus Shine." As concrete evidence of their support for the new band program, the class donated \$1,000.00, which was gladly accepted by Mr. VanLaar.

Various special guests in the audience had the pleasant task of presenting scholarships and awards. This year's total exceeded \$30,000. Rev. D. Vanderboom, the most senior pastor in the Fraser Valley, presented the Governor General's Bronze Academic Medal to Martina Byl. The evening closed with the lively singing of "Great is Thy Faithfulness" and "Two Nations Side by Side."

The recessionary march resounded. The students returned swiftly up the aisle. Once more cameras flashed. As the Grads reached the foyer an exuberant cheer could be heard. For the next hour heartfelt congratulations, hugs and handshakes were extended to each of the students. And then it was over. With a final cheer the Grads launched their caps into the air. Families piled back into their vehicles and turned homeward – parents and staff alike – all grateful for having safely shepherded another class beyond the walls of Credo.

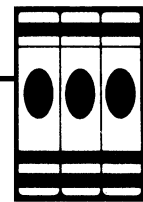
Mrs. Sarah Vandergugten **C**

THE 1992 GRADUATING CLASS OF CREDO CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Chris Admiraal | Lanny Hellewell | Michael Stel |
| Cameron Aikema | Patricia Hoeksema | Mark Stikma |
| Yolanda Arink | David Huttema | Corien Torenvliet |
| Janet Berends | Rick Jagersma | Pearl Vandeburgt |
| Patricia Berends | Heleen Knol | Jeremy Vandergugten |
| Lawrence Bilkes | Richard Kobes | Alisa Vanderhorst |
| Natasja Bontkes | Stephen Koning | Cindy Vanderpol |
| Martina Byl | Jennifer Leyenhorst | Darryl Vanderstoep |
| Shauna deHaas | Harriet Louwerse | Irma VanEllenberg |
| Natalie DeVries | Tessa Ludwig | Tyler VanVliet |
| Patricia deWit | Erica Moesker | Kari Veldman |
| Jennifer Dykstra | Anthony Nienhuis | Kimberly Veldman |
| Harold Flokstra | Hilary Scholtens | |
| Jodie Hellewell | Michael Stam | |

BOOK REVIEW

By G. Nederveen



Chantry, Walter J., *Call the Sabbath a Delight*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust 1991, paperback, 112 pages, \$5.95 U.S.

Recently in preparation for a sermon on Lord's Day 38 I read this booklet on Sabbath keeping. The author makes some very worthwhile remarks on the fourth commandment. His aim is to show that the day of rest is a holy day given by God so that Christians can serve the Lord in a special way one specific day of the week. He speaks out strongly against those who treat the Sunday as special only for a few hours when going to church but who then do whatever they please the rest of the day.

Chantry makes some harsh comments on the professional athlete who is hailed as a "committed Christian." He writes,

You are not impressed with this Christian "commitment." He excuses himself from all public worship of God 26 weeks per year. He and his team mates lead tens of thousands to glue themselves to the TV set on Sunday or to spend the entire day at the stadium...Who has done more to destroy patterns of worship than the professional athletes? (p. 10)

A comment like this gives you a good idea where the author is coming from and where he is heading. In his treatment on the Lord's day the author deals extensively with the aspect of relationships. If you do not cultivate a relationship with others because you are always too busy then in the end the bond disappears. That leads him to ask the question: what is your relationship with God? You would not insult the Most High by being too busy for Him (p.16)!

In the first chapter Walter Chantry investigates the place of the fourth commandment in the Ten Commandments. He points out that the most prominent element of the law is love to God. The first commandment shows that love to God requires exclusive worship of Him and service to Him. The fourth commandment stipulates what time is required to express that love to God (p. 17). Chantry spends ample time in ex-



plaining the holiness of the fourth commandment. Over against dispensationalism and antinomianism he stresses that the Sabbath is a creation ordinance (pp. 52-60).

The strength of this book is that Chantry backs up his case with plenty of Scripture evidence. A refreshing element in a time when most people are more interested in their own opinion than in what Scripture has to teach on the matter.

In the second chapter he looks at the law in light of Isaiah 58:13, 14. In these verses you find that the Sabbath is called a delight. Hence the title of the book.


I found chapter 6 on "Motives for Sabbath-keeping" (pp. 71-81) rather weak. Not that I found myself in disagreement with what he wrote, but what he wrote could equally be said for all the other commands. The whole chapter is devoted to the element of obedience. No one can deny that keeping the Lord's day is a matter of obedience. But so is not stealing and not coveting. Keeping of the whole law requires obedience.

I also have some difficulty with Chantry's distinction of "legal obedience" and "evangelical obedience" (pp. 75, 76). By legal obedience he means outward obedience while evangelical obedience is done out of thankfulness and love. But why call it evangelical obedience? That almost makes it sound as if this obedience is found only among the evangelicals. I find the term

unfortunate especially since the term "evangelical" is used in a variety of shades of meaning. Why not simply call it scriptural obedience since it is based on scriptural norms.

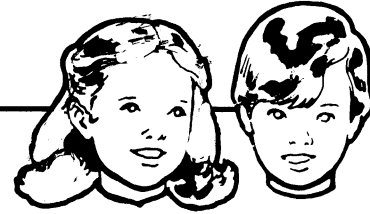
The author also spends a chapter on "Which Day of the Week is the Sabbath?" He mentions such texts as John 20:19, 26; Acts 20:6, 7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and Revelation 1:10 which point to the first day of the week, the Sunday as being the day of rest. It is interesting that he builds a special case on Hebrews 3:7 to 4:11 especially 4:9 (pp. 88-94). He makes a strong case. Though I am not entirely convinced by his explanation, it certainly merits further consideration. I do concur with his final analysis that

It is *Christ* who has once for all entered His rest when He rose victorious from the grave. It is *Christ* who once for all ceased from His own works of redemption as God did from His creation. Christ's ceasing from His works occurred on the first day of the week, just as God's ceasing from His was on the seventh day. Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, has become Lord of the Sabbath...Hence, Sabbath keeping in the New Covenant is on the first day of the week and not on the seventh (pp. 94, 95).

My overall impression of the book is favourable. It is a brief but well written study that gives the reader plenty of insights. The book concludes with two pages of suggested literature for further study on the Sabbath. 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers!

I asked one Busy Beaver, "What do you think of when I say School?"

She said, "Work." She didn't sound very happy. (I didn't feel very happy, either.)

A little bit sadly I thought about:

- the computer
- the videos
- the field trips to parks
- the films, we have at our school.
- Special ways to learn things!

Too bad,, eh Busy Beavers, that we can't ALWAYS, do those special things. Sometimes it's just plain WORK!

Are you **BIG ENOUGH** to make plain work into **SPECIAL** work?

Can you **MEET** the **CHALLENGE**?

Do you *have* what it *takes*?

YES, YOU DO!

You **CAN DO IT!** Trusting in our heavenly Father, asking Him daily for His help, **YOU CAN DO IT!**

DEPEND ON IT!

DEPEND on Him!

Depend on Him to make the ordinary into the **SPECIAL!**
Best wishes, Busy Beavers, for the Lord's blessing on a

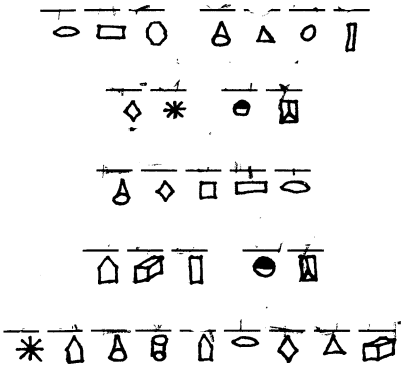
SPECIAL SCHOOL YEAR

Quiz Time!

A SECRET CODE

by Busy Beaver Ashlea Jagt

- A=
- E=
- D=
- G=
- H=
- I=
- L=
- M=
- N=
- O=
- R=
- S=
- T=
- Y=
- V=



SCHOOL DAYS WORDSEARCH

by Busy Beaver Amy Vanderhorst

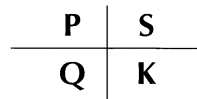
A	Z	B	Y	C	X	D	D	E	S	K	S	U	Look for:
E	C	H	A	L	K	P	T	Q	F	P	G	O	Art
H	O	J	N	K	M	L	L	E	L	M	K	N	blackboard
J	M	O	T	N	I	A	P	I	S	P	H	H	chalk
Q	P	G	R	F	G	Y	M	S	E	T	T	D	classroom
D	U	R	U	C	V	G	D	B	A	W	S	R	computer
M	T	E	A	X	A	R	N	M	P	S	T	A	crayons
O	E	H	G	Z	A	O	E	Q	E	S	U	O	desks
O	R	C	B	N	R	U	I	C	N	E	D	B	eraser
R	S	A	D	T	I	N	R	E	C	C	E	K	friend
S	U	E	N	I	A	D	F	F	I	E	N	C	gym
S	V	T	G	W	H	X	A	I	L	R	T	A	knapsack
A	Y	J	R	E	S	A	R	E	T	K	A	L	math
L	C	R	A	Y	O	N	S	L	R	B	M	B	paint
C	D	N	E	K	C	A	S	P	A	N	K	P	pencil
													playground
													reading
													recess
													student
													teacher
													tests



RECESS GAME

Busy Beaver Vickie Aikema wrote:

"At school in recess, the girls in my class play 'Four Squares.' It looks like this:

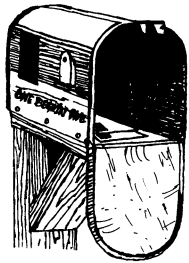
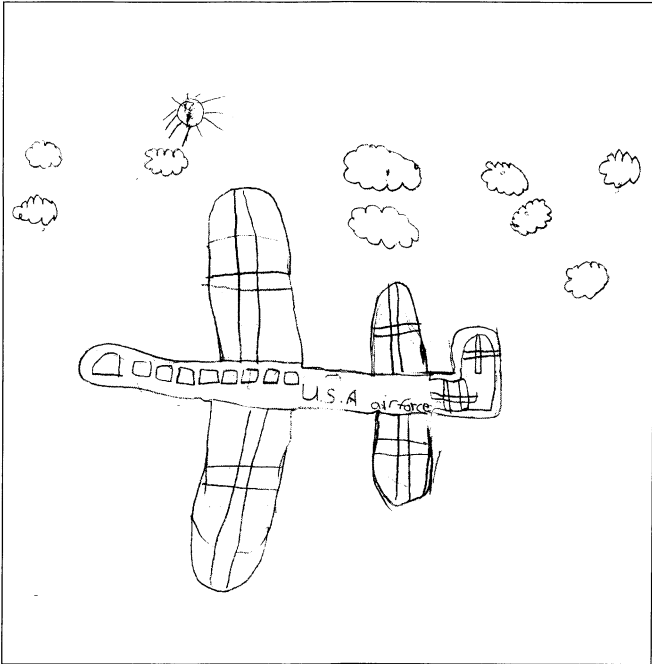


The K stands for King. The Q stands for Queen. The P stands for princess. The S stands for servants. You have 3 people in each square. The king serves by bouncing the ball and then hitting it. The idea is to keep the ball in the squares. Whenever the ball goes out, the person who it was closest to has to go to the bottom of the servants. Everybody moves up one space except the people who are in front of the empty space."

HAVE FUN!

PICTURE

by Busy Beaver Aaron Hordyk



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Kyle Lodder*. Thank you for your letter and the joke and picture! I see you are a real Busy Beaver already. Keep up the good work, Kyle! How was your trip to Ontario?

Are you on a soccer team *Melissa Bremer*? Thank you for your letter and picture. I like that! I hope you'll find a pen pal soon, Melissa. Will you let me know?

I was sorry to hear about your Opa, *Hester Barendregt*. But you are right, he is in a better place even though you will miss him. Thank you for the puzzle, Hester.

Hello, *Ashlea Jagt*. It was good to hear from you again. Thank you for the puzzle. Have you entered our Summer Quiz Contest, Ashlea? There's still time if you hurry!

I see you've been very busy, *Francine van Woudenberg*! Too bad you lost your friend. Are you still writing her, Francine? And have you entered our Summer Quiz Contest? Bye for now.

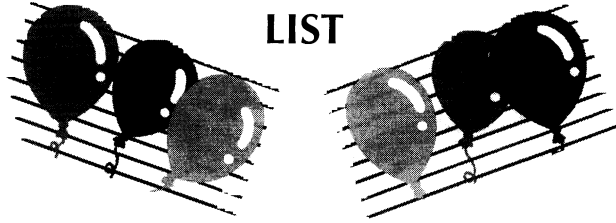
Hello, *Tanya Dehaas*. Thank you for your letter. Have you had a good summer Tanya? How do you feel about going back to school?

How did you enjoy swimming at Clear Lake, *Nelena Bergsma*? Will you write and tell us? Thank you for a very interesting picture, Nelena. I really enjoyed it! You put a lot of work into it. I can see that!

How did you enjoy sleeping in the hay loft, *Carrie Schuurman*? And did you have a good bike ride? Thank you for your story, Carrie, and your letter, too. Write again soon!

Hello, *Julie Bratcher*. It was good to hear from you again. I can see those baby praying mantises surprised you! Did they look a little fierce to you, Julie? I'm glad you had a good

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY LIST



We all join in wishing the following Busy Beavers a very, very happy September birthday!

May the Lord, our heavenly Father bless and keep you in the year ahead.

Here's hoping you have one excellent day celebrating with your family and friends!

Lydia Penninga	1	Cheryl Schouten	12
Jane Schulenberg	2	Marcia Rook	16
Alisa Schouten	3	Gerald Bartels	20
Kyle Lodder	4	Nellie Beukema	22
Michael Hummel	6	Sophie Witten	23
Joanne Jans	11	Breanne Meyer	28
Mary Vandeburgt	11	Cheryl Van Anandel	30

birthday. Have you joined in our Summer Quiz Contest, Julie?

Thank you for your letter *Jaclyn Dehaas*. How has your summer been? Are you looking forward to meeting your friends at school Jaclyn?

Hello, *Cindy Beijes*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for your letter and picture, Cindy. I hope you had a very good summer.

How was your summer, *Jaclyn Bartels*? Did you do lots of swimming? Have you joined in our Summer Quiz Contest? What do you think was the best day of your summer?

Thanks for the puzzle, *Alyssa Lodder*. Have you entered our Quiz Contest, too? You did really well on track and field, Alyssa! Keep up the good work!

Busy Beavers we need more pen pals!

If you want to RECEIVE letters don't be shy! SEND a letter to one (or more) of these addresses you find in *OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE* from time to time.

Annette Schoof (age 16)
28 Dixie Road
Kelmescott
Western Australia 6111

Kyle Lodder (Age 8)
63 Corliss Crescent
Winnipeg, MB
R2C 4S6

Melissa Bremer (Age 7)
1467 Alderson Road
Carlisle, ON
L0R 1H1

Send in your entries to our Quiz Contest soon, Busy Beavers! I'm looking forward to your letters!

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty

