

# Clarion

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# EDITORIAL

By J. Geertsema



## The Risen Christ and Prayer for Harvest and Labour

At the moment of writing this, we have come close to Easter. For us this means the celebration of the feast of the resurrection from death unto life of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also the time in which many congregations have a prayer service for harvest and labour. Many people are not involved in the celebration of Christ's resurrection or in a prayer service for God's blessing over the crops and the work of our hands. For them the risen Christ Jesus does not have a place in life anymore.

According to some dictionaries and encyclopedias, the word Easter might have its origin in *Eostre* or *Eostar*, the German or Teutonic goddess of spring. The Teutonic festival of spring was called *Eostur*. It has been suggested that, when the Christian faith conquered Asia Minor and Europe, the Christian Easter celebration replaced the old pagan *Eostar* festival. Today, in New Age circles, this pagan goddess of spring is brought back and at the occasion of her festival at the spring equinox, about March 21, people are called to worship her with the *Eostar* ritual. In this ritual the worshipers celebrated and celebrate the new life that returns in the spring. With their pagan rituals people meant and mean to secure a good harvest, and thus life, for themselves.

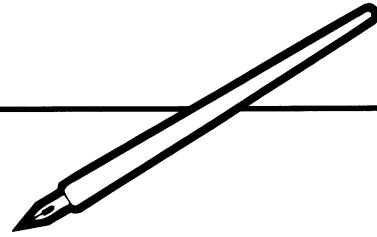
There is a clear contrast here, or rather, the old antithesis. The world, and life on it, does not come from "gods and goddesses." Life is also not something that is our own right. The whole universe, also our life, comes from the only true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He created the world through His Son (Heb. 1:2). For this very reason already life must be considered gift of God through His Son. Therefore, this gift should be used in the service of God.

However, instead of living our life in communion with God and for Him, we, in and with Adam, became rebellious and wanted to live our life for ourselves in our own way. The result was that we forfeited God's gift. The day you sin you shall die.

However, Heb. 1:3 continues to say of the Son that He "upholds the universe by His word of power" and that He "made purification for sins." These are marvelous things. God's Son became a human being, Brother for all God's other sons and daughters whom He wanted to bring to glory. And as man He died for their sins. He made purification for sin by His complete and perfect obedience to the will of the Father. It is this same Son who made purification for sin who also upholds all things, the whole universe, including the life of both believers and unbelievers, of man and animal.

In the light of this gospel, life on earth is to be considered even more God's gift that comes to us through Christ Jesus. Therefore, when one takes life here on earth for oneself and does not receive it in faith from God through Christ, such a life in fact is stolen from its Maker and Redeemer.

Here is the connection between the feast of the resurrection of Christ Jesus and the prayer for God's blessing for harvest and labour. We have no rights whatsoever on life and the things that uphold and support life. We have entirely



forfeited all life through our sins. Only in the Name of the Lord Jesus who died and rose to life and obtained life for the world, we can legitimately pray for the gift of life and for the things that uphold life. It is also clear that when we do not pray for life and for the things that sustain life in the Name of Christ Jesus our living Redeemer, we continue to exist in rebellion before God. In the gospel God reveals to us what this means: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests on him" (John 3:16).

Two remarks must be made with regard to this text. In the first place, eternal life should not be seen in contrast with life on earth. Eternal life is true life that begins here on earth as gift of God through the Holy Spirit. It is that life that is lived in fellowship with Christ, in the covenant of God, through faith. For eternal life that we know, that we believe in and live with God and His Son Jesus Christ whom He has sent, through His Holy Spirit. In the second place, the translation "rests" needs some correction. The Greek verb means more "abides" or "remains." The wrath of God is already there because of sin. That wrath abides there because of a rejection of faith in the Son who obtained life for lost sinners through His death.

In the Name of the risen Christ Jesus, His church prays for God's blessing on harvest and labour. It prays for God's patient goodness in letting food grow for man and animal. The story of Jonah and Nineveh shows that God cares for both.

At the same time, man continues to pollute God's creation: air, land and water; and in that way man is busy to destroy the animals that live in the water and on the land and fly in the air, as well as himself, ruining the life that God gives through His Son; the life that still is there because the Son upholds it by His powerful word. How incomprehensibly great is God's patient and forbearing goodness. It is simply miraculous that God still upholds this world and that He still causes seedtime and harvest to follow each other. He has still no pleasure in the death of the sinner but in his conversion from sin unto life. How intensely great is the need for a continued prayer for God's compassion and patient forbearance from His people on earth, from those who are aware of God's wrath and the wrath of His Christ, as we read about it, for instance, in Psalm 2.

God has appointed His king over Zion. The decree says: "You are My Son, today I have begotten you." God will make the nations the heritage of this (risen, living) King, and the ends of the earth His possession. He will break His enemies "with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." For this reason the call goes out: Serve the Lord with fear and with trembling rejoice in Him; kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish on your way. The promise is that God's blessing, also over harvest and labour, will be for those who take their refuge in Him. ©



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# Parish Development – A New Discipline?<sup>1</sup>

By J. De Jong

*Speech given at the Officebearers' Conference held on March 6, 1993 at Carman, Manitoba. Only slight alterations have been made.*

## Introduction

I have been asked to speak to you about the introduction of a new discipline in the curriculum of the Theological University of our sister churches in the Netherlands. This new discipline is called "Gemeenteopbouw," or "Parish Development" and is taught by Prof. Dr. M. te Velde. He has also been traveling around the country speaking on this topic in many churches. It is clear that he envisions a program of reorganization that he also would like to see implemented in the churches. One should not think that this matter only concerns the theological training. As you can expect, this is a subject directed to the practical task of building the congregation. Therefore, practical implications immediately play a role! So it is of value for us also to pay attention to these developments.

Our purpose will be straightforward. We will first define what is meant by this subject, then outline some of the leading ideas associated with it, including why it is considered to be a necessary complement to the existing program; and finally I will offer some critical remarks with respect to the introduction of this new discipline and its ideas in the churches.

## Definition of "Parish Development"

Let us first begin with the definition of "Gemeenteopbouw." Te Velde defines the actual activity of parish development as follows:

The work that is done in the Christian congregation according to God's command and in His power in order to build it up, and that in a manner in which special attention is

given to the gifts and task of every member of the congregation, to intermediary activities, while further much stress is placed upon a well organized goal, and a directed and carefully planned approach, with use of the insights and methods from the humanities.<sup>1</sup>

In this definition "intermediary activities" are those done by the congregation in its various societies and organizations, i.e. the midpoint between personal initiative and the consistory. Clearly this discipline concerns the question what is the best way to build up the congregation as a whole. It is not denied that God builds His church through His Spirit and Word, i.e. through the preaching of the Word. Yet the New Testament specifies the duty that the members have with regard to their fellow members: they are to build one another up in love.

Taking together the whole of the activities in a congregation, te Velde says that we can distinguish between workers, structures, processes, and forms of activity. Workers are of various kinds: ministers, the caretaker, the appointed visitors, and so on; there are structures, as, for example, the consistory, the committees; there are also different processes, e.g. a growing consciousness for missionary activity; and there are various forms of activity: homevisits, preaching, catechism classes, and so on. What is the goal of "Gemeenteopbouw"? It is to make these four factors integrate in a planned approach, so that the whole runs as smoothly and as productively as possible.

How then does te Velde define the science, or the discipline of "Gemeenteopbouw"? He says: "It is the theological examination on the structures, forms of activity and processes in which the gifts and services in the congregation of Jesus Christ can be made ser-

viceable, in an optimal interrelationship to its internal and external, horizontal and vertical functioning with a view to its perfection in Christ."<sup>2</sup> Thus we have a theological science which focuses on the structures, processes and forms of activity mentioned earlier. It makes use of the "humanities" i.e. sociology, psychology, human resources, and related disciplines to optimize growth and potential in the congregation.

## Background

You may wonder why this discipline is necessary, or why these new activities are being introduced in the churches. This discipline indeed does not just fall out of the sky. For years increased attention has been given to the theme of congregational growth and development in the "mainstream" churches. Te Velde mentions the "Parish Development" movement in England, and the "Church Growth Movement" in the United States.<sup>3</sup> In Germany as well, much attention has been given to what there is called "Gemeindeaufbau." Te Velde isolates five streams of thought on this point, or five distinct models of church growth that have been common place in the broader theological world to date, which for want of space I will not outline here. He is also critical of these five approaches, since they are built on man-centred, and in some cases secular principles. Yet, for him this does not discount the need for attention to this subject from a Reformed point of view. In his view the Reformed approach to church growth concentrates on the following points:

- it will develop a confrontation with other concepts and strategies, e.g. a conciliar or pluralistic approach to church growth;
- it will develop the Reformed principles and criteria for church growth;



- it will provide assistance in regard to the promotion of church life in all its aspects and in concrete situations, i.e. marriage counselling, training for evangelism, and so on. In this area it can also assist in conflict resolution, and in providing different strategies for leadership to a consistory.

Te Velde also explains why this new discipline has had such a rapid development in theological studies in Europe and America. Several influences and leading ideas of our modern era were absorbed by or in other ways influenced this movement. For one thing, life has become more complicated today. This requires that more measures need to be taken to properly regulate all affairs. Also, there is an increased desire to consciously spell out the things we do, even things that perhaps for years have been taken for granted. Also instrumental are the great advances in the fields of psychology and sociology with regard to the analysis of individual and group behaviour. Coupled with this is a growing individualization and democratizing process in societies at large. And, in general, more attention is given to methods and forms of working today than in the past. All of these factors have contributed to the rapid growth of this area in theological studies as a whole.

### Leading ideas

Te Velde then isolates some of the leading ideas of this new school. The first leading thought is *planning*. Just as builders on a job site work with plans developed by an architect, so there must be a blueprint for the growth of the congregation, 1/17. There must be a systematic approach to the organization of the various activities in the congregation, 1/39. Te Velde does not necessarily suggest that things are running poorly. He only asks in what way they can be made to run more *effectively*. The work must be done as efficiently as possible. Hence the increased focus on the structural, methodological and organizational sides of the work in the congregation.

Another key concept in “Gemeenteopbouw” is *functionality*. Te Velde focuses on this idea in dealing with the relationship of the new discipline to all the other disciplines in diaconology. How does “Gemeenteopbouw” fit into the scheme of the diaconological subjects? Te Velde suggests that this subject is concerned with the *functioning*

of the different offices and tasks in the congregation, p. 51. What then are the elements this subject deals with? It deals with things like motivation for activities, cooperation, developing a vision, taking stock or self-analysis, forming a program of action, making and executing plans, evaluating programs, and so on. In other words, “Gemeenteopbouw” deals with the practical side of all the other disciplines. Te Velde also sees a connection with Art. 44 of the Church Order which provides a forum for self-evaluation in the annual church visitation.

### Why is it necessary?

Te Velde sees many risks associated with introducing this new discipline, and its strategies for action in congregational life. Some of these risks are: putting too much stress on man, or on organization; expecting too much in terms of visible growth; catering to the desire for change for its own sake. Yet this does not deter te Velde from asserting that we must go forward. The Bible is clear in the call to hold fast our heritage, but is also clear in its call to continual renewal. In the measure that our society has become more complicated, a more planned approach to congregational affairs should be fostered. There should be ongoing improvement in local congregational life. Hence the need for a specifically Reformed approach to “Gemeenteopbouw.”

The necessity for this new subject arises from the fact that we fall short in matters of organization. Te Velde then gives a number of central problem areas in the church life of our sister churches, the Dutch federation of Reformed churches. Te Velde intimates that these churches show a lack of missionary effort; also, they are wanting in regard to family worship, and they leave a lot to the ministers. At a later point he also adds some additional critical remarks: they do not have a good record on personal evangelism; they are self-sufficient, but not turned to the outside world, and thirdly, the influences of secularism and materialism have not escaped them. Later he says that they are not very systematic and consciously planned in their approach to congregational activities, 1/68.

This summation of the problem areas in the life of the churches forms for te Velde the grounds for introducing a new discipline, and implementing its suggestions in congregational life.

### Using the humanities

Te Velde sees definite risks in using the humanities for “Gemeenteopbouw.” But he insists that there are also possibilities that must be exploited. The danger is that one ignores the divine element in the building of the congregation; the positive aspect is that these sciences can aid in elucidating the human side of the work. Therefore, te Velde insists that a planned and organized approach to congregational affairs is not in conflict with the character of the Christian congregation. Organization is a requirement – a must in an age of new technological advances, 1/59, 65.

### Developing a plan

Te Velde feels that the development of an overall plan is not simply the task of the consistory or elders as the leaders in the congregation. He insists that the whole congregation must be involved. He then outlines the key factors in forming a planned approach to congregational activities: motivation, cooperation, the development of a “total vision,” taking an inventory of gains and losses, forming a concrete plan, and establishing goals and priorities.

Hopefully, at this point the reader will have a clear idea of the direction te Velde is taking. He wants to introduce a more streamlined and well organized approach to church life. In Volume 2 of his book on “Gemeenteopbouw” te Velde outlines ten basic principles required for the development of a “global-plan” for congregational life. We will examine these ten principles next time, and also give our assessment concerning the introduction of this new subject in the training program in Holland.

<sup>1</sup>M. te Velde, *Gemeenteopbouw 1. Doelgericht en samenhangend werken in de christelijke gemeente* (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak, 1992), p. 29. All further page references in the text refer to this book. References to Volume 2 will be specifically indicated in the text as well.

<sup>2</sup>M. te Velde, *Gereformeerde gemeenteopbouw Een eerste koersbepaling voor een nieuw theologisch vak* (Barneveld: De Vuurbaak) 1989, pp. 11, 12.

<sup>3</sup>In 1960 Donald McGavern established the School of World Mission and the Institute of Church Growth with its headquarters at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. The Centre is now led by C.P. Wagner. Te Velde also mentions the Centre for Parish Development in Chicago, presently directed by P.M. Dietterich.

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# What does God reveal in the Grand Canyon?<sup>2</sup>

By N.H. Gootjes

## The CRC Report, 1991

In the previous article we dealt with three individual views in which general revelation and science have been connected. Far more important, however, is the Report of the Committee on Creation and Science, presented to Synod 1991, of the Christian Reformed Church. We can expect this Report to address this question, considering the history behind the appointment of this committee. When Dr. Howard Van Till published his book *The Fourth Day* in 1986, objections were brought in against three professors at Calvin College, Van Till, Cl. Menninga and D. Young. Synod 1988, in dealing with these objections, decided to appoint a study committee to report on this matter to Synod 1991. Part of the mandate was:

To address the relationship between special and general revelation as found in the Belgic Confession Article II and in Report 44 of the Synod of 1972 focusing primarily on the implications for biblical interpretations and the investigation of God's creation.<sup>8</sup>

Synod 1988, therefore, thought that the solution of the problems concerning evolution and creation could be found in the context of general and special revelation.

The committee that was appointed, presented their report to Synod 1991. They agree with synod that these problems should be discussed within the context of general and special revelation.<sup>9</sup> The committee, just like synod, connects their problems concerning the relation of faith and science with Art. 2 of the Belgic Confession.<sup>10</sup> As we have seen, this is incorrect for Art. 2 does not call scientific discoveries concerning creation, revelations. Now we will concentrate on the two main convictions of the section of the Report that deals with general and special revelation.

The first important question concerns the relation between general and special revelation. They should not be taken as independent, as two entities without connection. According to the Report they are interdependent.<sup>11</sup> That means that Scripture sheds light on the interpretation of general revelation, and, on the other hand, that general revelation sheds light on the interpretation of Scripture. This implies that general and special revelation are on the same level. Each may be used to understand the other.

Another passage in the Report, however, indicates that general and special revelation are not on equal footing. General revelation is primary. To prove this the Belgic Confession is appealed to. Article 2 describes general revelation as the "first." General revelation is "first" not only in time, "but also in the sense of being primary, constituting the matrix into which special revelation comes and against the background of which special revelation is understood."<sup>12</sup>

Now a matrix is a mold. Molten pewter is poured in a matrix. After it has cooled down the matrix is opened and out comes a spoon. The matter is still pewter, but the shape has been determined by the matrix. Actually, the matrix determines not only the shape, it also determines how that particular piece of pewter can be used.

In the same way general revelation should function as the matrix for special revelation. Let me give an example, the example does not occur in the Report, but is based on the article of Kromminga. A geologist studies a rock formation in the Grand Canyon and comes to the conclusion that it has been formed 135 million years ago by huge tidal waves. This conclusion should be taken as general revelation. Science has "read" the world, as it is

sometimes expressed. Special revelation should be shaped by this mold. We know from special revelation that God created the world. This statement, therefore, should be explained within the context of the scientific result of general revelation. The outcome is that God created that particular part of the Grand Canyon 135 million years ago by means of great tidal waves. The perimeters of the exegesis of Genesis 1 are determined by the scientists. That is implied in the statement that general revelation is the matrix into which special revelation comes.

The second important line of thought of the Report concerns the question: What does general revelation reveal? The primary answer, says the Report, is that general revelation reveals God. Romans 1:20 and Ps. 19:1,2 are quoted in this connection. That is correct, these texts speak of general revelation concerning God.

Romans 1:19 speaks about "what is known of God," v. 20 says that since the creation of the world God's invisible things,<sup>13</sup> namely His eternal power and deity, have been clearly perceived"; and v. 21 summarizes this as: "although they knew God." And Ps. 19 begins with: "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork." When Art. 2 of the Belgic Confession states: "We know Him (the God of Art. 1) by two means" it is in agreement with these texts.

If the Report had ended here it would not have fulfilled its mandate. It would have to say that the distinction between general and special revelation has nothing to do with the investigation of God's creation. In order to connect general revelation with science the Report makes the transition from "God" to "wisdom of God." This wisdom is embedded in creation itself. General revelation discovers the wisdom of God. A quotation:

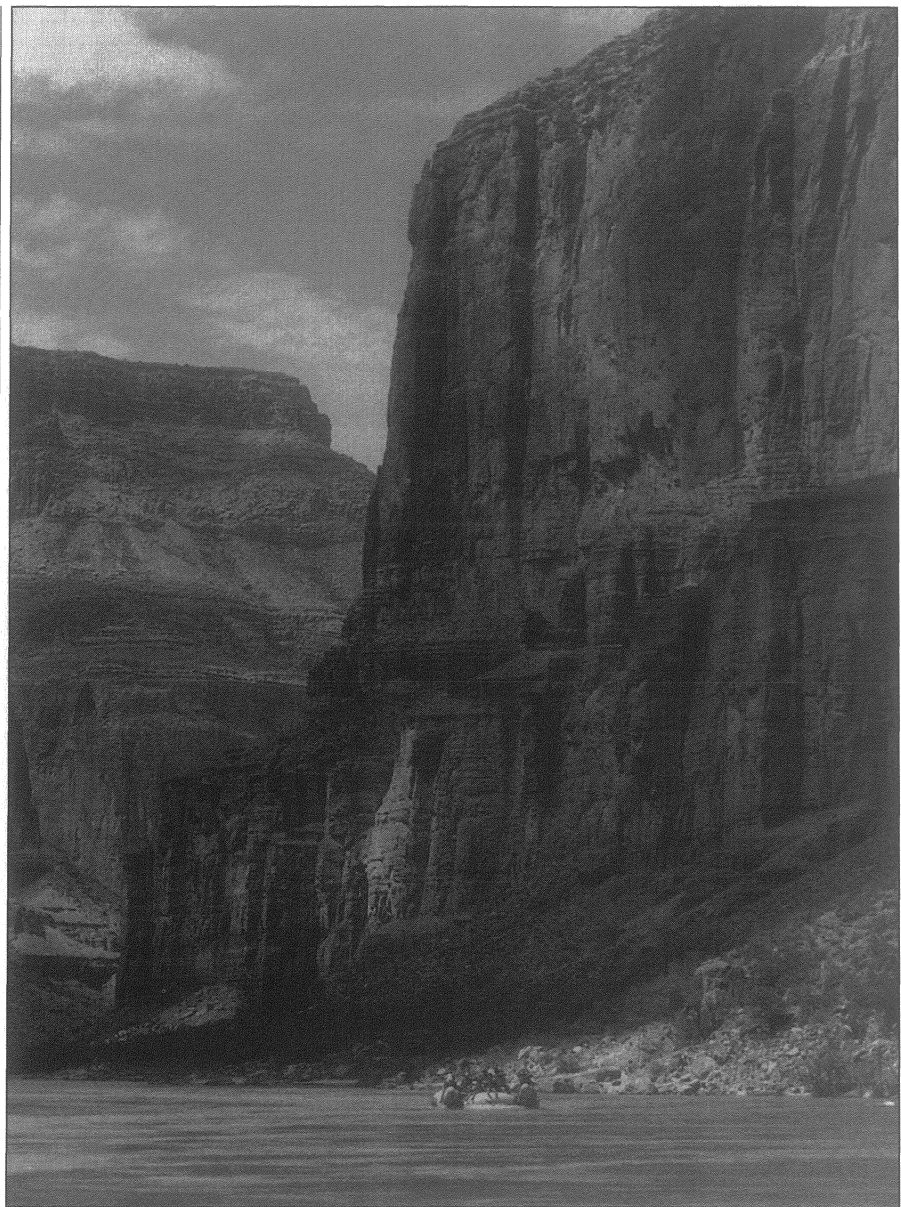
By working with the creation, by sifting it through our fingers, by tilling the ground, by peering through microscopes and telescopes, we learn creation's secrets, we discover its order, how it functions, how it sustains and produces life. In other words, we discover embedded in it the wisdom of God.

That is why, when the farmer has it right, when he discovers contour plowing and proper crop rotation, or when a scientist discovers DNA, that marvellous arrangement of the genetic code that controls the development of organic life, we may say with Isaiah, ". . . his God teaches him, this also comes from the LORD of hosts; He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom."<sup>14</sup>

These sentences show clearly what is meant with the wisdom of God. It is the secrets of the world, the order in the world, how everything functions and produces life. The wisdom of God is not the fact that God is wise, but those things which God in His wisdom has determined. When a farmer discovers crop rotation he discovers something which God has created in this world. When a scientist makes a new discovery he has uncovered another piece of God's wisdom.

We have to realize that suddenly "general revelation" means something completely different. Up to now "general revelation" always indicated something concerning God. This is also the case in Ps. 19 and Rom. 1, as we have seen. The Belgic Confession follows this usage. When general revelation is brought in connection with science, however, it suddenly indicates something about the world. It means the structure of this world, or, to connect it with God, it means how God in His wisdom determined the way of existence for everything. This meaning cannot be proven with the traditional texts for general revelation. A new text has come up in support of this view: Is. 28:23ff.

At this point we have to think out the implication of this meaning of general revelation. Scientific discoveries, if they are correct, have to be given the status of revelations from God. Christians would not want to deny what God has revealed to them. If scientific results present themselves as revelations from God Christians have to accept these on the authority of God. Certain scientific discoveries have to be accepted, not as



*Grand Canyon*

products of human investigation but as divine revelations.

We will have to come back to Is. 28, and ask whether it can support this meaning of "general revelation." First, however, I would like to investigate something else. From the preceding we received the impression that this application of general revelation to the results of science is new. It is certainly not to be found in the Belgic Confession. But the Report gives the impression that it is Reformed to discuss questions of faith and science within the context of general and special revela-

tion. And it substantiates this by invoking the authority of two Reformed scholars of high standing: Calvin and Bavinck.<sup>15</sup> Before we try to find our final answer in Scripture, we will turn to these scholars. Did they accept results of science as knowledge revealed by general revelation?

### **Calvin**

The Report uses in this section on general revelation two places from Calvin's Institutes: some chapters from book I of the *Institutes* and part of a chapter from book II. We will deal with



these separately. The reason for dealing separately with these sections will become clear later.

To begin with book I, Calvin here explains his view on general revelation step by step. Chapter three is the beginning of the discussion. This chapter speaks about the knowledge of God that God has *implanted* in all men. "God Himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of His divine majesty" (I,iii,1).<sup>16</sup> This means that all men know God without any revelation from outside.<sup>17</sup>

Chapter four shows that this part of general revelation fails since it does not lead to true religion. "They do not, therefore, apprehend God as He offers Himself, but imagine Him as they have fashioned Him in their own presumption" (I,iv,1).

Chapter five says that there is yet another way in which God makes Himself known to all men. "Lest anyone, then, be excluded from access to happiness, He (God) not only sowed in men's minds that seed of religion of which we have spoken but revealed Himself and daily discloses Himself in the whole workmanship of the universe" (I,v,1).

From the quotations it can be learned that Calvin in all instances speaks about revelation concerning God. That is consistent with the title of the book: *The knowledge of God the Creator*. This indicates that book I of the *Institutes* cannot be used to support the view that general revelation has anything to do with scientific discoveries concerning the world.

The Report, however, does quote a passage from this section of the *Institutes* in support of its view.

There are innumerable evidences both in heaven and on earth that declare His wonderful wisdom; not only those more recondite matters for the close examination of which astronomy, medicine, and all natural science are intended, but also those which thrust themselves upon the sight of even the most untutored and ignorant persons, so that they cannot open their eyes without being compelled to witness them. Indeed, men who have either quaffed or even tasted the liberal arts penetrate with their aid far more deeply into the secrets of the divine wisdom. (1,v,2)

Does this quotation not say that what scientists discover about the world is divine wisdom?

No, Calvin does not state that scientific discoveries should be taken as revelations concerning the world. He uses them to underline that God is revealed in the scientific discoveries. Someone who is ignorant of scientific discoveries sees more than enough of God's workmanship, says Calvin "to lead him to break forth in admiration of the Artificer." More things become known through scientific investigation: "As God's providence shows itself more explicitly when one observes these, so the mind must rise to a somewhat higher level to look upon His glory." And the last sentence of this section confirms that Calvin means that more knowledge of the world should lead to greater admiration of God: "But yet, as all acknowledge, the human body shows itself to be a composition so ingenious that its Artificer is rightly judged a wonder-worker."

We can conclude that book I of the *Institutes* cannot be used to support the main thesis of the Report that scientific discoveries can have the status of revelation. When Calvin briefly refers to scientific discoveries he emphasizes that scientific discoveries only increase our reasons for praising God.

What about book II? Does this book of the *Institutes* place scientific discoveries in the context of general revelation? The Report gives several quotations<sup>18</sup>; one is enough for our purpose:

But if the Lord has willed that we be helped in physics, dialectic, mathematics, and other like disciplines, by the work and ministry of the ungodly, let us use this assistance. For if we neglect God's gift freely offered in these arts, we ought to suffer just punishment for our sloths. (II,ii,16)<sup>19</sup>

Let us first place this quotation in the proper context. Chapter two as a whole deals with the results of the fall in sin. The title of the chapter already indicates this: Man has now been deprived of freedom of choice and bound over to miserable servitude. Calvin is in the first place interested in the freedom of the will. Some church fathers have a tendency to accept the freedom of the will (II,ii,4), but Calvin rejects their opinion (II,ii,10).

Calvin, then, hastens to prevent a misunderstanding. When he upholds that man has lost the freedom of the will, he does not want to say that man is no more than a beast. That is the reason why, in a chapter about sin, suddenly Calvin speaks about the sciences.

In the sentences quoted before, Calvin acknowledges that secular science can come with good results. Yet I have two objections against using this section from the *Institutes* in the context of science and general revelation.

In the first place, only one side of what Calvin says in this discussion is mentioned. Calvin is far less positive about secular scholarship than shows from the quotation. He begins this section by stating agreement with a statement of Augustine, "that the natural gifts were corrupted in man through sin, but that the supernatural gifts were stripped from him." (II,ii,12) We are dealing here with what in Augustine's terminology are natural gifts. They are corrupted, says Augustine. When Calvin says it in his own words, he says: "Soundness of mind and uprightness of heart were withdrawn . . . This is the corruption of the natural gifts. For even though something of understanding and judgment remains as a residue along with the will, yet we shall not call a mind whole and sound that is both weak and plunged into deep darkness." (II,ii,12)<sup>20</sup>

The Report fails to mention that the gifts are corrupted, according to Calvin. By doing so it presents science in a more positive light than Calvin does.

My second objection is more important in the context of our discussion. Calvin does not speak here of revelation at all, let alone general revelation. When this section from book II of the *Institutes* is used in the context of general revelation, different categories are mixed up. Calvin says that Christians should accept the correct results of science, even if that science is secular. But he does not say that those results are revelations.

Calvin says in book I that God reveals Himself in creation. He says in book II that Christians can accept results of secular science. But no book of Calvin says that scientific results concerning the world should be accepted as general revelations. The Report can use neither book I nor book II of the *Institutes* in support of its view.

<sup>18</sup>See *Acts of Synod 1988* (Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Church in North America, 1988) p. 598. The committee was to consist of representatives from the areas of natural science, philosophy of science and theology.

<sup>19</sup>The mandate places the discussion in the broadest context possible, namely, in the context of the relationship between special and general revelation. While acknowledg-

ing that in the Reformed tradition this is precisely the right context for such a discussion, we suggest also that it makes the mandate rather overwhelming, for the implications of the relationship between general and special revelation must be hammered out ever anew in terms of specific issues." See *Agenda for Synod 1991* (Grand Rapids: Christian Reformed Church in North America, 1991) p. 369. This section from the *Agenda* will be quoted in the following footnotes as "Report."

<sup>10</sup>See Report, p. 371.

<sup>11</sup>Report, p. 370: The Report "begins with the basic confessional and theological affirmations concerning the mutual interdependence of general and special revelation which determine the problem for the Reformed tradition." The Report wants to strengthen its position with a quotation from L. Berkhof's *Manual of Reformed Doctrine*: "Scripture can be fully understood only against the background of God's revelation in nature," p. 372. This quotation, however, cannot be used in the context of the Report. Berkhof does not address here the problem how to harmonize scientific discoveries with the Bible: "Consequently, the Christian now reads God's general revelation with the eye of faith and in the light of His Word, and for that very reason is able to see God's hand in nature and His footsteps in history. He sees God in everything round about him, and is thus led to a proper appreciation of the world," *Manual*

*of Reformed Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 11th printing, 1973) p. 30. The context shows that the words: "God's revelation in nature" do not mean that God reveals something about nature, but that God through nature reveals Himself.

<sup>12</sup>"Report," p. 371. This is obviously a failure if it is meant as an interpretation of Art. 2 of the Belgic Confession. In this article "first" neither implies that general revelation is first in time, nor that it is primary. The article begins: "We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe . . . . Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word . . . ." "First" and "second" are no more than an enumeration as explanation of the "two means."

<sup>13</sup>The RSV translates: "Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made." The Greek text, however, does not speak about "nature," it speaks about God's "invisibles," His invisible things. Synod Winnipeg was correct when it decided to go back to the old text, see *Acts General Synod 1989 of the Canadian Reformed Churches* (Winnipeg: Premier Printing, 1989) Art. 159; p.117.

<sup>14</sup>Report, p. 375.

<sup>15</sup>The third Reformed scholar used in this section of the Report is L. Berkhof. We will not go into his view; but note the misuse of a quotation of Berkhof above, in footnote 11.

<sup>16</sup>Quotations from the Institutes will be taken from J. Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (tr. F.L. Battles; ed. J.T. McNeill; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960)

<sup>17</sup>Calvin uses for this part of what we call "general revelation" names such as "seed of religion" and "sense of divinity." I have difficulty with Calvin's view at this point, see my article "The Sense of Divinity" in *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986) 337ff.

<sup>18</sup>The quotations in the Report are from *Institutes* II,11,15 and 16, see p. 377.

<sup>19</sup>Even though I agree with Calvin that God has preserved many "natural" gifts in mankind, I am not convinced that these gifts can be seen as gifts of the Spirit, see my article "De Geest in Bezaleël (Exodus 31:3)" in *Ambt en actualiteit* (Festschrift C. Trimp; Haarlem: Vijlbrief, 1992) 25ff.

<sup>20</sup>Calvin comes back to Augustine's view at the end of this section: "For with the greatest truth Augustine teaches that as the free gifts were withdrawn from man after the fall, so the natural ones remaining were corrupted . . . . Not that the gifts could become defiled by themselves, seeing they came from God. But to defiled man these gifts were no longer pure, and from them he could derive no praise at all." (II,ii,16) The gifts themselves are not corrupted, according to Calvin. However, the gifts are used by corrupted men. That causes the misuse of the gifts and the bad results.

– to be continued 

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## Improving Personal and Family Worship<sup>6</sup>

By R.A. Schouten

Those who practice regular personal or family worship as described in previous articles will experience a deepening integration of faith and life. The reality of God will become much more concrete in their minds and hearts and in the lives of our children. They will not contribute to the "Sunday Christian" problem.

One writer calls family prayer, Bible reading and singing the "power stations" of the Christian family.<sup>1</sup> Through the special times of worship, people are refreshed and encouraged in faith. They grow in love and in hope.

Today, there are many forces at-

tacking families, so many, indeed, that Christians, too, sometimes become afraid. The evil one, however, is afraid when he sees a praying, worshipping family. Such a family grows together instead of apart. "The family that prays together stays together" is a nice saying for a wall plaque and it is true! A certain contentment settles into homes when God is regularly worshipped. It becomes impossible to maintain bitterness and anger when we pray, sing and read the Word together.

Further, individuals and families who continue steadfastly in prayer, will notice the powerful answers of God.

The Lord hears the cries of those who come to Him in faith in their personal or family worship. He will mercifully fulfill His promises in the lives of those who claim those promises in faith.

Family worship will also lead to a more meaningful experience of public worship. When we go to church as people who live close to God in daily life, it will be impossible to be bored and uninvolved in public worship. The public worship service will then be experienced as a richer form of the regular household worship. In addition, in family worship, we consciously prepare ourselves for worship and pray that the min-

ister of the Word might receive what he needs to preach truthfully and boldly.

### Enemies of family worship

There are many potential obstacles and disruptions to family worship. For example, television is often an intruder in our homes. People waste incalculable numbers of hours in front of the tube. Often, these are the same people who say they have no time for devotions!

It is clear, furthermore, that the spiritual tone of most T.V. programs jars blatantly with the spirit of family worship. If you try to move from a 5:00 comedy straight into supper and family worship, you will experience a lot of frustration. Or, if somebody is anxiously awaiting the end of supper in order to get back to the football or hockey game, the Lord will soon be defrauded of His rightful worship. We need to jealously guard the spiritual atmosphere of our homes, so that all of life is in God's service. If we are not striving to serve the Lord in work and leisure, making His Word sovereign in those parts of life, too, then our family worship will be a sham. The joyful worship of God at special times must be joined to the hearty service of God during the rest of life.

Telephones, too, are great machines, but very rude at times. It is a very simple matter to unplug them during family worship! Or else, people could create a special family worship response for the answering machine. The message would say: "We are sorry, we are presently engaged in dialogue with Somebody Else. If you call back in 1/2 an hour, we will be glad to speak with you."

Babies also can form a threat to family worship! Yes, these lovely creatures of God have the power to totally disrupt family worship. For this reason, if they can't be made quiet, they should be put to bed or into another room for the duration of family worship. Of course, if there is proper discipline in the family, even a 1 1/2-year-old child can be trained to sit quietly for this time. If there are occasional lapses, the toddler will have to be warned and if continuing in his disruptive ways, removed from the room.

Now I will make a statement that sounds, no doubt, irreverent. Christian schools can also be an enemy of family worship. Why? Because parents assume that all necessary instruction in faith

and knowledge of the Word is taking place at school.

If people have their children in a school with a good Bible program, they should be thankful. However, there is the danger that this situation will make them lazy! However, instead of abandoning home discussion of the Bible, families can use the school materials as a focus in family worship. For example, older children can be asked to explain certain parts of Scripture on the basis of what they learn at school. Or, if a child is studying the Minor Prophets, why not read through them during family worship?

Even if the Christian school used by your children has an excellent instruction program in Bible, this is no substitute for family worship. Nothing can shape a child so powerfully as the life of the home. And nothing can take away the mandate of Scripture calling parents to instruct their children in the fear of the Lord! Some responsibilities in life we cannot delegate.

It might even be said that a Bible program in a Christian school is not a top priority! Surely each day in the Christian school should begin with devotions and God should be regularly called upon, but a comprehensive Bible program per sé is not necessary. Such education easily could and likely

should be accomplished largely by parents in partnership with the pulpit. Far more important for the school is to bring a Christian perspective to bear on the other fields of learning.

Perhaps the greatest threat to family worship is the lack of integrity on the part of those who lead it. Children are very adept in reading the hearts of their parents. If there is hypocrisy, the kids will soon understand. Therefore, it is so crucial that parents not only lead in family worship, but also show a good example of committed Christian living. If we go back to Deut. 6, we find that just before the verse where parents are instructed to "diligently teach" their children, they receive this instruction: "And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart."

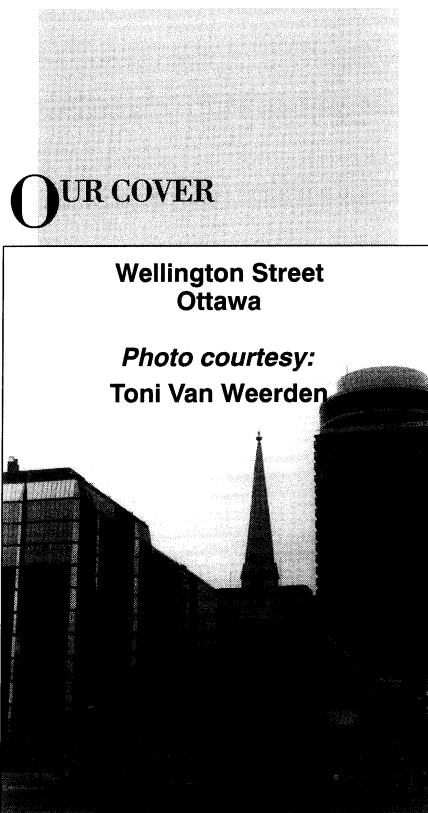
Thus, in order for family worship to have the desired effect, those who are parents must really live out of the Word. If there is no committed Christian living, then family worship is guaranteed to produce a lot of little hypocrites who know the forms of godliness but are ignorant of its power. Better a family which although it is weak in family worship, yet strives to obey the Lord in all of life, than a family which has the right forms of worship but lacks obedience in daily life.

### Summary

A healthy Christian life will contain a balanced rhythm of service and worship of God. The Lord desires His people to set aside their daily service at regular intervals in order to bow their hearts and minds before Him, seeking His face in a special manner. He asks that His people do this in public worship, but also in daily personal or family worship. People who are faithful in corporate and family worship will experience true joy in God and real growth in faith and godliness. Their times of worship will be genuine "power stations" of the Holy Spirit. Through worship, God is glorified and His people are recharged for the ongoing challenges of the Christian life.

*O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand (Psalm 95:6, 7).* **C**

<sup>1</sup>W. Meijer, *Christ in the Family*, (London: Inter-League Publication Board, 1985), p. 32.



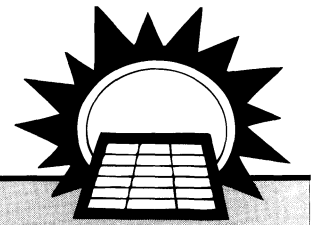
### OUR COVER

Wellington Street  
Ottawa

Photo courtesy:  
Toni Van Weerden



# RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

*If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*

Mark 8: 34b

## Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This month the Church celebrates Good Friday and Easter. Most people of the world do not pay much attention to those days, but the Church does. The church has been doing that ever since Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross and rose on the third day.

Before the Lord Jesus died, He taught the people and especially the disciples, how they had to live. Christ Jesus told the people, "Follow me." He told this to His disciples, and because it is recorded in the Bible He told it to us as well.

In a certain way it was maybe not too difficult for the disciples to follow the Lord, because He was right with them. But how can we do it, since He is now far away, in heaven? We can do it in faith, by studying the Bible. In the Bible our Lord God gives us instructions on how we have to live. When Jesus said, "Follow me," that is what He meant: Believe in Me and follow God's instructions, and live a life of obedience to Him. Jesus Christ our Saviour lived such a life for us Himself. He followed God's instructions and obeyed Him, even when those instructions made Him die on the cross!

Christ said, "Follow me." This includes, "Deny yourself and take up your cross." If we want to follow God's instructions and be obedient to Him, through faith, out of thankfulness, we shall also have to deny ourselves. That means that we pretend that we don't know ourselves. When Peter denied Jesus he said, "I don't know that man." So we have to say, "I don't know myself, that is, I don't reckon with what I want for myself, I only do what God wants me to do." That is very difficult. Often we only do what we want ourselves, and we forget all about God and His service and kingdom instructions. The only one who could deny Himself completely was Jesus Christ. He obeyed the Lord even unto death. We have Him as our example, teacher in word and deed. Even when it is very hard, with God's help we still can try to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We also have to take up our burden. Denying ourselves is very hard, we try and fail every day. And then we have to take up our burden, too, yet? Some of us have a very heavy burden to carry: a handicap, an illness, grief, loneliness, personal difficulties, shortage of finances, no work, no life's partner, no food, no peace. There is so much suffering and misery. Can we just pick up our burden, deny ourselves, and follow Jesus? That is much easier said than done. Sometimes you can be so burdened under your difficulties that you cannot think of anything else! How can you then deny yourself? When you have much pain, or you are all alone with nothing to do, can you accept everything and follow Jesus? Yes, this is possible through Christ, in the way of faith.

Yes, let us live in this faith in Christ. Our life is at stake! Not just your daily life, but our eternal life. We can read that in the rest of chapter eight. If we think we can help ourselves, we are mistaken. Our earthly life has to be part of our eternal life. When we want to save our own life for ourselves, we shall lose it. When we do not follow Jesus, He does not bring us anywhere, and we shall get lost.

We have Jesus Christ as our Leader. He denied Himself and bore His cross. That burden was very, very heavy. There was nobody even to help Him carry it, for God, the Father, had left His Son, so He had to undergo the pain, agony, humiliation, and loneliness all by Himself. He bore that cross all alone for us, so we would never have to carry a cross like His. He opened for us the way to God the Father. Because of Christ's suffering, the Lord will never refuse to help us when we ask Him for it.

Our burden may be heavy, but it is not too heavy for the Lord helps us carry it. To deny ourselves may be very difficult – we love ourselves, it is hard to forget what we want – but the Lord will help us to do it. To follow our Lord Jesus Christ and remember all God's instructions is not easy when the world shows us a much easier life with a lot of fun things. Yet, in following our Saviour in faith, we shall receive much more than what the world offers: forgiveness of all our sins, while the Lord will pour over us His love, grace, and mercy.

What happiness it is to celebrate with the church Good Friday and Easter. It will help us to remember what our Saviour did for us. Let us then follow Him; not into death, but into a life with our heavenly Father, where we will experience perfect happiness and harmony, for ever and ever!

*What is in life and death my only aid,  
My comfort when I am by troubles swayed?  
I am not mine but Christ's, who fully paid  
For all my sins and saved me.  
His precious blood for my offences gave He,  
Freed me from all the devil's power and slavery,  
For in the book of life God did engrave me,  
And me His own He made.*

Hymn 49:1

## Birthdays in May:

On May 4:

**Debby Veenstra**

RR 1, Sherkston, ON, L0S 1R0

Debby will be 19 this year.

On May 26:

**Dan Hlozyk**

c/o R. Ravensbergen

7462 Hwy 20, RR 1

Smithville, ON, L0R 2A0

Dan has not been mentioned in this column before. Dan has no parents anymore, and he has lived at quite a few different places. He has been living in our family for more than two years. He works at ARC industries. Dan enjoys going to church and he is an enthusiastic participant of the ANCHOR summer camp. Dan is going to be 40 this year.

Happy Birthday to both of you.

Until next month,

*Mrs. R. Ravensbergen*  
7462 Hwy 20, RR 1  
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

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**National Principals' Conference**  
**November 18-20, 1993**  
**Langley, BC**

## **“Whither shall we go . . . ?”**

We had a good conference.

The second National Principals' Conference convincingly showed the benefits of contact and communication between schools and principals. As Canadian Reformed schools we are living and working within a most diverse and troubled world. Public as well as private education are strongly affected by this. The public school system is being pulled apart between those who blame it for all the woes of society, and those who blame it for not providing the range of services that today's youth needs. Furthermore, there is an almost endless stream of research creating a powerful force for change but unfortunately not for certainty and security (who shall demonstrate that “research” in itself is a sound, reliable basis for educational innovation?). Thus, the education system finds itself in the midst of vicious political struggles for power and empowerment, fuelled by ideologies which prove to be more and more in irreconcilable conflict with each other.

Our schools live in the midst of such a world. Indeed, we are not of this world, but it would be most naive to claim that we are not strongly influenced by it, also with regards to our educational practice. The '92 Conference was instrumental in allowing at least one major point to (re-)emerge, in retrospect perhaps not as clearly as we might have desired but nevertheless a point which will remain with us for a long time to come: we can only deal with the diverse and wide ranging educational issues of the day on the basis of a strong and cohesive understanding of the identity of our schools, that is, on the basis of a Reformed theory of education. Some will argue that our schools have not done very well at all in developing a sound, reliable theory of education which rests clearly on Reformed principles, and therefore will look at theories developed by others to base their practice on. Others will seek edu-

cational security in an eclectic approach: we do not need such a theory; just take the best from whatever is there, and in the meantime retain your Reformed status. Still others will advocate that there are specifically Reformed ways of teaching, and claim that we should utterly reject methods which are secular in intent and practice.

I believe that the '92 Conference has shown quite clearly the need for and the possibility of developing a sound understanding of the nature and goals of Reformed education. It was good to hear Hans Messelink reiterate the close link between Reformed schools and the Reformed churches whose children they seek to serve. What this link means in the practice of every day school life remains a pertinent point on the discussion agenda of principals, faculties, education committees, and boards. Harro Van Brummelen provided one possible direction for dealing with this link (the result of the work of the Calvin College educational think-tank): build a vision of the identity of Christian schools focused on responsive discipleship. The message of these two main speakers might be considered complementary by some, perhaps contradictory by others, depending on how we define and contextualize these statements. We do well to acknowledge that it is “the rubbing of ideas” that can provide a strong impetus for further study and debate. In all this, I find it telling that after so many years we find ourselves again considering how (perhaps even whether) the three forms of unity should determine the identity and practice of Reformed education (I suspect that it is in particular the practice of Reformed education which is at issue here). This is not an unimportant, tired and tiring point. It is at the heart of our understanding of the unique character of Canadian Reformed education, and it is clear that previous discussions

have not been sufficiently exhaustive (be it perhaps exhausting). We are and will continue to be confronted with issues essentially similar to those which the public system faces as well (in itself an important element to keep in mind in these discussions): what is the task of the school with respect to the whole child? What is our conception of the role and responsibilities of the school in tomorrow's society? Indeed, we are not the only school system which struggles with issues of identity, and we should recognize that our debates have an equally public character. Eventually the issue might well become: why do we have separate, independent Canadian Reformed schools anyway?

Our answers to this question of identity will determine our answers to many practical issues: how are we, as teachers and schools, going to deal with child abuse, with parents as clients and with parents as the mandating authority; how are we as principals to provide leadership to our schools and to the community we serve? These were the topics that occupied our attention for those three days in November 1992. We found ourselves searching for practical solutions – after all, another school visit was planned by the education committee for next week; another classroom problem is bound to find its way to our desk tomorrow – and for principles which govern (perhaps ought to govern) our thinking and action.

Is it possible to deal with these issues at all? I believe it is, providing we do not expect final answers. A Christian view of life does not allow the unwarranted optimism that educational research or philosophical analysis will eventually provide us with the ideal situation. A Christian view of life shows that we are involved in an ongoing struggle (putting off the old and putting on the new) the purpose of which is to show the truth of the confession that our

only certainty rests in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ – He is our anchor, also when we struggle to help young people grow and develop in a world which bombards them with so many conflicting claims.

Is it possible to be a truly Reformed school in the '90s? I think it is. In many of our classrooms we have opportunity, not to preach, but as we teach the various subject matters to show right through the subject what it means to live Christianly in today's world. That, I think, is the old and yet always new challenge of Reformed education. It is perhaps most clearly and directly present when we are called to provide our students with guidance, including career guidance: showing our students what it means to serve the Lord according to His Word and to foster willingness to employ their God-given talents to the honour of God and for the well-being of their fellow-creatures in every area of life in which man is placed by God. The Lord provides us most graciously with a range of educational agents. One of these, the Reformed school, is allowed to concentrate on academic and vocational areas, knowing that its work is supported by

and supportive to the home, and knowing that its work is borne by the weekly preaching of the Word which teaches us the norms for and purpose of all of life, including academics and vocations. Within this context our work as Reformed teachers is not only possible, but will have the sure foundation it needs in order to teach its content effectively to truly benefit each of our students, our families, our church community, our society and nation.

Therefore, let our personal and professional agenda include:


- an ongoing study of common goals and appropriate practices which bind together home and school in a covenantally determined and confessionally bound educational process;
- an ongoing professional discussion, locally and nationally, to foster an ever-growing personal and public understanding of these goals and practices in order to enable schools, as well as they are able to, to assist parents in their divine calling to educate their children to function effectively as mature (*mondige*) Christians in an ever-changing society;
- providing the mutual professional support necessary to bring about effective

schools and an effective school system by means of national cooperation in staff development, curriculum, and educational leadership.

These I believe to be essential elements of covenantal education.

We had a good conference since it provided the participants with many opportunities for professional and personal exchange which encouraged us all and helped us understand a little more about Reformed education as a truly hopeful endeavour. At the same time it was a strong stimulant for much further thought and debate about many aspects of our work. In this manner, the National Principals' Conference 1992 moved on from where its predecessor had left off.

What a gift to be able to spend three days together in this manner. May the Lord be gracious and provide opportunity to meet again as principals of Canadian Reformed schools. In the meantime, let's do our homework, and do it well, and let's bring the results of our efforts along to the third National Principals Conference in 1994.

Tony M.P. Vandervren  
Covenant College, Hamilton, ON  
March 6, 1993 

## Inter League Publication Board Update

April, 1993

By the time you read these lines the Bible study season will have almost ended. A new topic for study will be needed by September. Board members will do well to search for available study aids before deciding on a Bible book.

This is where the I.L.P.B. comes in. As most of our readers know, the I.L.P.B. is made up of delegates of the Men's, Women's, and Young People's Leagues in Ontario. Their mandate is to prepare reliable Reformed Bible study material for publication. For the most part this results in the publication of outlines, although occasionally a topical book is published, such as *Christ in the Family* and *Call Upon Me*.

As previously stated, outlines are our main focus, for a number of reasons.

1. *Outlines* give a compact overview of the chosen Bible book.

2. *Outlines* are more affordable than elaborate commentaries.

3. *Outlines* are easy to read; every member of the society can study the topic prior to the meeting.

Some outlines have points to assist the essayist, others have questions to aid in the discussion.

We would like to stress that these outlines are carefully selected and chosen for their truly Reformed content.

A list is published periodically of all available titles. Each congregation also has an I.L.P.B. representative who will gladly assist with selection and ordering.

If all goes well, some additional titles will be added to the list this year. These include outlines on Colossians

and Hebrews which have been revised and will be reprinted.

New outlines written by Prof. Selles on 1 Corinthians are forthcoming.

Professor Selles had also started outlines on 2 Corinthians, however, he was unable to complete this work. The Lord has relieved him of his earthly task and taken him home. The Board and Administration Committee of the I.L.P.B. acknowledge with thankfulness to the Lord the work this servant of His was allowed to do for the benefit of the study societies. Professor Selles' outlines will be beneficial for many years to come.

Wishing all the societies  
God's blessing on their studies,  
for the I.L.P.B.,  
E.M. Schutten





## CLASSIS PACIFIC, MARCH 2-3, 1993, LANGLEY, BC

*Opening:* On behalf of the convening church at Chilliwack, Rev. M.H. VanLuik calls the meeting to order. He asks the brothers to sing Hymn 40:1,2, he reads from Eph. 4:1-16, and leads in prayer. He welcomes the delegates. He remembers that Rev. Venema has accepted the call by the church at Surrey for the work of mission in Brazil. He congratulates the church at Vernon with the acceptance of the call extended to Rev. D. Moes. Rev. Moesker declined the call extended to him by the church at Edmonton Immanuel. Rev. C. Bouwman declined his call to the church at Abbotsford.

*Credentials:* The delegates of the church at Abbotsford examine the credentials. All the churches are duly represented. Three churches have instructions.

*Constitution:* Classis is constituted. The officers suggested by the previous classis are appointed and take their seat. Rev. B.J. Berends, chairman; W. Wielenga, vice-chairman; Rev. E. Kampen, clerk.

The chairman informs the delegates that the church at Smithers extended a call to Rev. P. Aasman for the work of home mission.

*Agenda:* After some matters are added to the provisional agenda, the agenda is adopted.

*Approbation of call:* The church at Vernon requests approbation of the call to Rev. D. Moes. The necessary documents are read and found to be in good order. The call to Rev. D. Moes was approbated. Rev. C. VanSpronsen is appointed by classis to represent the churches at the installation or welcome evening of Rev. D. Moes. The chairman offers words of congratulation to the delegates of the church at Vernon.

*Signing of subscription form:* At this time the chairman reads the form of subscription for Rev. E. Kampen. Rev. E. Kampen signs the form.

*Correspondence received:* A number of appeals come before classis. These are dealt with in committees and in closed session for the remainder of the day.

*Adjournment:* Rev. E. Kampen closes the evening with prayer. The meeting

is adjourned to 9:00 the next morning in the Cloverdale church building.

*Reopening:* On March 3, the chairman calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Ps. 25:2,6 and reads from Phil. 2:1-13; he leads in prayer. Roll call shows that a number of churches are represented by alternate delegates.

*Correspondence continued:* Classis continues in closed session and completes its dealing with the appeals.

*Proposals or instructions:* The church at Abbotsford requests pulpit supply once every three weeks. Classis grants pulpit supply once a month. The church at Abbotsford requests and receives advice regarding remuneration of ministers who have classical preaching appointments. The church at Sur-

rey informs classis, and the convening church for next classis, of the upcoming colloquium for Rev. Venema who hopes to arrive in June.

*Reports:* The classical treasurer's report on the classis fund and the needy churches fund is received. The chairman thanks the treasurer for his work.

Church visitation reports are read and received for the churches at Langley, Port Kells, Surrey, Cloverdale, Abbotsford, and Chilliwack. The visitors are thanked for their reports.

*Question period ad Art 44 C.O.:* The relevant questions put by the chairman to the delegates are answered in the affirmative. One church requests and receives advice regarding a matter of discipline.

## 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

1943 ~ 1993

MR. AND MRS. H. KROES



Hendrik and Wietske Kroes (nee Wiebinga), the Lord willing, hope to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 20th, 1993.

They immigrated to Canada in June of 1947 with one daughter and one son.

In the years that followed they were blessed with three more children. They moved many times, but finally settled in Smithville, Ontario in 1956.

They farmed there until they retired. They still live in Smithville, where they thoroughly enjoy their retirement.

*Appointments:* a. Convening church for next classis is the church at Cloverdale; the time and place: June 8, 1993, at 9:00 a.m. in the Langley church building.

b. Suggested officers for the next classis: chairman: W. Wielenga; vice-chairman: Rev. E. Kampen; clerk: Rev. W.B. Slomp.

c. Committee for examinations:

Organizing deputies: Revs. C. VanSpronsen and J. Visscher.

Examiners: Old Testament exegesis: Rev. W.B. Slomp; New Testament exegesis: Rev. M.H. VanLuik; Doctrine and creeds: Rev. J. Visscher; Knowledge of Scripture: W. Wielenga; Church history: Rev. B.J. Berends; Church polity: Rev. E. Kampen; Ethics: Rev. J. Moesker; Diaconiology: Rev. C. VanSpronsen.

d. Church visitors: Revs. C. VanSpronsen (organizer), B.J. Berends, J. Moesker, M.H. VanLuik, J. Visscher, with alternates W.B. Slomp, W. Wielenga.

e. Church for taking care of archives: Smithers.

f. Church for inspection of the archives: Houston.

g. Treasurer: br. A.H. Lubbers.

h. Church for auditing the books of the treasurer: Vernon.

i. Committee for financial aid for students for the ministry: brs. K.F. Huttema, J. Moesker, M.H. VanLuik (convener).

j. Committee for needy churches: brs. E.C. Baartman, H.A. Berends (convener), G. Boeve.

k. Deputies for classical preaching arrangements: Revs. C. VanSpronsen, J. Visscher.

l. Delegates to regional synod: ministers E. Kampen, W.B. Slomp, C. VanSpronsen, J. Visscher. Alternates are the ministers J. Moesker, W. Wielenga, M.H. VanLuik, B.J. Berends in that order. Elders: P. deBoer, R. Fenema, J. Vanderstoep, P. VanWouden-


berg. Alternates are the elders: G. Leffers, J. DeLeeuw, H. Bosscher, P. VanSpronsen in that order.

*Question period:* The church at Vernon thanks classis for the regular pulpit supply during the time of vacancy, for the approbation of the call of Rev. D. Moes, and for the counsellor. A delegate raises a question regarding the meeting place of classes.

*Censure according to Art 44 C.O.:* The chairman thankfully takes note of the good cooperation among the brothers. Opportunity was given for mutual censure.

*Acts and Press Release:* The Acts are read and adopted; the Press Release is read and approved.

*Closing:* After the singing of Ps. 147:1, the vice-chairman leads in prayer of thanksgiving. The chairman closes classis.

W. Wielenga, vice-chairman e.t. 

## OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



### Hello Busy Beavers,

Lots of Busy Beavers write and say, "We've moved!" Moving might mean getting your own room, and having new places to explore!

Moving also means leaving your old house behind.

So do you miss it?

Maybe!

Busy Beaver *Evelene Plug* wrote this poem about her old home in *The Land "Down Under."*



### THE LAND "DOWN UNDER"

*In the far horizon*

*Across the glassy sea*

*There lies a far off country*

*That's beckoning to me.*

*A land of windblown grasses*

*Of azure, cloudless skies*

*Of endless rows of beaches*

*And myriads of flies!*

*Full of mythical creatures*

*(A mammal that lays eggs)*

*And unknown cartoon figures*

*Ever heard of Ginger-Meggs.*

*A bird, known for its laughing*

*The language, a quaint style*

*And never-ending highways*

*Stretching mile upon mile.*

*With friendly native people*

*That are very down-to-earth*

*And smiles come quite freely*

*From happiness and mirth.*

*Land of the Golden Sunrise*

*That's beckoning to me*

*The land where all my thoughts are*

*The land, where all are free.*

# Quiz Time!

## PUZZLE CODE

by Busy Beaver Sarah Bouwman

### Code

A = 7	I = 9	O = 15	T = 20
D = 4	L = 12	P = 16	U = 21
E = 5	M = 13	R = 18	W = 23
H = 8	N = 14	S = 19	Y = 25

16 18 1 9 19 5 20 8 5 12 15 18 4

23 9 20 8 1 12 12 25 15 21 18

8 5 1 18 20 19 15 21 12 1 14 4

13 9 14 4

## A BUILDER'S WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver Andrea Vanderhorst

R E M M A H P N M O G W N  
 G W I N D O W S A N B A A  
 S L B R I C K S L I T S I  
 R I U K T L L D Y Z L C L  
 O Q R E D I I I T W K S G  
 O X Y Z G S S A C E E F U  
 D A I L G U K N V N L U N  
 S C R E W S N I A Q E G S  
 L U M B E R R H I R J P E  
 V X B L K D T W Y S T S L  
 U F G H W N L P A I N T G  
 L K M E E N L K M N O P N  
 Q P R M C D I L E V E L I  
 O C E N G J R K Q S R C H  
 S C M A H I D O P T O D S



Hammer  
 Nails  
 Gluegun  
 Nailgun  
 Screwdriver  
 Level  
 Saw

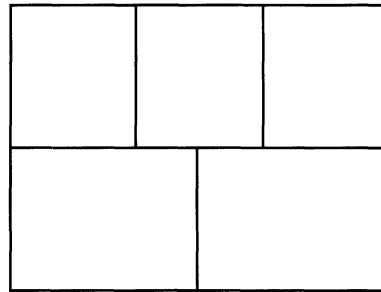


Drill  
 Lumber  
 Siding  
 Paint  
 Shingles  
 Cement  
 Doors

Windows  
 Bricks  
 Screws  
 Pencil  
 Transit

## CUTTING THE WALLS

by Busy Beaver Marcia Rook

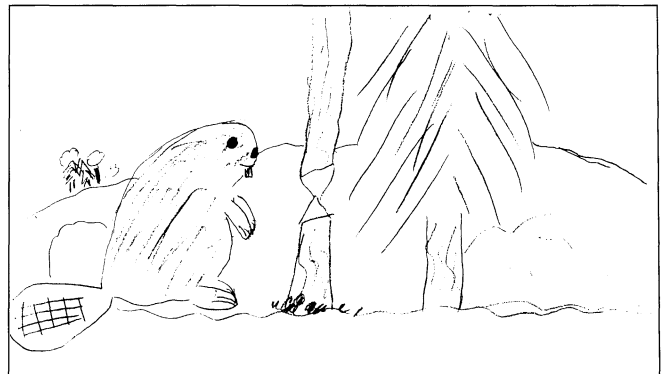


The diagram beside represents 15 walls. Draw a continuous line going through each of the walls without ever going through any wall twice.

(Answer next time)

## "BEAVER"

by Busy Beaver Heather Muis



## RIDDLE FUN

by Busy Beaver Earle Veenendaal

1. What is the smallest room in the world?
2. What did the one wall say to the other?
3. What kind of pie is not good to eat?
4. What would you do if there is a fly in your soup?



(See answers)





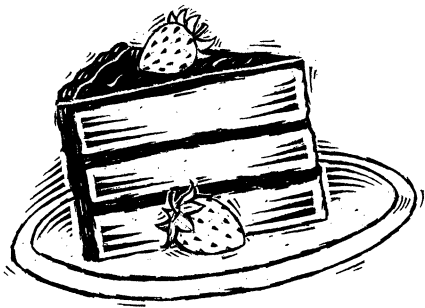
## KIDS CAN COOK!

Is baking a cake your idea of fun? Busy Beaver *Melissa Deboersap's* recipe for spice cake is for you!

Do you like pizza?

Check out Busy Beaver, *Carrie Schuurman's* recipe for pizza!

You could make them for a tasty Mother's Day supper!



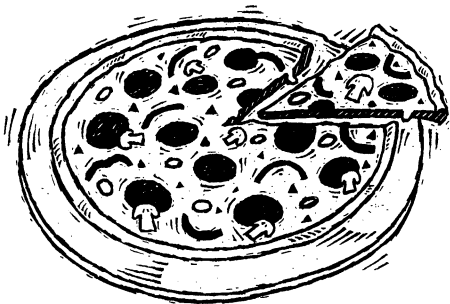
### Old Wife Koek

2 cup flour	2 tsp. baking powder
1 cup sugar	1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt	2 tbsp. honey
1/4 tsp. cloves, cinnamon, allspice	3/4 cup water
1 1/4 tsp. anise seed	

Mix; stiff batter.

Small loaf pan (9x5x3), 350° F, 40 minutes.

Psst! Makes a great Mother's Day gift!



### Pizza Muffins

Take some English muffins and split them.

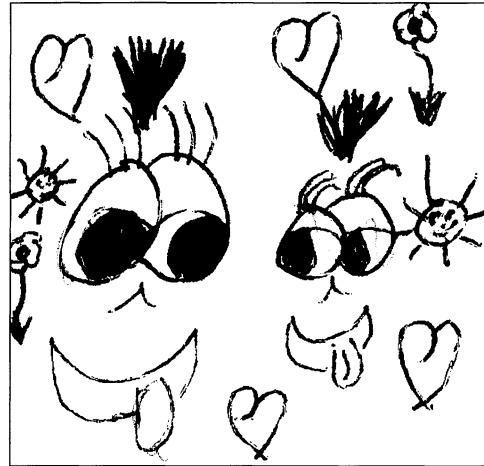
Put pizza sauce over them, and grate mozzarella cheese over top.

Put on some pepperoni, peppers, onions, and pineapple, salt, pepper, garlic powder, oregano and basil.

Lay them on a tray, and cook at 400° F for 10 - 12 minutes.

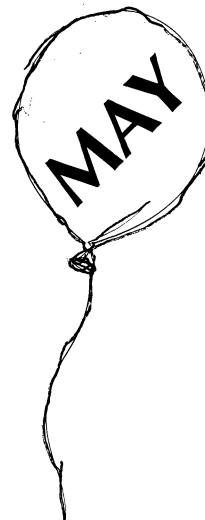
## CARTOON

by Busy Beaver *Deanna Wierenga*



## BIRTHDAY WISHES

We are sending out lots of birthday wishes to the many Busy Beavers who have their birthday in May. May our heavenly Father guide and keep you all in His care in the year ahead. Very best wishes for an excellent celebration with your family and friends!



	Karen Bartels	4	
	Andrea De Haas	4	
	Jodie Lodder	5	
	Laura Rook	7	
	Laura Vandenbos	8	
	Rebecca Hekert	11	
	Christopher DeBoer	12	
	Robert Vandergaag	14	
	Nicole Aasman	15	
	Rachel Broekema	15	
	May Hofsink	15	
	Kimberley Driegen	16	
	Deanna Wierenga	17	
	Deborah Verhoeff	18	
	Rachelle Van Veen	20	
	Lee-Ann Beintema	22	
Harold Winkelaar	2	Ruby Knol	23
Andrea Vanderhorst	3	Brian Jager	24
Anne-Marie Van Popta	3	Tesha Hopman	29
Miranda Barendregt	4	Anna Hordyk	31

*Answers to Riddle Fun:* 1. A mushroom 2. Meet you at the corner! 3. A mud pie 4. Ask him if he can swim!

Busy Beavers, I hope you liked the puzzles.  
How did you do?  
Till next time!

Love,  
Aunt Betty

