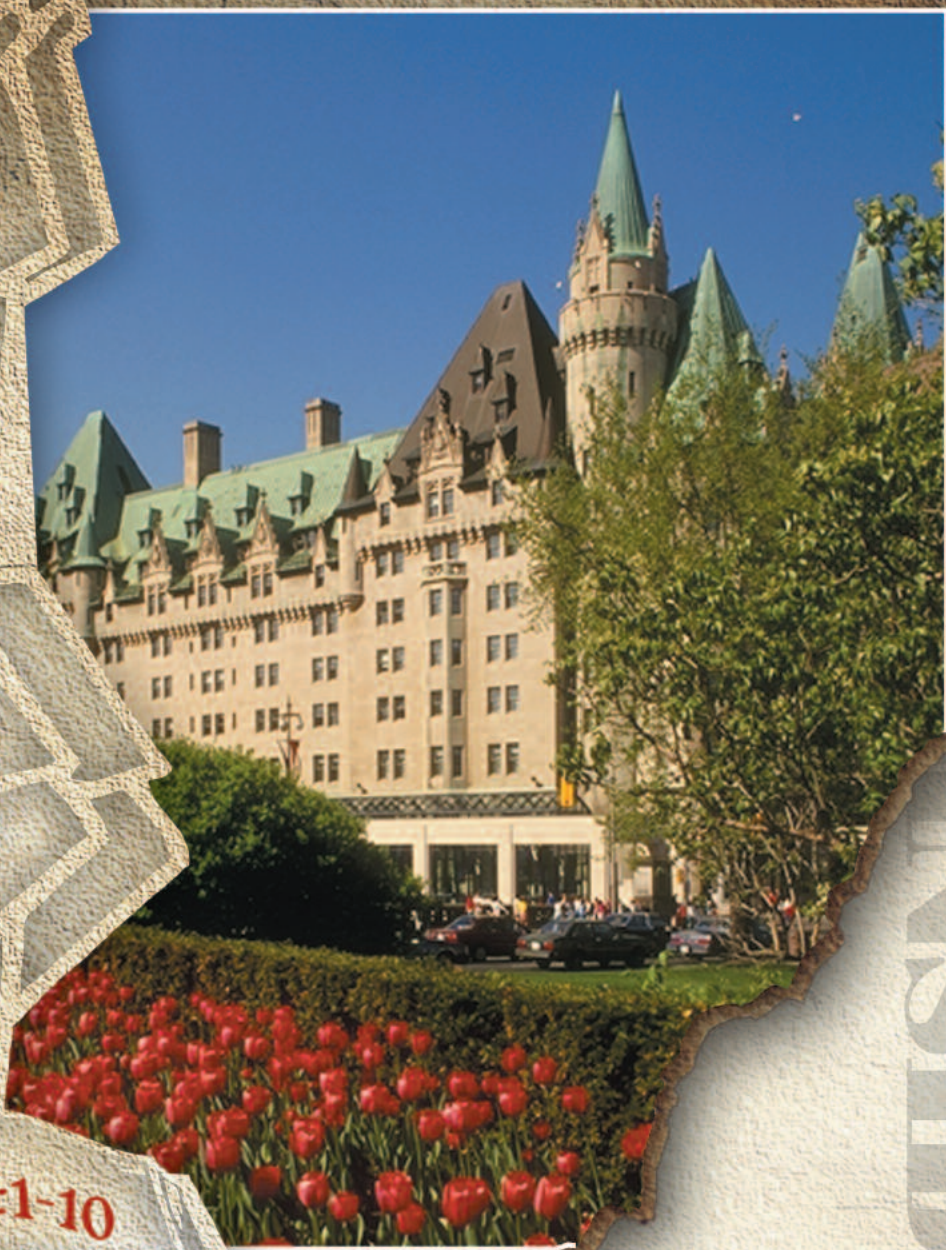


Clarion

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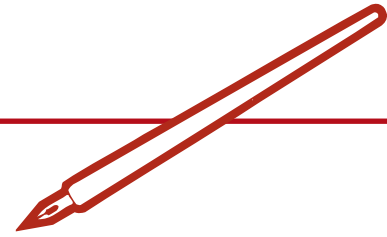


Numbers

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INSIDE!

Canada Day



By R. Aasman



O Canada

Before 1982, Canada Day had been known as Dominion Day. Sometimes, it was referred to as the First of July or Confederation Day. This marks the celebration of what occurred on July 1, 1867, when the British North America Act created the Canadian federal government. The BNA Act proclaimed “one Dominion under the name of Canada.” From this evolved the name, “Dominion Day.” However it was renamed “Canada Day” by an Act of Parliament on October 27, 1982. With this change, the government downplayed the colonial origins of Canada. Canada Day has become a national celebration which is always observed on July 1, unless this date falls on a Sunday. In the event that it does fall on a Sunday, it is observed the following day. In my own congregation, this event is always observed by prayers for the government and the country (which occur more often throughout the year) on the Sunday before July 1, and the singing of O Canada, stanzas one and four after the worship service.

Not all is well

The great pride and appreciation which I personally feel for my country, does not ignore the fact that not all is well in the state of Canada. As readers, you will no doubt agree that our country has demonstrated not just weakness, but a completely wrong philosophy and morality in regards to such principle issues as the life of the unborn, the family, and sexual orientation, to mention only a few things. There were also events during the past year which leave us saddened and worried. When the terrorists attacks unfolded last September 11, our prime minister and his government steadfastly neglected any reference to Almighty God, and to the only comfort and peace which we have in Jesus Christ. And that is in spite of the fact that the words to O Canada which ring out loud and clear from sea to sea, state:

Ruler supreme, who hearest humble prayer,
Hold our dominion within thy loving care;
Help us to find, O God, in thee
A lasting, rich reward,
As waiting for the Better Day,
We ever stand on guard.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.



In all fairness, I should be realistic and admit that I am quoting from stanza four of our national anthem. Most sing only the first stanza. Nevertheless, the refrain, “God keep our land glorious and free!” is compelling reason for our Prime Minister and his colleagues to give honour to God, and to his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am proud to be Canadian.

Still proud to be Canadian

At the same time, I am proud to be Canadian. I am proud of the many good things that I see in my native land. Historically, Canada has always been ready and willing to go to war in order to preserve the freedom of her own society and that of her friends. The first and second world wars remain a powerful testimony to Canada’s willingness to preserve freedom by the blood of her sons and daughters. We have seen this more recently in Canada’s entrance into the war against terrorist forces in Afghanistan. There are some who criticize Canada’s involvement in this war. Moreover, they criticize that lethal force is being used against the terrorists in Afghanistan. I wrote in the Remembrance Day

issue last fall: "If the US and her allies had not gone to war, she would have become the continued target of such monsters as Osama bin Laden. When a country is attacked in such a vicious and unprovoked manner as the US, then the government has to take up 'the sword' to secure its freedom and peace." I wrote this also in light of what the Holy Spirit writes about civil government and its use of the "sword" in Romans 13.

Canadian soldiers have already sealed their war effort with blood on Afghanistan soil. True, it was the result of "friendly fire." But that is part of the complexity of modern warfare, and it is how soldiers can die as they "stand on guard" for their country and for their allies. I am not happy about war and all the damage that results from war. But I am proud that my country will and does take up the "sword" against those who would unrighteously attack us.

The blessings of being Canadian

The apostle Paul writes in Romans 13:1: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God." He adds in verse 4: "For he is God's servant to do you good." The

What's inside?

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:1: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." Our confessions and church order also emphasize that we must obey, love and respect the civil authorities. We are reminded of this again as Canada Day approaches. The editorial reflects on the significance of this.

Rev. W. Bredenhof examines another interesting subject: whether parody has a proper place in Christian polemics. See what you think.

Under *Education Matters*, Keith Sikkema takes a careful look at home-schooling in the light of post-apartheid in South Africa. Dr. J. De Jong continues his press release on a lecture of Dr. W.G. de Vries. In addition we have some regular columns: *Treasures, New and Old* and *Ray of Sunshine*. We also have one letter to the editor.

Last but not least, from Dr. N. H. Gootjes we have a review of a book which deals with the visual arts in the Calvinist tradition. This subject should whet the interest of many.

RA



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entire system of government in our country, with all the shortcomings and weaknesses that there are, has been placed in authority by God himself *for our good*. We see much evidence of that. We are allowed to establish our churches and schools, our Theological College and

Canadian soldiers have already sealed their war effort with blood on Afghanistan soil.

Teachers' College. We have radio broadcasts around this country where ministers deliver meditations. We are allowed to be involved in the political sphere of life with our religious convictions and morality. We even get tax benefits for church contributions and other charitable causes. We are not persecuted for our beliefs and practices. This is not to say we are always widely respected, or everything is easy. But we have amazing freedom of religion. In the light of what Christians experience elsewhere and at other times, we have a lot for which to be thankful to our heavenly Father.

Our mandate

It is clear from Scripture, our confessions and our church order, that we are to hold the civil government in high esteem and to remember them in our prayers. It is good to remember this and practice this. But you remember an old saying, "pray and work." What are the implications for us as Christians to recognize that the government is placed over us by God, and that we are to pray for the government? Should we not also be involved by being part of and active in the governing of this nation? I am not just talking about involvement in politics. The government is not just comprised of public figures, but it is also civil servants, courts, police officers, mayors, aldermen, soldiers, and so on. Our young people who are seeking out careers in this land should consider whether their talents would suggest that they seek to be a police officer, a civil servant, an alderman, a mayor, just to name a few suggestions. When Christians are involved in the government of this land, there is a greater possibility to have a government which rules for the benefit of the citizens, to the praise of Him who is Lord of lords, and King of kings. Then the words, "God keep our land glorious and free!" are also backed up by our actions. 

Rev. R. Aasman is minister of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church in Edmonton, Alberta.

Flag Etiquette in Canada

Dignity of the Flag

The National Flag of Canada should be displayed only in a manner befitting the national emblem; it should not be subjected to indignity or displayed in a position inferior to any other flag or ensign. The Canadian flag always takes precedence over all other national flags when flown in Canada. The only flags to which precedence is given over the Canadian flag are the personal standards of members of the Royal Family and of Her Majesty's representatives in Canada. The Canadian flag should always be flown aloft and free.

It is improper to use the National Flag of Canada as a table or seat cover or as a masking for boxes, barriers, or intervening space between floor and ground level on a dais or platform.

While it is not technically incorrect to use the National Flag of Canada to cover a statue, monument or plaque for an unveiling ceremony, it is not common practice to do so and should be discouraged.

When the National Flag of Canada is raised or lowered, or when it is carried past in a parade or review, all present should face the flag, men should remove their hats, and all should remain silent. Those in uniform should salute.

By C. Van Spronsen

The First Gardener on Earth!

“Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.”

Genesis 2:8

This time of the year many are again enjoying the pleasure of gardening or seeing gardens. Do you realize there is a long line of succession of gardeners that goes back to the very beginning of the earth and civilization? Yes, that actually we are following the footsteps of the great and very first gardener, the LORD God Himself? God had planted a garden for man whom He had created after his image and to whom He had given the mandate to fill the earth and subdue it. In his fatherly care He gave man a teaching model showing what could be done with the great potentials and resources present in this brand new earth.

Try to imagine Adam’s situation, in as far as we can do this in our fallen state. God had created the earth and prepared a beautiful home with innumerable plants, animals and resources: a place for man to live and glorify his creator with all his gifts and talents. But what an enormous mandate! There is one man or one couple on this whole, big world where everything is new and unknown to them. They do not know any of the plants or trees, neither any of the animals. Being the first people they couldn’t learn from others nor go by previous experience. Yet they had to provide for themselves from the first day on. Where do you begin as first creature on a new earth?

The LORD our God, the almighty creator, is at the same time a most wonderful Father. Moses, telling us about these first events, indicates that

already by the name used for God even in these first chapters: it is the LORD God! That is his covenant name, which speaks about the special relationship of loving care for his people. God himself makes a beginning for Adam and Eve in fulfilling the mandate given to them and planted a garden for them, known as the Garden of Eden and also referred to as Paradise.

What do you do when you plant a garden, and what sets a garden apart from the rest of nature? You carefully select the trees and plants that are useful to you and place them in proximity to you so that you can benefit from them. A garden is also a place of beauty where you combine colours and plants in order to be pleasing to the eyes. It is a place where you can enjoy God’s gifts in nature inviting you to give glory and honour to the creator of it all! Having been planted by God Himself this garden was truly a bliss and delight, surely a true Paradise!

This garden would provide man with all he needed to live and enjoy the dwelling place God gave him. After all, the tree of life was there! God did not leave man in a wilderness with a club in his hands to go see what he could hunt up and gather. No, God and Adam lived in a father-child relationship. God’s child was allowed to live in a garden planted by his Father. At the same time Adam was an apprentice of God who taught him by example what could be done on this earth. God is so good!

Yet man, when given the opportunity to show that he loved and served

God with all his heart by not eating from the forbidden tree, fell into disobedience and rather listened to the serpent and did eat from this tree, with the inevitable result that he was expelled from the garden and had to live with the effects of a cursed earth.

Still God in his goodness and grace did not abandon the idea of a garden for his people to live in. Being redeemed by Jesus Christ, we may believe in a Paradise restored and anticipate another garden prepared by God, a heavenly Paradise to be followed by a new, earthly Paradise! When the criminal, crucified beside Jesus, asked the Lord to remember him, Jesus promised him: “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). The last book of the Bible again speaks about the future garden, the Paradise to come with its promises of having the right in Jesus Christ to eat “from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Rev 2.7).

In Jesus Christ the LORD God has again planted a luscious garden for us to dwell in with all the riches and treasures of his kingdom. No longer will there be any curse. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life. . .” (Rev 22:14). God is indeed so good!



Rev. C. Van Spronsen is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, British Columbia.

Parody and Christian Polemics: Possible?

By W.L. Bredenhof

We all enjoy a good laugh. And most of us being of the thrifty sort, we appreciate the economical use of words that allows both a good guffaw *and* a point to be made. This holds true in most spheres of life. So, why not also when it comes to the Christian faith? Can we use humour to advance the truth claims of the Scriptures?

This question has held my interest for a number of years already. I remember being impressed in university with Jonathan Swift's essay, "A Modest Proposal." In this eighteenth century piece, Swift proposes that the poor infant children of Ireland be used for food. This was Swift's biting and satiric response to the social conditions he saw in his day – the English were "devouring" the Irish. The essay is appalling, though not quite funny especially considering the fate of many unborn children today.

I wondered whether it would be possible to use Swift's style in Christian polemics. I experimented with the genre. I didn't dare publish what I had written, but I did circulate it amongst some friends. However, I quickly found that most people just didn't get it and some people actually thought I was being serious. Moreover, I had serious reservations about whether this genre was appropriate.

With the recent publication of two books by Canon Press, I've had the opportunity to give this issue further consideration. Canon Press is quite well-known in our circles, both for their *Credenda Agenda* magazine and the popular series of books about family life by Douglas and Nancy Wilson. Canon Press is a ministry of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho, a church that in many respects can be said to be Reformed.

The two books were both published in 2001: *Right Behind*, by Nathan D.

Wilson (and Mr. Sock, "the renown prophecy expert, a cotton-polyester blend"), and *the Mantra of Jabez* by Douglas M. Jones. The former parodies Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins' *Left Behind* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1995) and the latter pokes fun at *the Prayer of Jabez* by Bruce Wilkinson (Sisters: Multnomah, 2000). Both of the originals are popular evangelical books which also find their way into Reformed homes.

Left Behind is the story of what happens to a number of unbelievers after the rapturous disappearance of millions of Christians. The suspense builds as the unbelievers turn to faith in Christ only to see the Antichrist rising to power. In *the Prayer of Jabez*, Bruce Wilkinson shows his readers how God longs to give abundant blessings to everybody who prays the prayer of Jabez found in 1 Chronicles 4:10. Wilkinson insists that this is a prayer "that God always answers" and ". . . it contains the key to a life of extraordinary favor with God" (from the Preface).

Can we use humour to advance the truth claims of the Scriptures?

The Canon Press books are part of a series entitled "The Upturned Table Parody Series." In the back of each book we find this explanation: "The 'upturned table' in our series name points back to Christ's anger with the merchants in the temple. Our parody series isn't as concerned with money in the temple as it is with what modern Evangelicals spend on abject silliness." The editors go on to say that they don't claim to be geniuses and

they too "exhibit some of the targets of our own barbs." Besides these disclaimers for the sake of humility, they also emphasize that they consider the authors of the original books to be their brothers. So, they conclude, "In order to mature, Evangelicals need to move beyond the bumper sticker shallowness of the past four decades and long for true wisdom. Parodying our silliness is one small nudge in that direction. *To whom much is given, much is expected.*" Indeed.

Right behind and left behind

In order to properly understand and appreciate a parody, it's quite often necessary to go to the original. To research this article, I ingested the 468 pages of the original LaHaye and Jenkins book. It's the first book of a series, but the first book is the only one that receives attention in the parody. As far as fiction goes, this book was disappointing, to say the least. I will not comment here on the erroneous premillennial doctrine of the future things (eschatology) which undergirds this whole series. Enough has been written about that elsewhere.¹ Simply considered as fiction, this book is truly an indictment of the low state of popular Christian literature today.

The result was that I laughed more reading *Left Behind* than *Right Behind*. The original book is silly enough on its own, especially with its apparent fixation on alcohol and its effects. However, it is not funny when popular Christian literature misuses the name of our Holy God. There were several places in *Left Behind* where the Lord's name was being used in a questionable manner. It is a sad fact that this happens more often in so-called Christian literature.

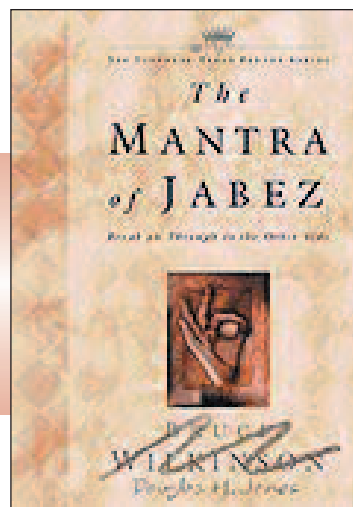
Right Behind, at 105 pages, is considerably shorter than the original – thankfully! As Augustine (!) is quoted on the back cover, “*Right Behind* is at least as horrible as the original.” It doesn’t claim to be fine literature, but by putting itself forward as a parody, it does claim to be funny. As I already mentioned, the parody was not funny at all. For the most part, it was just plain juvenile. Of course, humour is a subjective thing, and perhaps other readers will have found themselves with sutures in their split-sides.

The mantra and the prayer

The Prayer of Jabez is not a work of fiction, but a booklet (ninety-two pages of large print – count on maybe one hour to read it) that might be found in the Self-Help section of your local secular bookstore. Others have offered clear critiques of the wrong ideas contained in this book.² My concern here is not to do that – though I would note in passing that in my mission work I find that this book appeals very much to Roman Catholics who are accustomed to praying the Rosary – does more need to be said?

I cannot say that I was anything less than sad while reading the parody as well.

Prayer was not meant to make people laugh and I was more sad than anything while reading it. However, its parody, *the Mantra of Jabez*, was meant to evoke more than a few laughs. The back cover has the opening lines, “Do you want to be a kipper for God? Are you ready to reach for the most profound sort of immaturity? Just chant the Jabez mantra, and God will make you into something like a little canned fish, vacuum sealed from temptation and ready to be eaten without satisfying anybody.” I cannot say that I was anything less than sad while reading the parody as well. There is no question that these two examples of popular Christian literature reflect the flaccid state of American-style evangelicalism. However, the parodies that seek to address the problem are in some ways no better. The authors recognize there is a problem, but the manner in which they seek to illustrate the problem is questionable.



The nature of parody

Simply defined, parody is a “comic imitation of a piece of writing.” “The humour lies in the contrast between the subject matter and the treatment of it.”³ In other words, parody is written to make us laugh. According to the earlier-mentioned blurb at the back of the parodies under consideration, humour was not the primary motivation for these books. Rather, these books seek to make a point about the state of American-style evangelicalism. That does not take away from the fact that the point is cast in the context of humour. There is undeniably an effort being made here to get the reader to laugh. Therefore, we may say that there is an *entertainment* aspect to *Right Behind* and *the Mantra of Jabez*.

In this connection, we must seriously ask the question of whether or not it is ethically justifiable to use holy things for the sake of entertainment. In both *Mantra* and *Right Behind*, we find the names of God and the Lord Jesus used numerous times. Do we profane God’s name when we use it for the sake of our own laughter, even if we do it while claiming to advance the truth and expose the lie? I maintain we do. Does the end ever justify the means in Christian ethics? I do not believe that it does and one will search the Scriptures in vain to find a place where God’s name is used in the context of an attempt to evoke a laugh. Humour is found in the Scriptures, to be sure, but it is never in the form of parody, especially parody which involves others who claim to believe in Jesus Christ and the God of the Bible.

Speaking of the Scriptures, we must also question whether it is appropriate for Douglas Jones to deliberately misquote the Word of God. He does this several times in *Mantra* and the fact that he rightly quotes the Word elsewhere in the book only adds to the confusion. The Word of God is holy and do we respect that when we deliberately mishandle it for our own entertainment? Does this not place one in danger of violating the commands found in places such as Revelation 22:18-19 and Deuteronomy 4:2?

A further question must be raised with respect to the effectiveness of this form of polemic. Are those enamoured with the *Left Behind* series and Bruce Wilkinson going to be convinced by reading the parodies? Are they even likely to read them? If we’re realistic, most of the people who are regular customers of Canon Press are going to be convinced *before they read the parody* that the original works are symptomatic

To be sure, the Reformers did not shy away from poking fun at their opponents.

of an emasculated Christendom. If they are not already convinced, it is most likely that they will be open to the “argument.” In the end, this means that the books would not fulfill their stated function of exposing errors and convincing the adherents of these errors. Rather, these parodies take on more of a comic/entertainment character, thus underlining the concerns I already expressed above.

Reformation polemics

So, we have seen that parody of this sort is not acceptable when seen in the light of the Scriptures. This is buttressed by a glance at Reformation polemics. To their credit, the Canon Press/Credenda Agenda crowd is eager to go back to the classical Protestant faith as expressed in the Reformation heritage. However, this heritage does not appear to have had parody as part of its polemical toolbox. I do not claim to have read everything of the Reformers, but I do not recall ever having seen a parody from the pen of men like John Calvin, Martin Bucer, or Theodore Beza. Parody as a literary form had already developed by the time of the Reformation, but it does not seem to have been employed by the Reformers.

To be sure, the Reformers did not shy away from poking fun at their opponents. Sometimes we might even be tempted to say that they crossed the line. However, they do not seem to use holy things such as God's name for the sake of a laugh. They do not engage in producing comic imitations of the writings of the adversaries of the Reformed faith. Their polemics tend to be serious and argumentative. They tend to be more sophisticated, though this was not always true of Martin Luther's efforts, some of which were

quite debased and vulgar.⁴ However, the Calvinist Reformation seems to have been more restrained and urbane. An example is seen with John Calvin's *Inventory of Relics*.⁵ In this work, Calvin shows that the Roman Catholic Church has fleeced its sheep with lies and tales about relics. He demonstrates that if an inventory of relics were taken, it would be abundantly clear that the Romanist obsession with relics is entirely ludicrous. Calvin is satirical, even witty, but through it all he shows the utmost respect for God's name and for things that are truly holy. It is therefore questionable whether Calvin would have written this blurb for *Right Behind*: "If I weren't dead, I'd be rolling in the aisles."

Conclusion

There can be no question that Christendom desperately needs clear exposés of the emptiness and error of books such as the *Prayer of Jabez* and *Left Behind*. However, we must be clear about the right way in which to do this. A sober, well-argued, and clear piece of prose will be much more effective in arguing the case to those who are caught up in the hype surrounding these books. Not only will such an approach be more effective, it will also be more faithful, both to our Reformation

heritage and to the Scriptures upon which that heritage is founded. Let us have polemics, but when it comes to the Christian faith, parody is far better left behind.

¹ For representative critiques of dispensationalism, cf. *The Millennium*, Loraine Boettner, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958 and *The Bible Versus Millennial Teachings: An Exegetical Critique*, George C. Lubbers, published by the author, 1989.

² Cf. "Popular, but are they any good?" Johan D. Tangelder, in *Reformed Perspective*, July/August 2001, pp.12-13, and "God, Prayer and American Evangelicalism," Mark R. Talbot, in *Modern Reformation*, November/December 2001, pp.43-47.

³ "Parody" in *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2000*.

⁴ Luther commissioned an extremely obscene and scatological series of cartoons to be composed by Lucas Cranach. "He provided instructions for what the cartoons were to show and penned satirical verses to accompany them." *Luther's Last Battles*, Mark U. Edwards, Jr., Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1983, p.189.

⁵ In *Calvin's Tracts and Treatises (Vol. 1)*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958, pp.287-341.



Rev. W.L. Bredenhof is missionary in Fort Babine, British Columbia.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Please mail, e-mail or fax letters for publication to the editorial address. They should be 300 words or less. Those published may be edited for style or length. Please include address and phone number.

Dear Editor,

Our *Clarion* of April 26, 2002 under Media Release gave a glimmer of hope that after fifty years or so we finally do away with the perception that *Clarion* contributors, ministers and professors were born with an initial rather than a first name. I never knew for instance that Dr. Gootjes' first name was Niek, and how to spell Douwe. Wow!

All four Burlington Churches have a nicely bound, jointly published, Membership Directory with addresses, phone, e-mail info, and with the exception of a few older members, every-

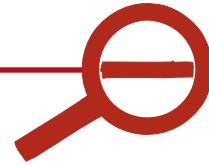
one is listed by their first name, including the ministers. I remember that the late Rev. VanDooren, a few years after he came to Burlington, insisted at a congregational meeting that we should address him with "Bert" and his wife with "Jo." He wanted to be close to his people.

When I served the district United Way board in the 70s, a man seated next to me introduced himself as Lorne. He was an elderly gentleman, and we had many nice discussions. A while later, I discovered that he was the Rev. Dr. Lorne McKay of Central Presbyter-

ian Church in Hamilton, who was also their Moderator for that year. That was the time when no one in our circles dared even to breathe the first name of any of our ministers. But now, one can read anywhere about Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck and Klaas Schilder. Do our people have to pass on first?

So, dear editor, whether it is Jack, Richard, Jack, Niek or Clarence, when is *Clarion*, like all other similar periodicals, getting in today's real world?

Respectfully,
Arie Hordyk
Burlington, Ontario



100 Years of Church and Theology (Part 2)

In the previous issue, we were quoting from Dr. W. G. de Vries' lecture. We continue that quote in the present issue:

The Apostles' Creed

5. A whole phalanx of theologians continually dispute the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith. It is not possible to expound this here in detail but in summary we can demonstrate thus in the twelve articles.

I believe in Godly the Father, Almighty. Creator of heaven and earth

No, says modern theology, God is not almighty. He suffers along with the world, and can't do anything about it. Neither did He create the world because everything came about by blind evolution.

I believe in his only begotten Son.

No, says modern theology, he is an ordinary human being, a noble example but not (very) God of (very) God.

Born of the virgin Mary

No, says modern theology. The community later reasoned that an important man must be of high extraction so they made of it that he was begotten by God, just as the heathens also have their sons of the gods.

He suffered

Yes, says modern theology, as a pitiful victim of human caprice, but not as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world; no atonement through sacrifice.

He died, was buried and rose again

No, says modern theology. Christ did not rise from the dead; instead, his disciples took away his body and he lives on in memory only.

He ascended into heaven

No, says modern theology, he was no space-traveller. His ascension is a primitive notion stemming from the time in which he lived.

He sits at the right hand of God

No, says modern theology, heaven does not exist above and outside of ourselves. You meet God in your neighbour, solely among people.

From where He will come to judge the living and the dead.

No, says modern theology. There will be no final judgment and all people will be saved.

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

No, says modern theology. The Trinity is an unsupportable figment of the imagination. The good person is representative of the good spirit.

I believe a holy, catholic, Christian church

No, says modern theology, you should look for the real church outside of the churches. Whoever is a good person is a good Christian, even though he were to reject Christ himself.

A whole phalanx of theologians continually dispute the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith.

The forgiveness of sins

Sins? says modern theology. Sin is found where social abuses are allowed to continue and where people don't support assistance to developing countries. If there is no God in heaven you cannot sin against him.

The resurrection of the body

No, says modern theology, that is biologically impossible – dead is dead.

And the life everlasting

No, says modern theology, for everlasting means a very long time and who is to say what comes after this life? You pull the ladder up behind you, and further than that nobody knows anything.

I have stated it all very briefly here, but I assure you that it is the heart of what is presented in all sorts of ways by modern theologians.

Rudderless Theology

6. This development is also noticeable in the synodical Reformed Churches. Take, for example, the previously mentioned document *God met ons* (God with us) published in 1980. It showed the same tendencies as outlined above, although it was a little more careful. Ac-

ording to this document God's truth only exists when human tongues come into action. So what is "below" determines what is "above." There is obviously something wrong here. Here the Bible is made out to be "the result of numerous human events," and is no more reliable than any other historical source. The story of Lot and his daughters is relegated to the realm of fables, of folklorist humour. We would encounter it to be: "then of a very wry and incestuous character." The explanation of the Old Testament is partly ascribed to Jesus, but originates for an important part from the early Christian community, and so the document states "but often Jesus would not have said or done what the Bible says, exactly as the gospel writers say he did." Even concerning Christ's resurrection it is said that this ought not to be regarded as "ordinary history" and so the question "Did it really happen or not?" is left unanswered. Paul argued with all his might that if Christ had not risen from the dead our faith would be totally in vain. But according to this document the church should be patient with those church members who have difficulty accepting the resurrection of Christ. In other words: when the heart of the Christian faith is removed the church is apparently not allowed to take spiritual measures. Here we have an example of the arrogance of a rudderless theology that wishes to subject the interpretation of Scripture to the authority of science. I quote: "Theology then considers itself able to make an indispensable contribution to the establishment of the truth concerning man and the world." But this so-called theology has cut the heart out of the gospel. And when that happens the body of the church dies. Hence the staggering secularisation during the second half of the Twentieth Century.

Visible unity or the invisible unity of the heart?

7. Let us finally examine the position of our own churches. Since the Liberation of 1944 they have upheld the reliability of the Word of God. That applies until today.

But to do so we have insisted on the visible unity of the church on all fronts. At the moment, however, we experience a reaction which rather looks to an invisible unity of the heart. This has come about through the influence of the evangelical movement which has wafted over to the Netherlands from America, especially by the agency of the EO (the Dutch evangelical radio and television broadcaster).

Central to this striving for unity stands the reliability of God's Word, of which Christ said: "Your Word is truth." For that reason God's Word cannot be broken.

Whoever is willing to accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God is made welcome in these circles. Thinking in terms of all kinds of denominations – everyone chooses the church which suits him or her best – originates from America. The true ecumenism of the visible church is replaced by "ecumenism of the heart."

During the sixties our churches opposed the independentism of those churches which later left the bond of churches, and tolerated the denial of the doctrine of life immediately after death, a denial as taught by Rev. Telder and others. These churches formed the Netherlands Reformed Churches. At the moment, however, an action and a reaction has become apparent also in our own circles which seeks to trivialise this important struggle. And un-

fortunately voices are heard which are strongly reminiscent of the independentism of the Netherlands Reformed Churches. Along with the (Dutch) Christian Reformed Churches and some Reformed Congregations our churches may still uphold the reliability of God's Word. Over against the "On-Our-Way-Together-Churches" (*Samen-op-Weg Kerken*), that is, the planned Dutch Uniting Church consisting of the state Dutch Reformed Church, the Synodical Reformed Churches and the Evangelical Lutheran Church, our clinging to the infallibility and authority of Scripture is a very important matter. The Reformed League, (the conservative Reformed branch of the state Dutch Reformed Church) rightly opposes the liberal tendencies of this proposed "On Our Way Together" church, which, if it goes ahead, will be increasingly at the mercy of modern theology.

Striving for Unity

But the striving for church unity with all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and God must not allow itself to come to terms with the "hard reality" of church disunity. Central to this striving for unity stands the reliability of God's Word, of which Christ said: "Your Word is truth." For that reason God's Word cannot be broken. The robe of truth is woven in one piece.

That is what we will continue to maintain over against all forms of Bible criticism, which increased so enormously during the Twentieth Century. We do not deny that in this area there may be problems and questions. We are not fundamentalists who advocate a doctrine of mechanical inspiration.




Called to the church at Vernon, British Columbia:

Rev. R.A. Schouten

of Abbotsford, British Columbia.

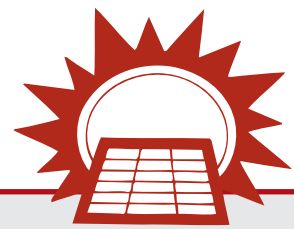
Unlike the "Book of Mormon," the Bible did not just fall out of heaven. God used all kinds of people to bring about the writing of his Word by a process we call organic inspiration.

We are not fundamentalists who advocate a doctrine of mechanical inspiration.

We cannot go into this any further right now. We conclude with a remark by Herman Bavinck: "Whoever refuses to eat before he understands the complete process by which food is digested will die of hunger, and whoever refuses to believe God's Word until all problems are solved to his satisfaction will perish from spiritual want." 

Dr. J. De Jong is principal and professor of Diaconology and Ecclesiology at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario.





By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

“Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.”

1 Corinthians 10:16, 17

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As we can see from the text above, the topic for this article will deal with one of the sacraments, namely the Lord's Supper. Why do we celebrate Lord's Supper? How does it benefit us? Do those who go to the table benefit more so than those who are unable to attend? Let us go to Holy Scripture and see what God reveals to us there.

In Luke 22:13-20 we read of how Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper on the night of the Passover meal. Just as the Passover celebrated the deliverance from slavery in Egypt, so the Lord's Supper now celebrates the deliverance from sin by Christ's death.

These verses also speak of a new covenant. What is this new covenant? In the old covenant, the people of Israel would come before God through the priests in sacrificing animals. God would forgive man's sins through this practice. These sacrifices had to be repeated day after day, and year after year. Therefore in the New Testament, Jesus instituted a new covenant, or an "agreement" between God and us. Under this new covenant, Jesus would die in the place of us sinners. His blood would truly and completely remove the sins of all who put their faith and trust in Him. Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross was once for all, and would never have to be repeated; it would be good for all eternity (Heb 9:23-28). This can only but lead us to walk a life of thankfulness to our Lord and Saviour.

We are also commanded to eat and drink in remembrance of Him. In doing so, we must also rightly examine ourselves. We are a people who are so full of sin and misery, that we cannot but turn in humble reverence before God and ask for forgiveness of our sins daily. We have been delivered from the chains of death. As Psalm 116:12-14 so beautifully says: "How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people." This can only lead us then to hearts of thankfulness, for all the wondrous deeds his hand for us has done. We may then in all humility and thankfulness then go to church and celebrate the death of Christ.

However it is not just those who participate in the eating and drinking that are strengthened. No, for we must realize that this sacrament of Lord's Supper, as with baptism, is visible to the whole congregation. Whether we go to the table or watch from the pew, we all share in the communion with Christ. It is by faith alone that we know Christ's death was sufficient for all who believe. The bread and wine do not save us, for they are a symbol of Christ's body and blood. In our hearts we know that Christ truly is our Saviour. We may not be able to tell others how we feel, but God knows our hearts. He

who made us to be his children will also work in us with his Holy Spirit. He will strengthen us and make us realize that the holy supper is a meal done in remembrance of Him. His covenant promises are for us all.

Jesus said to us, here is bread and here is wine. Eat and drink. You need food and nourishment to live. But in giving you this, I give you more. I give you Myself. His satisfaction for us is so complete and definite, says the Catechism, that it is "as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins."

This is truly something so marvelous in the sacrament of Lord's Supper. These are not empty signs. No, for He comes in great love in the symbols of bread and wine. So we do not cling with our hearts to the outward symbols of bread and wine, but we lift them up to heaven, where Christ Jesus is, seated at God's right Hand.

*We thank Thee, Father, who has planted
Thy holy Name within our hearts.
True knowledge, faith, and life immortal
Jesus Thy Son to us imparts.
Thou, Lord, didst make all for Thy pleasure,
Didst give man food for all his days,
Giving in Christ the Bread eternal;
Thine is the power, Thine be the praise.*

Hymn 46:1

Birthdays in July:

4: James Buikema will turn 41

c/o R. Feenstra
278 St. Catherine Street, P.O. Box 662
Smithville, ON LOR 2A0

20: Charlie Beintema will turn 27

29 Wilson Avenue, Chatham, ON N7L 1K8

28: Jim Wanders will be 41

538 Wedgewood Drive, Burlington, ON L7L 4J2

29: Tom Vanderzwaag will turn 49

Anchor Home
361 Thirty Road, RR 2, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B0

Congratulations to you young men on your birthday. May our heavenly Father bless you in this new year with much health and happiness together with your family and friends. Till next month,

Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman
Mailing correspondence:
548 Kemp Road East
RR 2 Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2
1-905-563-0380



Tuisonderwys (Home-schooling)¹

By Keith Sikkema

1. Introduction

Since the end of Apartheid in South Africa, home-schooling has become a way of life for as many as 10,000 children. The devastating effect of the breakdown of the family, and the failure of public schools to replace its role cannot be separated from this trend. After all, one of the key attractions of home-schooling is the importance it assigns to the family, and the strong bonds it creates within this central building block of society. At a unique conference held in Pretoria, in January, 2001, home-schooling was broached from a distinctly Reformed Christian perspective. This was unique because presenters switched liberally from Afrikaans to English and to Dutch, but also because the Reformed tradition had, with good reason, aimed for *day-schools* for their children since the sixteenth century. As this publication gives much food for thought, but is not readily accessible to all, this has become a relatively lengthy review.

I want to present the salient perspectives presented by some of the contributors to the conference. Hopefully, this will generate and facilitate up-building discussion among Reformed Christians who are trying to come to grips with the home-school phenomenon, which may appear elitist or unwelcome competition for the good tradition of Reformed day-schools. At the conference, the restoration of the family according to biblical norms, as well as its centrality and importance both in education and as a cornerstone of society, was emphasized. This is an undeniably good theme which we all do well to consider, especially in view of much current literature which tends to place schools at the centre of communities. Considering the biblical principles for educating the next generation helps establish a framework within which the competition

and potentially associated polarization can be addressed and resolved.

2. The presentations

The home-schooling parents of our Free Reformed Sister Church at Pretoria have formulated several principles for home-schooling, which I can only summarize here. It must be done out of faith, to the honour of God, according to his norms, and with a view to the children's task in life. It has to contribute to education in the fear of God's name, and parents should not let themselves be dominated by anything but God's Word. Rather than causing fellow-believers to stumble, home-schoolers must edify,

Home-schooling was broached from a distinctly Reformed Christian perspective.

and aim for the educational goals God set. Parents are primarily responsible for the up-bringing of their children, who must be equipped to function in today's complex society. They must grow up within a covenant (church) community, and parents must subject themselves to the supervising care of the congregation. Everyone must use and develop his God-given talents for the benefit and well-being of others, and carry one another's burdens. Attentive readers will have noticed that these principles do not of themselves demand that we should now all switch to home-schooling. They are valid for our day-schools as well.

Philosophical foundation

Slabbert Le Cornu offers a philosophical foundation for home-schooling, while allowing for other schooling options. He addresses home-schooling on four planes: Scripture, Reformed Tradition, Historical-Pedagogical, and Practical. He explains that the Reformed doctrine of infant baptism shows that God's covenant pertains to all of life, and that it is both a parental and a communal responsibility to pass this on to the next generation. Baptism, in fact,

emphasizes and strengthens the reciprocal organic unity between the individual and the community¹. If parents home-school, they must do so in the midst of the congregation: to be Reformed a family needs the supervision and discipline of the church.

The Reformed tradition does not demand a particular educational *model* (a school) but binds to a particular *doctrine*. It points parents to their responsibility not to *confuse* their children by exposure to different beliefs in non-Christian schools. Children belong to the parents, not to the state, community, or church; nor should it be left up to the children to decide what to believe. If parents, who are the ordained teachers of their children, need help, the school they choose must have the same covenantal foundation as the family. Both models must evaluate their philosophy, content, method, organization, and discipline in view of the doctrine of the covenant.

The principles of Reformed schooling must be based on the Word of God. Only then can one determine *who* it is that needs education, as well as *what* its goal, content, method, place, and discipline must be. In 1652, after the Dutch example, South Africa gave the task of schooling to the parents (to send children to school), to the church (to supervise its Christian character), and to the state (to establish and maintain schools). In our time, education is often delivered by "experts," away from the family. As a result of bureaucratic structures, state control, and demise of parental rights in public systems, private schools achieve better parental involvement than public schools, and home-schools do better yet. It is well to restore parents to their educational tasks, and to narrow the distinction between "experts" and "laymen" in education.

Le Cornu believes that most parents in healthy families can teach. Abounding in contacts with many people, they provide perfect settings for socialization, and home-schooled kids actually mature faster. It is well to pay close attention to the distinct place and task of the family and the school in a society in which marriage and family are politically and socially under stress. Rather than being

individualistic or at odds with the church, Reformed home-schooling wants to stimulate the cooperation of covenant parents within the communion of believers. Other than pointing to valid principles, Mr. LeCornu unfortunately provides no mechanism by which the more practical perceptions of competition, elitism and resulting polarization may be overcome².

Theological and practical insights

Gustav and Ina Opperman offer theological and practical insights on the topic. Ina elaborates on the thesis that faith, discipline, and a basic routine help overcome surprise situations, especially when coupled with avoidance of overly ambitious goals and a meticulously precise curriculum. Gustav bases his presentation on Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

If parents home-school, they must do so in the midst of the congregation: to be Reformed, a family needs the supervision and discipline of the church.

Covenantal education is primarily (but not solely) the father's life-long "patriarchal" responsibility as prophet, priest and king within his (extended) family. The principles of this covenant must be applied in all of education, and include the fact that the children must learn to love the Lord and the neighbour; that these principles must govern the total man in the sense of the biblical antithesis. It must govern the believer's behaviour in all of society. Through all-round cultural forming of the children for their task, home-schooling seeks to build God's kingdom. These contributions were obviously encouraging to the home-schoolers who made up most of the audience. The presenters support the notion that there should be no polarization in covenantal education.

The family

M.C. Durand describes the intent of the family as a place where one belongs, and which itself belongs to a community. Marriage, as God's creation order, is not intended to primarily fulfill sexual, emotional, psychological, or relational needs, but the cultural mandate God gave. This includes filling the earth, and to see children as a blessing of God. We cannot rationally determine how

many children a family should have. If responsible parents have a relationship governed by God, then children are received in joy, humility, and prayer. Parents then have to teach their children their purpose to complete and subdue creation, and home-schooling does that well. This contribution would provide food for good discussions about our understanding of "family," and how we read the command to "fill the earth" in the third millennium. Why don't Reformed baby-boomers and their offspring have the same number of children as they had siblings?

Home-schooling generates debates

B. van der Eems defended the thesis that home-schooling generates hot debates because it not only *requires* changes in the family, the church, and the state, but it can actually *accomplish* them. With families tending to become smaller, mothers taking on roles outside the home, and the state caring for the needy, homes become more like hotels. If parents again share the task of educating their children (as in home-schooling), this can be reversed. As for churches, some accept home-schooling, but others reject it for moral or practical reasons and treat it with varying degrees of severity. Without placing blame, van der Eems observed that this has resulted in polarization, and occasional disappointment with the communion of saints. Finally, as state ideology often sees the public schools as the hub of communities, it may suppress family-centred home-schooling³. Ideally, the state should handle justice and defence, and leave education to the parents.

Home-schooling is able to change institutions. Home-schooled students are already comfortably and with preference moving into colleges and universities. Their special characteristics of commitment, organization, motivation and enthusiasm for their choices, as well as their willingness to accept responsibility will enable them to lead in both church and state.

Education is a moral task of the parents, but every choice carries risks. Choosing a school has the risk that increasingly professional teachers take over or become less likely to consult parents, or that parents will come to rely on the "experts." If the state influences a school by means of teacher certification, subsidies, and accreditation, it suffers loss of identity and quality. Inadvertently, home-schooling parents may actually teach unintended values

with materials from a different background. Both models should therefore help each other: teachers can develop a reformed curriculum that can be used by home-schoolers; parents may send some of their children to school but not others, and remain involved with both. In this set-up, many will be active in education and help solve its problems, while home-schoolers' radically different approach may even help improve the school.

Finally, the church must proclaim that education is a parental responsibility flowing from their baptismal promises; all talents in the communion of saints must be used so all children will receive covenantal education until they publicly profess their faith. For those who can't home-school, the church must see to it that there is a school that leaves the parents responsible, independent of the state. With a joint effort, the school could even help spread good curriculum beyond the church. Van der Eems has many good things to say. However, he may be perceived as an idealist who does not identify a tangible way to accomplish what he proposes. It would be of interest to see that developed further.

Waves in home-schooling

In an informative and insightful presentation, L. J. van Oostrum addressed the three waves of home-schooling, and its legal position in South Africa. By 1920, most Western countries had schools to help solve specific problems posed by the Industrial Revolution.

For those who can't home-school, the church must see to it that there is a school that leaves the parents responsible.

When modernism began to crack by 1960, left-leaning people attacked the educational systems and started the first wave – de-schooling – providing their children with basic training and an apprenticeship. Home-schooling, the second wave, became interesting for Christians when the USA banned religion from schools around 1970. Unlike the de-schoolers, they followed a more traditional curriculum, often after Dr. Raymond Moore's model. In 1984, the HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association) began to help

families fight in court for the right to home-school. The resulting body of research-literature showed that home-schooled and de-schooled kids do as well as or better than others. The third wave came when the 1984 American "Nation at Risk" report inadvertently encouraged home-education by proposing curriculum that children could well learn at home.

Three models of legislation regarding home-schooling can be distinguished in different countries. They include the trust-model (parents are entrusted to do well); the notification model (parents must notify authorities); and the permission procedure (home-school choice must be formally approved, as in South Africa). Even though the right to home-school is entrenched in the South African Constitution, officials often don't know the rules, generating uncertainty regarding rights and duties of families.

Public schooling

Prof. Louw of the Unisa Faculty of Education provides a well-documented contribution about the dilemmas of compulsory public schooling, and the home-schooling alternative. He shows that the public school no longer authentically represents *the parents*, but *the state*, as an institution of coercion, repression, and conformity to the whims of the majority. This has led to renewed interest in community-based schools and home-schooling.

He proposes that parents should be allowed and are able to home-school for academic success. Teacher academic background is less relevant for student achievement than previously thought, and home-schooling parents tend to be highly dedicated and better educated than most. Compulsory schooling also is not as good for society as has been suggested. The neutrality it claims is itself a non-neutral stance, and the equality it wants to promote by forced ethnic and cultural assimilation is a myth because of the inequality of race, culture and religion, and associated conflicts. Home and school need to be similar to be successful. Public schools do not stimulate curiosity, creativity, enterprise, individuality, and independence, and their socialization often goes awry. Home-schooled children, on the other hand, tend to get challenged more and do better, while getting well prepared for jobs. Finally, parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education, and the state should respect

their religious and philosophical convictions by making home-schooling as easy as possible.

A lasting social movement?

A. Theron describes home-schooling as a lasting social movement of hope, especially for Christians who want to be obedient to the Word, and who cannot at the same time bow to the state. He believes that home-schooling can give a new future to the Republic of South Africa, which becomes understandable in the social and political turmoil in which that country finds itself and its neighbours. Even if a family does not home-school, strengthening the family bond remains important as society on the whole abandons it, tries "alternative" models, and shifts responsibility to others.

The conference did not (nor sought to) offer substantive answers or a viable mechanism to overcome practical issues such as finances and organization.

The publication concludes with several helpful book reviews in keeping with its theme. Some of these are rather extensive, and certainly may help stimulate future discussion about the importance of the family as well as the theme of home-schooling.

3. Conclusion

This collection of presentations provides new fuel for an important continuation of the discussion among Reformed Christians regarding different models of schooling. It provides insight in biblical principles of education, and makes a good case for the importance of the restoration of the family according to biblical norms. The book reviews encourage much needed further study. While several authors present home-schooling as the best way to accomplish the goals of family-restoration and reformation of education, they may not be convincing to those who hold other opinions. Their contributions may also have been tinted by the audience: the conference was attended primarily by home-schoolers. It is doubtful that it would have been able to bridge the polarization in Reformed education, as the con-

ference did not (nor sought to) offer substantive answers or a viable mechanism to overcome practical issues such as finances and organization. There are significant issues to be addressed when some parents choose to home school while the community has taken pains to establish Reformed Christian school. It will be necessary to study the matter further with particular attention for the place of the heart, Christian liberty, and neighbourly love in the communion of saints. Solutions to divisions among God's people must not be based on traditions, opinions, preferences, or common sense, but on a holy commitment to use our gifts readily and cheerfully for the other members of the body of Christ.

Endnotes:

¹The publication provides a translation of J. van Bruggen's treatise on the arguments for and the significance of Infant Baptism for the family and education: *No one is born a number – Baptism and family* (pages 124-127).

²In a personal communication, Mr. LeCornu explained that there probably is no "standard 'five point plan for all reformed communities to use to deal with the issue of 'polarization', but it will differ from church to church how members will deal with differences, hopefully gathered around God's Word through the power of His Spirit."

³In South Africa, it is not easy to obtain permission to home-school, as explained by L.J. van Oostrum. In the Netherlands, home-schooling is not allowed and therefore not an issue. For a recent and extensive discussion of the home-schooling phenomenon in North America, see *TIME*, August 27, 2001 (pages 40-48).

⁴*This article reviews a conference booklet based on a conference held in South Africa last year. Statistical details of the conference are published in: Slabbert Le Cornu, (Ed.). (January 27, 2001). Verbondseminaar 2001: Tuisonderwys. Esra Verslag. Available from: Die Instituut vir Christus en Kultuur Studies, Posbus 31974, Totiusdal 0134, South Africa. slecornu@netlab.co.za*



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Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition

Review by N.H. Gootjes

P.C. Finney (ed.) *Seeing beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999; price: \$65.*

The relationship between Calvinism and the arts has been of interest for many Reformed people. Did the followers of Calvin develop a specific kind of art, or did they follow the general direction of the arts? What was the specific view of Calvin on the arts, and how did this determine his followers? Do their artistic products show that these were made by Calvinists?

These questions have been discussed for a long time. In the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries, a clear answer was given. The famous Dr. A. Kuyper devoted one of his Stone Lectures (1898) to that topic. He wanted to demonstrate in this lecture that Calvinism was responsible for the flowering of art in the Netherlands of the seventeenth century. From the side of his opponents it was pointed out that Calvinism was responsible for the iconoclasm of the 1560s, when so much priceless art was destroyed.

In our time, this self-justifying approach to art has largely disappeared. Today, scholars are convinced that the art in countries where Calvinism was a strong influence, cannot easily be explained from one particular viewpoint. The question comes up whether a decidedly Reformed approach to art can be identified. An International Symposium was organized at Princeton Theological Seminary in May, 1995, to deal with these issues. The papers read and discussed at this symposium, and some additional studies, were collected and published under the title *Seeing Beyond the Word: Visual Arts and the Calvinist Tradition*. This valuable book shows a wide variety in approach and interpretation of art.

The chapters of the book are organized (alphabetically!) by region. Following a general chapter on Europe, it deals with different aspects of arts beginning with England. This is followed by several sections on France and Switzerland (Geneva). A chapter on Germany and Hungary is followed by three chapters on art in the Netherlands. The three chapters dealing with America all concentrate on church build-

ings. The range of the discussions on European art is much wider. In addition to church buildings, other arts are discussed: Huguenot goldsmiths, a sixteenth century cup portraying a biblical scene, Beza's publication of portraits of the Reformers, artwork in Hungarian churches, paintings and etchings are all dealt with.

Three articles are devoted to the Dutch pictorial art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These are lavishly illustrated with paintings and etchings. It is particularly here that the different approaches become visible. In the first, R.L. Falkenburg rejects the view that the art from this period portrays God's greatness and goodness. He emphasized the ambivalent meaning of these art works. They may show a mix of good and evil, and some appear to present holy things as a joke. The second article, by J.R. Tanis, uses other pictures to prove that Calvinism does not so much emphasize the word, as well the Word who was made flesh (394). I.M. Veldman addresses the issue whether Calvinism had a negative or a positive influence on art. He concludes that Reformed painters on the basis of the second commandment, mostly avoided portraying God. They also stayed away from overtly erotic subjects, but followed Calvin's view that it was permissible to paint anything that was perceptible to the human eye (415-420). In his opinion it is possible that this led to the characteristic realism in Dutch seventeenth century painting (421). These three scholars use different examples, which may indicate that in seventeenth century Calvinist Holland several views existed side by side.

Several articles are devoted to church buildings, and what they express. The article on Puritan and Nonconformist meeting houses in England explains that their simple worship concentrating on the gospel message led to corresponding simplicity in the building: "The central pulpit dominates an interior where the eye is not diverted by an excess of decoration, nor the mind allowed to stray from the work at hand. A domestic atmosphere, with the people gathered around the preacher, was all that the faithful desired, a building of good proportions and seemly construction, which is itself the basis of all good architecture" (81). Later in the book, three articles are devoted to

church buildings in America. G.T. Buggeln, in an article on the "First Congregational Church of Hartford, Connecticut," explains the theological ideas behind this building. The article of J.F. White deals with the development of church buildings in America. He traces how the Reformed tradition of a congregation gathered around a central pulpit was abandoned during the nineteenth century (437). The third of these articles, P.W. Williams' "Metamorphoses of the Meetinghouses," moves the discussion to contemporary church buildings. He uses three examples to show how different views on worship led to different church buildings. If a congregation is thinking of building a new church building, they would benefit from studying these four articles.

This book contains much valuable information and good illustrations. There is even a whole section of colour pictures. It does not present a unified Calvinist view on art, and the authors disagree among themselves in several instances. It is not surprising that a reviewer of this book will not agree with everything stated in it, either, but I need not elaborate on this, with one exception. It is stated repeatedly, that as a result of their disagreement with the Roman Catholics, the Calvinists renumbered the Ten Commandments. They divided the Roman Catholic and Lutheran first commandment into two, so that the statement, "You shall not make for yourself an idol..." became a separate commandment (xi, 28). The impression is given that the Reformed made this change in order to have a scriptural basis for rejecting the images in the Roman Catholic churches. This is not correct; the Reformed simply returned to a division which existed long before the sixteenth Century.¹

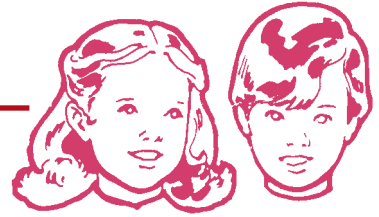
Overall, everyone who is interested in art, and particularly in the ways the Reformed used and applied it, will enjoy reading this book.

¹See E. Nielsen, *The Ten Commandments in New Perspective* (Nashville: A.R. Allenson, 1968) 10; J.P. Lettinga, 'Notities bij de Hebreeuwse tekst van de Tien Geboden', in J. Douma, *De tien geboden* (Kampen: Kok, 1985) 122.



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By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers

"Rain, rain, go away, come again another day!" As I was about to start this piece for you, it began to rain. It was beautiful. I love the sound of rain falling down on the roof. I love the sight of rain splashing on the windows or making big puddles on the driveway. I love rain. It is especially wonderful when it comes down after a long dry spell – such as during a long summer period when not much rain has fallen over the summer.

There are some places in the world where there is not so much rain. Those places are the deserts. They are large dry areas. Can you find them in your atlas?

Do you know what the sign of God is after the rain has fallen? Remember Noah. What did God say to Noah when he could finally come out of the ark? That He would never again flood the earth with so much rain. And His promise to that was the rainbow, wasn't it.

Have you ever seen a double rainbow? I've seen quite a lot of them. If you do, check the colours. The brightest rainbow will have the colours in their order as we know them, but the lighter rainbow will be a "mirror image" – the colours will be back to front. Check it out next time. And remember also why that rainbow is there for you to see!

Lots of love, Aunt Betty

PEN PAL WANTED

Robin Lodder would love to have a penpal. She is ten years old, loves sports and loves cats and dogs. She also plays the piano. She would like to have a penpal to share letters with. If you would like to do the same, please write to her at
RR 3, Carman, MB R0G 0J0

Puzzles

God Commanded

Often God's will is not easy to obey. These people experienced some of the hard-to-obey commands of God.

Match the person with what God told him to do.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Abram, Genesis 12:1 | a. to name his unborn son "John" |
| 2. Jonah, Jonah 1:1-3 | b. to anoint someone else king while Saul lived |
| 3. Hosea, Hosea 1:2 | c. to enter a Gentile's home and preach |
| 4. Moses, Exodus 14:14-16 | d. to cross a sea on foot |
| 5. Joseph, Matthew 2:13 | e. leave his father's house and move to a new land |
| 6. Zechariah, Luke 1:13,18 | f. to take a harlot for a wife |
| 7. Ananias, Acts 9:10-15 | g. to preach to his enemy |
| 8. Peter, Acts 10:19-20 | h. to help a man who killed Christians |
| 9. Noah, Genesis 6:13-14 | i. To build a boat on dry land |
| 10. Samuel, 1 Samuel 16:1-2 | j. to take his wife and infant son to Egypt |

Before or After

1. Leah gave birth to children before or after Rachel had a child?
2. Isaac died before or after Jacob's return from Haran?
3. The three men were placed in the fiery furnace before or after Daniel was placed in the lions' den?
4. The epistle of Jude comes before or after the epistle to the Hebrews?
5. Jesus revealed the traitor before or after He instituted the Lord's Supper?
6. Upon His arrest, Jesus was taken to Annas before or after He was taken to Caiaphas?
7. Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus before or after Jesus had raised her brother from the dead?
8. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, reigned as king before or after his father's death?
9. King Ahab died before or after his wicked wife was put to death?
10. The prophet Isaiah prophesied before or after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity?

Jokes and Riddles

from Busy Beaver Robin Lodder

1. What has one horn and gives milk? A milk truck.
2. How do you keep a skunk from smelling? Hold its nose.
3. How do you keep an elephant from charging? Take away its credit card.
4. Why did Jennifer go outside with her purse open? She was expecting some change in the weather.
5. What has four wings and flies? Two canaries.
6. What has four wheels and flies? A garbage truck.
7. Why do birds fly south in the winter? Because it's too far to walk.
8. What is gray, has four legs, big ears, a tail and a trunk? A mouse going on a vacation.
9. Mr. Sloan: Does that cow give milk?
Farmer McCoy: No, sir. We have to take it from her.
10. Waiter: How did you find the steak, sir?
Mr. Durwood: I looked under a mushroom and there it was.
11. Mr. De Witt: Waiter, what is this fly doing in my soup?
Waiter: The backstroke.
12. Mrs. Sloan: My daughter's gone on a cruise.
Mrs. Martin: Jamaica?
Mrs. Sloan: No, she wanted to go!

FROM THE MAILBOX



Thank you to Robin Lodder for your letter, jokes and riddles. You must enjoy playing the piano if you have a keyboarding class that is fun. Are you going away for a holiday during the summer, Robin? Write again, won't you? Bye for now.