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The Importance of Education

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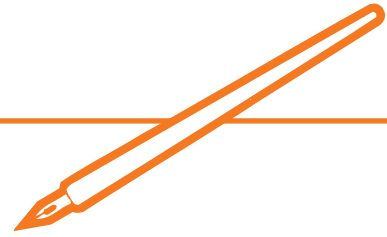
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By Cl. Stam



The Evaluation of Divergences¹



The assurance of faith

The third point in discussion with the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches concerns the “assurance of faith.” About the assurance of faith we confess in the Heidelberg Catechism that true faith “is a sure knowledge. . . and at the same time it is a *firm confidence* that not only to others but also to me God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation, out of mere grace, only for the sake of Christ’s merits. . . .” (LD 7, Q/A21). In other words, the assurance of faith is part of faith itself, or belongs to the “essence” of faith.

Where’s the problem? It is stated in the Westminster Confession that “this infallible assurance doth *not so belong to the essence* of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be a partaker of it.” (Ch 14.2) In other words, you can have true faith but not be assured that you are really and fully saved. Our churches have felt that this is a *reduction* of the riches which believers have by faith in Christ.

Is the assurance of faith to be based on the promise and power of God’s oath or is it to be based on something we have felt or experienced?

For this assurance the catechism directs us to Galatians 2:20, where Paul writes (with great certainty), “I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” There is here no hesitation or doubt, but only a very positive and all-encompassing certainty by which the merits of Christ are appropriated.

Where lays the danger?

At this point one might ask if this is such an important matter. Where lays the danger in specifically stating that assurance does not belong to the essence of faith itself?

Please note that the Westminster Standards do not say that assurance doesn’t belong to faith at all, but does not so belong to the essence of faith, that. . . etc. It is a well-qualified statement which should be read in its context. Perhaps I have not enough in the past taken this into consideration.

The OPC Deputies themselves recognized “the dangers of subjectivism and mysticism.” (Report, page 147) “Sub-

jectivism” means that we place our trust somehow in ourselves and not completely on the promises of God. Faith is not directed to our experiences but to the Word. “Mysticism” means that we receive some special message or sign from God, aside from what is written in his Word, that we are truly his children. It is precisely these dangers of subjectivism and mysticism which we want to meet squarely, for they can be very destructive for the life and maturing of faith.

This matter of the assurance of faith is very important for our manner of preaching, our usage of the sacraments, and our exercising of church discipline.

There is in the history of the continental (European) Reformed Churches evidence of this subjectivism and mysticism. Hence our churches know from experience what the issue is. Is the assurance of faith to be based on the promise and power of God’s oath or is it to be based on something we have felt or experienced? It became evident that *both* Canadian Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian deputies are aware of the same dangers here.

“Not always sensible of this full assurance of faith”

In the discussion the OPC Deputies directed us to the Canons of Dort. In Chapter 5, paragraph 11 we confess that “believers in this life have to struggle with various doubts, and that under grievous temptations they are not always *sensible* of this full assurance of faith and certainty of persevering.” The OPC men felt that this is what the Westminster Standards really mean to say.

This interesting reference to the Canons, however, is not pertinent, because it only speaks about *feeling* the assurance of faith. The fact that we do not *feel* something doesn’t mean that it is not part of faith and should not be present essentially. In truth our true comfort is that the Lord will give us (again) this full assurance *precisely because it belongs to the essence of true faith!*


This reference does alert us to the fact that the assurance of faith is not something that is always present in the same way and may be taken for granted. We shall not allow any false confidence of automatism to creep in. This matter of the assurance of faith is very important for our manner of preaching, our usage of the sacraments, and our exercising of church discipline.

The outcome of the discussion

Was this point about the assurance of faith properly resolved? I think that the two churches came a long way in understanding one another better in this matter. We both want to avoid subjectivism and mysticism. Through this evaluation, we are assured that both churches want to preserve the proper scriptural perspective here.

This matter of the *assurance* of faith is not of a minor importance. It determines how we preach to and teach God's covenant people. I'd like to see more work done on this aspect of the matter.

While enough territory was covered to find a common basis here, our Deputies were correct in observing that on this point the Westminster Standards "could be amended." This would bring out more strongly that the "hope and joy of the believer [are] rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ and his promises and not in his own personal experience." (a quote from the OPC deputies!) The OPC and all its sister-churches will benefit from a strong *Christological* emphasis on this point.

¹This editorial is a continuation of Rev. Cl. Stam's editorial in issue 8 of this year. 

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What's inside?

Rev. Cl. Stam again examines certain points of discussion between the Canadian Reformed and Orthodox Presbyterian churches in his editorial. This time his focus is on the assurance of faith. Thankfully there have been good discussions on this important matter between our churches.

This issue is being sent out around the time of Canada Day. The meditation by Rev. R.E. Pot reflects on the fact that there are some things about Canada that do not make a Christian proud. Thankfully, our citizenship is the kingdom of God. May more and more Canadians come to see and rejoice in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Rev. W. B. Slomp continues his two part series on education and the soul of the child. He draws some sober conclusions: not every teacher is fit to be a teacher. We may be thankful that in our schools we have many fine men and women to whom we can entrust the education of our covenant children. But that needs to be a matter of continual self-examination and improvement.

The *Education Matters* column contains the second part of a speech by Rev. R.J. Eikelboom. Unfortunately, the first part was in issue 6. We regret this separation of the two parts but encourage the reader to refresh the memory by having a peek at issue 6. The entire speech is well worth reading.

There have been articles and letters recently comparing the similarities or differences between the Canadian Reformed Churches and their sister churches in the Netherlands. Rev. K. Jonker gives his personal impressions and observations on this as one who knows both churches quite well.

We have a report from the Middle East Reformed Fellowship – Canada and our regular column, *Ray of Sunshine*.

RA



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By R.E. Pot

God's Holy Nation

"But you are . . . a holy nation." 1 Peter 2:9a

Are you proud to be Canadian? Do you cheer for your country? Are you patriotic? In recent years Canadian patriotism received a boost from a rather unexpected source: a beer commercial. It's an image that has been burned into the minds of most Canadians: an empty stage dominated by a gigantic blowing Canadian flag. "Joe" in his plaid shirt with his sixty second patriotic rant: "Canada is the second-largest land mass, the first nation of hockey and the best part of North America. My name is Joe, and I am Canadian." It has become an advertising legend, and for some, the equivalent of a new national anthem.

Certainly Canada is a wonderful nation. Grand and rugged landscape from coast to coast. Sprawling prairies. Glorious Rockies. Vibrant reds and oranges of fall colours. Brilliant white carpets of winter snow. This is a grand nation, glorious and free. A nation to sing about!

But this is also a nation to weep about. If it's true that many Canadian Joes put hockey and beer in the top three of things they get excited about, that's hardly something to be proud of. Sad to say, Canada is also a very unholy nation. It is becoming a world leader in passing laws that overturn traditional family values. "Alternative" lifestyles are celebrated and rewarded. God and his Word no longer reign supreme.

You'll be pleased to know that there is a better nation. No, it's not the United States. 1 Peter 2:9 tells us what this nation is: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God." Who is this "holy nation" that the Bible talks about? It's not a particular country. It's not a particular race of people. God's holy nation is his church, the true believers in Jesus Christ.

Not everyone is a citizen of God's nation. In fact, the same chapter of the Bible also talks about the people who are not citizens of God's nation. It describes them as "those who do not believe," those who "disobey the message." It says further that those who are not citizens of God's nation, of the church, and who reject the message about Christ: "They stumble, they fall." They stumble and fall in the biggest way possible – into eternal hell. But the citizens of God's nation escape hell. They enter the eternal life of heaven.

How can you be included in this great nation? If you are born in Canada, you have a right to Canadian citizenship. But nobody is born with an automatic right to heavenly citizenship. Because of sin, nobody has what it takes to be regarded as a citizen of God's nation. You can't expect to enter God's nation by filling out all kinds of immigration forms and showing how much of a credit you would be to this new country if they accept you. Realistically, you can only expect a heavenly immigration officer to say: "We only accept perfect people, and you don't have what it takes."

And yet Peter writes that the members of Christ's church *are* God's nation! How is it possible that sinners are included as citizens? Jesus Christ opens the way for entrance to God's nation. He died on the cross to pay for all the bad things that disqualified God's people from becoming part of his nation. He has all the credentials that make entrance into God's heavenly nation possible. He gives them freely to everyone who believes in Him. He, as it were, fills in the forms, signs and seals them with the immigration stamp of his own blood.

In Christ, God makes his covenant with believers and their children, sets

them apart from a sinful world on the road to hell, and makes them heavenly citizens on the road to heaven. Believing Canadians, Americans, Australians and Africans all become fellow-citizens of God's holy nation. These fellow-citizens encourage each other as travellers on the road to eternal life by gathering together regularly as believers in Christ's church. In local churches, they meet together, sing together, help each other, and together serve God their King.

While Canada is a great nation for which we can thank the Lord, a Canadian passport won't do you any good when you die. More important than being a citizen of the nation of Canada, is to be a citizen of God's holy nation. While the beer commercial starring Joe has helped Canadians get excited about our nation of Canada, the reality is that our nation is dying of spiritual thirst. Most Canadian citizens are ignoring the bread of life, the living water, Jesus Christ. More urgent than a message about beer, is the message about this bread of life, this living water, about Jesus Christ, who makes heavenly citizenship possible. A passport signed and sealed with his blood is valid beyond the grave, and allows heavenly citizens to enter eternal life.

Are you patriotic? Do you enjoy singing "O Canada" and "God Save the Queen?" Above all be thankful for God's grace in allowing sinners to be part of his holy nation. Let the national anthems of Christ's church never stop being sung: "O Emmanuel!" "Glory to God the King!"



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Education and the Soul of the Child: Defining the Role of the Home, the Church and the School in the Upbringing of the Child (Part 2)

By W.B. Slomp

(The previous article concluded with remarks about the unique teaching ability and relationship that Jesus Christ had with his own disciples).

Parameters defined

And so the role of a teacher, though very important, is limited. Therefore I agree with Van Dam when he says, "Generally speaking, let the home be home and the school be school."²

What does that mean? Well, the reality is that in many cases the lines between the home, school and church are not all that blurred. There are some very definite lines of demarcation.

Don't go beyond your duties as a teacher.

In the first place it is not the duty of the teachers to bring the child up. You may say that that is obvious. Yet, some teachers cannot resist trying to do that. They want to shape the children into a certain mould. They want to change the way a child behaves.

Don't go beyond your duties as a teacher. If a child seems unhappy, the only thing you can do as a teacher is to make sure that the atmosphere in the classroom is as pleasant as possible, and that the student is treated with kindness and respect.

Some teachers think that they have to go beyond that. They want to be the student's surrogate parent. They befriend the student, become involved in his/her life beyond school hours, and

lend a listening ear. You may say, what is wrong with that? Shouldn't we try to help? Well, it is commendable to go beyond the call of duty, and help a student in every way possible. However, do not overstep your bounds. Do not become entangled in his/her affairs.

For remember in the first place that you are dealing with the student as an individual only outside of his/her own environment. The student, for example, may tell you that he/she is unhappy because of his/her home situation. She may complain about her treatment at the hands of her parents. Even if all you do is listen without giving all kinds of advice, you may be entering an area where you should not enter. For inevitably you will be swayed, even if ever so slightly, to the student's point of view. I do not believe in counselling individuals in isolation from their environment.

That is why I have difficulty with the counselling profession as well. Often they counsel *individuals* with their problems. But, no one lives in a vacuum. We are affected by everything that happens around us. A child's home environment is most influential. In that respect Wielenga is right when he says that "far out the greatest influence on a child comes not from the school and not from the peer-group, but from the family."

What are the dangers? Well, a child can be very persuasive and manipulative. He/she may want to get you on side against the parents for whatever reason. But you as teacher will not know exactly what is going on in the

home. You do not know the background of the child either. In order to find out you may be tempted to go to the parents and inquire of them. However, to mention a certain problem to them is one thing, but to get involved is another.

Well, don't clobber their souls.

In a speech he held in 1983 entitled "Covenantal Education: Ethical Dimension "Parent/Teacher – Alignment," Rev. W. Den Hollander, stated, "Covenantal Education, . . . is done together by parents and teachers. They share the same Christian faith, they should also align in the inherent godliness!" He adds further, "One of my major proposals this morning is, therefore, that we adopt as first means to accomplish this alignment the so-called 'house visits.'"³

Well, house visits may be nice as a means to get to know each other a little better, but not necessary as far as I am concerned. Teachers are busy enough. The minister and elders make house visits. If there is a serious problem between the child and the parents, then the elders should be called in. They can deal with the whole situation. And if you suspect that the parents are physically or sexually abusing a child, then you call in social services, and let them handle it. Physical and sexual abuses are criminal offences, and the Lord has given the secular authorities the sword to deal with those situations.

I know of a teacher who became so involved in a student's life that he saw her at all hours of the day. According to him there was no physical relationship whatsoever. However, it made no difference. Her problems only became worse. When he moved, contact with her was broken off. Some years later the student accused that teacher of sexual abuse. He was convicted, and spent some time in jail. And yet, it was only on her word that he was convicted. It may well be that the teacher was not guilty at all. But what he was guilty of was of overstepping his boundaries. He had no business doing what he did. He spent all kinds of time with the student and became intimately involved in her life. That is the parents' task, not the teacher's. The parent is the primary teacher of their child. He is in a much better position to have a complete picture of what makes a child tick.

Sometimes teachers want to change a student's behaviour because certain character traits or certain habits annoy them. A close relative of mine once told me about his experience at the hands of the certain teacher. It was my relative's habit to stick his tongue out of the side of his mouth as soon as he had to concentrate on a certain task at hand. He did his unknowingly. However, the teacher was so annoyed by it, that every time he saw him do it he would hit him on the head and ridicule him. In a case like that I would say with Wielenga, leave the soul of that child alone.

"Some teachers actually do not like kids, and it shows in the way they treat the pupils."

There are great differences between students. Certain students are easier to love than others. Some are quite awkward socially, and do not interact with others as well as others. Or they have nicer personalities, or are better looking. Some easily understand the subject material, and interact well with the teacher, and with the rest of the class, whereas others are not that way. And so some students are much more of a pleasure to teach than others.

But how do you treat them? What do you do with the awkward ones? What do you do with those who have a hard time concentrating on the material at hand? How do you change their

behaviour? Well, don't clobber their souls. Don't hurt them to the core of their being. Don't ridicule them. That does enormous amount of damage.

You may say, "I don't do that." And I believe you. By far the majority of teachers don't. Yet, we all make mistakes. And if we do, we should not be afraid to apologize. A hurtful remark can leave quite a wound. It needs to be healed. An apology goes a long way in accomplishing that.

There are those who habitually hurt others with their words and actions. They make life for others miserable. Sensitive children especially are then wounded to the depth of their souls and have a hard time, even in later life, overcoming the damage done. It is not just one or two middle-aged men or women who have cried in my presence because of their school experience, there have been many.

I know of some young people right now who have just graduated from high school and who state that, once they have children of their own, they will home school their children because of their negative influence at the hands of a certain teacher at school. And you would be surprised the kind of family that they come from: from well-adjusted families who are active in church and school.

Not every teacher is a teacher

Rev. Cl. Stam in his speech of 1986, *"Christian Ethics and Reformed Education"* made the remark, "Some teachers actually do not like kids, and it shows in the way they treat the pupils."⁴ As I said, such teachers are few and far between, but they can do a lot of damage. It is up to the principal, the teachers and the board to see to it that such teachers are weeded out. That takes courage and vigilance. But, for the sake of our covenant children, this should be done. And yet, too often it doesn't happen. According to me it is better to be short a teacher than to have such a teacher on the payroll.

Children must be positively encouraged so that they can reach their fullest potential. You take into account their abilities, their aptitudes and their idiosyncrasies. You work with the material you have been given. How do you do that?

In a speech⁵ I held at the last teacher's convention held here in Neerlandia, March 20, 1997, I referred to the well-known text of Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he

should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." I said, ". . . we are not dealing here with a command and a promise. We are dealing here with a proverb. It is giving you a word of wisdom. Normally, if that is how you conduct yourself, then that is what will happen. However, there are exceptions to that rule. Children also make their own choices."

And then I went on to relate that in the original language it actually says that we must bring up our children according to the demand of their way. In other words, in the training of your children, it is important that you take into consideration what he himself has to say. Listen to your child. Know what makes him tick. That does not mean that you let him/her do whatever he/she wants. Not at all.

The most important thing a teacher can do is to truly love his students, also and especially the more difficult ones.

Josh McDowell and Dick Day put it: ". . . every parent needs to know the unique characteristics of each child in the family. Training up each child in "his own way" doesn't mean you let a child run wild or allow him to get his own way all the time. In the *Ryrie Study Bible*, a note on Proverbs 22:6 explains that "'in the way he should go' really means 'according to his way'; i.e., the child's habits and interests. The instruction must take into account his individuality and inclinations, and be in keeping with his physical and mental development."⁶

The role of the teacher

And so, what then is the role of the teacher? Well, I am not an educator, and I stand to be corrected, but according to me a teacher must teach a child how to live in this world as a productive worker. He must give him/her the skills how to make a living. There are many skills needed in order to be able to function in this society. Within those parameters he certainly has the duty to be an instrument in the shaping of the soul of those in his charge.

- He/she must teach them how to work and interact with others in society. That begins already in kindergarten. The child must learn to share. The child must learn to be

kind to others, to cooperate together, to work together. They must learn to respect the rights of others. That is one of the reasons I have difficulty with home schooling. Home-schooled children do not have the same opportunities in that regard. I am also glad that my children have been exposed not just to my ideas and idiosyncrasies. They have learned from their teachers, who have different temperaments and ideas. Considering that the teachers in our own parental schools are supposed to have the same love for the Word of God and the confessions, I feel safe to leave them in their care within their defined roles. In this way our children have the opportunity to compare and to grow so that they can develop their uniqueness as a creature of God.

- Our children must know also how to organize their time. They must learn to meet deadlines. They must learn to discipline themselves. They must learn to be responsible for their actions.
- They must also learn how to communicate properly, with the mouth and with the pen. Our children must learn how to have a proper debate. That means that they have to learn to listen to others in the first place, before they speak. They must learn to determine where their opponents are coming from, before they counter their argument. And they must know how to make a coherent presentation without putting others down.
- They must be taught how to put their thoughts on paper. This is important, not only for functioning within society, but especially within the church. Else they have a hard time as an office bearer.
- They must also know how to read. There must be love for literature, and for all kinds of different ideas. In this the teacher must teach them how to read things from a Christian perspective. They must be taught how to think critically.

According to me these are some of the main points in the educating of our covenant children. Let me end some of the remarks that Prof. J. van Bruggen made in an article published in the *Clarion* in 1991. He writes, "The teacher, as a human being, has the great influence. It is of such great importance that later on the young people remember the Christian who guided them in class or any in a certain subject area."⁷

He says the following points are of great importance.

- a. prayer;
- b. the prevention of derisive remarks about other people and other opinions;
- c. a positive attitude towards the Scriptures and the confessions;
- d. love for the student.

I would put the latter on the top of the list. The most important thing a teacher can do is to truly love his students, also and especially the more difficult ones. It might surprise how some of the more difficult and awkward ones will flourish in later life.

He also writes, "Young people cannot be fobbed off. When the Christian faith does not show as a warm personal faith in the Reformed teacher, then weak students will emotionally turn their back to the church while the more willing ones will develop an excessive interest in 'evangelical' movements, such as the Youth for Christ. The school, however, is not weaker or stronger in the faith than the church community as a whole. It can exert itself to strengthen the positive elements and to put the brakes on the degenerating ones."

Teachers, put the brake on degenerating elements. Be a positive influence on the souls of the children within the parameters of your calling.

¹This was a speech held in Neerlandia, Alberta on March 27, 2003 at a Teachers' Convention.

²Van Dam, *Educating*, p. 36

³W. Den Hollander, "Covenantal Education: Ethical Dimension "Parent/Teacher – Alignment," held at the Teacher's Convention, 1983.

⁴Cl. Stam, "Christian Ethics and Reformed Education" held for the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Convention, 1985.

⁵W.B. Slomp, "The Function of the Promise of the Covenant in the Rearing of Children."

⁶Josh McDowell and Dick Day, "How to be a Hero to your Kids" (Word Publishing, 1993), p. 57

⁷J. van Bruggen, "The Christian Character of a Reformed School," trans. by G.M. Spyker, *Clarion*, Vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 65-66.



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God's Glory in the Church

By K. Jonker



Introduction

Since I frequently visit the Netherlands, one of the editors of the Reformed Church News of Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe asked me to write an article comparing our Canadian churches to the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in the Netherlands. I responded that I would find it difficult to make an adequate comparison between the two churches since I miss the overall picture because I generally visit one congregation, namely Haren. There I attend church with joy. When I am requested to lead services in that area I enjoy doing that too and find that my preaching

I already have touched a point which shows that being church in Canada is not different from being a church in Holland.

is well received, albeit that I heard a complaint that seems to be global: that my sermons are a bit too long. Although I did not find myself qualified to make an adequate comparison between the Dutch and the Canadian churches, yet I took up the challenge to put something on paper. The article I wrote on October 31 was published on November 22, 2002. What follows below is a translated and adapted version of the Dutch article

"Gods Heerlijkheid In De Kerk," which means "God's Glory in the Church." The discussion about Rev. J. Huijgen's report about our Dutch churches and the synod at Zuidhorn made me decide to share my thoughts with the readers of *Clarion*.

The question on hand is, are our Canadian churches different from our Dutch sister churches? In brief my response to this question was and still is: "no" and "yes indeed." What do I mean to say? Please read on.

General information

First I shared some information from our yearbook about the number of the Canadian Reformed churches, the membership, the ministers and our Theological College in Hamilton. I mentioned that as comparatively young Reformed churches we have many young people among our membership. I also informed the Dutch readers that our federation established new ecclesiastical relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the Reformed Church of the United States (RCUS).

Furthermore I informed our sister churches in the northern part of the Netherlands that in 2001 our churches have entered Phase 2 on the way to full organic union with the United Reformed Churches in North America, and that in some provinces the implementation of Phase 2 goes very well, e.g., in our province of Manitoba, while in other areas it goes with some difficulty. In this regard I made the following comment (from here I follow the Dutch article), that in the process of reaching full unity we patiently have to work our way through human weaknesses, such as distrust, the feeling of losing our own identity, old sores between members of the different churches, etc. I guess the same would be the case in the Netherlands on the way of establishing full ecclesiastical union between the Liberated churches

and the Free Reformed Churches (the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, KJ).

You see, I already have touched a point which shows that being church in Canada is not different from being a church in Holland. For wherever we are, we are struggling with our own weaknesses of being opinionated, stubborn and self-conceited, whether we speak about the true church, the shape our fathers have given to the Reformed faith and church or whether we contemplate introducing new methods in being a faithful church in the third millennium. I, however, am now running ahead of myself, for I don't want to concentrate first on people when I speak about being church of the Lord.

The preaching and the office

For what is the glory of the church? Scripture teaches that the glory of the church is our holy God. He has come very near to us with his unfailing love in his only Son, Jesus Christ, (see Psalm 33, John 3:16, Ephesians 3:21). The last mentioned reference literally speaks about God's glory in the church! Therefore, when attending church in one of our Dutch sister churches, I experience the overflowing love of our covenant God. Then I exclaim: wow, what a God we have! The One who created the high blue skies over the Canadian prairies

There the perverting influence of secularized life seems to be unstoppable.

and who blows the clouds over the Netherlands reveals his glory in a marvellous way in his catholic church in both countries. His Word is powerful! It indeed is marvellous to taste the covenant preaching in our churches as the ministry of reconciliation. This preaching that addresses the church

members as God's covenant people is characteristic within our churches.

Now in Canada we carefully watch for adding an additional flavour to the preaching. In many evangelical circles, the pure preaching is spoiled by placing the (seeking) believer too much in the centre. Now it certainly does not do us any harm to remind ourselves that the preaching should clearly address the needs of the listeners in the pew. However, addressing the listener's needs should not go at the costs of the pure Word. The preaching of the Word must keep its radiance of the glory of the holy God who is near.

Preaching must remain the administration of God's grace and mercy and must not be reduced to an interesting (spiritual) story, or else it will lose its sharp edge (Heb 4:11-13). With this glorious and sharp Word, the Lord Jesus silenced the arrogant Nicodemus (John 3). He heard the crystal clear Word – and today we hear the same from the exalted Son of God – that one needs to have everything in Christ or else one has nothing!

We must guard against another point. We should not lose the right appreciation for Christ's gift of the office in the congregation. As it is in the Netherlands, the church in Canada must swim against the strong currents of post-modern ideas and attitudes. Today many Christians don't know anymore what it means to humbly submit oneself. In the meantime they continue to speak about the Lord. But who actually is their "lord?"

Yes, also here in Canada, Satan whips up the waves of secularization against us (compare BC art 12). The push of being busy with temporary and immediate pleasure is bigger than being busy with our eternal and lasting joy. Good Christian literature often remains untouched on the bookshelf. This, however, seems to be a bigger concern in the Netherlands. There the perverting influence of secularized life seems to be unstoppable. Nevertheless, the strong dike of church discipline protects the church. And church discipline again refers and radiates God's glory in the church!

The Reformed heritage

In principle the radiance of God's glory in the church is not different between the two countries. That is exactly the reason why we are sister churches! It does not hurt to mention

that in Canada we very much benefit from the Reformed heritage with which God has so richly blessed the church in the Netherlands. From a Dutch standpoint it often is stated, that the emigrants to Canada carried a great deal of the Reformed heritage in their luggage when leaving the old country, and that as immigration churches we have the inclination to hold on stubbornly to what our fathers took along with them when they settled into their new country of Canada. Today's visitors from our Dutch sister churches may see us as old-fashioned in our church life. For here church life seems to go as it happened twenty or thirty years ago in the Netherlands. This, however, is not a totally true assessment. Among us too the Holy Spirit has broken our introverted life and has more and more shown us that we are not just a congregation for ourselves but that we must shine God's glory in and to the world around us. That's why over the years, generally speaking, spiritual life among us has become warmer.

When we focus on the glory of God in his congregation, I believe that living here or in the Netherlands does not make any difference.

To Him be the glory

I hope that I have succeeded in giving the readers a taste of what it means to be Christ's church in this world, whether in the Netherlands or in Canada. When we focus on the glory of God in his congregation, I believe that living here or in the Netherlands does not make any difference.

However, when we focus on how today we concretely give form to church life there is certainly a difference. This difference is more than a cultural difference. And this difference is not only caused by the fact that we are emigrant churches from the Dutch viewpoint. The latter is less and less the case though. Today's (third) generation in our churches do not grow up as Dutch immigrants but as Canadians.


I think that the difference must be sought whether we believingly (not stiffly) maintain our Reformed heritage, yes or no. For me this means that we firmly must hold on to the connection



with the past, that is to say, with church history. For the glory of God also shines in church history (Matt 16:18, Phil 2:16, Heb 13:7).

Every generation in the church has the duty to make the heritage of the previous generations their own possession and to appreciate the obedience of our fathers in faith. Personally I have my concerns how the present generation in our sister churches in the Netherlands gives form to this challenge.

It is not difficult to criticize the work and stand of the previous generations. If we do that by simply criticizing their methods, ignoring their arguments and following our own ways in different methods of preaching and worship, then we are acting in our own wisdom. If we, however, maintain our preaching and worship in a mere traditional way without being conscious of the biblical reasons for them and without rejoicing in the glory of God, we too live in our own wisdom.

Wherever we are in the church of the Lord, we must consciously stand on the shoulders of our parents in humble submission to the wisdom of God. We must know this wisdom and experience this wisdom to his praise. To Him be the glory in the church forever! 

Rev. K. Jonker is minister of Grace Canadian Reformed Church at Winnipeg, Manitoba. kjonker@canrc.org



By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done. Genesis 2:1, 2, 3

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Sunday is a very special day for us as children of God. In the beginning, God created the earth and everything in it, and God saw that it was good, so on the seventh day He rested. The story of creation showed the Israelites that the idea of the Sabbath was already based on how God created the world. Israel knew very well the purpose of the Sabbath day. It was the day of rest after six days of work.

The Lord reminded them of this at Sinai, when God gave Israel the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 20:8 and following we read: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

How do we in our personal lives observe the Sabbath day? Has it become a day of tradition, or do we do whatever we want as long as it is not work-related? Do we show others in our walk and talk that we are different and that we are set apart? As Hebrews 10:23 says "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful."

We must spur or encourage each other on toward love and good deeds, and that we continue to meet together. We must diligently attend the church of God, to hear God's Word, to use the sacraments, to call publicly upon the Lord, and to give Christian offerings to the poor. We need to be reminded every week anew how sinful we are and how we have fallen short in the past week, by not obeying the Lord.

Whether we are young or old or in between, we must live so others can see Christ in us. This means in every aspect, and in every activity of our daily life. As Christians – we represent Christ at all times – wherever we go and whatever we do and especially on the day of rest. Throughout our daily life we must continually pray for the Holy Spirit to work mightily in us, and so begin in this life the eternal Sabbath. We may be very thankful for the peace we have with God now, and may look forward to eternal rest. Our rest here on earth will not end with death, but will become eternal rest in the place that Christ is preparing for us.

"There remains then a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his" (Heb 4:9, 10). Let

our hearts be ever-thankful in praise and prayer that God gave us a Sabbath day, set apart for his praise, worship and glory. In this day of rest, we may enjoy a foretaste of our eternal joy when creation will be renewed, and restored, and every mark of sin will be gone.

"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever" (Heb 13:15, 16, 20, 21).

*How glad I was when unto me
They said, "Let us with one accord
Go to the temple of the LORD,
There to adore His majesty."
Jerusalem, where blessing waits,
Our feet are standing in your gates;
Here shall we bring our supplication.
Jerusalem is built so well:
It is the pride of Israel;
Securely knit are its foundations.*

Psalms 122:1

Birthdays in May:

4: JAMES BUIKEMA will be 42

c/o R. Feenstra
278 St. Catherine Street, PO Box 662
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

20: CHARLIE BEINTEMA will turn 28

19 Forest Street, Chatham, ON N7L 2A9

28: JIM WANDERS will be 42

538 Wedgewood Drive, Burlington, ON L7L 4J2

29: TOM VANDERZWAAG will turn 50

Anchor Home, 361, Thirty Road, RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2

Congratulations to you all on your birthday. We hope and pray that you will have an enjoyable day together with your family and friends. May our heavenly Father bless you in this new year with much health and happiness. Till next month,

Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman
548 Kemp Road East, RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2
1-905-563-0380

NEWS from MERF-Canada

A Special Series of Arabic Gospel Broadcasts

The MERF broadcasting team is producing a new series of broadcasts aimed at presenting Christ as the true prince and source of peace. The spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ is also emphasized.

God's people in Iraq

At the turn of the third century, the area known today as Iraq was, in culture and name, almost totally "Christianized." However, not many years afterwards most of the population was converted to Islam. Baghdad became an important centre for Islamic politics, learning and culture. Iraq was also the birthplace for radical Shiite Islam. Over the centuries, the ethnic and religious complexity of the land led to much conflict and many massacres. Still, today there are more than a million people in Iraq called Christian. Mostly they belong to ancient Nestorian, Assyrian, Chaldean and Armenian churches. In the second half of the nineteenth century faithful Reformed missionaries introduced the Arabic Bible and the doctrines of grace to Iraq. A small but growing Reformed community was established.

In recent years the Lord has blessed their faithful testimony among their Muslim neighbours. A growing number of Iraqi Muslims have come to trust in Christ, initially through listening to Gospel broadcasts. Most of them face a great deal of hardship as they experience family and community persecution and rejection and at times have to run away for their lives. MERF provides support for local Iraqi churches, enabling them to meet many pressing diaconal needs. It also supports thirteen Iraqi pastors and evangelists who minister to these churches and to tens of thousands of Iraqi refugees in Jordan.

Christians in neighbouring Iran

Over twenty years ago, Ayatollah Khomeini led an Islamic revolution that established an Islamic republic in Iran, promising that Islamic ways would solve all problems. The vast majority of Iranians believed his message. He set out to purge the society of anything that did not conform to his version of "pure" Islam. Anyone who did not voluntarily convert to his Islamic vision or conform to his ways had to go into hiding. Hundreds of thousands fled the country, including a few thousand Christians. Those that did not hide or leave the country were detained and subjected to torture and immense pressures. A number of nominal Christians converted to Islam. He ordered the execution of several thousand former government officials, civil servants, army officers, politicians, businessmen, teachers and religious leaders. Among those executed were forty-one Evangelical and Reformed pastors and church leaders. Under the watching eyes of the fanatical Revolutionary Guard, a small number of Assyrian and Armenian Christians were allowed restricted worship. However, the majority of Iranian believers went underground. Many were caught, tortured and killed. Most now live on meagre incomes from humble jobs. Yet, the saints have not been intimidated. They have refused to deny their Lord and Saviour.

Since the Islamic revolution, the country went to ruin. The economy collapsed and the quality of life greatly declined. People's problems did not disappear. Thus, a growing number began to resent Khomeini and became disenchanted with his "pure" Islam. All the while, the underground church has continued quietly to strengthen and grow. The Lord has sustained and enabled them to boldly witness to those who sincerely inquire after the reason for their inner peace, joy and hope.

They are being nourished by faithful leaders and by biblical radio messages in the Farsi language. The Lord continues to daily add to their number those who are being saved.

Gospel inroads among Arabic-speaking Muslims in Eritrea

About half the Eritrean population are Muslim and speak the Arabic language. They live mostly in the lower and coastal regions. Evangelical/Reformed missionary endeavours have largely neglected them. Western missions in Ethiopia and Eritrea during the twentieth century concentrated on reaching either the animist tribes or those belonging to the Coptic tradition. Until recently no significant Muslim conversions have been reported throughout the region of East Africa. During the war of liberation (from Ethiopia) many Eritreans fled to neighbouring countries and/or made their way, as refugees, to western nations, where they experienced the love and care of Christians. They included significant numbers of Arabic-speaking Eritrean Muslims. Some of those who were converted consequently made their way back to their native land. They brought with them not only financial wealth but also the liberating Gospel of Christ. Their testimony is bearing much fruit. John Grotenhuis and Tesfai Samrit give thanks for the Lord's blessing on their work among Somali and Sudanese refugees in other parts of Eritrea and the work among children carried out in the capital, Asmara.

Palestinian Christian community

Less than four percent of the people of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza identify themselves as Christians. Only a fraction of these are committed believers. Suffering with the insecurities, hardships and losses of daily living amidst a seemingly unending bloody conflict be-

tween Arabs and Jews, this tiny Christian community is neglected and almost altogether ignored. Yet, they stand strong in the Lord, a light in a land overcome by darkness, salt in a culture of blind fanaticism, hate, and violence. Pastor Danny Awad of the Baraka congregation in Bethlehem reported to MERF's International Council in October of last year, "In the eyes of the world we account for nothing here. We have no voice. Most Protestants do not know that we even exist. At times we feel lonely, surrounded by suspicion and hate from all sides. But we are the ones whose message of reconciliation through faith in the true Messiah of God, both Jews and Muslims desperately need. It is our obligation to remain in this land, to bear witness to both Arabs and Jews; to call on them to embrace the Prince of Peace. There is no other hope for anyone here outside of Christ."

Saudi women show interest in the Gospel

The number of letters arriving from Saudi Arabian women indicates that young literate women are open to the Gospel. It is even more encouraging

that they seem to be willing to talk to one another and even to men about what they are thinking. Z.M. (twenty-eight years old) is married with two children. She says in a recent letter:

My family is very busy. But I cherish the moments of silence and meditation after listening to your talks on Radio Monte Carlo. . . This morning my best friend phoned me and surprised me when she said that she and her sister listened to the same broadcast. . . . Yes, Issa (Jesus) could not be just another good prophet. . . . There is so much different about him and his teaching. . . . I am happy to know that I can write to Arab people who believe in him. But I prefer to write only to women. . . .

Encouraging progress in Northern Sudan

"If you want to know about the power of the Gospel in Sudan, look even beyond the tremendous growth of the church in the South and the Nuba mountains. Great things are happening in Khartoum and throughout the north." Pastor S.N., who is active in reaching Muslims and nurturing converts, goes on to

say: "The church has more than quadrupled in the Khartoum area during the past 15 years. . . . The growing southern Sudanese population in the north has been greatly used of God to impact the lives of many northerners - in the army, in schools and universities, in government offices, among business people and even in prisons. There are now many converts in several local churches. The exciting thing is to see whole households unified in their love for their new-found Saviour."

Thank you!

Thank you for your faithful support! Please continue to remember MERF with your donations but above all with your prayers as MERF seeks to bring the message of true peace to the Middle East.

By way of reminder: Please make all cheques payable to "MERF-Canada" and send them to:

MERF-Canada

1225 Dundas St., RR 1
Burlington ON L7R 3X4

J. Mulder
J. Van Dam 

General Synod Chatham 2004

In accordance with the decision of Synod Neerlandia 2001, *Acts*, Art. 102 the church at Chatham, Ontario will, D.V., convene the forthcoming General Synod for

Tuesday, February 10, 2004 at 9:00 a.m.

in the Chatham church building.

You are reminded of the provision of the "Guidelines for Synod," 1.A (*Acts* Abbotsford, p. 103)

that all material for Synod should be received by the convening church

**IN TWENTY TWO COPIES
no later than SIX WEEKS PRIOR**

to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date will ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for late arrival are reasonable.

Mailing Address:

Agenda Committee Synod 2004
416 St. Clair Street, P.O. Box 20084
Chatham, ON N7L 5K6



The Importance of Education: Just the Parents' Business?¹ (Part 2)

By R.J. Eikelboom

Responsibilities of the Office Bearers

Before I go on, I want to share the observation that discussions on this subject can often be very emotional. Perhaps that is because very few of us read about and then think through a logical position regarding Christian education. Instead, most of us have heard our parents talk and pray about it. We remember their genuine desire to do what was pleasing to the Lord and how much they sacrificed for that. Then, if we decide to do it differently than our parents did, we may very well feel that we are betraying them. We need to learn to speak to each other gently and sensitively, and not necessarily try to convince each other in a brief conversation. We must be willing to think about possible objections and address them. Having said that, I would like to offer some practical suggestions on what the office bearers can do. Though you may find some of my suggestions impractical or idealistic, I would remind you that the Bible is rather idealistic as well.

In the first place, I would like to say something about the preaching. My impression is that the walls between Canadian Reformed Churches and evangelical churches are not as high or as solid as they used to be. On the positive side of the ledger, this means that we have learned from the evangelicals that the Lord requires a personal faith, a sincere personal commitment, and a personal relationship with him. In my preaching, I have certainly tried to emphasize this. But when we deal with the subject of Reformed education, I am reminded of the importance of the communion of saints. I am reminded that God is saving a church for himself. In this context, it becomes obvious that the evangelical emphasis on the individual cannot really benefit the church in the

long term. Here I need to adjust my preaching. I don't mean that I have to mention Tyndale Christian School [Canadian Reformed School in Calgary] in my sermons or my prayers more often; instead, I mean that my preaching has to encourage the congregation members to have a living, active interest in each other, for the future of the church is at stake.

The school board is in no way responsible for promoting the school and trying to attract members.

Elders, you can do your minister a great service by reminding him of this. Listen carefully, remembering that the preaching must hold us all personally responsible for what we do, as well as confront God's people with their collective responsibility. This is a matter of balance. Covenantal preaching will encourage the church community to support Christian education. Because God is saving a people for himself, and because congregation members want to assist each other, they will work for the building of the church of the future. After all, if one doesn't support the education of the children now, the congregation has no future.

Whose task is it to promote the school? Is it the school board's responsibility? In response, parents who are interested in Reformed education elect a school board, and the school board governs the school. The school board is in no way responsible for promoting the school and trying to attract members. I am not saying that the school board should not have a public relations committee, and neither am I arguing that the school board should stop

fund-raising; nevertheless, we need to understand that Article 58 is not in the constitution of the school association. The school board does not have the task to recruit members. Instead, the Church Order gives a certain responsibility to the consistory, and the consistory may not shove this responsibility onto the school board.

Responsibilities of the school

In the second place, I would like to say something about the way that our schools function. We said that we established a Reformed school because we are concerned about the future of the church. To give this concept a different spin: the school exists for the well-being of the church. That means that the school is not there just for one part of the community or for its own sake; the school is there for the entire church community. This is a challenge that our school boards and staffs need to consider. What are we doing for the church community? Do we look for opportunities to reach out to all our brothers and sisters in the church, especially those children who are being home-schooled or educated elsewhere? Do we try to include them? Are we interested in serving them? If we believe that the school exists for the well-being of the whole church community, we must encourage the school to show it and live it.

We should encourage the school to make the connection with the church as clear as possible. Let them pray for the ministers. When they have an opportunity, let them connect the Bible stories and other activities with the preaching. They can advertise their events in the church bulletin. They can let the minister know what psalms the children are learning at school, and hopefully we can sing some of them in the worship services. Let the school invite the minister

to teach Bible or catechism or church history at school. (For about five years now, I have been involved at Tyndale Christian School. This is with the full support of consistory, and it is an obvious way for the church to show that it views the school as important.)

...the school is there for the entire church community.

On talent evenings, or when the school has an open house, the whole congregation should be invited. Let the membership structure of the school society reflect the fact that every communicant member of the congregation can be a member, with full voting rights. Let the constitution of the school reflect the fact that the school association is working for the congregation under the supervision of the consistory. For example: if there is a dispute between the school board and a staff member, or a parent, does the school board make use of consistory in any way? Or if there are discipline problems with a student, a member of the church, do we involve the district elder? We claim that the school is connected to the church. We claim that our school provides covenant education. Well, then it is incumbent upon the school to demonstrate that clearly.

School choice

In an essay entitled "The Christian Character of the Reformed School," Prof. J. van Bruggen argues that the school is no stronger or weaker than the community it serves. If things are going wrong in the homes – if the families are not Christian families – the school cannot do much about that. Then it is not the task of the school to reform the church; the hands of the school are tied. However, the hands of the elders are not tied; they go on home visits where they meet teachers, the principal, or the board members, and where they also talk to the students. Eventually the elders report on all these visits to the consistory. If we agree with van Bruggen's statement that the school is no stronger or weaker than the community it serves – and I do agree with this statement – then problems of a general nature which surface in the school must receive the attention of the elders and the preaching.

Only in this context – where the school is showing that it is connected to the church, and where the church shows that it is connected to the school – can it be beneficial that the elders raise an issue such as school choice with the parents. But, please, the elders should not begin by telling the parents what they should and should not be doing; instead, the elders should begin by trying to understand the parents. Why are they making this particular decision for their child? When the parents have answered this question, ask them what impact they think their decision will have on their children. If parents choose one school above another for financial reasons, for example, remind them that their children will surely understand that. For dad and mom,

Prof. van Bruggen argues that the school is no stronger or weaker than the community it serves.

money is most important. If a decision is motivated by the relative status of the schools – for example, by the academic options available, or the sports program – tell the parents that their children will understand clearly what is the most important in their parents' lives! Obviously it is not love of the Lord! Do not be afraid to warn them, brothers, that faithfulness leads to blessings, but unfaithfulness leads to curse. In fact, I must remind you of what the prophet Ezekiel writes in chapter 3: if you see danger, and you warn the people involved, their sins will be on their own head. But if you don't warn them, God will hold you responsible. God will hold you accountable for their blood.

If the parents are convinced that their decision is best for the child, the elders may well ask the parents another question: how does your decision affect the school community, and therefore the church? If some parents have the necessary talents and the opportunity to home-school, there are certainly other parents who do not. In 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle Paul compares the communion of saints to a body, and he points out that we need each other. Consequently, it is appropriate to challenge each other. As elders, it is our duty to ask the people of God: is this really best for your child, for your family, and for the church community? Af-

ter all, it is a biblical principle that as communion of saints we must support each other, not just where we absolutely have to, but wherever we can and may. With respect to education we really can help each other.

In some cases the parents may be convinced that the school is unable to provide the particular type of education that their child needs, and we may be forced to agree with them. Then there is no issue. We can support them. In fact, every Sunday in the public worship service I pray for some children in the congregation who are being home-schooled. The church community needs to be encouraged to keep its doors open, to include these children as much as we can for the well-being and benefit of the church. When somebody stops sending his children to our school, he does not stop being a member of the church. Then, instead of wagging our finger at them, telling them that they have to repent and send their children to our school, we should show them what our school has to offer. In this respect as well, the Lord holds us responsible for what we do; he does not hold us responsible for the reaction of others.

It is also possible that people choose to home school because they consider our school to be too liberal, or unchristian. Along the grapevine I have heard stories about drugs and sex and alcohol and all sorts of other godlessness in Canadian Reformed schools. If true,

...if we have no schools left, we will have no churches left either.

then it is understandable that parents begin to wonder. Yet I would remind you of those words I already quoted from Prof. van Bruggen: "The school is no stronger or weaker than the community that it serves." That implies that the lifestyle of our young people reflects in a general sense the dominant lifestyle in our church community. Consequently, if there are families in the congregation who believe that they have to keep their children separate from the other children in the congregation, these parents are separating themselves from the church. For if your children cannot go to school with them, can your children go to catechism classes or Bible study with them; can your children date them, or marry them? These are questions which we may direct at

the parents who pull their children out of our school. We need to urge them to consider what their place is in a communion of saints, when they do not consider some others to be saints. Please, do not suggest to them that they should come back and help fix the problem. It's an easy answer, but it's neither helpful nor biblical. I can only help somebody if I recognize that I am a sinner, that I am just as much a part of the problem as he is. If you tell me that I am better, and that they need my help, you can send me on an ego trip, but I cannot help anyone.

Do not ignore alarm bells

This cannot be the end of the discussion, though, brothers. If people pull their children out of the Canadian Reformed school because they are offended by the godless behaviour of our children, it is one thing to challenge the reasoning of those parents. However, we may not ignore the alarm bells. If the truth be told, there is something seriously wrong with our schools. Hundreds of young men are graduating from Canadian Reformed schools every year, but so few of them go into teaching.

Why? Why aren't they excited about the thought of passing on the baton, teaching the next generation the ways of the Lord? Why do so many of them choose to go into computing and related industries, where they can make a pile of money, while the *Clarion* has pages full of advertisements: Christian Teachers Wanted? I know! It's because "The school is no stronger or weaker than the community that it serves." It's

because we parents often give the impression that we measure our success by the types of cars we drive and the houses we live in; it's because we parents are so free to criticize teachers. Most of all, it's because we parents don't show that we love the church, and that the future of the church is dearest to our hearts. The reality is that the churches need school teachers just as desperately as they need ministers. If we don't get the school teachers we need, our churches have no future. It is time that we start dealing with the problem. We need to love our schools and our teachers, to pray for them, and to show our teachers and our school boards that we are behind them, all the way. Remember, if we have no schools left, we will have no churches left either.

...every Sunday in the public worship service I pray for some children in the congregation who are being home-schooled.

In conclusion, although our job with respect to Christian education is a lot of work, it really is quite simple. In the first place, it must begin in the worship service on Sunday. As I was preparing this speech, I was reminded of the awesome responsibility that ministers have: to show the congregation that serving God in their personal life is important, and also to demonstrate an active and living interest in each other. I

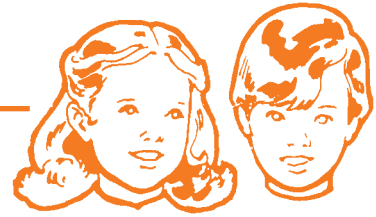
am convinced that we should not talk about Christian education unless we have first built the basis where we care for each other as a communion of saints. Secondly, office bearers must demonstrate that they truly value our own schools. They show this by making sacrifices and by bending over backwards to support the school in every way. Thirdly, congregation and school members must draw the link between church and school.

When this happens, the elders will dare to enter the homes of the people of the congregation and challenge them to explain their choice. Of course, this can only be done humbly, prayerfully, and evidently in a spirit of love. There must be love for the parents who have to make these tremendously important decisions, and love for God and his church. This love must be accompanied by the faith that good Christian schools and good Christian teachers will surely be a blessing, not just for us and our children, but also – and most importantly – for God's church!

'This two-part article is an edited version of a speech first presented by Rev. R. Eikelboom at an office bearers' conference in Edmonton, May 2002. Part 1 of this speech may be found in issue 6, March 14, 2003 of Clarion.

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By Aunt Betty

Dear Busy Beavers:

Are you enjoying your summer holidays? Maybe you are taking a trip somewhere or going camping or to a cottage. Maybe you aren't going away during the holidays but are doing special things around your house which you would not have time for when you go to school. Hopefully you are all enjoying time outdoors in God's beautiful creation. Could you tell me what you are planning to do or have done this summer? It would be nice to hear from some of you.

Love,
Aunt Betty



Puzzles

Fathers

We celebrated Father's Day not too long ago.
Can you match these fathers from the Bible with each statement?

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Told to sacrifice his son,
Genesis 22:1, 2 | a. Job |
| 2. Father who walked with God,
Genesis 5:21 | b. Joseph |
| 3. Blessed the wrong son,
Genesis 27:22, 23 | c. Adam |
| 4. Betrayed by his son,
2 Samuel 15:12-31 | d. Jairus |
| 5. Lost all his children tragically,
Job 1:13-15 | e. Isaac |
| 6. Jesus raised his daughter,
Mark 5:22-42 | f. Enoch |
| 7. Father of twelve tribes,
Genesis 49:28 | g. David |
| 8. Son baptized Jesus,
Luke 1:13 | h. Jacob |
| 9. Fled to Egypt with his family,
Matthew 2:13 | i. Kish |
| 10. Son was the first king of Israel
1 Samuel 9:3 | j. Zechariah |
| 11. First father on Earth,
Genesis 4:1 | k. Abraham |

Praise Him !

Circle every third letter below
(beginning with the first letter)
to discover a well known verse in the Psalms!
Write out the message on the lines below.

OAKHMSGYEIKQVBVENUTVAHZJANWNXC
KBJSNTTZFOLRTCWHMOETBLIKOVURYD
DCIFOUOAGRMSHDXELPIWC SHLGQTOZE
ODHDPVFBHONTREYHKQIXDSGOMPSEAF
REBCQWYCI EOUNFZDJRUYERFMEROSBG
FGLORXRDJEPAVGHEISR .

(Psalm 118:1)



Aunt Betty

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