

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 53, No. 20 • September 24, 2004

Worship Lite

Water is
Thicker than
Blood

Secularization
of Ontario's
Public
Education



*Exalt the LORD our
God and worship at
his holy mountain
for the LORD our
God is holy.*

Psalm 99:9

**J. Visscher**

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Worship Lite

How different it is today wherein God's holiness and transcendence often receives scant attention.

A popular new word

No, the title does not contain an incorrect word or a spelling mistake. You might have assumed that the word should be "light" instead of "lite," but not so. Lite has become a popular word over the last number of years. You will find it used on various food labels, on trailers and on a host of different products, all indicating that this item weighs less than normal or has fewer calories than it used to have.

Still, that is not quite the meaning that I had in mind in connection with worship. Rather I am thinking of one of the meanings that the latest edition of the Canadian Oxford Dictionary has for the word "lite" namely, "lacking in substance." Much that passes for worship and worship services in Christendom today can be placed in this category.

Voices of concern

On what basis do I say that? Is this a correct evaluation? For evidence I can point to a number of sources.

First, there is the media. Various Christian magazines, theological journals, books, computer websites, and television programs have been commenting on this for several years. Authors like D.G. Hart, Mark Noll and David Wells, among others, come to mind as critics of modern trends both in Christianity generally and worship in particular.

Second, there is personal investigation. A Reformed-Presbyterian missionary went on furlough for six months and took up residence in a Canadian city known for its many churches and even for its evangelical reputation. He decided that on his Sundays there he would visit as many churches as possible and take in their worship services.

What was his experience like? It was, he remarked, a great disappointment. What he found was very little solid, biblical preaching. The sermons were short, topical, clever, humorous, sometimes hi-tech, and geared to entertaining. Often the minister's text was a pretext or a springboard. Sin was hardly mentioned. God was always and only a friend. Sometimes the Bible was not even opened.

As for the music, the songs varied from the traditional to the contemporary. And he expected that. What he did not

expect was the popularity of so many new songs that in their words were superficial and biblically shallow and in their tunes had more in common with rock than with religion.

Of course, it is easy to dismiss the testimony of just one man. But there is a third man whose concern is not so easy to set aside, and that is the Rev. John R.W. Stott. He happens to be England's leading evangelical Anglican church man and a Christian leader recognized around the world. He writes:

Even in the church we seem to have lost the vision of the majesty of God. There is so much shallowness and levity among us. Prophets and psalmists would probably say of us that "there is no fear of God before their eyes." In public worship our habit is to slouch or squat; we no longer kneel, let alone prostrate ourselves in humility before God. It is more characteristic of us to clap our hands with joy than to blush with shame and tears. We saunter up to God to claim his patronage and friendship; it does not occur to us that he might send us away. We need to hear again the apostle Peter's sobering words: "Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives in reverent fear."

Biblical worship

All of these comments and concerns in turn raise the question, "If so much that passes for worship today is lite and superficial, what does true worship look like?" To answer that it has to be said that biblical worship is characterized by at least the following principles:

a) A sense of the greatness of God

If you turn to the Holy Scriptures and ask, "how do they describe this God who is to be worshipped?" the answer lies in his greatness. Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the Book of Psalms. Psalm 96: 4 is a case in point when it states, "For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods." Or what about Psalm 99:9, "Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his holy mountain for the LORD our God is holy"?

From these and so many other verses it is obvious that the LORD our God was never viewed apart from his worthiness and holiness. Hebrew believers had a deep sense of his transcendence. They praise Him for his omnipotence, his omniscience, his omnipresence, even for his justice (see Ps 139).

Where is the reverence? Where is the awe?

How different it is today wherein God's holiness and transcendence often receives scant attention. It is his immanence that dominates. It is familiarity that rules. God as buddy is in. Only, that is not as it should be and we do well to go back to the Bible and worship our God for his greatness.

b) A love and hunger for truth

If there is a current love and hunger in religious circles, it seems to be one filled with a desire to be affirmed, esteemed, assured and elevated. We want a God who conforms to our needs. And that is quite different from seeking the God of truth.

But again, is that not what Scripture teaches us. We should not seek after a God who conforms to us but we need to conform to God and to his will. His truth is what should shape

Inside . . .

Dr. J. Visscher writes in his editorial about the "Lite" worship service. His conclusion in this article is, "Properly speaking our worship services need to strike a proper balance between being orderly and yet warm, corporate and yet personal."

Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff continues to evaluate A. L. Th. de Bruijne's essays in the Dutch publication *Woord op schrift*. She turns to his second essay, wherein he deals with the question whether it will help Reformed theology if, more so than is normal within the Reformed tradition, some aspects of *historical* passages in Scripture are explained not literally but metaphorically.

A press release of a church order meeting between committees of the Canadian Reformed and United Reformed Churches shows that discussions and developments are going very well. A common church order is of vital importance between churches that are seeking federative unity. We may be thankful that things are going well in this respect.

We have some regular columns: *Treasures, New and Old*, *Children's Catechism*, *Education Matters* and *Ray of Sunshine*.

RA



Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

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**ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:
(subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):**

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202
Email: clarion@premierprinting.ca

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
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Subscription Rates for 2004	Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada*	\$42.00*	\$69.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds  	\$44.50	\$57.50
International	\$69.00	\$103.00

*Including 7% GST – No. 890967359RT
Advertisements: \$13.50 per column inch
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

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our minds and hearts and attitudes. Is that not also what the Psalmist emphasizes so clearly in Psalm 119? There you will find one long discourse on God as a God of truth, on our need to know his will, love his will, and do his will. God's truth is equated with life and blessing.

Often worship can be an exercise in which we enter a church building and want to hear what we think is important. Our agenda should prevail. Biblical worship, however, is different. It concentrates on God's agenda and expects us to place our lives within its framework. God comes first and God's truth comes first.

c) A conviction of human unworthiness

But then if true biblical worship is all about God and truth, it is also about us as worshippers. Just how do we come before this Lord and God? With what sort of a mindset do we worship Him? What sort of hearts should be calling on Him?

The dominant answer these days seems to be – hearts that have little or no awareness of sin, humility or unworthiness. Years ago Pierre Berton wrote a book called *The Comfortable Pew*. Well, not much has changed in the interim. As a matter of fact, a good case can be made for the fact that the pew has become even more comfortable, and padded. Words like sin, transgression, repentance, depravity have been all but banished from church pulpits and human vocabularies.

Properly speaking our worship services need to strike a proper balance between being orderly and yet warm, corporate and yet personal.

If Isaiah the prophet were living today he would have an exceedingly hard time getting people to take his "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips" (6:5) seriously. By and large, we do not consider ourselves "unclean." We may have some spots and wrinkles here and there, but do not be too hard on us.

The biblical worshipper, however, dissents. He or she knows that it is a humble and contrite spirit that God esteems (see Isa 66:2)

d) An attitude of reverence and awe

But then if a proper sense of sin should be there in every true worshipper, there should also be something else, namely a resultant attitude of reverence and awe. Now, that word "awe" has already been mentioned, but the word "reverence" has not, and yet it needs to be. For together these two words best describe how we need to approach our God always.

Of course, I realize that some view this as Old Testament religion. They claim that the God of the Old Testament is

remote, intimidating and legalistic, whereas, the God of the New Testament is near, fun-loving and gracious. But such characterizations can not pass biblical scrutiny. One proof of that is to be found in those words "reverence and awe" and in their combination. They are written in Hebrews 12:28. In other words, it is a New Testament writer who formulates it in this way. Acceptable worship, he says, is always worship done out of a spirit of reverence and awe. And just in case we missed that, he quotes approvingly in verse 29 from Deuteronomy 4:24 – "our God is a consuming fire."

Quite simply, our God has not changed. What He was in the Old Testament, He remains in the New Testament. In both testaments we are being reminded that worshipping Him is never to be relegated to the category of casualness.

And yet that is what we so often see today. Casualness is in! Many professing Christians allow it to impact on the frequency of their worship. They worship when they feel like it. They allow it to impact on their dress. Suddenly God has become a God of the inside and here we had always thought that he was a God of both the outside and the inside. They allow it to impact on their offering. Whether or not I follow the principles Christian charity and first fruits is up to me.

Where is the reverence? Where is the awe?

e) A need for order

One final biblical principle needs mention and it has to do with order. You can find it in 1 Corinthians 14:40, where the apostle Paul states, "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." These words were written specifically about worship. In Corinth disorder prevailed. Worship was a free-for-all. This member had a favourite hymn that had to be sung, another had a word of instruction that needed to be heard by all, still another claimed to have received a revelation, and then there were those who uttered a tongue. In the midst of all of these believers jockeying for opportunity and attention, Paul calls for order.

It might help if he was heard more often making the same call today. Disorder is making a comeback. Worship having order, structure, flow, style and solemnity is frowned on. Everything has to be spontaneous, off the cuff, loose and free flowing.

Now, I know that too much order can lead to formalism. We need to be on guard against that too. Properly speaking our worship services need to strike a proper balance between being orderly and yet warm, corporate and yet personal. Nevertheless that hardly seems to be the over-riding need at present. Today there is ample evidence to suggest that many churches need to re-discover what it means to worship "in a fitting and orderly way."

In due time, I hope, the Lord willing, to come back to some of these matters in more detail. For now, however, let us reflect on these biblical principles, as well as on others that could be added, and strive to worship the Lord our God in a manner fitting to His person. Worship lite is, and always should be, for us a glaring contradiction.



K.A. Kok

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MATTHEW 13:52

Water is Thicker than Blood

Leviticus 12:1-8

While we know that Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable, it is safe to say that Leviticus is one of the least studied books in the Bible. Leviticus seems to abound in obscure details that seem irrelevant to our lives as Christians. The laws of sacrifice may shed light on the death of Christ, but the clean and unclean laws make our eyes glaze over. Consider Leviticus 12:1-8: a woman is unclean for forty days after the birth of a boy and eighty days after the birth of a girl. The woman goes through a cleansing ritual at the end of a week for a boy and at the end of two weeks for a girl. Then at the end of the forty days, or eighty days, she is to bring a sacrifice to make atonement for her. There is no explanation of why this is to be done. Israel is simply told to do it.

To understand this, we have to remember that Leviticus follows Exodus. In Exodus, God gathers his people to Himself, gives his name to them, and begins to dwell in their midst. Exodus ends with the tabernacle being built and Yahweh's glory filling it, but no one, not even Moses, could enter in. God is much closer, but how can Israel enter in? God in her midst means Israel has a whole new batch of responsibilities. If her sins offend Yahweh, He may leave, or He may break out against her. A number of new factors come into the picture. Now we have the purification and reparation offerings, which deal with defiling the sanctuary and holy things, and which Israel had not had before. Now people can become unclean and have to be kept from the sanctuary. The clean and unclean

laws have nothing to do with hygiene. They deal with access to the tabernacle and are related to the curses in Genesis 3. To be unclean is to be, in various ways, ceremonially dead.

As Israel meditated on Leviticus 12, she would see that the background was the judgment announced to the woman in Genesis 3. To the physical distress in childbearing, there is also ceremonial distress. The blood from the innermost parts associated with the childbearing makes the woman unclean. The baby born in blood is unclean and shows the passing along of the death nature in Adam. The child is born dead in sin. The child starts out dead and God makes him alive. That is why it is forty days for a boy; a boy is circumcised and blood is shed. The time of testing is doubled for a girl, because there is no blood of circumcision. Leviticus 12 taught Israel that birth defiled God's dwelling; it is a picture of birth under the curse. The God-provided blood of sacrifice covers the defiled blood of birth. God is in Israel's midst and the blood of birth calls up before Him the judgment of death and has to be dealt with.

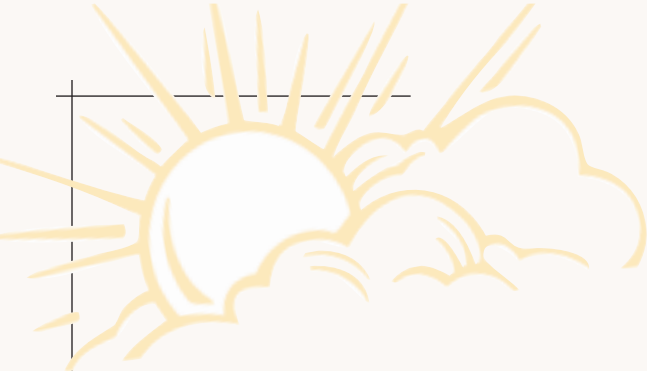
The Old Testament shows the failure of the bloodline family. Certainly, the family was central to it. Just think of all the genealogies in the Old Testament – and also remember how they all ended in failure. The Old Testament is the failure of the family to provide salvation. All children get from their earthly parents is death. Leviticus 12 is clear: procreation could not provide salvation; only Yahweh's grace saves. Christ fulfills the sacrifices of

Leviticus; He fulfills circumcision. He established the true form of the family, the church. The blood family depends on the redemptive work of Christ as applied by the church, which has the power of the keys of the kingdom.

We have nothing by blood descent, no salvation, no knowledge, and no true inheritance. What we and our children have, we have by the grace and promise of God. The family is decentralized and brought under the church of Jesus Christ. As the relationship of Christ and the church is the first form of the family, so, too, the church is the first form of the family, with God as Father and Jesus Christ as brother. One of the things baptism says is that we, by nature, are not fit to be parents. Our children need God as their Father. From Him, they receive life; from us, they receive death.

Today, the family is under assault. Unfortunately, the response in many Christian circles has been to make an idol out of the bloodline family. "Family" becomes more important than anything else. Too often, we live like Germanic tribes, with the patriarchs, or matriarchs, gathering even adult children around themselves, as though the family can make it without the church, without the Word and the sacraments. This is the religion of fallen man – "Blood is thicker than water." But salvation does not come by procreation; it does not come in clannish behaviour. Salvation is by God's grace in Jesus Christ, signed and sealed in baptism in the midst of Christ's church. The water of baptism is thicker than blood.





Ray of Sunshine

By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Thanksgiving

I'm thankful to God
because He died for me!
Now He lives again,
Never more to die;
He is my Saviour on High!

I'm thankful that God
is there when I fall.
Through Grace Alone,
Because of his love,
He is there when I call!

I'm thankful to God
for all of his gifts to me!
He knows my daily needs;
Freely He will give!
Friends and family so very dear;
Capable hands He sends for my care.

I'm thankful to God
for the promises He gives!
Though undeserving;
If I obey Him,
If I seek to do his will;
Forever with my Saviour I will live!

Written by: Connie VanAmerongen

Then let us adore,
And give Him his right,
All glory and power,
And wisdom and might,
All honour and blessing,
With angels above,
And thanks never ceasing
For infinite love.

Hymn 64:4

Birthdays in October:

- 6 HENRY VANDERVLiet will be 37**
Anchor Home 361, Thirty Road, RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2
- 17 ALAN BRUEKELMAN will turn 38**
225 - 19th Street
Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4
- 22 NELENA HOFsINK will be 44**
Bethesda Clearbrook Home
32553 Willingdon Crescent, Clearbrook, BC V2T 1S2
- 28 MARY ANN DE WIT will turn 48**
c/o Bethesda Home
31126 King Fisher Drive, Abbotsford, BC V2T 5K4

Congratulations to you all who are celebrating a birthday in this new month. It is our hope and prayer that our heavenly Father will continue to bless you in this new year with much health and happiness. May you all have an enjoyable day together with your family and friends.

Till next month,
Mrs. C. Gelms and Mrs. E. Nordeman
548 Kemp Road East, RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2



J. Wiskerke van Dooren

Lord's Day 20

Mrs. J. Wiskerke van Dooren published a Children's Catechism in Dutch. This has been translated with her permission.



When you have to do your homework, you need light. You switch on the light in the room. Or you turn on the desk lamp. When the light is on, you can see clearly. Now you know what you are doing.

How is it possible that the light goes on? Because there is electricity. This is made by power generators. Through thick cables, it is transported to many houses all over the country. You can turn it on in your room. Now you can see everything, even when it is dark outside.

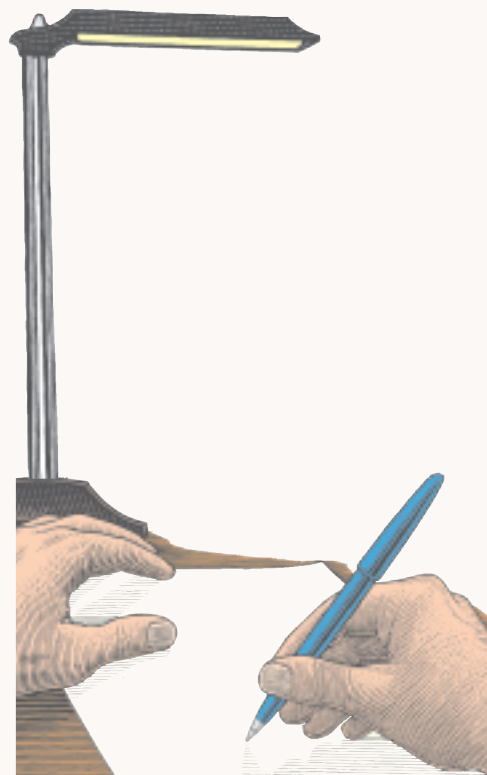
Last time, we said you would learn more about the Holy Spirit. You can look again in Lord's Days 7 and 8. There is only one God. At the same time we can say: There is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Today, we want to know more about the Holy Spirit. He, too, is God.

First, I want you to answer a question. Imagine you know in the back of your mind that God is in heaven, and that God's Son came down to live on earth. But you do not work with that. Would you be a believing child of God? Of course not. There are so many people who have heard about God, and about Jesus Christ. But they never read in their Bibles.

Now another question. Can we say: God likes it that we do believe? It would

be wrong for you to say that. We do not believe of ourselves. We received it. And we should be grateful for it.

How do we believe? That is the work of the Holy Spirit. He uses the Bible to bring us to Christ. And to believe in Him.



Remember the lamp in your room? The electric cord does not give any light. But when the switch is turned, the cord has power. The dark disappears, and you can see everything clearly.

We, too, receive power. Not through a cord, but through the Bible. That is the best book in the world. Through it, the Holy Spirit wants to give us faith, to give us comfort and all the good gifts of God. He will never abandon us.

For us this means that we must connect with God. That means: we should listen to God's voice, the Bible. If we do that, the power of the Spirit reaches us. Just as the electricity reaches the lamp so that it shines. Then you know that your sins are forgiven. And you are so glad for everything the Bible tells us. And for the sermons in the church, and the Bible stories at home and in school.

Do you know how electricity reaches a lamp? Through a plug. The plug connects the lamp with electricity.

You, too, should be connected with the power of God. Then you receive your strength from God, through the Holy Spirit. He works in you to make you a child of God. We call that: being born again.



How Do We Read The Bible? (3)

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History and Metaphor

We continue with our review of A. L. Th. de Bruijne's essays in the Dutch publication *Woord op schrift*. Last time we considered his remarks on the role of figurative language in biblical interpretation in general. We now turn to his second essay, wherein he deals with the question whether it will help Reformed theology if, more so than is normal within the Reformed tradition, some aspects of *historical* passages in Scripture are explained not literally but metaphorically.¹

In seeking an answer to this question, De Bruijne is still in discussion with his colleague B. Loonstra. One of Loonstra's arguments is that ancient historians (including biblical ones) were not greatly interested in historical accuracy. They wrote their accounts not first of all because they wanted to relate what actually happened, but in order to frame a theological message. In the process they used a variety of conventions, such as metaphors and other non-literal language as well as saga, elements of myth, and pseudepigraphy (the placing of a text on the name of a well-known person who had not in fact written it). They did so not to deceive but because the approach was a normal one at the time, and because no strict distinction between literal and non-literal was required (112-16).

Because he believes this to be the nature of biblical historiography, Loonstra concludes that we can interpret certain historical passages figuratively even when the biblical authors presented them as literal. This means in effect that we can deny their historicity. But because biblical accounts do not have the pretension of

being historically exact, such a denial is no real problem, although, as we saw in the previous instalment, an exception must be made for descriptions with a redemptive-historical content.

Biblical historicity: a Jewish view

Having summarized Loonstra's argument, De Bruijne refers to the work of two scholars who have specialized in the study of biblical and other ancient historiography. Both men contradict Loonstra's conclusion, showing that ancient-eastern historians were vitally interested in historicity and truth, and that the same applied to biblical authors.

The first of De Bruijne's witnesses is the Jewish Old Testament scholar and ancient historian Baruch Halpern, who in one of his studies focuses on the historical books of Joshua up to and including Kings (162-7). Halpern shows that these books intend to do justice to the facts, including even the smallest details, and that in this respect they do not differ from modern-western historiography. An investigation of the sources the biblical historians used, as well as a comparison with what we know from extra-biblical sources, are among the factors that lead to this conclusion.

Halpern distinguishes between "what happened" and "history." The former term refers to the endless number of occurrences that we experience from day to day, often without being able to make connections. "History" is the discipline which organizes (some of) these facts into a coherent whole. It is a means of *representing* the past. As such, history necessarily has a literary dimension. It needs a narrative structure to show connections, deal with cause and

effect, offer interpretations, and also to bring a message, for history always has an ideological or didactic component. All this means that the writer has to concentrate on some facts, rather than on others. There is no true historian who does not select. Sometimes he focuses on political data; at other times he leaves such data out and restricts himself to facts dealing, for example, with religious matters. In historical narratives, Halpern continues, there are also "white spots" – areas where the sources are very limited. The historian tries to fill in these spots as well as he can, but historical accounts necessarily have a measure of probability. They are also apt to contain errors: e.g., an inaccurate date, or a mistake caused by the misunderstanding of a source. These various elements do not detract, however, from the historian's intention to do justice to the past. They characterize all serious historiography.

Narrative conventions

Although the desire for accuracy is the same, Halpern states that there are differences between the historiography of biblical times and of today. Far more so than their modern counterparts, ancient historians presented their history in story form. They also made use of narrative conventions that were current in their times. These were well known to their readers, but they are unfamiliar to us and their usage must therefore be explained. One of these conventions is the symbolic meaning of numbers, which I mentioned before. Another is the use of dialogue and direct speech. When a modern historian has to give the words of a historical figure he does not usually have an exact text before him and reports indirectly. That is, he gives a

summary or a paraphrase of what was said. But in the same situation historians in the ancient orient (and also in classical Greece) often used direct speech, and so left the impression that they were quoting literally. This was done also when it concerned words spoken in secret, and even when the historian referred to a person's unspoken thoughts. The fact that we cannot take such direct speech as literal does not mean that it is historically unreliable. The convention served the goal that all proper historians pursue, namely to give a faithful presentation of what was actually said and thought.

Another convention Halpern mentions is that of hyperbole or exaggeration. The original readers recognized this convention and interpreted it properly, whereas we have to be alerted to it. A report, for example, that a tyrant "ripped open all pregnant women" does not necessarily imply numerical exactness, but may simply be a means the author used to indicate that great cruelties were visited upon the tyrant's victims. In the same way, we must assume that hyperbole is used when we read that a city was destroyed "to the last man" when later it appears that there were still men present. And various other examples could be given.

Halpern also believes that sometimes fictional elements were inserted into the narrative. He himself disbelieves in miracles and therefore considers a text like 1 Kings 13 (which relates the story of the man of God who in the days of Jeroboam I came from Judah to prophesy at Bethel) as fictional. Halpern thinks that this story may have been consciously inserted as figurative, although he also considers the possibility that the author mistakenly believed that the events had actually taken place. But generally, this type of story, he believes, was recognized as figurative and inserted to throw light on the total message. While we have difficulty distinguishing such fictional stories from the historical ones surrounding them, this was not the case with the immediate readers, who were familiar with the convention.

To summarize: Halpern rejects the view that biblical history as a whole is metaphoric, that it serves as nothing more than a means of conveying a message, and that it does not claim true historicity. He esteems the reliability and professionalism of biblical witnesses much higher than critical scholars do. He also makes clear that, if we want to understand the biblical message, it is essential that we keep in mind the different narrative conventions. At the same time he criticizes confessional scholars for trying to explain all claims as historical and factual and so ignoring the possible metaphorical aspects of a story. Their belief in the historicity of 1 Kings 13, which he himself considers fictional because it contains miracles, serves him as an example.

Loonstra concludes that we can interpret certain historical passages figuratively even when the biblical authors presented them as literal. This means in effect that we can deny their historicity.

Halpern's attitude toward the supernatural makes clear, De Bruijne concludes, that we can only make a critical use of his work, while nevertheless admitting its value for a biblical hermeneutics. Especially valuable are his arguments in support of the Bible's historicity and his explanation of ancient-oriental narrative conventions (168).

An evangelical voice

The second expert De Bruijne introduces is the Old Testament scholar V. Philips Long, an evangelical theologian who, unlike Halpern, believes the bible to be the infallible word of God. De Bruijne concentrates on Long's study *The Art of Biblical History*, 1994. In this book Long builds on Halpern's work

but, because of his Christian convictions, comes with additional information that can help Reformed hermeneutical reflection (168-83).

Like Halpern, Long distinguishes between history as the totality of past occurrences on the one hand, and history as it is told and written (historiography), on the other. Again like Halpern, he points out that written history does more than simply recount facts. It is a composition, which means that it takes the form of a narrative wherein events of the past are presented in a coherent and well-ordered manner, so that their significance becomes clear. History as the totality of past occurrences and written history, Long points out, are both part of God's revelation. His work of salvation is *established* in his historical deeds. The significance of these deeds He Himself *explains* by means of the historian's selection, ordering, description, and explanation of the historical facts.

Unlike Halpern, Long does not believe in automatically assigning supernatural elements like miracles and divine revelations to the domain of the non-historical. He suggests a method for determining whether a certain passage in the Bible is meant historically or not. Among the things that he suggests the exegete has to keep in mind are the following two:

(1) The exegete must determine what type of truth claim the historian makes. Does a certain book have the intention of giving historical information or not? The claim for the book as a whole affects the parts according to a "top-down" structure. If it appears that the author presents his entire text as history, then this applies also to the parts, unless these are clearly meant figuratively. The fable of Jotham in Judges 9 and the parables of Jesus have characteristics which distinguish them from the surrounding passages and are clearly not meant to be taken literally. In the case of the speaking donkey of Balaam (Numbers 22) such distinguishing characteristics are absent, and therefore this section must, with the

book of Numbers as a whole, be taken as historical.

(2) The exegete must apply the test of internal consistency (i.e., are there contradictions which give rise to doubt as to the text's historicity?) and of external consistency (i.e., does the passage come into conflict with what we know from other sources?).

"If Jericho was not razed.."

Long considers also the question whether, in attempting to establish the historicity of certain texts, we can distinguish between the central message of the Bible and what would appear to be more peripheral or marginal information. We have seen that Loonstra makes this type of distinction when he insists that certain presentations in the Bible can be taken figuratively (even though presented as literal) but that this may not be done with texts that have a redemptive-historical content (the so-called *heilsfeiten*).

Long questions the validity of such a distinction. In this connection he refers to the destruction of Jericho (Josh 6), an event that liberal historians have often presented as non-historical. He borrows from another author, who quoted Paul's confession, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15:14) and who paraphrased it by asking, "If Jericho was not razed, is our faith in vain?" Long believes that we have to take that question seriously. The book of Joshua, he points out, claims to give history, and this claim is compromised if we should conclude that the destruction of Jericho did not take place. That would have consequences for our trust in the Bible's central message. We accept that message as true for the same reason that we accept the account of Jericho's razing as true, namely through the witness coming to us in the Bible. If we conclude that the account of Jericho's razing is not to be taken literally, although it is clearly presented as such, then our confidence

in the trustworthiness of Scripture as a whole cannot remain unaffected.

De Bruijne agrees with this point of view and adds that in any event it is difficult to establish precisely which texts are "central" and which "peripheral." The so-called *heilsfeiten* comprise much more than we usually assume when we restrict ourselves, for example, to the Apostles' Creed. As several of the Psalms show, the category also includes elements not mentioned in the Creed, such as the flood, events occurring in the times of the patriarchs, the exodus, the desert experience, the conquest of Canaan, the history of David, and so on. Often it is impossible to distinguish between biblical Fact and fact (179f.).

Unlike Halpern, Long does not believe in automatically assigning supernatural elements like miracles and divine revelations to the domain of the non-historical.

Some applications

Applying the arguments of Halpern and Long, De Bruijne shows how they correct a number of Loonstra's conclusions, and also how they can help us with various problems in biblical interpretation. As examples of the latter he mentions, *inter alia*, elements in the accounts of the beginning of Saul's kingship and of the conquest of Canaan, as well as the fact that in the New Testament the first three gospels place the cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry whereas John places it at the end (172-6, 180, 181f.). An awareness of narrative conventions and the application of literary analysis enable us, he shows, to eliminate what have long been

considered inconsistencies or contradictions in biblical history. By ignoring these conventions, and in general by attempting to explain literally what is intended figuratively, we do not uphold the Bible's truth claim but in fact obscure its message. De Bruijne therefore stresses once again the need for greater openness among us for the presence of narrative conventions and other figurative elements in the Bible (184f). As we have seen, that need has in his opinion not always been fully recognized in the Reformed tradition.

While rejecting Loonstra's conclusion that all biblical language is metaphorical, De Bruijne emphasizes once again that a text can have a literal as well as a metaphorical meaning. We had an example of this in his explanation of the biblical account of Christ's resurrection (see the previous instalment). Returning to the same Bible passage, De Bruijne mentions the cloud that, according to Acts 1:9, hid Jesus from the disciples' sight when He ascended. In the light of Long's criteria there is no reason, he writes, to believe with Loonstra and others that the cloud may not have been literally there. We must regard it, however, as a literal element which has *at the same time* a metaphorical "surplus value" (*meerwaarde*). The cloud was there, and by its very *physical* presence it *symbolized* the divine glory (178).

De Bruijne sees a similar metaphorical message in some of the direct speech we find in Scripture. Agreeing with Halpern that the use of direct speech was an ancient-eastern narrative convention, he mentions the difficulty some Reformed believers have in accepting it as non-literal. In many instances the Bible itself, however, claims no absolute literalness for direct speech. The differences among the evangelists in their rendering of human words, and even of the words of Jesus Himself, make this clear, as do other parts of Scripture.

As to the possible metaphorical "surplus value" of direct speech, De Bruijne draws attention to the words of

Rahab to the two spies (Joshua 2), and suggests that the narrator (that is, the Holy Spirit) used the convention here to reveal the *meaning* of the episode. Rahab's speech repeated promises that God had given to Joshua with respect to the conquest of Canaan. What Rahab actually said and what is recorded is materially the same, but the specific form served to underline the specific promises given earlier. These promises required faith. Rahab's message confirmed that God's promises were indeed reliable (183).

Summary

To summarize what we have covered so far: With reference to the work of experts like Baruch Halpern and V. Philips Long, De Bruijne has argued convincingly that biblical authors were as much concerned with historical accuracy as are modern historians. Rather than considering historicity of only secondary interest, biblical historians knew that the truth of their message depended on that historicity. Texts that were clearly intended as literal and literally accurate must therefore be interpreted as such.

At the same time De Bruijne has made clear that figurative elements do play an important role in historical accounts. Such elements the author has *consciously* incorporated in his historical narration. In various cases they form a second layer on top of the literal meaning of the text and depend on that meaning. In addition, there is the matter of ancient-oriental narrative conventions. An awareness of these conventions and their nature makes it possible, De Bruijne has shown, to resolve a good many "problems" in historical accounts in the Bible. Elements that used to be labelled "discrepancies" or "errors" make perfect sense when the narrative conventions are kept in mind. This applies not only to the symbolic use of numbers, the use of dialogue and direct speech, and the use of hyperbole, but also to apparent repetitions, "gaps," and other literary usages in narrative accounts. Another function of narrative conventions is that they allow the author to show the

meaning of the events he narrates and explain them as acts of God.

Questions

The insights related above have been quite widely accepted as positive among De Bruijne's Reformed colleagues. His essay on biblical history contains, however, a number of controversial elements as well. They include the following:

De Bruijne's. . . essay on biblical history contains, however, a number of controversial elements as well.

1. Although he rejects Halpern's view that accounts of the supernatural are necessarily figurative, De Bruijne agrees that ancient-eastern narrative conventions allowed for the inclusion of *fictional* elements in historical accounts, and that we may meet this convention also in the Bible. Referring to Halpern's idea of "white spots," he suggests that this may apply, for example, to the book of Genesis – especially to the first 11 chapters, but to a lesser extent also to the history of the patriarchs (187-90). For these early events there were few literary sources available. Although it is possible that God revealed directly much of what happened, it is also possible, he argues, that the historian was forced to make use of popular traditions, which, as he will have realized, will have contained facts as well as fiction. It will have been necessary for him, moreover, to paint lengthy and complex periods with simple brush strokes. De Bruijne believes that in such cases the possibility of inaccuracies in the account increases. Rather than implying direct revelation, inspiration means that, here as elsewhere, the Holy Spirit led the historian's work in such a way that the outcome gave a reliable account of the period in question. In his own words: "The special guidance of the

Spirit did not replace the historian's normal craft but directed it to God's special goal" (187).

I should add here that De Bruijne later qualifies the above by stating that the sources the historian used may well have contained divine revelation to earlier believers. A case in point is Abraham. In Genesis 18 God revealed to Abraham his plans for the future. It is to be expected, De Bruijne writes, that God will have given his prophet information about his work in the past as well. On the same occasion De Bruijne also comes back on his statement that in the use of his sources the historian may have been inaccurate and made errors. He now calls that "a useless and groundless speculation." Although such errors are theoretically possible, one can assume them only if one meets a concrete problem. General statements on the matter are speculative and should be avoided.²

2. Another controversial element concerns De Bruijne's proposed explanation of Genesis 6:1-4, where we read about the "sons of God" who married "daughters of men" (190-93). Although he does not want to give a definitive interpretation, he considers the possibility that the biblical author made use of well-known pagan myths according to which gods had sexual relations with human beings, and that he consciously applied these myths in an *antithetical* manner, namely in order to denounce them. We may have an account here, he suggests, of mankind before the flood trying to establish a connection with heaven on its own conditions – specifically by the creation of idols. The flood would then be God's judgment on human idolatry.

More about these issues, and about the discussion to which they have given rise, in the next instalment.

NOTE

¹ Page references within the text are to *Woord op schrift*.

² *De Reformatie*, May 31, 2003, p. 644.

Keith Sikkema

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Secularization of Ontario's Public Education

Christian flavour

Since its inception in the mid-1800s, North American public education had a deliberately Christian flavour. Even if they were neither red nor perfect, there is some nostalgic affection associated with the little red school houses of a century ago. Besides the closeness to their respective and largely Christian communities, their multi-age character which facilitated mutual assistance, and the wintertime warmth from some sort of firebox, the schools sought to shelter the children with, and train them in Bible-based values.

In Ontario, for instance, Egerton Ryerson (1803-1882) wanted public schools to be "Christian but non-denominational." Ryerson, a Methodist preacher, was chief superintendent of education for Upper Canada from 1844 to 1876, and he has been credited with establishing Ontario's public education system. In the United States, Horace Mann (1796-1859), the American founder of public education, also strongly defended the use of the Bible in public schools. However, Rousas John Rushdoony (1963, pp. 31-32) argues that Mann's public schools were not Christian at all: he defended the use of the Bible only because of its efficiency for producing civic virtue: "(Mann's) basic reference in religion is not to God but to society. What he envisioned was a new religion, with the state as its true church,

and education as its Messiah." Thus, although the flavour may have been Christian, the schools were not necessarily Christian as we understand it.

Just flavour

Rushdoony's claims about Mann's intentions ring true for Ontario as well. In 1950, around the time that Canadian Reformed Churches were first established, Ontario's governmental Hope Report heralded Christian virtues that should be maintained in the public schools: "There are two virtues about which there can be no question –

Indeed, at the time, Canadian Christians generally viewed public education as acceptable: school days were opened with prayer; the Bible was read, and Bible stories were told.

honesty and Christian love. They may be taught by the strongest means at the school's command. If this be indoctrination we accept the stricture." Indeed, at the time, Canadian Christians generally viewed public education as acceptable: school days were opened

with prayer, the Bible was read, and Bible stories were told. In 1961, Dr. Roy W. Fairchild and Prof. John Charles Wynn, researchers for the YMCA, concluded similarly for the American educational system:

Generally, Protestantism has affirmed its faith in the public schools of America. On the other hand, Protestant families have discovered, by and large, that the school cannot be depended upon or expected to foster their religious heritage. It is recognized that the public schools do foster a corpus of values, some of which are congruent with, and some contrary to, their religious convictions (pp. 34-35).

In keeping with the Hope Report (1950), Ontario law actually required religious (that is, Christian) instruction for two half-hour periods a week by a classroom teacher or clergymen volunteers. Although metropolitan areas dropped this element by the 1960s, it was maintained in rural areas, such as Niagara, which kept a conservative stance. For instance, several (older) parents in the Smithville area remember distinctly Christian elements in the public schools they attended. They also recognize that the Christian flavour depended largely on the teacher. Yet, even in 1952, the local Canadian Reformed men's society (Smithville, Ontario) discussed the desirability of establishing a Reformed school, negating the notion

that the public schools were “not that bad.” The brothers understood that education of covenant children requires more than a Christian flavour.

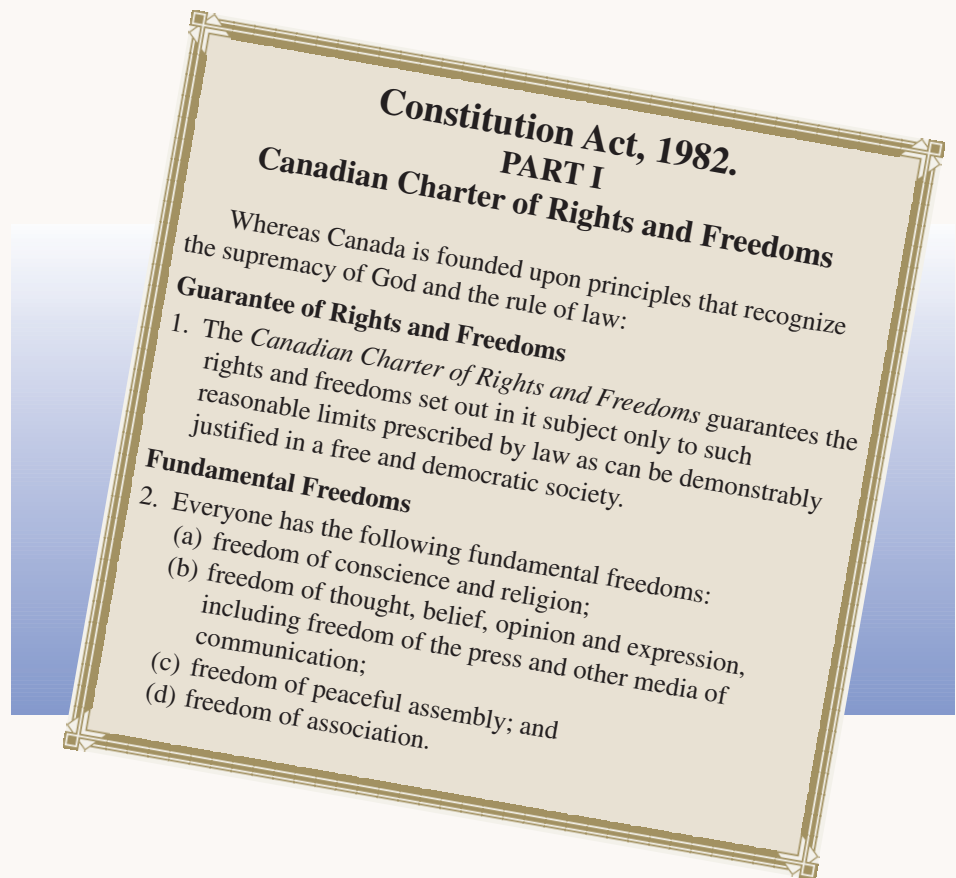
Secular search for truth

The 1960s not only marked the end of the little red school house through school consolidations, but it also marked the decline of the Christian flavour of Ontario’s public schools. The 1968 Hall-Dennis Report about public education worked from a clearly secular and humanistic perspective. It had high expectations of the power of education for transforming people:

The underlying aim of education is to further man’s unending search for truth. Once he possesses the means to truth, all else is within his grasp. Wisdom and understanding, sensitivity, compassion, and responsibility, as well as intellectual honesty and personal integrity, will be his guides in adolescence and his companions in maturity.

Not surprisingly, in 1969, the Mackay Committee, commissioned by the government to study religious and moral education in Ontario, set out to change the tone of public education from Christian to distinctly secular. Although the committee recommended maintaining recital of the Lord’s Prayer for opening exercises, it rejected any support for parochial or private schools, and suggested to eliminate all Bible readings and twice weekly religious Bible instruction. It also recommended offering optional, non-proselytizing courses in world religions in grades 11 and 12. These courses should help the student to “create his own set of values and to promote in him a deeper feeling for the human condition” (Oliver, Michell, MacQueen, and Bieler, 1972, p. vi).

The actual change from a Christian to a secular tone came slowly. Terri A.



Sussel noted in 1995 that “provincial ministries of education gradually moved toward an increasingly secular public school curriculum during the 1970s and through to the early 1980s,” and that the Mackay recommendations were but slowly implemented. Even the 1980 Ontario Education Act stated that “a public school shall be opened or closed each school day with religious exercises consisting of the reading of the Scriptures or other suitable readings and the repeating of the Lord’s Prayer or other suitable prayers.” Note that the religious exercises were still compulsory.

The courts

In 1986, a court case known as *Zylberberg v. Sudbury Board of Education* dealt with a challenge to the compulsory requirement for religious exercises. The petitioners held that even asking for an exemption from this requirement coerced pupils into participating and infringed on their right to freedom of conscience and religion, and further that

the regulation discriminated against non-Christians. The Ontario Divisional Court had rejected the challenge, but the Ontario Court of Appeal overturned that rejection on September 23, 1988 (Sussel, 1995, pp. 134-155). As a result, prayer was banned from public schools. In October, 1988, Ontario’s Ministry of Education declared, “We recognize and respect the spirit of the Court’s ruling – that today in Ontario’s multicultural society, no single religion should be placed in a position of primacy in our public schools” (Guldmond, 1990, p. 57).

Meanwhile, the Elgin County Board of Education was challenged in the Ontario Divisional Court that its religious education curriculum for elementary schools constituted unconstitutional indoctrination. This particular course was taught by volunteers from the evangelical Elgin County Bible Club. With a split decision, the Court sustained the practice in March, 1988. Next, however, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association

successfully appealed the decision to the Supreme Court of Appeal of Ontario, claiming that the Elgin County Bible Club sought to “propagate fundamentalist Christian doctrine under the guise of education.” The Court decided in January, 1990, that the curriculum was contrary to Section 2(a) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Guldmond, 1990, pp. 57-71; Sussel, 1995, pp. 143 ff.), and should be terminated.

After Elgin

After this decision, there has been a rise in enrolments in some separate and private schools, as well as home schooling, and no reversal of the secularizing trend. It is no surprise that people were looking for alternatives. Only consider that the public school system was altered dramatically as a result of school consolidation and social influences, including (among others) general secularization, the breakdown of the family, the decline of community,

The brothers understood that education of covenant children requires more than a Christian flavour.

significantly changed immigration patterns, and the schools’ attempts to fill the voids generated in these shifts. Indeed, the public schools can no longer be expected to teach Christianity, as Dr. Vriend (1990) points out, because it would undercut equality and educational freedom, and because claiming minority rights could be discriminatory to others who do not obtain that advantage. At best, they could teach about Christianity, and even then one would

hardly trust the content or the perspective would present.

Marvin Klassen (2001) demonstrates that Eden High School in St. Catharines may be an exception. Formerly known as Eden Christian College, a Mennonite private school, it ran into financial difficulties and would have to face closure unless another source of funding could be found. This community opted for joining the public system in 1987. Aside from its “direct religious instruction and devotional activities (which) take place outside of regular school hours,” the school is now fully funded by the government. Klassen, a graduate of, and now a teacher at the school, feels that the Christian character of the school has been strengthened by the change, and he told me that “with our doors closed we get away with a lot.”

Eden High School appeals to people who want their children to have a Christian education without paying the price. For our people, this is not an option, as the close bond between home, church, and school cannot be maintained, as there is no guarantee of confessional faithfulness, as the covenant must be broadened beyond the church, and as the antithesis will be compromised as a consequence. In what way will teachers be encouraged to allow the light of God’s Word shine in all subjects? In what way is the Christian character maintained if religious content is literally marginalized? How can teachers justify a strike with their Union Brothers and Sisters if there is a dispute with the Board of Education?

Home schooling

The secularization of American education has been identified as one of the key motivators for home schooling as well. As people became increasingly dissatisfied with the public system, and private or independent schooling was beyond their financial reach, this option

became increasingly popular, especially among Christians, and especially when curriculum and support materials became readily available. Home schoolers dread the slogan of Hillary Clinton that “It takes a village to raise a child” in which the government represents the village and is a ward of the child. Along the same lines, Mary Pride, a feminist turned Seventh Day Adventist, is as militant about the public schools as Rushdoony (1985, p. 99):

Even the 1980 Ontario Education Act...religious exercises were still compulsory.

The battle now raging will decide who owns our children. Christian schools and home schools are challenging the compulsory attendance laws and the very concept of government control of education. The National Education Association, the utopians, and the children’s rights people are fighting back with every bit of power they possess. . . . Will we surrender our children to them, docilely dumping them in day-care euphemized as “early education” and trotting off submissively to a job? Or will we hold the home fort? Our children can’t be raised at home until they are spiritually mature if there is *nobody home to raise them*. Who owns our kids? God owns our kids. And he has given us parents the responsibility of making sure they turn out to be his kids.

While Mary Pride rightly stresses the task of the parents in bringing up their children in this quote, she does not speak of covenant children who already belong to the Lord, she does not consider the

option of a Reformed day school in this context, and she does not present a clear understanding of how the communion of saints should work.

In the cold

Secularization of the schools is a fact in Ontario. Back in the 1950s and 1960s, there were good reasons to establish and maintain Reformed schools. The old reasons are still valid. In the fall of 2003, a noon hour Bible discussion group in Hamilton's Westmount Public High School, under the leadership of a Baptist youth pastor, was told it could not use school facilities for their activity, even during non-class time, and even though they had received permission for it a few years before. Judith Bishop, Hamilton-Wentworth Public School Board Chair, defended the decision of the principal:

All parents want to be sure that any adult their child meets in the school has been vetted by the school. They also want to be sure that they have

knowledge about what their child is being taught. There are parents who are fearful of their child being exposed to cults. There are parents who do not want their child to be exposed to religious beliefs that contradict their family beliefs. The school has a duty to be a safe place for all students.

The secularization of American education has been identified as one of the key motivators for home schooling as well.

Ironically, the Board Chair was right that parents should not have their children exposed to cults or religious beliefs that contradict their family beliefs. The Bible discussion group chose to meet outside,

in the cold snow, shivering in their winter clothes. However, the real chill was inside, where Christian beliefs had been deemed potentially dangerous, denied, and removed.

There are now more reasons than ever to consider that the public school is not a place where one would want to send covenant children. Let us rather realize the great gifts we have received from the Lord in enabling us to set up Christian schools that seriously strive to teach in accordance with God's Word. Meanwhile, as a covenant community, let us also do all we can to help those who seem to have no other choice but to use the public schools.

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Press Release of the meeting of the combined committees of the Canadian Reformed and United Reformed Churches to propose a common church order, held August 03-05, 2004 at the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington, Ontario

Present were: Dr. Nelson Kloosterman, Rev. William Pols, Rev. Ronald Scheuers, Rev. Raymond Sikkema and Mr. Harry Van Gurp, representing the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA), and Dr. Gijsbert Nederveen, Mr. Gerard J. Nordeman, Rev. John VanWoudenberg and Dr. Art Witten of the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC). Dr. Kloosterman opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer.

The minutes of the November 4-6, 2003 meeting were reviewed and approved after some minor corrections were noted. An agenda and timetable for the next three days were circulated and adopted.

Recent synods of the respective federations dealt with the reports submitted by the committees. Synod Chatham 2004 of the CanRC expressed its thankfulness for the quality and thoroughness of the work that the Joint Church Order committee has been able to complete, thus far, and for the brotherly harmony that has been experienced. This Synod further encouraged the churches to forward their suggestions directly to the committee for its consideration. It re-appointed the committee to continue with its earlier mandate and, in addition, to formulate a draft proposal of regulations for General Synod. Synod Calgary 2004 of the URCNA adopted all of the committee's recommendations and encouraged the churches to interact directly with the committee regarding their work. It further authorized its church order committee to develop rules for General Synod.

Correspondence was received from one URCNA and two CanRC consistories with comments and reactions to some of the proposals formulated. This material was circulated and each respective committee will draft a report for later discussion.

A review of the articles thus far adopted resulted in a few modifications. It included a further discussion on the use of the term "council" versus "consistory with the deacons." No final decision was made. It is agreed that the consistory is the ruling assembly in the church. Also the use of the words "ordained" versus "installed" received attention with a view to correctness and consistency.

Article 8 CO of Dort was placed back on the table as the result of a letter received from a church. The CanRC brothers will serve the committee with a proposal at the next meeting.

The matter of delegation to General Synod was again revisited. After an extensive debate and the consideration that a broader assembly is deliberative in nature, it is decided that each second last classis before general synod shall choose two ministers and two elders as delegates to General Synod.

A report on "gaps" that currently exist in the development of a Joint Church Order (JCO) was reviewed. The following articles were decided on:

It was agreed to leave out Art 15 CO of Dort as the first part was considered no longer relevant in this age, and the second part is covered elsewhere in the JCO.

Article 18 in Dort deals with the office of Professor of Theology. As this is not a recognized office in the proposed church order, this article will be omitted.

Re: Art 24 CO of Dort:

The duties belonging to the office of deacon consists of exercising and supervising the works of Christian mercy in the congregation. They shall do this by acquainting themselves with congregational needs; exhorting members of the congregation to show mercy; gathering and managing the offerings of God's people in Christ's name, and distributing these offerings according to need; continuing in prayer; and encouraging and comforting with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ's mercy. Needs of those outside the congregation, especially of other believers, should also be considered.

The deacons shall ordinarily meet monthly to transact the business pertaining to their office, and they shall render a monthly account of their work to the Consistory. The

Church News

Declined the call to the Free Reformed Church of Darling Downs, Australia:

Rev. C. Bouwman
of Kelmscott, Australia

Declined the call to Cloverdale, British Columbia:

Rev. D. Poppe
of Houston, British Columbia

Declined the call to the church of Langley, British Columbia, as a second pastor:

Candidate Ian Wildeboer

Accepted the call from the Free Reformed Church of Armadale, Australia, to work as a missionary in Lae, PNG:

Candidate Ian Wildeboer

Called by the church of Yarrow, British Columbia and Orangeville, Ontario:

Rev. D.G.J. Agema
of Attercliffe, Ontario.

Examined by Classis Ontario West on September 8, 2004 and declared eligible for call:

Candidate John Smith

deacons may invite the minister to visit their meetings in order to acquaint him with their work and request his advice.

The concern of Art 40 of Dort is also included in the above.

Re: Art 28 of Dort with respect to Civil Authorities was considered to be very relevant in today's age. Rev. Sikkema was asked to present a proposed wording for this article at the next meeting.

Re: Art 31 of Dort dealing with the right to appeal was discussed at length for a proper understanding of this process. The Revs. Nederveen and Scheuers were asked to draft a proposal.

Re: Art 37 and 38 about the assembly of the consistory, it was agreed that "in each church there shall be a consistory composed of minister(s) of the Word and the elders, which shall ordinarily meet at least once a month. The consistory is the only assembly which exercises direct authority within the congregation, since the consistory receives its authority

directly from Christ." Whether the minister should preside over the meetings of the consistory is also the question of one of the letters received from the churches. The CanRC brothers will formulate a proposal for the next meeting on this issue.

Where a consistory is to be constituted for the first time, it shall be done only with the concurring advice of Classis.

The next meeting will take place D.V. November 9-11, 2004 in the Grand Rapids area. Further meetings were

tentatively planned for March 15-17, August 9-11 and November 15-17, 2005.

The press release was read and approved for publication.

In his closing remarks Dr. Kloosterman stated his thankfulness to the Lord for the brotherly manner in which the committee again could proceed with its work. A considerable amount of work could be accomplished. After Scripture reading and closing prayer by Rev. Sikkema, the meeting was adjourned.

For the Committee
Gerard J. Nordeman



Advertisements:

Announcements of Weddings, Anniversaries (with Open House) should be submitted six weeks in advance.

BIRTHS

With thankfulness and praise to the Lord we joyfully announce the birth of our first born child

BREE ADRIANNA

June 21, 2004

Derek and Patricia Reinink

1st grandchild for Dick and Dina Lodder
3rd grandchild for William and Rita Reinink
433 Forfar Street, Fergus, ON N1M 3H6



I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made!
Psalm 139:14a

With thankfulness to the Lord we announce the safe arrival of our son

CALEB CORNELIS VANDENBEUKEL

Born August 28, 2004

Alvar and Laura Vandenbeukel

A little brother for *Esther*
A grandson for Keith and Trudy Vandenbeukel
and Hans and Mary Boks
61 East 14th Street, Hamilton, ON L9A 4B4



Know that the LORD is God. It is He who made us, and we are his.
Psalm 100:3a

With thankfulness to the Lord who made all things well, we announce the arrival of our daughter and sister

NORAH HENDRIKA

Born August 5, 2004

Harold and Janice Jonker

Reuben, Logan, Alayna and Samuel
4901 Sixteen Road, St. Ann's, ON L0R 1Y0

After an anxious time the Lord made everything well and gave to our children Harold and Linda Elzinga a healthy baby girl.

They named her

JAMIE NICOLE ELZINGA

June 15, 2004

A sister for *Dustin*

Harold and Linda Elzinga

Comp 97, Site 202, Onoway, AB

* * *

Also after some concern the Lord made everything well and gave to our children Charlotte and John Bouwers (Elzinga) a healthy baby girl.

They named her

KAY LINA SMINIA BOUWERS

August 17, 2004

A sister for *Corey*

Charlotte and John Bouwers (Elzinga)

James Street 14, Caledon, Ontario

* * *

The thankful grandparents
Keith and Linda Elzinga
Road 63 - 7800, Dunnville, Ontario



With thankfulness to the Lord, the Giver of life, *Andrew, Mikel, Joshua, Kara, Rebekka, and Annalise* joyfully announce the birth of

REUBEN HENRY ALLEN

Born on Tuesday, August 24, 2004

Time: 12:16 p.m., Weight: 8 lb 1 oz, Height: 54.5 cm

Peter and Elinor Zuidema

PO Box 296, South Mountain, ON K0E 1W0