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*Respect and
the Ministry*

*Jesus Christ
Lives!*



*Anchor Camp's
Twenty-Fifth Anniversary*



W.B. Slomp

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Respect and the Ministry

The ministry is about the glory of God.

Introduction

In my last editorial I wrote about authority and the ministry. A minister must guard against abusing the God-given authority vested in his office. Both the minister and the flock that he serves must keep this in mind. And that is what I promised to write about this time.

What ultimately is the ministry all about? It is about the glory of God. A minister must reflect the glory of God and teach God's people to stand in awe of his greatness. Nothing must stand in the way of achieving that goal. This is what happens, however, when members of the congregation do not treat the minister or his position with proper respect. How then should he be regarded?

It is the duty of the minister of the Word to remind God's people of who God is and of who we are in relation to Him.

The twenty-first century angrily denies the existence of God, and marginalizes those who proclaim Him in all his glory. Thankfully in the church we do not do that. At least, we do not want to. Yet, in a certain sense we do. Sometimes we treat ministers either as demons or as gods. In either case God's existence is denied and his glory diminished.

The glory of God

How does God reveal Himself? He reveals Himself as the almighty Creator. He could have created the world in the blink of an eye, but He didn't. He created everything in six days. After each day of creation He said that it was good. In the end God said that it was very good. "It is beautiful, magnificent!" Indeed, how magnificent God's creation is! Even now, after the fall into

sin, we stand in awe of Him and his wonderful creation. It is absolutely glorious!

The Bible does not define the word "glory" for us. God, however, created us in such a way that intuitively we see it. We see it in the beauty of a sunset with its brilliant colours, a most spectacular feast for our eyes. We see God's glory every time we are confronted with the great complexity and variety of his creation. We see it in every moment of beauty. It is at times like this that we want to stand up in awe and wonder and applaud the brilliant artist who conceived it all.

What is most remarkable is that man is created in God's likeness. We, of all creatures, reflect Him and what He stands for. It is especially the duty of the minister of the Word to remind God's people of who God is and of who we are in relation to Him. He must also remind God's people that in spite of our sins we ourselves are all endowed with God's glory through the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, He recreated us and through his Spirit we bear God's image once again.

Glory diminished

This has great implications for how we treat each other, and especially how we treat the minister of the Word. Paul writes that God "made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (2 Cor 4:6). It is the task of a minister to pass on the glory of God, to reflect it. He must make God known in all his glory and majesty.

When men diminish the minister and his role, they prevent him from making God's glory known. This is done when they ridicule the minister, and treat him with contempt. A minister is in the public eye a lot. Consequently many conversations of the members of the church are about him. His idiosyncrasies and foibles are well known. It is easy to make disparaging remarks about him. He is a ready and obvious target.

When certain changes are made in a church that are unpopular with a few, they make the minister the object of scorn, even though a whole church council is responsible. He is



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painted as a liberal, or as a dangerous man. This takes away from his effectiveness to present the glory of God.

This also happens when there is constant bickering about his performance: he does not visit often enough with the elderly, with the youth, with those who are lonely; he is involved too much with other ecclesiastical duties; he is not friendly enough; he does not spend enough time on his sermons; his sermons are too deep or not deep enough. The list can go on and on. Often he is held to a standard that no human being can attain. The reality is that ministers often work long hours. Many work seven days a week, and have few evenings for himself and his family.

Glory inflated

The opposite also happens. Some people make an idol out of their current or former minister. Although they would not put it that way, they make him to be a little god. They will quote him ad nauseam, and compare all other ministers to him in accordance with their inflated image of him. "He alone knows how to preach, how to counsel, and how to uphold the truth."

This also degrades the minister, just as much as unwarranted criticism. He is a sinful man, just as every one else. He may not be put on a pedestal. He must not be worshipped. That honour we may give only to God.

God grants us the glory with which we are endowed. He equips each minister with his unique talents. Ultimately we have nothing to do with it. And so we must have a right sense of how we became what we are. We are all God's workmanship. We have nothing to boast of.

If a minister's position is compromised then God's voice becomes muffled.

For that reason a minister may not allow himself to be elevated to an artificially inflated position. It is easy to allow others to tell him, for example, that they could never do without him, and that no one can replace him. It is flattering to hear this, and it feels good. But it is wrong and dangerous to encourage others in this way. The minister may get an exaggerated idea of his own worthiness, and think that he alone knows how to minister to his flock. He might actually

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buy into the idea that no one else will be able to minister to his flock as well as he. And because he begins to believe in his own superiority, he will not allow criticism of his performance. As a result other members of the congregation will become frustrated and hope that he takes a call elsewhere.

Proper reverence

Paul says in I Timothy 5:17-18, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." It is my own experience that by far the large majority of people treat their minister with proper respect. They honour him in his position in every way, and have a good sense of his abilities and limitations. Thankfully so; otherwise the church could not exist. For the minister is the mouthpiece of the Lord. If his position is compromised then God's voice becomes muffled.

Children who constantly hear criticism of the minister learn not to take him, and therefore God's Word, seriously. This weakens their faith and they become cynical and indifferent over time. Eventually it may even cause them to leave the church.

We all have a great responsibility to honour those who labour in the ministry, not for the sake of minister in the first place, but for the sake of God and his kingdom. The minister himself, too, must respect his own position in the church. He must not bring dishonour upon himself in the way that he conducts himself.

The Bible leaves no doubt about the submission to pastoral authority. "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account" (Heb 13:17). These are strong words. These are important words. Let us heed them.



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Jesus Christ Lives!



MATTHEW 13:52

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!”

Luke 24:5b-6a

If you can't find your shoes, do you look for them on your bookshelf? Of course not! What a ridiculous idea! No matter how difficult it might be to find your shoes, you can be sure that they won't be among your books. You're looking in completely the wrong area and your search will not be successful. In order for your search to be successful, you need to look in more likely places and you need to remember what has happened in the past with the lost items. Then you will look in the right places and will find what has become lost.

Looking for things in the wrong places, looking for someone in the wrong place, is just what the women did on Easter morning. They had attended Jesus Christ and his disciples for quite a while and supported them from their own means (Luke 8:3). And on Good Friday, while much of the crowd went away after Jesus had breathed his last, these women remained and at a distance watched everything that happened (Luke 23:49). Now at the earliest opportunity, on the day after the Sabbath, they had come to pay their last respects to Jesus Christ. They had come to the tomb in which He was buried in order to give Him a proper burial. They wanted to anoint Jesus' body with perfumes and spices so that it might be preserved as much as possible. In this way, they wanted to show their love and devotion

to their Lord. They came very early in the morning for there was no time to lose as the decay could set in quickly.

And so there the women went, carrying their spices. They thought that they were going to find the dead body of Jesus in the tomb. He had died after all, hadn't He? Indeed, another possibility never even occurred to these women. They had all witnessed his agonizing death on the cross. The images of this were still vivid in their minds. It was all they could think about. So now they go to where they are certain He is to be found, among the dead, in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

But when they arrived at the tomb, they immediately noticed that something was amiss. The first thing that they found, as it says in Luke 24:2, was that the stone was rolled away from the tomb. What could have happened? Why was the stone removed from the opening to the tomb? Had the body of Jesus been tampered with? They entered the tomb, seeking the body of their Lord. They looked for something that does not belong in a tomb. They were convinced that the body of Jesus must be found in this tomb and they were very perplexed when they did not find his body here. They had expected that his body would stay for many days and gradually decompose and so they had brought their spices and ointments.

But instead of a dead body, the women found two live men dressed in clothes that gleamed like lightning. They were angels, messengers of the Lord Most High! And they asked the women how they could be looking for the living One among the dead. Did the women really expect the Son of God, the long awaited Messiah from heaven to remain in the tomb, the place of the dead, forever? Could death conquer the One who has the springs of eternal life, the One who gives such life to those who believe in Him? Of course not! What a ridiculous idea!

Jesus Christ lives! He continues to live also today and cannot be found among the dead. We have never seen Him and do not see Him now, but nevertheless He lives. Death could not hold Him because He has won the complete victory over the powers of darkness and the evil one when He died on the cross. The death that He suffered was for the sake of our sins. He did not die because of his own sins, for He never committed any sin. He was holy and blameless and therefore He did not belong among the dead and should not have been sought among the dead. Jesus Christ is the living One and because of his life, we may also share in his rich benefits, the forgiveness of our sins and life everlasting.

J. Wiskerke van Dooren

Lord's Day 31

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



At a certain moment the Lord Jesus asked his disciples, "Tell me, who am I?" It was Peter who answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." I think that all the disciples nodded agreement. It would be hard to find a better answer.

A whole castle can be built on solid rock. In the same way, the Lord Jesus built his church on the solid confession of Peter. The church does not consist of stones, but of people. All of them know for sure that what Peter said is true. Even today, we say with Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

You know that you use keys to open doors. You also use keys to lock doors. For a castle you would need a key, made of bronze or iron. You cannot enter without the key.

Peter, too, received keys from the Lord Jesus. He did not receive keys made of bronze or iron, but keys of words. The Lord gave these keys to Peter and all the disciples. These keys were also meant for all those who would later preach the word of God faithfully.

What kind of keys are keys of words? When a minister preaches the gospel, he can say, "Your sins are forgiven because of Jesus Christ." If you think or say, "Yes, that is what I believe," then the door to God's kingdom is opened. You belong to the Lord.

But the door to God is locked if you do not believe, or if you only pretend to believe. You would not belong to the kingdom of heaven, even if you still went to church. And if you go on pretending,

God goes on being angry at you. God is angry at anyone who runs away from Him or does not come to Him.

Thankfully, we belong to the church not only for ourselves but also for each other. If you notice that your friends are doing something bad, you should not follow them. You should tell them that they shouldn't do that. Adults must do the same. If there is a person that no longer comes to church, they should talk to them. They should talk in a friendly and loving way, for the church is one big family. Sometimes we ourselves do things the Lord does not want. If someone warns us, we should listen. That is how it goes in the church.

It is terrible if warning no longer helps. The minister and elders come to our home, and they say, "Because you grieve the Lord you may not come to the Lord's Supper. For you do not mean it anyway." If you would go to the Lord's Supper, that would be even worse.

If someone continues to move away from God, then he or she should no longer be part of the church. This is what God wants, for they do not belong to the church in heaven either. Do you know why these people are warned? To bring them back! They have to feel that being outside the church is not good. You can always return to God and to the church, for the Lord is a merciful God.



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Part 3: Living the Christian Life – Serving the Lord

This session is about Christian ministry or service in its widest sense. It is largely based around two exercises: the first about church planting and mission and the second about discovering gifts and affirming one another. Both exercises not only teach valuable lessons but also help the group to develop in its life together, as group members reflect both on a task (which is imagined at this stage) and on the gifts they bring to that task.

Into action together

Have the group members imagine there is no church in the neighbouring community of Someplace. Have them further imagine that they are sent out by their congregation to plant a church in that area. Give them 15 minutes to work out how they would begin, what their priorities as a church are, and what gifts they have in their group for ministry in the new situation. Have them make an inventory of the essential tasks that need to be done and who will exercise which ministry. Remind them that everyone must play a part in the new church and that they have no premises but a grant of just \$2000.00. Then leave the room as facilitator. A new dynamic will happen in the life of the group as you withdraw and the members think about a task and set goals together. Come back into the room and ask for a full report. The reporting should be fairly light-hearted. Perhaps end it by asking people to say individually what they learned.

Covenant: a commission to serve

It is important to link the theme of Christian service to the doctrine of the covenant. Remind the participants that members of God's covenant are called to serve each other and the world. Point out that in many people's minds the pastor and the council do most of the work. Explain that a biblical understanding of being a church is that every member has a vital contribution to make. In addition, God has given everyone gifts that need to be discovered. Furthermore, God will call members into different ministries outside and within the church. It is very important that outsiders are given a positive vision of Christian ministry or service.

Five areas of Christian ministry

It is of utmost importance to give the group members an understanding of a broad concept of ministry which embraces all of life and is rooted in mission rather than simply in maintaining and building up the church. The handout unpacks this broad concept of ministry by focusing on five areas of Christian ministry. The church or members of the church ought to:

1. Proclaim the good news of the kingdom
2. Teach, nurture, and baptize new believers

3. Respond to human needs with loving service
4. Seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.

Work through these areas one by one, drawing out the group's understanding of what each may mean in their own local area or community. Ask the group if they would add anything to these five areas of Christian ministry.

Discovering your gifts

Have the participants study Romans 12 together in small groups. Before they do, place this chapter in the context of the rest of Paul's epistle to the Romans. Be sure to point out that God has given more gifts than the ones mentioned in Romans 12. Have the groups list the gifts that are mentioned. Then have them try to identify which person in their group may have one or more of the gifts on their list. End this section by explaining the place of the pastor, elders, and deacons in equipping the members of the church for ministry.

Ministry now

This section is meant to look at different opportunities for ministry. In small groups, or one large group, have the participants think through the different ways in which they can exercise a ministry and get involved in a ministry now. Have them list the number of ways

in which they can get involved outside the church first through work, home, or volunteer work. Then, have them list the ministries within the church we are all called to exercise. Among these ministries, be sure the group includes intercession, giving, and witnessing. At this time introduce the concept of vocation: God calls particular people with particular gifts to particular tasks. All too often new Christians jump into too many different things with the result that church and doing things at church suddenly becomes more important than either God or their family. Have the group reflect on what principles they should have for balancing their time between home, work, church, and the community.

Some pitfalls to avoid

Run through the pitfalls mentioned on the handout. Discuss the following with the group:

1. Your ministry is not confined to churchy things or Christian activities
2. Upfront ministry is not more important than behind the scenes ministry
3. "Spiritual" ministries are not more important than practical ones
4. Every ministry must be undertaken in the form of a servant
5. Take time to let your ministry develop, and persevere in what you do
6. A balance between prayer, rest, and work is important in every Christian's life.

Finish the lesson with a meditation on Jesus washing the feet of his disciples (John 13). Ask the participants to think and pray between this lesson and the next about their own ministry.

If you would like to view the outline for this lesson, go to www.reformedevangelism.com and follow the links. We have added an article by John MacArthur on "The Importance of Spiritual Gifts" as well as an online tool for discerning your spiritual gifts. Please be discerning in which tool you decide to use. If you are unhappy with the online tools, a visit to a Christian bookstore should enable you to find a Gift Assessment Tool with which you feel comfortable. Next time, we hope to introduce "Your money and your life." +

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Being Reformed in an unchristian World: The Legacy of Herman Bavinck for the Twenty-First Century

Introduction: 1854-2004

December marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of Herman Bavinck, one of the finest reformed theologians of the modern era. Bavinck played an important role in the advancement of reformed life in the Netherlands, especially in the decades around 1900. As a child of the Secession and an agent in the creation of the Dutch Reformed Churches (*Gereformeerde Kerken*) that were established in 1892, Bavinck is a spiritual ancestor also of the

Liberated churches (*Vrijgemaakten*) and their sister-churches in Australia, Canada, and the United States. He bequeathed to them a valuable legacy, which may be described broadly as an emphasis on the direct application of the reformed faith to contemporary issues in theology, philosophy, social life, politics, and education.

Unfortunately, however, Bavinck is not widely known in English-speaking countries, since only a few of his writings have been translated from the Dutch language. The goal of this article, which

offers little more than a sketch of Bavinck's life and career, is to convey to the reader the *current* value of Bavinck's writings and ideas, especially as these concern the relation of the reformed faith to Christianity generally and to the world at large.

Faith and science

Bavinck's parents were members of the Seceded churches, yet they did not yield to the isolationist spirit common to many of them. Affected by their continued contact with believers who did

not depart from the State Church, Herman developed an open-mindedness that would mark his thinking, writing, and actions later in life. While a stalwart defender of the just cause of the Secession, Bavinck gave serious consideration to the ideas expressed by those of other, also non-reformed, traditions. In 1873, after attending gymnasium, Bavinck enrolled in the theological college at Kampen, which had been founded in 1854. Within a year, however, since he preferred to be in a more academic environment, Bavinck transferred to the University of Leiden, the leading intellectual centre in the Netherlands and the seat of modern theology.

Fortunately Bavinck was not overly attracted to the teachings of the so-called “ethical” school of theology, or to the “modern” science prevalent at the time. Yet he did acquire a conviction not widely practised in our time: reformed scholarship must operate at the highest intellectual level, and not languish on the margins of contemporary thought.

It was in Leiden that Bavinck also acquired the conviction that one must fully understand the ideas and methods of one’s intellectual opponents in order to refute them completely. Later in life, although he differed openly with his peers, Bavinck commanded deep respect for his fair representation of their arguments and his desire to counter them on their terms. In our unchristian era, too, the spirits must be tested fully to see whether they are from God; the truth must be acknowledged wherever it is found, and falsehood must be exposed by means of reasoned arguments, not dismissive rhetoric.

Bavinck wrote his doctoral dissertation on the ethics of Huldrych Zwingli, noting that the Swiss reformer

boldly applied the combination of humanism and Christianity to ethics, the field of moral behaviour. Bavinck’s interest in the relation between belief and human achievement would develop into a life-long endeavour to perceive the complex links between all aspects of human enterprise. One of the most significant, though difficult, goals of Bavinck’s career was to define precisely the relation between faith and science. It is fair to state that the furtherance of knowledge in the context of the Christian faith was Bavinck’s main contribution to the revival of Calvinism

Reformed scholarship must operate at the highest intellectual level, and not languish on the margins of contemporary thought.

in the Netherlands at the beginning of the twentieth century. Obviously, the advancement of knowledge from the Christian perspective should mark reformed science also in the twenty-first century. To quote Bavinck from one of his guest-lectures at Princeton, the person who dedicates his life to the pursuit of science “cannot split himself into halves and separate his faith from his knowledge.”

Christian faith and modern theology

While Bavinck was completing his dissertation, he kept an eye upon the liberalising trend in reformed churches throughout the Netherlands, and he dedicated his scholarly efforts to serving



the church of Christ directly. In the late 1870s Abraham Kuyper was executing the plan to establish the Free University in Amsterdam, and he offered Bavinck a professorship in oriental languages there. After some vacillation, Bavinck declined and determined to serve the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken* (the name of the churches which arose from the Secession) as minister, accepting a call to the Frisian town of Franeker. In 1882 Bavinck received a renewed invitation from Amsterdam, this time to be professor in New Testament exegesis. He declined, since he felt called to serve the congregations of the Secession, however humble they and their institutions were. The decision reveals Bavinck’s keen sense of respect for the boundaries between denominations (in Dutch: *kerk-besef*), a sense not highly active in evangelical North America today.

In 1883, when he was twenty-nine, Bavinck was appointed lecturer in theology and literary studies at the theological college at Kampen. Bavinck was eager to raise the academic standards of the relatively young school, and expectations were high. In his inaugural lecture Bavinck revealed his plan of study: from the confessional reformed perspective he would examine the central problems of theology as formulated by modern scholars.

Herman Bavinck 1854-1921

1854	Born in Hoogeveen
1874-1880	Student of theology in Leiden Doctoral thesis: <i>The Ethics of Huldrych Zwingli</i>
1880	Completes study for ministry at Theological College, Kampen
1881-1882	Serves as minister in the (former) <i>Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk</i>
1882	Becomes lecturer in dogmatics in Kampen
1888	Publishes <i>Catholicity of Christianity and the Church (De Katholiciteit van Christendom en Kerk)</i>
1891	Marries Johanna Schippers, with whom he receives one child
1895-1901	Publishes the 4-volume <i>Reformed Dogmatics (Gereformeerde Dogmatiek)</i>
1902	Replaces Kuyper as professor of dogmatics at Free University of Amsterdam
1904	Publishes <i>Christian Worldview (Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing)</i>
1904	Publishes <i>Pedagogical Principles (Paedagogische Beginselen)</i>
1911	Leads the Anti-Revolutionary Party as active politician
1921	Passes away in Amsterdam

Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics

Bavinck wasted little time, and the years following his appointment became the most productive period of his life. It was during these years that he composed and published the four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics*, a work regarded by many experts as the most important modern expression of the teaching of Scripture from a reformed perspective. This exhaustive work provides a balanced account of the development of theology as a discipline; it also seeks to make dogmatics a more systematic discipline than it has been. Though Bavinck interacts with both contemporary and earlier thought, he does so in a personal manner in order to show that theology is not a purely academic pursuit, but a deeply personal undertaking of the

believing Christian. Thus Bavinck counteracts the methods of so-called higher criticism practised by agnostic, or unbelieving, scholars.

Falsehood must be exposed by means of reasoned arguments, not dismissive rhetoric.

Bavinck advanced the teaching of the inspiration and authority of the Bible (topics of considerable interest today). He emphasized that theology arises out of God's revealed Word, the Scriptures, and so must always be bound up closely with it; theology cannot be pursued apart from the inspired Bible. Accordingly, the

basis, methods, and goals of theological study must be established by the exercise of faith, and not by criteria determined by modern scientists. This means that every believer, regardless of education, can and should seek to grasp and formulate the teachings of the Bible. Thus by articulating the current significance of the well-known profession, *sola Scriptura*, Bavinck provided for our generation a renewed statement of the basis upon which reformed theology must advance and respond to current philosophical and theological movements. Readers will be pleased to discover that *Reformed Dogmatics* is now being translated into English: the available Volumes One and Two are required reading for any student of reformed doctrine.¹

It is needless to state that Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* is not flawless or timeless. Both within and outside reformed circles, the shortcomings of the work were noted. One common observation was that Bavinck is partial to the scholastic methods of argumentation common especially to the Middle Ages, and that his approach was somewhat rationalistic. Especially in the sections that treat the doctrine of man (or anthropology), Bavinck has given the impression of employing scholastic modes of argumentation and language. Criticism has also been directed at the heavily philosophical tenor of the work, which may create the sense that it seeks to impose a theory of philosophy upon theology. Bavinck certainly knew intimately the writings of the great philosophers, in particular the Greek thinkers Plato and Aristotle, and the later Aristotelian thinker, Thomas Aquinas.

In Bavinck's defence it may be observed that in responding to both historic philosophies and their modern manifestations, Bavinck was walking in the footsteps of some of the greatest

Church News

Called to the church of Calgary, Alberta:

Rev. W. Bredenhof

home missionary of Smithers, British Columbia.

Accepted the call to Cloverdale, British Columbia:

Rev. T. Lodder

of Taber, Alberta.

theologians, most notably Calvin and Augustine, and that Scripture itself exposes the heresies of humanistic ideas. As far as the time-bound character of *Reformed Dogmatics* is concerned, it is regrettable that Bavinck could not include in his writing a full, corrective response to the ideas of the highly-influential theologian, Karl Barth, who was younger than Bavinck.

Bavinck's methods and principles

Unlike Abraham Kuyper, who stressed the antithesis between reformed and unchristian ideas, Bavinck sought to understand fully the assumptions and principles of theological movements. His method is that of *synthesis*, which places different ideas side by side. Bavinck did not draw parallels between the ideas of modern thinkers and classic reformed teachings;

Theology is not a purely academic pursuit, but a deeply personal undertaking of the believing Christian.

rather, he wished to grasp completely the thoughts of his opponents, and he did so through a careful analysis of the

similarities and differences between their ideas and his own. His own treatment of doctrine was arranged in such a way that the relationship between the various elements was clearly visible. Bavinck's balanced approach to his subject and to the writings of his colleagues succeeded because of his principled stance: firmly rooted in the Secession and the confessional reformed tradition, Bavinck confidently identified the truth wherever it appeared, and exposed theories not grounded in the text of Scripture. This cautious yet moderate approach deserves imitation today, especially in the formulation of reformed assessments of theological trends.

¹ H. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 1; Vol. 2 (ed. J. Bolt, tr. J. Vriend, Baker, 2003-); some readers may be familiar with the abbreviated and popular compendium, entitled *Magnalia Dei*, which has been rendered into English as *Our Reasonable Faith* (tr. H. Zylstra, Baker, 1956).

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

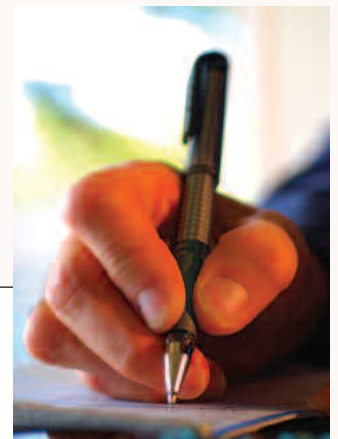
Mr. Sikkema's September 24 article about the secularization of Ontario's public schools was very informative and should be quite helpful to our whole community. Unfortunately, a few issues in the article require attention.

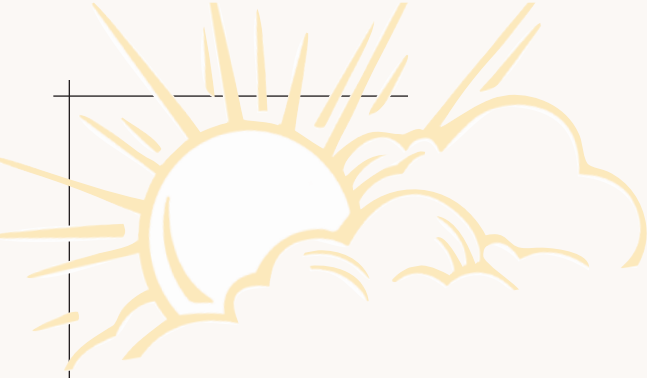
First of all, the former feminist Mary Pride is not a Seventh Day Adventist, but a conservative Presbyterian.

Secondly, as Mr. Sikkema implied, some of Mary Pride's arguments against Christian day schools do not seem applicable to our Reformed schools. Two of her concerns,

however, are quite relevant: the effect of peer pressure among the children, and the financial burden that can cause mothers to seek an outside job [Mary Pride, *The Way Home: Beyond Feminism, Back to Reality*, (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books), p. 93-99]. If these recurring issues are not dealt with Biblically, they can significantly reduce the positive effects of our Reformed schools.

Nancy Schriemer
Ottawa, ON





Ray of Sunshine

By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Matthew 7:24

In this article we would like to wrap up this series on the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus has taught and commanded us a lot through this part of Scripture. But how are we now to put these teachings into practice, each and every day anew? For we know that the life of a Christian here on earth is not meant to be easy. We ought not to say “Oh, what will happen tomorrow?” No, we must have the confidence and trust that Psalm 112:7-8a speaks about: “He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure, he will have no fear.” For when we have our faith built on the strong foundation of our Rock and Saviour, then we are able to go on, no matter what comes our way.

This can only be done when we are humble and recognize that in every aspect of life we do not do anything out of our own strength. It is only through our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit who works mightily in our hearts in order to help us to walk as his children.

But what is it that really lives in our hearts? Do we cry out to God in total dependence in Him? We must know and realize that we are but mere sinful human beings, and deserve nothing. Daily we must pray and ask God to cleanse us from within, to cleanse all the evil and filth that comes from our hearts. He alone can make our hearts pure. David also prays for this in Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

When God renews us from within we are able to walk in the ways that He has taught us in the Beatitudes. Yes, when we walk in these ways then we will face persecution because of righteousness, but each Beatitude shows us how we will be blessed. To be blessed is to find true hope and joy, and the deepest form of happiness, when we daily follow Jesus no matter what the cost.

This righteousness only comes from what God does in us, and not what we can do by ourselves. Walking day by day in all humbleness before God is what He wants. We cannot do this in ourselves, and must see God’s mighty hand working in us through the Holy Spirit.

So why then did Jesus preach the Sermon on the Mount? He shows us how we have come short of giving all glory to God. However great our efforts and striving, whatever we do

will never make us righteous, or fit us to stand in the presence of God. It also teaches us that it is God alone who makes his people anew. He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, the promise made to Abraham. A believer wants to live what Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount, and he does his utmost to do so. He realizes his failures, but prays to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and he has the blessed experience of the promises being realized in his daily life.

We know that Christ died for our sins, that our sins are forgiven. We know that we have passed from death unto life, and we belong to Him, because we do indeed hunger and thirst for righteousness. We must be conscious of the fact that He is dealing with us, and that his Spirit is working within us, revealing to us our shortcomings and imperfections. This creates a longing in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Above all, in the midst of life, with all its trials and uncertainties, we can certainly say with the apostle Paul, “So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Tim 1:8-10). And, “You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. . . Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 2:1-3).

*O God, hide Thou Thy face from all my sins,
Blot out all my iniquities that grieve Thee.
Create in me a clean heart; do not leave me.
Renew my spirit, make it strong again.
O from Thy presence cast me not away;
Let nought me from Thy Holy Spirit sever.
Let joy of Thy salvation with me stay,
Uphold me with a willing spirit ever.*

Psalm 51:4

Birthdays in April:

- 2 **DEREK KOK will be 35**
464 Domville Street, Box 4, Arthur, ON N0G 1A0
- 19 **MARINUS FOEKENS will be 53**
4-290 Forest Street, Chatham, ON N7L 2A9
- 23 **ARLENE DEWIT will be 44**
c/o P. DeWit
Barnston Island, Surrey, BC V3T 4W2

- 29 **BRYCE BERENDS will be 30**
3217 Twin Oaks Crescent, Burlington, ON L7M 3A8

Congratulations to all who are celebrating a birthday this month. May our heavenly Father grant you an enjoyable day together with your family and friends, and also his blessings for this new year.

Till next month,

Mrs. C. Gelms and Mrs. E. Nordeman
548 Kemp Road East, RR 2, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2
Phone: 905-563-0380



Helen Dorgeloos

Anchor Camp's Twenty-Fifth Anniversary

On Saturday, September 18, 2004, a large group of people gathered in the Guido gym to celebrate Anchor Camp's twenty-fifth anniversary. It was a time to pause and reflect on the fact that twenty-five times our handicapped brothers and sisters have been able to enjoy a wonderful holiday at Anchor Camp. The Lord has blessed Anchor Camp greatly. He has granted safety, health, strength, energy, enthusiastic volunteers, cheerful donors, and much more. Anchor Camp is a special place because the participants and volunteers share a bond of faith in God our Heavenly Father. The volunteers often have their faith strengthened by the child like faith of the participants. They love the Lord and show this in many ways, such as their enthusiastic singing and being eager to attend church on Sunday.

The afternoon was opened by singing Psalm 116:1 and 10, a favourite for many of the campers. A former director, Allard Gunnink, read Hebrews 6, the Scripture passage from which the Camp's name is derived. "We have this hope as an anchor



for the soul, firm and secure" (Heb 6:19a). Mr. Gunnink spoke some opening words reminding us that in the new world our special brothers and sisters will no longer have handicaps.

A trip down memory lane

Helen Dorgeloos and Lydia Schulenberg took the audience on a trip down memory lane. Below follows several excerpts from this trip.

The first Anchor Camp was held at Valens Conservation Area near Freulton,

Ontario. At that first Camp Jim VanderHeiden, John Feenstra, Paul Dieleman, Grace Homan, Janine Smid, Marinus Foekens, James Buikema, Albert Dorgeloos, Philip Schuurman, and Connie VanAmerongen were the ten participants who attended for one or two weeks. At Anchor Camp 2004 there were thirty-four participants that attended. In recent years the total number of people at Camp has ranged from sixty to sixty-five. The age of the campers has been

preschool to fifty plus. The Lord has called home Anchor Camp participants Marlene Fausert, John Feenstra, and Marten Jansen. Anchor Campers have many fond memories of these three special individuals.

In the many years of Camp, we have enjoyed a variety of activities. We swim, play games, bowl, enjoy campfires, go hiking, enjoy sports, go boating, go on scavenger hunts, joke, talk and socialize, fish, make crafts (an activity which the male counsellors love immensely), play tricks, have water fights, and do lots of singing and eating. Food has always been an important highlight of Camp. We eat a variety of foods from around the world; we've eaten Canadian, American, Chinese, Indonesian, Hungarian, Italian, and Dutch. Scavenger hunts were a popular activity during Anchor Camp's years at Valens. You had to find all kinds of unique things. At the very first Camp, one of the items on the list was a bird's nest. One group actually cheated and made a nest out of twigs and other objects. They said that nowhere on the sheet did it say that the nest had to be made by birds and not by humans!

Kangaroo Court has become an Anchor Camp tradition. This famous court is equipped with a judge, a defence attorney, prosecution, police, and criminals who are always guilty. The humorous punishments vary and may include being surprised with a bucket of cold water or wearing a delicious cream pie.

Two years ago, Anchor Camp had a farm theme. Two stuffed farmer dummies named Frank and Bob joined the adventurous life of Anchor Camp. Frank got to sleep in the director's bed, float in the pool on Sunday, and arrive at the sing song circle tied to the front of an old tractor, where Connie VanAmerongen offered to elope with him! Anchor Camp 2004 had a clown theme. One night two minister's sons and friends placed a row of chairs and a table on the dining room roof along with two stuffed clowns.



Highlights of Anchor Camp

After this trip down memory lane, the audience was treated to a slide presentation, a video clip, and a delightful power point presentation, all of which portrayed the highlights of Anchor Camp during the twenty-five years. The campers enjoyed seeing themselves on the screen and the excited comment of: "That's me!" could frequently be heard. Connie VanAmerongen, who has attended nearly all of the twenty-five Camps, also gave a brief speech. The visual presentations were alternated with joyful singing from the *Book of Praise*, praising our God and Father who has given us twenty-five wonderful Anchor Camps.

Closing remarks

After closing the formal part of the program in prayer led by Mr. G. Nordeman, chairman of the Anchor board, guests were given the opportunity to partake of delicious anniversary cake

and other refreshments. It was also time to meet old and new friends made during the twenty-five years of Camp.

In the closing remarks gratitude was expressed to the countless volunteers who have given their time with love and enthusiasm at Anchor Camp itself or behind the scenes. Thankfulness was also voiced to all those who have made donations, financial or other, to Anchor Camp. It is amazing and a reason for rejoicing when one thinks of the countless individuals who have contributed in many ways to make Anchor Camp a success for twenty-five years.

Above all our thanks go to God our Heavenly Father who has blessed Anchor Camp and made each and every Camp a safe and special holiday for the Anchor Campers. He is the one who has made it possible for Anchor Camp to exist for twenty-five special years. May God continue to guide and bless future Anchor Camps.

