

# Clarion

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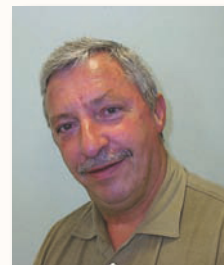
*Deism teaches  
that creation is  
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independent  
course*



## **Inside this issue**

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Lessons from History

Klaas Stam



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# Putting God on the Shelf

*Deism teaches that God made this world  
and promptly lost interest in it*

## The resurgence of Deism

A while ago in an answer to a letter to the editor dealing with Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, I mentioned that Darwin's mother, Susannah Wedgwood, was a believer in Deism. I was asked to elaborate on what Deism actually means.

Meanwhile I read in a Dutch church magazine that the current rapid acceptance of evolutionist thinking in Reformed circles indeed reminds us of Deism (see note below). In another magazine I read an article by Dr. K. van de Belt (*Reformatorisch Dagblad*, January 3, 2009) that the combining of faith in creation with (theistic) evolutionism definitely smacks of Deism. So it appears that I was not far off the mark with my comment about the resurgence of Deism.

## What is Deism?

Deism (from the Latin word *Deus*, meaning "God") acknowledges that there is a God, who caused creation to come into existence. In this sense, it is the opposite of atheism, which states that there is no God. Darwin's mother and many others in her time would never deny that God exists. In fact, they would agree that God had a part in bringing creation into existence. So far, so good.

There is a snake in the grass, however. Deism also teaches that God, after creating the world and setting into motion the development of things by natural laws, had *no further involvement* in this world. Creation is like a clock that is properly wound up and follows its own independent course.

Deism teaches that God made this world and promptly lost interest in it. In other words, *God exists but He has been put on a shelf*. He has no stake in this world and lets it run its course. Creation will evolve by

itself and come to its purpose on its own without God. You can immediately see how this kind of thinking may easily lead to theistic evolutionism. God is Creator but for the rest we evolve on our own. Since God built natural laws into his creation, things develop as they should without his direct help or participation. God looks down from his lofty shelf as a casual observer of the human drama.

Whatever is on the shelf has only limited time and is soon discarded. This is exactly what happened to God. From the shelf He disappeared into the recycling bin. From there on He was deleted and replaced by atheistic rationalism.

*Deism must be clearly recognized  
and strongly rejected*

Deism was prominent in the age of the so-called Enlightenment, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is precisely the time period when Charles Darwin had his day. Deists typically do not believe in revelation but base their views on human reason. They tend to reject the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the inerrancy of Scripture. Charles Darwin grew up in a family where these views were taught and believed.

At most God is seen as "the Supreme Architect" of things. It comes close to the idea of "Intelligent Design," the notion that there must be an intelligent Being who made everything. No one really knows his identity, but still he exists. . . on the shelf. The ID movement is rapidly losing popularity. Who wants to serve an *unknown* God?





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To put it in simple terms: Deism agrees that there is a “God,” but He is dysfunctional and therefore irrelevant. God has a limited shelf-life. At bottom we are on our own and have to fend for ourselves.

**God in the middle**

To be sure, not every theistic evolutionist is a Deist. We may be thankful for that. They are by and large sincere Christians and honourable people. The purpose of my editorial is not to cast aspersion on anyone, least of all Reformed scientists. It is a challenging profession. But I am saying that the danger of Deism still exists, and Deism must be clearly recognized and strongly rejected, especially by members of the academic community who are called and enabled to give biblical guidance.

I find it striking how the Bible shows us time and again that God not only created all things but that He is *deeply involved* in the life and well-being of all things. This is especially true of his children. In the Heidelberg Catechism (LD 10) we confess that God by his omni-present power upholds and governs all things as with his own hand. Believing “providence” is a necessary corollary to believing “creation.” Nothing happens by chance. God’s hand is evident in all things, even in the most minute event. I take much comfort and encouragement from what the Bible teaches about the providence of God. Without this comfort, I’d go nuts; it’s *that* serious.

We see God’s involvement especially in the sending of his only-begotten Son. God is not on the shelf in his own sweet world, but He *is in the middle* of all things! He is deeply involved in our lives. Christ is always in the centre. Whoever stands at the foot of the cross cannot be a Deist. It pleased the Son of God to take upon Himself human flesh and blood and a human soul. *It is in Christ that we see the eminent proof of God’s love for us.*

## Creation and evolution

All this brings me to some important conclusions for now, for enough has been written by me on this matter. There is nothing new under the sun, also when it comes to the relation between faith and science.

Dr. H.J.C.J.J. Wilschut wrote in *Nader Bekeken* (February 2, 2009, Vol. 16, no. 2) that we must be careful not to develop a manner of Scripture explanation *from out of ourselves*. Then we begin to adapt the Scriptures to our insights. The battle is not only about a few texts but about the way in which we read and explain the Bible, the science of "hermeneutics." I'd like to elaborate on the topic of hermeneutics another time, if you wish.


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## God is deeply involved in our lives

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If we accept the claims of evolutionism, the following happens. The distinction between God and man becomes vague. We develop problems with respect to what the Bible teaches about sin. We do not understand the significance of death. The parallel between the first and second Adam is lost. We do not know anymore how to understand Genesis 1 and 2, as well as other key passages in Scripture. Our Creator and Provider comes to sit on the shelf of human wisdom. Our eyes will be closed to God's great work of salvation that takes place in this creation by his providence.

No one wants this kind of development in our churches. Therefore it must be nipped in the bud. We cannot combine creation and evolution. The questions that rise will have to be answered in a different way. This is the real challenge that Christians are faced with today. We may have to live with the humbling thought that we do not have all the answers in this life.

We need to study science in the faith that this is our Father's world. He made this world and established order in it, so that we might learn and stand in awe. As one letter writer wrote: we do have a cultural mandate! Get to it, then. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son that whoever believes in him might not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). He does not accept a limited shelf-life. 



## Correction

In the February 12 article "Science and the Age of the Earth," p. 84, 2<sup>nd</sup> column, line 9ff: the footnote, inserted as bracketed material should have read: "Steven A. Austin, "Excess Argon Within Mineral Concentrates from the New Dacite Lava Dome at Mount St. Helens Volcano," *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 10 (1996) 335-343; Steven A. Austin, *Grand Canyon: Monument to Catastrophe* (Santee, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1994) 111-113; also, e.g., Edgar Andrews, "The Lessons of Surtsey," *Creation* 5:2 (1982) 10."





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**MATTHEW 13:52**

*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*

2 Timothy 2:15

“Do your best.” That’s a common refrain parents and teachers use to encourage the children. Paul stimulates Timothy in the same way, “Do your best to present yourself as one approved.” That word “approved” has in it the idea of testing: “Present yourself as one who is tried, tested, and proven.” The students among us know exactly what that means. There are tests, assignments, exams, and so on. And they work hard at those so that at the end of the year their report card will say, “Approved. May continue to next grade.” That’s so often our stamp of approval – to get the nod from the people around us, who are evaluating us.

But Paul gives us a different focus. He specifically says that Timothy must work to present himself to God as one approved. The focus is not on approval from men, nor on approval from us. You can hear that often today too: “Well, as long as you are satisfied with what you have done, that is what matters.” Paul however, puts the focus on God, as he does in 2 Corinthians 10:18, “For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”

When Paul says “do your best to present yourself,” we can have the image of a courtroom, of someone who presents himself before a judge. Then we can see how Paul’s command to Timothy even has to do with Judgment Day. The work you are doing is not to gain approval before men on

earth, but so that you may present yourself before the judgment seat of God as one approved.

So that we don’t think this is some kind of salvation by works, Paul tells us who this “approved” man is. He is “a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” What Paul means is that the one who correctly handles the word of truth can be an unashamed workman. He is approved. But what does that mean?

First of all, Paul calls the one approved “a workman.” The life of a Christian is hard work. Paul speaks throughout his epistles of the labour that is involved. In the beginning of our chapter Paul compared this work to that of a soldier, or an athlete, or a hardworking farmer. But this worker must also be an “unashamed worker.” And the litmus test for whether this worker can be unashamed is whether he “correctly handles the word of truth.” That is where the crux of the matter lies. That is where all the hard work is involved. And we will see why.

The word for “correctly handling” is a difficult word. Some say Paul is focusing on “right interpretation of the gospel.” Others say that he is focusing on “right behaviour in line with the gospel.” But really there is no dilemma! Paul often combines the two. Think for example of Titus 2:1-2, “You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-

controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.” Doctrine and life go hand in hand. So too, in our text Paul exhorts Timothy to present himself as one who correctly handles the word of truth. That is, he must correctly interpret the gospel, and he must live in accordance with that gospel. That is why this is hard work!

And when he combines these two, as much work as it is, then he can indeed be unashamed, and can present himself before God as one approved. Then he will know – because he has faithfully studied – and he will live out that knowledge, that he does not stand there on his own work ethic but on the gospel, the good news of the blood of his Saviour Jesus Christ. The hope of this gospel and the certainty of faith will make this workman unashamed. He has nothing to hide from God his Maker. The workman who correctly handles the word of truth knows that he only has life in Christ. Only in Him can the workman appear before the judgment seat of God. Only in Him will the Judge mark on his transcript, “Approved. May continue to eternal life.”

So brothers and sisters, “Give it your every effort to present yourself to God as one approved, an unashamed workman, correctly handling the word of truth.” That is, do your best to study the gospel, to know of your salvation in Christ and to live accordingly, in deep gratitude for all He has given us! **C**



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# Inerrancy – Lessons from History (Part 2 of 6)

In the first instalment in this series, we noted that some concerns have been expressed about the Introduction to the Proposed Joint Church Order stating a commitment to biblical inerrancy. With the help of E. J. Young and his book *Thy Word is Truth*, we saw that inerrancy means “that the Scriptures possess the quality of freedom from error. They are exempt from the liability to mistake, incapable of error. In all their teachings they are in perfect accord with the truth.” We also saw that by virtue of membership in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), the Canadian Reformed Churches have explicitly and officially committed themselves to biblical inerrancy.

As we continue our look at this doctrine and its place in our history, we need to give some attention to the Belgic Confession. Last time, we noted a 1979 article by J. Visscher that claimed that Articles 5 and 7 of the Belgic Confession express a doctrine of inerrancy. However, more recently, a paper was published at the Reformed Academic blog (reformedacademic.blogspot.com) which argued something different. Building on a rejection of verbal plenary inspiration, a brother contended that “it is best to do away with the so-called doctrine of inerrancy in favour of the traditional Reformed affirmation, as found in the Belgic Confession (Articles 5 and 7), that Holy Scripture is *authoritative* for our faith, *sufficient* for our salvation, and the *infallible* rule in regards to doctrine.”

So, where does the Belgic Confession stand on this issue? We may be committed to inerrancy via membership in NAPARC, but are the Canadian Reformed Churches also confessionally committed to inerrancy?

## The Belgic Confession and inerrancy

The Belgic Confession was written by Guido (Guy) de Brès and first published in 1561. Although written

by de Brès, it was likely adopted by at least some of the Reformed churches in the Low Countries before its publication. De Brès used sources, the most prominent of which are Calvin’s *Institutes*, the French (Gallican) Confession of 1559, and a confession written by Theodore Beza.

In the context of the Low Countries (present-day Belgium, Netherlands, parts of France and Germany), there were two main opponents to the Reformed faith. On the one hand, there was the Roman Catholic majority. The government was Roman Catholic and took a very dim view of the existence and propagation of the Reformed faith. This dim view was primarily because of the other group, the Anabaptists. While Anabaptists were never very numerous in the Low Countries, they were vocal and they had a reputation as rebels and revolutionaries. The Belgic Confession was written primarily to distinguish clearly the Reformed from the Anabaptists.

These two groups are not only addressed in the Belgic Confession, but also in the two largest books of de Brès. In 1555, he wrote *Le Baston de la Foy Chrestienne* – in this work he responds to the errors of the Roman Catholics using Scripture and the church fathers. In 1565, *La racine, source et fondement des Anabaptistes* appeared, his magnum opus exposing the errors of the Anabaptists. Both works are important for this discussion because in both de Brès does not have to discuss at length the inspiration or divine origin of Scripture. He does have to debate the authority of Scripture, for both Roman Catholics and Anabaptists drew *sola Scriptura* into question. But all agreed, whether Reformed, Roman Catholic, or Anabaptist, that God had inspired the Bible and that it was infallible. For all it was a book whose trustworthiness could not be called into question.

It has been said that inerrancy is a uniquely fundamentalist doctrine that has little to do with our Reformed or Catholic (in the good sense) heritage. In his book *Recovering the Reformed Confession*, Dr. R. Scott Clark has some helpful discussion on fundamentalism. He notes that one of its distinctives was and is indeed an emphasis on biblical inerrancy. However, he goes on to note that this is not a problem for Reformed confessors:

Fundamentalists have held and practiced these [characteristics, including inerrancy], but holding and practicing them does not necessarily make one a fundamentalist. For example, something like the inerrancy of Scripture was held as an article of faith by the patristic, medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation church. Given that it was not until the Enlightenment that the truthfulness and reliability of Scripture became a crisis, it is remarkable how often premodern theologians affirmed the trustworthiness of Scripture. The Reformed doctrine of Scripture has developed in the last two centuries in order to respond to the modernist critics, but the doctrine of the Trinity underwent the same sort of development in response to the Arian critics in the fourth century. In fact, it is not a belief that the Bible is true which makes one a fundamentalist; rather it is the belief that one's interpretation of Scripture is inerrant which qualifies one as a fundamentalist. In the same way, it is hardly self-evident that calling sinners to faith in Christ is fundamentalist unless the only alternative to modern universalism is fundamentalism. (45)

Clark is right: the medieval, Reformation and post-Reformation church all held to a form of inerrancy. However, it was not a very nuanced and detailed form of inerrancy; neither does it appear that the word "inerrancy" was per se used. All of that would only come later after the Enlightenment period saw the introduction of critical approaches to the Bible. Necessity demanded the extensive refinement and development of a doctrine of inerrancy that

had hitherto been generally taken for granted and otherwise only stated in bare bones fashion.

We may conclude that Visscher was correct in 1979 to appeal to the Belgic Confession, because inerrancy is there in an incipient form. In a context of Roman Catholic religious domination, Guido de Brès was careful to make it clear that on this point the Reformed churches were in line with late medieval theology. Thus, Article 4 asserts that "nothing can be alleged" against the canonical books of the Bible. No one can make an accusation of contradiction or error. Article 5 states that "we believe without any doubt all things contained in them." No exceptions are made – if God says it, we accept it as the word of our Father who will never lie. To pit Scripture's sufficiency in matters of salvation or doctrine against Scripture's truthfulness in other matters is a false dilemma unknown to the Belgic Confession. The traditional Reformed doctrine of Scripture has always assumed at least an incipient form of inerrancy.

In the high orthodox post-Reformation period, this aspect of the Belgic Confession was formally recognized by theologians such as Johannes Hoornbeek (1617-1666). Faustus Socinus and his followers had explicitly denied biblical inerrancy. Against the Socinians, Hoornbeek argued (in his multi-volume *Socinianismus Confutatus*) that even in the apparently unimportant matters, God had preserved the divine writers free from error. Hoornbeek explicitly stated that this was not just his personal position but that of the Reformed churches and he appealed to Article 5 of the Belgic Confession. This demonstrates that Visscher's appeal to the Confession as a support for the doctrine of inerrancy is not novel or idiosyncratic. Rather, what is novel is to argue for positions similar to that of the Socinians using an appeal to our Confession. Given the history, such an effort is lacking in credibility.

In our next instalment, we'll begin looking at the loss of biblical inerrancy in the Christian Reformed Church.



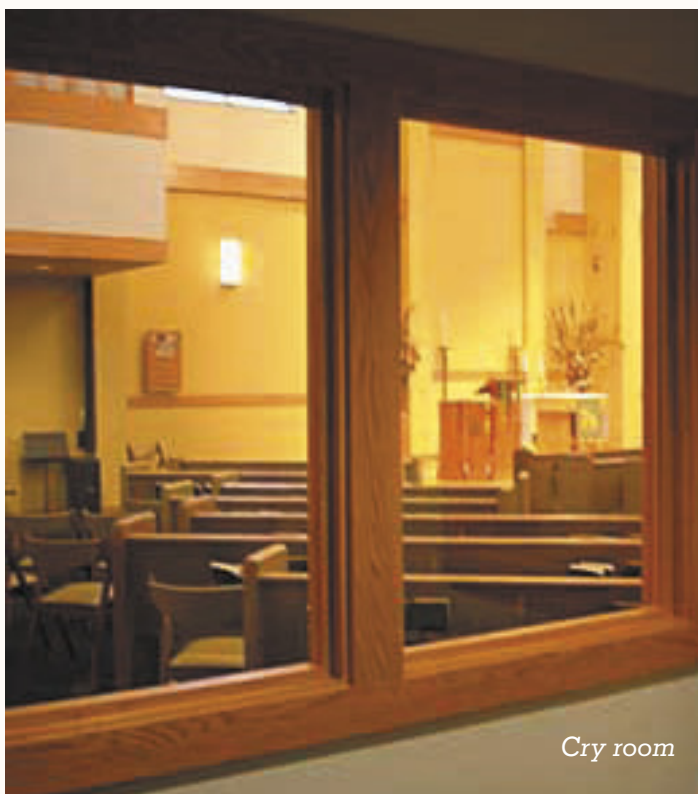




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# Let the Children Come

Laura Vanderkam wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* of Friday, December 4, 2009, about a dilemma she faced one Sunday. After having been cooped up all week with a sick nine-month-old baby, she was desperate to get out of her apartment. She wanted to go to church; however, she did not want to expose other children in the church nursery to her son's germs. So she decided to bring him into the pew with her and her husband – only to learn that her church had chosen that Sunday for a very solemn Lenten service, full of soft chants and contemplative silences. Her baby made joyful noises at inopportune moments. An usher asked them if they would take him out. Laura's husband brought him home while she spent the rest of the service in tears.



Cry room

Do the children belong in the worship service? Yes, they do. As we confess in Lord's Day 27, "Infants as well as adults belong to God's covenant and congregation. Through Christ's blood the redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith, are promised to them no less than to adults. Therefore, by baptism, as sign of the covenant, they must be incorporated into the Christian church and distinguished from the children of unbelievers."

## *Christ calls the whole Christian family to the worship services*

Believing those powerful things we should not, after having baptized our children, bar them from the worship service of the congregation of the Christian church just because of a bit of mewling and crying.

Today, in many churches, the age groups are separated: nursery for the little ones; age-appropriate Sunday school ("Children's Church") for the older children; adult services for the mature. Most of our churches offer a baby-sitting service for the infants. Some also offer a kind of craft or teaching class for the prepubescent members of the church.

Some parents are pushing back against the age-specific separation and for intergenerational worship. Ms. Vanderkam mentions Kate Wicker, an Atlanta-area mom of a four-year-old, two-year-old, and a baby, who brings all three of them with her to Mass on Sundays and sometimes during the week. Ms. Wicker says, "I try to be polite and respectful of other people's worship experience, but how can we baptize children, welcoming them to the body of Christ, and then say 'until you're old enough to not make any noise and sit still you're not welcome here?'" She has gotten some raised eyebrows and nasty comments, but feels backed up by Pope Benedict XVI who has reminded Roman Catholic parents that Christ "calls the whole Christian family to Sunday Mass."



We have our issues with the Pope, but here we agree with him (except for the Mass thing) – Christ calls the whole Christian family to the worship services. The babies should be in church again the Sunday after they have been baptized. This would necessitate several changes in how we, as Canadian Reformed people, do church.

The older among us, who have moved beyond the child-rearing stage, would need to cut the young families some slack and not become irritated by a bit of noise as the young parents train their children how to worship. Worship does not flow naturally from the human heart; it needs to be taught. The congregation ought not to think it important to follow, with their eyes, the young father who is taking his unruly toddler out of the auditorium to administer a bit of discipline – which reminds me of a funny though true story: a father in the deep south was taking his misbehavin' daughter out of the service. As he threw her up over his shoulder, she shouted to the congregation, "Y'all pray for me now, y'hear?"

We would need to rethink our church architecture. Our church buildings should begin incorporating the good and old Presbyterian tradition of the "cry-room." A cry room is built beside or behind the auditorium and is a place that mom or dad can take a noisy child out of the service. As it will have glass between it and the auditorium, those in the cry room do not feel distantly

separated from the worshipping community. With today's possibilities for public address systems and sound proofing, cry rooms could serve us well. Those in the auditorium would not hear any children's noise; those in the cry room would hear the sermon, singing, etc.

It is good for children to see their parents worshipping, to hear them sing and recite the creed and the Lord's Prayer. Mom or dad in the cry room with noisy Johnny can continue the training. During the time mom and dad have a number of small children, they can take turns. Thankfully, we have two worship services every Sunday. And don't worry, young mom and dad: that stage in your lives will not last forever. In fact, it slips away very quickly.

Ministers need to be sensitive to the fact that a large part of the audience is very young and, for the most part, does not have much of a clue what he is talking about. Without dumbing the service down, he needs to engage the children in his preaching, prayers, and segues between the points of the liturgy. The consistory and the "more mature" in the congregation should not criticize him when he endeavours to engage also the children and "less mature."

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them." He did not add, "Except when they make a bit too much noise." C

## Canadian Reformed Home Registry

*"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. . ."*  
Hebrews 13:2

Along with other such words in Scripture, it is clear that it is pleasing to the Lord to open our homes to brothers and sisters in need of a place to go.

The Elora Canadian Reformed Home Registry Committee is a service for young people between ages of approximately ten and twenty who require a home away from home for a time. Parents, consistory, and young person would all agree that removal from the present situation is best, but where to go? This is where our progress has been focused on now. We are searching for homes available for the youths to live temporarily. If you can be of service in this, please contact your consistory with deacons. They will pass on to you forms to fill out, and will forward those forms to the Canadian Reformed Home Registry Committee. You will be contacted by the Home Registry Committee if and when there may be someone who requires your hospitality.

Thank you!

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# Canticles

## The Desert and the Flower

Note to the Readers: This Canticle was published in Issue 4 without the last four verses. Here you will find all six verses included.

This song is a versification of Isaiah 35. In this chapter, nature is personified. All of creation joins in exultation to praise the Lord for his work in redeeming his chosen people. God is the redeemer of all of life: the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the lame will leap like a deer.

Those who know the Psalter will recognize that many of the themes and motifs of Isaiah 35 are also found in Psalms 65 and 72. The tune for this new song seemed inevitable.

### The Desert and the Flower

1. The des-ert and the bar-ren coun-try  
 with glad-ness will re-joice.  
 The wil-der-ness, so dry and dust-y,  
 will raise a cheer-ful voice.  
 As cro-cus-es burst forth in flow-er,  
 as ros-es bloom and bud,  
 our land will see the LORD'S great splen-dour,  
 the glo-ry of our God.

2. Like Lebanon's majestic cedars  
 so will our forests grow.  
 As Sharon's roses, lush and glorious,  
 thus will our flowers show.  
 Our pastures will be rich and verdant  
 like Carmel's mountain fields.  
 The land will flourish and be fragrant  
 as it brings forth great yields.

3. Strengthen the weary hands that tremble,  
 old knees that soon give way.  
 Say to the ones with hearts so fearful:  
 "Be strong; be not afraid.  
 Your God will come with retribution –  
 with vengeance they deserve –  
 'gainst those who persecute His nation.  
 His people He'll preserve."
4. Those who were blind will see creation,  
 the deaf will once more hear.  
 The mute will shout with great elation,  
 the lame leap like a deer.  
 The wilderness will gush forth fountains,  
 the thirsty ground will flow.  
 Where jackals once roamed through the barrens  
 there grass and reeds will grow.
5. Right through the land will run a highway,  
 the Way of Holiness.  
 Only the just will make the journey,  
 those who hate wickedness.  
 No dangerous lion will be found there  
 no cause to fear or mourn.  
 All those redeemed by God their Saviour  
 will to the land return.
6. The ransomed of the LORD will walk there  
 with joyful songs of praise.  
 They'll enter Zion, by God's favour,  
 to Him their anthems raise.  
 Full bliss will crown their heads forever,  
 joy speed them on their way.  
 They will rush in with festive banners.  
 All sorrow flies away.



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# Canticles

The five books of the Book of Psalms all close with a doxology of praise to the Lord. This song is one extended doxology made from the five.

Stanzas 1 and 12 are similar but have a significant difference.

Stanza 1 calls forth praise from Israel while stanza 12 calls forth praise from all nations. To represent the post-Pentecost singing of the church today, stanza 12 employs the well-known hymnic phrase "Soli Deo Gloria."

The tune, unique to this song, was composed for this hymn by Chris Nobels, organist at Brampton Canadian Reformed Church. Mr. Nobels also composed the harmony.

Note: You can view more of George van Popta's canticles at <https://sites.google.com/site/canticles99/>

## Praised Be the God of Israel

*A Doxology*

1. Praised be the God of Is - ra - el. May from His peo - ple wor - ship swell.  
 2. Praise be to God, our gra - cious LORD. To Is-rael's God our thanks af - ford.  
 3. Praise be to His great glo - rious Name. For - ev - er praise Him, voice His fame.  
 4. Praised be the LORD for - ev - er - more. Write Him a fit - ting mu - sic score,

Ex - alt Him ev - er and a - gain. Yes, praise His Name. A - men, A - men!  
 our God who does great deeds on earth. O praise Him, mag - ni - fy His worth.  
 The earth is filled with His re - nown. We praise our God. A - men! A - men!  
 and sing a - loud its high re - frain: O praise the LORD. A - men! A - men!

5. O praise the God of Israel,  
 and of His exaltation tell.  
 Extol Him ever and again.  
 Let all the people say, "Amen!"

6. Yes, hallelujah, praise the LORD  
 who on His people blessings poured.  
 Praise God in His most holy place.  
 Praise God Almighty for His grace.

7. Praised be the LORD in heav'n above.  
 Praise Him who showers us with love.  
 Praise Him for all His mighty ways.  
 Extol His Name, give Him your praise.

8. Praise Him, our God, with trumpet blast.  
 Applaud His glory unsurpassed.  
 Exalt Him with the harp and lute.  
 Pay homage with the strings and flute.

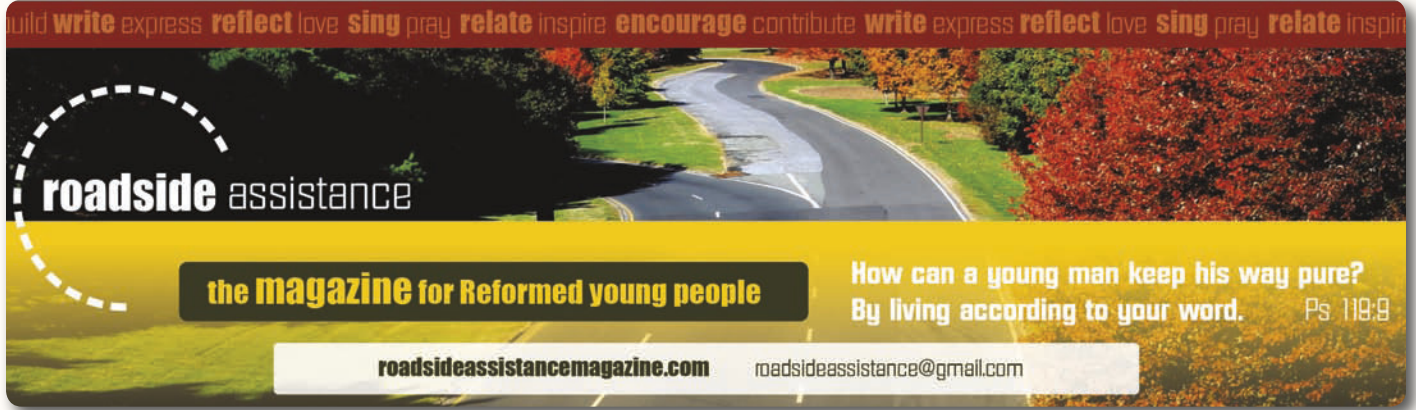
9. Praise Him with tambourine and dance.  
 Praise Him for all His excellence.  
 Our God is great, Him we adore.  
 We praise Him now and evermore.

10. Praise Him by making cymbals ring.  
 Exult before your God and king.  
 Come, make a great and holy noise  
 before Him; let us all rejoice.

11. Let all things living praise the LORD.  
 All that has breath, His praise record.  
 Praise Him with everything you are.  
 Praise our great God! Hallelujah!

12. Praise be the God of Israel.  
 May from all nations worship swell.  
 Yes, Soli Deo Gloria!  
 Amen, Amen. Hallelujah! AMEN





# Speaking Grace

Arend Witten

When you think about selfless service in the Bible, the prophet Moses stands out. He was a man who patiently and humbly served the Lord's people. For forty years he put up with the Israelites complaining in the desert. At one time, he even offered to have his name blotted out of the Book of Life so that God would have mercy on the people. But what I have always found incredible about the story of Moses is the disappointing finish. God tells Moses in Numbers 20:12: "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." Moses, after struggling so long, is not allowed to enter the Promised Land because he struck the rock when God had told him to speak to it.

In this article I would like to look a bit more closely at the story of Moses in Numbers 20 and consider why the Lord did not allow him to enter into the Promised Land. Not so that, in the first place, we can learn from Moses' example, but because in this passage the Lord reveals something about Himself. And what He reveals is far from disappointing. Actually, it is a wonderful and encouraging truth, one that is important to keep in mind as you consider what it means to live as a Christian young person.

## Moses disobeys

Numbers 20 begins with the Israelites complaining in the desert because they had no water to drink. "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place?" Now I don't want to minimize how unpleasant it would be to wander through a desert and be short on water, but clearly the Israelites responded in a wrong

way. They questioned why the Lord had ever come to them at all. They were rejecting their covenant Father. Moses recognizes how serious this is and, together with Aaron, falls down before the Lord. The Lord then appears in all his glory. But remarkably, He does not come with reprimand and punishment. Instead, He gives Moses instructions for how to get water for the Israelites. Moses is to gather the people together and, while they are watching, speak to a rock so that water would come out of the rock for the people to drink.

*Moses was supposed to be the messenger of grace, but he stood in the way of this message*

Moses does as the Lord commands him. He calls the people together, but before the water comes, Moses speaks to the people roughly: "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" And then Moses violently strikes the rock twice with his staff and water gushes out. The people and their animals are able to drink. It seems like the problem has been solved.

Yet the Lord is not pleased. He says, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them" (Num 20:12). What a shock! Why was striking the rock so bad? Was it just that Moses did not follow the Lord's instructions to the letter? If we look closely at God's words, we see the issue is deeper than that. God says that Moses did not "trust," and Moses did not honour God as "holy."

## God is holy

Often when we use the word “holy” we mean that God can have nothing to do with sin. However, the basic meaning of the word “holy” is not firstly moral or ethical; rather, it means “to be set apart.” God is holy. He is different. He is set apart, in his own league. That is how the Old Testament uses the word “holy.” For instance, the prophet Isaiah speaks about God’s power in creation; he says in Isaiah 40:25-26, “‘To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal’ says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these?”

Also in Hosea 11:9, God is speaking about his great mercy to his sinful people. There He says, “I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim. For I am God, and not man – the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath.”

Taking these two passages together, we see that God’s holiness applies to his power (Isaiah), and also his mercy (Hosea). So God’s holiness basically means that He is set apart; He is in a different league.

## Moses did not trust

Why is it that striking the rock did not show that God is holy, while speaking to the rock would have? Well, striking the rock is a violent action, an action that shows anger and frustration. Moses wanted to emphasize that the people deserved punishment.

This was a problem because this was not the message that the Lord had wanted to bring. When God came down in his glory, He had not given any reprimand for the people but had instead only given instructions for getting water. God had not told Moses to speak harshly to the people (Ps 106:33). God was going to show his grace to his people. This new generation of Israelites would see God’s great mercy as their parents did in Egypt. Moses was supposed to be the messenger of this grace. But instead Moses stood in the way of this message. Instead of grace, he showed anger. Moses did not *trust* that God knew what He was doing. According to Moses, these people were sinners and they needed to know it!

But the Lord still sends water. If what Moses did was so wrong, you would think that the Lord would have let Moses strike the rock and stand there in front of those thousands of people with nothing happening.

But He doesn’t. Despite the sin of Moses and Aaron, God sends water. God turns the situation around so that all of the people realize that God is gracious. He does this by punishing Moses and Aaron, barring them from the Promised Land. In this way the Lord makes very clear to the people what a holy God He is. His grace is far greater and wider than that of any person, even patient Moses.

## The water of life

It is significant that it was by water that God was showing his grace to his people. To the Israelites living in parched Palestine, water was very important for physical life. For this reason, water is used in the Old Testament as a symbol for spiritual life or salvation (see Ezekiel 47:1-12)

Then it is not surprising that in the New Testament we read in John 7:37 about the Lord Jesus standing in the temple and calling out to everyone: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.” Christ is the living water. Christ is the source of life and salvation.

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*God turns the situation around so  
that all of the people realize that  
God is gracious*

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The Lord Jesus warned people not to get trapped in legalism. The scribes and Pharisees thought obeying the law would earn them their salvation. But the Lord Jesus proclaims clearly that He is the only one who gives life and salvation; He is the living water. In essence, the scribes and Pharisees made the same mistake as Moses in Numbers 20; they did not believe in the depth of God’s mercy and grace.

Whenever we address issues of Christian living, we must not lose sight of that grace. Our God is a *holy* God, set apart, great in respect to his grace toward sinners – infinitely more patient and forgiving than we are. We must remind each other of God’s grace provided in Christ. That is the basis for our active lives of thankfulness before Him.

By punishing Moses and Aaron, by barring them from Canaan, God made sure everyone recognized the depth of his grace.





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# Peregrine Survey

Late summer and fall are traditional times for teachers' conferences and the like. Ontario's Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Education (CARE) committee annually prepares a professional development day with a curriculum focus during the second week before school in September. On August 27, 2009, some eighty teachers from around Ontario learned about Phys Ed. Before the PE sessions started, however, Miss Judy Kingma was presented with a round of applause and a twelve-year-old *desert rose* in recognition of her twelve years of loving labour on the Grade 1-4 CARE Church History curriculum project, the last units of which were published that very day. Sean Wagenaar of the Theological College presented a biblical perspective on Phys Ed, highlighting challenges regarding competition and victimization, and why this subject should have priority in our schools. Assessment and evaluation, as well as aspects of safety were addressed by Dr. Ken Lodewyk of Brock University and Ron Lopez, a consultant with the District School Board of Niagara. Several practical workshops were offered as well. Separate reports have been prepared for the late September biennial National Principal's Conference, the early October CRTA West convention, and the late October CRTA East (October 29-30) conference. Once such conferences have been held, the school year is certainly in full swing.

William of Orange does not have about fifty students as previously suggested, and I apologize for the mistake. The paragraph in the previous Peregrine Survey read: "William of Orange Christian School is the oldest Canadian Reformed School on the continent. Towards the end of this past school year it was unexpectedly faced with a decline in enrollment for the 2009-2010 school year, which puts a strain on its viability. Enrollment will still be well above that of several others schools in our system, however, which have an enrolment of about fifty students." The school's enrolment is actually about seventy-five.

## Developments

Smithers' President lists things to be thankful for with regards to the school. They include a smooth beginning of the school year; having a full complement of staff; children receive a Christian education; safety students and teachers enjoy in their travels; a school facility; being able to meet financial commitments; being able to enjoy extracurricular activities without any major injuries; the cooperation the school enjoys from all involved; the blessings of good and pleasant unity of believers. Around the country, our communities have been able to support local food banks and other community oriented support efforts as well. In Guelph, thankfulness has been expressed at Cornerstone Christian School for the appointment of a Principal and Vice-Principal who bring a "combination of leadership, experience, enthusiasm, and passion for Reformed education." Congratulations, and may the Lord bless your labours as you prepare for the school to open in September! Covenant Christian School in Flamborough has seen progress on land-acquisition, as an important step towards construction of a new building.

Despite our abundance and many things to be thankful for, the economic downturn has its effects on how school societies view budgets and their expenditures. Last year, there was an increase in Albertan provincial funding, along with a higher charge for transportation, but now Alberta Education needs to save money and is billing the schools for bussing. One treasurer reports that about ten percent of the local membership is in arrears, with about half of them in the one to three months category. The finance committee of this school will "continue to work in assisting those who are in arrears to come up with plans to address these." Around the country there is also evidence of schools economizing on high efficiency light bulbs and windows, volunteer labour, and other ways of stretching the available dollars. To help cash flow, more schools are establishing the option of automatic debit – which, in those cases, does outweigh the drawbacks. There are also members who can and



do pay tuition or membership in advance, offsetting the shortage that could otherwise exist. One not-so-good way to save money (even by default) is on safety-related items. It was nice of the fire chief to allow us to open the doors of the school again, writes one board representative. "Many of the fire safety devices and alarms were not recently inspected and quite outdated. These inspections were to be completed yearly, yet they were overlooked. . . . We were able to get the majority of the required points of attention looked after. . . . Safety becomes much more of a concern with larger crowds of people, as well as the actual regulations changing as the building and its occupancy increase." Through the Independent School Association of Ontario, efforts continue to reclaim the federal French grant the province has refused to pass on to the independent schools.

## Innovation

Helping families to overcome or prevent tuition shock, PICS in Edmonton has adopted a Tuition Credit for funds donated to the school before families have children in Kindergarten. The idea is that one dollar in every three donated would go toward a grade 1, 2, and 3 tuition credit. The policy applies to families where the eldest child was not yet eligible to attend kindergarten in the 08/09 school year. Motives for the new policy include that it reduces tuition shock for young families; it encourages a climate of giving within the larger community; it encourages involvement and membership from younger members; and it recognizes supporters, as it provides a positive reinforcement for those who provide early support – rather than a punishment for those who do not. The credit is to apply to funds donated since September, 2004, and one third of the credit will be applied for three continuous years starting when the eldest child attends grade 1.

## Wisdom

Musing about the character of our child-rearing practices, one principal (pht) addresses courtesies in conversation. He writes:

In the past, one of the common courtesies we taught children was to look at the adult talking to them so they could learn to relate to body language, and politely provide the speaker with undivided attention. Are we "o.k." nowadays with our children texting while we talk with them? Or are we "o.k."

with people giving preference to their cell phones when they are in company? What meta-message do we give people in our company when we constantly allow our cell phones to regulate (i.e., interrupt) our social life?

In *Christian Educators Journal* (October 2009), Professor Quentin J. Schultze of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, takes this a step further as he reflects on aspects of wisdom. I give a few quotes as food for thought:

Wise persons avoid living frantically from byte to byte. Excessively high-tech ways of life seduce us into enjoyable but sometimes shallow social networks. Our time-consuming digital interactions with others become short and thin, and we miss out on deeper communion with God and others. . . . The blessing of instant digital access to others can turn into the curse of relational immaturity. We end up with plenty of messengers and messages, but we suffer from insufficient social commitments and non-intimate love. We live promiscuously, message to message, without longer-term more meaningful relationships with God, neighbor, and self. . . . The wise person first loves God above all other things and desires.

Many of our schools refer to one of the passages in Scripture that hold the fear of the Lord before us as the beginning of wisdom. Considering that, what really is important in education? Neerlandia's principal presents that:

In my opinion there are two major aspects to education. The first is to provide our children with God-centered instruction; such that in everything they may see the hand of the Lord. This is a goal that is shared between home, school, and church because we want our children to honour our Father. This requires more than knowledge; it requires wisdom. Too often our children have the knowledge but not the wisdom to practice, to do, what they know God requires. Wisdom requires insight and most often a guide, be it a parent, teacher, elder, or minister, to truly appreciate the depth of God's love for his children and his creation. . . . A second aspect to education is the acquisition of knowledge and skills that will form the foundation for further studies. Learning never ends: throughout our life we will be called on to learn new skills, do new jobs, and assume new positions. . . . Our children must be challenged and encouraged to present a

thoroughly Christian witness to the world. We need to be lights in the world, to stand out for our beliefs. . . . Let our walk and talk reflect our faith in action.

### Prayers for blessing

This is the season in which education and hiring committees and boards busy themselves with planning for the next school year. It is a critical time for making longer-term decisions that will impact on the delivery of education for possibly several years. It is crucial at this time that boards have a clear vision of where the school needs adjustments, strengthening, or enhancements; and what is good for one school or situation is not necessarily what is good for another. What is important for your school? How can your collaborative effort as covenant community improve in their support for the parents among your members as they raise their children to "serve their Maker in all of life?" Carman's new board chairman reflected on the challenges this entails, and wrote:

This reality is why it is so important to "always pray." Pray that all of our collective activities surrounding the school may ultimately serve God.



Please remember to take time to thank God for His rich blessings in allowing us to operate this school. Remember to always ask God to grant all of us patience in dealing with one another and remember to pray to God that we may truly serve Him in thankfulness as we strive together to honour Him in ALL we do. Yes, we can have a "peaceful feeling," knowing that God is in control of His school, but there is nothing easy about it. Through prayer and diligent effort we will together continue in the task of operating this school.

From the URC's Hope Centre in northwest Toronto, Pastor Tony Zekveld and Padre Peter Nathaniel reach out to the South Asian immigrant community. Preparations are well underway to start Hope Academy, a new Christian mission school with grades JK-5, in September 2010. Expectations are that student numbers will initially be small. Governance of the school will be kept in the hands of members of the supporting Reformed churches (URC, FRC, and CanRC), with a direct link to the council of Providence URC in Strathroy. Hope Academy is designed to be an outreach to families from various faith backgrounds with the purpose of teaching them from a biblical perspective, with Jesus Christ, in whom all things consist, as its foundation. It has in mind the notion that the covenant with Abram was intended from the beginning to extend God's blessings to all peoples on earth (Gen 12:3).

Such is the round-up of items this time. There is reason for reflection, for concern, for reaching out, for lending support, and for anticipation. In all cases, may we use the gifts of God's grace to help and encourage one another in the task set before us. As seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter continue (Gen 8:22), may we encourage one another that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28). That is one way in which God's people can witness to those around them of their hope (1 Pet 3:15) and set a model for their children to follow.

*The Education Matters column is sponsored by the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association East. Anyone wishing to respond to an article written or willing to write an article is kindly asked to send materials to Clarion or to Otto Bouwman [obouwman@cornerstoneschool.us](mailto:obouwman@cornerstoneschool.us).*



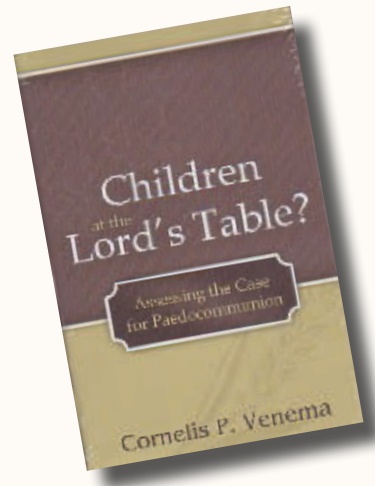
*Children at the Lord's Table? Assessing the Case for Paedocommunion*, Cornelis P. Venema, Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009

Additional Information: Hardcover, 199 pages, \$25.00 USD

Paedocommunion is a word that we're hearing more often these days, mostly because of its connection with many of the figures associated with the Federal Vision movement. A few years back, one of those figures pointed out to me that no one has ever really written a book presenting a solid case against admitting children to the Lord's Supper. He may have been right then, but I don't believe he's right any longer.

Cornelis Venema is well-known as a professor at Mid-America Reformed Seminary and a United Reformed minister. In this book, he first outlines the arguments of Tim Gallant and others like him for the practice of paedocommunion. These arguments are primarily from Scripture, but there are also historical considerations.

In the chapters following, Venema considers these arguments. He examines the historical evidence and finds it to be inconclusive at best. He also adds a chapter looking at "Paedocommunion and the Reformed Confessions." Several years ago, there was a case in the United Reformed Churches dealing with whether the Three Forms of Unity allow the teaching of paedocommunion. The answer was negative. Although Venema does not mention that particular case, he affirms the answer. However, most important of all is the scriptural evidence. Venema examines the relationship between the Passover and the Lord's Supper and points out that it is not as straightforward as many have made it out to be. In fact, there is a



stronger connection between the Lord's Supper and the covenant renewal meal in Exodus 24. Venema also gives an entire chapter to the crucial passage of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, concluding that the biblical way to the Lord's Table is through public profession of faith.

In the last chapter, the author also considers the relationship between covenant theology and paedocommunion, especially in view of the Federal Vision movement. Given these current issues, this is a helpful discussion. Equally helpful is the appendix dealing with covenant theology and baptism. Venema correctly outlines the promise and obligations of the covenant. Like Klaas Schilder, he distinguishes between two different aspects of the covenant of grace. There's also a good section on whether the covenant is conditional or unconditional – though I do think that more explicit reference to union with Christ could have sharpened the argument here.

This is an excellent and timely book dealing with an important issue. It would be worthwhile to have it on hand in family and church libraries for when questions arise about paedocommunion. It's also highly recommended for those who need to have a good understanding of this issue, i.e. pastors and elders.





# Ray of Sunshine

Patricia Gelms and  
Corinne Gelms

*"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens."*  
Psalm 8:1

Spring is in the air. The sun, set in place by its creator, is warming up the earth. Birds are flitting about in search of materials to build their nests. The buds are bursting forth in flower. Seeds that were dormant in the ground are germinating and showing signs of life. "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" God's power is shown in his work of creation. We can marvel in this power when we notice the renewing work of spring. In this change of season, we can take notice of God's greatness and God's faithfulness.

"When I consider your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor." When we read these words of David, we see with him the difference between the creative power of God the Lord and the frailty of human life. Yet, God, the powerful creator, pays attention to man. He gave man a great position in his creation. He has created man in his own image. Though, with Adam, we fell into sin, God restores and renews us through the life giving work of Jesus Christ. We, who were dead in our sins are being made alive in Christ. God has saved us by his grace. We can move forward in faith knowing that our creative God is mindful of his children. He has a plan and a program for our lives. The Lord Jesus went before us as a forerunner. He was made a little lower than the angels to taste death for us. Jesus is now crowned with glory and honour. We can look forward to the day when we will reign with Him in eternity.

As we enjoy another spring season we may think again about God's creative power, let us be comforted by his majestic works. As his breath renews all that was cold and frozen into new life, be reminded that God is faithful to all that He made. "O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth."

## Psalm 8

*O LORD, our Lord, Thou God of our salvation,  
How glorious is Thy Name in all creation!  
Thou who hast set Thy majesty on high  
Beyond the skies for man to glorify.*

*When I behold the skies Thou hast created,  
The moon and stars which Thou hast generated,  
O what is man that Thou wilt think of him,  
The son of man that Thou dost care for him?*

## Birthdays in April

### 2 DEREK KOK will be 40

653 Broad Street West, Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8

### 23 ARLENE DEWIT will be 49

31126 Kingfisher Drive, Abbotsford, BC V2T 5K4

### 29 BRYCE BERENDS will be 35

653 Broad Street West, Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8

We wish a wonderful birthday to Derek, Arlene, and Bryce. May the Lord, who upholds creation with his mighty hand, sustain you and give you all that you need to live in his service. Rely on Him for all your needs, He is faithful and will provide for you in this your new year. We hope you have a wonderful day feasting with family and friends.

## A note to all parents and caregivers

If there are any address or other changes that we need to be aware of please let us know as soon as possible.

You can contact us by the following means:

Mail: Corinne Gelms

8301 Range 1 Road, Smithville, ON LOR 2A0

Phone: 905-957-0380

Email: [jcorgelms@porchlight.ca](mailto:jcorgelms@porchlight.ca)



## Letter to the Editor

Rev. Stam's article "Looking for our Common Ancestor" (January 1) was well written and challenging. Crafted with engaging and ironic humour, the article has a strong biblical message. However, his view of science needs some development. As a scientist I would like to address that.

Christians usually accept that God has given us two books of revelation. The one is explicit – Scripture, and the other implicit – his creation (Ps 19:1-4). The difficulty in interpreting the truths of the two revelations is fraught with difficulty, tension, and sometimes outright "warfare." To ease this tension one could take the position of John Calvin. He stated that Scripture is the complete book of salvation and that for science one should look elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. Personally, as my Catechism minister taught my church generation, Scripture and science<sup>2</sup>, both revealed truth, should not and indeed cannot conflict.

Let's take a step back in history and have a look at the beginning of science in the time of Galileo (1564-642). Among other scientific discoveries, he discovered four moons revolving around Jupiter and espoused the Copernican cause. (Nicolaus Copernicus, 1473-1543, was a mathematician and astronomer who proposed that the sun was stationary in the centre of the universe and the earth revolved around it<sup>3</sup>.) Please note that John Calvin (1509-1564) lived during the controversy of the Copernicus theories. Let us not underestimate this controversy or its wording. Witness Cardinal Bellarmine who wrote in 1615, "But to affirm that the sun is *really* fixed in the center of the heavens and that the earth revolves very swiftly around the sun is a dangerous thing, not only irritating the theologians and philosophers, but by injuring our holy faith and making the sacred scriptures false."<sup>4</sup> Make no mistake, similar wording is used in our Canadian Reformed Churches in the controversy with the truths of science.

Perhaps it is possible to ease or resolve the tension between Scripture and science by formulating a simple model. What should the relationship be? Optimistically, it should be possible, as both nature/science and Scripture are revelations (two books). Tentatively, and simply then, in words, the relationship should have Scripture a little higher than science and joined together with arrows. In this way each is influenced by the other. This relationship is necessary as each has God-given truths.

Having this model in mind let us continue with the scientific aspect of DNA as given by Rev. Stam.

He, however, places Scripture over science without any of its influence. Writes Rev. Stam, "Mankind is unique, no matter what the DNA profile shows." To me, there is a confusion here of minimizing of the input of science. Yes, we believe (in faith) that mankind is unique and made in the image of God. But, the DNA<sup>5</sup> also needs to give us input. What should that be? As an environmental chemist I don't have a suggestion or answer. It should be a matter of conscience. Personally, my own conscience points me away from theistic evolution.

What to do with the question of science, DNA, and evolution. My suggestion is that of the position of *Christianity Today*. Questions and opinions on evolution (and the age of the universe) and their science are not worth the effort of printing and the contention that brings. Each believer, theologian, scientist, or otherwise, needs to follow his own conscience before God. Even though Scripture is above science, it should respect and be influenced by science. Otherwise as a church we become dictatorial, sectarian, and out of date. Praise his holy Name for the two books of revelation.

Harry Alkema

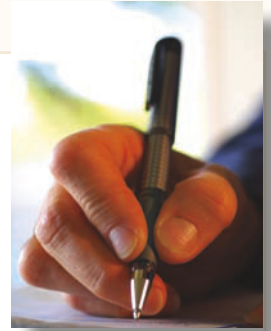
<sup>1</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 1, p 79. "He who would learn astronomy, and other recondite [abstruse] arts (science, HA), let him go elsewhere."

<sup>2</sup> The study of nature is a man-made endeavour, but is largely self-correcting

<sup>3</sup> Copernicus thereby created a concept of a universe in which the distances of the planets from the sun bore a direct relationship to the size of their orbits. At the time Copernicus' heliocentric idea was very controversial; nevertheless, it was the start of a change in the way the world was viewed and Copernicus came to be seen as the initiator of the Scientific Revolution.

<sup>4</sup> *Opere*, 12, 171-2, abridged from *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, April 12, 1615.

<sup>5</sup> Incidentally, in current understanding, female DNA indicates an ancestral Eve for the human race.



## Letter to the Editor

Re: "Testing the Revised Psalm Lyrics" (January 15)

Prime time and four pages in *Clarion* still do not convince me that Rev. Van Oene is wrong. If matters have been done wrong in the past, they should be corrected and we should not continue in that way. Article 55 of the Church Order states clearly that "Psalms will be sung in the rhyming adopted by general synod." The lyrics were not approved by

Synod. Synod is not above the law to give local churches the freedom to use them in the worship service.

The whole approach is wrong; our current psalm melodies are well known and we do not have to practice them. Testing the revised lyrics should be done by reading them and studying them and giving feedback to the consistory. From there it goes back to synod. This is true testing. It will take more than one synod to accomplish. After this process, the psalms are approved and ready for use.

If Synod wants to do matters differently, then change Article 55 and make it so that we all understand and not have to read between the lines.

The sad part of the new psalms for the generation who grew up in the old country is that they are forced to use the "You" and "Your" version. Synod should have been wiser and more compassionate with the older members and waited until most of them are with their Lord and Saviour.

Sincerely yours,  
B.F. VanDerBruggen, Carman, MB

Letters to the Editor should be written in a brotherly fashion in order to be considered for publication.  
Submissions need to be less than one page in length.



## Clarion Advertisements

### Advertisements:

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

## BIRTHDAYS

### 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**GERRIT [Gary] HOEKSEMA**

1930 ~ February 15 ~ 2010

*Blessed is the man who always  
Reveres and serves the LORD,  
Who, walking in His pathways,  
Obeys and keeps His word.*

*The fruit of all your labour  
As your reward you'll eat  
And, blessed by His great favour,  
You'll have what you may need.*

*Psalm 128 vs 1 BoP*

With great thankfulness to our Father in Heaven, we announce the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of our father, grandfather, and great-grandfather Gerrit (Gary) Hoeksema on February 15, 2010. Thirty-four years ago the Lord took to himself Dad's wife and our mother, Siepie Hoeksema nee Doesburg; however, the Lord has continued to bless our father with good health. In his quiet unassuming ways, Dad kept the faith and continued to lead his family in the ways of the Lord. We thank the Lord for his faithfulness!

Hetty and Henry Stel

Marcel and Harriet Stel

Emily, Alexa, Esther, Jesse

Maria and Ken Hamoen

Justin, Meaghan, Keaton, Garnett, Natalie

Rebecca and Phil Geusebroek

Shaun, Ryan, Daniel, Kaitlyn

Jessica and Marcel Peters

Brittney, Kameron, Kaylee

Tyson and Suzanne Stel

Alicia

Rosemary Stel and Kevin Noot

Anthony and Jane Hoeksema

Garrett and Kim Hoeksema

Joel and Kaylin Hoeksema

Gavin

Sarah Hoeksema and Chris Ostermeier

Heather Hoeksema

Ken and Julie Hoeksema

David and Rhonda Hoeksema

Julina, Dawson, Marko

Kristopher and Kathleen Hoeksema

Amanda and Alex VanDyke

Jordan

Tyler Hoeksema

Jeannette Hoeksema

Phil and Henrietta Hoeksema

Cassandra and Jason Vandermeulen

Krista Hoeksema

Elaine and Dean Messer

Nicolas, Lucas

We pray the Lord will continue to bless him and make him a blessing to all who surround him.  
Dad's address is #100 – 10041-149 Street, Edmonton, AB T5P 4V7