

# Clarion

## **Studying Scripture together**

**STUDYING THE BIBLE TOGETHER**

**CLARION KIDS**

**YOU ASKED**



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# Canonics

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## *Inspiration is not dictation*

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### Theme issue

You have in your hands a theme issue of *Clarion* on Bible study. You will find articles that focus on different aspects of communal Bible study. The reason for publishing a theme issue is that it gives readers an assortment of related articles, conveniently in one issue. The reason for publishing an issue on Bible study at this time of the year is that early summer is often when society boards make plans for the coming season. It is our hope that this issue will be of benefit in that planning. Perhaps the articles themselves can have a spot on the agenda of society meetings as part of an effort to improve the meetings.

This editorial, however, will not simply introduce the theme issue. It will start the issue by paying attention to what is called canonics. The term may have a familiar ring to it, but it does need explanation. Following an explanation of the term, there will be some examples, some suggestions for helpful tools, and the mention of some benefits of canonics for studying Scripture together.

### What is “canonics”?

It was mentioned that the term “canonics” will have a familiar ring to it. We can think of the heading over Article 4 of the Belgic Confession, which speaks of the Canonical Books. We can also think of the Canons of Dort. The word “canon” is derived from the Greek language. It has the meaning of a measuring stick. We hear this meaning in the first sentence of Article 5 of the Belgic Confession, “We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith.” When we call the books of Scripture canonical, we confess they are the authoritative measuring stick for all matters pertaining to our faith and life as Christians. They are authoritative

because we recognize that, ultimately, they come from God, who by his Holy Spirit guided men to write what they did (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20, 21).

This emphasis on the origin of these books in God does not take away the recognition of human instruments. The men who wrote the various books of Scripture are not to be seen as mere secretaries, mindlessly taking down dictation from above. Holy Scripture, in this respect, is very different from the Muslim Qur’an, which, it is claimed, was dictated to Muhammed. As Christians, we speak of inspiration rather than dictation. Inspiration refers to the way God’s Spirit moved and guided the hearts and hands of men, as they were busy with their task of writing. Inspiration is not dictation.

This is essential for understanding canonics. While assuming ultimate divine authorship, canonics focusses on the human elements. It asks question such as, “Who wrote this book? When was it written? How is the book put together? What are major themes and special literary features?” Further, it seeks to figure out what role it plays in the totality of Scripture. After all, while Scripture consists of sixty-six books, it is essentially one book with one message.

### Examples

For example, we can consider the book of Genesis. It is a careful composition. The organizing principle is the phrase, “These are the generations of. . .” (ESV). This phrase appears for the first time in Genesis 2:4. This phrase helps you see the transition points in the book. It helps you see how the promise of Genesis 3:15, about the offspring of the woman, moves forward, with the ultimate fulfilment in the coming of our Lord Jesus. Having an eye for the way the book is organized can help prevent study from being sidetracked.

A second example is the book of Psalms. When you read a significant number of psalms in one sitting, you quickly discover that a group of psalms deals with a similar theme. Just as reading a passage in one of the gospels requires reading what leads up to it to understand it, the same is often true in the Psalms. One example is the way Psalm 43 follows on the heels of Psalm 42, and seems to be the conclusion. Another example is the cluster of psalms that starts Book Three, at Psalm 73. We have various psalms by Asaph, dealing with injustice, suffering, Israel's repeated unfaithfulness, and looking for deliverance by the LORD.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Let us start by quoting what Rev. Eric Kampen says in his editorial, "You have in your hands a theme issue of *Clarion* on Bible study. You will find articles that focus on different aspects of communal Bible study. The reason for publishing a theme issue is that it gives readers an assortment of related articles, conveniently in one issue. The reason for publishing an issue on Bible study at this time of the year is that early summer is often when society boards make plans for the coming season. It is our hope that this issue will be of benefit in that planning."

Beyond our special topic, there are a number of other columns in our issue: Treasures New and Old, Clippings on Politics and Religion, *Clarion* Kids, Ray of Sunshine, and You Asked. There is also a press release.

Laura Veenendaal

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A third example is the gospel of Luke. Any thought that inspiration means dictation is dispelled by Luke's words of introduction. He writes, "It seemed good to me, also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3). This indicates that Luke only wrote after proper research. This was necessary since he was not one of the twelve disciples. He relied on reports from others.

A final example is the letters of Paul. In many letters, it is evident that Paul was interacting with particular concerns and questions in the congregations he was addressing. To understand what he was saying, it is necessary to read between the lines, so to speak, and to reason backwards as to what the issues were. To understand what the Spirit is saying to the church today, it is necessary to understand, as much as possible, what Paul was saying to the original recipients.

### Useful tools

From what has been described, it may appear that canonics is a rather daunting task. An attentive reading and re-reading of a certain Bible book should begin to give a sense of its structure and main themes. One does not have to tackle this task alone. The Bible has been given to the church, that is, the community of believers throughout the ages. We are not the first Bible readers and we should not pretend we are. There are many tools at our disposal to help us along the way.

One of the most basic tools for canonics is a good "Study Bible," that is, a Bible that has helpful introductions to each Bible book, along with explanatory notes. Some discernment should be shown in which Study Bible to use. It is good to have a sense of the theological persuasion of the various contributors. It only makes sense to seek help from those who acknowledge that Scripture is the Word of God. Such material functions like a roadmap, helping you navigate through Scripture. Of course, just as roadmaps and a GPS can be wrong, so can those who seek to guide us through the Bible. You will find that out once you get on the road and start travelling through Scripture itself.

One helpful edition is the ESV Study Bible. Many may still have the NIV 1984 Study Bible, which also had many helpful notes. Another helpful resource is the book, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*, by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart. Of course, helpful information will also be found in various study guides. The Interleague Publication Board has an extensive offering of guides

written by men committed to Reformed understanding of the Scriptures. A good study guide should really begin with a section on canonics, paying attention to the title of a book, the background, author, date, theme, message, and literary features. It should also provide an outline. I emphasize that there is always the need to exercise discernment. Be like the Bereans, who measured everything they heard by Scripture (Acts 17:11).

### Benefit

There are a number of benefits in starting the study of a Bible book by paying attention to canonics. First, it helps us get a sense of the big picture before looking at the details. It will prevent discussion from getting bogged down.

Second, canonics will lead to sound exegesis, rather than "sound" exegesis. What I mean by the latter is the danger that we hear a certain word or phrase and we go merely by the sound, connecting it to all sorts of happenings in our own life, or the way it reminds us of certain theological phrases and constructions. This sets the stage for what is known as biblicism, where Scripture is read in a super literal manner without regard to the original context and meaning. Such "sound" exegesis can lead to the thought that we should anoint the sick with oil (James 5:14), not light a fire on Sunday (Exod 35:3), or never take off all our clothes (Rev 16:15).

Third, canonics is a stepping stone for understanding Scripture today. The Spirit forces us to think through not just one passage, but the passage within the context of a book and all of Scripture. The Holy Spirit makes us look over the shoulder of the first readers, think ourselves into their situation and their issues, and then move to our time. In that way, we can hear what the Spirit tells us today. The benefits of canonics suggest that a new study season may be well served by having the first session dealing with all the topics included in canonics.

### Conclusion

When it comes to Bible study, we should not just jump in feet first and hope for the best. The Holy Spirit guided various authors to write in particular times and circumstances. It is part of the marvel of Scripture that the words written for peoples long ago have been preserved by the Spirit to speak to the church of all ages. We enrich our understanding of Scripture and enhance discussion by investing time in canonics.





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# Dissolving the Distance

**Luke 17:11-19**

Story-telling is an art, and Luke does it masterfully. His finesse is especially admirable when we recognize that his aim was to write for a *person* (Theophilus) rather than for *publication* (the more one reads, the more one will appreciate the distinction). Therefore Luke's gospel reads as more persuasive than informative, more gospel than biography.

Take the encounter of Jesus Christ with the ten lepers. Note the recurring theme of distance. We see that already in the setting mentioned. En route to Jerusalem, Christ was traversing the borderline between the land of the "holy" (Galilee), and the "unholy" (Samaria).

Next we discover the ten lepers standing "at a distance" from Christ (v.12). This distance was not strange. Lepers were unclean and therefore isolated, ostracized, and excommunicated from society (cf. Leviticus 13-14). They were living embodiments of the effect of sin. For with sin comes curse, with curse comes disease, and with disease comes death. Bottomed-out in their crisis,

helpless, and in desperate need, they cried out to Jesus for pity.

Hearing their cry, Christ directs them to the priests. In a basic sense this was because the priests were the public health inspectors of that day, whose task it was to verify the disease. But don't miss the subtle sense here! The priests (who were rejecting Christ) were unable to *give* cleansing. But where the law was powerless, Christ was powerful!

The healing occurs suddenly and almost unnoticeably, on account of the spoken word. Remarkably, all ten lepers act in faith upon Christ's word. Before having detected any evidence of improvement they all venture toward the priest. Luke expressly states that "as they went, they were cleansed" (v. 14).

But the account is not over. For then comes the key contrast: One came back! At some point he saw he had been cured. But he also saw more! For this one leper witnessed not only the healing but also the Healer. He saw beyond the gracious gift to the gracious Giver. He returns

to praise God at the feet of Jesus. While the others show themselves to the priests to receive their clean bills of health and are reintroduced into society, this cleansed-leper goes back to give thanks to God.

This first and only returnee was a "despicable" Samaritan. Where were the other nine? Covenant people can easily forget that covenant blessings are gifts of grace. The irony of the story is that the Samaritan, who was the furthest from Christ at the start, comes nearest to Christ at the end. Meanwhile the other men are at a further distance from God than they were at the beginning.

The gospel is that Christ came near to us so that we could come near to him. Note again Luke's preface to this account: Christ was on his way to the cross. There he was made the Ultimate Leper – banished from man and banished from God. He was put at a distance in order to dissolve the distance that separated us from God.

How evident is your thankfulness?

## For Further Study

1. Is there anything in your life putting distance between you and Jesus Christ (unconfessed sin, ingratitude, busy lifestyle, etc)?
2. How can that distance be dissolved?
3. What can we learn from the Samaritan about how we should show gratitude to God?
4. How can covenant people develop a sense of entitlement toward covenant blessings?



# Studying the Bible Together



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Years ago, Bible study societies used to be common and well attended in the Canadian Reformed churches. I recall belonging to the Young Peoples' Society in my youth. It was expected, by my parents and by the elders. Also by the young people. Not all the meetings were necessarily very edifying. Sometimes there was too much horsing around. I lost a tooth one Sunday evening . . . but at least you struggled together to understand something of the Bible, and sometimes the discussion was heated, and then you had to take a position too!

## Excuses

Sadly, in some churches Bible study societies seem to have been fading away more and more over the years. You ask at home visit whether dad or mom or young Bill or Sue attend a Bible study and all too often you get a negative on that. Why not? Too busy. Or, we don't get anything out of it. Or, we don't like the dumb things people argue about. So I'd rather study the Bible on my own.

Too bad! I don't say it's no good to study the Bible on your own. I certainly hope it does happen. Personal Bible study is fine. You are freer to choose the time for Bible study then. And you can study whatever Bible book or topic you choose. And you don't have to deal with dumb comments or questions put forward by others. And you don't have to be frustrated by people who attend but don't say anything.

## What is Bible study?

So there are lots of reasons not to join in studying the Bible together with others. There are maybe even more excuses to limit yourself to personal Bible study only. However, I wonder how many of those who use those reasons to limit themselves to personal Bible study actually do make regular time for such study. I suspect that many who aren't interested in Bible study with others probably aren't that up on studying the Bible on their own either. I

don't doubt that there are some who do, but I expect that many don't do more than simply read the Bible at table or before they go to bed. That's actually not Bible study.

No, Bible study means delving into what a Bible passage says and thinking through what God says in it for your life today. That's not an easy process! The Bible isn't easy to understand. You need to compare Scripture with Scripture and open a commentary or Bible handbook. And if you regularly do that, you'll end up with questions too, even apparent contradictions to wrestle with. And in the process, you realize then that it would be good to bounce a few things off someone else to see if your interpretation is correct or off the wall.

## Growing in faith

I think you know where I'm heading by now. Engaging in Bible study with others is good, has many advantages. In the first place, you grow in Lord's Day 7 faith (sure knowledge and firm confidence in God's promises in his Word) through discussion of God's Word with others. Each person has his or her own background and experiences, and learns at a different pace. So the one sees something different in a Bible passage than another. And so you learn from others, and others learn from you. You may be surprised what you can learn from the questions and comments of others! As it says in Proverbs 27:7, "Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Of course, if you're not interested in growing in your sure knowledge and firm confidence, or think you know enough about the Bible, that's a whole different problem. But consider some other benefits of studying the Bible with others.

## Accountability in Bible study

Another benefit of Bible study societies or groups is that it encourages you to regular Bible study. Sure, personal Bible study is good, as we mentioned before. I

don't want to take anything away from that. But there are always excuses for not taking time for personal Bible study. Studying the Bible with others means that you are held accountable and you hold others accountable as far as participation is concerned. It says in Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow." As well, having leaders who regularly publish date and time of the study group in the bulletin also encourages regular attendance. And going through a book of the Bible or one of the confessions or so with others also encourages regular attendance so you keep up with what is being discussed.

### **Learning to articulate and correct your faith**

A third benefit of group Bible study is that you learn how to articulate what you believe. And even if you're not someone who speaks easily in a group, you hear how others explain a passage and you learn from that how to communicate your own thoughts about it. It's important to learn to articulate your faith so that, as it says in 1 Peter 3:15, you'll always be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."

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***I suspect that many who aren't interested  
in Bible study with others  
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Another benefit of group Bible study is that you are tested. It could be that you aren't correct in what you think about a certain passage or doctrine of Scripture or moral issue. In discussing your thoughts with others, you find correction then. Or you help to correct the wrong ideas of others. You grow in critical thinking about your own thoughts or the thoughts of others. Thus, as the Apostle writes in Ephesians 5:10, you try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. And as he writes in 1 Thessalonians 5:21, you test everything so you can hold fast to what is good.

### **Developing relationships**

Finally and importantly, group Bible study helps you to develop relationships with your brothers and sisters in the communion of saints. You come to understand each other in a spiritual sense. You hear not only about each other's opinions, but also about each other's struggles. That's how brothers and sisters in Christ encourage each other and discover how they can be a hand and foot to one another in the body of Christ as outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. Oh, it can be frustrating to hear that sister always take over the discussion or to hardly hear that certain brother speak at all. But overall, you get a sense of where each other are and what one another's needs might be. And that's important knowledge for healthy functioning as body of Christ. Think of what happened after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as described in Acts 2:42. It says there concerning those who joined the church at Pentecost, "And they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." There's a call in that passage to devote ourselves, to persevere in studying the Word of God and to how to put it into practice together.

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***And so you learn from others,  
and others learn from you***

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That call is also found later on in Acts, in Acts 17, where the Apostle Paul arrives in Berea in the northern part of Greece. It says there in verse 11 that the Jews in Berea "were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the Word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so." Now, I won't advocate daily Bible study, however beneficial that was for those new Christians in Berea. I do believe that passage ought to motivate us to break away from the TV or computer or other hobby for one evening a week or every other week to study the Scripture. After all, it "is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:10).





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# Mind Matters

## *“Thinking God’s Thoughts After Him” (Johannes Kepler)*

### How well do you think?

Someone concerned might ask, How well do you eat? How well do you sleep? But perhaps an even more important question is, How well do you *think*?

Thinking is far more important than we think. Every one of us has a collection of thoughts in our mind, sometimes conscious, sometimes not so conscious, that functions as a backstory to our lives. Like a cow chewing its cud, we are all constantly ruminating and digesting. It would be fascinating if we could peek into a mind and listen. True – it might be embarrassing and scary, too.

### *How we think critically affects how we feel and how we live*

The beautiful thing about being a Christian is that there is a whole new set of thoughts in our inner world. The knowledge of God’s love in Christ begins to fill our lives, shaping, transforming. The story of Christ, his suffering and death, his life, resurrection, and ascension, becomes our new story.

### You are what you think

In the last few decades, modern psychology has rediscovered the role of the mind. You may have heard of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). This perspective recognizes that how we think critically affects how we feel and how we live. A doctor will tell you, “You are what you eat;” a CBT therapist will tell you, “You are what you think.” Counselees are taught to look at their own thoughts and thinking patterns, recognize unhelpful core-beliefs, and give them an overhaul.

CBT observes that we are constantly telling ourselves all sorts of things. Often negative thoughts like “I’m a

failure,” or “It’s going to go terribly” grow like weeds in our mental landscape. We may attempt to mind-read what others think about us as well, which only adds fuel to the fire. All this thinking needs to be critically and realistically examined.

This counselling approach seems to fit with the Christian life. Here, too, the mind, our thinking, is central. In Proverbs 4:23 we are told, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life” (NIV84). In Hebrew though, the “heart” is similar to what we would call the “mind.” Again, what you think is more important than you think.

### Renewed minds

In Romans 12, the Apostle Paul tells us that the new life begins with a transformation of the mind. “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom 12:2 ESV). Our world has a pattern. Today it heralds stories of self-expression and self-fulfillment that exalt (sinful) human choices and supposed potential. The Christian takes a stand against these narratives. Our minds are renewed, in view of God’s tender mercies (v. 1) and this begins a life transformation. We do not just learn to be “nice people.” We are rooted every day in the knowledge of God and his salvation. His grace is to be the new backstory, our new “internal frame of reference.” Our life, in turn, is but a response, an answer to his prior grace.

### Ignorance and idolatry

It isn’t always so, of course. Look at the book of Judges. Things go downhill when “another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the

LORD and served the Baals” (Judg 2:11-12 NIV 84). Doing evil arose from denying the Eternal, idolatry flourished because of ignorance.

Or look at Matthew 18:21-35, the parable of the unforgiving servant. When we fail to know how greatly we have been forgiven, we will fail to live as we ought towards others, in grace and humility. Daily you and I need to be confronted with the greatness of our sin and the greatness of our salvation. We need to be in the Word.

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### ***We need to stop the “worry-story” and start living the new story***

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Someone once said that a Christian often “forgets what he ought to remember, and remembers what he ought to forget.” We remember our sin, its shame, its guilt, as our conscience and the devil accuse us. And we forget that we truly have been set free in Christ, called to live a new life he provides in his Spirit.

#### **Positive “positive thinking”**

The other day I read through Tim Lane’s book on anxiety, *Living Without Worry*. I think that someone might find it a little frustrating, at first. He doesn’t give various techniques for managing and coping with anxiety. He doesn’t merely want you to realize most of the things you worry about never happen. That is certainly true – but he has a far different and better approach.

Lane notes how worry and anxiety can become the theme of our lives. A vicious treadmill, going nowhere fast. What needs to happen? We need to get off that treadmill entirely. We need more than simply to hear, “God has your worries under control.” To go back to our original metaphor, we need to stop the “worry-story” and start living the new story – the story of our sin and God’s amazing grace.

Every day we need to train our minds. We need to read the Word, study, meditate on it. We need to confess our sin and weakness and worship the God who forgives and restores. We need to learn to worry in whole new way – worry about the state of our hearts, worry about

hell, but also know that Jesus Christ has set us free from all these worries.

Today positive thinking is all the rage. From Oprah to Osteen, thinking happy thoughts is promoted as the great panacea. There is some truth to that – but it’s only a half truth. The Christian also learns “negative thinking” as well. As we read the Word, we are confronted and ponder the reality of sin, of curse, of the wrath of God. And that’s the only way to positive thinking worth being positive about.

#### **Together**

In so many ways, then, all of us constantly need our thinking corrected. In our churches, we are blessed with great knowledge. However, sometimes more difficult than finding the truth is holding onto the truth, and learning to hold onto it in all areas of life, in the midst of an argument or temptation, at a celebration or at a cemetery.

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### ***The Word needs to be studied with one another and the Word needs to be spoken to one another***

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That’s something we also learn to do *together* – in the communion of saints. It’s only “together with all the saints [we] grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” (Eph 3:18 NIV 84). It’s together that we hold onto the Word of God. Sometimes we may know a biblical truth, but hearing it from a fellow believer makes it come alive in a whole new way (see Col 3:16). The Word needs to be studied with one another and the Word needs to be spoken to one another. This is how all our confusing self-talk is silenced.

The Spirit has given us the thoughts of God to think after him. He breathes out to us the Word *of God* that will ground and shape all of life, as it fills our minds and hearts. That Word is eternal and it makes us eternal. 1 Peter 1:23: “You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.”

Let’s daily immerse ourselves in it!



# Bible Study and the Fifth Commandment

Looking through many church bulletins over the years, I've noticed that many congregations in our federation have quite a variety of Bible study groups. I trust that Bible study among us is vibrant and well attended. However, that is not always the case.

Have you ever been in a Bible study group in which no one really talks? Perhaps only the leader and one other person do most of the talking. Ever felt like Bible study was monotonous and boring? It's hard to get excited about going to Bible study if this is what you expect and experience.

We instinctively know that this lack of enthusiasm is not a fruit of the Spirit, but what can we do to change the situation? And to make matters worse, the lack of enthusiasm rubs off onto the next generation. Sometimes children and young people see that their parents stay away from Bible study, while at the same time they are *told to go*. Perhaps the parents hope their kids will do okay at Bible study. But where would they learn how to do good Bible study? At school or in the catechism class? I'm sure they learn good Bible study approaches there. But could it be that we as parents sometimes expect too much from our Christian schools and catechism classes and congregational Bible study groups? Do we perhaps pawn some of our parental responsibility off on others?

## Honouring your parental responsibility

In the fifth commandment God commands, "Honour your father and your mother." Now why does the Lord require obedience to authority?

The Lord's goal for parental authority becomes clear when we connect the fifth commandment to the preamble of the Law. The Lord says there, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the house of slavery." And then in the fifth commandment the Lord says "if you

honour your father and your mother and those in authority over you I promise you that you may live in that land for a long time." In other words, "I am bringing you to a beautiful land where you may live in freedom, and if you want to remain in the freedom that the Lord your God is giving you, then listen to your parents."

The Israelites had been slaves to Pharaoh. It was a terrible time for them. They were abused, mistreated, and had to work hard. They had no time to serve God or go to church. But the Lord kept the promise he had made to Abraham (Gen 15) and rescued his people from slavery. That entire generation of Israelites witnessed and experienced the mighty works of God by which he rescued them from slavery and brought them out of Egypt. But did the children understand this, especially the younger ones? Perhaps some of the children thought they were moving to another place, or going on a trip. But you see, that's where the authority of the parents comes in.

They had to explain to the children, "No, we're not simply going on a trip, but the Lord is bringing us to the Promised Land, a place where we can worship him freely. We are leaving Egypt because we couldn't go to church there; because that's where we were slaves to sin."

When we understand this we see today's connection to the fifth commandment as well. I'm sure most of us have never been in Egypt, but still the Lord says to us every Sunday again, "I have brought you out of the house of slavery, out of the land of Egypt."

Why is that? Because in Scripture Egypt represents the place of slavery to sin. We have not been physically rescued from Egypt, but we have been redeemed from sin and Satan. That's what our baptism represents, as Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 10:1ff.

And just like the Israelite boys and girls didn't understand what was going on when they all left Egypt, boys and girls today don't remember and understand their

baptism unless it's explained to them. That's also what parents promise to do at the baptism of their children.

Now the Lord wants to bring us and our children to the Promised Land: to the new heavens and the new earth. That's why children need to honour their parents, because parents have the responsibility to explain God's promises at baptism to their children. *Via the authority of parents, God has something to offer their children, and, simply put, that is eternal life: the Promised Land.*

## Urgency

Since neither we nor our children have yet arrived there is a sense of urgency to the fifth commandment. That's reinforced in Deuteronomy 6:6, 7, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." You sense the urgency! Jesus says, "Behold I am coming soon." We live in the last days. Christ could come back any day, and then you have to be ready. As long as Christ is not here yet we have to prepare ourselves and our children for his return – teach our children to live according to God's Word.

## Setting an example

Now if the children are to listen to the good instruction and discipline of their parents, this implies, of course, that the parents must provide this good instruction and discipline. So maybe it's good to ask ourselves how much time we take for that! What kind of atmosphere is there in our homes? Can your children come to you with questions about the things that weigh on them? Or are they afraid or embarrassed to ask you?

And what do they see of our zeal for the Lord? Do they see that we are busy with the Bible, and there is time to talk about God's Word around the dinner table? Sometimes Bible reading can become a custom: "O, we have to read the Bible too yet." And then it's closed again and off we go.

What is it that our children see at home? Do we get more excited about our camping trip than about our Bible reading? Of course camping only comes along once a year and Bible reading is an everyday thing. That's why our Bible reading, Bible study, and Bible discussion

must become a matter of discipline. Everyday day habits require discipline – self-discipline first of all, but it's also a matter of disciplining the next generation to keep it up.

The Lord requires that we discipline our children. We certainly would not neglect to teach them the discipline of personal hygiene: "Brush your teeth, wash your hands, comb your hair – and do it every day!" This requires repetitive instructions until the child is able to take personal responsibility for him or herself.

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## What is it that our children see at home?

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Bible study requires discipline too, and this needs to be taught and patterned. Don't just tell your children to pray, teach them to pray – do it for them and with them. Don't just tell them to go to Bible study, but also go to Bible study and set an example on how to study by talking about your Bible reading at home. Do your best to apply the passage to your life as a family. Encourage questions about your family Bible reading: Why does God want us to know this? What does this passage say about his plan for history and how do we fit in? Does the passage address any changes we need to make in our life? Do we have the same struggles as Bible characters? Are we willing to admit it? Can we talk about it? Lots to think about! Remember, if we show no enthusiasm for the Word of God and for Bible discussion at home, how can we expect our children to have enthusiasm for the same?

## The weapon of prayer

Nurturing and raising your children is an incredibly wide-ranging task, but it's a task that the Lord gives us. It's not easy to fulfill your parental responsibility according to the fifth commandment. But we have a mighty weapon, namely, the weapon of prayer. The Lord gives responsibility but he also provides help. Therefore discipline and instruction in the home must be a matter of prayer. Pray for your children, pray for your parents, pray for the members of your Bible study group, and so together help each other on the way to the land of eternal glory.



# ILPB: The Study of God's Word

Life gets busy and it can be so distracting. Yet, it is vitally important – perhaps now, more than ever – that in our lives as Christians we take the time and care to immerse ourselves deeply and fully in the study of the immense riches of the Bible. God has indeed preserved a treasure of incalculable wealth for his people through the ages, so that we – in addition to knowing him through his Creation – may also the more fully know our God and Creator through his Holy Word. The Inter-League Publication Board (ILPB) has, over the years, actively taken it as their mission to publish accessible Reformed study materials to help us mine the great riches of God's Word.

## History of ILPB

In the early years of the Canadian Reformed churches, God guided members to recognize this foundational truth, and establish study societies. The Young People's Society members, especially, realized the necessity of having Reformed study material in English to work with. This led to the Young People's group publishing their first work, Rev. Selles's book on Hebrews. Its initial printing in the autumn of 1963 saw nearly 200 copies sold by December 14 of that year; an especially spectacular number in the context of the size of the church federation at that time. Shortly after the Selles book was published, the Men's Society League also published an outline, this one on Haggai. Realizing the wisdom and the economy – both in terms of labour and financial resources – of working together on something this mutually beneficial, on October 17, the Young People's League and the Men's and Women's Society League met together in London, Ontario. There, they officially joined to make one publishing group, the Inter-League Publication Board to, as their Mission Statement sets out, "Provide Reformed Study Material of the highest quality to Bible Study Societies and other interested people."

## Fresh material

In those critical fledgling years of our federation, much of the ILPB's work involved translating Dutch material into English. It's been nearly ten years since we've last done so. Our work these days is mostly with manuscripts, or tailoring sermons to fit an outline format. In fact, two of our latest books – Rev. R.J. Sikkema's study guide on the Beatitudes and Rev. W. Bredenhof's book on the Covenant of Grace – both originated as a sermon series. The ILPB regularly sends out queries – mostly to ministers in our federation – asking if they are interested

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***The ILPB has taken it as their mission  
to publish accessible Reformed study  
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of God's Word***

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in writing something for us, giving them the option of reworking a sermon series. There is an admittedly broad range in how authors treat their work; some prefer to be closely involved in getting their manuscript to print, while others are content to simply hand us their sermons, saying "do as you please." Still, we're always conscious of making sure that the author, regardless of his approach, stands in full approval of what we intend to send to print; it's this kind of integrity that builds good author-publisher relationships, and helps keep them strong.

## Current organization

From its inception, the ILPB has been a non-profit organization of volunteers, and has operated, over the years, under the auspices of the Men's, Women's, and

Young People's Societies. Though most of these societies as official entities have since been dissolved, the ILPB continues on; there is yet much work to be done. Our headquarters have also shifted. Based originally in the London, Ontario area, we've since moved to Fergus, Ontario, and continue to be well-served by a highly capable and talented group of volunteers.

We also have a great contingent of volunteers who are ILPB representatives for their local church. Having familiarized themselves with the ILPB books, they are in an excellent position to give suggestions to Bible study groups and church members about our books. These reps may also organize a book club in their congregation, where book club members automatically receive every newly-published book from the ILPB at a twenty-five percent discount.

### **Changing with the times but remaining true to its purpose**

God has richly blessed the ILPB in all that we have undertaken, and standing with feet firmly planted on our original mission, we have also adapted to meet many changes and requests you've made. Though the ILPB has always focussed strongly on Bible study books, in response to the growing interest in workbooks over the years, we have broadened our scope to include those as well. Our Bible study guides of more recent years have also been adapted to accommodate the growing popularity of study questions to act as a guide and a lively discussion springboard for Bible study meetings. Additionally, as our older books are sold out, we review the text, update the English for readability, revise the Bible translation to reflect the current version, add study questions where possible, and also revitalize the format and

the cover. The cover graphics of our most recent study guides, including those on Daniel (Rev. A. Souman), Luke (Rev. Cl. Stam), and Haggai (Rev. W. Bredenhof), have a delightfully modern and fresh appeal to them; an appeal reflected also in dazzlingly brisk sales.

Equally modern is our website. The next time you're at your computer, take a few moments to browse it ([www.ilpb.ca](http://www.ilpb.ca)) and see our latest offerings – we're set up with PayPal for easy on-line payment – or you can download our book catalogue for easy on-hand reference. More recently, we've metaphorically placed both feet in the Technology Age, especially with some of our more recent books being available in e-book format as well; simply follow our e-book link under the book description on our website for download. In addition, we're looking forward to changes just beyond the horizon; a name change, a new website, as well as a refreshed logo.

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### ***Our Bible study guides of more recent years have also been adapted to accommodate the growing popularity of study questions to act as a guide and a lively discussion springboard for Bible Study meetings***

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In all the growth and changes since the beginning of the Inter-League Publication Board so many years ago, God has continued to guide us and keep us as we strove to be faithful to his infallible Word, and to be in accordance with The Three Forms of Unity, points that are every bit as inviolable now as they were back then. **C**

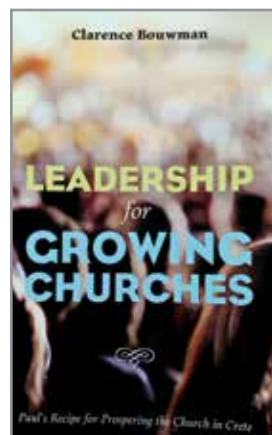


## Leadership for Growing Churches



Peter H. Holtvluwer  
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***Leadership for Growing Churches: Paul's Recipe for Prospering the Church in Crete* by Clarence Bouwman (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishing, 2016)**



**Additional Information:** 178 pages. For a limited time, study societies and individuals in the churches may obtain copies through your local ILPB rep, at the special rate of \$20 CDN, with proceeds to go to Mission Timor (email [leadershipforgrowingchurches@gmail.com](mailto:leadershipforgrowingchurches@gmail.com) for more info). Kindle edition (and hard copy) available through Amazon.

Is your Bible study group looking for next year's study guide? Or perhaps your church council is looking to study a book that will help them in fulfilling their offices and prospering the church? Look no further! For either situation, Rev. Clarence Bouwman's new book will admirably fit the bill!

### Explaining Titus

*Leadership* is a careful study on Paul's letter to Titus which contains much practical instruction for office bearers and church members alike. Rev. Bouwman works carefully with the text and mines it to bring out both the riches of the gospel of Jesus Christ and how it applies in a real-life church situation. A seasoned pastor and preacher, Bouwman brings his reflections and explanation of this short letter across in fourteen easy-to-read chapters, leaving hardly a stone unturned.

The writer takes pains to bring the reader along, repeating certain key thoughts from previous chapters in order to build on them in the present one. While that could be annoying if one reads it straight through, when a person studies one chapter every second week (in Bible study), these connecting paragraphs will prove quite helpful in refreshing the reader with previous themes. Each chapter is about ten through twelve pages and concludes with well-thought out questions that tap into the content of what was presented but extend further and

will ensure robust discussion on current challenges. There are helpful subject and Scripture indices to assist in looking up matters of particular interest.

### Old Testament roots

One of the unique features of *Leadership* is the author's extensive use of the Old Testament to fill out the background of Paul's instruction. For this reason, dear reader, do not fall for the temptation to skip the first chapter "Making the Sermon" simply because you may not be a preacher. Trust me, this chapter is valuable for *everyone*, for in it Rev. Bouwman explains (and proves) how both Paul and Titus would have been taking in the Christian gospel through the lens of the Old Testament. Digging up that OT background helps us better understand the sometimes brief directives Paul gives to Titus and how Titus would have worked with them. This is true for every New Testament book and so it's very helpful for all Christians to learn to reach back into the OT to better understand the NT.

### Grace-based application


How practical is Bouwman's book? Consider the titles of a few chapters: "Appoint Elders in Every Town" and "Teach Sound Doctrine" are directed particularly toward office bearers. There is a separate chapter each for "Older Men," "Older Women," "Young Women," "Younger Men," and "Slaves" (for employees/workers.) Along the way, Rev. Bouwman has thoughtful things to say on marriage, mothering, fathering, and even evangelism. All the specific "action" items that are spelled out for Christians are clearly set in the context of God's grace to us in Christ: such work is not ours to do alone but Christ enables us by his Spirit! What is especially helpful is that

Pastor Bouwman does his best in each chapter to broaden out the application beyond the particular target group. He helps the reader set that specific instruction within the whole communion of saints. In each chapter there is something for everyone and the whole body can learn to work and grow *together* – very helpful!

### Five questions

The author states in the preface that he hopes to answer five questions along way: 1) What ought leadership in a church to look like? 2) What role are individual members to play in the Lord's church? 3) How do you make a church prosper? 4) How does one handle dissent? 5) How does the church thrive in a culture of deceit? As you can see, these are all highly relevant and real-life questions for the church today (and of any day!). However, the order of the questions does not necessarily follow the order of the chapters (these same questions are found on the back cover in a different order, a fact that made it less clear where to find the answers). A related

issue is that the questions do not return later in the book and the answers to them are not singled out so that the reader is left to go hunting for himself. To be sure, I easily found answers to questions 1, 2, 4 and, with some additional digging, also the answers to 3 and 5. Perhaps in a second edition of this fine book, both the order of and a deliberate taking up of these important questions could be revised so as to further aid the reader.

The core theme of this book is to urge churches to follow God's wisdom and employ his specially designed method of leading and growing a church (conveniently summarized in the letter to Titus) and reject the current human wisdom of a "business model" approach (p. ix). While Rev. Bouwman does not describe what he means by a "business model," he succeeds admirably in fleshing-out God's model and how employing it would bring so much benefit as the Lord enables and blesses. Any Christian church would do well to give this book careful attention – and put God's method into practice. Recommended! 

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Press Release for Classis Central Ontario – March 11, 2016


Brother A. Smouter, delegate of the convening church, opened the meeting in a Christian manner. The Fellowship delegate inspected the credentials and reported that the churches were lawfully represented, and that there were no instructions. The delegates of Jubilee-Ottawa and Bethel-Toronto were in attendance via teleconference. Classis was then declared to be constituted. The proposed officers were appointed: Chairman: Rev. J.L. van Popta; Vice-Chairman: Br. J. Spithoff; Clerk: Rev. G. Bruintjes.

The chairman noted that Rev. A.B. Roukema, of St. Albert Alberta, had recently accepted a call to Ebenezer church. Flamborough church will be the only church in

this classis without a minister. The chairman also remembered the retired ministers, Rev. C. Bosch, Dr. J. de Jong, and Rev. J. Mulder.

The assembly adopted the provisional agenda. Since there were no instructions, reports, overtures, or other correspondence, the only matter on the agenda were the questions of Article 44 of the Church Order. The churches responded with their appropriate answers while mentioning that various appeals to General Synod 2016 had been submitted. The chairman noted that every church in this classis is appealing the 2013 decision concerning women's participation in the election of office-bearers (Art. 110).

Arrangements for the next classis were made. After the Acts were adopted, the assembly assigned the chairman and vice chairman to prepare a press release.

The Chairman led in closing prayer. 

# Wilful Blindness on Jihad



*Cornelis Van Dam*  
Professor emeritus of Old Testament  
at the Canadian Reformed Theological  
Seminary in Hamilton, Ontario  
[cvandam@canrc.org](mailto:cvandam@canrc.org)

In spite of repeated Islamic terrorist attacks, most recently (at the time of writing) in Brussels, Western governments by and large refuse to acknowledge the strong link between these attacks and Islam. Neither President Obama nor Prime Minister Trudeau made the connection when they condemned the attacks. This silence rightly angered Tarek Fatah in his *Toronto Sun* column on March 22. “Imagine,” he wrote, “President Franklin D. Roosevelt not naming the Nazi regime of Germany as the enemy Americans fought and laid down their lives to fight against in the Second World War.” And indeed, the Islamic State which claimed responsibility for the Brussels attacks have declared war on the West. According to Islam, it is the duty and right of all Muslims to heed the call of jihad, armed struggle, against the infidel, in this case the West.

The extent to which this denial continues was illustrated by Judith Bergman in a March 24 *Gatestone Institute* article “Jihad in Brussels.” Here are some of her examples.

The European Union’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, stated on June 24, 2015 at a conference dealing with Islam: “The idea of a clash between Islam and ‘the West’ . . . has misled our policies and our narratives. Islam holds a place in our Western societies. Islam belongs in Europe. . . . I am not afraid to say that political Islam should be part of the picture.” The wilful blindness and sheer incompetence which Mogherini showed about the most basic teachings of Islam is apparently typical of the European establishment.

It is not politically correct to study critically the doctrines of Islam because you may offend Muslims. It boggles the mind that, as Judith Bergman reported, “The White House ordered a cleansing of training materials that Islamic groups deemed offensive as far back as five years ago.” In 2013, experts on Islamic terrorism were not allowed to speak to any American government counterterrorism conference. This ban included conferences

of the FBI and the CIA. Instead, these agencies were “ordered to invite Muslim Brotherhood front groups.” But the Muslim Brotherhood has been clearly linked to terrorist activities by a British government-sponsored study. Prime Minister David Cameron publicly announced this fact last December. This link was of course no news for countries such as Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, who are quite familiar with the Brotherhood and its connection to terrorism.

Yet, the Obama administration responded to the British report by condemning it within minutes of its release. Indeed, two experts on terrorism, Steve Emerson and Pete Hoekstra, commented in the *National Review* (December 22, 2015) that “the Obama administration has accepted Islamist groups and regimes run by the Muslim Brotherhood into its fold, under the belief that, when allowed to participate in government, Islamists will no longer feel repressed and forced to engage in brutality.” They point out with examples that this belief is completely misguided.

Bergman correctly observed that the jihadists who carry out terrorist attacks in the service of the Islamic State are not victims of social and economic exclusion, as the Left holds, but are simply following the commands of the Qur’an. “Fight and kill the disbelievers wherever you find them” (9:5) and, “Fight them until there is no more strife and all submit to the religion of Allah” (8:39). She acknowledged that not all Muslims think this way, but there is “a persistent refusal by many in the West to acknowledge that sharia is the doctrine with which jihadists justify the war they wage on the West. This refusal is a most dangerous form of dishonesty; it has arguably already cost hundreds of lives on both American and European soil.” This refusal to face the facts will only embolden the jihadists.

Western governments, including Canada’s, need to wake up to this reality.



# Clarion Kids

## Jacob and Esau

Genesis 25-28

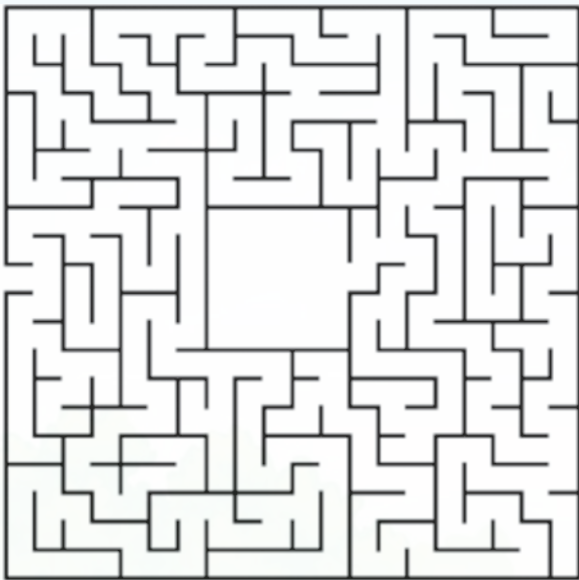
When Isaac grew up, he married Rebekah. They had twin boys named Jacob and Esau. Isaac loved Esau best, but Rebekah loved Jacob. When Isaac was getting old, he asked Esau to hunt an animal and cook it for him. Then he would bless him. Rebekah heard this. She told Jacob to get a lamb and she cooked it up just the way Isaac liked it. Since Esau had rough skin, she told Jacob to put some wool on his neck and arms and to pretend to be Esau. Jacob did as his mother told him. His father thought he was Esau when he felt his skin. He blessed Jacob instead of Esau. When Esau came home he discovered what Jacob had done, he was very angry.

Go to [www.clarionmagazine.ca](http://www.clarionmagazine.ca) to print and colour this picture!



### Maze:

Help Esau find an animal to bring to his father!



U	C	D	T	U	S	R	H	M	I
B	N	A	A	J	E	K	J	P	I
I	L	S	A	B	H	P	I	N	L
L	E	E	E	S	A	R	I	N	M
K	B	K	S	R	I	E	H	O	Y
I	A	R	L	S	P	T	U	Y	J
H	N	D	Z	M	I	E	G	R	U
B	O	C	A	J	P	N	C	G	I
C	O	O	K	C	J	D	G	N	Z
E	H	V	U	S	D	A	G	A	L

### Find these words !

Angry	Esau	Pretend
Blessing	Isaac	Rebekah
Cook	Jacob	Skin

by Emily Nijenhuis

## Anchor Camp

June 27-July 8<sup>th</sup>

Have you heard about Anchor Camp, wondering what it was all about? Or have you gone to Anchor Camp many years, whether as a camper or a counsellor? Either way we want everyone to know about Anchor Camp and why so many people love it.

Every year for the last thirty-seven years, campers, counsellors, cooks, nurses, and bus drivers head down to Campfire Summer Bible Camp to enjoy a fun and relaxing week full of many friends and activities. Many campers look forward to this week months ahead, in eager anticipation.

So what happens at Anchor Camp? There are two different theme weeks. This year, week one will be a Dutch theme, and week two an insects theme. This theme will be demonstrated throughout the week, and usually one day of the week everyone dresses up in their own costumes related to the theme. Everyone arrives on Monday around lunch and gets settled in; they find their cabin, and campers and counsellors meet up. Then the fun begins! Everyone finds a table to sit at for a meal and that will be their table for the week. Every morning everyone gathers in the main hall and has a delicious breakfast that the cooks have prepared. After that everyone gets ready for the day and heads down to the pavilion for devotions and singing. After that each day is different, various activities are planned for the week. Usually one day is spent going to Harrison Park where everyone can either go paddle boating or mini-putting, or they can tour and see all the animals. Another day they usually go swimming in an indoor pool. One day of the week they all can go on a hay ride, and one night "The band" comes and performs for everyone. Many other events at camp take place. Things like large group games, small games

of sports, water fights, fishing at the pond, walks down the trail, and crafts inside. There is never a dull moment at camp. Every year there seems to be a group of mischievous campers who pull pranks on others and put the blame on other people! Then every night after dinner, everyone gathers around the campfire and we sing praises to the Lord. Every camper can pick which song they would like to sing out of the psalm book.

This year Campfire will also have the pool up and running, which will create many more fun memories.

Anchor Camp is a great blessing from the Lord, where so many of his children can be together and worship him.

Anchor Camp could not take place without the many volunteers who come every year. We are always thankful for the large support from our church community to make this the best experience ever for the campers!

They are still looking for volunteers for both weeks this year: June 27-July 2, and July 2 -July 8. You can contact Angelina below!

Address: Campfire Summer Bible Camp  
75340 Grey Road 12, Markdale, ON, Canada N0C 1H0  
Contact: [anchorsummercamp@gmail.com](mailto:anchorsummercamp@gmail.com)  
or 905-701-1650

## Birthdays

- 17 JOAN KOERSELMAN will be 59**  
2113-16 Avenue, Coaldale, AB T1M 1J8
- 20 LARS HUIJGEN will be 25**  
85950 Canborough Road  
RR 1, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1
- 26 DEVON NIEZEN will be 16**  
454 St. George Street E, Fergus, ON N1M 1K8
- 30 BEVERLY BREUKELMAN will be 54**  
19th Street, Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4



Congratulations to everyone celebrating a birthday in June! We wish you all the Lord's blessing in the year ahead, and a great day with family and friends.





*William den Hollander*  
Minister emeritus of the  
Bethel Canadian Reformed  
Church of Toronto, Ontario  
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**Q Among Reformed scholars there are some who believe the fourth commandment is just ceremonial while others consider it a creation ordinance. The Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly dealt with it and the former considered it both ceremonial and moral, calling Christians to “rest from all servile works on the day of rest,” while the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) is more explicit about the command to rest, calling it the “Christian Sabbath.” Are faithful Christians still called to rest from unnecessary work throughout the Lord’s Day? Or is such a restriction contrary to Colossians 2:16?**

**A** The fourth commandment has been the subject of much controversy in the history of the NT church. When we consider the question of this commandment being a creation ordinance, we need to state up front that there is no clear indication for that assumption. Genesis 2 does not contain a command for Sabbath observance; it only states that the LORD rested on that day. We also note that until Exodus 16 (the manna stipulations) there is no mention of Sabbath observance. If it was a creation ordinance, it is striking too that there is no evidence at all regarding the people (including the patriarchs) observing the day as a day of rest. Exodus 20 looks back at God’s resting on the seventh day and makes it the basis for the day of rest of God’s people. Deuteronomy 5 adds to it the dimension of redemption from Egypt, setting it aside for rest and restoration for all who were under the care of the LORD.

Going to the NT, we observe as well that there is no specific renewal of the Sabbath command; neither does it command to substitute the seventh day with the first and enforce the required rest of the fourth commandment. In the first centuries of the NT there was no such

observance of the first day as the day of rest, and even after Constantine’s proclamation of the Sunday as the day of rest there was no strict observance either nor the prescription of this day as a day of worship. Hence, for centuries there was no indication that Sunday was observed “on the basis of” the fourth commandment.

Having said this, we do observe and keep the Sabbath on the first day of the week, thus retaining the “truth and substance” of the fourth commandment (cf. LD 38; BC Art. 25). As was the Sabbath so the Sunday is a special day, a day of rest, related to and grounded in God’s resting on the seventh day, Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, and Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Hence they’re days of celebration, feast days, commemorating creation and recreation, deliverance and salvation in the context of the covenant relationship with the LORD. They *were* and *are* days of worship, of gatherings, of proclamation, of covenant renewal, and of rest. Yes, rest is important too, namely rest from the everyday labours, rest for employers and employees, rest from work by animals and by servants (at gas stations, restaurants, and other places of economic pursuits!).

When in the discussions about these matters distinctions are made, e.g. between moral and ceremonial, then

moral is understood to refer to everything in the fourth commandment that remains binding, while ceremonial refers to what belongs to the OT aspect of the fourth commandment and therefore no longer binding today. J. Douma, in *The Ten Commandments*, suggests that the terms moral and ceremonial should better be substituted by the concepts provisional and permanent (p. 128). The observance of the Sabbath (on Saturday) was provisional, because after Christ came the church began observing another day. At the same time, we can say that the fourth commandment contains permanent elements that are as binding on the NT church as they were on OT Israel. The essence of the fourth commandment is permanent: i.e. the elements of worship, calling upon the Name of the LORD, enjoying a foretaste of the eternal Sabbath (Heb 4), etc. In places like Romans 14:5, Galatians 4:10, and Colossians 2:16-21, Paul is not refuting this permanent aspect of the day of rest, the Lord's Day, but the attempts of the Judaizers in retaining various OT practices, incl. the Jewish Sabbath observance in an OT manner.

In comparing the WCF and the HC we should be careful not to overstate the differences. The WCF devotes attention to both rest and exercises of worship, and the HC directs the attention to Sunday church attendance and our spiritual rest. Lord's Day 38 could be considered a

compromise between those who wished to articulate the stricter observance of the Sunday in its confession and those who wished to restrict the expression regarding the Lord's Day as a day of rest and worship. Both confessions uphold the abiding validity of the fourth commandment and the understanding of its permanent principles in "substance and truth" regarding the day of rest.

The Sunday, therefore, as a day of rest, should still be observed as a day on which to concentrate on God, attend "the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb 10:25; twice, if and when the consistory calls us to these services!), and spending the day in our families and among the brothers and sisters in the faith as much as feasible (cf. WCF). Thus we rest from our daily work and rejoice in the rest obtained by Christ! Then, as far as other activities are concerned, we will have to learn to distinguish between activities done during the week (swimming, hockey, studying) and those that are more in line with a restful and festive use of the Sunday (i.e. a "holy" day!). And as far as work that "may" be done is concerned, we can maintain the rule of thumb that works of necessity, of mercy, and of religion, as performed in our present day culture and society (and broken world) will need to be accepted.



**Is there something  
you've been wanting to know?  
An answer you've been looking for?**

**Ask us a question!**

**Please direct questions to Rev. W. denHollander  
[denhollanderw@gmail.com](mailto:denhollanderw@gmail.com)**

23 Kinsman Drive, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0