

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

NOVEMBER 2013
Volume 33 Issue No. 1

PERSPECTIVE

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS

WHY AREN'T WE
ACCOUNTABLE p.8

KUYPER'S
LEGACY: p.26
FOR BETTER
AND WORSE

ABRAHAM KUYPER **LARGER p.18** **THAN LIFE**

NEWS WORTH NOTING...
**NOTA
BENE**
p. 6

IN A NUTSHELL • FROM THE EDITOR • BOOK REVIEWS • CROSSWORD

Is this not
your copy of
*Reformed
Perspective?*



Enjoy *Reformed Perspective* all year long. Receive freshly designed monthly issues with articles pertinent to Reformed living.

CDN \$50/year

USA \$55/year

Int'l \$69/year

**SUBSCRIBE
TODAY**

Call **888.773.7780**

Reformed **PERSPECTIVE**

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Published monthly by the Foundation for the publication of a Reformed Social-Political Magazine (Reformed Perspective Foundation).

For Subscriptions or to Change your address, contact:

Reformed Perspective, 322 Caradoc St N., Strathroy, ON N7G 2N2
subscribe@reformedperspective.ca
1-888-773-7780

For Letters to the Editor, Advertising and Submissions, contact:

E-mail: editor@reformedperspective.ca

Editor: Jon Dykstra

Regular Contributors: Sharon Bratcher, Christine Farenhorst, Margaret Helder, Anna Nienhuis, Michael Wagner

Board of Directors: John Voorhorst (Chairman); Henry Stel (Managing Editor); James Teitsma (Secretary/Treasurer); Bob Lodder

Secretarial Address (Board Matters): James Teitsma
8 Granite Cove, East St. Paul, MB, Canada, R2E 0L6

Art Direction, Design and Layout: Compass Creative Studio Inc.
compasscreative.ca

Contact Address for South Africa:

Arie Roos, Box 584, Kuilsrivier, 7580 Republic of South Africa

Contact Address for Australia:

Pro Ecclesia Publishers, PO Box 189, Kelmescott, W. Australia 6111

Copyright statement: Copyright in letters, articles, cartoons and any other material submitted to Reformed Perspective and accepted for publication remains with the author, but RP and its reciprocal organizations may freely reproduce them in print, electronic or other forms.

This periodical is owned and operated by the Foundation for the publication of a Reformed Social-Political Magazine, a nonprofit organization, whose purpose is described in Article 2 of its constitution: "to publish periodically a magazine promoting Reformed principles in all spheres of life, especially the social, political and economic realms." In carrying out its objectives, the society is bound by the Bible, God's infallible Word, as it is summarized and confessed in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort (Article 3 of the constitution).

If you are interested in the work of Reformed Perspective Foundation and in the promotion of Reformed principles in all spheres of life, especially in your local area, and you need help, call John Voorhorst at 1 (403) 328-9114 (days), and 1 (403) 345-2904 (evenings).

Annual Subscription Rates:

Canadian Funds – 1 year \$50.00, 2 years \$93.00, 3 years \$137.00*
Canada Airmail \$73.00,* U.S. Airmail (U.S. Funds) \$80.00
U.S. Funds – 1 year \$55.00, 2 years \$100.00, 3 years \$145.00,
International Surface Mail \$69.00 (2 years \$125.00, 3 years \$184.00)

International Airmail \$115.00

***including 5% G.S.T. – G.S.T. No. R118929272RT0001**

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.



Cancellation Agreement

Unless a written subscription cancellation is received we assume you wish to continue to subscribe. You will be invoiced prior to the subscription renewal date.

Registration: ISSN 0714-8208

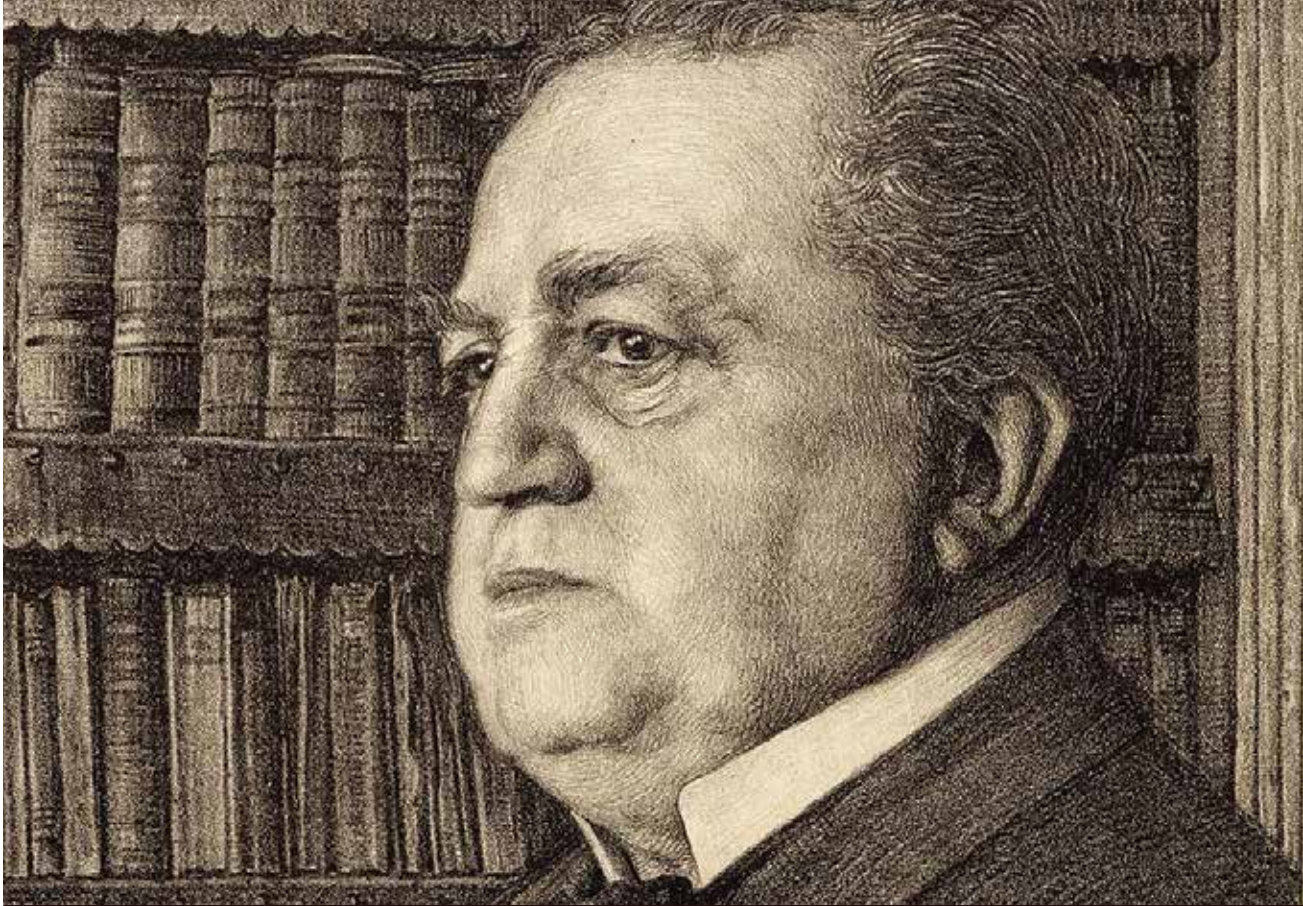
Charitable Organization under Canada Income Tax Act

Registration No. 118929272RR0001

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:

One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5

reformedperspective.ca



ABRAHAM KUYPER
LARGER THAN LIFE

– *Wes Bredenhof*
p.18

WHY
AREN'T
WE
**ACCOUNT-
ABLE?**

WHY AREN'T WE
ACCOUNTABLE
– *Luke Gilkerson*

p.8



WHEN ONE SPOUSE
DOESN'T BELIEVE.
– *Jim Witteveen*

p.12



**PREPARING TO INHERIT
THE EARTH** p.16

– *Michael Wagner*

DEALING WITH DRAGONS p.5

– *Jon Dykstra*

NOTA BENE p.6

**GOD GAVE US BOTH
FOR A REASON** p.14

– *Ryan Smith*

IN A NUTSHELL p.15

A BIT ON THE MOUTH p.32

– *Christine Farenhorst*

OUR VISION

EVERY COMMUNITY TRANSFORMED BY THE GOSPEL.

OUR MISSION

TO ADVANCE CHRIST-CENTRED EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WORLDWIDE.



edu·de
MINISTRIES

EduDeo Ministries is a Canadian, Christian, mission organization serving children in developing countries with quality education rooted in a Biblical worldview.

**EDUCATION
+ GOSPEL
= TRANSFORMATION**

edudeo.com
866.360.4274 | info@edudeo.com

FROM THE EDITOR

Dealing with dragons

Our children need to be prepared

If you scan the bookshelves of your local library you'll find a lot of "powder-puff" stories for the pre-K set – stories where everyone is nice, they do nice things, and a nice time is had by all. I'm all for niceness, but after reading a stack of these to my three-year-old I noticed she was having a hard time dealing with stories that included disagreements, disappointment or any sort of actual drama. Anything that wasn't the nicest of nice was becoming scary to her.

Steps needed to be taken to rectify this situation, and what better approach than to tell her stories of valor, self-sacrifice and dragons!

Start slowly, consult experts

Admittedly the first go-around wasn't a success. With no dragon books at hand I made up a story about daddy fighting a dragon in defense of my daughters *and then getting eaten by the fierce beast!* Now, I knew this dramatic turn would push my little one's limits, but I was going to quickly follow it with my climactic re-emergence, sword in hand, out of the belly of the now dead dragon. A fantastic ending, if I do say so myself. But, alas, my daughter wasn't around to hear it. She had already fled the room.

For my second go I decided to turn to the experts and get an actual book, one of the very best dragon-fighting stories ever made by man (or retold by woman): Margaret Hodges' *Saint George and the Dragon*. In this account, taken from Edmund Spenser's classic *The Faerie Queene*, the brave Red Knight is asked by Princess Una to come save her land from a dreadful dragon. And come he does.

The battle that then commences is epic. The fearsome dragon has "scales of brass fitted so closely that no sword or spear could pierce them," leaving the

Red Knight no opportunity to slice into him. It is only "the strength of the blow" that gives the dragon pause. The first day's battle ends when the Red Knight's thrust glances off the dragon's neck but pierces its left wing. In fury the beast throws the knight and his horse to the ground and then bellows,

*the like was never heard before
– and from his body, like a wide
devouring oven, sent a flame of fire
that scorched the knight's face and
heated his armor red-hot.*

The knight falls, and the dragon thinks he has won.

But that was just Round One! The spot where the knight fell, it so happens, was an ancient spring which cools his armor and restores his strength, so much so that the next morning he was ready to do battle again. Two more rounds follow, with the dragon losing a paw and a length of tail before ultimately succumbing to the Red Knight in Round Three.

This is reality

My daughter *loved* it! She needed some reassurance midway through, and I should also note I didn't give it as dramatic a reading as I could have – vocally I tamped down on the tension. But there was still plenty of suspense, loads of action and a full-on disagreement between knight and dragon. And my daughter handled it all.

Why should little kids be exposed to drama? Because stories, in addition to being a source of entertainment, also serve as a means of education. We don't live in a powder-puff world; there are dragons that need slaying. What's more, Christians need to teach their children that the fiercest dragons out there *can be and must be slain*. God



Jon Dykstra can be reached at editor@reformedperspective.ca.

For a longer review of Hodge's *Saint George and the Dragon*, see www.ReallyGoodReads.com.

calls us to battle, so while stories about tea parties and talking puppies have their place, at some point training must commence. We have to be properly prepared for disappointments, disagreements and dragons.

Courage now

When the battle was at its most suspenseful, my daughter had to peek ahead to the last few pages to deal with the tension. We saw that this story, as good stories are apt to do, ends with the dragon dead and with a royal wedding. Then we returned to the action.

Why was my little girl now able to endure the scary parts? Because she knew that the ending was all properly sorted out.

God knows that life can get a little too dramatic for us adults, too, so our loving Father has given us a peek at the last page. When things get overwhelming, we can be reassured knowing it all has a happy ending, the serpent slain, and the Bridegroom saving his Bride.

NOTA BENE

News worth noting

FIRST CHURCH BUILDING IN MODERN ISRAEL

BY ANNA NIENHUIS

W For Christians, Israel has long been associated with God's calling of a nation to Himself. It is a strange irony then that, in the entire history of modern Israel, not a single church building has ever been erected. It was only earlier this year that this dismal record came to an end when the Grace and Truth Church – a Reformed congregation – dedicated their building.

The church started as a home congregation in 1976. Construction of an official church building has been underway for the past decade, with opposition from Orthodox Jews forcing the issue all the way to the Supreme

Court of Israel where the project was allowed to go ahead. The new building will also be used as a library, school and conference center.

At the dedication Pastor David Zadok stated:

My prayer is that we will be able to use this large and beautiful building as a place where God's Word is faithfully proclaimed with joy, a place where many will hear the gospel, and many will be deepened in the knowledge of God's Word and in fellowship with God, and a place where God and his Messiah are glorified.

That should be our prayer echoed for all churches, along with a prayer that this first church in Israel will be far from the last.

Source: D. H. Kranendonk's "The first church building to be erected in the modern state of Israel", banneroftruth.org, Oct. 4, 2013.

CORRECTION: The September issue had two extra letters. In Jim Hummel's "Investing God's Money," at the top of the second last column, readers are told "... while we are allowed to borrow, we shouldn't do so hesitantly." That "shouldn't" should be a "should" – we are allowed to borrow, but should do so hesitantly.

BIGGER THAN A BLOCKBUSTER?

BY JON DYKSTRA



L ess than 20 movies have ever grossed more than a billion dollars. In September, the video game *Grand*

Theft Auto V (GTA) was released, and it took just three days to earn its first billion. We've learned how films can impact our culture – blockbusters are discussed, their stars celebrated and their worldview propagated. But do we understand the impact video games can have? Reformed blogger Tim Challies called GTA's September release "the greatest entertainment launch in history" but added that it was one that "few of us noticed."

It's important that we do sit up and take notice. *Grand Theft Auto V* is no Pac-Man – the point of the game is to rob and murder and even torture, characters include prostitutes, and locales include strip clubs. The game cost more than \$100 million to develop, so the visuals are hyper-realistic. And while movies immerse viewers in their world for only a couple or three hours, players will take 40 to 50 hours to finish all of the *Grand Theft Auto V* missions.

Parents who never go to movies likely still know who the biggest stars are, and have at least an inkling of what goes on in their films. If parents are going to help their children learn to make good entertainment choices it's important they have at least an inkling about this new kind of blockbuster.

GARDASIL: A VACCINE WE DON'T NEED

BY JON DYKSTRA



Calgary's Catholic Bishop Fred Henry continues to make headlines for opposing the mandatory Gardasil vaccination of Catholic junior high school girls. The vaccine protects against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), a sexually transmitted disease thought to greatly increase a person's chances of developing certain cancers.

But it is also a disease that cannot be caught by faithful, sexually pure Christians. If single Christians are

celibate and Christian couples are monogamous, they are 100% safe from HPV.

Vaccines come with some risks, but in most cases the benefits vastly outweigh those risks. In this case, however, the risks, no matter how small, vastly outweigh the entire absence of benefit the vaccine can give to faithful Christians.

Dr. Jon Meddings, head of the University of Calgary medical school, has called Bishop Henry's stance

deplorable...You are increasing the rate of spread of this virus in the population as a whole...Death rates, for both Catholics and non-Catholics, will increase as a consequence. I find it hard to appreciate the morality of this position.

Meddings finds it inconceivable that young people could be taught self-control. He assumes that no matter what their parents' wishes, teens will have sex.

But Meddlings knows nothing of Christian parenting. We aren't called to prepare for when our children sin; no, we are called to show them how to flee from it.

If we are worried that our children might some day have need for this vaccine, then we need to give them something much better now - direction and protection. We need to talk to them about the temptations common to all men and women, and we need to hold them accountable for telling us where they are going, who they are with and when they will be home. We need to help them avoid situations where they could fall into sexual sin. This vaccine can protect them from some of the medical consequences but none of the spiritual ones.

Like Bishop Henry we should reject Gardasil as simply too risky for our children.

Source: Joshua Miller's "Boys could be spiked from New York high school's girls' volleyball team"; Sept. 27, 2013; foxnews.com

BOYS AND GIRLS ARE ACTUALLY DIFFERENT

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



ANew York high school is being forced to reconsider its decision to allow two boys to play on the girls' volleyball team since there was no boys' team this year. While there has been little dissent from the team itself, and opposing teams are generally unconcerned, some dispute the unfair physical advantage males have when competing against girls.

Other teams have allowed this in the past, with the boys having to prove to a decision committee that they are not so physically fit as to have a big advantage.

This attempt at inclusion, however, makes no sense when you consider the fact that girls play on a net that sits a foot lower than a boys' net. This indicates that we do recognize a difference in physical ability between the sexes, and the game is altered accordingly. No one is suggesting the girls' net be raised that foot to foster a sense of equality, nor should they then be suggesting that it will not affect a team's outcomes to have boys playing. Despite the world's every effort to ignore or eliminate differences between the genders, the truth remains evident that God has made the genders distinct, as we can even see in those competing at the top of their physical ability.

Source: Joshua Miller's "Boys could be spiked from New York high school's girls' volleyball team"; Sept. 27, 2013; foxnews.com

ATHEISTS BELIEVE THERE'S LIFE OUT THERE

BY ANNA NIENHUIS



A recent study by consumer research firm Survata looked at the prevalence of belief in extraterrestrials. Of close to 6,000 people polled, an average of 37% of Americans believe in the existence of extraterrestrial life. Christians were less likely than their atheist or agnostic counterparts to believe in aliens - 35% of Christians, compared to 55% of those identifying themselves as atheist. If more than half of atheists can believe in aliens that they have never seen, why is it they are certain there is no God?

Source: Billy Hallowell's "Who's more likely to believe in alien life - atheists or people who embrace God?"; theblaze.com; Sept. 30, 2013.

WHY AREN'T WE ACCOUNTABLE?

by Luke Gilkerson

THREE PROVEN WAYS TO FAIL AT ENCOURAGING ACCOUNTABILITY IN YOUR CHURCH

It was your typical Christian men's conference: the predictable but entertaining talks on godly masculinity, the vendor area selling the latest "man-up-to-Jesus" books, the seminars addressing everything from lust to having a healthy marriage.

We were invited there because of the work we do for Covenant Eyes, providing people with Internet Accountability and Filtering software. I was standing at our booth when I was approached by a young man who smiled at the sight of our table.

"I love you guys," he began, "I used your accountability software for a year or so."

"Why did you stop?" I asked.

"Oh, well, I used to really struggle with pornography on the Internet, and your software really helped me. But I don't really struggle with that anymore."

I both like and dislike hearing testimonies like this. On the one hand, I love hearing how Internet accountability has changed someone's behavior for the better. On the other hand, I know the value of long-term accountability groups, and I hate to see people give up on them when the perceived threat is over.

When it comes to the subject of accountability – beyond the mechanics of using software – the church knows it is a good idea, but few churches know how to really encourage it over

the long haul. And often our hidden attitudes and beliefs about it doom accountability groups before they even get off the ground.

Here are three ways I have noticed churches fail at encouraging accountability.

FAULT #1: TREAT ACCOUNTABILITY AS SOMETHING ONLY FOR PEOPLE WITH "REAL PROBLEMS."

Sometimes we imply - or even directly say - accountability is really only something useful for those ensnared in overt and habitual sins. For them accountability is for those who want to break their nasty habits.

When we speak of the value of accountability only in situations of overt or habitual transgression, we stigmatize accountability.

Accountability, of course, can be a great help in that. But when we have this attitude we confuse accountability with restoration. The two certainly overlap, but they are not the same.

Restoration is mentioned in Galatians 6:1, “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.” Paul exhorts those who are “spiritual” – those who are keeping in step with the Holy Spirit and manifesting the lasting fruit of Christ-like character – to reach out to those who are “caught,” or overtaken and trapped, in sin. By God’s grace, the spiritually mature can speak into the broken and fractured lives of others and “restore” them. The word here communicates the idea of mending what has been broken, helping someone become what they ought to be. It is also a medical word for setting a broken bone. Paul is asking some in the church to take on the ministry of restoration, to become good soul physicians, to help those who have yielded to addictive or destructive sin, and set them in right order again.

As necessary as restoration is, more basic to church life is accountability.

Accountability is something meant for every member of the church. James writes, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16). God calls all of us to give an account to each other about the ways in which we fall short. This same ministry is hinted at in 1 John 1:7, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” Instead of walking in the darkness, controlled by both the desires of the world and the

illusion that our sin isn’t real or isn’t serious, we walk in the light of God’s presence: being honest with God, with ourselves, and with our fellow Christians about our temptations, our sins, and the state of our hearts.

When we confuse these two we do the church a great disservice. When we speak of the value of accountability only in situations of overt or habitual transgression, we stigmatize accountability. Those who seek out or are prescribed accountability must have “real problems.”

When this is the norm, those who feel they have their most obvious sins mastered do not seek out regular confession.

We see this all the time in our churches. We encourage people to confess their porn addictions, but not their ingratitude. We encourage people to confess their outbursts of anger, but not their joylessness. We encourage people to confess their misuses of money, but not their misuses of attention and devotion. We reinterpret “confess your sins” to mean “confess your most bad-mannered sins,” and in doing so we miss out on the opportunity to sharpen one another as iron sharpens iron in the daily grind of life (Proverbs 27:17).

Often it is our most subtle, “respectable sins” (to quote Jerry Bridges), that are the most dangerous. Puritan author John Owen described sin as a subtle, sly, and strong force within us, “always at work in the business of killing our souls.” Just when we think sin is most quiet, this is when it is most powerful. “Sin is always acting, always conceiving, always seducing and tempting.” Even in our holiest moments, even in our most moral decisions,

indwelling sin is seeking to corrupt what we think and do (Romans 7:19).

We should not be shocked to find sick people in the waiting room at a doctor’s office: this is exactly where those who know they are sick should be. Similarly, one of the things that all church folk should have in common is that they all know their sin-sickness runs deep. John Freeman of Harvest USA says the church should be a community of “unshockable realists.” The church, of all groups of people, should understand there are no limits to moral weakness, no depths to which sin cannot go, and no areas of our lives that are beyond sin’s reach.

The discipline of regular accountability forces us to search our hearts for all the ways sin has tried to sap the resurrection-life of Christ flowing in our veins. By regularly speaking and listening to one another in a place of humble confession, we help each other to articulate and define the hidden struggles that wage war on our souls.

FAULT #2: TREAT ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS LIKE PROTESTANT CONFESSIONAL BOOTHS.

In his book *Fight Clubs: Gospel-Centered Discipleship*, Pastor Jonathan Dodson talks about how easily an accountability partner or group can devolve into a “confessional booth” mentality. Dodson writes about this kind of group:

I confess my sin; you confess yours. I pat your back. You pat mine. Then we pray. Accountability groups become circles of cheap grace, through which we obtain cheap peace from a troubled conscience. Confession is divorced from repentance, reducing holiness to half-hearted morality. Accountability becomes a man-made mix of spineless confession and cheap peace. This approach to discipleship is hollow. It lacks the urgency required by the fight of faith.

To be sure, there is great comfort in getting something off your chest, letting another human being know the things that have weighed down your conscience. Often all we’re looking for is someone else to commiserate with our

sin. Sometimes we're just looking for a reassuring word to calm our hearts. But if we aren't careful, we could offer one another a false sense of peace that glosses over the seriousness of sin.

The prophet Jeremiah warned the inhabitants of Judah that a time of judgment was coming. Idolatry and injustice were everywhere, and after generations of sin, God was going to level Jerusalem to the ground and send His children into exile. Despite this warning, there were many false prophets in Jeremiah's day who prophesied, saying, "Peace, peace." These were soothing words that offered cheap peace to the souls of Jerusalem, but the peace would not last. Of these false prophets Jeremiah writes, "They have healed the wound of my people lightly" (Jeremiah 8:11).

and praying, "God, show me how I can really motivate my friend to forsake all self-obsession and hidden idols, to love God and others wholeheartedly." We are to have a hardcore intentionality and thoughtfulness in our friendships. We are to treat our brother's or sister's sin with the utmost seriousness. This is the opposite of passive accountability.

Notice also, this vision of accountability is not about merely the confession or overcoming of so-called sins of "commission." These are typically our red-letter sins in the church: lying, cheating, lust, rage, dirty talk, etc. Healthy accountability, at its core, addresses sins of "omission," all the ways we neglect positive expressions of Christlikeness and Christ-centeredness. What would happen if we regularly asked one another:

events, or trivial matters. But isn't this the kind of conversation the Bible calls us to embrace? Shouldn't we strive to have these sorts of friendships?

FAULT #3: TREAT ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS LIKE MORALITY COPS.

I have never been in a church where I didn't meet someone who had been burned by pseudo-accountability. It is easy, in our quest for holiness, to build superficial relationships we hope will motivate us to fight sin. But all too often these relationships miss the mark.

Consider this story from Nate Larkin's book, *Samson and the Pirate Monks*:

You've probably seen that poor fellow who decided one day to be honest in a Christian meeting. Maybe he'd been caught in a sin, so he really had nothing left to lose, or perhaps he was so plagued by guilt that he decided to take the church's rhetoric about grace and forgiveness at face value and bare his soul in a desperate bid for freedom.

I remember a guy who did that. As soon as the fateful words were uttered he looked around, hoping somebody would say, "Me, too," but all he heard were crickets.

Accountability relationships, like all aspects of the spiritual growth, should not primarily be based on what John Owen calls "restraining graces": our fear of shame among others or our fear of God's punishment. Rather, our obedience should be encouraged by what he calls "renewing graces," New Covenant motivations. Accountability partners should primarily inspire us by helping us see the ugliness of sin in contrast with the awesomeness and beauty of communion with the holy God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says we should be "encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." As this verse implies, accountability conversations should be infused with an eternal perspective, stirring up hope in one another. Our words of encouragement need to rouse in us a

Accountability is something meant for every member of the church.

Rather than addressing the cancer of sin, the prophets were merely passing out Band-Aids.

Accountability partners can be guilty of offering the light healing of cheap words that offer cheap peace. Instead, the author of Hebrews gives us a proper vision for accountability partners and groups: "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

In the face of each other's weaknesses, we need to encourage one another to fight sin. We are called to "stir up" one another – to urge, to spur on, to provoke, to motivate each other – to love and good deeds. We are to "consider," or fix our attention on, how we can encourage each other. Each time we meet together we should be contemplating

- What keeps you from enjoying God?
- Have you been joyful? What has been your primary source of joy?
- What do you desire more than anything else?
- What do you find yourself day-dreaming or fantasizing about?
- Where do your thoughts drift to when you enter a social setting? What consumes your thoughts when you have time alone?
- Have you been filled with compassion over the hurts and trials of others?
- Have you been relishing in your peace with God through the gospel?
- Have you been making much of Christ in your conversations?¹

Granted, asking each other these questions might seem over-the-top, especially if our friendships tend to revolve around entertainment, current



We should not be shocked to find sick people in the waiting room at a doctor's office: this is exactly where those who know they are sick should be. Similarly, one of the things that all church folk should have in common is that they all know their sin-sickness runs deep.

holy longing for the Day of Christ, the day when all luster of sin will vanish and we will be made just like Him, for we will see Him as He is (1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; 1 John 3:2-3).

In sharp contrast to the “cop” mentality, Hebrews 10 calls us to “encourage” one another. This can also be translated “beseech.” It is a verb that involves speaking, for sure, but additionally it means calling someone to your side. It is more than words of instruction (though it often involves instruction), it is more than rebuking (though it often involves correction and rebuke), it is more than comforting (though it often involves words of comfort). It is first about being fully with someone.

Often this is the frustration when it comes to confessing our sins, big or small. It is easy to feel like we’re sitting in a room of preachers and therapists. Often when we are discouraged, tempted, or defeated, we don’t want a sermon. We want someone to sit and listen. We want someone to just be with us, to feel the frustration and pain in our gut. We want someone to weep with us before they preach to us.

This verb, “encourage,” avoids two extremes of accountability relationships. The first extreme we’ve already mentioned: passive accountability. God calls us to speak into one another’s lives, to treat sin seriously, and not simply use


one another for obtaining cheap peace. The other extreme is a harsh, legalistic, “cop” mentality. A cop is someone who is just looking over your shoulder for you to screw up. Accountability cops are those who have come up with very religious and sanitized ways of being a jerk to someone. But a real friend isn’t someone who merely polices your life. Good accountability partners are fellow travelers, not cops. A real friend is someone who gets in the vehicle with you, helps you drive in the lines, travels with you in life in good times and bad, helps you look out for the potholes, helps you read the road signs, and helps you get to where you are going.

ACCOUNTABILITY: A NEW VISION


Avoiding these three common faults of accountability is not easy. It isn’t easy because our uninformed and sinful hearts are often caught in the paradox of wanting close community and wanting to avoid it. Somewhere within every human heart – Christian or not – is a desire to return to the Garden, to a time when we were in harmony with God and one another. But we all live east of Eden, in a world where being known by others is a scary thing, a world where really knowing others requires us to die to ourselves and our self-centeredness.

But developing this vision of biblical accountability starts simply by making it known. Church leaders must cast this vision for their people. Fathers must cast this vision for their families. And all church members must cast this vision among their Christian friends. Just as “every family of the pious ought to be a church” (John Calvin), every accountability partner or group ought to strive for this vision.

END NOTE

¹ Many of these questions are modified from Jonathan Dodson’s “Gospel-Centered Questions” in Fight Clubs: Gospel-Centered Discipleship. 

LUKE GILKERSON is the Internet Community Manager at Covenant Eyes (www.covenanteyes.com) a Christian company that creates accountability software for all sorts of web-connected devices such as phones, computers and tablets.



WHEN ONE SPOUSE DOESN'T BELIEVE

by Jim Witteveen

As Reformed Christians, we stress the importance of God's covenantal relationship with His people. Scripture shows us how our God works in families, and also how Christian parents are called to bring their children up in the fear of the Lord. One passage in the Old Testament shows us how we can do this; it was a foundational text for the Old Testament people of God, and, as the New Testament people of God, it should shape our thinking and practice as well.

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 shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

– Deuteronomy 6:6-9, ESV

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

As Christians, our “religious” practices are not limited to the times when we gather for corporate worship. We can't, and we shouldn't, divide life up into separate compartments. All of life is religious; “God talk” should not be limited to the times when we meet formally – all of life should be centered on worshipping God and speaking about Him and His works, and this passage makes that fact very clear.

One of the ways that we can make sure that we're doing what we're supposed to do within our Christian families is to set aside a regular time for family worship. This is more than just mechanically asking for God's blessing on our food before our evening meal, giving thanks for it, and then reading a passage from the Bible. Family worship, or family devotions, can provide parents with a regular opportunity to deliberately speak about God's Word, teach God's Word, and apply God's Word to the lives of everyone in the family.

Families with young children know from experience how challenging this can be. With our busy schedules and all the demands we have on our time, with short attention spans and tired young bodies and minds to deal with, it can be a struggle to set aside a regular time for meaningful family worship. But for families in which one parent isn't a believer, family worship can mean additional stress on a relationship which is already strained.

TOUGHER TO DO, BUT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT

A strained relationship between a husband and wife who do not share the same faith should come as no surprise; God's command that believers “not be unequally yoked with unbelievers” has a basis in the reality that, at the most basic level, “righteousness” has no partnership with lawlessness, and “light” has no fellowship with “darkness” (2 Corinthians 6:14). So it's no surprise that keeping God's commands leads to practical benefits in the lives of everyone

involved, since those commands are never arbitrary.

However, for a husband or wife who has come to faith apart from his or her spouse, the marriage relationship brings additional responsibility, as well as a beautiful calling for the believer. As the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 7:16, “Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?”

In this kind of situation, family worship time becomes an opportunity, not just to teach and encourage the children of the family, but also to teach and encourage the unbelieving spouse to put his or her faith in Christ. But how can this be done?

how long the kids will sit still and listen, while still encouraging them to develop and grow in this area. It means being patient, as well as being self-disciplined.

Regular family worship is also a great opportunity to sing together, to learn the psalms, to practice memory work or songs that were sung in the previous week’s worship services. God’s command to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16) isn’t limited to the worship services. What better way is there for a family to express joy and encourage one another than by singing

God uses His Word as a means of grace, and the Holy Spirit works through the Word, there is no better way to lead someone to Christ than by opening that Word with them.

IT CAN'T BE LIMITED TO FAMILY DEVOTIONS

But there’s one final, vitally important point that must be made. Family devotions must express a reality that shows itself in every area of the family’s life. If a believing husband doesn’t lead his family in a Christ-like way, if he says one thing and does another, if he lives one way on Sundays and another for the other six days of the week, no amount of family devotions will make a difference to the life of the non-Christian spouse. In each of our relationships, if we don’t practice what we preach, we’re actually doing a disservice to the cause of Christ.

Our greatest witness, both within and outside of our families, is in the way we live in every aspect of our lives. It is reflecting Christ in our words and in our deeds that provides the best witness for the gospel. Family worship may be an important part of that witness, but it is only one piece of a much larger puzzle. God calls Christian wives to “be subject to their own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives – when they see your respectful and pure conduct” (1 Peter 3:1,2, ESV). In the same way, Christian husbands need to lead their families, do their work, and raise their children in a way that brings glory to the Lord.

Of course, we can’t control the way people will respond; they may respond positively, or they may continue to reject the gospel. But thankfully we aren’t responsible for the response of others; that’s the job of the Holy Spirit. But we can, by God’s grace, be tools that God uses to bring people to faith, by living in faithful obedience to Him. And our faithful devotion to our God, in family worship and in all of life, may just be the means that God will choose to bring those we love to a true and living faith.

PASTOR JIM WITTEVEEN is a Canadian Reformed minister preaching the gospel in Prince George, B.C..

family worship....is more than just mechanically asking for God's blessing on our food before our evening meal, giving thanks for it, and then reading a passage from the Bible.

IT SHOULD BE REAL

First of all, the same principles apply as in any regular family situation. Family worship should not be made into a meaningless tradition – something that we do simply because this is how we’ve always done things, with the idea that we can “get it over and done with,” and go on with the rest of our lives. Bible reading and prayer should be done thoughtfully, deliberately, with the knowledge that when we are opening up God’s Word we are hearing His voice, and that when we’re praying, we’re speaking to our Creator and Savior.

IT SHOULD BE JOYFUL

Secondly, family worship should be joyful. This is not another burden, just another ritual we have to go through in order to feel like we’re doing the right thing. For families with young children, this may mean lowering our expectations about

together? Our songs aren’t just prayers or praise, they are also important teaching tools, allowing us to let God’s Word dwell in each of us in all its richness.

THE GOSPEL IS PRESENTED

When a believing spouse leads the family in a thoughtful and joyful time of family devotions, something of vital importance is happening. Through the experience alone, even apart from the specific content of our reading, prayer, and conversation, the unbelieving spouse will see and experience that the Christian life is not all about doing the right things, going through the right motions, outward piety, or meaningless traditions. The non-Christian spouse will experience this display of God’s grace as a part of the family, but at the same time as an outsider.

And this may just be one of the means God uses, by His grace, to bring the unbelieving spouse to faith. And since

GOD GAVE US BOTH FOR A REASON

Same-sex marriage treats men and women as identical and interchangeable

by Ryan Smith

Which parent do I not need? My mom or my dad?" 11-year-old tween, Grace Evans, asked legislators this pointed question during a hearing to legalize same-sex marriage in Minnesota. She politely waited eight seconds for a reply. When there was no response she repeated her question.

"Which parent do I not need? My mom or my dad?"

She waited again, this time for 13 seconds. Again, there was no answer from those politicians. I don't know why they did not answer, perhaps they were stumped, or perhaps they simply refused. Either way it is truly absurd to imagine a politician telling a child that her mommy is unnecessary – or her daddy.

God in His wisdom made two parents of different sexes, both a mom and a dad, necessary for procreation for a reason: both sexes have very different God-given abilities, and both are necessary in raising healthy children and creating a strong family.

Speaking with the boldness and clarity of a seasoned public speaker Grace states:

Since every child needs a mom and a dad to be born, I don't think we can change that children need a mom and a dad...I believe God made it that way. I know some disagree, but I want to ask you this question: Which parent do I not need, my mom or my dad?

Grace said of her parents,

[my mom] is my role model on how to be a girl, and I love her very much. My dad is also very important to me

because he protects me and helps me get the confidence to be a girl who is growing up to be a woman. He takes care of me in a way my mom cannot.

In Genesis 1 God commands us, "be fruitful and multiply, subdue the earth and fill it, and have dominion ... over every living thing that moves on the earth." God created Adam and Eve, and like it or not, in His wisdom He made both sexes necessary for procreation. Both have unique attributes and abilities that, together, make a complete parental unit.

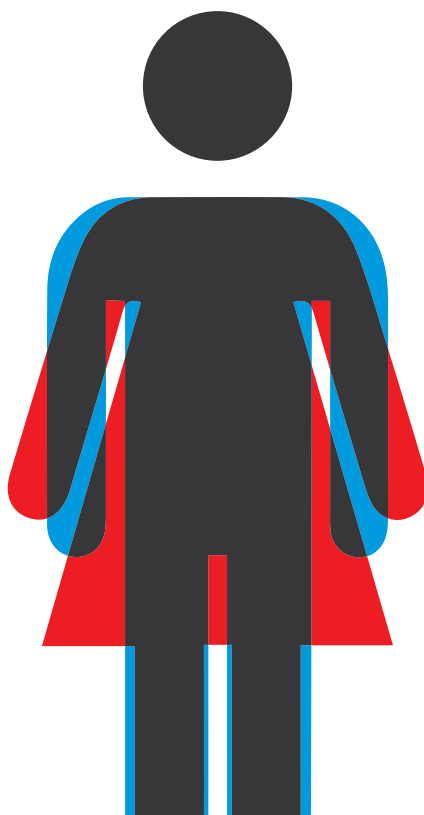
Some might point out that there are families that have only one parent. Yes, in this fallen world there are broken marriages and single family homes – even in the church. So while two dads don't

...it is truly absurd to imagine a politician telling a child that her mother is unnecessary – or her daddy.

make a mom and two moms don't make a dad, a mom and dad do not make a Heavenly Father. A single family home, while missing an important part, can still be grounded in God and His Word, trusting in His faithfulness. A same-sex couple fundamentally denies God and His Word. That is the difference.

So to answer little Grace's question: You need both a mom and a dad; that's how God designed marriage and family. But if one parent should become delinquent, pass away, or abandon you, do not worry, but look to God, who, as the *Heidelberg Catechism* states in Lord's Day 9,

is for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father. In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul, and will also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this life of sorrow. He is able to do so as almighty God, and willing also as a faithful Father. **RP**



IN A NUTSHELL

TIDBITS RELEVANT,
AND NOT SO,
TO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY JON DYKSTRA

TRAPPED BY THEIR WORLDVIEW

There once was a man who was convinced he was dead. His doctor tried everything to convince him otherwise, but the man remained sure that he was dead. Then the doctor had an idea. He asked, "Do dead men bleed?" The man pondered the question for a few moments. "Well, doctor, dead men haven't got any circulation so they could hardly bleed now, could they?" The doctor then pulled out a pin and pricked the man's finger. "You're bleeding - what do you have to say about that?" The astonished man looked down at his finger and exclaimed: "Well, what do you know? I guess dead men do bleed!"

It's an old joke, but it's no joke when people get blinded by their worldview. In 1997 scientist Mary Schweitzer discovered what seemed to be red blood cells inside a fossilized T. Rex leg bone that had been dated as 68 million years old.

Creationists celebrated the find, and evolutionary paleontologists tried to discredit it, both for the same reason. The two sides agreed that 68-million-year-old dinosaur bones simply don't "bleed" - all such soft tissue would have been degraded long ago if the bones were really that old.

Creationists saw this as evidence that dinosaurs lived as recently as thousands of years ago, not millions, and that's why these red cells had survived. The evolutionists trying to discredit the find speculated that the cells were from a recent contamination of the fossil - a biofilm that had grown on it recently.

But further research by Schweitzer, published in 2012, has made it harder and harder to deny that traces of soft tissue can be found in dinosaur fossils. So are evolutionists ready to concede the fossils aren't as old as they claim? Not at

all. Instead, Mary Schweitzer has many of her critics now saying, "Well what do you know? I guess 68-million-year-old dino bones do bleed after all!"

THEISTIC EVOLUTION EXPLAINED

Three geologists were standing at the foot of Mount Rushmore staring upwards.

The first geologist turned to his colleagues and said, "The faces we see here of these four US Presidents certainly must be the work of a Master Sculptor!"

To this the second geologist replied, "You call yourself a geologist? We investigate how natural causes form mountains and rocks - causes like volcanoes, plate movement, and erosion from water and wind. That's science. So let's get to work and figure out how these faces were formed through the forces of geophysics."

The third geologist nodded in agreement. "Of course, you're right. That's the only way to do good science - we need to look for ways that natural forces like erosion could have made these faces." Then he turned to the first geologist and added, "A Master Sculptor didn't carve these faces, but I'm sure He enjoyed watching what the wind and water could do."

SOURCE: An adapted version of a joke that has made its way - no author given - around the Internet.

DAT IS DUTCH?

A Canadian lass who married a Dutchman and is now living in the Netherlands has had some fun getting acquainted with Dutch culture. She is using her blog to both celebrate and mock "Stuff Dutch People Like." Of the 50 items she lists some are predictable - bicycles, hagelslag, the color orange - but there was also a handful of items that don't seem particularly Dutch... except upon reflection.

#4 Directness

Apparently in some cultures they don't like being told when they "couldn't be wrong."

#10 Birthday congratulations

Is it really only the Dutch who congratulate the birthday boy's brother, or the birthday girl's aunt?

#18 Bringing your own cake

We're accused of being cheap, but no one else brings treats to work for their birthday.

#24 Dairy + #41 Being tall

The Dutch are among the tallest people on earth, and among the most avid consumers of dairy. Coincidence?

#25: Going camping

There's a reason everyone you know loves camping.

#34: Dat kan niet

This negative, opinionated and popular phrase is used to end discussions in the Netherlands. There is no equivalent phrase in North America, but the attitude does seem familiar.

#37: The Birthday Calendar

A handy little device that is unknown in other cultures, but has now been co-opted by Facebook.

SOURCE: <http://stuffdutchpeoplelike.com>

ON USING WORDS

"Telepathy in marriage doesn't work any better than it does anywhere else"

- Douglas Wilson in *For a Glory and a Covering*

PREPARING TO INHERIT THE EARTH

by Michael Wagner



DOES SLOW AND STEADY GROWTH HAVE CHRISTIANITY PRIMED TO TAKE OVER THE WEST?

Current events make it appear that Christianity is on a downward slide in North America, as well as in all the other Western countries.

But are appearances deceiving?

This is the surprising conclusion of a book by University of London politics professor Eric Kaufmann in his book *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth?* His answer to that question is “yes.”

He’s come to this conclusion despite being a liberal who doesn’t like what he sees. Kaufmann has carefully studied demographic trends and thinks the coming increase in the influence of Christianity in North America (and other religions in different regions) basically amounts to a return to the Dark Ages. He wrote this book to warn fellow liberals that the sky is falling. Despite the dramatic gains for secularization over the last four or five decades, those gains are about to be lost. Kaufmann summarizes his thesis thusly: “this book argues that religious fundamentalists are on course to take over the world through demography.”

DEMOGRAPHIC DIRECTION

What’s going on here? Well, to make a

long story short, secular people don’t like having large families. Many don’t have any children at all. As a result, for many years most Western countries have had below-replacement birth rates. That is, the average number of children born to each child-bearing-age woman is below 2.1, the number necessary to keep the population stable. This is the result of what demographers are calling the “second demographic transition” (SDT). (The first demographic transition occurred decades earlier when urbanization and the improvement in medical care decreased infant mortality and led to a decline in the fertility rate.)

The SDT is a result of the 1960s sexual revolution and the rise of feminism, when the values of many people in the Western countries changed. Individualism became much more important, and the ideal of getting married and raising children was severely diminished. As a result, the desire for many people to have a traditional family has declined dramatically. There are fewer marriages, more divorces; fewer children, more abortions – you get the picture. The bottom line is that most women are having fewer (if any) children.

RELATIVELY ROBUST

This trend is affecting conservative Christian families to a certain degree as well. The average Christian family is having fewer children than in previous generations. However – and this is a big “however” – the fertility rate of secularist women fell much further than the fertility rate of conservative Christian women.

Christian women still have a relatively robust fertility rate. For example, one 2002 study placed the fertility rate of evangelical Protestant women at 2.5 compared to 1.5 for women without religion. Thus the proportion of conservative Christians in the United States relative to the secularists is growing through the natural increase of child-bearing. There is no reason to believe that this trend will stop, and the long-term consequences are enormous. According to Kaufmann, the influence of conservative Christians will increase:

After 2020, their demographic weight will begin to tip the balance in the culture wars towards the conservative side, ramping up pressure on hot-button issues such as abortion.

Kaufmann refers to the population

growth of conservative religious people as “demographically turbo-charged piety.”

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, THEN AND NOW

Interestingly, there’s a precursor in history to a rise in Christian influence through demographic growth. Some scholars believe that the success of Christianity during its first two to three hundred years was partially the result of demographic factors. Christianity had a more family-centered ethos than paganism and therefore attracted a disproportionate number of female converts. Thus the Christians likely had a higher fertility rate than the pagans. Christians also cared for their sick during plagues, so they had a lower mortality rate. “Higher fertility, lower mortality and a female skew in the child-bearing age ranges endowed Christians with a significant demographic advantage over pagans.” In addition to evangelism, this contributed to the rapid growth of Christianity in the Roman Empire before Emperor Constantine became a Christian himself.

Demographic change takes time, so the results don’t become evident immediately. Nevertheless, it will ultimately have a large impact. For example, the so-called “mainline” Protestant churches which abandoned the Bible decades ago are part of the secularist trend. This contrasts sharply with the conservative Protestants who still uphold the Bible as the Word of God. Kaufmann notes the effect on demography:

Between 1960 and 2000, liberal Protestant denominations saw their share of the American religious market cut in half from 16 to 8 per cent, while conservative Protestants doubled in size from 7 to 16 per cent.

Although not as pronounced as in North America, the higher fertility of conservative Protestants in two European countries is notable. According to Kaufmann,

In Europe, the roughly 100,000 Conservative Laestadian Lutherans of Finland and more than 1 million Dutch

Orthodox Calvinists have both bucked secularizing trends. These high fertility endogenous growth sects are starting to make an impact: there are now more Orthodox Calvinist church attenders than those of its liberal parent, the Dutch Reformed Church, whose parishioners once outnumbered them six to one.

In various regions of the world conservative religious believers have a higher fertility rate than secular-minded people. Thus Kaufmann discusses the high fertility rates of Muslims in the Arab world and parts of Europe, as well as the high fertility rate of Orthodox Jews in Israel. So the complete picture offered in his book is not all good news for Christianity. But for North America, certain regions of Europe (and hopefully places like Australia and New Zealand), conservative Christianity has the upper hand demographically.

IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

In obedience to God, Biblical Christianity strengthens the family, encourages married couples to have children, forbids abortion and frowns on divorce. This

...there are now more Orthodox Calvinist church attenders than those of its liberal parent, the Dutch Reformed Church, whose parishioners once outnumbered them six to one.

leads to high fertility and the growth of the church over time.

In contrast, the modern secularist mindset emphasizes individualism: focus on yourself, not others. Having children will tie you down, especially if you are a woman, and prevent you from reaching your potential. You could be the president of a corporation or a high-flying lawyer – but only if you don’t have children.

People who believe this way will not leave many descendants – they and their ideology have a barren future.

It shouldn’t be surprising, then, that the proportion of conservative Christians in North America will grow relative to secularists. Ideas have consequences, and since the secularists (generally speaking) emphasize their own personal and individual ease and happiness, having children won’t be an important part of their lives. Thus they are beginning to lose the demographic race with conservative Christianity. Because of these demographic trends Kaufmann laments, “In effect, secularism must run to stand still and sprint in order to succeed. In America, as in the world, it looks destined to fail in the long term.”

Even more to the point, due to its emphasis on individualism at the expense of having children, “Secular liberalism lies hoist on its own petard.”

CONCLUSION

The pervasiveness of pornography, the legalization of abortion, the invention of no-fault divorce and gay marriage, and the spread of euthanasia, are just a few of the events that might make it seem as if Christianity is on the wane in the West. But the day-to-day faithfulness of conservative Christians in their families, bearing and raising children, is the tortoise that will win the race against the child-avoiding secularist hare.

There’s a common saying that “demography is destiny.” That might be somewhat overstated, but the basic point is sound: significant change in the size and structure of populations determines the future of nations. With this in mind, current fertility rates give conservative Christians in North America a reason to be optimistic for the long-term future.

RP



ABRAHAM KUYPER: LARGER THAN LIFE

by Wes Bredenhof

After John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper is probably the figure who looms largest in our Reformed church history. In some ways, in his lifetime he was even more significant and powerful than Calvin was in his. He was a pastor, professor, prolific writer, and politician. He even served as the Prime Minister of the Netherlands. He established a university. He was an important leader of the 1886 Doleantie and an architect of the Union of 1892. For good reason people referred to him as “Abraham the Mighty,” or as “Father Abraham.”

Because of the role of his views in later church controversies, his name would become rather black amongst many in the Canadian Reformed Churches. But you do not have to appreciate or endorse the idiosyncrasies of Kuyper’s theology to understand that he has played a huge role in shaping who we are as Reformed people today. Here we will explore his life’s story and elsewhere, in this same issue, dip into his theology.

EARLY LIFE

Let’s start at the beginning. Abraham Kuyper’s father was Jan Frederik Kuyper. He was a minister in the Netherlands

Hervormde Kerk (NHK), the official Dutch state church. Jan Kuyper had already been a minister for six years when 120 conservative congregations left the NHK in the “Secession of 1834.” However, he did not join them. He wasn’t a liberal, but he wasn’t completely confessionally Reformed either. He was just happy to stick with the status quo.

Abraham was born October 29, 1837, in Maasluis, just outside of Rotterdam. For what we would call elementary school he was homeschooled by his parents. When he was 12 years old, his family moved to Leiden and there he went to school for the first time. This would be similar to our high school except that it was oriented to academics – it was preparation for university studies. He studied there for six years and then, in 1855, when he was 18, he began studies at the University of Leiden. There he pursued what for us would be the equivalent of a Bachelor of Arts degree. He graduated with the highest honors – obviously a bright and gifted student.

But we should take note of what all this did to his faith. He would later write, “I entered the university a young man of orthodox faith, but I had not been in the school more than a year and a half

before my thought processes had been transformed into the starkest intellectual rationalism.”¹ He even stopped praying altogether. He remained a member of the Hervormde Kerk, the NHK, at least on paper. But his faith shriveled, to be replaced by the modernism and liberalism then in vogue. Related to this point, Kuyper didn’t make public profession of his faith. In fact, it would not be until some years later, after he graduated from seminary and was a candidate for the ministry, that he would finally take that step. Even then, there wasn’t much faith to confess.

After graduating with his bachelor’s degree, Kuyper stayed on at Leiden University to study theology. Leiden’s theology department was a center for liberal theology. Some of the most notorious liberal theologians taught at Leiden.

One of them was Prof. J. H. Scholten. He was a persuasive teacher of systematic theology. But he didn’t believe the Bible was the Word of God. When it came to formulating his system of theology, he relied more on reason than on revelation.

Then there was Prof. L. W. E. Rauwenhoff. I once mentioned him in the introduction to a sermon I preached on



KUYPER ON TRUE FRIENDS
"He is your friend who pushes you nearer to God."

Lord's Day 17. Let me briefly tell the story:

The young man and his friends were excited. There was a new teacher at the school. The new professor was not much older than them, only thirty-two years old. Finally there was some fresh, young blood at the school, some fresh thinking. His name was Professor Rauwenhoff, a professor of church history.

One of his first lectures dealt with the resurrection of Christ. The young man listened intently. Professor Rauwenhoff pointed out that the Bible spoke very clearly about the resurrection. However, he said, we have to be careful because the Bible often uses symbolic language that is not meant to be taken literally. After all, the Bible is not a textbook for science or history. Moreover, no rational modern man could actually believe that Christ's body was raised from the dead at a certain place at a certain point in real history. That would be against all the laws of nature, and everybody knows that those

laws simply can't be broken. Jesus rose from the dead, yes, but not in history. He rose in the hearts of his disciples. His body remained in the tomb.

As the professor reached his conclusion, the young man and his friends leapt from their seats and started clapping. They were applauding a professor who finally understood. Finally they had a teacher who was with the times. The young man, twenty-three years old, was thrilled with a prof who had the courage to say what everybody else was thinking.

That's a true story and it took place in 1860 in the Netherlands at the University of Leiden. The students were all men studying to become Reformed ministers. The young man was Abraham Kuyper. Now eventually, God would grab hold of Kuyper and convert him and he would become a mighty tool in God's hands to bring Reformation to the Netherlands. He had his weaknesses and shortcomings – no man is perfect – but many of our families trace their roots back to the Reformation led by Kuyper, the Doleantie. Later in life, Kuyper confessed that he was still haunted by what happened in that classroom in 1860. He had applauded the denial of Christ's resurrection. With his denial, he had grieved his Lord and Savior and this bothered him immensely.

Rauwenhoff was known as "the Defender of Modernism." His teaching continued to send Abraham Kuyper down the path of unbelief.

Yet God did not stop chasing him.

A series of providential events led Kuyper back to faith. It began with learning how to pray again. The University of Groningen organized an essay competition. One of Kuyper's seminary professors, a Prof. DeVries, encouraged him to enter and write a research paper comparing the views of John Calvin with a Polish Reformer named Jan Laski. Kuyper was reluctant because there wasn't much out there still available from Laski. Still Prof. DeVries encouraged him to persevere and sent him to his father in the city of Haarlem who had a large collection of books.² The elder DeVries wasn't sure where the books of Laski were in his library, but he told Kuyper to come back the next day. In the meantime he would check. When Kuyper returned, he encountered the very writings of Laski that he had been missing. Kuyper thought it was something like a miracle, and from this point on he began praying again.

This event also encouraged him to engage in some serious scholarship. He not only wrote a prize-winning paper on Laski, but also went on to write his doctoral dissertation on him, and later published a complete critical edition of his writings. But as far as his spiritual development was concerned this was only the small first step.

He received his bachelor of divinity degree in 1861 and his doctorate in theology in 1862. Around the same time another piece fell into place. He read a novel. It is unusual in church history for a novel to play a role. More unusually, the novel was not in Dutch, but in English. It was a Victorian novel entitled *The Heir of Redclyffe*. It was written by Charlotte Yonge. There were two things that Kuyper took away from this novel.

First was a reorientation of his priorities. He came to realize that God values a broken and contrite heart, and he began to feel that heart within himself.

The second thing was a sense of the place of the church. At the end of the book, one of the characters dies, and Yonge writes about how he had been prepared for that moment by "his mother church," a church which had guided him all his life. When Kuyper read those words, he became jealous. He had never known such a church, but he wanted her.

CALLED TO THE MINISTRY

After receiving his doctorate, Kuyper was examined to be eligible for call in the Hervormde Kerk.³ He sustained his examination. However, there was a glut of candidates. Vacant churches could afford to be fussy, and they were. It took ten months before Kuyper finally received a call. It was to the Hervormde Kerk in the village of Beesd, to the south of Utrecht. He was ordained as their pastor on August 9, 1863. He was married a month before, to Johanna Hendrika Schaay.

His first congregation didn't exactly welcome him with open arms. Kuyper had a reputation as a fence sitter. He was sort of liberal and sort of orthodox, but not really one way or the other.⁴ The more liberal minded in the congregation could live with a compromiser more readily than the orthodox.

Amongst the orthodox was a single woman in her mid-thirties, Pietje (Pietronella) Baltus. Despite still being in the liberal-dominated Hervormde Kerk, she was a devout Christian. Rev. Kuyper did not impress Pietje Baltus.

She wanted nothing to do with him. Nevertheless, Kuyper made his visits and soon was in her neighborhood. A neighbor told her that before long the new minister would be at her door, too. She scoffed, "I have nothing to do with that man." But then the neighbor said, "But don't forget, Pietje, that our minister, too, has an immortal soul, and that he, too, is travelling towards eternity." Those words changed her mind, and the door swung open when the minister came to visit.

Pietje Baltus became another instrument in God's hand in the spiritual development of Abraham Kuyper. As he visited with her, she witnessed to him of her hope in Jesus Christ. She told him that he must have the same hope or he would perish eternally. This made an impact. Kuyper often came back to visit with her. She influenced him positively in a Reformed direction. He wasn't yet totally orthodox in a confessional sense. But by this point God was breaking him away from liberalism and turning him back to true faith in Christ. As can be expected, these developments in his personal life had a bearing on his preaching and ministry in Beesd. This was partly because of a peasant woman who would otherwise receive no notice. Pietje Baltus is another example of how God used the weak and lowly in the eyes of the world to advance the Reformation of his church. Largely because of her, Kuyper would always have a special place for those he called the "kleine luyden," the little folks.

CONTROVERSY IN UTRECHT

Kuyper spent four years in Beesd, and then, in 1867, he was called to Utrecht, a city slightly to the north. The consistory there was orthodox, though again, still part of the Hervormde Kerk. Yet controversy was brewing. There were two issues in Utrecht.

One had to do with the formula for baptism. There were various words being used to baptize in the Hervormde Kerk. Some ministers baptized "unto faith, hope and love." Others, "unto initiation into

OVERVIEW OF THE DOLEANTIE

The Doleantie (literally, "The Grieving") was a Reformation movement that began in 1886 in the Nederlands Hervormde Kerk (NHK) or, in English, the Dutch Reformed Church. There were many members and local churches concerned about the liberal direction of the NHK, including Abraham Kuyper. What follows are some of the important dates in the history of the Doleantie.

1880

The Free University, founded by Abraham Kuyper, opens. It was "free" of ties to the NHK and was a conservative alternative to the liberal seminary training of the state universities.

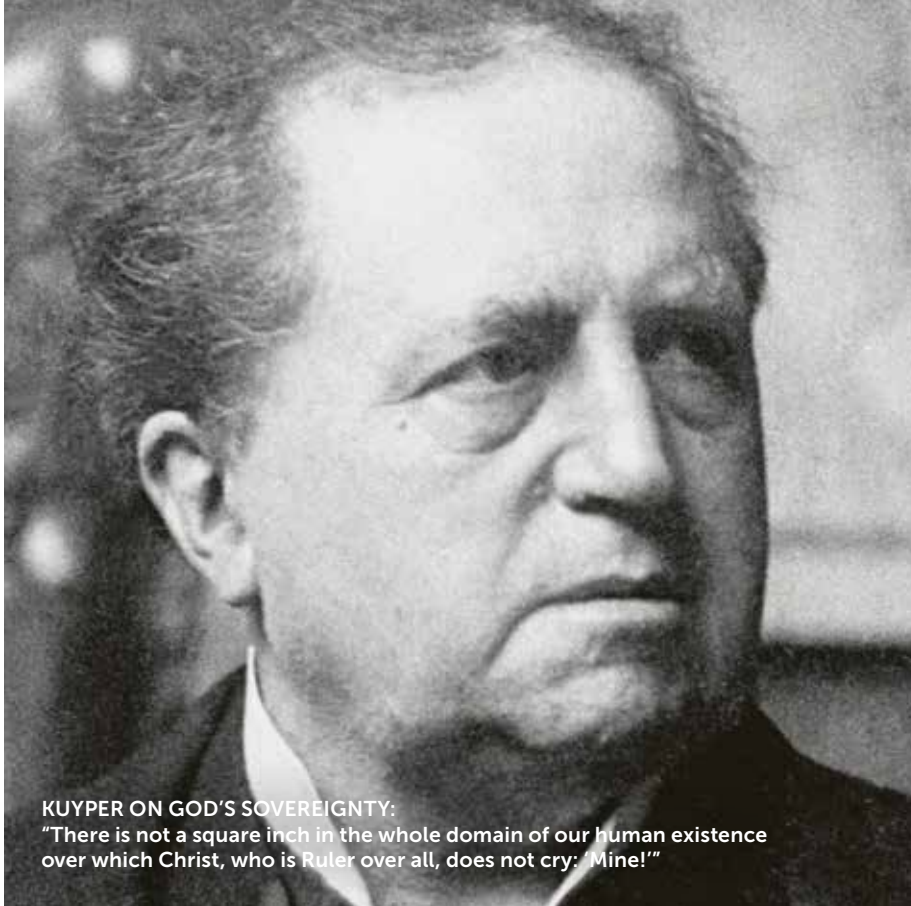
1884

JUNE – The church at Voorthuizen calls Dr. W. van den Bergh. He accepts – with the provision that he would be allowed to do his work in a confessionally Reformed way, without the yoke of the regulations the NHK would want to place on him. The church at Voorthuizen agrees and, surprisingly, the NHK approves the call too. While Dr. van den Bergh opposed the NHK's liberal direction, he decided to work for reform from within.

1885

MARCH/APRIL – The church at Kootwijk calls Candidate J.H. Houtzagers, a graduate of the Free University (which was not an NHK-approved school). Because of his training at Kuyper's school, the classical board refuses to examine him so that he can be ordained. The church at Kootwijk organizes their own examination for Houtzagers, and ordains him.

"I entered the university a young man of orthodox faith, but I had not been in the school more than a year and a half before my thought processes had been transformed into the starkest intellectual rationalism."



KUYPER ON GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY:
"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Ruler over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

would be done in person. Some of the questions asked by the church visitors had to do with doctrine, the doctrine confessed by the Hervormde Kerk. Kuyper and the Utrecht consistory recognized this for the farce that it was. There was no doctrine held in common by the Hervormde Kerk. So when the bureaucratic visitation letters came in 1867 and 1868, the Utrecht church just responded in a bureaucratic fashion by sending back some statistics about the church. They refused to answer the questions about doctrine. They said that the questions are "asked on behalf of a synod with whose dignitaries the consistory has no communion of faith or confession." The classical board sent another set of questions with a demand that Utrecht comply, but they received the same response. Then the classical board said they would send a committee of two people to ask the questions in person. Utrecht said that they would not receive the committee, and the committee didn't come. Eventually the bureaucracy accepted the position of Utrecht. The ultimate conflict was delayed.

REFORMATION IN AMSTERDAM

As for Abraham Kuyper, his stay in Utrecht wasn't very long. In 1870 he took a call to the enormous Hervormde Kerk in Amsterdam. There was one church for the whole city, but it had several worship services, dozens of elders, and numerous ministers. Of course, there were thousands of members. This was one of the most influential churches in the whole Hervormde Kerk. Now Kuyper was there as one of the ministers. This church was largely heading in an orthodox direction.

His inaugural sermon dealt with the doctrine of the church. Kuyper gave a clear indication of where he was going with his principles. He emphasized the autonomy of the local church and criticized the idea of synodical hierarchy. The inevitable conflict with the bureaucracy was looming.

Things were pushed further along in 1871. It was Easter, and a Rev. P. H. Hugenholtz was on the pulpit for one of the services in Amsterdam.

"...Kuyper didn't make public profession of his faith. In fact, it would not be until some years later, after he graduated from seminary and was a candidate for the ministry, that he would finally take that step. Even then, there wasn't much faith to confess."

Christianity," and there were other "creative" formulas besides.

Under the leadership of Kuyper, the Utrecht consistory decided that they would not recognize any baptisms not administered in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They decided that guest ministers would not be allowed to administer baptism unless they promised to use the words of Christ from Matthew 28. Then the Utrecht Hervormde Kerk sought out other churches that were opposed to laxity on this issue. They formed an association of

143 churches that were dedicated to the Trinitarian baptismal formula.

The other issue had to do with church visitation. In Reformed church government, every year a pair of ministers are supposed to visit each church on behalf of the churches in a classis region. They look at whether everything is being done properly and then report to the next classis. In the Hervormde Kerk of this time, this was done in a different way. There would be two years where the "visit" was done in writing, and then the third year it

He denied the bodily resurrection of Christ. A member of the church objected to this sermon. He wrote a letter to the consistory, and he asked that Hugenholtz be deposed along with any other liberal ministers like him. The consistory couldn't make a decision like that – the discipline of office bearers was something that the classical board had to deal with.

So they forwarded the request to the classical board. And what did they do? They said that the historicity of the resurrection of Christ was not something that ministers were required to believe. There was freedom in the Hervormde Kerk to believe that Christ did not really rise from the dead with a physical body on the third day. Hugenholtz got a pass.

However, 17 elders from the Amsterdam church were fed up. They made a public statement to the church in March of 1872, almost a year after the original sermon. They declared that they were no longer going to attend church when liberal ministers were preaching or administering the sacraments. They encouraged the rest of the congregation to do likewise. By sitting and listening to these heresies, the elders and members were saying that these things weren't really of much concern. They needed to take a stand.

Not everybody in the church saw it the same way. About 1,200 members signed a protest against the 17 elders. The consistory appointed Abraham Kuyper to write the reply to these members. It turned out to be a 144-page brochure. As a result of the leadership of Kuyper and others, the consistory stood behind the 17 elders.

WRITING AND POLITICS

I just mentioned Kuyper's brochure. He was a prolific writer. In 1871, he started a weekly newspaper, *The Herald (De Heraut)*. This newspaper was an important means through which Kuyper spread Reformational thinking, and it was popular. In 1872, he established another newspaper, this one a daily entitled *The Standard (De*

Standaard).⁵ This periodical was used mainly to spread his political ideals. On top of that, he cranked out many books dealing with a variety of topics. Some of them have been translated into English, for instance, his book on worship (*Our Worship*) and a thick book on the Holy Spirit (*The Work of the Holy Spirit*).

In 1874 there was another major change in Kuyper's life. He officially became involved in politics and was elected as a member of Parliament for the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP). For some time already he had been involved with Groen van Prinsterer, one of the leading figures of the ARP. Van Prinsterer urged Kuyper to stop merely talking and writing about politics and to actually take action. So he did, and now he was faced with a dilemma. According to Dutch law, he could not be both a minister of a church and a member of Parliament. He would have to choose.

He chose to resign as a minister of the Hervormde Kerk in Amsterdam to enter the political realm. For a few months he stayed on as an elder of the church, but this proved too much. Until 1882 (when he again became an elder), his official ecclesiastical status was just that of a retired minister.

Yet that doesn't mean that he stopped thinking or writing about theology. It didn't mean that he stopped showing leadership with regard to concerns about the Hervormde Kerk. And it also didn't mean the end to his own spiritual development.

HIS METHODIST MOMENT

Up to this point, Kuyper was still not completely confessionally orthodox. This is reflected in some strange events in 1875. Kuyper became entangled with the Methodists. Methodism was a religious movement originating in England with John Wesley. Most Methodists in history have been Arminians – which means that they deny the doctrines of grace found in the Canons of Dort. They also put a lot of emphasis on revival meetings and having spiritual experiences, especially

1886

FEBRUARY 3 – The church at Kootwijk breaks with the NHK.

FEBRUARY 4 – In support of Kootwijk and for its own reasons, the church at Voorthuizen breaks with the NHK.

FEBRUARY 9 – The church at Reitsum also breaks away from the NHK.

JUNE 16 – The churches of Kootwijk, Voorthuizen, and Reitsum meet together to discuss forming a federation. Other conferences soon follow, with other local churches joining in.

1887

JANUARY 11 – An ecclesiastical congress is convened by the Amsterdam consistory (of which Kuyper was a member). 1,200 people attend, with numerous local churches represented.

JUNE 28-JULY 1 – A "Synodical Convent" is held – the federation of Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerken ("Netherdutch Reformed Churches") is officially established.

1888

Kuyper's Keizersgrachtkerk is completed in Amsterdam. New church buildings had to be constructed for the members of the new federation.

1892

The Doleantie churches merge with a majority of the Secession churches (congregations that had split from the NHK in 1834) to form the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland or, in English, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

a conversion experience. In April of 1875, Kuyper wrote an article in *The Standard* in which he was appreciative of some Methodist evangelists. Shortly afterwards, Kuyper went to England and attended a revival campaign. At one of these gatherings, he even administered the Lord's Supper. When he came back,

was at the helm of the Free University of Amsterdam, and he was also one of the theology professors.

The Free University becomes important in church history because it offered an alternative to the liberal seminary training in the state universities. But at the same time, it

unity with the Secession churches, the churches that had already left the liberal Hervormde Kerk back in 1834. That decision would lead up to the Union of 1892, and Abraham Kuyper would be extensively involved with those discussions as well.

Through the 1880s and early 1890s, Kuyper continued to teach theology at the Free University. But in 1894 he was called back to state politics. He was elected again as a member of Parliament. He continued to serve in that capacity until 1901. That year he became the Prime Minister of the Netherlands. His time as PM was beleaguered by various controversies. He served only about four years. By this time, Kuyper was 68 and he "retired." He took a year off and did some travelling. In his "retirement" years he again served as a member of Parliament on several occasions, and his last political appointment came in 1913. He was elected to be a Dutch Senator. However, he was getting older and was starting to slow down. He reached the age of 83 and then God called him home. That was on November 8, 1920.

"A series of providential events led Kuyper back to faith. It began with learning how to pray again."

he continued to gush about the Methodists and appeared to be leaning in their direction. Then, quite abruptly, there was nothing more from Kuyper on this.

What happened? Firstly, one of the Methodist evangelists (Robert Pearsall Smith) that Kuyper had been so appreciative of came under suspicion of sexual immorality. Secondly, and probably more importantly, Kuyper suffered a breakdown. He was overworked. He spent some months recovering in the south of France. It was there that God brought him on the last steps of his journey to confessionally Reformed orthodoxy. Having flirted with Arminianism, he finally fully embraced the doctrines of grace. Kuyper wrote:

In the quiet solitude of suffering that I experienced in Nice, my soul was transplanted to the firmness of the firm and energetic religion of our fathers. My heart had indeed yearned for it before, but it was only in Nice that I took a resolute decision.⁶

He was about 38 years old.

THE FREE UNIVERSITY

In the summer of 1877 he resigned his seat in Parliament and took on a new challenge: the development of Reformed higher education. At the end of 1878, Kuyper had mobilized enough people to form a society that would endeavor to set up a university. Finally, in 1880, the university opened. Abraham Kuyper

was an independent institution (a Free University), not under the oversight of any church. The first point became a factor in the Doleantie. The second point became a factor in the discussions regarding unity between the Secession churches and the Doleantie churches.

THE DOLEANTIE AND SUNSET YEARS

In the 1880s, Kuyper also resumed his work as an office bearer in the Hervormde Kerk in Amsterdam. He became an elder again in 1882. He was enmeshed in the struggles of the Amsterdam church with the synodical hierarchy of the Hervormde Kerk. Kuyper showed leadership both inside the consistory room and outside of it. In 1886, when the Doleantie happened, he was part of the consistory that was suspended and then deposed by the bureaucracy because of their refusal to issue attestations to liberal members. He then led the deposed office bearers and concerned members to form what they called the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerken ("Netherdutch Reformed Churches").

Together with the consistory, he organized an ecclesiastical congress of concerned members in early 1887 in Amsterdam. They decided to throw off the yoke of synodical hierarchy and form a new federation where the autonomy of the local church was honored and where confessional orthodoxy was taken seriously. There was another meeting in 1887, and there it was decided to pursue

CONCLUSION

Figures like Abraham Kuyper simply do not exist anymore. You will look in vain for someone who effectively combines being a Reformed pastor, professor, politician, journalist and even prime minister. His accomplishments are all the more remarkable when we remember how muddled his theology was in his early life. God made use of such a mixed-up man to make such an enormous impact. Glory be to God!

End notes

¹ Vandenberg, Abraham Kuyper, 17.

² See Bratt, 36. The story was embellished later by Kuyper.

³ There is some question about his public profession of faith. Praamsma (41) says that he did it right before being declared eligible for call. Bratt (23) says that it took place earlier, in 1857.

⁴ Kuyper would later say, "At the beginning of my service as a minister, I was, sad to say, not acquainted with the way of truth, and I stood in opposition to the holy things of God." Quoted in H. Bouma, *Secession, Doleantie, and Union: 1834-1892*, 175.

⁵ Apparently De Heraut became a weekly religious supplement to *De Standaard*.

⁶ Quoted in Praamsma, *Let Christ Be King*, 69.



AMONG THE NEW niche colleges of the late 20th century, New Saint Andrews is a liberal arts college in the classical and Christian tradition. We seek to graduate leaders who are eager to shape culture through wise and victorious Christian living. At New Saint Andrews you will find: a faculty worthy of imitation; friendship with fellow students who will spur you on; a Christian community of accountability and encouragement; an integrated curriculum that brings all things under the lordship of Jesus Christ; and, a tuition among the lowest in North America. Apply online, call or email for more information.

208.882.1566 | INFO@NSA.EDU | WWW.NSA.EDU

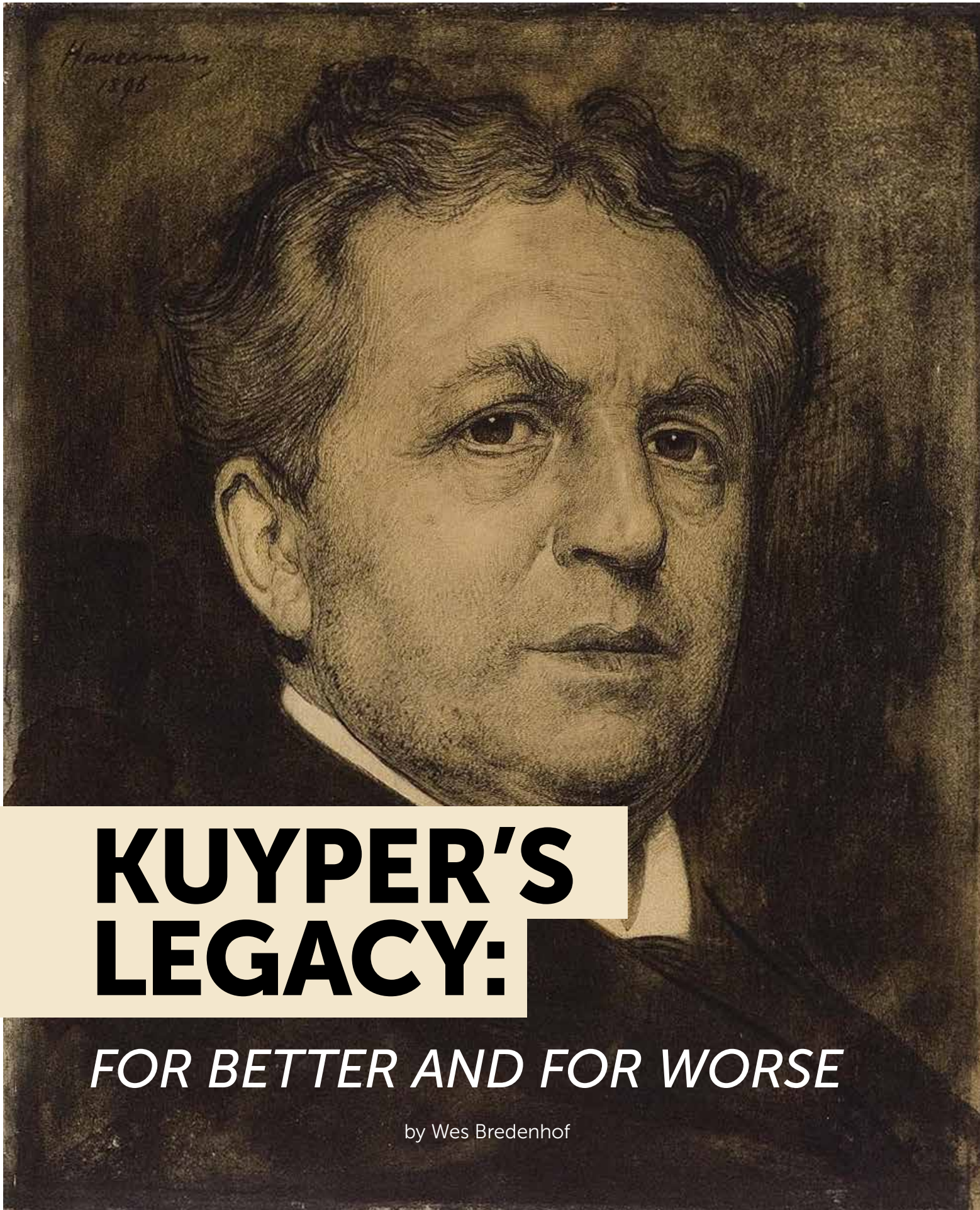
SINCE 1994



NEW SAINT
ANDREWS
COLLEGE
MOSCOW, IDAHO

A LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE *in the* CLASSICAL *and* CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools, recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and a member of the Association of Reformed Colleges and Universities. Located on Friendship Square in Historic Downtown Moscow, Idaho, New Saint Andrews admits students of any race, color and national or ethnic origin.



KUYPER'S LEGACY:

FOR BETTER AND FOR WORSE

by Wes Bredenhof

Abraham Kuyper left behind a lasting legacy. There is, most notably, his indispensable role in the Doleantie of 1886, in which he led an exodus of conservative churches from the official, very liberal, Dutch state church.

However, there is more church historical significance to Kuyper, especially for later church history. Unfortunately, not everything in his legacy is endearing.

Kuyper was an influential man. He was a prolific writer, and people looked to him for leadership. Often, if Kuyper wrote or said something, many Reformed people took that as being the final word on the subject. There was some critical analysis of his thinking during his lifetime, but what little there was went mostly unheeded. “Father Abraham” was for many people the epitome of what it means to be Reformed.

FOR BETTER

There was much that was solidly Reformed about him. He had some good emphases.

For instance, he emphasized the autonomy of the local church. Kuyper was opposed to ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Another good emphasis was his eye for church history. He had a solid appreciation for Calvin, Laski, and other great Reformed theologians of the past. He taught the churches to value their history.

GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY AND THE ANTITHESIS

Another emphasis worth mentioning is the sovereignty of God over all of life. One of Kuyper’s most famous sayings was: “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”

Closely related to that was his emphasis on the antithesis. Human beings are either for or against Christ. No one is neutral. The antithesis is the great divide between belief and unbelief. In his politics, Kuyper was sometimes accused of creating the antithesis, of dividing the Netherlands into two hostile camps. In response to that, Kuyper claimed that he simply recognized

the antithesis.¹ The recovery of this emphasis is one of his great contributions to our Reformed church history.

WORLDVIEW

Another one is his conception of the Reformed worldview. In 1898, Kuyper travelled to the United States and gave a series of six lectures – the “Stone Lectures” – at Princeton Seminary. In these lectures he laid out how Christianity is not simply theology or religion. It is a conception of the world, a philosophy of life. The Christian faith is something that has a bearing on the way we look at everything, and the way we think about everything. Our contemporary concept of a Christian worldview comes to us directly from Abraham Kuyper. Before Kuyper, no one really thought or spoke in those terms. One could say that it was implied or assumed, but it wasn’t explicit.

“TRAIN UP YOUR CHILD...” (PROV. 22:6)

Kuyper’s impact on Reformed education is especially worth noting. Kuyper had a passion for distinctively Reformed education at every level, from elementary to university. He was also a key figure in getting the Netherlands to financially support independent Christian education. In the Netherlands, Christian elementary and high school education is fully funded by the state. This is directly because of Kuyper. Kuyper argued that Christian education should be on the same footing as public education and, as a politician, he made it happen. Now we can debate the rightness or wrongness of Christian education receiving public funds, but there is no getting away from the fact that Christian education mattered to him, and he wanted to make it available for everyone who wanted it.

This has a bearing on North America as well. Calvin College was established in Grand Rapids in 1876. It was initially meant just to be a preparatory school and seminary for the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). But later, as Kuyper’s views took hold in the CRC, it became a liberal arts college along the same lines as the Free University.

“There was some critical analysis of his thinking during his lifetime, but what little there was went mostly unheeded. “Father Abraham” was for many people the epitome of what it means to be Reformed.”

Kuyper’s emphasis on Christian education would also have an impact on Canadian Reformed people. Because of him and others, we also value the idea of a Christian school that imparts a distinctively Christian worldview to its students. We recognize that public schools follow a secular worldview and therefore our covenant children don’t belong there. Humanly speaking, at least some of the credit for this way of thinking has to be given to Kuyper.

FOR WORSE

However, Kuyper also had some controversial views. Let me just briefly mention them.

Many Reformed people appreciated Kuyper’s emphasis on the antithesis. However, Kuyper had another idea related to culture that some Reformed people appreciated and others didn’t: common grace.

COMMON GRACE

He believed that God had a special grace for the elect. This was the saving grace that he has in Jesus Christ. But there is

also a common grace, a grace that God shows to all human beings. With this grace, he gives good things, he restrains wickedness, and he allows unbelievers to make true scientific discoveries, produce beautiful art, compose compelling music, and many other things.

This became controversial because some thought that the word “grace” in Scripture always refers to what God does for his people because of Christ. It is true that the word “grace” is not the best word to describe what Kuyper had in mind. Moreover, things became even more complicated when people focussed on the concept of common grace without limiting it by the antithesis. Common grace became so emphasized that believers started becoming more and more worldly and

The church as institute is the local congregation, and the church as organism includes all believers everywhere, or the church in its broadest sense.

Some objected to the terminology – “institute” and “organism” are not words found in Scripture or in our Reformed confessions. In fact, the word “organism” was seen by many to have more of a connection to German philosophy than to the Bible. Again, there was also the fruit of this distinction: some placed all the emphasis on the church as organism, seeing that as the “real” church, and then used that to justify cooperation with non-Reformed people in many different endeavors, including Christian education. After all, if the church as organism is the “real” church, and all

for administering baptism. That presumption can later turn out to have been wrong. It may become evident that a child has not been regenerated. In that case, Kuyper taught, the baptism was not a real baptism.

Against that, Kuyper’s critics argued that baptism is administered on the basis of God’s command and his promises. The starting point is God’s covenant, not what might be presumed about what has happened with regard to regeneration in the one being baptized.

Now Kuyper had the freedom to hold these views. While we may not agree with them, these views do fall under the umbrella of confessional orthodoxy. While he taught these views with conviction, with most of these positions he did not himself insist that one had to hold them in order to be Reformed.² Problems arose when the next generation made that insistence. They made Kuyper’s theology the exclusive touchstone of Reformed orthodoxy. One could no longer disagree with Kuyper without being accused of being unReformed. That’s where problems began. Klaas Schilder and other theologians took issue with Kuyper’s theology of baptism, his doctrine of the church, his view of the covenant, and other points. When they did this, the followers of Kuyper insisted that such critiques were a breach of orthodoxy. This led to the Liberation of 1944, a foundational event in the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

CONCLUSION

Today Kuyper has been largely forgotten by many. This is unfortunate. He was a giant in our history. God worked in powerful ways in his life to bring him to true faith. Then he was used by God in a powerful way to point a straying church in the right direction. Whether we realize it or not, a lot of the ethos in our Reformed churches has been shaped by Abraham Kuyper or by reactions against Abraham Kuyper. We can’t ignore him.

Endnotes

¹ Praamsma, *Let Christ Be King*, 104.

² See Bouma, *Secession, Doleantie, and Union: 1834-1892*, 200-201. He did make that insistence with regard to presumptive regeneration.

“Today Kuyper has been largely forgotten by many. This is unfortunate. He was a giant in our history.”

forgetting about the differences that they have with unbelievers. This became a problem in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, and this also became a problem in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. This doctrine bore the fruit of worldliness and this led many to react against it. As an example of how this works out in practice, a CRC pastor in Calgary named John Van Sloten has used episodes of *The Simpsons* as the text for his sermons. With a doctrine of common grace in the background, he argued that God can reveal himself just as well through cultural phenomena as through his written Word. Therefore, pastors can use music, movies, and TV shows as the “texts” for their sermons. This is what happens when the antithesis is no longer recognized.

Another controversial view of Kuyper had to do with the church. He distinguished between the church as institute and the church as organism.

believers are in this church together, then shouldn’t we work together for God’s kingdom? One could also argue that this view was behind the reluctance of the concerned in the Hervormde Kerk to leave, even when things were so obviously off the rails. Why were they staying in a church where ministers were denying the resurrection of Christ when Paul so clearly says in 1 Corinthians 15 that to deny this is to deny the gospel itself? Kuyper’s weak view of the church probably allowed this to be rationalized.

BAPTISM AND THE LIBERATION OF 1944

There were other issues, but let me finish with baptism. This is important because of the role it plays in the Liberation of 1944. Kuyper maintained that baptism is administered on the presumption that the child receiving baptism is regenerated - we presume he is saved. The presumption of regeneration then becomes the ground or the basis

Reformed
PERSPECTIVE

*Give a one-year
subscription to your
loved ones this
Christmas!*

Call **888.773.7780**



Providing financial planning services to Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario

For over 20 years!



C.V. BENEFITS INC.

734 – 13 Street North
Lethbridge, AB T1H 2T1

Phone: 403-328-9114
Toll Free: 800-565-4434
Fax: 403-328-9122

Email: info@cvbenefits.com
www.cvbenefits.com

-RRSPs -Annuities -Life Insurance -Disability Insurance -Tax Planning -Estate Planning -Group Benefits

Your Budgeting Specialists

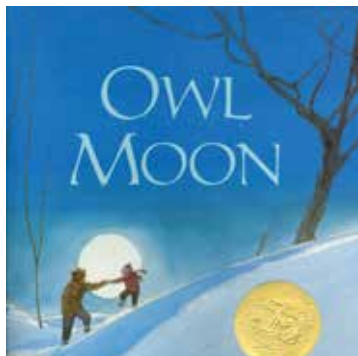
REVIEWS

EXPLORING WONDERFUL WHITE STUFF

reviewed by Deborah Dykstra

OWL MOON

BY JANE YOLEN



One moonlit night when she is finally old enough a little girl goes out into the winter snow with her father. Owling seems to be a family tradition – her brothers have shared with her what she should expect, and she has been looking forward to the privilege for a long time. She knows that when you are owling, you must be many things: quiet, brave, and hopeful.

The language in this book is so beautifully descriptive you don't need the pictures to imagine the setting. "Our feet crunched over the crisp snow, and little gray footprints followed us. Pa made a long shadow, but mine was short and round. I had to run after him every now and then to keep up, and my short, round shadow bumped after him."

The illustrations, done in ink and watercolor, are also beautiful. Readers can look for the wildlife on almost every page, and the text and illustrations together are like stepping into a memory. And according to the dedication, that is what it is. The author has shared her own family tradition in this book. It is a celebration of the beauty of nature and the value of taking the time to appreciate it.

Now I want to go owling too!

SNOWBALLS

BY LOIS EHLERT

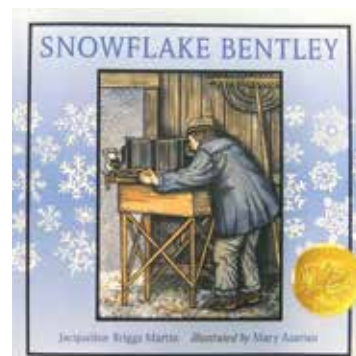


Snowballs is another great book to read to inspire kids to go out and enjoy the snow. It's a bit of a mixed bag: thoughts about hungry birds and the water cycle augment the main story of collecting a set of items to decorate a family of snowmen, including pets – the "Snow Cat" is decorated with toy fish for eyebrows. It's an interesting set of items – no carrots or coal here! Brightly colored textiles, along with nuts and seeds for the birds and squirrels make up the snowman-decorating kit. The pictures are cut paper and collage, including those bright hats, mittens, and food items – a great inspiration for a winter craft project. All the items are displayed and labeled at the end of the book in a sort of picture dictionary. The story ends with a rhyming description of what happens to snowmen when it warms up. The book also contains instructions for snowman popcorn balls and a page of photographs of snowmen, including some made by the author's children.

Birdwatching, collage, snowman building, popcorn balls...sounds like a full day to me! This book would be best enjoyed by families with children aged 2 to 8.

SNOWFLAKE BENTLEY

BY JACQUELINE BRIGGS MARTIN



What I like most about this book is how it combines an appreciation for the intricate and detailed beauty of creation with the meticulous discipline of scientific study. Those are big words. More simply, *Snowflake Bentley* is the true story of Wilson Bentley, a farmer who from his boyhood was fascinated with nature, particularly the beauty in small things like raindrops, insects, and plant life. His parents supported his particular interest in photographing snow crystals. Wilson spent much of his free time each winter examining snowflakes, and then figuring out how to photograph them. The idea that no two snow crystals are alike comes from Wilson Bentley:

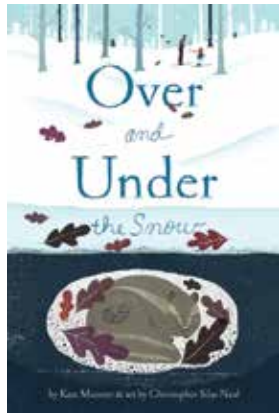
I found that snowflakes were masterpieces of design. No one design was ever repeated. When a snowflake melted...just that much beauty was gone, without leaving any record behind.

How abundantly creative is our God!

Wilson Bentley remained a farmer all his life, studying snowflakes as a hobby, but his one published book remains an important work of literature on the subject. This book about him is beautifully illustrated with woodcuts, and includes sidebars on each page that give the reader additional information about Wilson Bentley's thoughts and techniques, as well as some scientific facts about snow. It would be enjoyed by anyone, but particularly readers aged 6-12.

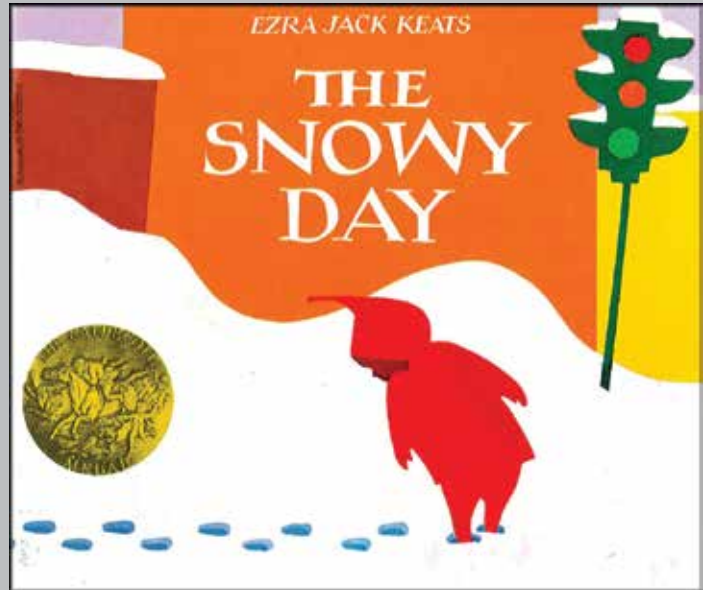
OVER AND UNDER THE SNOW

BY KATE MESSNER



As a child, I was fortunate enough to live out in the country, and much of my play-time in the winter was spent wandering around the fields and the frozen river near our house. There was an abundance of wildlife to observe – rabbit tracks, snow-covered beaver dams, rustling in the bush. I wondered a lot about the creatures I rarely saw, but who left hints of their presence. *Over and Under the Snow* is about a little girl and her father on a day-long cross-country ski adventure through the fields and trees. They observe the animals and the hints indicating their presence as the father explains about the ways they find shelter and food. Most interesting to me was the fact that there is an insulated air space between the snow and the ground in which many animals spend the entire winter.

The text is poetic as well as informative. The painted illustrations by Christopher Silas Neal are perfect for young readers, evoking a crisp winter feel with shades of brown and blue and bits of red. This is a great book for young naturalists aged 3 to 8, and includes notes at the end with more information about the animals and their habits, as well as suggestions for further reading.



THE SNOWY DAY

by Ezra Jack Keats

If you read books as a child, you probably remember *The Snowy Day*. It's a winter classic – every child can relate to a young boy's adventures out in the snow. The sound snow makes when you walk in it, the quiet beauty of snow falling, the tracks you can make with feet or sticks, snow angels, the funny faces of snowmen, snowball fights, melting snow trickling inside your clothes: they're all here!

This book was the beginning point to enjoying books with our daughter.

It's a very simple story – little Peter ventures out into the snow in his bright red snowsuit – and the illustrations and text work together so clearly it made it easy for her to understand and relate to her own snow experiences. For at least one winter we had to tug on snow-covered branches and act out the line, "Plop! Down fell the snow on top of Peter's (Abigail's) head." She didn't seem to mind the cold, and it was a great way to play together and encourage my small child to enjoy being outdoors in winter.

Originally published in 1962, the 50th anniversary edition was released last year. It's worth getting for the notes at the end, as the book is a piece of history. Ezra Jack Keats, a white man, chose to use some photographs of a black child as the model for Peter. *The Snowy Day* was one of the first children's books to feature a child with brown skin, but it was done "without making any particular point about it." One teacher wrote him to tell how, after she read the book to her predominantly black class, the black children began painting themselves with brown paint instead of pink. Keats said, "It gives them a sense of belonging. They are in books!" Snow is fun for everybody.

It is recommended for all ages, but especially ages 2 to 8.

A BIT ON THE MOUTH

by Christine Farenhorst

Not too long ago, because of a move, we were on the lookout for a new dentist. Our old dentist, besides the fact that she lived in a different city, had retired. She had treated all the members of our family for years and years. The kids jokingly referred to her as “the butcher.” But even if she was, at times, a trifle rough when she probed around in our collective mouths, her heart was definitely in the right place. The reason for her relatively early retirement was that she felt she needed time with her infirm mother who resided in a local nursing home. I trusted this dentist – was actually quite fond of the rotund little woman who once treated one of our university student daughters for free because she felt that our child must already be heavily in debt.

My first visit with the new dentist was a “get acquainted” session. It was a question-and-answer time period lasting approximately an hour. Without such a session, you were not admitted as a patient. Our talk covered politics, health habits, religion, you name it. A month later I first sat in his chair, and met the dental assistant. Her name was Gail, and she cheerily informed me that it was her first day on the job.

I did my best to reassure her, for my own sake as well as for hers, as she seemed a trifle giddy with the import of the day. As the doctor performed a thorough examination, her task was to suction my mouth, and this she did with gusto. She suctioned my cheeks, my tongue and below my tongue, constantly apologizing when the instrument appeared to

vacuum what should not be suctioned. However, I readily forgave her, for she was friendly and possessed a sweet spirit.

My husband and I are content with our new dentist, as well as with the friendly people in his office. We are thankful that there are dentists. Our grandparents, and even our parents, did not always have the benefit of being able to seek out help for a toothache. The last fifty years have seen many innovations and inventions in a great many fields. God made man to invent and to innovate. He is the Creator, and we are made in His image. We create. So we see in the first chapters of Genesis with the three sons of Lamech – Jabal, Jubal and Tubel-cain – the tentmaker, the music maker and the bronze and iron maker. Inventions change things; certainly these first inventions did. What would the world be without tents, music, alloys or metals?


ANCIENT DENTISTRY

Having just been to the dentist, and the ever-present hygienist, I was encouraged to floss and brush in just the right way. It is interesting to note that the early Egyptians used a mixture of myrrh, volcanic pumice and burned ashes of ox hoofs in their pursuit of dental hygiene. They dipped their fingers into this mixture, which no doubt was expensive, and rubbed it back and forth over their teeth to remove food and bacterial deposit.

Around 15 A.D., a Roman doctor named Archigenes is reported to have said that he thought the causes of toothaches were from the inside of the tooth. He invented a special drill to open the tooth. Inside this opening he

recommended that a roasted earthworm together with some spikenard and crushed spiders’ eggs be deposited. About fifteen years later, in 30 A.D., another Roman doctor, Celsus, was the first to put lead into these cavities. However, Dr. Celsus was not inserting lead into his patients’ teeth to save them, but to make them strong enough so that he could pull them out! It is quite a wonderful blessing to be living in the twenty-first century, is it not?

Another historical tidbit records that in the first century, it was also believed that toothaches could be avoided by removing animal bones from wolves’ excrement and wearing these bones as a necklace. As well, at some point in time, and I’m not quite sure when exactly, people used white wine as a mouthwash or, get this, used old urine. Reflecting on this, I think I would much prefer to go to the dentist and submit to being severely suctioned!



Tooth powder...
in the late 1700s...
often contained
abrasives such
as brick dust and
pulverized pottery.

SOME PROGRESS

During the early Middle Ages, a time when guests were often reminded by hosts not to wipe their teeth on the tablecloth, medicine and dentistry were often practiced by monks. But between 1130 and 1163, the pope issued edicts that prohibited monks from performing any type of surgery, which included dentistry. After these edicts, only barbers extracted teeth.

The French Dr. Pierre Fauchard, (1678-1761), is known as the father of modern dentistry. In 1728, he wrote a book entitled, *The Surgeon Dentist*. In it he describes oral anatomy, decay, restoring teeth, pyorrhea, and orthodontics. His book was the first scientific description of dentistry, although his instructive text was followed by others throughout the years.

TOOTHPASTE AND TOOTHBRUSHES

Tooth powder became available in Europe in the late 1700s. It often contained abrasives such as brick dust and pulverized pottery. Harmful to enamel, it was not exactly helpful to teeth.

Toothpaste was first sold in jars in the 1850s. In the early 1800s, a Dr. Peabody added soap to this paste causing it to foam in the mouth. And in 1896, William Colgate capitalized on the invention of collapsible tubes by a Dr. Sheffield, to begin mass production of toothpaste.

We all have toothbrushes today and even have our choice of various colors or degrees of bristle stiffness. The forerunner of the toothbrush is believed to have originated in China and was brought to Europe some time during the 1400s. These first Chinese toothbrushes were made out of the bristle of the Siberian wild boar. The bristles were



embedded into a handle made of bone. It was quite popular but rather rough. In 1870, the English inventor William Addis mass-produced toothbrushes, still using boar hairs and swine bristles, and attaching them to a cow's thighbone. These natural pig bristle brushes continued to be used until 1938, when du Pont de Nemours invented nylon.

DENTURES

There are records from around 700 B.C. of Etruscans using dentures made from human and animal teeth. By the 1400s ivory or bone dentures were in use in Europe. They were attached in the mouth by wire to other teeth. Often human teeth were used either from recently deceased people or from the poor who sold their teeth for money. Queen Elizabeth I, someone who was terrified of the dentist, put white cloths in the gaps

where her teeth had been, to make the royal smile more attractive to her public.

In 1774, a French chemist by the name of Alexis Duchâteau became increasingly unhappy with the dentures in his mouth. Consequently, he designed a new set for himself, one made out of porcelain. He was, however, unable to promote his invention properly. His assistant, one Chémant, did market these dentures rather successfully about thirteen years later. Duchâteau sued him, but lost. During the French Revolution, Chémant fled to England where he was granted the patent to these dentures. The English company Wedgwood provided him with the porcelain he needed to make false teeth. By the beginning of the 1800s, Chémant was also making single false teeth.

Dr. Levi Spear Parmly (1790-1853), a dentist from New Orleans, was upset by the bad condition of his patients' teeth. So he encouraged them to use a thin piece of waxed silk thread, and even went so far as to say that flossing combined with the use of a toothbrush and dentifrice would eliminate bacteria from the gums. Dental floss was not mass produced until 1874, when it was patented by Codman and Shurtleff. But eventually it was the Johnson & Johnson company who became responsible for world-wide distribution of floss when they bought out Codman and Shurtleff in 1898.

A wealth of interesting and fascinating trivia! Obviously, we can count our blessings today with regard to dental care. The mouth is a very precious part of our body. Many verses in Scripture speak of the mouth, the tongue and the teeth. We do well to reflect on these verses and to strive to take care of these body parts in both a physical and spiritual manner.

RP

COMICS

How many inappropriate parts you forgot were in that movie.

Watching with your friends.



Watching with parents or kids.

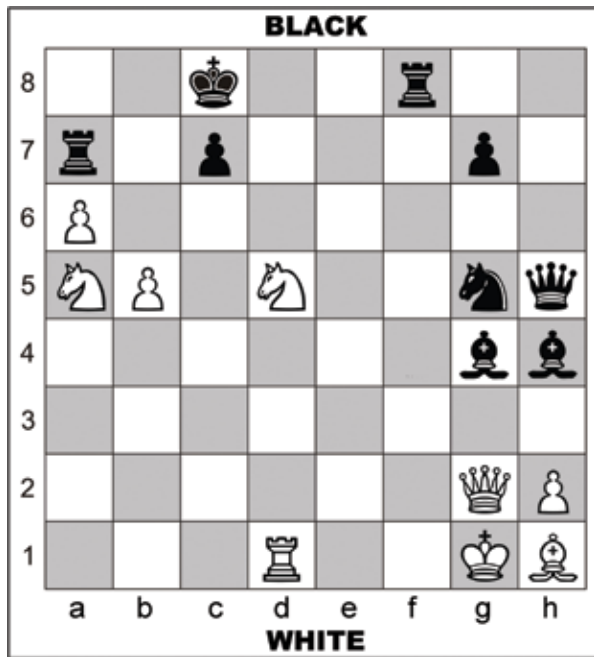


DOGHOUSEDIARIES

ENTICING ENIGMAS & CEREBRAL CHALLENGES



Chess Puzzle #204



Riddle for Punsters #204

"Keeping the Jets Shipshape?"

Why is it that jets moving slowly toward the runway are said to _____ while taxi cabs going very fast in a city just seem to _____ by? Why is it that a ship's hold is filled with _____ go while a courier van delivers a _____ ment of parts.

Problem to Ponder #204

"Fowl Migration from our Nation!"

Two flocks of Canada geese are headed south to find a warmer place to spend the winter. One flock has five more geese than the other. If the larger flock was four times larger, it would have eight more geese than there would be in five times the smaller flock. What is the total number of geese in the two flocks that are flying south?

WHITE to Mate in 3

Or, If it is BLACK's Move,

BLACK to Mate in 4

Last Month's Solutions

Solution to Chess Puzzle #203



White to Mate in 2

Descriptive Notation

1. P-R7 ch K-R1
2. B-K5 ch R-B3
3. N-KB7 mate

OR

1. P-R7 ch K-R1
2. B-K5 ch N-N2
3. BxN mate

Algebraic Notation

1. h6-h7 + Kg8-h8
2. Bc7-e5 + Rf8-f6
3. Ng5-f7 ++

OR

1. h6-h7 + Kg8-h8
2. Bc7-e5 + Nf5-g7
3. Be5xg7 ++

BLACK to Mate in 3

Descriptive Notation

1. ----- N-K7 ch
2. K-R1 Q-B8 ch
3. B-B1 QxB mate

IF

1. ----- N-K7 ch
2. K-B1 Q-Q8 mate

Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Nf4-e2 +
2. Kg1-h1 Qd2-c1 +
3. Bg2-f1 Qc1xf1 ++

IF

1. ----- Nf4-e2 +
2. Kg1-f1 Qd2-d1 ++

Answers to Riddle for Punsters

#203 – "He also has a handy pouch for tools!"

Why did the kangaroo get hired by a tow truck company? It was because he was so good at **jump**-starting cars and trucks.

Answers to Problem to Ponder

#203 – "Summer Scramble"

Unscramble the letters to make words involving summer activities. For example, "FILGONG" would become "GOLFING".

UNF - **FUN**

NISTEN - **TENNIS**

WINGIMMS - **SWIMMING**

MINCGAP - **CAMPING**

KINBIG - **BIKING**

TAGBOIN - **BOATING**

SLEDWERATIS - **WATERSLIDES**

NIKHIG - **HIKING**

ALABBELS - **BASEBALL**

FLOGINIM - **MINIGOLF**

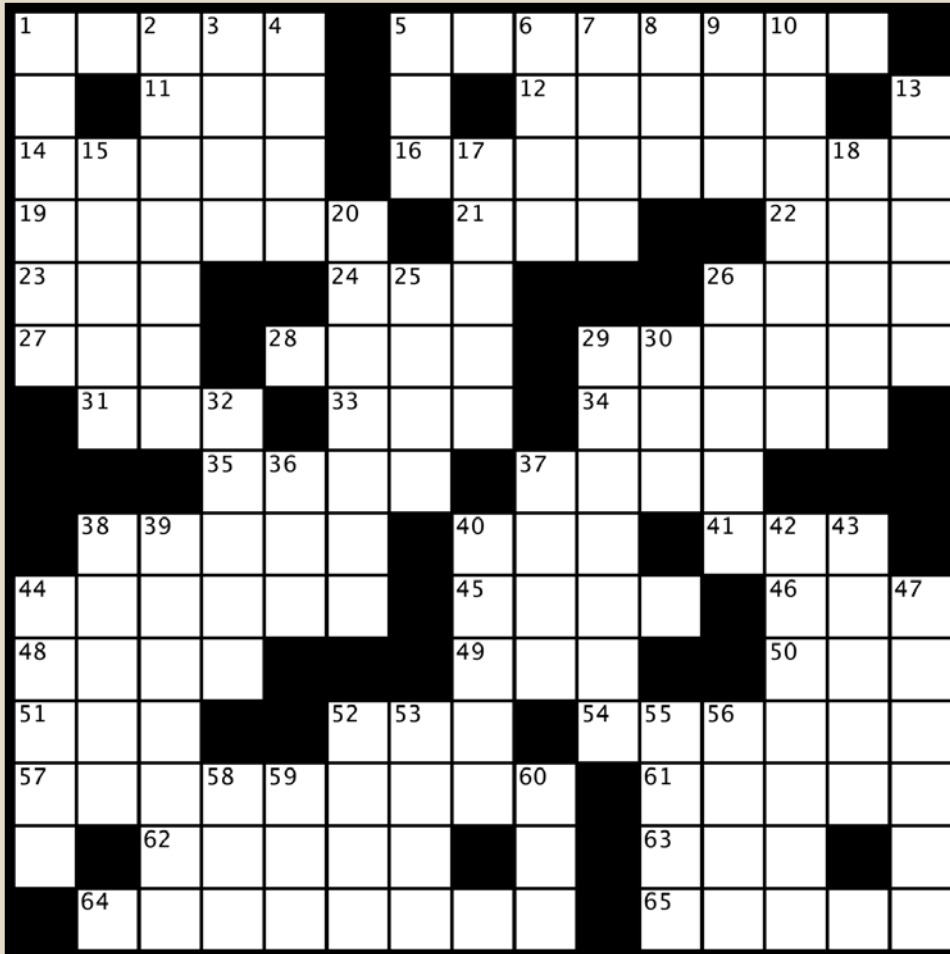
SPINCIC - **PICNICS**

GGGOINJ - **JOGGING**

GINNANT - **TANNING**

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page,
43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 or
robleach@gmail.com

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



SERIES 20 #6

PUZZLE CLUES

ACROSS

1. French cup
5. Hebrew leader of the 5th century B.C.
11. Attitude Anomaly Detector (Abbr. from NASA)
12. To pay the reckoning for, as of old
14. Where Abram put his tent in Gen. 13
16. Large, long-armed ape
19. A student away from school without permission
21. Spanish cheer
22. Playing card
23. Agriculture (Abbr.)

24. French friend
26. Area of 4047 square meters
27. Flightless bird
28. First murder victim
29. Street entertainer
31. Pen point
33. A possessive word
34. Out of proper order
35. A ceremonial act
37. Group of households
38. Direction
40. Large mammal
41. European Article Number
44. Eye part
45. Silver coin of Iran
46. Not Elsewhere Included

(Abbr.)

48. Origin, for short
49. Lady's name
50. Gotta go now (texting Abbr.)
51. To do with photographs, the non-digital kind
52. Long-eared, slow mammal
54. Refrained from destroying
57. What some figurines are made from
61. Oily fruit
62. French form of Mary
63. Building extension
64. Illuminated a manuscript in red
65. Played with something

DOWN

1. A gong with indefinite pitch
2. Japanese warrior
3. A female given name

4. Paradise
5. Noncommissioned officer (Abbr.)
6. Get better
7. Anglo-Saxon laborer
8. Microgram, for short
9. Written debt repayment promise
10. Tries to destroy
13. Grimace of contempt
15. The gas that fills some lamps and vacuum tubes
17. Boils boisterously
18. Parcels of land
20. A disciple of Jesus, also known as Dorcas
25. Dole out
26. Ancient town in southern Greece
29. Peninsula in Southeast Europe

30. A fringe-toed lizard
32. Simple past tense of bring
36. Suffix denoting tribe
37. Clinical abbreviation
38. Male fallow deer
39. Paper art
40. Delete
42. Showing wrath
43. Part of Israel; the capital is Beersheba
44. A male given name
47. In fact; in truth
52. Continent
53. Manuscript mark
55. Maker of poems
56. French phone greeting
58. Forbid
59. Male given name
60. Fishing accessory

LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 3 #2

Joyce



A variety of card designs are available.
Cards come with matching envelopes.
Ten card variety packs are available in prepackaged sets.
Shipping/mailing extra.



GIVE THE MESSAGE OF HOPE!

*Order your christmas cards
from compasscreative*

To order your cards contact Sarah Huizing at sarah@compasscreative.ca

Don't wait. Don't be late. Order today!