

# TableTalk from Christian Renewal

*John Hultink*

## **Christian Education**

### **Back to School**

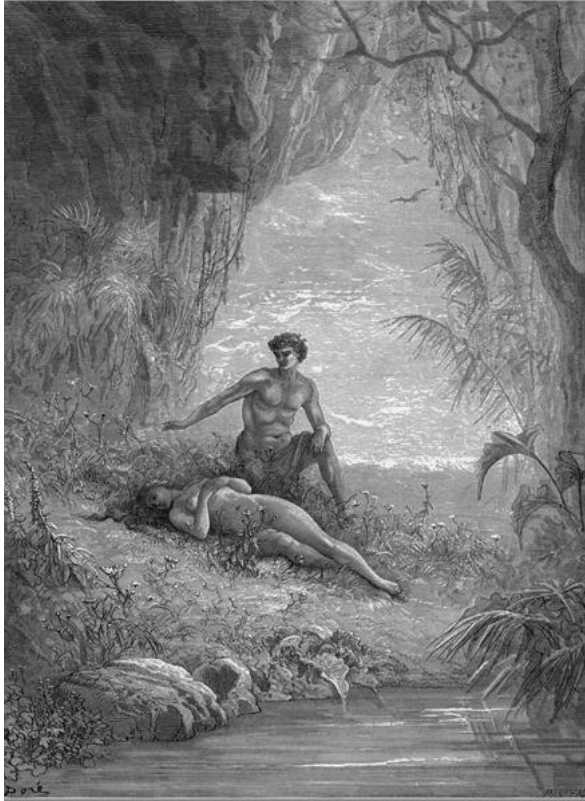
**September 8, 1984**

BACK TO SCHOOL. Thousands and tens of thousands of children from Christian homes in Canada and the United States will soon be going back to school. Many of them will be given the opportunity to go to a Christian school. What a great blessing that is, to be able to go to a Christian school.

Children today find themselves living in a society that is moving at a breakneck speed. It is humanly impossible to stay ahead of the tremendous advances in human knowledge. We live in the age of computers. Properly utilized the computer will assist man immensely in the task of fulfilling his cultural mandate.

But why are the hearts of tens of thousands of Christian parents filled with joy because their children have the opportunity to go to Christian schools? Why? you ask. The answer is almost too obvious for words. Human knowledge which stands outside of the light of God's Word is knowledge built on a foundation of shifting sand.

For thousands of years men have been asking themselves questions relating to the meaning of their lives. They ask: Where did we come from? How did we get here? What is the meaning of our existence? Where are we going? And the answers which men have given to these questions over the centuries have filled books which can now fill entire football fields. There is no one alive who can read everything that has been written on this subject. And still



*“Adam and Eve” by Gustave Doré. Our first parents were created in the image of God, with the capability to learn, conceptualize, analyze, sympathize, and much more. That we are considered the crown of creation attests to the divine wisdom of God.*

the questions persist: Who am I? What am I doing here? Where am I going?

The Christian confesses that the most fundamental questions of life have been revealed in Scripture. They do not come about as a result of human inquiry. No amount of human inquiry can answer questions of origin and meaning. God has revealed the answers to these probing, fundamental questions to us in His revelation.

Who am I? I am the head of God’s creation, fearfully and wonderfully made. I am created in God’s image. God made me

from the dust of the earth and formed me in His likeness. He gave me the responsibility to be a steward over His creation.

What am I doing here? The meaning of my existence is to live to the glory of my Creator. The joy of my existence is to witness to the creative power and love of my God who has restored me in my relationship to Him through the wonderful gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. The meaning of my existence is to live obediently before the face of my God.

Where am I going? God has revealed to His children that this present age will come to an end. In God’s good time there will be a global judgment. And for those who have confessed the name of Jesus Christ there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

The knowledge and wisdom revealed in Scripture lies at the heart of our entire enterprise in Christian education. Without scriptural revelation we also would have to consume much of our energy attempting to answer questions of origin and meaning. But not now. God has graciously revealed to us who we are, how we got here, what our task is and where we are going.

Any educational system which has lost the relation between heaven and earth, between revelation and human inquiry will become hopelessly lost in the darkness of its own foolishness.

Thank You, God, for the gift of Christian

education. Thank You for Your wonderful revelation.

## What Are Our Teachers Teaching Our Children

**September 2, 1986**

IT ISN'T RIGHT, YOU KNOW. It just isn't right. Thousands of Reformed parents send their young people to reformed institutions of higher learning expecting that these children will be taught to integrate their Christian faith and learning. Unfortunately, this is not what is happening. At least not in a growing number of instances.

Let me give you a disturbing example.

Some young people were working side by side in the fields of a nursery owned by a reformed Christian. Many of these young people were from Christian Reformed homes. As they worked, they talked. And they talked about more and less important things. One of the subjects of discussion which repeatedly surfaced during those weeks was that of abortion. "Is it right for a society to abort its own children?" they asked.

Most of the young people were in principle opposed to abortion for any reason other than an obvious threat to the life of the mother. But one of the students argued that abortion was justifiable under a number of circumstances. He also argued that we ought to distinguish between aborting children during the first three months as opposed to aborting them in



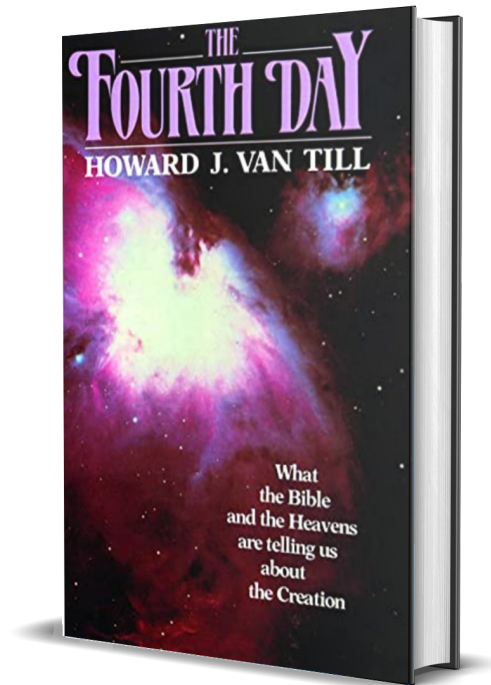
*Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where I attended and took classes under H. Evan Runner.*

the second and third trimester. How did this student arrive at these views? Did his views not conflict with the views held by the community of which he was a member?

The student who argued in favor of abortion in a number of qualified instances was a pre-med student at Calvin College. It was at Calvin College that he picked up these new views on abortion.

How do we explain this situation? A faith community with a reformed emphasis spends millions of dollars to establish an institution of higher learning to enable its youth to confess and apply the beliefs it considers so important. Yet it is the very institution which was established to integrate these beliefs, values, and reformed perspectives which now teaches its students views which are diametrically opposed to that of the faith community.

The example which I have mentioned would not be that important if it was an isolated instance. But this example of the pre-med student can be multiplied a hundredfold. Members of the reformed community have long suspected, for instance, that a growing number of teachers teaching at reformed grade and high schools are favorably inclined towards the teachings of evolutionism. Why are these teachers so inclined? Is it not because a growing number of professors at some of our reformed institutions of higher learning are coaching them in



this direction? Is it not true that we have arrived at a situation where it is possible for a reformed student to walk into a classroom in physics or astronomy in one of our Christian institutions and be told that “anyone who takes the first 11 chapters of Genesis literally is a biblical illiterate.”

Let me mention two more examples of how our Christian institutions of higher learning are beginning to serve as institutions which **destroy** the values and beliefs of the faith community which has established these educational institutions rather than to further them. In his book, *The Fourth Day*, Howard J. Van Till, professor of physics and astronomy at Calvin College, informs his readers that the insights contained in his book are based on the training which he received at home, in

the church, and in Christian elementary and secondary schools as well as the training he received at Calvin College. And no doubt, to a certain extent, that is true. But what Van Till does not bother to mention to his readers is that from Calvin College he went to a secular university. It was at this university that Van Till was “equipped” to become a teacher of those studying at colleges. Now the question is, “To what extent did the ideas and values and perspectives taught to Howard Van Till at this secular university influence his worldview?” I think that question can best be answered on the basis of what Van Till teaches at Calvin College and what he writes in his book, *The Fourth Day*. In *The Fourth Day*, Van Till very clearly teaches that Reformed people ought not to take the first 11 chapters of Genesis literally. On the basis of definitions carefully laid down in his book, Van Till brings his readers to the conclusion that Adam and Eve, the garden, the tree, Cain and Abel, the flood, and Babel never happened or existed. And Van Till’s students and readers are expected to share his views. Those who don’t are accused by Van Till of not taking Scripture seriously.

Here we have an example of a professor who has promised to teach our youth a perspective which is in harmony with our reformed understanding of Scripture and the reformed confessions while in fact he teaches our young people ideas which are

diametrically opposed to Scripture and the confessions. Granted, this professor argues vociferously that his views are in fact in harmony with Scripture and our confessions, but where do Scripture and our confessions teach that Genesis 1-11 is not to be taken literally?

For our last example let’s go to Calvin Seminary. People of the Christian Reformed Church established Calvin Seminary as a center for training young men to equip themselves to proclaim the Gospel as that is understood within the context of our reformed heritage. Scripture and our confessions have a very high view of office. In recent years the thinking of a growing number of professors at Calvin Seminary has been influenced by ideas taught by feminists and by advocates of the theology of liberation. A growing number, if not the majority of Calvin Seminary professors, believe women ought to be allowed to preach. Never mind the teachings of Corinthians and Timothy. But this view held by a disturbing number of seminary professors is not shared by the majority of people in the Christian Reformed Church. Discussions during the past 15 years have attested to this. Recent synods have confirmed it. In spite of this, the Seminary staff and boards have recently appointed an individual who holds the view that women ought to be permitted to preach. This individual has been given a one-year teaching position at

the Seminary and unless he lacks integrity, he is going to teach his point of view to seminarians in his classes. (Isn't that why he received the appointment in the first place?) And there is no reason to believe that his one-year appointment will not be extended into indefinite tenure.

So what is going on here? Aren't those within the Reformed community who have been placed in positions of leadership in fact using our institutions of higher learning to teach our youth views and values and perspectives which stand in opposition to the beliefs and values of that community? Is it not true that our institutions are being used to undermine the confession of the community which established these institutions? And isn't it true that once our youth (who are being educated to occupy our pulpits and to stand in front of classrooms of future generations of young people) are prepared for their task, many of them will have been indoctrinated by their professors? Will they not also accept an evolutionistic view of origins, approve of abortion, and shrug at the teachings of Corinthians and Timothy as these relate to office? And isn't it the height of insanity for a faith community to continue to support such institutions?

Isn't it time that the membership of the Reformed community did something about this deplorable situation? *Christian Renewal* would like to hear from its readers.

P.S. In the next issue of *CR* we will again discuss the practice in an article entitled, "An Open Letter to Hendrik Hart."

## **An Open Letter to Hendrik Hart (and the Institute for Christian Studies)**

**October 6, 1986**

*The following letter was received from Hendrik Hart towards the end of August. I am reprinting it, along with my reply, in this issue of Table Talk because it touches on fundamentals.*

DEAR JOHN:

I wish to apologize for sending you that Rembrandt card from Amsterdam last June 25. Not because I no longer feel upset when I read what you write about me. I still feel like you're unloading all over me. Rather, I apologize to you because that card only shows one side of our relation. That's the side of the enemy I perceive myself to be in your eyes. From that side I see your writings as enmity.

But there is another side. Even if, maybe especially if we are enemies, I hear the Gospel say I must love you. And I know for a truth that I do. That's also a side. So, sorry John! I wish I hadn't done that.



*Hendrik Hart (1935-2021)*

Instead, let me turn my other cheek to you and send you the full text of my latest version of *Morning Star*. As you'll see, it has no embargo on it. It's a year younger than the one you have. Since I'm on vacation now, I'll send it to you as soon as I get back to the office.

In love (though with fear and trembling you will strike again).

Yours,

*Hendrik Hart,  
Toronto, Ontario*

Dear Hendrik:

Your letter of August 25, 1986 is a remarkable letter. I believe it deserves an open, honest and public reply. It deals with the very essence of the Christian faith.

In your letter you speak of the enmity of my writings directed against you. You also state that in your own eyes you perceive yourself to be my enemy. In other words, Hendrik, when I write about you in the pages of *Christian Renewal* I am attacking you as my enemy.

Thank you for writing me this, Hendrik, because it helps me to understand our relationship. It helps me to understand why in these exchanges you and others at the Institute for Christian Studies so seldom deal with the issues and views at stake but rather discuss personalities. It also helps me to understand why you take these discussions so terribly personally and why you feel so personally threatened. After all, you do hold a position of public trust, you do express your views publicly in an attempt to convince others of the correctness of your views, so why do you perceive those who differ with your new views as your enemy? Is it not at least possible that those who express concern about your views are expressing their concern as brothers in Christ? It is not you they are "attacking" but your ideas.

My wife Jenny will confirm that my initial reaction to your Rembrandt postcard was a hearty belly laugh. My family and I were on our way to Chesley Lake Camp for a week's holiday. When I stopped by the post office they handed me your Rembrandt card mailed from Amsterdam with the Watering

Man portrayed on the front and your comments written on the reverse. The truth is, Hendrik, that I was not the least bit upset by your card. As a matter of fact I thought it was quite comical. I can appreciate your strong dislike for the articles written in *Christian Renewal* dealing with your views. But I do that in a position of public trust as well. There is nothing personal about it. When I handed the card of the Watering Man to Jenny I distinctly remember saying to her, “Doesn’t Henk realize that this card symbolizes his relationship to the Christian Reformed Church ever since the day he stepped off the plane upon his return from the Free University in Amsterdam in the late 60s?”

No, Hendrik. I do not see myself as your enemy. I never have. That of course is different than saying that I have never been angry with you—especially at the manner in which you abuse your position of trust in relationship to the Christian Reformed Church. But that does not make me your enemy, I am your brother in Christ. You are my brother in Christ. For that reason you may not view my writings as enmity. Because then you can ignore dealing honestly with what I say. You could then dismiss everything written in *Christian Renewal* about the Institute for Christian Studies and you personally as the work of my father, the devil. We could then simply part ways and be done with it. But it is not

that simple. We contend for the faith. And we do that with passion and feeling.

In your letter, Hendrik, you state that you want to turn the other cheek. But what does it mean for you to turn the other cheek if you are simply going to go on doing for the next ten years what you have been doing for the past twenty? Do you honestly have no perception of what it is that you and others at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto have been doing and how the influence of your views and actions is beginning to permeate the Christian Reformed Church as well as other denominations? Have you so little self-awareness and self-understanding that you are merely going to dismiss my writings as the writings of an enemy who is filled with enmity towards you? Is that what it means for you to turn the other cheek?

Thousands of people long to support the work of Christian higher education. But they cannot in good conscience support what you and a few others have turned the Institute for Christian Studies into, Hendrik. Thousands of people supported the work of Christian higher education as that which first came to expression in Unionville. These same people put up with your dubious views as these were concretely expressed in the book, *Out of Concern for the Church*, and its sequel, *Will All the King’s Men*. Many of these people were still willing to give the Institute for Christian Studies the benefit



of the doubt in 1980 when you personally worked so hard to frustrate the will of the membership and the board in relationship to Arnold DeGraaff.

These people supported an Institute for Christian Studies as that was envisioned by its leading spokesman, Dr. Bernard Zylstra. But especially you, Hendrik, and John and James Olthuis, frustrated Bernie Zylstra's attempts at Reformed scholarship at every turn. It was your desire and it is Olthuis' desire to revolutionize the Christian Reformed Church in North America. And you are quite prepared to use the Institute for Christian Studies as your vehicle to achieve your goal. As I understand your writings, you are still of this frame of mind today. Why otherwise would you have spoken the way you did in 1985 at the Discovery Lectures? And why would you have published those Discovery Lectures for a select group of people? In this publication you attack what lies at the very heart of reformed belief and confession—namely, our view of Scripture. In your Discovery Lectures you suggest in no subtle fashion that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit you and others are your own revelation. And the revelation which you receive personally is of as great an authority as Scripture itself.

Bernard Zylstra understood this. That is why he opposed you and Olthuis so vehemently. What I say here is fully

documented. You cannot deny it. The years of internal divisiveness within the Institute have been etched into history like a design carved into glass. You can't just wipe it off. And you, Hendrik, stood and continue to stand at the center of this great controversy.

Why don't you do the honorable thing, Hendrik? Why don't you openly explain to the (remaining) membership of the Institute and others within the CRC where it is you want to *go*? Why don't you reveal to your membership why you are infatuated with the writings of John H. Westerhoff III? Why don't you inform your membership why you are especially intrigued by Westerhoff's publication entitled, *Will Our Children Have Faith*? You have been very successful in conveying your personal enthusiasm for this book to other Institute enthusiasts. So much so that this past fall Westerhoff's book was used by study groups within Trinity Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines. (The consistory finally ruled against the use of this publication because of its unbiblical and unreformed content.)

Why are you so enthusiastic about Westerhoff's book, *Will Our Children Have Faith*? Is it because Westerhoff promotes liberation theology and sympathizes with the views of some of the most liberal theologians of our age? Is it because Westerhoff openly states that if our children follow in the footsteps of their parents they

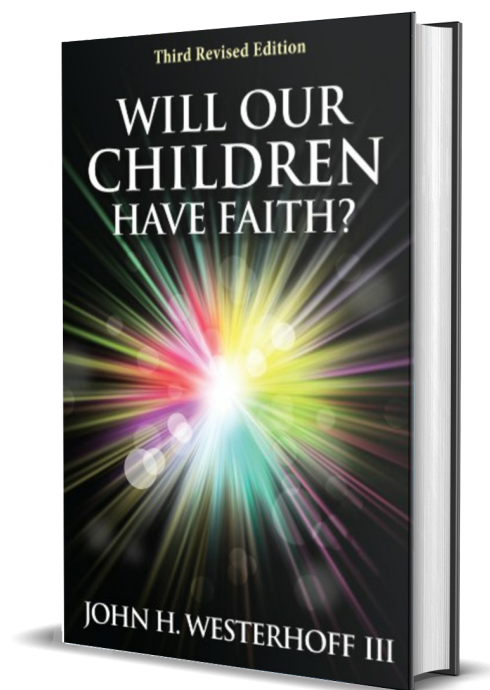
will soon have no faith? Isn't the reason that you are so enthusiastic about Westerhoff's book in fact because you also believe that our children within the Christian Reformed Church must also take a more radical approach to social action or they also will have no faith? Isn't that why you emphasize action at the expense of understanding our creeds and confessions and the Word? Isn't that why you write in *The Banner* about God as our mother? Hasn't your whole adult life in Canada to this point been aimed at the object of revolutionizing thinking within the Christian Reformed Church?

In the June 9, 1986 issue of *Christian Renewal* I wrote an article on page 28 entitled, "Financing the Overthrow of Our Reformed Life." I stated that the Institute for Christian Studies is instrumental in overthrowing our reformed way of life. I stated why I singled you out, Hendrik, as the one individual most instrumental in this development within the Institute. In the July 1986 issue of *Christian Renewal* I wrote an article entitled, "What Is Really Being Taught at the Institute for Christian Studies?" In that article I pointed out how your views and how the views of James Olthuis and other professors at the Institute conflicted with what we believe Scripture to teach. The views held by Institute professors on such subjects as abortion, homosexuality, the place of women, female language about God, apartheid,

economical oppression, and many kinds of social injustice were stated in that article to be in direct conflict with what many Reformed people believe Scripture to teach. And much of what you teach at the Institute is in direct conflict to its stated purpose.

Yet you continue to teach your revolutionary points of view. Worse yet, under the administration of Clifford Pitt, present President of the Institute for Christian Studies, you are permitted to continue to teach these views to your students while the Institute's promotional staff strives to do its best to hide these views from your constituency. Is this what you understand by turning the other cheek, Hendrik?

If some staff members at the Institute



for Christian Studies want to side with liberation theology, if they wish to lend more authority to their own insights than the teachings of Scripture, let it be so. But if this is in fact what is happening at the Institute, declare it boldly to your constituency. Teach your revolutionary views openly and honestly, Hendrik, and your constituency can then decide for itself whether or not it wishes to support the Institute. But put an end to the duplicity and deceit.

What is happening at the present time is an outrage. *Perspective Newsletter*, the official monthly publication of the Institute for Christian Studies, has become a periodical of mis-information. Its purpose has become to keep the people in the dark about what is really happening at the Institute for Christian Studies.

In a letter to *Christian Renewal* published in its July issue, Rev. Derk Pierik, then Chairman of the Board of the Institute, informed us that there are reasons why James Olthuis has left the Christian Reformed Church and joined the Bloor Street United Church in Toronto. Pierik suggests that there are good reasons for this. But the constituents are kept in the dark. They are kept in the dark about many things. Apparently their judgment cannot be trusted.

Why don't we have an open discussion in *Perspective Newsletter* about why your

views are so important, Hendrik. Why don't you address yourself to the issues which I have raised in this regard in the June and July issues of *Christian Renewal*? Why don't you publicly explain your enthusiasm for Westerhoff's *Will Our Children Have Faith*? Why don't you explain your view of Scripture as that comes to expression in the Discovery Lectures? Why do you hide behind the skirts of those at the Institute who do not advocate the revolutionary?

Hendrik, in your letter you state that you must turn the other cheek and that you must love me. But what does that mean? Turning the other cheek and loving someone must have a context. If a father repeatedly beats his son without cause while all the time telling him that he loves him, what is the son to think and do? And isn't that in fact what you are doing to the reformed community?

You opposed the work of Bernard Zylstra without mercy. You ground his efforts into the dust. The reformed Christian schools in Toronto were not to your liking so you started your own downtown Christian school. Only to watch it disintegrate a few years later as a result of infighting. Only this time the infighting was among people who were all Institute enthusiasts. You insist on being viewed as reformed but you develop a view of Scripture which Luther and Calvin and Bavinck would have abhorred. You repeatedly state that Reformed people

by and large don't know how to live joyful lives as Christians and that they have their noses stuck in doctrine too much, while all the time you yourself spend most of your time in senseless infighting. You claim that your way of seeing and doing things will result in a healthier Christian community while in fact it was only a few years ago that almost every student at the Institute for Christian Studies went to Arnold DeGraaff for counseling and almost every married student at the Institute had marriage problems. You say that you have found a newer and more effective way of being Christian and then proceed to throw a *shower* for a man (who is part of your community) who had been *separated* from his wife and many children who are not part of the shower festivities and live from hand to mouth. This is your idea of the joyful Christian life? Give me the old doctrinaire ways of my parents (if I must choose).

Hendrik, you despise what you call the old morality and the old moralism in the CRC. You are quick to point out the shortcomings and failings of our parents but you are blinded to your own stupidities and your own unfaithfulness. Is it not true that you are in fact engaged in developing a new moralism which is a worse taskmaster than the old moralism? Isn't it true that unless people see things your way and only your way, they are in bondage to their

conservatism and traditionalism? And isn't it true that this view and feeling is shared by a majority of those in leadership positions within the Institute today? Isn't that why you celebrate open communion at your conferences and isn't that why women served the communion bread and wine at the Niagara conference this year? Isn't that why you trample the Church Order of the CRC underfoot at St. Matthew's?

Hendrik, you have always militated against authority. It has always been your view that no one should assume a position of leadership within the Institute. You always contended that everyone employed at the Institute were equals. But isn't it true that others were only equal if they saw things your way? Isn't it true that when Arnold DeGraaff was dismissed in the fall of 1980 you sent a letter to all the board members threatening an insurrection? Hasn't that always been your attitude towards authority? And turning the other cheek?

Love must have a context, Hendrik. And turning the other cheek must have a meaning. In Scripture turning the other cheek always goes hand in hand with submitting oneself to the will of God. To love God is to obey Him. That is what love of God means as Charles Colson has so powerfully worked out in his book, *Loving God*. It is only within the context of a loving obedience to God that I can have a

meaningful relationship with you, Hendrik.

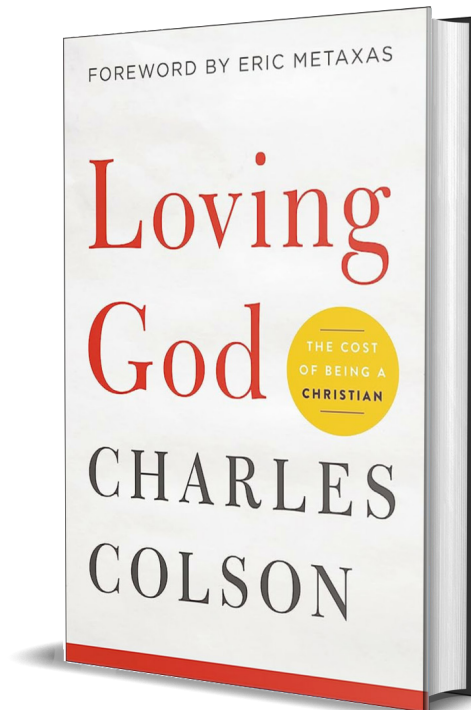
Do yourself a favor, Hendrik: quit viewing my writings as enmity. And quit viewing me as your enemy. I am not. I am your brother in Christ. But precisely because I am your brother in Christ do I write the things that I write. Surely it is possible for Christians to have an honest exchange of views without being enemies. But as I have said before, this does not mean that I love your ideas. Truth is that I hate many of them—not you, your ideas and your actions. But in spite of that I can still love you and I will, by God’s grace. Meanwhile, I will continue to oppose those views which I believe to be unbiblical and unreformed. In that respect you may “fear and tremble that I will strike again.” That is not only my right, it is my obligation as a Christian.

## “Let There Be”

**November 10, 1986**

“AND GOD SAID.” These few words so often repeated in Scripture are awe-inspiring. When God speaks, things happen. This in sharp contrast to the often empty words of people.

Already at the very outset of Scripture the reader is confronted with the power of God’s Word. And God said, “Let there be.”



And it was. Again and again God said, “Let there be.” And that which God called into being came into being. Is there anything more majestic and awe-inspiring than God’s creative command?

When man’s wickedness on the earth had become great, God spoke, and water covered the earth. When God saw how men slaved and toiled to build their tower, He spoke and they were scattered over the face of the earth. God spoke and burning sulfur rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah. At the command of God, Sarah’s dead womb stirred to life and Isaac was born. Time and again God spoke to Pharaoh through Moses and millions of people stood in awe at the power of His Word. At God’s command the waters of

Egypt turned to blood, locusts stripped away all vegetation and hail descended like death from the sky. Before God finished speaking the first-born of man and animal alike lay dead throughout the land.

It was God's Word which sent life-giving manna from the skies for forty years and sent water gushing from a rock. It was the Word of the Lord that sent the walls of Jericho crumbling into a pile of ruins and opened the gateway to Canaan for God's people. God listens to a man and the earth ceases to rotate on its axis for a day and a night while Joshua pursues the enemies of God.

Scripture is filled from beginning to



*"The First Plague: Water Is Changed into Blood" by James Tissot.*

end with the awe-inspiring power of the Word of God. At Elijah's request God seals the heavens and drought consumes the land. Even the ravens of the air heed God's command and bring Elijah bread and meat both morning and evening. By the power of God's Word, David slew Goliath and before long the whole world knew that there was a God in Israel. From the judges to the prophets God magnified His name by the power of His Word.

Is there anything more pathetic than a minister of the Word who gets up on a pulpit and says, "Let me tell you what I think about this or that issue. Let's look at the pros and cons. And let's have more people participation."

Is there anything more pathetic than a college president who places such emphasis on achievement measured by secular standards and on the need for harmonious coexistence with other institutions that the power of the Word is muzzled? Is there anything as sad as the professor who pays greater homage to the word of men than the revealed Word of God? Or the parent who wishes so passionately for the success of a child that service to God is lost in the pursuit?

The Supreme Court of the United States has agreed to hear briefs regarding the constitutionality and legality of the 1981 Louisiana state law called The Balanced Treatment for Creation Science

and Evolution Science Act. Will men of science who are committed Christians appear before this highest court of the land and say, "Thus says the Lord"? Or will the challenge be left to those who call themselves fundamentalists? Will the reformed community again send those who hold such a disdain for the revealed Word of God that they would rather testify on behalf of the godless American Civil Liberties Union?

There is nothing more powerful than the Word of God. That Word causes springs to flow and flowers to bloom in an arid desert. That Word gives life to those who are dead. To be a Christian is to testify to the power of that Word. And the Supreme Court of the United States has invited such a testimony.

Many are concerned about the present direction of the Christian Reformed Church. Much of that concern centers around politicized issues and abuse of power. And concern is often expressed in words of what to do about such a situation. Political manipulation is not the answer. Speak the truth in love. God is not mocked. There is nothing more powerful than God's Word. God can accomplish in a moment what we cannot in a lifetime. There is really only one issue that concerns us. That those who occupy our pulpits speak the Word of the Lord. When God's Word is proclaimed there will still be polarization. But it will be

the polarization that Jesus Himself spoke of when He was on earth.

When God's Word is proclaimed in truth and in love, God's people flourish. Not by the standards of this world, but by the standards witnessed to in the life of the early Christian church.

## Contradictions

**November 24, 1986**

BOOKS ARE MY BUSINESS and occasionally an unusually interesting book crosses my desk. This happened a few weeks ago when I received a copy of a book entitled, *The Doomsday Book of Animals: An Illustrated Account of the Fascinating Creatures which the World Will Never See Again*.

This book of 300 pages is filled with gorgeous colour illustrations of hundreds of birds, wolves, bears, cats (big), wild oxen, fleet grazers, wild horses, sea mammals, rats, bats, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. It is a beautiful book which tells a terribly sad story. It tells the story of 300 years of animal extinction at the hands of mankind. It is a sad thing when one realizes that irreplaceable beauty and grace have been destroyed by what was often the calloused attitude of man.

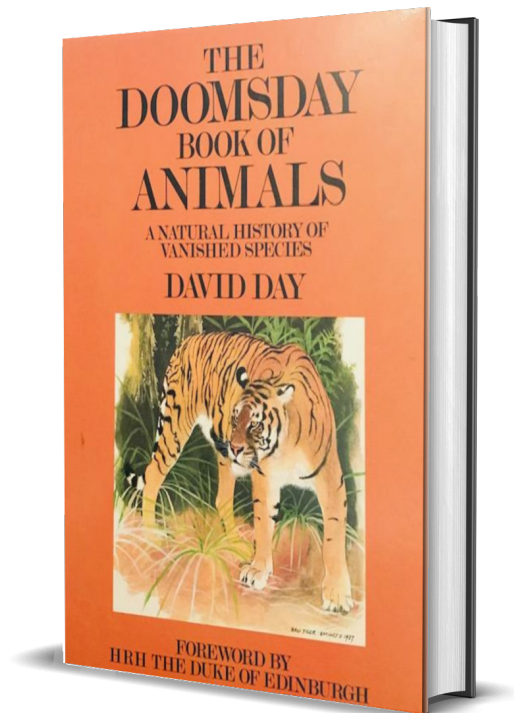
And this particular book deals only with the past three hundred years. Imagine

what has been happening since the beginning of time.

Yet this particular book is guilty of a terrible contradiction. The author leaves little doubt that he is committed to an evolutionistic worldview. In the opening introduction to the book he speaks about tens of millions of years during which time the process of extinction has taken place. The book, however, deals with only 300 years. Man theorizes about tens of millions of years, but in concrete reality he restricts his knowledge to hundreds or possibly thousands of years.

What I find both surprising and contradictory in this book is that after having made a total commitment to an evolutionistic worldview, the author makes the statement that the animals which have disappeared will never again be seen in this world. I happen to believe that that's true and you probably do too. But how can that be the view of a committed evolutionist who believes that the various species have come into being as the result of the process of evolution?

If the process of evolution is in fact the mother of all life, then why concern oneself about the extinction of a few of these creatures? If one sincerely believes that the process of evolution has brought all life forms into being, would one not also hold the point of view that in the coming eons we may look forward to a multitude of new



life forms? And why wouldn't that include life forms which have become extinct? After all, if the process of evolution has given rise to the hundreds of thousands of different life forms that exist around us today, why wouldn't evolution provide the world with additional hundreds of thousands of new life forms in eons to come?

On the one hand the author pays homage to the evolutionistic worldview. On the other hand, he does not credit the process of evolution with the "power" to bring new life forms into being in the future.

But then it is probably expecting too much if we ask the evolutionist to be consistent.

The dinosaurs and the sabre-tooth elephants as well as hundreds of other animals are gone. And the extinction





*“Anachronistic comparison of four spinosaurid species” by Andrey Belov (Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 license). Those who worship at the altar of an evolutionistic worldview actually worship the extinction of living things.*

of some animals was no doubt God’s intention from the beginning of the world. What would we do with thousands of dinosaurs today? On the other hand, it is a sad thing that the inexpressible beauty of the Creator’s work in the form of birds and mammals and fish and bats has been destroyed; often by the carelessness of man. But such destruction underscores the reality that what was once a perfect and good creation is going through a process of destruction. We are not in an evolutionary process which is moving us towards a better world.

Those who worship at the altar of an evolutionistic worldview in fact worship the extinction of the species and not

the creation of new life forms. And that, along with the extinction of thousands of animals, is a terribly sad thing.

## Enemy at the Party

***December 8, 1986***

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY was spoiled from the outset. Even though the parents had spent a lot of time and effort to make this Adam’s best birthday party ever. But it was not to be.

Soon after the party had started a stranger entered the house. He knew Adam’s father was a doctor. He demanded

drugs. But there were no drugs that could be given to the stranger. When he was told this the stranger became angry. He pulled out a gun and began shooting wildly. Death echoed through the room. Then he fled from the house.

Two of Adam's little friends, a boy and a girl, lay dead. Adam himself had been paralyzed by a bullet in the back. It appeared he would be paralyzed for life.

It happened in a moment. From joy to utter despair.

God also threw a party. Many years ago. And what a party that was.

You will remember that there was a time when there was no creation, no world, no universe. Only God. Human beings cannot grasp this. They cannot grasp a reality that is beyond time and space. But it was so.

Then God decided to make a universe. And what a universe it was. He created and created and created. Day after day after day God called one spectacular creation after another into being. He created water and sky and land. Then He let the land produce plants and trees and flowers of different shapes and colors and filled the earth with beauty. Then God made the great lights in the heavens to mark the seasons in days and years. He filled the waters of the lakes and oceans with millions of living creatures and filled the sky with birds of a thousand

different shapes and colors. Millions of different animals were called into being and together the sound of their existence praised the name of God.

Finally God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God made man.

And God delighted in His creative work. He stood back and observed it all. It was good. And God delighted in the goodness of His creation.

How glorious it was for man to be living in fellowship with His Creator—forever and ever. What a party that was. But it was more than a party. It was a Paradise. Perfect in every sense of the word. A sinless creation. Man living in fellowship with God in perfect, obedient harmony.

Then it happened. A stranger came into Paradise. He was not God's invited guest. Rather, he was God's arch enemy. God had already thrown him out of heaven because he had attempted to dethrone God. Now this enemy came into God's Paradise on earth. He hated God. He hated God's creation. He set out to destroy it. And he almost succeeded.

For reasons which man will never comprehend, Adam and Eve were seduced by the brazen lies and naked deception of

this stranger. And the echo of death has resounded throughout creation ever since. From obedience to disobedience. From everlasting life to death. From Paradise to an existence that was to be characterized by hardship, pain, and suffering.

The party was over. The great banquet had come to an end. Man had disobeyed his Creator. The penalty was death.

Graciously God did not let the party come to a complete end. He promised to send Someone who would crush the head of this stranger. He promised to send His Son who would do battle with the spirit of unbelief and rebellion. And God kept that promise. More than 2,000 years ago.

This Messiah, this Deliverer has once again invited mankind to God's great banquet. The invitation has gone out everywhere. But you cannot serve the Son and the stranger as well. You must choose. The stranger is still with us today. He still stalks about in God's creation seeking out those whom he may destroy. He makes integral, Christian education next to impossible. He constantly undermines the Christian's efforts at obedient political and social activity. The deadly, tearing noise of his gun resounds throughout creation—century upon century. Even today he would like to turn God's creation into a stinking corpse.

But thanks be to God, Christmas has put a limit on this stranger's influence and



*"Paradise Lost" by Gustave Doré. Satan hated God's creation, and thus tried to destroy it.*

success. Soon the day will come when he will be judged. Along with all those who have chosen to be his children.

There will be another party. God has promised. The restoration of Paradise on earth. And God keeps His promises. At that great banquet man will again begin a life of perfect harmony with his Creator forever and ever. What a glorious life that will be.

Christmas. God has done it. God has said it all.

## For Tracy

**December 29, 1986**

CANCER. TERMINAL. The diagnosis was as uncompromising as it was heart-breaking. A death sentence with an indefinite date of execution.

And she is only 12. Why God? Why her? Especially since she is one of Your children. Why all this suffering and pain which will soon become unbearable?

It has been only 12 months since parents, relatives and friends have been informed. Who would have believed then that 12 months could be so long and encompass so much grief, and suffering and pain?

She was only 12 when doctors diagnosed her impossible condition. Cancer, they said. Terminal, they said. For an instant hearts stood still as minds grappled to digest this information.

The question was unavoidable. Even by those whose lives were lived in close fellowship with God. Why God? Why us? What have we done to deserve this terrible adversity?

Doctrinally we have all the answers to all the questions. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We all deserve to die. Of cancer if need be. We all will die as surely as our forefathers before

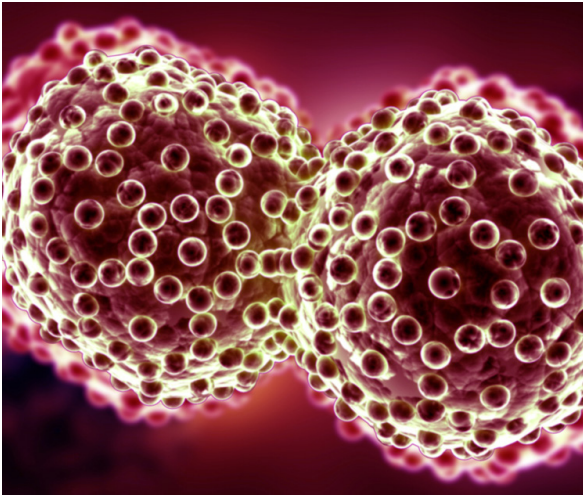
us have died. Death reigns in God's creation and sooner or later we must all succumb to its power. Death is the reality of the sentence passed in Eden when God said to our first parents, "In the day that you eat of that tree, you will surely die." Doctrinally we have no difficulty accepting death. We all know why we must all die.

But at the age of 12? And of cancer? This is different, dear God. She's 12 years old. She has come to a point in her life where she has begun to think of her future. Graduation and marriage and children that now will never be. Like a rosebud about to open. Cut down. Never to bloom.

Why God? We dare to ask it. Why? Why the intense suffering and the unbearable pain in a life so young and so innocent? Heavenly Father, You have seen her lying there. A shadow of her former self. Hair gone and body ravished by disease. How close to experiencing hell can a human being come in this life, dear Father? If it were not for Your presence.

It's only a matter of weeks now. Possibly days. And as the end approaches the question reasserts itself ever more fiercely and ever more painfully. Why us God? Why her?

There are questions in this life that will not be answered. At least not to our satisfaction. Especially not when those questions concern death. And even less so when they concern the death of the young.



*Cancer is the result of the curse of sin; it has brought much pain, suffering, and death.*

Struck down in a moment by the merciless wheels of a truck or consumed over a period of months by the relentless spread of cancer. The death of the young can give birth to suffering and grief so intense that it surpasses understanding.

Why does God permit suffering in a world that has been reclaimed by Jesus? We know that Satan's power is still great though not unlimited. Wherever Satan goes he leaves his cancerous trail of death behind. We live broken lives in a broken world. The battle in the air around us is intense and fierce. Often we don't realize it. It is the battle for the spirit of our age. The spirit of our lives. It is an intense battle. And in this battle there is a great, great deal which we do not understand.

When man openly and willfully curses God to His face it should not surprise him that God strikes him down. That is what happened to Herod. He was consumed

by worms after having been smitten by the angel of the Lord because he thought himself god rather than a man. Herod did not fear God. And neither did Gehazi who willfully took payment for God's free gift of grace.

It is not so with God's children. God does not reward us or punish us according to what we deserve. Scripture clearly teaches that. Our indebtedness to God is so great that an eternity in hell would be an inadequate payment. Meanwhile we add to our indebtedness daily. The sins of each and every Christian, including the sins of the apostles who walked this earth with Jesus and the prophets of old, are so great that they are beyond our imagination. There is no way we can make restitution for our sin. There isn't enough time in eternity to work off the debt. The debt of sin which each Christian owes God is simply incomprehensible.

It is impossible that we realize the extent of our sinfulness. If we don't we may perhaps be tempted to think that our suffering comes about as a result of our sin. That suffering is God's way of making us pay for our sin. Christians should realize that our suffering or the suffering of our children is not the result of one particular sin or another. If such were the case all Christendom would have died of cancer or some other terminal disease long before Christ ascended into heaven. Take comfort

from the suffering of Job. Put the suffering of this world, of your children, of your friends and relatives into larger perspective. Put it within the context of redemptive history. But do not torture yourself by believing that God permits our children to die of cancer because of some specific sin on their part or on ours. For then we would all perish of cancer as the world once perished in the flood.

Turn your eyes to Jesus. Remember and believe that it was His body which God broke on the cross. So we need no longer pay for sin. Remember and believe that on that cross He suffered the full fury of God's wrath for all our sins. All of them. Our slate is clean.

We suffer *because* of sin. But our suffering is not in *payment* of sin.

Think about that, fellow Christian. Those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ have been ransomed. There is not a single sin for which they will have to pay. Not in purgatory and not in hell and not on earth either. We have been washed clean, totally and completely. Pure before the face of God. Like the leprous skin of Naaman after he descended seven times in the Jordan River.

Remember, Christian. It took no one less than the Son of God to make restitution for our sins. All of them. The little sins and the big sins. From the moment of our birth to the day of our death. Forgiven! Certified

by the blood of Jesus Christ. Paid! Stamped across the invoices of our life. Paid in full? Paid in full. Signed. Jesus Christ.

There is cancer in this world. And it strikes those who fear God as well as those who do not. And we don't understand it. Human suffering—who can comprehend it? That mystery will not be revealed on this earth. Only God knows and God knows best.

This we know and know with a certainty. God does not give us cancer because of a specific sin which we or our children have committed. Jesus sees to that. Cancer is the creation of Satan, not God.

The end is approaching. The pain has reached a level that is humanly unbearable. She's only 13. The question reasserts itself, Why God? Why her? It is almost more than we can bear. For a year now family and friends have watched her waste away. Their tears could fill an ocean. The older ones might even be prepared to forfeit their lives in exchange for hers. But to no avail.

Father in heaven we do not understand why some of Your children must suffer so intensely. We do not understand suffering at all. But we know and pray that in all this Your name may be glorified. In this great suffering, may we draw closer to You, closer to the great Physician.

We do not suffer and grieve as if we



*The healing of Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-19).*

have no hope. Although the experience of prolonged suffering leaves us tired and spent, we grieve as those who have met Jesus. If it be Your will, Father, we know You **can** heal her. Even now. We know that You **can** raise her even from the dead. And we believe You will. Along with all those who confess Your name. On that great and glorious day which our Saviour purchased for us on the cross. Her Saviour! On that day when we will inhabit a new earth where the glory of God will shine like the morning sun. Where death and suffering and cancer will be no more.

Comfort her, Lord, with the promise of Your resurrection. Prepare a seat for her at the banquet table of a new Paradise. In

the presence of her Saviour.

O God, may the pain and suffering of this world vanish before the reality of that great day. Open our worldly eyes that we may see. Also the eyes of those who are so very young.

## Peter De Vries

**January 26, 1987**

I HATE YOU, God. I hate You. The blood of Your Lamb accomplishes nothing, satisfies no one.

That message conveyed by Peter De Vries to his readers in one of his earlier books entitled, *The Blood of the Lamb*, became a recurring theme in all of his books. On the one hand, De Vries does not believe there is a God. "Prove to me that there is a God," he writes in *The Blood of the Lamb*, "and I will really begin to despair." On the other hand all of De Vries' many books are unthinkable apart from his Christian upbringing and his lifelong rebellion against God.

Christians who wish to come to grips with the devastation that suffering can bring into the life of a man should read this book. Suffering gives rise to intense expressions of one's faith. It seldom leaves those involved indifferent. It may cause a person to crumble to his knees and cry out to God for understanding. Or it may

motivate a person to clench his fist, shake it in God's face, and curse God with the labors of his life.

That is what happened to Peter De Vries, a member of the body of Jesus Christ by baptism and a graduate of Calvin College.

Peter De Vries had to endure what very few of us have to endure—the untimely death of a brother as well as a daughter who died by degrees of the life-consuming disease of leukemia. And as she did the remnants of his weak faith died with her. At one point in the book, as he leaves the church in a drunken stupor, he hurls a cake into the face of a statue of Jesus. Later, in a conversation with himself he asks,

“Are God and Herod then one?”

“What do you mean?”

“The Slaughter of the Innocents. Who creates a perfect blossom to crush it? Children dying in this building, mice in the next. It's all the same to Him who marks the sparrow's fall.”

De Vries had been taught that God rules over all. He was intimately acquainted with the biblical teachings about providence. And he could not reconcile God's providence with the death of a brother or the prolonged and painful death of a dearly loved daughter.

The expression of rebellion surfaces strongly in his book, *The Blood of the Lamb*.

But a dialogue with God is still possible. What follows in later books is enough to chill a Christian's blood.

Peter De Vries is not any old individual. He is a man entrusted with a beautiful gift – the gift of wit and humor. And the ability to write. His talents were recognized when he was given an editorial position on *The New Yorker*. One book after another flowed from his pen.

But there is no rejoicing in heaven at De Vries' achievement of literary success. Much of the humor that fills the pages of more than twenty books is made at the expense of God and His Son Jesus Christ. Blasphemy. We find a sample of that blasphemy in a more recent book, *Slouching Towards Kalamazoo*, where he writes, “She (De Vries' old landlady) had a coat of many colors that Joseph himself might have found a trifle busy, and an Easter bonnet that could have made our risen Lord wonder why he had bothered to start the day by getting up at all.”

Peter De Vries was raised in the home of Calvinist parents. Intimately acquainted with the reformed way of life, his best-selling books seldom fail to mention that he was educated in Dutch Reformed Calvinist schools and that in 1931 he graduated from Calvin College.

There is no question that Peter De Vries is a gifted man. His many books bear testimony to that also. But his books also



bear testimony to a deep, unrestrained hatred of God and His creation. After the death of his daughter he writes, “How I hate this world. I would like to tear it apart with my own two hands if I could. I would like to dismantle the universe star by star, like a tree full of rotten fruit.”

The blasphemies that thunder across the pages of Peter De Vries’ many books are not ordinary blasphemies. They are the blasphemies of a man deeply wounded, but also the blasphemies of a man who is personally and intimately acquainted with the Word of God and of His Christ. They are the blasphemies of a man who has met God and rejected Him.

The *Washington Post* once described De Vries as a “marvelously funny satirist.” And another periodical described De Vries as “a masterful writer and one of the best humorists of our time.” But much of De Vries’ satire and humor is gained at God’s expense.

Does the reader of De Vries’ novels detect a cry of despair beneath the bravado of blasphemy? A restless soul in search of meaning and rest?

Intense suffering and death can lead to submission or it can erupt into unbridled rebellion. De Vries’ literary gifts become the vehicle for rebellion. Life no longer has meaning and purpose. In the concluding sentence of *The Blood of the Lamb*, Peter De Vries writes, “...how long is the mourners’



*Peter De Vries (1910-1993).*

bench upon which we sit, arms linked in undeluded friendship, all of us, brief links, ourselves, in the eternal pity.” God is a joke. And Christianity is an empty search for pie in the sky. And that, Peter De Vries believes, ought to be worth a few good laughs.

Blinded by doubt and grief De Vries throws away the only thing worth having in this life—the promise of God that the day is approaching when all things will be made new. If only his gifts could have been employed in the proclamation of God’s great love.

# The Strange Case of the Amputated Fingers

**February 9, 1987**

IMAGINE THAT. The unthinkable. Professors amputating the index finger on the right hand of students attending Calvin College. Four thousand students in the process of losing their index finger. Hands mutilated for life.

Can you imagine the cry of outrage that would resound throughout the denomination if such a thing were actually happening? The switchboard at the college would be jammed with angry calls from thousands of parents from across North America. Every consistory within the denomination would be sending angry letters of protest instructing the administration and the professors to halt this barbaric practice immediately. No doubt the present board of trustees would be summarily dismissed and an impressive number of professors would be fired.

But they are not amputating index fingers at Calvin College. If they were, you would have heard about it. What is transpiring on the campus of our denominational school is worse than the atrocity described above. Much worse.

A number of professors have decided

on the need for “amputating” an entire section of Scripture. They have become convinced, on the basis of much learning, that the first eleven chapters of Genesis have no basis in history. These professors have decided that, taken literally, those chapters can have an undesirable influence upon the thinking of college students. Especially upon students who are to become teachers in our Christian schools and ministers in our reformed churches.

Students are told they must discontinue the misleading practice of reading Genesis 1-11 as history. They must quit thinking of Adam and Eve as real people. They must accept the view of these professors that the Garden of Eden never existed. The account of Cain slaying Abel is not an historical event. People nearly a thousand years old never lived. Methuselah is not an historical figure.

Calvin College professors intent on “amputating” the first eleven chapters of Genesis have never explained what the “higher” or “deeper” meaning of the biblical account of creation really is. What is the “deeper” meaning of the flood or the tower of Babel? This we are not told. But whatever the deeper significance may be, students are told not to take Genesis literally. There was no Noah, there were no sons, the ark was never constructed. And the flood? Never took place. The tower of Babel was never built.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis as history are to be “amputated” from the biblical record. Since the biblical events recorded there appear to conflict with speculative scientific theories, students are urged to discontinue their belief in these biblical events.

This is amputation in the third degree, uncompromising and irreversible.

This process is not new. It has been going on for decades.

Where will the amputations stop? The amputations engaged in by a growing number of Calvin College professors is the same as that practiced by professors at the Free University of Amsterdam for more than 25 years. And once the truthfulness and historicity of Genesis 1-11 are discarded it is only a question of time before the professors decide that Jonah couldn't possibly have been eaten by a whale. And Elisha's axehead couldn't possibly have floated. And a talking donkey? Don't be so naïve.

And so the process of “amputation” continues. In more liberated circles and in the more enlightened churches the resurrection of Jesus Christ and His bodily ascension into heaven have been “amputated” from the biblical record as well.

No, dear reader, they are not amputating the index finger of students at Calvin

College this year. But what they **are** doing is a great deal worse. Some professors have harnessed all of their intellectual resources to convince our reformed students that they should discontinue believing in the biblical revelation given in the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

What could possibly be worse? Hasn't history already proven that once we discard the opening chapters of Scripture more amputations soon follow? And what alternative is there to the biblical account of origins? The Big Bang?

The amazing thing is that the process of amputating entire chapters from Scripture has now been publicly defended in a book entitled, *The Fourth Day*, by Professor Howard J. Van Till. This public attack upon Genesis has been in print now for more than six months. But the switchboard at Calvin College is not jammed with irate telephone calls from angry parents. The board of trustees of Calvin College has not been replaced and professors responsible for amputating entire sections of Scripture have not been dismissed. It is uncertain at this time of writing whether even as much as **one** consistory in our entire denomination has publicly protested the amputations.

Isn't that sad?

## A Dishonest Review

**March 9, 1987**

A BOOK REVIEW is intended to give readers a quick overview of what that book is all about. Such a review generally stresses the strengths and weaknesses of the book in question. In the February 16, 1987, issue of *The Banner* a full-page review appeared of Howard J. Van Till's book, *The Fourth Day: What the Bible and the Heavens Are Telling Us About the Creation*. It is basically a dishonest review. It creates the impression that there

is nothing particularly disturbing about Van Till's book. In the concluding paragraph of the review where mention is made, finally, in passing, of Van Till's rejecting a strict literal reading of the Bible, the reader is also told that Van Till has given his readers "tentative answers." But can anyone who has seriously and honestly read Van Till's book in its entirety come to the conclusion that the answers given there are tentative? And what Van Till teaches his students at Calvin—is that also tentative?

In a particularly misleading paragraph



*“The building of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:3-5)” by Pieter Brueghel the Elder. Are we to take the biblical account of the tower of Babel as non-literal as well? How are we to make sense of the origin of language?*

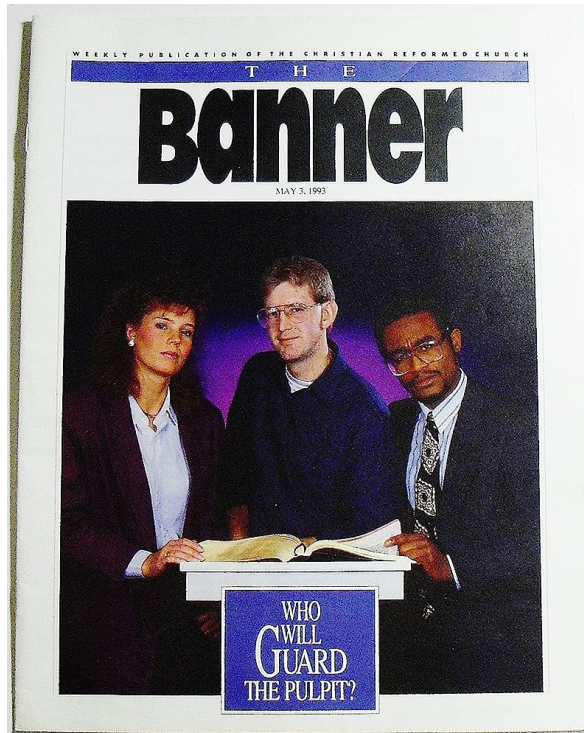
in the book review, Archie Vander Hart, pastor of Colton (S.D.) Christian Reformed Church writes the following: “This is a book with obvious strengths. Part 1 contains solid information on the cosmological views of Israel’s pagan neighbors and the Scriptural teachings about the heavens.” What the reviewer completely ignores is that chapter five is included in Part 1 of Van Till’s book. And chapter five is the chapter in which Van Till makes his case that Genesis chapters 1-11 are primeval history. And he defines primeval history as history that never happened (see especially pages 82-85 of his book). This chapter is extremely significant.

How is it possible for an honest reviewer of Van Till’s book to state that Part 1 contains “solid information on the Scriptural teachings about the heavens” when that is the very section of the book which reduces the first eleven chapters of Genesis to one statement, namely, that God created the world via the process of evolution. How can the writer of this *Banner* review honestly state that one of the obvious strengths of this book is the reduction of the first eleven chapters of Genesis to “a kind of” history that in fact never happened?

Van Till’s book has been reviewed in other periodicals. In another sympathetic review which appeared in the newsletter of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, Siert

Woudstra stated that “Part 1 of his book is a masterful discussion of the insights gained when the Old Testament is read from within the perspective of Israel’s faith as it clashed with the paganism of that time. Yet there remain enough biblical scholars who would ask if it is totally beyond doubt that the Bible, notably the early chapters of Genesis, address **only** the **status** of the cosmos as divine creation. The difficult question is, what belongs to the teaching and what to the packaging?”

“The question becomes particularly poignant,” Woudstra goes on to write, “when the matter of the historicity of Adam and Eve is broached—always a sensitive point in traditional, evangelical thought. Totally consistent, Van Till does not stop with Genesis 1 but maintains that also Genesis 2 and 3 (and beyond) present a religious focus. If Van Till is right, the historical Adam as traditionally understood is in deep trouble. Frankly, I do not see how he can be saved. By no stretch of the imagination can one read the early chapters of Genesis and other passages as leaving room for an earth that is several billion years old and at the same time insist that Genesis 2-3 must be interpreted as **demanding** an actual first human pair who at most lived a few (10? 20?) thousand years ago and whose sin of eating of a forbidden tree plunged the entire human race into sin.”



*In the United States the reformed community was served by a denominational paper, The Banner. Over time, it shifted to the left.*

Woudstra is correct. If the world is billions of years old, if man evolved from lower forms of life, then there is no room for a biblical account of creation. No room for Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Seth and Methuselah, Noah and his sons, the Flood, as well as all the events surrounding the tower of Babel are indeed rejected by Van Till as historical. We are not to take these biblically recorded events literally. He also states in his book, very frankly, that he has emphasized to the 2,000 students who have passed through his classrooms at Calvin College that they ought not to take the first eleven chapters of Genesis literally. It would be naïve to do so. But that reality

is not reflected in Archie Vander Hart's review as that appears in the February 16 issue of *The Banner*.

What does appear in *The Banner* review is another attack on the creationist point of view. That is not uncommon for *Banner* reviews or articles. The creationists have not fared well at all in its pages during recent years. The reviewer reminds us that according to Van Till the creationists are guilty of distortions. Their overall efforts are viewed as a "travesty of natural science and a sad parody of biblical theology." What the review does not disclose is that this so called "sad parody of biblical theology" consists especially of taking the first eleven chapters of Genesis literally.

The best advice that Vander Hart gives his *Banner* readers is that they should read the entire book for themselves. That is good advice indeed. Regrettably very few will follow it.

Perhaps most misleading of all in Vander Hart's review is the title itself, *Evolution by Design*. Of course, it is possible that the title is the responsibility of the editor and not the reviewer. Nevertheless, that title, *Evolution by Design*, is quite revealing. It is also a contradiction in terms. Much like speaking about a pregnant virgin. The concept of evolution excludes design. Van Till himself makes this very clear in his book when he states that it is his belief that the world (the evolution

of the world) began approximately ten billion years ago as a result of a big bang, a gigantic explosion. What design is there in an explosion? And what design is there in the process of evolution when evolution is the process of millions and millions of mutations and accidents? Is that not the Achilles heel of Van Till's book? Namely, that evolution lacks design? By its very definition? Once one imposes design upon the process of evolution it can no longer honestly be referred to as evolution. For evolution is random selection.

The reviewer further states that "Part III (of Van Till's book) includes a good analysis of the creation/evolution debate and some excellent suggestions on how both creation and evolution can be taught in both public and Christian schools." What the reviewer fails to tell his *Banner* audience is that the reason the account of creation can now be taught, from Van Till's point of view, in public as well as Christian schools is that it is no longer necessary for either Christians or non-Christians to take God's revelation in the first eleven chapters of Genesis literally. Take evolution at face value. Reduce the Genesis account of origins to primeval history, that is, history that never happened. And then you can teach it in the public as well as the Christian schools. And why not? Both the public and the "Christian" view of origins are now consistently pagan.

At a recent meeting, the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary appointed a committee to look into the views and teachings of especially Dr. Van Till and Dr. Clarence Menninga as these teachings relate to the question of evolution. It is to be hoped that as a result of this inquiry a more honest presentation of Van Till's views will appear in the pages of *The Banner*.

But there is a more compelling consideration. Sow the wind in the college classroom, reap the whirlwind at the elementary and secondary levels as well as on the pulpit. In recent years we are being repeatedly confronted by consequences of the destructive forces of sowing the wind in the pages of our denominational magazine.

## Whose Fault Is Evil?

**March 23, 1987**

GOD IS GOOD. The Bible leaves no doubt about that. God is very good. He created the entire universe with life in all its wonder and diversity. In goodness and perfection. When God saw what He had done He Himself exclaimed, "It is good."

Every age has its own peculiar heresy. The twentieth century is no exception.

The seventeenth century produced a crop of Deists who ruled out miracles and denied that God is Lord over His creation. They transformed a personal, omnipotent God into an impersonal force behind the mechanism of the universe. The eighteenth-century intellectuals (intellectuals are always the propelling force behind the formulation of any heresy) began to tamper mightily with the authority of Scripture. Some portions of Scripture were more authoritative than others they said. And some Scriptures didn't have any authority at all. Before it was all over man's authority was greater than God's. The nineteenth-century, as J.I. Packer describes it in an article entitled, *The Modern View of Jesus* gave us "A domesticated God as the power behind the universal evolutionary processes..." God's power of creation as described in Genesis and elsewhere was abandoned. God became the great evolutionist.

The twentieth-century distinguished itself with its own unique heresy. And once again the intellectuals are outdoing each other. In this century God is pictured, as Charles Colson has so effectively and repeatedly pointed out, as a senile old man. Twentieth-century intellectuals have transformed God into a kind-hearted, suffering Being who lives in heaven, far removed from the cares and events of the earth. God is a kindly Uncle who in effect is incapable

of coping with anything. But He is always good for a listening ear. Our century is a century of the theology of revolution. Man must bring about his own redemption and his own salvation. His kindly Uncle is not going to do it for him.

One of the insights that has led intellectuals to this conclusion is the preponderance of evil in the world. Everywhere we look there is evil. There is the evil and heartrending agony of war in over forty countries on our planet. There is the evil of cancer. There is the evil of older people dying what appears to be useless, painful deaths. Why not quicken it with a needle? There is the evil of infidelity and unfaithfulness. Never in the history of mankind has there been such a rate of divorce. Children are mindlessly molested for personal, sexual gratification. There is a hollowness in the lives of men that fills the air with screams of agony. And the twentieth-century intellectual community has decided that it is either God's fault or God is powerless to do anything about it. Since twentieth-century intellectuals still cling to some undefined idea of God's goodness, they have concluded that God is powerless.

I first heard it on the radio. I wasn't certain whether I heard it entirely right. Then I read about it the same week in the February 9, 1987, issue of *Newsweek*. This is what the Health and Human Services





secretary reported on the risk of AIDS: “When a person has sex they’re not just having it with that partner. They are having it with everybody that partner has had it with for the past ten years.” That tidbit of information speaks volumes. One of the great evils facing our society is the deadly disease of AIDS. Many people find this painful death revolting. Who does whoever is in charge of the universe think He is anyway? Who but a beast would let such inhumanity go on? These are the questioning accusations being made against God. Why do so many people have to die of AIDS? Why do so many people die of cancer? Why do so many people suffer? Why do young people die? And why do some old people never seem to die?

God’s revelation is emphatic. God created a good creation. He looked at

everything He had made and it was beautiful. So what has gone wrong? **Sin!** That’s what has gone wrong. The entire human race is paying the universal penalty for sin. You suffer and I suffer; we all suffer. Young children suffer and 80-year-old men suffer. The effect of sin is universal. We are all sinners, we all suffer.

But some of us suffer more directly than others. If I personally insist on practicing homosexuality then I now know that my chances of coming down with the disease of AIDS are better than 50 percent in the next ten years. The choice is mine. And I needn’t come to God afterwards and say, “Don’t be cruel, God. I don’t want to die. Why are You making me die of AIDS?”

God has given us His Book of Life. “Hear My Word and live!” God says. “Come to Me and I will give you to drink from the

Fountain of Life.” Life! God gives life. Satan hands out death. But man would rather eat out of the hand of Satan than sit at the table of God.

In an article in the previous issue of *CR* I said that the speech I heard by the interim leader of the Christian Heritage Party of Canada inspired me more than the last twelve sermons I heard. And during those six or seven weeks I heard a variety of preachers. What is so uninspiring about so many sermons we seem to hear today? They may be technically correct, they may even be well delivered. But many of our sermons today lack prophetic zeal. Our sermons are apologetic. We apologize for this and we apologize for that. We have no difficulty stating what was wrong with the Israelites in the Old Testament or the New Testament but we have a great deal of difficulty saying to the congregation sitting in the pews these days, “This is what the Lord requires of you. Quit your sinning. Live holy lives of love and obedience. Love your wife and your children. Love your fellow man. But above everything else, love God.” And loving God means obeying Him.

It is not unusual for ministers, when they are reading the law of Exodus, to skip over those sections that state that God created the world in six days or that we are to labor six days only and rest on the seventh. We are not certain that God created the world and if He did He may

very well have done it through the process of evolution. We are no longer certain about anything. Does God really mean that we shouldn’t work on the seventh day? Didn’t our parents take too strict an interpretation? Weren’t they legalistic?

For a minister to speak prophetically in the twentieth century is a rare thing.

But today it is quite conceivable that a minister or someone with a license will get up on the pulpit and talk about homosexuality. He will even use the first book of Romans as a basis for his discussion. But when the discussion is all over it is no longer clear whether homosexuality is right or wrong. You haven’t heard God speak if that is so, my friend. If you can’t tell the difference between right and wrong no one spoke on God’s behalf to you. The individual may have given you a few ideas of his own, but he silenced God in the process.

God’s Word is life. Jesus gives water that quenches our thirst forever. When we go to church we have a right to drink from that water. The minister has an obligation to bring us that life. And to tell us what such life with God entails. That’s why we go to church. Personal opinions and ideas and speculations one can hear enough of on television and on the radio. For that we need not go to church.

Late one night this week I went to my library and I pulled a volume of the

encyclopedia off the shelf. I read the article under “Black Plague.” What was it so many centuries ago that swept the continent of Europe and killed people by the millions? Sometimes half the population of a city. And does the debilitating disease of AIDS possess the same universal powers of destruction? Already the destructive tentacles of AIDS are reaching beyond the homosexual community. Where will it end? Tens of thousands of people are already in the grip of inevitable death. You can read about it in the newspapers and you can hear about it on television. Use condoms when you have sex, they say. One church actually handed out condoms to its members. Schools are handing out condoms. The Ma and Pa grocery stores are either selling condoms or seriously thinking about it. Our young people must be protected from such a painful death.

“Listen to Me, you stupid people,” says God. “Listen to My Word and live. Those condoms aren’t going to save you. Your whole lifestyle is leading you into the abyss. Even if you don’t contract AIDS, eternal agony awaits you.”

That’s what this generation needs to hear from our reformed pulpits today. Sin kills. Serve the Lord. Obey Him and live. That is why I was so deeply impressed by the words of the interim leader of the Christian Heritage Party of Canada. Here was a man who dared to say, in the face

of much opposition and much skepticism from fellow Christians, “This is the Word of the Lord for us today.” Hear it and live.

## Is There a Limit?

**April 13, 1987**

“GOD CAN’T HELP ME. I am too rotten a person. You have no idea what I have done with my life.”

How many people are there in the world today who could so easily subscribe to these sentiments? Ruined lives. Broken images. An uninterrupted and unending assault upon the majesty of God—on God’s image in man.

A few weeks ago my brother and I visited New York City to buy some books. Two very attractive girls approached us one evening as we crossed the street to our expensive hotel. (There are no inexpensive hotels in New York.) One was white, the other was black. They were dressed like models. Strikingly good looking. “Would we like some company for the night?” they asked. We laughed and joked, my brother and I. What are you to do in a situation like that? Invite them for a cup of coffee and sit down and have a discussion about life and God and humanity? Pay them if need be for their time? These girls caught us by surprise. We didn’t know what to say. So we

joked. Next time it may be different.

The young man had repeatedly forced his will upon the girl. The girl thought she loved him. She hoped he would eventually marry her. So why not a little premarital sex? So many people do it, right mother? In time she became pregnant and it became clear that he didn't love her. When he abandoned her. As an act of pure desperation she aborted the life within her. Before it became visible. There was enough of the image of God left in her that for years she was tormented by guilt.

Can God forgive? Will God forgive? Will God forgive the man who has made his marriage a living hell for twenty years? Will God forgive the father and mother who have raised their children so unwisely and so self-centeredly that their children scream out their hatred for God?

Where does God draw the line? How much can God forgive?

Every living human being sins every conscious moment of his and her life. And judging by some of the dreams that I have personally had we do a fair amount of sinning while we are asleep as well. It is difficult to overestimate the measure of sin in the life of each and every human being. Christian or otherwise. Ministers of the gospel and elders of the church of Jesus Christ. As well as choir leaders and prominent willing workers. All are capable of sinning a thousand-fold more

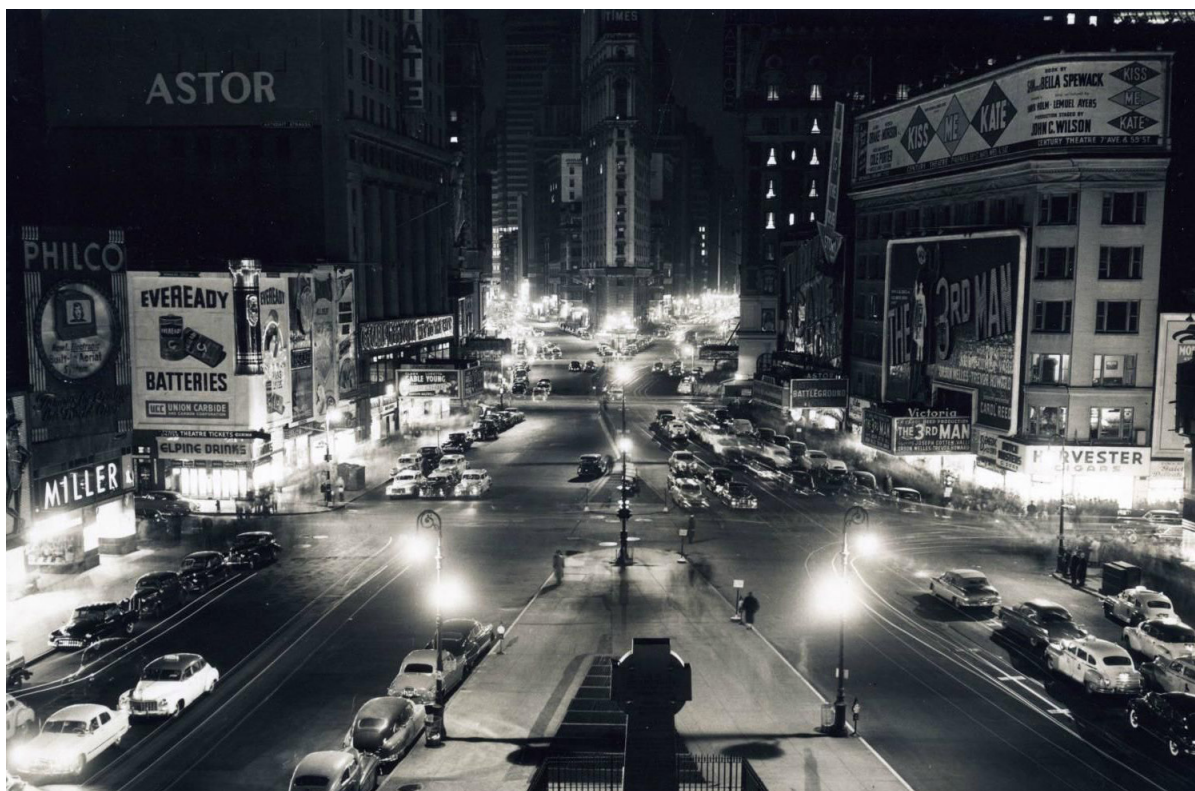
destructively than the girls on the streets of New York City who ply their trade by night.

Can God forgive?

The pietists and the moralists have often absolutized or overemphasized man's need to live by commandments. The emphasis has been too sharply on man's performance rather than God's long-suffering love. More progressive Christians on the other hand often take the whole biblical notion of sin with a grain of salt. They emphasize man's goodness and man's humanity. And God's forgiveness. But both of these notions fall far short of the mark. Neither takes sin seriously. And is there anything worse than discounting the seriousness of sin before it has been committed?

What does the Bible do with sins which in our eyes are almost unforgivable? Three heroes of the Christian faith were murderers. Moses choked the life out of the Egyptian with his bare hands. David murdered Uriah in cold blood. And Paul persecuted and murdered Christians at will. Murder. That is a sin of a somewhat different degree than a little premarital sex on a Sunday afternoon or pocketing twenty dollars out of your employer's till. Murder! Taking of life which only God may do.

God forgives. He not only forgives, He rehabilitates the pathetic lives involved. By the power of His Spirit; by the power of His Word.



*Times Square, New York City.*

Never underestimate the power of the principalities and powers in the air around us. Satan is a worthy opponent. He and his henchmen have crippled the lives of every human being who has ever drawn a breath. And the cumulative sins of all those human beings, great and small, rises like an unholy mountain toward heaven. Take your own life as an example. What is the cumulative effect of sin in your personal life and in your life as that crosses the pathway of others? Sin manifests itself everywhere. Lovelessness, selfishness, disobedience.

It occurred to me sometime after I left New York City that we all walk the streets of our lives like well-dressed prostitutes. We prostitute God's image within us

almost every day without fail.

So what's the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? Does the one sin and the other not? That's what the moralists and the pietists would like us to believe. Christians don't sin. But nothing could be further from the truth. Moses, David, and Paul sinned. It is perhaps more accurate to say that there are no sinners like Christian sinners. Christians can **really** sin. They can do it with a finesse often absent in non-Christians. Just look at what's happening between the evangelistic teams of Jimmy Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. Satan knows his most strategic blows are struck in the Christian camp. When Satan beats the drums, Christians often dance

themselves into a sin-crazed frenzy. Until God sobers them up.

Think of Jacob. A manipulative man and a schemer. God made him one of the patriarchs of Israel. God creates strength out of weakness. Thank God that God is not dependent, at any time in history, on man's strengths. Or on man's sinlessness.

Can God forgive? **Can God forgive!** The most remarkable thing about the Christian religion is God's capacity for forgiveness. There is no end to it. Right up to the day that we quit sinning. The day we die.

God forgives sinners. Also those who sin boldly. Scripture makes it clear that God does not like lukewarm people. God Himself said He would spit them out of His mouth. And God especially doesn't like people who contradict His specific revelation by suggesting that sin is okay with God. That God is quite willing to turn a blind eye. God will do nothing of the kind. God hates sin. And somebody has got to pay the price. Christ or you. To suggest that God is soft on sin is to assault God's righteousness, His holiness. And to demean Christ's sacrifice. Scripture's one unwavering message is that God hates sin. But God is quite capable of loving the sinner. Regardless of how great the sin may be. Murder, abortion, the psychological destruction of a fellow human being, hatred—all these God can forgive. If you

mean it. But God hates sin. And so should we (although our own unrelenting sinning should prohibit us from being judgmental and self-righteous).

Easter is God's answer to sin. The gravity and universality of sin come to full expression in Easter. God Himself came to earth in the form of a perfect man. Repeatedly, He was tempted by Satan. Like Adam and like Eve He was tempted. Without fail He resisted each of Satan's advances. Finally, He entered Satan's stronghold. He became dead on the cross. He descended into hell. He destroyed hell's power by breaking its bonds. He who was dead, destroyed death's power. He became alive. And by demolishing the shackles and walls of Satan's stronghold, He set a great throng of God's people free. They will all be given power over death. Like those in the open graves on Good Friday.

Easter! God's proclamation of the deadly seriousness of sin. God's declaration of new life to those who seek it. God's resurrection from the dead of all those who sat at Jesus' feet.

He is risen. We shall rise with Him. What a day of glory that will be. Man living in the fullness of God's image in renewed Paradise on Earth.

Thank You, Jesus, for Easter.

# Are Facts Neutral?

**June 29, 1987**

ARE FACTS NEUTRAL?

It is a fact that God created the world. But is that fact a neutral statement? Is it not rather a confessional statement that is firmly imbedded in God's revelation to us?

Two plus two is four. We accept that as fact. But is that a neutral statement? Is two plus two four as a result of the evolution of mathematical theories? Or is two plus two four because God the Creator structured the creation that way? Whether you believe the one or the other makes a world of difference. The statement that two plus two is four is hardly a neutral fact.

At our denominational school in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the belief that facts are neutral is now being taught by many professors with increasing conviction. Such teaching is not without consequences. This perspective has effectively created a chasm between God's revelation as given in Scripture and God's revelation as it manifests itself in creation. The consequences of accepting the neutrality of facts for academic work are awesome.

The extent to which the belief that facts are neutral directs one's thinking has recently been demonstrated by Howard

Van Till in his book, *The Fourth Day*. A belief in the neutrality of facts has motivated Van Till to accept the evolutionary givens without critical question. For instance, Van Till believes that it is an unassailable fact that the world was created 15 billion years ago as a result of a huge explosion. There is no scientific proof (only theories) undergirding that belief. Yet Van Till accepts it as a fact. And he believes that the factual information is neutral. The interpretations of the facts have not been influenced by the direction of man's heart.

Van Till believes that man is the product of a lengthy evolutionary process. Van Till believes that life originated as a single cell, via the process of billions of mutations, eventually resulting in the complex organism known as man. Van Till accepts this as a fact. And Van Till wants to convince us that all the scientific givens leading up to that fact are neutral. Once the reader realizes the existence of this belief in the neutrality of facts, it becomes much easier to grasp why Van Till and a growing number of professors at Calvin College so uncritically embrace the evolutionistic dogma. And why, alongside this belief in evolutionism, they confess their Christian beliefs. The two can apparently co-exist in harmony.

Calvin College has a long history of confessing the belief in the neutrality of facts. This belief came to its fullest



*“Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden” by Wenzel Peter (1745-1829).*

expression under the tutorship of men such as Calvin professors Henry Stob and Harry Jellema. (For instance, they taught that the pagan Greek philosopher, Plato, held views which had a great deal in common with Christianity.) Their belief in the neutrality of facts had tremendous consequences. Especially upon the present Calvin College staff. In the area of ethics it meant that a fetus was in all likelihood not human during the first six weeks after conception. In the political arena it meant that there was no need for a distinctive Christian political voice. In the area of labor it was argued 25

years ago that an organization such as the Christian Labour Association of Canada did more harm than good. Why? Because political parties and labor unions were in and of themselves neutral. Christians made them Christian simply by joining the ranks.

What Howard Van Till and other Calvin professors believe and teach is that many of the facts they deal with at Calvin College are neutral. For this reason people such as Van Till, Young, Menninga, Wilson, etc., have no difficulty accepting all the so-called “factual information” concerning evolution. And when those



“neutral” facts conflict with the Christian faith, it is the Christian faith which must be compromised. Exit the first 11 chapters of Genesis.

Take a number of examples. Dr. Menninga has suggested in *The Banner* that many “people” lived on earth before Adam. Adam is only unique in the sense that he is the first human being who had some kind of relationship to God. Humans who lived before Adam did not have such a relationship. Menninga is forced to this conclusion because he accepts the “neutral” fact that human beings in one form or another have existed on the earth for millions of years. He refers to the skeletal remains of Lucy, found in Ethiopia. Hasn’t it been scientifically demonstrated that these bones are millions of years old? Menninga certainly believes so although many secular scientists do not.

Prof. Wilson teaches at Calvin College that human beings have existed on the earth for millions of years. Long before Adam. Isn’t that what the “facts” convey to us? And aren’t the facts neutral? Adam is unique in that he had a soul. But the study of the soul is not a “factual” science, therefore Prof. Wilson and his colleagues will quickly beg off when asked at what point God gave man a soul in the evolutionary chain. The answer these Calvin professors invariably give is “We are not theologians.” But if they are not theologians by what authority do

they discard the first eleven chapters of Genesis?

Man is viewed by those professors as the end-product of a long evolutionary chain. This is now commonly confessed on campus by the vast majority of Calvin College professors. We have seen what the consequences of this confession are in anthropology and astronomy classes. But can you imagine what the consequences of such an evolutionistic belief are in courses teaching psychology that deal with man’s psychic make-up? Is man then a creature of stimulus and response?

Because of an erroneous belief in the neutrality of facts, most professors at Calvin College have not bothered to work out a Christian perspective for their discipline. They express the belief that there is no need for a distinctively Christian view. Teaching at Calvin College is rapidly becoming a mirror reflection of what is taught at the average secular college across the nation. As one professor said over 20 years ago, “Much of the talk about a Christian point of view and a Christian perspective at Calvin is merely a snow job to blind the constituency.” Many professors don’t believe it. And they are correct. If facts are neutral any talk of a Christian perspective is indeed nonsense.

Facts are neutral. This confession has resulted in the view that the first 11 chapters of Genesis are not historically true. Why?

Genesis conflicts with the “neutral,” evolutionistic givens. Calvin professor Howard Van Till has therefore argued in his book that we must read the first 11 chapters of Genesis in a new way. We must read these chapters symbolically or allegorically. But whatever we do, we must not take their revelation literally. What is described in the first 11 chapters is simply not historical.

This is Calvin College’s great contribution to the Christian Reformed Church: the belief in the supremacy of science over Scripture. Man’s word is declared more authoritative than God’s revelation. God’s revelation in Genesis is reduced to symbolism. Adam and Eve are merely symbols of a community of ten thousand or so believers who have evolved into being by God’s special grace. Yes, go figure.

The belief in the neutrality of facts has necessitated a new hermeneutic, a new understanding of Scripture. The world, it is now believed, has been around for billions of years and man has been evolving for millions of years. We must now read Scripture through the glasses of these so-called neutral scientific facts. If we fail to do this we are told that our approach to Scripture is naïve.

If Dr. Howard Van Till is right, if facts are indeed neutral, why bother having Christian institutions of learning at all? Why have a Calvin College? Why not save

ourselves the expense? Why not send our children to public institutions of learning where the facts are said to be equally neutral? If the world originated as the result of a big, destructive explosion and not as the awe-inspiring, creative command of God, can’t our students learn that at the University of Toronto or at the University of Michigan just as well? For their devotional life (which apparently runs parallel to their academic life) we could set up chapels and Bible Study sessions in the vicinity of these secular institutions. There we could teach them not to take the first 11 chapters of Genesis literally. We could teach them a new way of understanding the many New Testament references to the first 11 chapters of Genesis. We could teach them that Scripture is time-bound and culturally conditioned. We could teach them that Christ is not actually the second Adam since there was no first. It has been done before by Harvard and Yale and Princeton. The results are utterly predictable.

The Board of Calvin College has appointed a committee to examine the views of some Calvin College professors as these views relate to evolution. Would it not be advisable to study the growing belief on the Calvin campus that facts are neutral as well? What has happened to the reformed, scriptural confession of the great antithesis? Do we no longer believe in the covenant? Has our belief in the neutrality

of the “facts” of science resulted in our denial of the powers and principalities in the air around us? Has our belief in the neutrality of facts created a worldly-wise Christianity? A horizontalized Christianity that is barely distinguishable from the views confessed by the world?

Science is not neutral. Science has never been neutral. Science is a human activity. And there are no “neutral” humans. All scientific views and ideas are permeated with the “soul,” the heart of man which gives “birth” to them.

All men stand before the face of God. In obedience or disobedience. This is man’s inescapable condition: that he is a religious being. He *must* respond to God. He cannot serve on neutral ground. Man’s heart is not neutral. The facts are not neutral. They are covered, from top to bottom, with man’s fingerprints. For example, that God created the world is a fact. But it is a fact denied by many. The facts either stand in the Light of God’s revelation or they are obscured and twisted by the darkness of the lie. Facts do not have an independent existence. They are an integral part of God’s dynamic creation.

The facts are not a product of man. They are created by God. Man uncovers or “discovers” them. But that “discovery” takes place in a worldview context. And every fact is colored by that worldview.

The growing belief on the Calvin

campus that facts are neutral constitutes a growing threat to the uniqueness of the Christian faith. This is a dilemma which deserves the Calvin Board’s full attention.

## Christmas

### December 7, 1987

WE HAVE ALL MADE preparations for special occasions. Remember the time when the whole family was coming over for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner? Thirty people for dinner. What an endless amount of preparation. And what a joy. Remember the preparations for the wedding of a son or a daughter? For weeks on end your mind was preoccupied with hardly anything else. You wanted this occasion to be one of great joy and happiness. You spared no expense or time to make it so.

There is more going on between heaven and earth than a person can begin to imagine. We would never have known about the special and intimate relationship that exists between heaven and earth if God had not revealed it to us. In the extensive preparations that God made to prepare His people for the birth of His Son, we see just how intimately heaven and earth are related.

First of all, an angel of the Lord

appeared to Zechariah as he was standing at the right side of the altar of incense. You can imagine that Zechariah was startled and gripped with fear. But the angel put his mind at ease. “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah, your prayer has been heard. Your wife will bear a son, and you are to name him John. He will be a joy and a delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is going to make ready a people prepared to meet the Lord.”

Zechariah was amazed. How can I be certain that what you tell me is true? I am an old man and my wife is old. The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.”

Isn’t that amazing? God sends His angel Gabriel to earth to a couple who are past childbearing age to announce the birth of John the Baptist. The preparations have begun. God is about to perform a mighty work. His Son is coming to earth. Immanuel. God with us. And as a result of this visit things on earth will never be the same again.

God is about to do what Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Saul, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Micah, Malachi, and the blood of a thousand lambs upon a thousand hills could not accomplish. He

is about to deliver His people out of the hands of His great adversary, Satan.

God has prepared for this great event in meticulous detail. Nothing is left to chance, so to speak. But above all, there will not be a doubt in anyone’s mind who believes that this great work was performed by God. A child born to parents too old to conceive and to a girl still a virgin. Truly God’s hand and His power are at work.

Six months have passed. The child in Elizabeth’s barren womb miraculously conceived, is now six months old. Go to earth again, God commands the angel Gabriel. This time go to Nazareth. Speak to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. Her name is Mary. Tell her that she is highly favored. Tell her that without knowing a man, she is going to give birth to a son. She is to name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end.

Imagine that. A young girl in Israel betrothed to be married to Joseph, is informed by the angel Gabriel (who stands in the presence of God) that she is going to give birth to the Son of the Most High.

God’s preparations continue. He informs Mary and all generations of believers yet unborn how this will happen. “The Holy Spirit will come upon you,

and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” Gabriel then goes on to inform Mary that her relative, Elizabeth, is going to have a child in her old age, and that she who has been barren all her life is six months pregnant.

Gabriel must have guessed Mary’s amazement for he goes on to say, “Nothing is impossible with God.”

The preparations are well on the way. Elizabeth is six months pregnant. She is going to give birth to John who is going to prepare a way in the desert. A desert where people thirst for the Word, the water of life. And Mary is going to give birth to the Son of the Most High. The bread of life who will

make the desert bloom with His miracles. The ancient promise is about to be fulfilled. He who will crush Satan’s head is about to be born. A new King will ascend the throne of David. This king will not fail. He will rule forever. His Kingdom will never end.

Mary is overcome with joy. “I am the Lord’s servant,” she says. “May it be to me as you have said.” Mary hurried to Elizabeth’s house where she stayed for three months. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, John the Baptist leaped in her womb. She exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!”

God leaves no doubt what this momentous event means for Israel and for all generations of Christ’s believers yet to



come. "God has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as He said to our fathers."

And when John the Baptist is born Zechariah rejoices, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come and has redeemed His people... And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

God's preparations are complete. He leaves no room for doubt or misunderstanding. He sends Gabriel to make the announcements personally and He inspires Mary and Zechariah with His Holy Spirit to reveal the great thing He is about to do. He gives life to the womb of an old woman and miraculously places life in the womb of a virgin. This is truly the work of God.

A few months later the Son of the Most High is born. He is the greatest of all

kings, yet lives in poverty. He is born in a stable, and is wrapped in rags. Soon, Herod, king of Israel, will seek to destroy His life. Satan is awake and alert. He cannot permit this child to live. He seeks to destroy Him. He uses his servant Herod. But in vain. God sends the child to Egypt, the land of oppression, where the child is safer than in Israel.

Meanwhile, the high and mighty in Israel are ignorant of the great work which God is about to perform. What God has meticulously revealed to His humble, believing children He has hidden from those who rule over His people. Gabriel does not appear to the king of Israel nor does he make a special appearance to the high priest of the house of Aaron. It has pleased God not to reveal Himself to the mighty in Israel.

But to the humble and believing of heart? Again God sends an angel to earth. Go to the shepherds living out in the fields near Bethlehem, God commands, and announce to them the good news of great joy that will be for all people. Tell those shepherds that in the town of David a Saviour has been born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will find Him wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel making God's announcement to the shepherds, praising God and saying, "Glory

to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.”

After the angels had left, the shepherds hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, lying in a manger. When they had seen the Christ, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

What the king of Israel and the high priest in the temple of God would have refused to do, the shepherds now gladly did. With believing hearts they spread the news that in the town of David a Saviour had been born. And that this Saviour was the Christ, the Promised One.

God's plans were now complete in all their detail. And God had planned events in such a way that generations of believers would see His mighty hand at work. God would also see to it that a complete and detailed record of His mighty deeds would be recorded in the Gospels. It pleased God to reveal to all generations the preparations He had made for the birth of His Son and the deliverance of His people.

Yes, heaven and earth are intimately related. God rules over the affairs of men. He raises up kings and prime ministers and presidents. And He throws them down. In the great controversy between God and Satan, all men play a role. For God or against Him. In obedience to Christ or in opposition to Him.

Soon God would reveal to His people just what kind of a King Israel had this time. He would have none of the weaknesses of His forefather, David. His Kingdom would not be of this earth. This King would not be trapped by His great adversary, the devil. His obedience to God would be total and complete.

Time would reveal that Satan would behead John the Baptist. And Satan would stir up the people of Israel into a murderous frenzy demanding Christ's death on a cross. But that cross would become God's victory and seal Satan's doom. The Son of the Most High, the second Adam, would soon ransom God's people. His life for theirs.

Imagine the joy among those who had awaited the day of deliverance. Imagine the gladness of heart among those who had looked forward to the day of His coming. God's promise. Fulfilled at last. Immanuel. God with us.

## **The God Who Is There**

**January 11, 1988**

ONE OF THE MOST remarkable battles ever fought in Canaan was a battle in which the armies of the Lord also fought.

God's people were frightened. There

were giants in the land. The Israelites wanted to return to Egypt, to captivity and to slavery. They were really scared. Their unbelief eventually cost them their lives. For forty years they wandered around in the desert until the older generation, who had no faith in God's power to deliver, died.

The forty years passed. The great day arrived. The day that God's people would enter the land God promised. And what an entrance that turned out to be.

The gateway to Canaan was well fortified. The well fortified city of Jericho with its mighty walls stood at that gateway. How would God's people ever gain entrance? Were the doubters correct?

Those mighty walls of Jericho crumbled at God's *command*. What an amazing sight that must have been. To the Israelites as well as the Canaanites. The Israelites never raised a finger. Miles of wall, thick enough to support houses, crumbled like a sand castle. At the command of God. The people stood back in amazement. How was this possible? This was visibly a mighty act of God.

Imagine the CN Tower in Toronto crumbling into a heap of rubble. Apparently of its own accord. What a spectacle.

The people were afraid. They were afraid of giants. But with God the impossible is possible.

The power of God is unimaginable.

God's Word is indescribable. God speaks and it happens.

Nothing is impossible for God. God is not limited by the laws that govern the universe. God stands above the law. Law is God's command. God's command is law.

The laws of gravity and the laws of physical properties and the laws of biotic life are an expression of God's will for creaturely existence. It is commonplace in the twentieth century to speak of natural laws. But there are no "natural" laws. That is, laws that exist in and of themselves as the evolutionists like to believe. The lawfulness of creation finds its origin in God. God commands, and it happens. All of creation functions in obedience to God's divine command.

That is what happened at Jericho. The walls of Jericho crumbled because God commanded the walls to crumble. God's command is law.

When Jesus walked upon the waters of the sea of Galilee, He did not break God's physical laws. As God, Jesus is master. He commanded that the water support His weight. And the water obeyed. Because His command is law.

When Jesus broke the five loaves and the fishes, He commanded the bread and fish to continue breaking until a crowd of four and, again, five thousand people had been fed. Jesus willed it. His will is law.



When Jesus commanded the water to turn into wine, wine it became. At His command. Vintage wine.

God is not subject to His creation. Creation is subject to Him. Creation exists in accordance with His divine command. God created the universe, and He upholds the universe and all that is in it by the power of His Word.

There is an intimate relationship between heaven and earth. Heaven is where God lives; the earth is the home of man. But the two are inseparable. Because both are God's creation, both exist in obedience to His divine will.

The great sin of institutions of Christian higher learning in our generation is that much of the awareness of this relationship has been lost. Secularism is the divorce of God from His universe. Secularism is the attempt to understand reality purely in terms of natural phenomena. But created reality cannot be understood in terms of natural phenomena. There are no natural phenomena. None at all. Created reality can only be understood in terms of its Creator. Any attempt to explain or understand created reality apart from God is secularism—divorcing God from His creation.

God's rule is the recurring theme of the Old and the New Testament. God Almighty is Creator of heaven and earth. He brought them into being. He upholds

them to this very day. By the power of His Word all things exist. Nothing exists in and of itself. All of creation is lawful. It functions in obedience to God's command.

There is no "natural" explanation for the crumbling walls of Jericho. There is no "natural" explanation for the parting of the Red Sea. There is no "natural" explanation for the manna that fell from heaven for forty years without interruption except on Sundays. There is no "natural" explanation for the floating axehead. And there is no "natural" explanation for the origin and function of the universe. Because there is nothing "natural" about any of these things. There is a secular explanation. But that secular explanation is secular by virtue of the fact that it has divorced God from the scene of His own creation. So "they" speak of a spontaneous explosion. The Big Bang.

All of creation continues to function in obedience to God's command. The snow that falls from heaven and the rain that rages into a flood. The buds that break forth into life in spring and the flowers that bloom. The lambs that are born and the cattle that die. All of creation lives at the command of God's Word. And Jesus Christ is that Word.

Human sensitivity, even Christian sensitivity, to the all pervasiveness of the Word of God is dulled because God's laws function faithfully from century to century. We take them for granted. When God does



*The crumbling of the walls of Jericho; at God's command its great walls were reduced to rubble.*

something we are not accustomed to, then we are impressed. When Jesus walks on the water or when He breaks a loaf of bread and feeds thousands of people. When walls crumble. But are these things any more a display of the almighty power of God than when a seed in the womb of a woman grows into a child and this child grows into an adult? Are they any more a display of God's great power than when the sun rises and the sun sets?

The almight of God is everywhere present in His universe. There will be no spring, unless God commands it. There will be no harvest, unless God blesses it. And there will be no peace in 1988, unless God wills it. We must once again come to realize God's intimate involvement in the day-to-day affairs of men. God's involvement in history today is as real as the crumbling of the walls of Jericho thousands of years ago.

## **Christian Scientists Embarrass the Church - Again**

**January 25, 1988**

FOR DECADES NOW many Christian scientists at leading Christian institutions of higher education have been defending and promoting Darwinian evolution in one form or another. They have been doing this with the heartfelt conviction that unless Christian academics jump onto the evolution bandwagon, Christianity will once again be discredited as unscientific. These Christian scientists never tire of reminding the Christian community that Christianity fell into disrepute in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the church opposed the new theories of Galileo Galilei. These Christian academics do not want history to repeat itself. They want to make certain that they, as Christians, are in the forefront of promoting evolution.

The consequences of this false belief are far-reaching. It means, among other things, that the biblical account of creation as recorded in Genesis has no bearing on our scientific inquiries into the origin of the cosmos. Some members of the Christian academic community repeatedly tell the Christian community at large that

the Genesis account is not to be taken literally. A literal interpretation of the creation account as recorded in Genesis would result in problems comparable to the ones the Christian church faced in the days of Galileo. How wrong these Christian scientists are is only now beginning to become evident.

A battle has been raging in the scientific community at large for decades. That battle concerns the origin of man. In Darwin's day non-Christians were generally agreed about the origin of man. Today the question of man's origin is little more than a dispute of an endless number of competing points of view. This disagreement is not recent. It has been raging for decades. What is recent is that this dispute among scientists is now beginning to surface at the public level.

The extent of the dispute is highlighted in an article entitled, "The Search for Adam and Eve," published in the January 11, 1988, issue of *Newsweek*. Every Christian concerned about the influences of non-Christian evolutionistic thought in Christian circles, especially academic institutions, should read this article. It is an eye-opener. It confirms beyond a reasonable doubt what many Christians have suspected for a long time. There is only one thing that scientists know with any scientific certainty about evolution: and that is, that they know absolutely nothing

with any certainty about the evolution of the human race.

For the benefit of those readers of *CR* who do not subscribe to *Newsweek* and who cannot readily avail themselves of an issue (if you are really interested, you can probably pick up a photocopy of this article for very little expense at your local library), I will quote a few key statements from the *Newsweek* article.

Scientists claim to have found our common ancestor—a woman who lived 200,000 years ago and left resilient genes that are carried by all mankind. Scientists are calling her Eve, but reluctantly.

When scientists announced their "discovery" of Eve last year, they rekindled perhaps the oldest human debate: where did we come from?... The mythmakers spun their tales on the same basic assumption as the scientists: that at some point we all share an ancestor. The scientists don't claim to have the *first* woman, merely a common ancestor—possibly one from the time when modern humans arose. What's startling about this Eve is that she lived 200,000 years ago. This date not only upset fundamentalists (the Bible's Eve was calculated to have lived 5,992 years ago), it challenges many evolutionists' conviction that the human family tree



began much earlier.

Eve has provoked a scientific controversy bigger even by the standards of anthropologists, who have few rivals at scholarly sniping. Their feuds normally begin when someone's grand theory of our lineage is contradicted by the unearthing of a few stones or bones.

**These quotations** from the *Newsweek* article clearly indicate that the contention of professors at Calvin College that the theory of evolution is supported by undisputed scientific evidence, is false. There is no agreement among evolutionists.

None whatsoever. The entire evolutionist debate is made up of nothing more than an endless series of conflicting theories. It is difficult to believe that in the name of these competing and conflicting theories, Christian scientists have abandoned the Genesis account of creation as unreliable and of no importance for scientific inquiry.

It is my firm conviction that the damage done by these Christian scientists to the cause of Christianity in the twentieth century is greater than that done by the Catholic Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries during the time of Galileo. The Christian scientific community has egg all over its scientific face. It has abandoned Genesis in favour of highly dubious and highly speculative theories which, we are now being told, are being discarded like the plague.

We are being told by scientists, that the work done by geneticists appears to indicate that human beings did not gradually evolve in different parts of the world. The geneticists are telling us that man evolved in only one place, and that evolution may have taken place as recently as 90,000 to 100,000 years ago. It was only a few years ago that Dr. Clarence Menninga, professor of anthropology at Calvin College, told his readers in *The Banner* that Lucy may have been an ancestor to Adam and Eve. Lucy is believed by anthropologists to have lived in Africa some 3,500,000 years ago. That

scientific claim was made on the basis of a handful of bones.

The extent to which Christian professors have embroiled the Christian church and the Christian community in this evolution nonsense is only now beginning to become apparent to the public. It is an embarrassment that promises to have implications that will far exceed the embarrassment of the Christian church in the day of Galileo.

Listen to what paleoanthropologists have to say about themselves and listen to the degree of uncertainty as that relates to their inquiries. This is a direct quote from the *Newsweek* article:

What bothers many of us paleontologists,” said Fred Smith of the University of Tennessee, “is the perception that this new data from DNA is so precise and scientific and that we paleontologists are just a bunch of stumbling old fools. But if you listen to the geneticists, you realize they’re as divided about their genetic data as we are about the bones. We may be stumbling fools, but we’re not any more stumbling than they are.

A little further on in the *Newsweek* article we are told,

Scientists have relied on bones ever since the 1850s, when Darwin published

his theory of evolution and some quarriers unearthed a strange skeleton in Germany’s Neander Valley. Was the stooped apelike figure a remnant of an ancient race? Leading scientists thought not. One declared it a Mongolian soldier from the Napoleonic Wars. A prominent anatomist concluded it was a recent “pathological idiot.”

Revealing, isn’t it? A popular article written for popular consumption in no less than a seven-page article in *Newsweek* succeeds in confirming one truth: Scientists know absolutely nothing with any certainty about the origin of the human race. Whereas anthropologists and paleoanthropologists used to believe, on the basis of their study of some old bones, that modern man has been walking the earth for at least 3,500,000 years, geneticists are now telling us that it may have been as recent as 90,000 years ago that man first appeared. And you can be certain of one thing. This soap opera of pseudo-scientific inquiry is only in its first installment. The real fun is yet to come.

The hoax is public. Darwinians have been leading the general public down the garden path for more than a century now. Through popular television programs and popular magazines such as *National Geographic*, scientists have convinced huge segments of the general public that

evolution is a scientific certainty. The article in *Newsweek* makes it manifestly clear that these scientists may indeed be little more than a sophisticated group of “bumbling fools.”

Scientific inquiry has indeed contributed much to society during the last number of centuries. Without scientific inquiry we would not be driving automobiles, watching television, flying from North America to Europe in a matter of hours or cooking our meals in a microwave oven. Scientific inquiry has resulted in numerous blessings for the medical profession. An entire book could be written on the benefits of science. This should not be disputed.

But many scientists have gone too far. The pretensions of science in the area of human inquiry seeking an answer to the question of the origin of the universe and the origin of man is unequalled in the annals of history. Pretension! Pretension! Pretension! is written across every pseudo-scientific article and book dealing with the question of origins. Scientists have abused the real and legitimate accomplishments of science to mislead the general public concerning the question of human origin. On the foundation of undisguised speculation and fabrication they have spun one grandiose theory after another and have attempted to legitimize their fanciful theories with the name Science.

Now, it's true that science can tell us some interesting things about man. People who specialize in studying old bones and the remnants of old civilizations are certainly in a position to tell us something about these civilizations. That is legitimate scientific inquiry. But to pick up a handful of bones in the Ethiopian desert in 1974 and declare that these bones are over three million years old on the basis of spurious scientific experiments is not science. It is simply an attempt to embroider human speculation in the cloak of science.

The pretentiousness and arrogance which characterize the dogmatic statements of non-Christian evolutionists is not uncommon in Christian circles either. Non-Christians do not have a monopoly on pretentiousness. Let me give you an example. There is a professor at Calvin College who has made it one of his concerns to indoctrinate members of the CRC into believing in an evolutionistic origin of both the universe and man. To convince the members of the CRC to believe in evolution, this professor uses an interesting approach not uncommon in non-Christian circles. He combines the insights of legitimate science with his own speculative pseudo-scientific beliefs. This is an example of what he does. He informs the audience that it is a demonstrable scientific fact that it takes the light from the sun a little more than eight minutes to reach the

earth. That is legitimate. And scientifically verifiable. He then goes on to suggest that there are heavenly bodies radiating light which are billions of light years removed from us. This professor argues that since we can now see the light from these distant stars, that light must have traveled billions of light years. That is self-evident, isn't it? God wouldn't put those stars up there to deceive us, would He? But whether or not God would deceive us is not the issue. We all know He wouldn't. But the professor might. He has made an assumption which is invalid. And unscientific. He has **assumed** that he knows how the universe came into being. He will go so far as to state, as a scientific fact, that the universe was created 15 billion years ago as a result of a huge explosion and that the universe has been receding into space ever since. But that is not a scientific fact. That is speculation. That is pseudo-science. That is interpreting the facts to fit a preconceived theory.

I don't pretend to know how God created the universe. I don't believe anybody knows. But it is pretentious on the part of this professor to teach the CRC community that he knows. Scientifically. He knows nothing of the kind. He doesn't know how the universe was created. He can only study the end result. And his theories may very well be dead wrong. It is very well possible, certainly theoretically, that at the moment of creation, the speed of light was

infinite. There are valid scientific theories dealing with this possibility. Now if a scientist accepts this possibility, it would fundamentally influence his determination of the age of the universe. It is a possibility that may not be discounted. Therefore it is nonsense for a professor to go around the community teaching that the universe, on the basis of scientific inquiry, is billions of years old. That insight is not the fruit of responsible scientific inquiry. That insight is a result of human speculation and pseudo-science.

For the same professor to teach that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are not history, but primeval history, that is, history that never happened, is terribly misleading and irresponsible.

The article, "The Search for Adam and Eve," in the January 11, 1988, issue of *Newsweek* confirms the truth about science and evolution: there is only one thing that scientists know with any certainty about evolution, and that is, that they know nothing with any certainty. They certainly don't know anything that would motivate the Christian church to discard the first eleven chapters of Genesis as history.



*The parliament of world religions, Chicago, 1893, continues on still today.*

## Academified Malarkey

**May 9, 1988**

THERE IS A new god in town. He is a favorite among academics. His name is **Process**.

**Process** is a god of no small accomplishments. He brought the entire universe into being. A long time ago. (And he is still at it?)

It all began fifteen billion years ago. There was no universe. Only one huge and highly condensed ball of matter. There was an explosion. The likes of which has never been seen or heard since. The massive ball of matter shattered into a billion pieces. **Process** had begun his work. A universe of countless stars and galaxies had been processed. In the beginning. Fifteen billion

years ago.

Among these countless galaxies there was the Milky Way. Distinguished from all the other galaxies. For it contained planets. And the most favored of all planets was the planet Earth. It was to become the processing place of the greatest process of all processes. The process that gave birth to life. The process of the evolution of a single cell.

Earth was a somber and dismal place. Without beauty and without life. Until **Process** began. And what a process it turned out to be.

As the eons passed on into history (primeval history of course) lifeless matter gradually proceeded to evolve into life-containing matter. Molten lava bubbled like soup and came to life.

The first traces (processes) of life were not very impressive. A single cell.



But over the eons, **Process** exerted his mighty evolutionary powers and the cells multiplied. And multiplied. And a single cell became a blade of grass. As time and **Process** united their contributions, the blade of grass evolved into a dandelion, the dandelion into a rose and the rose into a mighty oak.

What happened next was a process that is difficult to comprehend. Plant life proceeded to evolve into animal life. The mighty oak became a mere mouse. But the mouse eventually evolved into an elephant. It was a fine moment for the process of evolution. **Process** observed his handiwork. And was pleased. The universe had come a long way from its explosive beginning. But still it had not arrived. The greatest of all processes had yet to take place. The process that would give birth to man.

Man. The crowning achievement of a long evolution of processes. **Process** flexed his mighty processing muscles. Time, lots of time, and the process of continuous evolutionary development, that is, the process of continuous evolutionary processes, that is, the process of continuous processing processes, was about to experience his finest moment. The culminating achievement of all processes. Man!

Processing man was no small process. And **Process** knew it. To process a creature

capable of rational thought, feeling, imagination, speech, justice, love, and artistic creativity required all of **Process's** processing ingenuity. And it would take time. A lot of time.

**Process** had time on his side. Fifteen billion years to be exact. So **Process** decided to take his time. No sense mucking up the fine process of processing man by being overly ambitious. Processing man was no mean achievement. Therefore **Process** decided to ease himself into the task. It decided to experiment.

Rather than processing a perfect man from the outset, **Process** decided to let the process of continuous evolutionary development give birth to a primitive creature first. A creature that wasn't capable of rational thought, feeling, imagination, speech, justice, love, and artistic creativity.

*Modern* man has come to recognize this creature as *primitive* man. His immediate predecessor. This primitive creature was incapable of speech. It grunted and groaned. It had no imagination, no sense of justice. Might was right. It evolved within the confines of the unwritten law of the survival of the fittest. It had no sense of deity. It worshipped its belly. Only after millions of years did this *primitive* creature evolve the most rudimentary artistic abilities. Some scratchings on a wall.

For millions of years, **Process** observed the antics of these *primitive*

creatures. Only then did **Process** decide to let the evolutionary processes complete their work. Rational thought, feeling, imagination, speech, justice, love, and artistic creativeness gradually became the attributes of man.

And what an achievement. Non-primitive history began. A history of fire, pyramids, cities, ships, agricultural implements, radios, cars, and airplanes. The finest of music, Mozart, Beethoven and Bach. The greatest of art. Michelangelo, Rubens, and Rembrandt. And not over a period of millions and millions of years. No, **Process** had grown impatient with the processes of continuous evolutionary development. **Process** proceeded to let all this happen in a matter of only a few thousand years. Like the explosive rays of sunshine after an overcast day.

Then it happened. **Process** decided to have some fun. He was not without his sense of humor. **Process** gave man a soul. That was quite a process. The details of which had better be left unrecorded.

At least until such a time as when the psychologists and anthropologists get a firmer grip on reality. And until the Calvin College professors provide mankind with a somewhat more elaborate explanation of what they mean when they say that they have no difficulty believing that man and his belief in God are the end product of a “process of continuous evolutionary

development.”

### **Postscript:**

What is the Christian community to make of the ideas put forward by the Calvin professors? That Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother? That the universe is the product of an explosion? That history began millions of years before the account recorded in Genesis? That the first eleven chapters of Genesis are historical fiction, to be taken seriously but not literally? That speech, creative ability and belief in God are the end result of a long trial-and-error process of evolutionary development?

What is the Christian community to think of all this? The response can be summarized in a phrase—academified malarkey!

The account of the origin of the universe as described by Calvin College academics is nonsense, rubbish. It limps along like a one-legged centipede (which by the way is all the “leg” centipedes had once upon a time in their “continuous evolutionary development”).

What truly amazes me is the deathly pallor that hangs over the Christian community. The unnatural silence, as if at a wake.

The CRC community spends hundreds of millions of dollars annually on Christian education. And this community has no spokespeople who can challenge

the malarkey being spoon fed by Calvin professors?

Dordt College has appointed a committee to study the question of creation and evolution. A committee. Like the government. Towards what end? Is there no one at Dordt who can or who dares to challenge the idea that Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother or that Genesis is not historically reliable? If a committee of Dordt academics is studying the question of creation and evolution what, meanwhile, are these academics teaching their students?

And what of the Seminary, Trinity College, the Institute for Christian Studies, Redeemer College? Is there no David in their camps empowered by the Spirit of God to put an end to the blasphemous lies that the cosmos and man are the end product of a “process of continuous evolutionary development”? Are these institutions seriously inquiring if Adam may be the son of primitive parents?

And what about *The Banner*, our denominational paper? Has its editor, Andrew Kuyvenhoven, no insight to offer in respect to the controversy? Why did he give Howard Van Till no less than three full length, consecutive articles in the pages of *The Banner* permitting Van Till to put a biblical, confessional face on his unbiblical ideas? And why did Kuyvenhoven not ask Van Till to address the “Adam question”

and to explain the consequences of his assertion that Genesis 1-11 are not historical? No first Adam?

And was it not in the pages of *The Banner* that Clarence Menninga publically launched his trial balloon that Adam may have been the offspring of primitive parents, to see if the denomination would swallow that heresy? (See the Menninga interview in the Nov. 12, 1984 issue of *The Banner*).

What is Andrew Kuyvenhoven’s *Banner* trying to prove? That academics should be taken seriously, even when their teachings fly in the face of Scripture and our confessions? Adam, the son of primitive parents? Towards what end?

Heaven cries out for justice. Are there no prophets of God left in the CRC who are filled with the courage to defy the popular wisdom (sic) of our age?

## **Forget It! It Can’t Be Done!**

**July 18, 1988**

SOME CHRISTIANS have too high an opinion of themselves. They think they are going to help God usher in His Kingdom on earth. Satan thinks that is just great.

Saving people is no small undertaking. Have you ever tried to save someone? No, not from drowning. Nor from a fall off a cliff. That is not what I mean. I mean *really* save someone. Save them from the death they inherited by being the children of Adam. The fallen Adam.

During the early part of June I had occasion to spend a weekend in New York City. A hot weekend. One day the temperature actually hit 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius). And it wasn't much cooler at night. New York City is not an ideal place to be during a heatwave. Truth is New York City isn't an ideal place to be any day of the year. I certainly wouldn't want to raise my children there. The temptations of the flesh are beyond description. Especially in the core of the city.

Late one night a business associate of mine and I decided to visit Covenant House. If you read *Christian Renewal* regularly you will have read about Covenant House. It is a center that was founded by a Roman Catholic priest. A sort of halfway house that ministers to the needs of young runaways. Especially those who have fallen into the hands of pimps and become male or female prostitutes.

Covenant House is located in one of the seamiest districts of New York City. From there it sends its vans, equipped with coffee and cold pop, into the night to

provide refuge and a safe haven for those young children who desire to elude the destructive grip of their pimps.

My friend and I took a taxi to get there. After our visit we decided to walk back to our hotel room. Down 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. What a revelation.

As we made our way down 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, it occurred to me that life in Sodom and Gomorrah couldn't have been worse. Every conceivable human sexual vice is catered to. For a fistful of dollars the underworld belongs to anyone who cares to enter. Only the underworld is no longer underground. It has taken occupancy of prime real estate on the city's main streets. And on the stages of Broadway. Anyone who cares to witness the devastation of lawlessness need only walk the streets of the heart of New York City. It is not a pretty sight. Satan has his headquarters there.

The fruits of Satan's labors are not difficult to assess. As we walked down one city block after another, we passed scores of derelicts. Wasted human beings stretched out on cardboard in front of store windows. No homes, no families, no future. A state of existence firmly in the grip of death. An open display of the gratuities bestowed without favor upon the subjects of the prince of death.

But Satan's blatant influence is not limited to certain streets of New York City. His seamy influence has extended

to the airwaves of the city as well. When we returned to our hotel room, we turned on the T.V. No, not to one of those special stations commonly available in a growing number of hotels that provide pornographic movies. This was a regular station in the same line-up as CBC and NBC. Only this station catered to the desires and interests of homosexuals. A *special* station for homosexuals. Truly a tribute to Satan's power and influence at a time when hospital beds are being filled by those dying of AIDS. People not only sin; they revel in their sin. They pretend that it is normal; merely an "alternative lifestyle."

Anyone in the Christian church who has been bitten by the bug of "alternate lifestyle" should visit New York City. Whether they have any business there or not. New York City will teach them an unforgettable lesson in what "alternate lifestyles" are all about. There is a Christian lifestyle. And then, there are alternate lifestyles. The alternate lifestyles are firmly in the grip of him who lies and lies about life. He promises life, delivers death. No façade. In New York City.

Disobedient sons of Adam. It is well to remember that we all fall into that category. The difference is that some of us have been redeemed; others haven't. But who does the redeeming?

Who can save? Who can redeem? The entire world would be an extension of the

core of New York City if someone couldn't. Yet you and I cannot even save ourselves, let alone another. Can we? Really! Have you ever tried to save someone? Anyone?

You are concerned about the future. You want to improve life, change society for the better. Be more than a Christian who has a grip on Scripture and the confessions. You don't *merely* want to be a believer who provides for the widows and the orphans. You want to be a doer. You want to save not only individuals; you want to save society. Influence governments. Only there is a "small" problem. Satan is standing in your way. The prince of this world. To redeem anything at all you must get past Satan. No! More than that. You must crush his head.

Yes, you must crush the head of the destroyer of life. To improve the quality of life and the future. Disobedient son of Adam? Can you clean up the mess in the heart of the people in New York City? The mess that Satan has made? Can you clean up the mess that is in your own life? The mess between you and your wife, you and your children? The mess that Satan has made? Can you clean up that mess? Can you provide for a better future?

The history of those who have tried to improve the future is not very impressive. The kings of Israel had a difficult time. Especially with their own lives. Satan is a worthy opponent. He can and he will crush the life out of anyone. Anyone at all. Unless

that person has been reclaimed by God. By His power.

Three times Satan attempted to crush the life out of Jesus. “Hungry? Why not turn those stones into bread? You can do it.” And later, “Throw Yourself off the highest point of the temple, Jesus. Angels will catch You.” And later still, “Bow down before me and I will give You the kingdoms of this world.”

Three times Jesus stood up to Satan. Three times He refused to eat from Satan’s tree. Can you do that? Disobedient son of Adam? You will have to if *you* want to improve the future. Otherwise put your hand in Jesus’ hand.

Some Christians in Canada are trying to change the future of the abortion holocaust in this country. Are they walking hand in hand with Jesus and proclaiming, “Thus says our God”? No they are not. They are trying to change the future by entering into a dialogue with Satan. In the shade of his tree. With an apple in their mouth. They have silenced Jesus by “arguing” that it is alright to condone abortion for “a certain length of time after conception.” Never mind that John leapt in his mother’s *womb* when he detected the presence of Jesus in the womb of Mary. Abortionists have bought Satan’s lie that the kingdom of this world and its splendor can be obtained by bowing down to Satan and paying homage to him. In that there is no future.

## The Question Deserves an Answer

September 26, 1988

1. ADAM WAS NOT the first truly human being. Perhaps Adam was a Neanderthal. Neanderthals were not modern men, not truly human. They were nothing more than a link in the chain of evolution that eventually evolved into modern men. But Adam himself was not a modern man. Perhaps he was a Neanderthal, a primitive creature that supposedly pre-dated modern man. That is what Clarence Menninga is saying when he writes that perhaps Adam was a Neanderthal.
2. Modern “science” teaches that there were supposedly thousands and perhaps millions of Neanderthals living on earth at one time. Modern science also teaches that the Neanderthals evolved from animals. So if Adam was perhaps a Neanderthal, then Adam also evolved from animals. So maybe the questioner’s question isn’t as dumb or foolish as Dr. Menninga would like *The Banner* reader to believe.
3. If Adam was perhaps a Neanderthal, then it follows that Adam was a sinner from the day he was born unless one believes the Neanderthals didn’t sin.

Of course, if the Neanderthals did sin, perhaps Dr. Menninga is suggesting that Adam's "conception" was immaculate. That, of course, would be blasphemy. Or perhaps Dr. Menninga is suggesting that since the Neanderthals weren't modern humans, they weren't really human at all. They were a more advanced form of animal life. In that case Dr. Menninga is suggesting that perhaps Adam was an animal. That would really be blasphemy.

Whatever it is that Dr. Menninga is suggesting when he writes that perhaps Adam was a Neanderthal, one thing is clear: The questioner who asked the question in the September 5 issue of *The Banner*, is perfectly justified in asking the question. Dr. Menninga in turn should quit serving up pious platitudes like "I have always confessed that Adam and Eve of the Scriptures were the first human beings..." Menninga has confessed nothing of the kind. He **has** confessed that perhaps Adam was a Neanderthal. On page 11 of the November 12, 1984 issue of *The Banner*.

So Menninga should quit beating around the bush and confounding his readers with meaningless platitudes. He should do the honorable thing. **He should answer the question.**

For those who are not yet convinced that Menninga's thinking and "perhapsing" is fundamentally out of tune with what the

Scriptures reveal, let's take a look at one of Menninga's more recent "confessions." In the study committee's report submitted to the Calvin College Board of Trustees, Menninga states: "Maybe the dust (out of which Scripture says Adam was formed, JH) is a figure of speech and maybe God formed Adam and Eve by enabling a more primitive mother to give birth to an offspring who possessed the image of God."

"A more primitive mother..." More primitive than what? More primitive than Adam who himself has not aspired to become a human being? Perhaps Adam himself may have been only a Neanderthal. A precursor to human beings. And upon this primitive creature, born of an even more primitive mother, God bestowed His image? Really, Dr. Menninga. Even pagans set limits to their fantasizing. And that is all you are doing, stacking one absurd fantasy upon another.

But here comes the crunch. In your scenario, and it is your scenario, of placing a sinless Adam among the rabble of evolution, where does the historic fall into sin come into the picture? It is a legitimate question. One that deserves an answer. And you haven't answered it.

Every Christian on earth confesses that Adam is the head of the human race. And that in Adam we have all sinned. But your "maybeing" and "perhapsing" has turned that confession into a joke. In an attempt to

reconcile the pagan fantasizing about the origin of man with the Genesis account of creation, you are making a mockery out of God's Word.

What scientific grounds do you have for making your speculations? Did Adam and Eve have primitive parents? Were these primitive parents an advanced form of animal life? Or were they human? If human, were they sinners? If animal, is Adam the product of animal life? How did Adam and Eve live in a state of sinlessness among primitive parents? Parents who from birth taught Adam and Eve their "sinful" lifestyle and their animal behavior.

And we could go on. Were Adam and Eve brother and sister? Were they perhaps twins? Or did they have different parents? Where did they meet? In the Garden of Eden? When and how? How old were they? Did their primitive parents observe Adam and Eve walking and talking with God? Did their parents "observe" their fall into sin? Did Adam and Eve's children play with the children of more primitive parents? What influence did these primitive creatures exercise upon the creatures that bore God's image? And did Adam and Eve the Neanderthals give birth to less primitive children which eventually evolved into human beings? Or did the lines of the human race develop concurrently? Adam's less primitive line; Neanderthal's more primitive line?

Quite a scenario, Dr. Menninga. Quite a scenario. You owe it to your denomination to sketch in a few of the details. I appreciate your reluctance to do so. And can empathize with your non-answer to the questioner in *The Banner*. If you ever get around to giving the questioner a straight answer, you may as well pack your academic bags and vacate your office on the Calvin College campus.

*Meanwhile we have a "committee" studying this nonsense for three years.* And here I must take off my hat to the establishment. It is no mean accomplishment to succeed in getting a reformed synodical committee to study the question of whether or not Adam and Eve were the children of primitive parents. Because, as the questioner in *The Banner* so well comprehends, *that* is what the creation-evolution debate is really all about.

## **The Servant of the Lord**

**December 12, 1988**

LIKE THE DRIVEN WIND. But God's people will not listen. The sinews of their neck are as iron and their forehead impenetrable as bronze. Before God's judgment is completed, they will all go into captivity.

God, however, will not give His glory to another. A remarkable thing now



happens. Before the kingdom of Judah is also led into captivity and more than seven hundred years before the fact, Isaiah foretells with prophetic accuracy, the birth of the great Servant of the LORD. The Messiah will come to ransom His people and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Yes, Israel as a nation had failed. God's plan to open the eyes of the peoples throughout the world and to bring salvation to all mankind was a role intended for Israel. But Israel, as disobedient servant of the LORD, failed. Isaiah now prophesies that the great Servant of the LORD would not fail to realize God's purpose of bringing salvation to the peoples of every tribe and every nation throughout all the earth.

No, the arm of the LORD is not too short to save. God's purpose will be accomplished. Of this the prophecy of Isaiah is a ringing testimony, especially the ninth and fifty-third chapters of the book that carries his name. "For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders..."

"He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever."

What a comfort the words are for the small remnant that still looked to God for its salvation.

Isaiah did not live to see this prophecy

fulfilled. But you and I know that it came to pass as God decreed. A prophet was born in Israel. He proclaimed the year of God's favor. He went into the temple and read from the scroll of Isaiah that section which is known today as the sixty-first chapter. He concluded, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

And this is the great event which we commemorate at Christmas: That God became one of us. He dwelt among us and gave us to drink of the living waters of His Word. The ultimate defeat of God's archenemy who made all the nations to drink of the maddening wine of Babylon's adulteries is now sealed. The Lamb of God has conquered and overcome. This great Servant was faithful to the end. Christ drank the last dregs of the wine of God's fury so that you and I might be set free. Where now, O death, is your victory?

We now await with great expectation the appearance of our Deliverer for He will come again. God Himself has promised that He will not tarry but neither will He return until the very last sheep has been brought into God's fold. God's timetable is not our timetable.

Yes, He is coming!

On that great day all who believed and called upon His name will behold the glory of God. For those who, in spite of the brokenness of their own lives, and by



*A human skull facing a supposed Neanderthal skull, are these two separate species? Human DNA today identifies a mix with Neanderthals, this should mean that Neanderthals are actually human beings like you and me.*

the grace of God, have laid up treasures in heaven, an eternal existence awaits in a new heaven and on a new earth. Satan and sin and death; sickness and loneliness; hunger and pain; hate and jealousy—these will be banished from God’s creation. Oh Lord, our Lord, how glorious will be that day.

It is Christmas 1988. Oh how we thank You, God, for Your Son and our Savior. Maranatha.

## Stupid Ideas

**February 6, 1989**

THEY COULD NOT TALK to the primitive creatures that they had earlier lived with because these creatures did not have the

gift of speech.

Adam and Eve were very happy together. They loved God. And they loved each other. For a while. Then something very terrible happened. Adam and Eve sinned. We don’t know exactly what that means, children. There is a story about that in the early chapters of the Bible. But that is all it is. A story. A story in which God means to teach us a deep, spiritual truth. And that truth is that little children who were born of primitive mothers, perfect and without sin, somehow became sinners. How tragic. God was sorry too. He told Adam and Eve that their good life was over. Now they would have to work for a living just like their primitive parents. By the sweat of their brow.

But God also comforted Adam and Eve. He told them that someday a Savior would be born. This Savior would deliver

many from their sin. This didn't include Adam's and Eve's parents because they weren't human. Adam and Eve were a little bit sad about that. Especially since there were already millions of creatures just like their parents living on the earth. But God knows best, children.

Yes, ideas have consequences. And the idea that Adam had a primitive mother will have the consequence that before long our children are going to take the entire Bible with a grain of salt. And rightly so. Who is going to worship a God who tells fantastic fairy tales as those recorded in the first eleven chapters of Genesis?

The Calvin College professors state again and again that they believe in Adam. Not in the Adam of Genesis. But in the Adam who is the son of a primitive mother. The Adam who is the final product of evolution.

Well, you can take your choice. You can take their word for it or you can take God's Word.

If you choose for God's Word, how long are you going to continue to let these men teach these ideas to your children?

## Satan Looking at the Dead Body of Jesus

**March 20, 1989**

IT WAS OVER. Once again Satan had gained the upper hand. Years ago he had brought death to the first Adam, and in Adam's death he had sealed the death of the entire human race. There was only one Man among all of humanity who stood a chance of foiling his plans. That Man was the Anointed One, the Christ. And here Christ lay, a corpse, dead at Satan's feet. Satan had won. The death of the human race and the annihilation of God's creation had now been assured. Satan had destroyed the Christ, his last great obstacle.

Even those closest to Jesus shared Satan's point of view. The Christ was dead. Hadn't they themselves laid His remains to rest in the grave of Joseph of Arimathea? In mortal fear of their own lives they now sat huddled in upper rooms and elsewhere, dreading that each knock on the door might announce the arrival of the dreaded Roman militia who would take them to prison and death.

Yes, the opinion was universal. Christ was dead.

And yet...

An element of doubt remained. That doubt was artistically and majestically

captured a century ago by a Russian painter of German descent, Sascha Schneider, in his painting that carried the inscription: “Satan looking at the dead body of Jesus.”

The title alone serves to inform us that we have a subject here worthy of our attention. Satan, the embodiment of all the hatred that has been poured out over the nations all these thousands of years, looking at the *dead body* of Jesus. What a presentation on canvas. Two enemies. The one responsible for the death of the other: what a wealth of joy for the one still living.

On his canvas, Schneider shows Satan standing in the foreground. His stature is overwhelming, his countenance bright. With penetrating eye and proud head, an expression of pure delight on his face. His eyes riveted upon Jesus’ dead body. The work of his hands, that lifeless body.

And yet Schneider’s canvas reveals something in the countenance of Satan that does not speak of joy. A trace of terror is present on that face. Oh, the facts cannot be denied. Christ is dead. Satan has His dead body to show for it, lying at his feet. And yet there is a quiet majesty present in that body. Even in death. And this quiet majesty terrifies Satan. It causes him to shudder. And rightly so.

There have been instances before when Satan lost his grip on death. A long time ago, in the days of Elijah, it happened. And again in the days of Elisha someone

had been recalled from the dead. But they had again died. Recently there had again been a number of awakenings. Why, this very Jesus, lying dead at Satan’s feet, had awakened a young girl. And more recently Jesus had awakened His friend Lazarus after his dead body had already begun to decompose. More unnerving still had been the earthquake on Good Friday and the opening of graves when many holy people who had fallen asleep were awakened from the dead. But Satan had reason to believe that these people would die again.

There he stood, at the feet of Jesus. Triumphant, yet in doubt. Had he really dealt the second Adam as fatal a blow as the first? Satan didn’t have long to live with his doubts.

On Easter morning the majesty of God was heard in the thundering violence of an earthquake. Two days earlier, on Friday, the earth had shaken and groaned at the death of the Son of Man and the awakening of many. Now it thundered again as God Almighty raised His Son from the dead. The angel of the Lord, his appearance like lightning and his clothes white as snow, descended from heaven and rolled back the stone. Christ had risen. The powerful and well-armed guards guarding the tomb became as dead men. And when the women came to the grave to grieve over the body, the angel showed them the empty place where Jesus had lain.



*Satan looking at the dead Jesus by the Russian-German artist Sascha Schneider.*

Satan's apparent triumph had been short-lived. His worst fears had now been realized. The body was not there. Christ had risen.

The great drama of salvation had come to its climax. He who had laid dead at Satan's feet was alive. Satan shuddered. His powerful hold on death had been broken. Christ has now freed all those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Heb. 2:14,15). What Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, and Daniel could not accomplish, had now been accomplished by the Son of Man. The power of Satan had been shattered, his dominion over death crushed. In His death Christ set us free.

It was no small accomplishment, this death of Christ. Though entire battalions of angels stood at His command, though He could have crushed the might of Rome in minutes, God's justice demanded that in the day that man ate from the tree, made a covenant with Satan, disobeyed his God — in that day man would surely die. Death was required by God's justice. For you and me that meant eternal death. It is that death that the Son of God died for us. And in that death He made complete satisfaction for all our disobedience.

Do you realize, dear reader, what all this means? Our disobedience, our death sentence?

Our natural tendency is to liberate,

to free ourselves. The revolutionary blood flows freely through our veins. That certainly was Peter's inclination. That is why Christ's rebuff of Peter was so harsh: "Get behind Me, Satan!" It was Satan who had wanted to deny Jesus His road to the cross. And Peter agreed with Satan. It was again Satan who had inspired Peter to draw his sword in Gethsemane and thereby turn Christ's spiritual battle with Satan into a battle of flesh and blood. That battle Satan would surely have won.

The revolutionary blood that pulsed through Peter's veins relied on its own might and strength for deliverance from Satan. Peter believed that he, Peter, possessed the power to thwart the design of Satan. Not until he denied his Lord three times, did Peter realize how powerless he was in the hands of Satan.

Those who think that they can deliver themselves from the power of Satan have never stood beside Sascha Schneider and observed the triumphant look upon Satan's face as Satan viewed the dead body of Jesus. They have not understood the biblical revelation of the terribly destructive power of sin and the measure of God's wrath. Jesus died at Satan's feet! Think about it: Jesus, dead! The Son of God, dead. He who dwelled with God from before the creation of the universe, dead. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, dead.

There are those today who are

developing a new heresy. This new heresy teaches that man must join God in liberating mankind from injustice and war, from oppression and iniquity. In short, man must deliver himself from Satan. This new heresy is called liberation theology. It is so popular in revolutionary circles that even Fidel Castro, one of the greatest oppressors of Christianity in the twentieth century, praises it.

In truth the work and vision of liberation theologians and their adherents is utterly pathetic. While promising peace, they deliver guns for war. While promising equality, they sow death and destruction. Because the theology of liberation advocates a worldview which relies upon its own power and strength for deliverance, it readily becomes a prey of Satan.

There is no power in all of creation which can stand up against the power of Satan. None at all. Those who promise universal peace and an equitable redistribution of the world's wealth promise a utopia they cannot deliver. Satan will see to that.

The Heidelberg Catechism puts it well. Not only can we not make restitution for the evil we have already committed, we daily increase our indebtedness to God. Such is the power of sin. Dead at the feet of Satan.

There is only one pathway to deliverance; only one pathway from death

to life. There is only one pathway through Satan's deadly battlefield. And that is to pray: "For Christ's sake, forgive us, God. For Christ's sake!"

There is *nothing*, absolutely *nothing* that man can contribute towards his own liberation. *Nothing*. There is *nothing* that he can do, there is *nothing* that he can say, there is *nothing* that he can promise or accomplish that will make the least difference. Except to say: "Forgive me, Father! For Christ's sake! Teach me to live a life of gratitude." And even the power to say that must be given us by God.

It is Easter. Let us go back one hundred years in time and stand with Sascha Schneider in front of his canvas and look at Satan looking at the dead body of Jesus. The power of sin—death. Your sin and mine, not His own. God demanded it.

The sins of the world. Paid in full. Yours and mine and millions more. "Since the children have flesh and blood, Christ too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy Satan who holds the power of death and free all those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Heb. 2:14,15).

Christ arose. We are free. The power of death is truly broken. We need not and cannot liberate ourselves. Only God can do that. All God asks of us now is that we live a life of obedient gratitude. For Christ's sake, that is now possible. Through the work

of the Holy Spirit.

## No Connection

**April 10, 1989**

"THE SEVEN-DAY chronology that we find in Genesis 1 has no connection with the actual chronology of the Creator's continuous dynamic action in the cosmos... The particular acts depicted in the story of the Creator are not the events of creative action reported with photographic realism but rather imaginative illustrations of the way in which God and the Creation are related."

Did you know that? The opening words of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," are said to have no connection with the actual chronology of the Creator's continuous dynamic action in the cosmos? No connection.

Quite a novel idea. The story of creation as recorded in the book of Genesis is said to have no connection to how the creation actually came into being. The Genesis account of the origin of the universe is not to be taken literally. It doesn't actually tell us what happened. Genesis merely establishes a relationship — the relationship between God and His creation. Don't read any more into it. Of course, no one bothers to tell us what that relationship is.

The author is very careful in his choice of words. He talks about the Story of the Creator when he refers to Genesis; not the Story of Creation. Why? Because he believes that Genesis does not tell us the story of creation. Genesis merely gives us “imaginative illustrations of the way in which God and the creation are related.”

When reading the first three chapters of Genesis, the reader is struck by the numbers of “imaginative illustrations” used by God. Three entire chapters of illustrations.

And that’s not all. The same author suggests that the entire first eleven chapters of Genesis ought to be read that way. As “imaginative illustrations”. The fall of man, Cain and Abel, the flood, God’s covenant with Noah, the table of nations in Genesis 10, the tower of Babel. All of these biblical accounts are to be read not as *actual history* but as “*imaginative illustrations*.” Illustrations of what? How God and creation are related? If what is recorded did not actually happen how can there be a relationship?

Why this insistence to deny the event-character of Genesis 1-11? Because in 1859 Charles Darwin wrote a book, *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection*. Since that time the belief that the universe and life on earth originated through a process of continuous evolutionary development has been elevated from theory to dogma. Christians and non-christians alike have

gradually accepted the idea—the dogma—that evolutionary process accounts for the origin and development of creation.

That is why reformed Christians are urged by Calvin College professor, Howard Van Till, in his book *The Fourth Day* to view the Genesis account of creation as “imaginative illustrations.” Whatever that is supposed to mean.

Fair enough. For the sake of argument, let’s view the first chapters of Genesis as “imaginative illustrations.”

Remember, once you agree to view the Genesis account as **imaginative**, you may no longer take that account literally. Van Till makes this point repeatedly in his book, *The Fourth Day*. He writes: “Within the book of Genesis, the first eleven chapters form a body of primeval history...” (page 81). And on page 83 he writes, “Though it (primeval history) is not to be taken literally, it is to be taken seriously.”

The ground rules for reading the first eleven chapters of Genesis in this unique fashion have been established. The early chapters of Genesis are primeval history. That is, not to be taken literally. The events and people referred to in early Genesis are imaginative illustrations. And what is imagined is not real. That is the whole point of Van Till’s book. Or is it?

Van Till’s book has an *index* of names and subjects. But you won’t find Adam



listed in that index. Nor will you find the names of Eve or Noah for that matter. And why should you? If the events and people recorded in the first eleven chapters of Genesis are merely “imaginative illustrations,” these people, as historical figures, did not actually exist. So why include them in the index?

Van Till has been called on the carpet by the Board of Trustees of Calvin College where he teaches. And he has been asked, “Do you believe in Adam as a historical person and do you believe in the fall of the human race into sin through its head, Adam?”

The answer to these questions to any reader of *The Fourth Day* is obvious. Van Till has already answered these questions in his book. Genesis 1-11 is primeval history. The early chapters of Genesis are “imaginative illustrations.” So the obvious conclusion by any freshman student in Van Till’s class would have been, “No, Adam is not a historical figure. And the Fall as recorded in Genesis 3 is not a historical event.” Can’t you read?

Why ask the questions at all? Can’t the members of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College read? Haven’t they read *The Fourth Day*? Van Till has answered their questions emphatically in his book. Genesis is primeval history. The facts depicted in Genesis are “imaginative illustrations.” IMAGINATIVE! ILLUSTRATIONS! Not

historical facts!

So what did Van Till say when he appeared before the Board of Trustees? He said that Adam was a historical person. He also said that the Fall into sin was a historical event. If Van Till had worked at a bank he would have been charged with fraud.

So why doesn’t Van Till do the obvious—renounce the ideas in his book and withdraw the book from publication?

Van Till has told the Board of Trustees of Calvin that he believes that Adam is a historical figure. And he has told the Board that man’s fall into sin was a historical event. Not primeval history, not imaginative illustrations.

So why not send the committee appointed by synod to look into Van Till’s ideas home? Van Till has already conceded that he didn’t really mean what he wrote about Adam in his book.

Or did he? Snow storms are not uncommon on the Calvin College campus during June, July, and August. Imaginatively speaking, of course. Because what I really have in mind is not so much a snow storm as a snow job. A snow job to blind the Calvin constituency to what it is that Van Till and his colleagues are teaching. A snow job that enables Van Till to speak with a forked tongue. One thing to the Trustees and another to the students. But that is subject

matter for the next Table Talk.

## Have You Met Robinson Crusoe?

**April 24, 1989**

HAVE YOU MET Robinson Crusoe? *Robinson Crusoe*, the book, was first published on April 25, 1719. It delighted everyone. By the time the twentieth century rolled around, more than 700 editions, translations and initiations had been printed. Jaques Offenbach put the Great Castaway into an opera. And in our century Robinson Crusoe's adventures were turned into motion pictures. Even the Eskimos have a translation of it.

Robinson Crusoe is as "real" to us as the man next door. He is the creation of author Daniel Defoe. Robinson Crusoe has become part of that great tradition of literature known as **imaginative** literature.

Daniel Defoe created the character, Robinson Crusoe, to entertain and to instruct his readers. Robinson Crusoe is the product of Defoe's imagination.

What follows is what one book says about the lessons to be learned from reading the book. "*Robinson Crusoe* is not — or is only at first — a story of survival. He is cast away, not on a desert island,

but on one richly hospitable to human living. One by one, he moves through the three stages that may be said to represent man's earliest development: the gathering of wild foods, farming, and the keeping of herds. Crusoe is building himself a one-man civilization... What has happened to Crusoe has happened to many a civilization in human history: a few things salvaged and a beginning again."

Now imagine that a professor of English literature at Calvin College began to teach his students that Robinson Crusoe was a historical figure. That he was born in such and such a town, in such and such a country and had so and so as his parents. Such a professor would soon become the laughing stock of the academic community. Crusoe never existed.

*Robinson Crusoe* has become part of that great tradition of literature known as **imaginative** literature. Folk lore, if you will. The intent of such literature is to entertain and to instruct. But it is certainly not intended to be taken literally, taken as historical fact. And any literature professor doing so would quickly identify himself as a fool.

*Robinson Crusoe* as the creation of Daniel Defoe is nevertheless very "real." And the lesson which Defoe attempts to teach individuals and society should nevertheless be taken very seriously.

But no one in his right mind would

want to claim that the account of *Robinson Crusoe* in all its detail is *both* imaginative literature and historical fact.

No one?

A professor at Calvin College has published the following statement about the first eleven chapters of Genesis in which certain details of the creation of the earth, plant life and animal life, and man and woman are recorded. This is what the professor has written: **“The particular acts depicted in the Story of the Creator are not the events of creative action... but rather imaginative illustrations of the way in which God and the Creation are related.”**

Reader, note well, “...not the events of creative action... but rather imaginative illustrations...”

The author, Calvin College professor Howard Van Till, has rendered the first eleven chapters of Genesis part of the great tradition of literature known as **imaginative** literature. On par with Daniel Defoe’s great imaginative creation, *Robinson Crusoe*.

Van Till, in his book, *The Fourth Day*, repeatedly warns his readers not to take the events described in the first eleven chapters of Genesis literally. Because those events described in Genesis are not part of the historical record. They are imaginative illustrations of the way in which God and

the Creation are related.

The reader of Van Till’s book must therefore conclude that Adam, like Robinson Crusoe, is an “imaginative illustration” and not a historical figure. The creation of Adam as recorded in Genesis is not to be taken literally. But it is at this juncture that Van Till’s deception becomes manifest. When asked if he, Van Till, believed in Adam as a historical person, Van Till replied that he did. All the while insisting on his earlier contention that the biblical account of the creation of Adam is not an event of creative action but an imaginative illustration of the way in which God and the creation relate.

IT HAS HAPPENED! AND IS HAPPENING! AT CALVIN COLLEGE! A professor is advancing an argument that would transform all imaginative literature into historical fact. Robinson Crusoe can be said to be an historical person by virtue of this reasoning. Worse yet. Adam has also become an “imaginative illustration.” And when it suits, Adam is a historical person. The son of a primitive mother if the argument demands it.

We have all been caught in blinding snow storms at one time or another (unless we are fortunate enough to live in the sunnier part of the hemisphere). Snowstorms can be so blinding that a person cannot distinguish his own hand in front of his own face.



*Friday (left) and Robinson Crusoe, lithograph by Currier & Ives, c. 1874.*

But there are also snowstorms of man's creation. They are called snow-jobs. And their function is to blind a constituency to the true nature of issues under discussion.

The president of Calvin College and the board of trustees of Calvin College have repeatedly told the Christian Reformed constituency that the Calvin professors in question (Van Till, Menninga, etc.) believe that Adam and Eve are historical people. That is in fact a snow job. The Adam and Eve that the professors claim to believe in are figments of their own imagination. They are not the Adam and Eve revealed in Scripture. The Adam referred to in the New Testament by Paul and by Christ. The Adam and Eve of Scripture, historical

people, have been rejected. They are said to be part of primeval history. A history not to be taken literally. They are said to be an Adam and Eve that function as imaginative illustrations. They are not the product of the miraculous, creative acts of God.

How did Van Till's Adam and Eve come into being? Through a process of continuous evolutionary development. Reflect on that for a moment and consider the implications. How did Clarence Menninga's Adam and Eve come into being? As the offspring of *primitive parents* who were not human.

The professors and the boards and administrators at Calvin College have been

making monkeys out of members of the Christian Reformed Church. They have unleashed a snowstorm of misinformation that is aimed at blinding the most perceptive.

Do they really expect the denomination to believe that the Adam and Eve of Howard Van Till and Clarence Menninga have **anything** in common with the Adam and Eve of scripture? The products of evolution? The offspring of primitive creatures?

They may as well ask the denomination to believe that Robinson Crusoe was a contemporary of Christopher Columbus and co-discoverer of the Americas. That idea is no less preposterous than the idea that professors who believe Adam and Eve had primitive creatures for parents, believe in the Adam and Eve revealed in Scripture.

Adam an “imaginative illustration”? Humbug! Eve the daughter of a speechless ape? Believe that and you no doubt met Robinson Crusoe at a congregation meeting. Or in your dreams. Dreams—that is where the Calvin professors appear to be going for their insight on the origin of Adam and Eve.

It is a bold deception on the part of the Calvin administration to suggest that this product of evolution has anything in common with the Adam revealed in Scripture. And the second Adam!

## Bridge over Troubled Waters?

**May 15, 1989**

IN THE April 3, 1989 issue of *The Banner*, Gordon Spykman (professor of Religion at Calvin College) discusses some of the issues related to the creation/evolution controversy in the CRC.

Spykman identifies two camps, two positions. The one side holds to “the long-accepted viewpoint.” This is called position X. The other side advocates a “newly proposed viewpoint.” This is called position Y.

In order for these two sides to come together, Spykman suggests that there has to be a certain amount of give-and-take on both sides. Since most, if not all readers of *Christian Renewal* hold to “the long-accepted viewpoint,” it is this view in particular that we want to take a close look at in this article. What are the weaknesses of “the long-accepted viewpoint” that Spykman calls attention to? How much give-and-take does there have to be among those holding to the “long-accepted viewpoint” to meaningfully begin the process of building bridges from the one side to the other and restore harmony in the CRC? Spykman identifies three areas of concern. He states that those defending

“the long-established position” should come prepared to say at least the following: **SCIENCE.** Spykman wants to make clear that those holding to “the long-established position” on the creation of the cosmos and man are not “down on science.” That doing science is one important way of responding to general revelation and pursuing our cultural mandate.

I think that history attests to the important place those who hold to “the long-established viewpoint” ascribe to science. After all, did those people not stand in the forefront when the time came to found Calvin College, Dordt College, Trinity College, the Institute for Christian Studies and Redeemer College? Defenders of “the long-established position” on creation do not object to science. On the contrary. Their emphasis has always been to study science in the light of Scripture. It is not science they object to but the pretended autonomy of science which seeks to establish itself as a god of the modern era.

One of the boldest expressions of the pretensions of science is the theory of evolution or the theory of origins. Secular science today seeks to speak with authority on a subject outside of the competence of its field of study. Let me offer an illustration. Science has pontificated for decades that man is a descendant of the apes. Microbiology

has demonstrated conclusively that this is genetically impossible. So what do the science textbooks teach now? That man and apes are two separate lines descending from one common ancestor. What common ancestor? **No one knows.** With any certainty. This is not an example of the proper activity of science to assemble facts. It is a clear-cut example of scientists constructing myths. Out of bones.

This is what Michael Denton writes in his recent book, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*: “By its very nature, evolution cannot be substantiated in the way that it is usual in science by experiment and direct observation. Neither Darwin nor any subsequent biologist has ever witnessed the evolution of one new species as it actually occurs.” Yet that is exactly how it is presented in textbooks. As indisputable, proven, scientific fact.

The extent to which the pretensions of science have been elevated in our generation are captured in the following statement by Michael Denton: “Although it is nonsense to claim that Darwin’s theory is a fact, ironically both Huxley and Dawkins are right in the sense that, once a community has elevated a theory into self-evident truth, its defence becomes irrelevant and there is no longer any point in having to establish its validity by reference to empirical facts.”

No, those holding to “the long-

established position” on creation do not object to legitimate science. They do however object to the pretensions of scientists. And the theory of evolution is the mother of some of the most fantastic pretensions ever formulated by scientists.

**THE DAYS IN GENESIS.** Spykman goes on to write in his *Banner* article that in order to set the stage for building bridges between the two factions in the CRC, “defenders of ‘the long-accepted viewpoint’ must be ready to allow a measure of flexibility in understanding what the word *day* means in Genesis.” The discussion should not get stymied in advance by the age-of-the-earth question.

Let’s face it. No one can come to a scientific understanding of the days of creation. All we can know about those days is what God has revealed to us. Was God pulling our scientific leg or addressing our ignorance when He wrote: “And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.” And God saw that it was good.

And could God not have “corrected” our (mis)understanding of our understanding of “days” in Genesis, when only a few thousand years later, God revealed to Moses, “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day.” The days referred to here are not part of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. The text comes much later.

How long were the days in Genesis? When God speaks about those days, He speaks in terms of morning and evening. Is God accommodating His omniscience and omnipotence to our finite understanding? Is God speaking poetically?

In his article in *The Banner*, Spykman has written: “Perhaps the word *day* in Genesis allows for a more developmental concept of God’s creating activity.” Perhaps! Perhaps not! Who knows? There is little agreement. Even in circles where “the long-established position” is adhered to. Why? Because the question, over the years, has been magnificently muddled.

But what does Spykman understand by “a more developmental concept of God’s creating activity”? If we are in doubt about the meaning of the length of the *day* in Genesis, how can mortal man ever hope to come to a **scientific** understanding of God’s creating activity?

Some Calvin College professors have suggested that, “perhaps Adam was the offspring of a primitive mother.” That is their understanding of “a more developmental concept of God’s creating activity.” And it is an understanding which those defending “the long-established position” categorically reject as nonsense. It is not the age-of-the-earth question that creates such divisiveness in your community, but what Christian professors do with an old earth that is so biblically offensive. Adam the

offspring of a primitive mother? What has that to do with the length of days in Genesis or the age of the earth?

**SYMBOLISM IN GENESIS.** Those defending “the long-established position” on creation recognize the presence of certain figurative descriptions in the historical account given in Genesis. For instance, when we read in Genesis that God will put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, we do not read that God will put enmity between little snakes and little people. The context makes it perfectly clear that the enmity will be between those who obey God and those who obey Satan. But that does not give us the right to say, as Howard Van Till has, that Genesis 1-11 is primeval history, that is, history which is not to be taken literally.

**SO HOW DO WE BUILD BRIDGES?** Spykman has made an important contribution to the ongoing debate in the CRC surrounding the question of creation and evolution by publishing his article in *The Banner*. But this first article calls for a *series* of articles. Is it not time that the Calvin professors most directly involved in the present controversy explained their views in greater detail? And shouldn't these professors answer specific questions put to them by members of the synodical committee? Wouldn't this go a long way toward

coming to a better understanding of what the different parties believe?

In this article I have attempted to show that those who defend “the long-established position” do so out of their commitment to teachings of Scripture; not out of an irrational rejection of the discoveries of science. We can discuss the meaning of *day* in Genesis without dividing the church. But we cannot accept the “idea” that Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother. Or that there can be a second Adam without a first. Nor can we acquiesce to the suggestions that Genesis chapters 1-11 are primeval history.

Is there time to build a bridge? Yes, there is time. But only if those proposing “a new viewpoint” openly and honestly share their insights with the entire community. And the first question they must answer is how they propose the church understand those historical *details* revealed in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. For this is something the proponents of “a new viewpoint” have painfully avoided.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the time has come for professors at Dordt College, Redeemer College and the Institute for Christian Studies to join the public debate. Of what value are the millions of dollars the CRC community spends annually on higher Christian education if some of these educators



cannot contribute to our understanding of the relationship between God's revelation and scientific assertions?

## Embracing the Whore

**May 29, 1989**

AN INCREASING number of reformed Christians are embracing the great whore of the twentieth century. In our Christian high schools and in our Christian colleges thousands of Christian students are encouraged to embrace her and acknowledge her as the mother of us all.

Who is this great whore of the twentieth century? This seductress who in less than two decades has slain millions? Who in recent years has made her way into the high school classroom and on to Christian college campuses.

The name of this great whore is **evolution**. The fruit of her womb has proven to be destructive and deadly. She has equated human life with animal life. She has given your generations justification for abortion, homosexual immorality, AIDS and euthanasia. In outward appearance her seductiveness is irresistible. Especially to academics.

Many Christians no longer distinguish between micro and macro evolution. Between small changes within species and major changes transforming one species into another. Evolution is being presented to the Christian community as historical fact supported by scientific findings. And these so-called scientific "facts" have motivated some to re-write the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Thereby making God out to be the spinner of tall tales.

Some reformed professors have descended so far into the abyss of her adulteries that they have forced the reformed community to entertain the possibility of their ancestors having evolved from primitive creatures who in turn have evolved from still lower forms of life. Thereby declaring that God is an evolutionist.

These reformed professors have gone so far as to suggest that God's perfect creation came into being as a result of a series of endless accidents (mutations). That man is nothing more than the end result of this gruesome survival-of-the-fittest process.

These professors have made God out to be a liar. The apostle John teaches that the Word spoke the world into being. That nothing was made without Jesus Christ of all that has been made. Calvin professors are now saying that the process of evolution, the process of endless mutation and the process of the survival of the fittest is the most credible explanation for under-

standing the origin of all life. These professors teach that the things we now see were made out of things that were previously less perfect.

The Calvin College board of trustees and the Calvin College president are doing their best, at great expense, to convince the reformed community that the idea of Adam as the descendant of a brute beast is scientific, reformed, and biblical.

Let there be no misunderstanding. I *publicly* accuse the Calvin College board of trustees, the president of Calvin College, and the stated clerk of synod of seducing the reformed community into embracing the whore of evolution. (If those who stand so accused deny the truthfulness of this accusation, I invite them to petition my consistory to place me under discipline for bearing false witness.)

The lack of leadership among presidents and most professors in our other institutions of higher Christian learning is deplorable. The reformed community has been betrayed by the very institutions it founded to direct her in these matters. Calvin College would never have dared to be so bold in its advocacy of evolution if it could not count on the silence of its sister institutions. A silence which continues to this day.

It is ironic that Christian professors at Christian institutions of higher learning are championing the cause of evolution

at a time when the theories of evolution have fallen into disrepute among a growing number of non-Christian scientists.

There is no scientific proof, none at all, that one species evolves into another. This idea exists exclusively in the minds of men. That the theory of evolution has attained the status of dogma makes it no less false.

Stars give birth to stars. Whales give birth to whales. Dinosaurs gave birth to dinosaurs. Cows give birth to cows. Birds give birth to birds. Monkeys give birth to monkeys. People give birth to people. And yes, Dr. Clarence Menninga, God gave life to Adam. He breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. Not into some brute beast of the field.

The theory of the evolution of the species is bunk. There is not an iota of scientific proof to support it. Oh yes, there are theories. Dozens of theories. But there are no scientifically verifiable facts. Man can prove that water is made up of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. At least, no one has been able to disprove it. But there isn't a theory that evolutionists have put forward that some other scientist has not turned into Swiss cheese. The entire enterprise of evolution is a shambles. And at a time such as this, Calvin college professors come forward in a concerted effort to convince members of the reformed community that they are naive if they continue to read the first

eleven chapters of Genesis literally.

Evolutionists used to argue that man was a direct descendant of the monkey. Geneticists and microbiologists have conclusively disproven this theory. So what do evolutionists teach now? That man and the monkey are two separate branches stemming from a common ancestor. Who is this common ancestor? *They don't know*. They just made it up. Evolutionists are experts at fantasizing.

And Calvin College committees, boards and presidents and professors who are prepared to entertain the idea that Adam is the offspring of a primitive mother are incompetent. They make God out to

be a cruel commandant in a creation that functions with the cruelty and ruthlessness of a concentration camp.

In the immortal words of palaeontologist, Colin Patterson, as he addressed his colleagues at the American Museum of Natural History after having studied evolution for twenty years: "Can you tell me anything you know about evolution? Any one thing, any one thing that is true?" To date no one has satisfied Patterson's inquiry by offering him one factual truth about evolution. Wise in their own estimation, they have become fools. It confounds all understanding that committees and boards as well as the president and stated clerk of



*The complexity and intricacy of the whole of created reality should discount evolutionary theory from the outset.*

synod have joined them in their destructive foolishness. Wait until they meet God.

Adam the son of a primitive animal? Raised by a brute beast of a mother and subsequently transformed into a perfect creature made in God's image? And transposed to a sinless garden in Eden? Even the Koran can do better than that.

The suggestion on the part of the boards of Calvin College, its president as well as the stated clerk of synod that such views are reformed and biblical should give the CRC synod of 1989 pause for thought. Are these leaders fit to give leadership? If any one of these men were a manager at my local bank, I would withdraw my funds at a moment's notice. Are we now going to entrust them with the future of the youth of our denomination?

## Where Were You?

### June 20, 1989

OUR GENERATION is impressed by power and intrigued by the supernatural. Superman movies are in vogue, breaking all box office records. And horoscopes are a popular item in daily newspapers and on radio programs. Power and the supernatural. Saleable commodities to a gullible generation.

So why isn't our generation intrigued by Christianity? Christianity is a religion

filled with stories of both power and the supernatural.

Power. Is there anything more powerful than the biblical account of creation? Listen to Jeremiah: "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm" (Jer. 32:17).

Jeremiah is not talking about a process of mutations taking place over a period of millions of years in which one imperfect form of life mutates into another. Jeremiah is talking about God's outstretched arm! And when God stretches out His arm as we know Moses did over the Red Sea, awesome things happen. The Red Sea parts its waters. Manna falls from heaven but not on Sundays. Axeheads float. An entire army is blinded. A man outruns Ahab's fastest horses. Fire ignites a waterlogged altar. Dreams are disclosed and interpreted. A disembodied finger writes on a wall. The mouths of hungry lions are sealed. God calls into being life forms that do not exist. Out of nothing. Everyone who has ever lived—billions of people—are going to be brought back to life. In the twinkling of an eye.

The writer of Hebrews informs us that: "The universe was formed at God's *command*, so that what is *seen* was *not made* out of *what was visible*." Do you get it Calvin College professors? Is that language clear enough? At God's command. The power of

the Word of God brought the creation into being. **Ex nihilo.** Out of nothing that we recognize.

The awesome majesty of creation reflects God's power and God's glory and God's dominion. God spoke and it came into existence. Read John 1:3: "Through him (i.e. the Word, Jesus Christ, who was with God in the beginning) all things were made; *without him* nothing was made that has been made." Is that not clear language?

Not convinced that the universe and all life in it were created by the Word, by Jesus Christ? Then read Col. 1:16: "Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born [in rank] over all creation. For by him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." Visible and invisible!

Still not convinced that heaven and earth, things visible and invisible were created by the Word, Jesus Christ? Impressed by the shallow, empty arguments of *The Banner* and Calvin College professors? Read Heb. 1:1-2: "God... has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and **through whom he made the universe.**"

Through whom God made the universe. The universe was made by Jesus Christ through the power of His Word. Not by some dumb, senseless process that transformed existing matter into awesome

life forms. There is only one way Christian professors can sell the garbage of evolution to the Christian community and that is by tearing the heart out of God's revelation and rendering Jesus Christ powerless.

Imagine Jesus Christ mucking about with the evolution of the species. One imperfect form of life giving birth to another imperfect form. Until finally, according to some Calvin professors, a brute beast gives birth to Adam. That is blasphemy. That is speaking evil of God.

The heavens and the earth and everything that has been created declare the glory and majesty of God. What glory and what majesty can any one find in the gruesome, horrifying process of evolution? Adam the offspring of some primitive, beastly creature?

That is not the message of Scripture. **The unmistakable message of Scripture is that the universe was created out of nothing by the power of the Word of God. Let there be!**

And that Word of God is powerful, dear reader, make no mistake about that. The power of the Word dwelt in Jesus Christ bodily. In Him the Word became flesh. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. Nothing. Nothing at all. That Word was in the beginning, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And that Word came to earth. On earth the power of that Word became visible to all. The foundations of the earth shook; Satan trembled. The glory and majesty and dominion and power of God became manifest to man.

All men. Believers and unbelievers alike. Read Romans 1:20: “For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and *divine nature*—have been *clearly seen*, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

The wrath of God is revealed against all godlessness of men who suppress the truth. And all men are without excuse, Paul says. Because God’s eternal power and divine nature are clearly visible from what God has made.

God’s power and divinity are visible in the mysteries and dynamics of creation. Creation is an open book revealing the power and glory of God. The vast expanses of the earth and universe. The thunderstorm. The atom. The DNA molecule. The bear with its cubs. The wisdom and discoveries of man. The soaring eagle. The strength of the horse. The glory and splendour of the lily. Everything belongs to God and testifies of His power and glory.

But that is not what the evolutionists teach. Evolutionists designed a fabulous scheme of the origin of things to eliminate God from the scene. They called this

scheme a natural process. And now Calvin College professors are saying that this natural process explains God’s power. In fact, natural processes as explained by Christian evolutionists make God powerless. The *process* is everything. God is nothing more than a spectator who observes and, presumably, directs the mutation (the accidental, freakish coming into being) of the species.

Is that what Paul is talking about in Romans 1:20? Is the mutation of the species the power and glory of God made visible in creation leaving all men without excuse? Ridiculous! The mutation of the species would motivate unbelievers to laugh at God rather than stand in awe of His power! Evolution, the mutation of the species, is a carefully conceived, highly contradicted, unscientific myth constructed to erase any relationship between the Creator and His creation. The theory of evolution, as intended, “broke man’s link with God and set him adrift in a cosmos without purpose and without meaning.” According to Google, seventy-three million children are aborted every year in the world because evolution and the ACLU have taught people to view unborn children as nothing more than a blob of protoplasm. Evolution has closed man’s eyes to God’s glory and power. And man’s created dignity.

The power of the Word of God to create is the Christian’s thesis. The fable of



*A beautiful snapshot by the James Webb Telescope, the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope.*

evolution is the anti-christian's antithesis. The Christian, biblical thesis of creation stands in moral opposition to the antithesis of evolution. The great tragedy of our age is the attempt by Christian academics to synthesize (force a marriage) of these two opposing worldviews (creation and evolution) and calling that union of conflicting views theistic evolution. Indeed, Christianity embracing the whore.

The recurring message of the Bible is that God is the Almighty creator of heaven and earth. By His power heaven and earth were created out of nothing. What is seen is not made out of what is visible. The power of God: to call into being that which did not exist. Out of nothing. That is a biblical imperative.

The recurring theme of evolution is that an explosion of highly condensed matter evolved over billions and millions of years through a process of mutations (freak accidents) into miraculous lifeforms. Evolution denies the creative power of God. So much so that Calvin College professors are asking the Christian community to seriously entertain the absurd proposition that man, the image bearer of God, may be the offspring of some brute beast. Such a view contradicts **all** the fundamental teachings of Scripture. It transforms Scripture into a body of silly myths. It turns God into an overseer of freak mutations.

The Word, Jesus Christ, came to earth. And manifested the power of God.

The Word commenced its ministry by transforming water into wine. That is power. That is an act of creating. Jesus commanded it. And the elements obeyed. Water became wine! Vintage wine. At the command of the Word. Instantly. No process. No evolution. But by Divine command. As in the beginning.

What our world needs is another superman movie. Starring Jesus Christ. Not Christopher Reeves. And the script? Taken exclusively from Scripture. This is then what the world would soon see: the awesome, breathtaking power of God.

The power of the Word, Jesus Christ, walking on the Sea of Galilee. And the apostle Peter walking beside Him. (Until he doubted the power of God.) The Word commanding the sea to support Him as well as Peter. That is power.

The Word become flesh feeding five thousand and then four thousand men plus women and children with a few loaves and a few fishes.

Thus by-passing the processes of growing grain, making flour, and baking bread. The ability to do that is power. The power of the Word filling the nets of the disciples to the point of breaking. The Word commanding all those fishes to enter that net. That is power. That is being ruler over the universe.

Jesus Christ taking the hand of the daughter of Jairus and awakening her from having fallen asleep in Jesus. The Word nullifying death and creating new life. The creative power of God!

The power of the Word healing the sick and demon-possessed. Healing the man with leprosy and the paralytic, the blind man at Bethsaida and the boy with the evil spirit, blind Bartimaeus and the crippled woman and the ten lepers. The Word's complete mastery over all forms of disease and sickness. The ability of the power of the Word to create wholeness in those ravaged by the effects of man's sinfulness.

What a movie! What a manifestation of Divine power. Only days before His own death, the Word restored the decomposing body of His friend, Lazarus, to the land of the living.

Decomposed flesh restored to life. A deteriorated heart restored to beating. Stinking, coagulated blood sent coursing through recreated veins. Ten thousand million nerve cells in the brain restored to life along with complete memory of all that was lost at death. How? At the command of the Word: **“Lazarus, come out!”** The power and glory of God manifested.

At the moment of Jesus' own death the power of God tore the curtain in the temple from top to bottom. With invisible hands, God shook the earth and rocks split.



Tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had fallen asleep were raised to life. Not by a process of evolution. But instantaneously. At the command of the power of the Word of God. God does not create by means of processes, He *creates* the processes. Almighty God commands. And it is performed.

On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead. And gave Jesus a glorified body. Difficult to capture on the movie screen. For now Jesus transported Himself from one distant place to another at a moment's notice. Without special camera effects. The Word incarnate walked through closed doors. Bodily. Witnesses testified to the holes in His hands and hole in His side. And forty days after the resurrection, a crowd saw Jesus ascend bodily into heaven. At the command of His Word He ascended.

Oh, what a movie that would make. The *power* of the Word of God visible on the screen.

Yes, dear reader, you can take the revelation in the first eleven chapters of Genesis *literally*. For they also manifest the power of God. "And God said, Let there be..." "So God created." "And God saw that it was good." "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth." Yes, in heaven. How do the Calvin professors deal with heaven?

And so it will be upon Christ's imminent return. By the power of the Word of God. "Listen, I tell you a mystery (Paul said): We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye...the dead will be raised imperishable." By the power of the Word of God. O Lord, our God, how majestic is Your name in all the earth.

As for the Calvin professors and the Calvin president and the Calvin Board of Trustees and their belief in dumb theories about Adam being the offspring of a dumb animal—let them heed the words of God spoken to Job's friends when they questioned the wisdom and power of God: "Who is this that darkens My counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man. I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?" Yes, where were you?

## **Samantha and Nathan Meet Jesus**

**July 18, 1989**

IF YOU WERE TO DIE today, do you have the assurance that you will meet Jesus?

On the evening of June 22nd, Samantha Zwart was struck by a motorcycle as she

and her brother and sister crossed the street. She died on impact. She was only ten.

Hundreds of fellow Christians witnessed this tragic accident as they were standing in front of Calvin Memorial Christian School in St. Catherines. Parents, children and friends had come together to celebrate the graduation of this year's high school class. Samantha was there to celebrate the graduation of her sister, Karen.

Only hours before, Henk Zwart, Samantha's father and a member of the school board, had announced the passing away of Nathan Plugers earlier that day. Nathan was only three. He died of the cancer he and his twin brother, Jordan, were born with. During his short life Nathan knew much pain.

A few days later as I was driving to Pennsylvania the images of small coffins kept appearing in my mind. As did the questions. Why, God? Why? Why, on the evening of June 22, was joy transformed into grief? Why did Samantha die at such a young age? She was Your child. Has Jesus not taught us that not a hair will fall from our heads without the will of our heavenly father?

And why was Nathan dying so soon after he was born? Nathan was Your child. Yet on earth he experienced little else but pain. Pain that was often unbearable for the

parents as much as for him.

It would have been a small thing for You, God, to divert Samantha's path from the oncoming motorcycle. And just one Word from You, and the cancer in Nathan's body would have fled.

The tragic death of God's children has often driven a wedge between understanding God's love and God's sovereign power. If God loved these two children with whom He made a covenant of baptism, why didn't He save them from death? Did God not love them or did He not have the power to save? Is God also a victim of the devastation of death? Does He merely sympathise with those who suffer?

No! Never! God loves His children. And He has the power to save from death whomever He chooses.

Satan drives wedges. Hard and deep. Between God's love and God's sovereign power.

Lazarus died. Jesus wept. Jesus did not have to weep. He could just as easily have said that Lazarus had fallen asleep in Him. Waiting for the resurrection and a spiritual body. But He didn't. Jesus **wept** at the curse of sin.

Yes, Jesus wept because death is a curse on God's once perfect creation. (Do not listen to the satanic suggestion of spinners of evolutionary tales who argue boldly and



*Lazarus died. Jesus wept. Jesus wept because death is a curse on God's once perfect creation.*

blasphemously that death was a part of God's creation among Adam's primitive parents. For they deny the power of God and the truth of Scripture.) Jesus came to remove that curse. And He would go to Golgotha to do so. The power of God. "Lazarus, come out!" And behold, Lazarus came out. Those standing around the grave as well as the millions who have read this account in Scripture, have tasted the glory of God.

Satan whispers, "Choose for God's love but deny His sovereignty; or choose against His love and for His sovereignty. You can't believe both."

Yes, we must believe both. Both

God's love and God's sovereignty are real. Remember Job. God loved Job dearly while exercising His sovereignty. God is God. We may not question the wisdom of God. Even while we stand there and weep. And ask why. And fail to understand.

No, we do not understand. We do not understand the death of Samantha. And we do not understand the life and death of Nathan. We stand and weep. Especially those close to Samantha and Nathan, weep bitterly and ask, "Why, God? Why?" And if it were not for grace abundantly given, we would clench our fists and scream at heaven. Because we do not understand the "why" of suffering.

God loved Samantha and Nathan. There is not a smidgen of doubt about that. Even sparrows that are sold for a halfpenny will not fall to the ground apart from the will of our Father. “So do not be afraid,” Jesus said. “Samantha and Nathan are worth more than many sparrows.” And My Father’s love is better than life. Psalm 63:3.

We are not afraid. We are filled with sorrow. We loved them dearly. Parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters and friends. And we will weep. Often. Even as Jesus wept at the curse of the death of His friend.

But we do not grieve as those who have no hope. Samantha and Nathan are with Jesus. By the grace and wisdom of their heavenly Father. And on that great and glorious day when Jesus returns, we shall see Samantha and Nathan again. In our glorified bodies. On a new earth. Where moth and worm cannot destroy.

We shall see Samantha and Nathan, Jesus and His disciples, Paul and Stephen, Moses and Elijah, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. And the little girl Jesus awoke from her sleep. Along with millions of others.

In the beginning God created not only the earth, but heaven as well. From there Christ reigns. In love and sovereign power. Over our lives and the lives of Samantha and Nathan. Lord, our Lord, how great is Your name in all the earth.

## **Incest: The Banner Increases the Pain — Troubled Waters?**

**September 11, 1989**

“ONCE UPON A TIME I was a little girl...

“I first remember him giving me the nightly bath when I was perhaps five years old...

“Not long after came bedtime visits. After the lights were out and my mother long gone to earn money at the pavilion, I lay in terror, for he had taken to tiptoeing quietly to where I slept across the room from my parents’ double bed...

“My father came and put his hands under the covers and did things to me. He whispered to me that it was our secret...

“For what, after all, kept the sorrow at a manageable level? Only pluck and courage and books, long books that took me out of my own place and time, like “Les Miserables.” It made my life seem O.K. by comparison...

“The long golden days of summer vacation were spelled into ways of manoeuvring to get out of his reach...

“Full of revulsion and anger and tears, I said across the living room where he stood, lighting a smoke, ‘Why can’t you just

be a regular father?’ And then I stopped sputtering, paused, and said in a lower voice, ‘You know, I could take you to court and call you—almost anything.’

“And he turned and said softly, ‘If you ever do, I’ll kill you.’

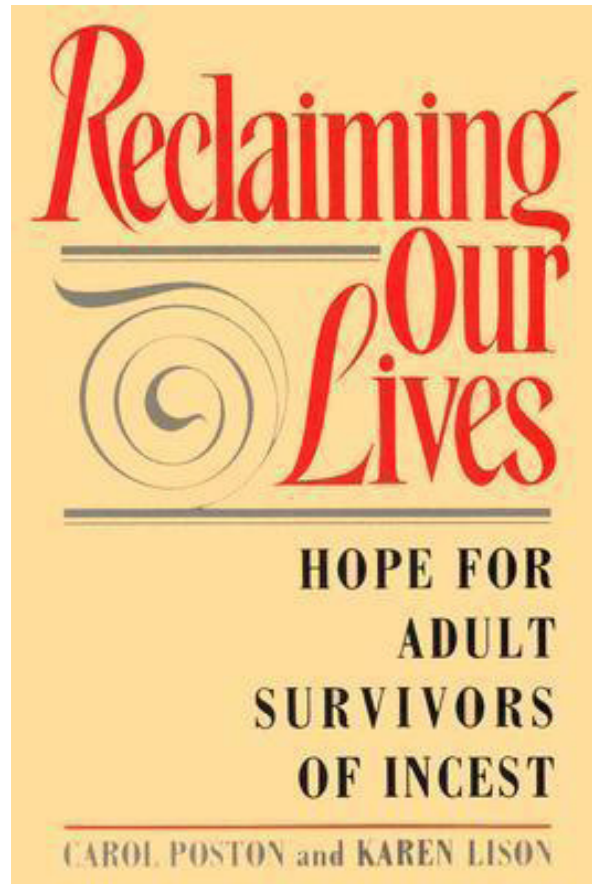
“And I believed him.”

This true story taken from the book, *Reclaiming Our Lives*, by Carol Poston and Karen Lison, could be retold by tens of thousands of children with varying degrees of horror. Young children bruised and battered in their innocence by members of their own family.

The tragedy of incest is perhaps the most tragic of all family failures. The loss of childhood, the loss of genuine parental love, the loss of trust and respect, fear as a constant bedtime companion. A lifetime of apprehension about God’s great gift of human sexuality. The rage and terrifying power to destroy the lives of others.

Children come into this world with God-appointed guardians. For the guardian to become the gatekeeper of the prison of the child’s unnatural sexual affections is an injustice of horrific proportions. An injustice that will leave the child scarred for life. As well as the adult.

I consider myself quite capable of committing adultery. But incest? I have three beautiful daughters. What power would propel me to destroy their innocence and



*The book that contains the story recounted in “Incest: The Banner Increases the Pain —Troubled Waters.”*

their lives? And yet Scripture warns those who think they stand to take heed lest they also fall. The assault Satan has undertaken against God’s creatures acknowledges no limits.

Yes, the horrific act of incest is also committed by members of the church of Jesus Christ. That cannot be denied. Heartrending as it may be.

It is important, therefore, that the act of incest within the church of Jesus Christ be discussed openly and honestly in an attempt to root out the evil among us.

Mary VanderVennen’s article on incest

at home and in the church in the August 14, 1989 issue of *The Banner* contributes little towards this noble end. The victims of incest deserve our help, understanding and compassion. But VanderVennen's article offers none of these. She uses her article in *The Banner* to raise the flag of her libertarian views while undermining proper biblical authority within family and the church.

Mary VanderVennen is a member of a sub-culture within the CRC which is more or less known today as the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS). The ICS has singled itself out by condoning views which stand in stark contrast to Scripture and our confessions. VanderVennen's article is a prime example of this emphasis. She seeks the root of the evil of incest in the *structures* of family and church rather than in the evil inclinations of man's heart.

In one instance VanderVennen's *Banner* article on incest is little more than a cheap, pragmatic attempt to argue for women in church office.

In another instance, VanderVennen uses her article on incest to pit conformity over and against creativity. Has the ICS community learned nothing from its disastrous experiment in creativity at its Toronto school? The lives of many young people were ruined in that experiment.

Has VanderVennen not assessed the damage of the "creativity" advocated by the ICS community? Has she honestly not

done a survey of the broken families, the confused children and the misinformed sexual practices of many in that community?

The publication of VanderVennen's article in *The Banner*, the official publication of the CRC, establishes the extent to which the editor responsible for this series, Andrew Kuyvenhoven, will go in his attempts to marry the CRC to ideas more commonly found in liberal, mainline churches. Apparently there are no limits to what Kuyvenhoven will allow for publication, as long as such articles serve his agenda—especially his desire to establish women in all the offices of the CRC.

For Kuyvenhoven to permit an article on incest to be twisted to this end is a revelation of the insensitivity and callousness of the liberal.

Our abused children deserve better. Let's pray they find it at the hands of the newly appointed editor. For what Kuyvenhoven has done in this issue is not only to increase the pain of abused children, he has abused the entire readership of *The Banner* as well and painfully contributed to the division within.

# Distorting the Issue

**September 25, 1989**

THE SEPTEMBER 1, 1989 editorial in *Calvinist Contact*, written by Robert Vander Vennen, is misleading to its readers. To put it mildly, RVV would have his readers believe that the seriousness of the discussion in the CRC relating to the question of creation and evolution has no basis in fact. According to RVV the Calvin professors only believe in the idea of evolution as a way of describing the **small changes** (emphasis added) that have taken place in biological species. Writes Vander Vennen, quote, "It is in the sense of the 'small changes' that the word evolution is used by some Christians, including the Calvin professors who are being criticized."

Now if that is true, what is all the discussion about? Almost everyone accepts evolution as a way of describing the small changes that have taken place within the species. It is commonly referred to as micro-evolution. Is that what the Calvin professors have been talking about? Small changes? Micro-evolution?

No, they have not! RVV is misleading his readers. Has RVV even bothered to read Van Till's book, **The Fourth Day**? Apparently not. Has RVV listened and

learned anything from the discussion surrounding the Calvin professors' views? Apparently not. His statement that the Calvin professors only believe in evolution as a way of describing small changes is patently false.

What follows this is what Van Till has written in *The Fourth Day*, page 258, **"To consider the possibility that we are creatures... whose capacity for the awareness of self, of God, and of our responsibility for obedience of divine mandates has been formed through a process of continuous evolutionary development does not strike me as inappropriate or incongruous or unbiblical. I see no reason whatsoever to deny that the Creation might have an evolutionary history or that morally responsible creatures might have been formed through a process of evolutionary development."**

Small changes? How can Vander Vennen seriously come to that conclusion? Van Till is talking about a continuous process of evolutionary development. Van Till is talking about a continuous process of evolutionary development. Van Till's book makes it clear that he believes that the world began with a Big Bang and that life on earth developed over an evolutionary period of hundreds of millions of years. Van Till believes that lower forms of life evolved into more complex forms of life.

Mind-boggling changes. Macro-evolution.

When Vander Vennen writes that the Calvin professors accept the idea of evolution as a way of describing the small changes that have taken place, he is deceiving his readers. Does RVV believe that his readers are **that** uninformed? Does he have no regard for his own integrity and credibility? What is he going to tell his readers next?

In his article in *Calvinist Contact*, RVV talks about “...**the problem of how to interpret the biblical picture of the creation of Adam and Eve in the light of discoveries of early human artifacts.**”

Is that a legitimate human enterprise? Look at what the Calvin professors have said on the subject.

Van Till is of the opinion that his understanding of the processes of “continuous evolutionary development” conflict so fundamentally with Scripture’s authoritative account of creation, that he has decided to relegate the first eleven chapters of Genesis to allegory, myth. Van Till insists that Genesis chapters 1-11 are primeval history. History that empirically never took place. No garden of Eden, no sinless creation, no Adam, no Eve, no Noah, no tower of Babel. For Van Till authoritative biblical history begins with Abraham.

Another Calvin professor, Clarence Menninga, has made the absurd suggestion,

on the basis of *his* study of early human artifacts that Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother. Is that what Van der Vennen understands when he characterizes *The Fourth Day* as promoting small changes?

Is such an approach legitimate science or is that the fruit of human speculation? Can a point of view possibly be more rationalistic and secular? Adam the offspring of a brute beast! A non-human mother.

Vander Vennen is quick to denounce those who disagree with the Calvin College professors. He writes in his *Calvinist Contact* editorial: “There seems to be a small group of Christian Reformed ministers, who don’t want to bother to understand what science is. They seem to feel that you don’t need to know anything about science in order to know how the Bible is a lamp and a light on the pathway to scientific knowledge. The word for this is obscurantism.”

It takes nerve, Dr. Vander Vennen, an inordinate measure of nerve, to level such an accusation in the face of all the nonsense Calvin College professors have been preaching about the relationship between the biblical account of creation and secular, humanistic evolution.

“A small group...” RVV hopes that those who disagree with the Calvin professors make up a small group. But do they?

Leo Peters has been placed under



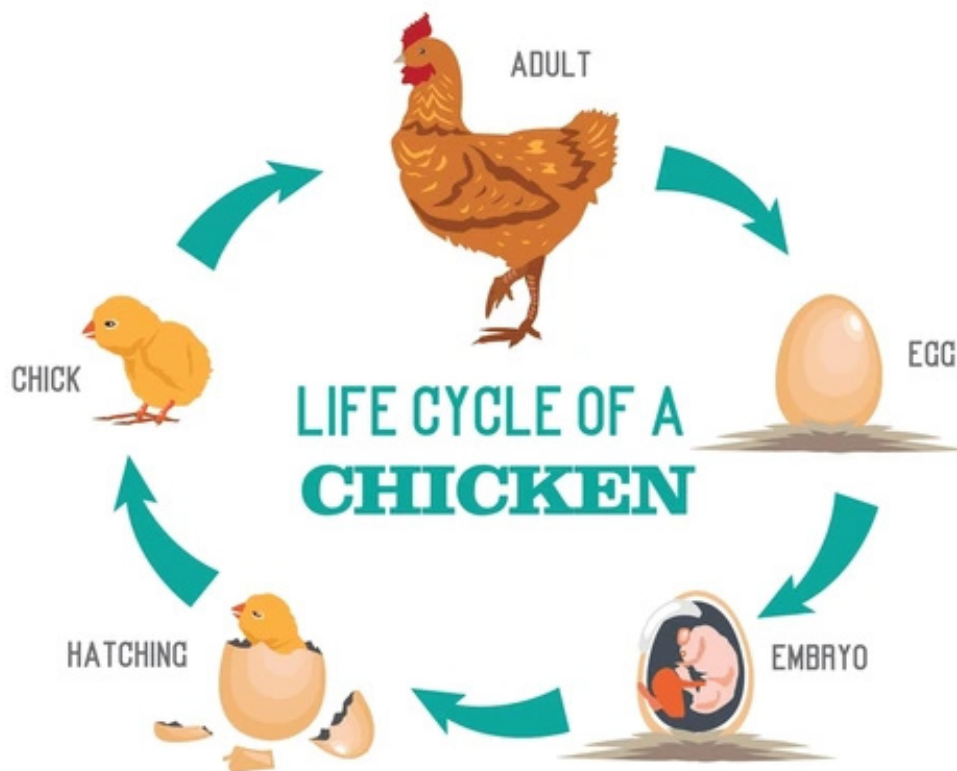
discipline by his consistory, the consistory of LaGrave Avenue CRC in Grand Rapids, for the articles he published in *The Grand Rapids Press*. The same consistory on two occasions placed a minister on nomination to fill a vacancy. The congregation voted down the choice made by the consistory—*twice*. Why? Because the minister in question did not share a reformed view of the book of Genesis.

A small group? No, an entire congregation!

I challenge Robert Vander Vennen to explain to his readers why he has misled them into believing that the Calvin professors accept the idea of evolution as a way of describing *small changes*, when in

fact the changes the professors themselves have describes are a blueprint of secular, humanistic evolution.

I challenge Robert Vander Vennen, as an employee of the Institute for Christian Studies, to explain Menninga’s suggestion that Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother. Is that how God created Adam? As an offspring of a primitive *mother*? And by initiating a process of millions of years which then finally gives rise to a primitive godless creature? A mother for Adam? And this “creature” then gives birth to Adam? Is that science? Is that what the professors at the Institute for Christian Studies also believe? Is this what Vander Vennen believes? Is this how



the Institute views the relation between the Bible and science? By letting “science” make a mockery out of the biblical account of creation?

## Wiser Than God

**October 9, 1989**

WHO IS WISER than God? Apparently a number of Calvin College professors claim they are. They know more and differently about the origin of the universe than God has revealed in Scripture. Much more. The professors know so much about the origin of the universe and life that they have declared that God’s account recorded in Genesis is not to be taken literally.

Adam! Is Adam really the first human being on earth? Is Adam the first man? He is according to God. He is *not* according to the Calvin professors. Adam had a mother. And Adam’s mother was the product of evolution. Wiser than God.

Are the stories recorded in the early books of Genesis true? Was early civilization destroyed by a flood and did only Noah and his family survive? That is history according to God. But not according to the Calvin professors. They have the bones to prove it. Wiser than God.

Did languages originate at Babel when

God confused the speech of the architects of a great tower? According to Scripture that is how it happened. But not according to the Calvin professors. Languages evolved degree by degree. Never mind what happened at Pentecost. Wiser than God.

Just how clever are these Calvin professors? Dr. Clarence Menninga, professor of geology at Calvin College, enjoys telling the story of the rabbit tracks in the snow. Listen to how this story goes. There are rabbit tracks in the snow. Look, you can see them for yourself. The tracks are there for everyone to see. But where is the rabbit? The rabbit is long gone. Is any intelligent person going to deny that there actually was a rabbit that passed by in the snow?

Well, so the story continues, the world is full of rabbit tracks. Scientists have found the “tracks” of the evolution of the species. Is any intelligent person foolhardy enough to deny it? The “tracks” of evolution are everywhere.

I used to go rabbit hunting with my father. Especially hunting for jack-rabbits. We hunted in the winter, usually after a recent snowfall. I have followed many rabbit tracks in the snow. And when I was fortunate enough to find something at the end of those tracks, it was invariably a rabbit. In all my years of hunting I never found an elephant or a cow at the end of a

trail of rabbit tracks.

But apparently Dr. Menninga has. He has “followed” the tracks of human life all the way back to their origin. And along the way he has made some rather remarkable discoveries. Menninga has discovered, for instance, that Adam had a mother. Yes, by Jiminy, this professor has followed the “tracks of evolution” all the way back to their origin and has learned from these tracks that Adam had a mother. That is clever. Even Leakey and Johanson have never made a claim that far-fetched.

But there is more. The “tracks of evolution” (those famous rabbit tracks) revealed to Menninga that Adam’s mother, a primitive creature, descended from a single-celled organism that was formed in the prebiotic soup of the oceans. Did this single-celled organism leave rabbit tracks as well? Amazing if true.

Yes, wiser than God. Calvin professors invite the Christian community to reject God’s account of the origin of the universe and life. And after having rejected God’s account, the Calvin professors invite that same community to accept their story about the “tracks of evolution” that “reveal” the origin of life.

A remarkable development, Dr. Menninga, a remarkable development. Your suggestion that Adam may have been a Neanderthal and that Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother,

demonstrates to any informed Christian just how much of the myth of evolution you have swallowed. Your incredible suggestion about Adam’s mother and the rabbit-tracks underscore the words of Jeremiah 17 where the Lord declares, “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord.”

You have turned your heart away from God’s revelation in Genesis. You can no more demonstrate to the Christian community the “tracks of evolution” leading to Adam’s mother, than I can walk on water.

God created the world by the power of His Word: “Let there be!” But you have God “creating” Adam by having him issue out of the womb of a primitive animal. That is where the rabbit-tracks are supposed to lead us.

Answer me as a fellow Christian, Dr. Menninga. Quit hiding behind the skirts of President Diekema and your fellow Calvin College colleagues. Trace out for the readers of *Christian Renewal* the “tracks of evolution” that you believe, as a scientist, lead me to Adam’s mother. Or admit that you are not wiser than God’s revelation in Genesis and that your rabbit-tracks lead only to the rabbit’s mother.

## A Man of War

**October 23, 1989**

GOD IS A MAN OF WAR. Listen to the majestic testimony of Exodus 15:

*“The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.”*

God is a man of war. God engaged the peoples of earth when He destroyed them with a universal flood. God fought for Israel against Egypt manifesting His divine power. God fought Israel’s enemies for forty years in the desert. God laid Jericho, the gateway to Canaan, in ruin. Again and again God comes to the assistance of His chosen people. During Joshua’s battle against the five kings of Canaan, God listened to a man and the sun stood still. How? Nothing is impossible for God! During the height of that battle God hurled hailstones from heaven; more Canaanites were killed by God than by the swords of the Israelites.

God fights for His people through men like Gideon and Samson. A young shepherd boy with a sling destroys the pride and glory of the Philistines. Mighty, blasphemous Goliath crashes to earth. Dead. By the power of God.

Elijah slays the prophets of Baal and the prophets of the groves. The glory of

Jezebel. The blood of those eight hundred and fifty false prophets flows like a river, turning the waters of the brook Kishon crimson. The power and glory of God are thereby revealed.

God fights against His own godless people. A soldier draws his bow at a venture, the arrow hurls through the air. Moments later godless Ahab sinks to his knees in his chariot, mortally wounded. Soon the dogs drink his blood. And gnaw on Jezebel’s bones. God will not be mocked.

The Lord is a man of war. He fights to the death against all those who serve Satan.

The testimony declared in the Old Testament is unmistakable. The Lord is a mighty warrior.

Does all this change in the New Testament? Does the fighting and warfare end? Do believers and unbelievers now lock each other in an (un)holy embrace?

The perimeters of the battle certainly change in the New Testament. The scene shifts from Israel to the world. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” God’s chosen people are *now* Jew and Gentile alike. But the battle carries on. For Satan is more than ever a roaring lion, seeking to destroy God’s elect.

The great arenas of Rome become slaughter houses. Thousands of recently converted Christians—Jew and Gentile—die the death of martyrs. Does God no lon-



*Michael casts out rebel angels. Illustration by Gustave Doré for John Milton's Paradise Lost.*

ger fight “physically” for and through His people?

“Turn the other cheek,” Jesus com-

mands. “Love your enemy!” And the blood of the martyrs becomes the seed of the church. Christianity spreads like wildfire

throughout the Roman empire and beyond. Soon it reaches every civilized corner of the globe. Jesus is King. Serve in His kingdom. Forsake the kingdoms of this world. Like the empire of Nebuchadnezzar, the days of the empires of this world are numbered.

The perimeters of the battle have shifted. From earth to heaven. God now does all the fighting. The days of Joshua, Gideon, Samson, David, and Elijah are over. Seated at God's right hand, on the throne of David, sits the Lamb of God. He will deliver His people. By the power of His might.

There was war. Not in Egypt. Not in Canaan. Not in Israel. There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. Satan and his angels fought back. Satan who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to earth, and his angels with him. Christ has been to Golgotha.

Then the apostle John heard a voice in heaven say:

*"Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ."*

*"Rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you."*

The day of crusades is over. And should never have been. Our battle is not

against the flesh and blood of Egyptians and Canaanites and crusaders. That battle is over. Our battle is against the powers and principalities in the air around us.

To equip us to fight that battle, Jesus Christ sent His people the Holy Spirit.

Satan has been thrown out of heaven. Christ has lived and died. But He arose from the dead, ascended into heaven and reigns in power and majesty. The old dispensation has ended. The fullness of time has come. Satan can no longer approach the throne of God and accuse the elect. The ransom for the sins of God's people has been paid. In full. That battle is over.

Christians with more than a passing acquaintance of the book of Revelation know that the battle on earth is not over. But it is no longer a battle that involves spears and arrows. For God is personally conducting the present warfare. The Lamb of God opens the scroll with the seven seals. And the four horsemen descend upon the earth. The book's seals are broken and the trumpets are sounded. The Lamb is a man of war.

Peace is taken from the earth. There is no peace for the wicked. The great controversy between God and Satan continues. Until Satan is bound and thrown into the great lake of fire.

The battle is the Lord's. The outcome is assured. Not one of those chosen by God

shall lose his inheritance. In a new heaven and on a new earth. Their names are written in the palm of God's hand where He will not lose sight of them.

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." Not by the power of man and his armies. But by the power of the Lamb of God.

In one hour Babylon, the stronghold of Satan, has been brought to ruin. By the power of the Lamb.

The Lamb is a man of war. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

And when the battle on earth is over, when the last of God's enemies on earth have been defeated by the Lamb, God will prepare a great banquet for His people. He will wipe the tears away forever. God's great adversary, the devil, will be no more.

A new earth filled with people filled with love. For God and the Lamb. And for each other. Peace on earth. God's kingdom restored.

Oh yes! It is happening. Before your very eyes. The great drama of the great battle between the Son of God and the son of perdition. These things must take place. The great battle. For God has said so.

Come, Lord Jesus, come soon.

## Samson and the CCRCC

**November 6, 1989**

GOD WAS NOT PLEASED with His people. He had delivered them out of Egypt, led them into the promised land of Canaan by the power of His might, to be a nation of God-fearing people living according to His commands.

When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He divided all mankind, He gave Israel a land flowing with milk and honey. If only they would live by the Word God spoke to them.

But Israel did evil in the eyes of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. God's anger burned against Israel. The people of God, miraculously placed in Canaan, were embracing the lifestyle and the gods of the Philistines.

How is it possible that the nation which witnessed miracles such as the destruction of Jericho, forsook God to embrace no-gods?

How is it possible that Christians who have Scripture's testimony about the great miracles of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead, join hands with the pagan no-gods of the twentieth century?

Representatives from the Council of

Christian Reformed Churches in Canada (CCRCC) have worshiped at ecumenical services where the no-gods of our generation shared in the glory. And the same Council has entered into an inter-faith television network where the Christian religion stands as merely one religion alongside the pagan religions of our age.

It is better said by some reformed leaders that there is some truth in all religions. Christians must learn to embrace the good in the religions of the world. We are brothers. Seeking the truth. No one, not even Christians, have a corner on the truth.

The Bible states it otherwise. Jesus Christ is the Truth. The only Truth. There is no other way to God. There is no other truth. Not in the combination of all the pagan religions in all the world. Every religion on earth that preaches a gospel other than the good news of Jesus Christ, preaches a lie. Every religion that does not worship the Messiah of God worships a false messiah who has Satan as a father.

The Philistines, worshippers of Dagon, ruled over Israel. God's people who had been given Canaan as their inheritance, became slaves again. Because they did not worship the one, true God.

God looked upon the plight of His people. And He decided to begin their deliverance. Through Samson.

Samson was weak. He treated his

Nazarite vow with a casualness amounting to contempt. But God took Samson's weakness and turned it into strength.

Amazingly Israel did not want deliverance. Samson, the deliverer sent by God, was viewed as a troublemaker. In retaliation for the double-dealings of the thirty Philistines at his wedding, Samson tied the tails of three hundred foxes and devastated the wheat fields and vineyards of the Philistines. They in turn murdered their own people—Samson's wife and her father included. In anger Samson attacked them viciously and killed many of them. Scripture tells us that this chain of events took place because the LORD was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines.

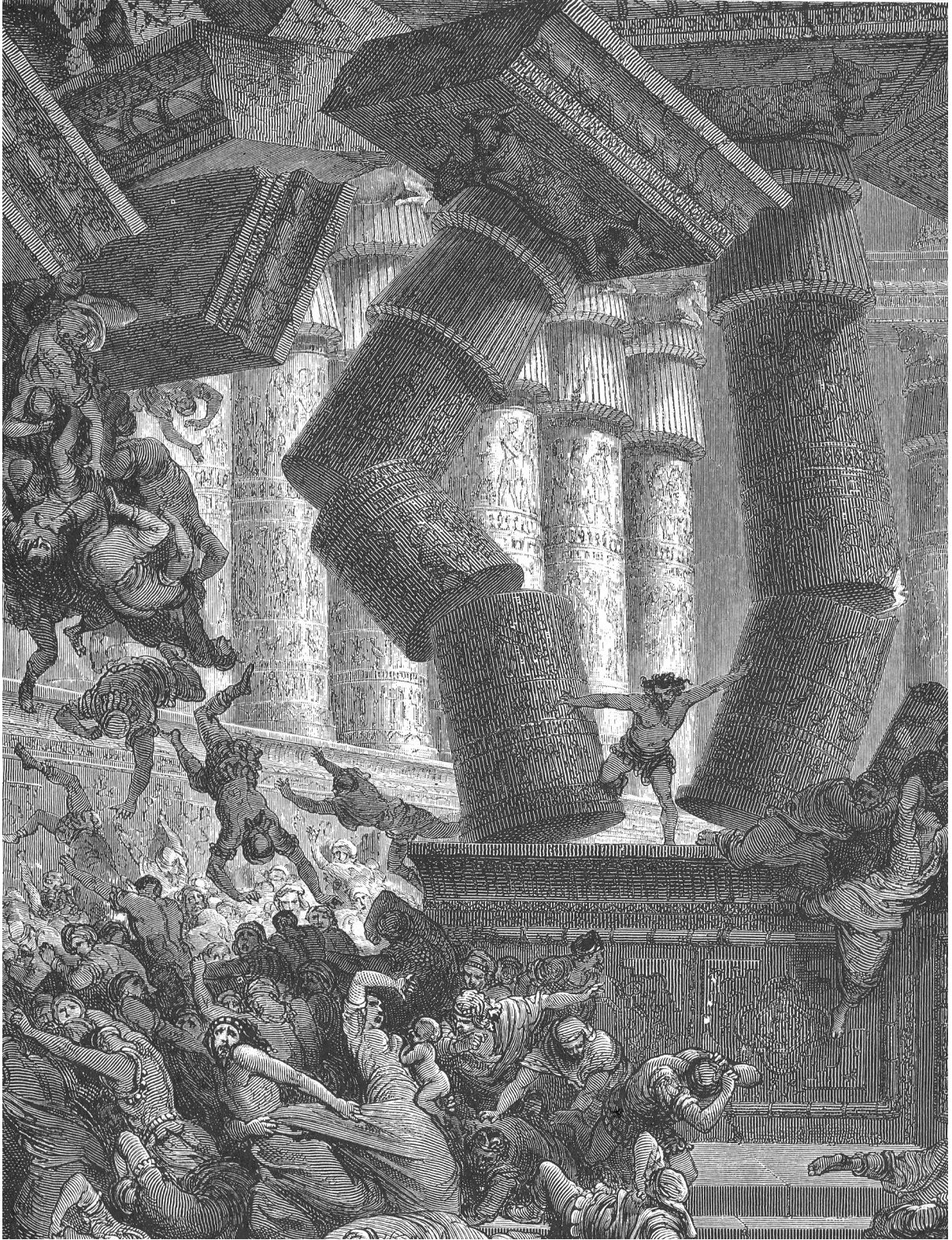
The Israelites did not see things God's way. Samson was not their deliverer. He was a troublemaker. And he had to be stopped.

Three thousand men from Judah came to Samson and said, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? We have come to tie you up and deliver you to the Philistines."

Samson agreed. They tied him up and delivered him to the Philistines. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson and with the jaw of a donkey he struck down a thousand men.

Samson was eventually defeated. The charm of Delilah was too much for him.





*The Death of Samson (Jud. 16:25-34), Doré's English Bible 1866.*

But during the twenty years that he judged Israel, Samson manifested God's power.

On his bare shoulders he carried the city gate and posts of Gaza and dumped them on a hill. And while his tormentors were praising their god and offering a great sacrifice to Dagon, Samson prayed to the God of heaven and earth that his strength might return one last time. God answered blind Samson's prayer. With his bare hands he demolished the pillars that supported the temple. Thus he killed many more Philistines when he died than while he lived.

Imagine the trauma. We recently witnessed the devastation the earthquake caused in California. Several hundred people died. The collapse of a highway and part of a bridge. We witnessed it on television. The despair, the suffering, the pain.

Imagine the televised version of the collapse of the temple of Dagon. All the rulers of the Philistines were there. On the roof of the temple were about three thousand men and women. Buried in a rubble of concrete. Not by an earthquake but by the power of a man sent by God to deliver Israel from their enemies.

There will be no blessing on the efforts of the Council in Canada if it persists in its ill-conceived plans to join forces with pagan religions. God did not tolerate such a union in the days of Samson; Jesus Christ, seated on the right hand of God, will not tolerate such a union today. If we persist,

we will find ourselves buried in the concrete rubble of God's judgment.

The Israelites turned a blind eye to God's power to deliver. But aren't we turning an equally blind eye to God's power to deliver today?

There is only one name under heaven and earth by which men can be saved. That name is Jesus Christ. All those who do not confess this name, confess no-name. All the ecumenical services and all the joint television programs in the world cannot change that.

The CCRCC has one mandate: to address the government of this country with the Word of God. To deliver the people from darkness, to give sight to the blind and life to those who are dead in their unbelief. God often delivered Israel. He will also deliver many in our generation. If only we turn to Him for salvation in this world.

### **Postscript**

Emily Brink, editor of the CRC's new Psalter Hymnal, is an avid promoter of the sin Israel paid dearly for—ecumenical services with faith communities which worship no-name gods. Emily Brink has made the incredible statement that an ecumenical service including the Hare Krishna, Jewish and Mormon faiths is "... a marvelous expression of our unity in Christ..." There is little doubt that Satan will concur that such a service is a marvelous expression of unity—a unity in

which Christ is not present.

Emily Brink has in effect suggested that Christ is not our only Savior. Therefore, Christians also may sing “hymns” in the pagan temple of Dagon in union with the Philistines. Or the unrepentant Jew or pagan Hare Krishna.

Brink’s belief should tell the CRC something about the direction in which our new hymnbook has gone. And will go in future editions.

## Gary Shahinian on Van Till

**November 6, 1989**

OVER, AND OVER, AND OVER AGAIN the CRC community is told that the Bible is not a science textbook. Gary Shahinian, elder of First CRC, Sarnia, again made the point on the floor of Classis Chatham in the spring of 1988. Said Shahinian: “The Bible is not a history textbook; it is not a science textbook. If we want to learn about science, we do not go to the Bible, but rather, we go to creation.”

Amen! Brother Shahinian. Let’s all agree on that one fundamental point: The Bible is not a history or science textbook. But the Bible is certainly a book of

redemptive history.

Why are we being told time and again and again and again that the Bible is not a textbook? At least not a book that deals with history in general.

Why? Because Van Till and Menninga and Young and Shahinian and others don’t want us to read the opening chapters of Genesis literally. Why? Because the Genesis account of origins conflicts with scientific *speculation*.

Well, if we are all agreed that Christians are not to read the opening chapters of Genesis as if they were science or history textbooks, how are we to read the opening chapters of Genesis?

Ah, there’s the rub!

How *do* we then read the opening chapters of Genesis? As God’s revelation of the beginning to us?

What do the opening chapters of Genesis actually deal with? *They deal with the birth of the universe*. Would you say that is His story?

Now who is going to reveal to us how the universe was born? Where did the planets, the stars, the sun, and the moon come from? Where did plant life, life in the sea, birds, animals and mankind come from? How did they get here? Who is going to tell us that? God or the scientists?

The scientists, including Van Till, Menninga, and Young, declare that they

are going to tell us how the birth of the universe and life on planet earth began. How? By studying the creation, the universe. Somehow a study of the universe is supposed to reveal to us how the universe began. Take your choice. Thousands of scientists have come up with a hundred different answers. They have written thousands of textbooks on origins. But to this very day no one, scientists included, know with any degree of certainty, how the universe began.

Why? Why don't the scientists know with any degree of certainty how the universe began? Because the study of origins does not fall within the purview of science. There was no one there to observe the beginning. And it was a one-time-only event. There are no "rabbit" tracks. It is the height of arrogance for scientists to claim that they can tell us how the universe began. Only God can do that.

Scientists have tried. Clarence Menninga has tried. Menninga has a very peculiar view about the origin of Adam, the first man. Menninga has seriously suggested that Adam is the offspring of some primitive mother. Go figure. Apparently Adam had a mother.

Now Menninga is entitled to his peculiar point of view. Whether he should be allowed to teach that view to reformed students is another matter.

How did Menninga arrive at this view?

Did science reveal this to him? Not likely. Menninga's view of the origin of Adam is pure speculation. Speculation that flies in the face of Divine revelation. When Menninga suggests that Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother, he is talking through his hat. He may be a scientist but he is quite capable of making non-scientific observations. When Van Till declares that the opening chapters of Genesis ought not to be taken at their Word, he most definitely is not speaking scientifically.

This issue brings us back to textbooks and the Bible. I repeat: The Bible is not your average textbook. The Bible is unique. It is a book of Divine revelation. And anyone who tampers with the contents of this Book does so at his or her own peril. So the Book says.

The Bible begins at the beginning. "In the beginning God created..." The Bible tells us what no textbook on earth can tell us. That God made the universe by commanding it into being through the power of His Word. What manner of Man is Jesus that even the wind obeys Him?

No, the Bible is not a biology textbook. It does not tell us how the organs of man and animals function. It does not tell us how much hemoglobin there is in our blood. God enables man to learn that for himself.

The Bible is God's special revelation to man. It tells us about God, angels, heaven

and man's relationship to God. Genesis, the opening book of the Bible, contains a magnificent revelation of how the universe began. And it tells us how God took a man of dust and by the power of His breath (Spirit) sent the blood coursing through his veins.

Is the account of origins as revealed in Genesis scientific? Certainly not! Genesis does not provide empirical proof. Science is a human activity. Creating by the power of His Word is a Divine activity.

God has set limits to what man can and cannot know. Man can study God's creation. Man can most definitely not study God's creative activity, His creative power. Man cannot study and observe and comment on *how* Almighty God brought the universe into being by the power of His Word. Man must humble himself and *listen* reverently to what God *reveals* about origins in Genesis. All the protestations of all the scientists of all the ages in all the world notwithstanding. No one can master or grasp God's creative power.

At this point someone will interject: "But what about all those old fossil remains?" Precisely. What about them? They are bones of contention. Leakey and Johanson, the greatest among contemporary "studiers" of fossil remains, take one glance at a fossil remain, draw their egotistical conclusions and argue for years about those "conclusions." Read the recent

book by Roger Lewis, *Bones of Contention*. Remember Java man and remember Piltdown. What a joke. Remember what paleontologist Patterson has said, namely that there is nothing we know with any *certainty* about the evolution of anything.

On May 10, 1989, Gary Shahinian stood up on the floor of Classis Chatham and declared in his office as elder that Van Till and Menninga and Young do **not** call into question the event-character of Genesis 1-11. You don't say, elder Shahinian! Then what is Menninga talking about when he states that Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother instead of the first man God created and without a mother? Is he thereby not denying the event-character of Genesis 1-11?

What then is Van Till prattling on about when he declares that Genesis 1-11 are primeval history, not to be taken literally? And that what a Christian should take literally is that Adam had a mother? Why has Van Till repeatedly refused to inform the CRC that the first eleven chapters of Genesis *are* to be read as primeval history? And why Genesis 1-11 should not be read as event-character revelation?

Will Gary Shahinian accept the challenge? Will he explain to the CRC how Genesis chapters 1-11 can be viewed as primeval history which we understand is not to be taken literally while at the same time be read as event-character revelation

which does take the biblical account of Adam and Noah and the Tower of Babel literally?

Yes, we know that the Bible is not a science textbook. If we want to learn about things scientific we do not go to the Bible.

But if we want to learn about *origins* we do not go to the scientists. It is the task of scientists to study and explore God's creation. It is not their task to construct numerous hypothetical accounts about how the universe may have originated. When they attempt to do that they are clearly out of their depth.

When we want to learn about the origin of creation, we go to the revelation that the Creator has given us. Not to the mythmakers who today come armed with scientific degrees. Because like their predecessors, they pile up speculation upon speculation and compile utter nonsense that Adam may have had a primitive mother.

It is not enough to say that the Calvin professors confess that God is the Creator of everything. Especially not when they add in the next breath that Adam was born of a non-human mother or that Genesis 1-11 is primeval history. In that context it is meaningless to speak of God as Creator.

So next time Gary Shahinian stands up on the floor of classis or stands in front of the college students he teaches, would he also

tell us how Calvin professors accommodate the event-character of Genesis to their evolutionary theories. And please do not repeat the ridiculous suggestion that the world evolved for millions of years giving birth to a primitive creature which then in turn gave birth to Adam. Because if you believe that nonsense there is no need to demythologize Genesis 1-11. You may as well simply throw the entire Bible in the garbage and dismiss it as irrelevant.

Since it is not "science," and since it is not accepted as Divine revelation, it is little more than a fairy tale.

The burden of proof is yours my "Christian" friend. If you continue to insist that Menninga and Van Till do not call into question the event-character of Genesis 1-11, it is your burden to demonstrate how the Christian community is to understand the creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, their fall into sin, the destruction of the human race in the flood, and the events at the Tower of Babel. How are these events to be understood in a world which has been evolving for millions of years and is inhabited by primitive creatures steeped in sin and death?

What meaning does it have for Christians to believe that Adam was the first man on earth created good and perfect, lived in the Garden of Eden in communion with God and subsequently fell into sin plunging the entire creation

into disobedience when all around Eden primitive savages had lived in “sin” for millions of years?

The Christian community is not going to wait indefinitely for an answer.

How long do you think Christian parents are going to pay \$10,000 a year to send their Christian children to Christian institutions for higher learning only to have Christian professors teach them what Van Till and Menninga are teaching? And are you going to follow in their footsteps?

I have the most recent issue of the Calvin College alumni magazine *Spark*. This issue is little more than a promo-job defending the views of these professors. Will the Christian community buy it? Who knows. God’s people have worshiped some pretty pagan gods. Evolution isn’t the first strange god to come along. Some have even justified the abortion of their own children. On the advice of Christian professors.

This I know: The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ isn’t impressed with the arguments in the latest issue of *Spark*. Those arguments are not biblical.

I suggest that president Diekema use the next issue of the *Spark* to clarify to members of the CRC how they are to understand the Genesis account of Adam and Eve, living in the Garden of Eden, their fall into sin, the flood and the Tower of Babel.

How do we understand God’s revelation of origins as explained in Genesis 1-11 in the context of a world inhabited by primitive creatures that have been evolving for millions of years before Adam was “born”?

It may be well for those who have been given the responsibility of managing our institutions of higher learning to remember that the people who built those institutions brick by brick are also capable of tearing them down brick by brick.

And then of course there is God. God has been known to tear down one or two institutions Himself.

## How Is It Possible?

**December 25, 1989**

IT HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO Pittsburgh. I was “cruising” south on interstate 79. It was late in the evening. Very little traffic on the road. The radio was tuned to a classical station. Many fine musical compositions were being played. The radio commentator introduced the next piece. I recognized neither the name of the composer nor the selection. It was a piano concerto. By a German.

Then it happened. Music! A finer piece of music I have never heard. For a moment it occurred to me that I must have died and

gone to heaven. Could anyone on earth compose and play such edifying music!

As I steered the car over to the side of the road (the emotion of the moment was so overwhelming that my eyes had filled with tears and it was not safe to drive at the speed to which I have become accustomed), I realized that I was still very much on earth. As I sat there listening to the conclusion of this moving piano concerto, I wondered what kind of music we will get to listen to on the new heaven and on the new earth.

How is it possible for mere human beings, sinful humans at that, to compose and play such fine music? Where does the talent come from? Do a few select people have a special chemistry in their brain that makes them musical geniuses? And do great artists such as Rembrandt and Durer have yet another brain chemistry that enables them to be great artists? And why was Mozart a musical genius at a time when he could hardly walk? Brain chemistry?

Where does such talent come from? Is it something that people acquire genetically or through much hard work and practice? No! All talent is a gift. Unearned and undeserved. As all gifts are. Talent is a gift from God. And God bestows talent upon whom He pleases. Some people receive more talent(s) than others. God is not a democrat. According to His sovereign will God bestows a great variety of special tal-

ents upon the Rembrandts, Durers, and Mozarts of this world. Think of what Handel did with his talent. He composed the *Messiah*. A moving and majestic composition that stirs the souls of men to awe and reverence to this very day. Did not the king of England arise from his seat and stand as the words, "Lord of lords, and King of kings," reverberated throughout the concert hall? Obligating all attendees to rise?

A few days ago John Van Dyk, who more or less runs *Christian Renewal*, reminded me that the next issue of *Renewal* would be the New Year's issue. Say something inspiring, he advised.

Say something inspiring! To whom? My two feet have been so firmly planted on solid ground this past year that there have been weeks and months when I never seriously thought about heaven. And yet the most inspiring thing I can think of to say to readers of *Renewal* as we enter the year nineteen hundred and ninety is: **THINK OF HEAVEN THIS COMING YEAR.**

Christians have often been accused of escapism. Karl Marx characterized Christianity as the opium of the people. Christians, said Marx, are so preoccupied with the life hereafter that, like opium, Christianity puts them to sleep to the need for the great revolution of the masses that must take place on earth.

Many contemporary Christians agree. Also in the CRC. Let's change the world,



they say. Don't be so exclusive, they say. Let's have ecumenical services, they say. Let's improve the lot of man and establish the brotherhood of mankind.

A pipe dream. Conducted and orchestrated by Satan.

Contemporary Christians do not stand in danger of a preoccupation with life on a new earth and a new heaven. On the contrary. Most contemporary Christians, like myself, have both feet too firmly planted on the ground. So firmly in fact, that contemporary Christianity is increasingly and rapidly moving in the direction of Christian humanism. And humanism—Christian and otherwise—distinguishes itself by its horizontalism. Humanism is preoccupied with the human, by things on earth. It discards the Divine. Christian humanism, in spite of all its fine rhetoric, is no less horizontalistic (earthly) in its emphasis than the non-Christian varieties.

As we enter the year of our Lord nineteen ninety, we do well to remember that any genuine renewal activity that will take place on earth this year, will be initiated in heaven.

Christ is in charge. All year long. From January 1, 1990 to December 31, 1990. And not a minute less. The drama on earth in 1990 will unfold according to His sovereign will. Christ, through His Spirit and followers, sows the wheat. Satan, through his spirit and his followers, sows the weeds.

When Christ returns at the end of time in triumphant majesty, the wheat and the weeds will be separated. That is the exclusivism of the gospel. Also for 1990.

Heaven and earth were created in the beginning. God and Christ and their angels live in heaven. Man lives on earth. The two are intimately and inseparably related. Karl Marx was wrong. The death of Christianity is not its preoccupation with things in heaven, but its preoccupation with life on earth.

In the Garden of Eden God created a great banquet for mankind. The harmony between heaven and earth was complete. But mankind sold its birthright to the devil. The banquet was poisoned, the harmony destroyed. Christ restored that harmony. At a terrible price on a terrible cross all the way into hell. How is it possible?

The Savior of mankind is not to be found on earth. Our Deliverer is in heaven. Seated at God's right hand. He, and He alone, will set men free. Tell that good news to your unbelieving neighbor in 1990. You can tell him no finer thing. And ask God to work in your neighbor's heart so that your neighbor also may be set free. In 1990. For God all things are possible.

The piano concerto I listened to on my way to Pittsburgh was not only a very fine, stirring piece of music, it served to remind me, Christian, that my feet are planted much too firmly on the ground. We are

not on earth to stay. God will call some of us home in 1990. Perhaps He will return. He is coming. To establish His everlasting Kingdom. In heaven and on earth. That is something to look forward to. And to think about. In 1990.

And should some of us leave earth this coming year, it is well for those of us who remain to remember that eye has not seen and ear has not heard the things God has in store for us. How is it possible?

## Those Silly CRC Professionals

January 22, 1990

A PROFESSIONAL IS SOMEONE who knows more about a particular subject than the average person by virtue of having made an in-depth study of that subject. But what happens when a professional advocates views which conflict with scriptural revelation or contradict the facts? The listener gets to hear some pretty silly arguments.

At a public meeting the former editor of *The Banner*, Andrew Kuyvenhoven (AK), stated that, "...he and many Reformed people were never taught that the six days of creation must be taken literally." That may very well be true. But what has that got

to do with our understanding of creation? The Pope was never taught that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is not immaculate (without sin), nor was the Pope taught that there is no purgatory. So is Mary Immaculate and is there a purgatory? The Pope thinks so. That is what he was taught.

When the Bible states that, "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day," do we take that literally or do we argue that the first day of creation was **actually** billions of years? Is someone a fundamentalist when he or she reads the Bible literally as the inspired Word of God?

It is silly to argue that one has never been taught to take the six days of creation literally.

As editor of *The Banner*, AK published an interview in which a Calvin College professor (a professional) stated that Adam may have been a Neanderthal. Later the same professor stated that Adam may be the offspring of a primitive mother. A silly argument indeed. And that is the heart of the creation-evolution controversy in the CRC. Not the length of the creation days. So if you were taught that Adam had a primitive mother, does that mean Adam **in fact** had a primitive mother?

So what is the Christian church to do? Believe that Adam had a primitive mother merely because some CRC professionals teach that point of view? Kuyvenhoven appears to think as much.

In a recent article in *Calvinist Contact*, a “professional” psychotherapist from Toronto, Mary Vander Vennen, stated that a madman who brutally shot fourteen women to death in Montreal should not be viewed as “a sad but isolated instance of one man suddenly gone crazy.”

Then how should his act of insanity be viewed according to Mary Vander Vennen? As the “...inevitable consequence of generations of people and thousands of years of an historical process in which violence against women and children... has been sanctioned by man.”

Really? Is that a responsible, professional point of view? Or is it rather the opinionated and dogmatic view of a twentieth century feminist?

Do men as a gender sanction violence against women? And have they done so for thousands of years? That may come as a bit of a surprise to Mary, Queen of Scots, also known in history textbooks as bloody Mary. That point of view may also come as a surprise to Rip Van Winkle and thousands of other husbands who have been driven to distraction as often as not, beaten by their wives.

Vander Vennen argues against the biblical teaching that husbands have authority over their wives and children. She does not believe that man is the head of the family even as Christ is the head of the Church. She *does* believe that *because*

men have historically assumed the position of headship, *that therefore* a madman in Montreal shoots down fourteen women.

A shallow argument indeed.

Redeemer College is asking the reformed community for \$1,000,000 to fund the Pascal Centre whose mandate it is to conduct scientific research from a reformed, Christian perspective. To date, Redeemer College as a reformed Christian institution has failed (with the notable exception of one professor) to contribute any biblical insight to the creation-evolution debate which is turning our community and Christian grade and highschoools upside down. Redeemer College has been silent as an institution, as far as its supporting community is concerned, in regard to the question of creation and evolution. It has offered no assistance to the Christian community in its attempt to grapple with this non-Christian worldview.

Isn't it silly, therefore, to spend \$1,000,000 on a Centre founded to conduct scientific research when Redeemer has been unwilling or unable to address the question of the scientific nature or not of evolution?

The president of Calvin Seminary, James DeJong, is going on a speaking tour in February to attempt to restore the membership confidence in the CRC. The subject of the speech is “Unity in Diversity.”

This speech is being made by the same man who did his level best to undermine the reputation of Mid-America Reformed Seminary at the 1989 Synod of the CRC. It will be interesting therefore to see what this professional has to say in this context about the subject of “Unity in Diversity.” Two of the most outspoken pro-women-in-all-offices-of-the-church advocates at Calvin Seminary, Henry De Moor and Melvin Hugen, are accompanying De Jong on this speaking tour.

DeJong, De Moor, and Hugen are going to attempt to inspire confidence in the direction our seminary is taking? They are going to discuss “unity in diversity” when that means tearing the denomination apart by advocating that some churches have women on CRC pulpits and some CRC churches don’t?

How silly!

Paul De Groot, a professional journalist and member of the CRC recently argued in an article in the *Southam Newspaper* that the confessional documents of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth “... are not the core of Christianity but are instead a kind of tribal war cry.”

The *Apostles Creed* a tribal war cry?

De Groot argues that the church should do away with all doctrine since it is divisive. All that Christians need to believe in, according to De Groot, is the necessity

of loving God and our neighbor. And, of course, De Groot’s new creed that there should be no creeds.

Isn’t that silly?

## The Little Girl Who Cannot Stand

**February 5, 1990**

OUR FAMILY WENT TO CHURCH in Hamilton this past Sunday. One of our nieces did public profession of faith. It is wonderful to see God’s faithfulness expressed in the confession of young people. It is even more wonderful when it is someone from your own family.

A guest minister preached that morning. The subject of his sermon was, “The Hands of God.” Before he began his sermon the guest minister invited the Sunday School children to come to the front.

Twenty to thirty children responded. One mother carried a young girl in a red dress and sat her alongside the other children on the steps of the stairs leading to the podium. She herself sat in a front pew waiting to return the child. This little girl appeared to have casts on both her legs. It wasn’t until later that I learned the little girl

had cystic fibrosis. She could not walk. She could not even stand. A simple motion we all take very much for granted.

The guest minister asked the Sunday school children if they knew any songs with the words, “God’s hand” or “hand” in it. After a moment’s silence a young voice responded, “He has the whole world in His hands.”

The guest minister then suggested that we all sing, “He has the whole world in His hands.” He suggested that all the children stand up. They could thereby sing better.

It was such a simple request. The children rose. All except one child. The little girl in the red dress remained seated. The little girl with cystic fibrosis.

The expression on that little face would surely melt the hardest heart. She looked at the other children. She made a motion to stand. But it was in vain.

She looked at her mother. Her mother hesitated. She pleaded with her eyes. Her mother responded. As most mothers would. As the mother sat down on the stairs of the podium she lifted her daughter into a standing position. An expression of joy filled the little girl’s countenance. She began to clap. And sing, “God has the whole world in His hands.”

God’s hands often take the shape of a mother’s hands.

As the song ended and the children

left for Sunday school, the little girl in the red dress left in the arms of her mother, I wondered, “What would Jesus have done if He had been in the audience?” The answer wasn’t long in coming. If Jesus had seen the expression on the little girl’s face, He would surely have had compassion on her. He would have healed her.

That morning the minister read from Lord’s Day 10. The providence of God. “Providence,” declares our confession, “is the almighty and ever present power of God by which He upholds, as with His hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but from His fatherly hand.”

Health and sickness! Not by chance. But from God’s fatherly hand. And that is what makes cystic fibrosis so difficult, so impossibly difficult, for us to understand. Sickness also comes to us, not by chance, but from God’s fatherly hand. So declares Scripture. So declare our confessions. And invariably we rebel. It cannot be so. And yet it is so. Believe it.

I don’t have any difficulty believing it—in theory! I can accept it as a piece of doctrine. But in practice? In practice all the children stood to sing, “He has the whole world in His hands.” All the children but the little girl in the red dress. The little girl

with the cystic fibrosis. The little girl who will never walk. Not unless God chooses to perform a miracle. And that is something we *may* ask for.

“So who sinned,” someone may ask. The little girl? Who had cystic fibrosis from *birth*? The mother? The grandparents? Some distant relative? The congregation she is a member of?

If God rewarded us and our children according to our own merit we would all be paraplegics. With not one exception among us. Some of us sin more publicly than others but our sins are crippling—for each and every member of the body of Jesus Christ. That is why Christ came in the flesh. To pay the crippling ransom of our collective and individual sins. All the way back to the Garden of Eden. And God has accepted Christ’s ransom as payment in full. For all those who confess their sins and believe.

I don’t know why there is so much suffering even among the very young. But I do know that God is not a stranger to that suffering. And I know that suffering does not come by chance.

As I watched the little girl in the red dress struggle futilely in her attempts to stand, a deep compassion ran through me. If I had had the power to restore her legs at that moment I would surely have done so.

But I am not the only one who ob-

served and I am not the only one who had compassion. From His throne on high, Jesus also observed. And no one has greater compassion than He. And He has the power. Both in this life and the next.

Meanwhile Jesus asks from all of us that we be arms and legs to those not so gifted. Until His glorious return when He will abolish the ravages of man’s disobedience and establish His kingdom without blemish. In that kingdom there will be no little girls who cannot stand.

“Strengthen the feeble, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, ‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come...’ And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way to Holiness. But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away” (Isaiah 35:3, 8, 9b, 10b). And by God’s grace the little girl in the red dress will walk.

## **Burying the Truth under a Boulder**

**February 19, 1989**

**Sherlock Holmes walked into the abandoned house where the corpse**

had been found. **“I wonder how long this house has been abandoned?” he mused. As he walked into the living room he noticed a thick, undisturbed layer of dust on the furniture and oak living room table. “Judging by this dust, Watson, I would venture that no one has been living in this house for over a year.”**

**“It must be much longer than a year Sherlock,” Watson replied. “Take a look at the dust on the kitchen table. It’s at least two feet thick.”**

**“Impossible!” replied Sherlock Holmes. “The dust on the kitchen table should have accumulated at about the same rate as the dust on the living room table.”**

**“Look for yourself,” Watson replied.**

**Holmes did just that. As he entered the kitchen he immediately grasped the nature of the contradiction. “That is not dust, Watson,” he exclaimed. “Someone has dumped a wheelbarrow load of soil on the kitchen table. We can’t possibly deduce from that how long the dust has been accumulating.”**

At least one professor at Calvin College would be well served if he shared a little of Sherlock Holmes’ common sense insight. He would be less prone to making ridiculous statements. This professor

apparently can’t tell the difference between dust on a living room table and a wheelbarrow of soil on the kitchen table. And that can lead to some pretty ridiculous assertions.

In the January 5, 1990 issue of *Calvinist Contact*, Dr. Clarence Menninga, geology professor at Calvin College, takes issue with the argument that the layer of cosmic dust on the moon is quite thin. A thin layer of dust on the moon would point the inquirer in the direction of a young moon. A moon that is thousands and not hundreds of millions of years old. An old moon requires a very thick layer of cosmic dust. Dust measured in feet rather than in inches. Dr. Menninga believes in an old moon. So he requires a lot of dust on the moon.

He finds this dust—many feet of it—in *The World Book Encyclopedia*. According to this encyclopedia, “the layer of lunar soil (reader please note that Menninga has suddenly switched from talking about lunar dust to lunar soil—J.H.) on the surface of the moon is generally from 5 to 20 feet deep on the lunar maria.”

That is a lot of lunar soil (dust?). A lot more than the inches of dust advocates of a young moon state there to be.

So how much dust is there on the moon? As much dust as Sherlock Holmes found on the living room table or as much “soil” as Watson found on the kitchen table? You’d be surprised at the answer.

The reader is not told when the article in the *World Book Encyclopedia* was published. That would have been helpful. Especially if the reader were to learn that this particular article was written prior to the manned moon landings.

But it really doesn't matter. The article in *World Book Encyclopedia* that Clarence Menninga quotes as his authority on how to interpret the age of the moon, lunar soil is made up of "dust-sized particles, **with some rocks and boulders mixed in**" (emphasis mine—J.H.).

Now isn't that neat?

Menninga admonishes those who write about the age of the earth not to distort the physical evidence. Fair enough! But look at what Menninga does himself. He employs a definition of lunar soil which is totally irrelevant and contradictory to the discussion.

Menninga warns his readers not to be influenced by those who say there are only a few inches of lunar dust on the moon and who therefore believe the moon to be young.

Not so, says Menninga. There are deep piles of lunar dust on the moon. Generally from 5-20 feet deep. So the "factual" evidence which God has given us points to an old moon.

Except...!

Except Menninga and *The World Book*

*Encyclopedia* employs a definition of lunar soil that conveniently dumps tractor trailer loads of so-called "lunar dust" (boulders, that is) all over the moon.

Lunar soil, says Menninga, for the purpose of my argument is "dust-sized particles" and uh, of course, "**with some rocks and boulders** mixed in."

No, not just rocks mixed in with the dust. But **boulders** even. **Boulders. That is cute, Watson. Very cute. But an argument totally lacking in integrity and logic.** (Yes, the bold means that I am shouting.)

Of what value is it to discuss the thickness of the layer of dust on the moon, if in our definition of dust we include boulders? Is that a "scientific" definition of dust?

I, for one, have no difficulty with Menninga's assertion that the layer of "lunar dust" on the moon is 5-20 feet thick if some of the dust (soil) particles consist of boulders 4, or 8, or 20 feet thick. But what does that tell us about the age of the moon?

If it takes, for instance, a thousand years for one inch of lunar dust to accumulate on the moon, how old is the moon when a 10 foot boulder from another planet crashes down? A 10 foot boulder is equivalent to 120 inches of dust. After that boulder, and many more like it, have fallen on the moon, may we conclude that the moon is now



120,000 years old according to the time it took for those boulders to fall?

Menninga seems to think so. His working definition of lunar soil consists of dust, rocks, and boulders. It is therefore **nonsense** for Menninga to talk about the age of the moon **on the basis of the accumulation** of lunar soil so defined. For Menninga does **not know** whether the dust on the moon got there gradually as in Sherlock Holmes' living room, or whether it was dumped there in the form of rocks and boulders as in Watson's kitchen.

I have often wondered how Dr. Clarence Menninga arrived at the insight that Adam may have had a primitive animal for a mother. I think I am beginning to understand. One has to be flexible in one's definitions.

Dr. Menninga is right when he emphasizes to his readers in *Calvinist Contact* that, "We may not ignore the story of God's world." True! But we should not hide the truth under a layer of boulders either by pretending those boulders are dust.

## Clarence Menninga at Mount St. Helens

**March 5, 1990**

**CLARENCE MENNINGA, professor of geology at Calvin College, accuses Christians (who don't share his evolutionistic view of the world) of locking themselves in ivory towers** (see his article in the January 5, 1990 issue of *Calvinist Contact*).

Writes Menninga in this article: "You may have heard of reports which claim that the layers of sedimentary rocks (sandstone, shale, limestone) on the earth, at least those layers which have fossils in them, were deposited during the flood which is described in Genesis chapters 6-8. We also have learned some things about those rocks and fossils by the study of the rocks and fossils themselves. The history that we tell about the rocks ought to fit the available information.

"Does a flood history fit the observations for the rocks that we find on the earth?" Menninga asks.

Let's face the truth. Menninga does not believe the great flood described in Genesis tells us anything. He and many of his Calvin College colleagues believe that the Genesis flood was a small, localized affair that does not tell us anything about



the history of the earth. Calvin professors never tire of warning their readers not to be taken in by those Christians who place great emphasis on how the Genesis flood changed the face of the earth.

Menninga is a uniformitarian. What is a uniformitarian? A uniformitarian is a geologist (someone who studies the formation of earth layers) who believes that geomorphic processes which can be observed in action at present, such as erosion, sedimentation, glaciation, diastrophism, etc. (all operating in essentially the same fashion as at present) can be invoked to explain the origin and formation of **all** the earth's geologic features.

That is why Menninga believes that the Grand Canyon was formed over a period of hundreds of millions of years. The formation of the Grand Canyon took place gradually over a very long period of time. A catastrophe of the proportions of the Genesis flood might have created a Grand Canyon in a relatively short period of time. Listen to what the book of Genesis says about that flood: "...all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened... Rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights... And all flesh died... Every living thing that was upon the face of the earth, was blotted out from the earth."

A catastrophe! Total destruction. The

earth buried under a mountain of water.

Interesting story, says professor Menninga. But hardly scientific. The geologic features that we geologists study today came into being gradually over a very, very long period of time.

“The history of the rocks is God’s story, too,” Menninga writes. Never mind the Genesis account of the great, cataclysmic flood. It has no bearing on our study of the features of the earth.

Well, God made a mockery of this kind of thinking almost ten years ago. At the foot of Mount St. Helens.

### **THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED!**

In 1980 Mount St. Helens released the explosive power of 400,000,000 **TONS** of TNT in one day.

What did this gigantic blast do? It formed 600 feet of strata sequences in just a matter of hours—some over 25 feet thick. But professor Menninga still teaches that each layer formation represents a long period of time. Look at the Grand Canyon, Menninga will say. Tell us, professor, how was the Grand Canyon formed? Were you there?

No, you weren’t there when the Grand Canyon was formed. What happened at Mount St. Helens happened before your eyes. The rapid stratification and erosion that occurred at Mount St. Helens discredits Menninga’s and Van Till’s geologic time

frames and processes.

God had a message for geologists at Mount St. Helens. And this was the message: In the course of **ONE DAY** a new canyon system was formed that was over **140 FEET DEEP**. This canyon system, created in one day, came complete with cliffs, cup-shaped side canyons and **many of the same features that you see in the Grand Canyon**.

Many people have seen the canyon at the foot of Niagara Falls. Well, that canyon is 193 feet deep. At Mount St. Helens, a canyon three-quarters the depth, was created in **ONE DAY**. And science will attest to that.

Consider that scientific fact the next time you look at the Grand Canyon, Dr. Menninga, and tell your listeners it took hundreds of millions of years to form the Grand Canyon. The truth is: **YOU DON’T KNOW!** You merely have a desperate desire for it to be very old. And that is not what the story of God’s creation is telling you in scientific terms.

The vast periods of time required for the petrified forests to form is an argument that evolutionists put forward to support their theory of an old earth.

Dr. Menninga is still a firm believer in the millions of years it takes to form, for example, the Yellowstone Petrified Forest which has 27 different levels of fossilized logs.

I will personally put up the money for a complete scuba diving outfit if Dr. Menninga will go diving in Spirit Lake, north of Mount St. Helens. Because if he does, he will discover that, under water, Spirit Lake looks like several whole forests have grown there over many thousands of years. Yet we know that those forests were deposited in Spirit Lake in an instant. Doesn't that put the lie on uniformitarianism?

How were the coal fields formed in Kentucky? Dr. Menninga has a theory. They were formed gradually over a period of millions of years. Simply imagine leaves and branches falling off trees forming a peat deposit over a very long period of time.

However, if one were to go for a swim to the bottom of Spirit Lake at Mount St. Helens, one would find deposits of bark and broken branches, which is a peat deposit, three feet deep in places. If another catastrophe occurred and that peat in the lakebed was buried and altered under pressure, it would form coal.

What would it take to float entire forests of logs over the state of Kentucky to form the coal fields that have been found there? A flood of the magnitude described in Genesis?

Clarence Menninga should spend less time at the Grand Canyon. He can only speculate on its formation. What he should do instead is go for a long walk on the bottom of the 140 foot deep canyon

at Mount St. Helens and meditate on the **reality** that this canyon was formed in **one day**.

The story of the 140 foot deep canyon actually formed in one day at Mount St. Helens is in truth and scientific fact God's story.

It is a current story to which the professors at Calvin College should lend an ear. Perhaps then they won't have to bother the Reformed community with the "need" for demythologizing the first eleven chapters of Genesis, making Adam the offspring of a primitive mother and including rocks and boulders in lunar dust on the moon to achieve the "desired" thickness.

A summer of study at the foot of Mount St. Helens by a team of scientists from Calvin College may serve to end the dubious love affair the professors have with uniformitarianism.

## **Cowards at Calvin?**

**March 5, 1990**

**COWARD!**

**No one likes to be referred to as a coward. No one likes to be viewed as someone who lacks courage. Yet a number of professors at Calvin College**

**lack the courage of their convictions.**

What are these convictions? That the world and all animal and human life **evolved** into being. Evolution. Since these professors are Christians they hasten to add that God directed the process of evolution. Can anyone believe that God directs *random mutations*?

In his book, *The Fourth Day*, Howard Van Till states that “he sees no reason whatsoever to deny that the Creation might have an evolutionary history or that morally responsible creatures might have been formed through the processes of evolutionary development.”

“No reason whatsoever to deny...” Well, does this make Howard Van Till a coward? He appears to be stating his position boldly.

Not really. The only clear statement that Van Till is prepared to make is that he sees no reason whatsoever to deny that humans made in the image of God have been formed through the processes of evolutionary development. And that the opening chapters of Genesis should not be taken literally since a literal reading of Genesis destroys the current understanding of evolutionary development.

What Van Till is not prepared to discuss are the consequences of his evolutionary views for our understanding of Scripture. And that is cowardly.

Van Till’s colleague, Clarence

Menninga, has suggested that Adam might be the offspring of a primitive mother. Now that is a bold suggestion. What is cowardly on the part of Calvin professors is their unwillingness to discuss the *implications* of this belief.

Suppose for a moment that Christians accept the belief that Adam is the offspring of a primitive mother as Menninga suggests. Menninga’s suggestion is not frivolous. The chain of evolution demands that man be the end product of lower forms of life. Van Till clearly states in his book that he sees no reason whatsoever for not believing this.

Fine! It is so easy to proclaim that Adam had a primitive mother. Why not? And if you don’t believe that, just remember the problems the church created when it challenged Galileo.

As if the belief that Adam had primitive parents functions on the same “scientific” level as the question of whether the earth is round or flat.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven has stated that members of the CRC ought not to get too excited about the age of the earth. But what have Adam’s primitive parents to do with the question of the age of the earth? And *why* is it that Kuyvenhoven has never dared to address the issue of Adam’s primitive parents raised by the Calvin professors? A view published in *The Banner*.

It has been suggested that members

of the CRC ought to leave scientific issues and discussions to the experts. And what the “experts” would dearly like to see the average member of the CRC overlook is that any Christian with a grade six education and a clear mind can figure out what the implications of “a primitive mother” for Adam would be.

The implications of a belief in Adam’s primitive mother are far reaching. Imagine Adam sitting around a campfire with Eve and his children. One of Adam’s children asks, “Why is it, dad, that our family believes in God but all those thousands of human-like creatures around us don’t? Why doesn’t grandma believe in God, dad? Doesn’t grandma love God?”

And imagine Adam’s response, “We don’t know, son. Those are deep theological questions. And I am not a theologian.”

Howard Van Till and Clarence Menninga aren’t theologians either. So they decline to answer the questions raised by their view that man, including Adam, is the offspring of a lower form of life as well. Just believe it.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is a theologian. But to date he has declined to answer these difficult questions by hiding behind the skirts of the non-theological “experts.”

Did Adam have a non-human creature for a mother? According to Van Till and Menninga he did. And according to

Kuyvenhoven that is not important. After all, Van Till and Menninga are the experts.

But when asked to discuss the implications of this belief, the experts are silent. They live in mortal fear of the day when they might have to give an accounting of what it means for Christianity that Adam had a non-human creature for a mother. Just imagine.

Was baby Adam born and conceived in sin?

No, says Scripture. Adam was not born. He was created by a mighty act of God. And he was without sin. He did not know what sin was.

Yes, say the Calvin professors. Adam *was* born. Out of the womb of a primitive creature. And he was as sinful as his primitive mother. Adam lived in a world steeped in sin. Sexual permissiveness, murder, rape, incest and theft were the order of the day. There were no ten commandments. And Adam was part of that decadent creation from its evolutionary inception.

No, you don’t have to be an astronomer or biologist or anthropologist to understand the implications of what these Calvin professors are teaching.

In the Fall 1989 issue of the magazine, *Calvin Today*, Anthony J. Diekema, president of Calvin College, defends the view that man is the end product of evolutionary processes. He notes that the

three science professors who have been criticized “strongly affirm their faith in God as Sovereign *creator* of all things, they confirm man as the image bearer of God, they claim the *historicity* of Adam and the event character of the Fall into sin, and all other doctrines contained in our reformed standards of faith.”

Dr. Diekema has gone to great lengths to defend the views of the Calvin professors. He has written at length on the creation/evolution controversy. But he has declined to assist the community in their understanding of this controversy.

Why?

Dr. Diekema states that the Calvin professors “strongly affirm their faith in God as Sovereign creator of all things.”

How do the Calvin professors do this? They also strongly affirm that the creation came into being through evolutionary processes which teaches that one form of imperfection gives rise to a lesser form of imperfection giving rise to yet a lesser form of imperfection. Life pitted against life. The survival of the fittest. Is that the creative work of a Sovereign God?

Dr. Diekema also states that the Calvin professors strongly affirm “man as the image bearer of God.”

How do the Calvin professors do this? They have stated that man is the product of lower forms of life. They have stated

that Adam may have been a Neanderthal. Did the Neanderthals possess the image of God?

Dr. Diekema also states that the Calvin professors strongly affirm “the historicity of Adam and the event-character of the Fall into sin.”

How do the Calvin professors manage this? The professors are on record teaching that Adam is the end product of a long chain of evolutionary processes. The professors have stated that Adam may have had a primitive mother. A mother who was non-human and sinful. So what strange tale are the professors spinning when they say that they strongly affirm the historicity of Adam and the event-character of the Fall into sin? Can the professors blow bubbles and drink water all at the same time?

All is quiet on the Calvin front. No one, not even the president of the college, has accepted the challenge of explaining what the professors are talking about. Adam was born of a primitive mother, **but** we affirm the historicity of Adam as recorded in Genesis. Really? What do the professors and the president of Calvin understand by historicity?

Would the professors and the president of Calvin College please offer the community an explanation of these two diametrically and conflicting points of view.

## **\$10,000 for Calvin Professors**

**April 23,1990**

**YOU CAN LEAD A HORSE to water, but you can't make it drink.**

**I am not suggesting that some of the professors at Calvin College are horses, although on the basis of their view of origins, it is a distinct possibility that the professors have horses among their ancestors.**

Why is it that Clarence Menninga, Howard Van Till, Davis Young and Company at Calvin College stubbornly refuse to discuss the *implications* of evolution for our understanding of the first eleven chapters of Genesis?

The president of Calvin College, Dr. Anthony Diekema, isn't much help in this matter either. Diekema is on record as supporting the evolutionary views of the Calvin professors as being reformed and biblical. Diekema has hitched his wagon to theirs. But the president of Calvin College doesn't appear to be in the least interested in having the professors discuss the *implications* of evolution for our understanding of Genesis.

Can we make the horse drink? Perhaps. Perhaps not. We will try.

The most compelling reason the

Calvin professors have given for **not** discussing the implications of evolution for our understanding of Genesis is that they are not theologians. That being the case, why is it that they come to such sweeping theological conclusions in their writings?

Van Till for instance has drawn the theological conclusion that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are not to be taken literally. That is quite a theological conclusion about the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Especially if this conclusion is made by someone who refuses to discuss **how** the Christian church is now to understand God's revelation about the origin of the universe, the human race, the perfection of God's creation, man's fall into sin, redemption, Noah, and the events at the Tower of Babel. Is Babel related to tongues at Pentecost?

Menninga has stated that Adam may have been a Neanderthal and that Adam may have had a primitive mother. That is another sweeping theological conclusion. But to date, Menninga has refused to discuss the implications of that theological conclusion.

Davis Young has suggested that the flood described in Genesis did not result in the death of the human race. Noah and his family were not the only human beings to survive the flood. A sweeping theological conclusion.

In spite of drawing these sweeping



theological conclusions, the professors adamantly continue to insist that they are not theologians. They do not wish to discuss the implications of their evolutionary views for our understanding of Scripture.

And that is hogwash. A cop-out. The professors have set themselves up as professionals capable of not only interpreting Scripture, but of re-interpreting it as well.

The professors, therefore, owe it to the community they serve to explain how the Christian church is now to understand the first eleven chapters of Genesis, the origin of man, man's fall into sin, the flood and the events at the Tower of Babel in the light of their re-interpretations.

It is the responsibility of the president of Calvin College and its board of trustees to urge the professors to explain to the CRC community how Scripture is to be understood in the light of these re-interpretations.

Professors are busy people. They have courses to prepare, books to write, seminars to attend. Some engage in extra-curricular activities to support their families.

So I am willing to offer these professors some extra-curricular work. And pay them for their efforts. I am willing to pay either Van Till, Menninga, or Young (any two or all three may work on the material together) \$10,000.00 if they will write an

article or series of articles for publication explaining how the Christian community is to understand the first eleven chapters of Genesis in the light of their re-interpretation of Scripture.

The questions and biblical givens they are to deal with specifically in their articles are the following:

**1.** If the first eleven chapters of Genesis are primeval history and not to be taken literally, how are Christians to read these chapters?

**2.** More specifically, how are Christians to understand the biblical revelation about a Garden of Eden, Adam as the head of the human race, the tree of good and evil, the serpent and the expulsion from the garden?

**3.** How are Christians to understand Cain slaying Abel as being the first murder, if primitive creatures had been killing each other for millions of years before Adam?

**4.** How are we to understand the biblical revelation that people during Adam's time lived to be almost a thousand years old?

**5.** Menninga has stated that Adam may have been a Neanderthal or had a primitive mother. How, in the light of this data, are Christians to biblically view Adam as the first human living in a sinless creation?

**6.** If Noah and his family were not the only people to survive the flood, how are Christians to understand Genesis 8:21

where God states: "... Never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done"?

7. How are Christians to understand the events that the Bible says took place at the Tower of Babel?

8. We know how humanists describe and understand the process of evolution. But how do Christians who believe in evolution account for evolution? Do they also believe that life began as a struggle of the survival of the fittest? Do they believe that mutations (freak occurrences) gave rise to new species? Did imperfection give rise to forms of life less imperfect until distinguishable species were formed? Did man evolve from the lower animals?

9. Do Christian evolutionists believe that inanimate matter evolved into life? If so, how is this distinguishable from a miracle?

10. Has any Christian evolutionist, a theistic evolutionist, ever attempted to give an account of the process of evolution as directed by God? Or do Christian evolutionists merely accept secular evolutionism and declare that God directed the process? End of story.

We are of course to take God's revelation in creation seriously. But how do we harmonize what the professors say God's revelation in creation tells us with what God specifically reveals to us in the Bible?

These questions are of such importance to the Christian community that I am willing to pay the professors \$10,000.00 to set aside time to answer them. I will also pay them \$1,000.00 for each and every series of supplementary questions which may arise as a result of their initial article(s). They agree in advance to answer these supplementary questions to the best of their ability.

I hope to hear from them soon.

## Calvin Trustees

May 7, 1990

**TENS OF THOUSANDS OF CRC members and over 100 Christian Reformed Churches have expressed grave concern about views taught by three Calvin College professors.**

To address the concerns of members of the CRC, the Calvin College Board of Trustees appointed a committee of four of its own members to give scriptural direction to the three professors and to work toward clarification and resolution of issues which have raised concern.

On February 21, 1990 this committee of four Calvin Trustees sent a report to all councils of the CRC in North America. In

this report the churches are not told who these four trustees are. It is just as well because their report makes it clear that the views of these four trustees does not differ in substance from the views of the three professors. Any one wishing to read the complete report can obtain a copy by requesting it from the clerk of their local council.

Here is what the committee of four members of the Board of Trustees reports concerning the three professors:

**RE: PROFESSOR CLARENCE MENNINGA**

According to the Calvin College Committee of four trustees: “ **We are assured that he (Clarence Menninga) seeks to honor his commitment to our Reformed understanding of Scripture, and the board judges that his views are within the bounds of our creedal forms of unity.**”

There you have it. In black and white. According to the Calvin College Board of Trustees, Menninga’s views are reformed and scriptural.

What are Menninga’s views concerning the biological formation of God’s creatures?

1. All biological life came into being via the process of evolution. God created all life via a process of trial

and error. Imperfect forms of life evolved into **less** imperfect forms of life.

2. Human-like creatures preceded Adam on earth by millions of years.
3. Adam may have been a Neanderthal. In other words, Adam himself was sub-human.
4. Adam may have had a primitive mother. Therefore, Adam did not originate as a miraculous, creative act of God and did not live in a sinless world. Adam was **born** into a corrupt society of lower, human-like creatures which were in the throes of the violent process of evolution.

Professor Menninga does state that Adam and Eve were the first human pair made in the image of God and that they were made capable of keeping God’s commands in perfection. But this view of Menninga’s is held within the context that Adam may have been a Neanderthal and may have had a primitive mother. And Menninga stubbornly refuses to discuss the implications of this belief. For instance, Menninga has never answered the question how Adam as offspring of a primitive mother met Eve. Was Eve also the offspring of a primitive mother?

And Menninga has consistently refused to discuss how Adam, the offspring of a primitive creature, attained perfection.

Apparently the committee of four Calvin trustees is not disturbed by these contradictions.

Menninga's peculiar views are accepted as biblical and reformed.

#### **RE: PROFESSOR HOWARD VAN TILL**

The committee of four Calvin trustees is not satisfied with Van Till's response to date and is continuing the discussion.

#### **RE: PROFESSOR DAVIS YOUNG**

The board has judged that Davis Young's views do not conflict with our reformed confessions.

In his report to the trustees, Davis Young does not answer the question whether Noah and his family were the only human beings to survive the Flood as the Bible clearly teaches.

Young does state that he believes that Adam and Eve were the first two human beings made in the image of God. He does not inform the Board of Trustees whether "people" lived on earth prior to Adam and Eve who were **not** created in God's image. He has clearly suggested as much in his article in *Eternity* magazine.

In their reports to the trustees all three professors avoid the heart of the discussion.

All three professors believe that human-like creatures preceded Adam and Eve on earth. When the professors refer to Adam and Eve, they refer to them as the first human beings **made in the image of God**. We are left in the dark about the "human beings" on earth that were **not** made in the image of God and who lived prior to Adam and Eve.

The churches which submitted overtures to synod should be aware of one important factor. The synodical committee is not **specifically** dealing with the teachings of Menninga, Van Till, and Young. The synodical committee is dealing primarily with the question of creation and evolution in a broad context.

The committee of four Calvin College trustees **is** dealing **specifically** with the teachings of the three Calvin College professors. And **this** committee has already determined that the views of Menninga and Young are biblical and reformed. So Noah and his family were not the only people who survived the Flood. According to the trustees. And Adam may have been the offspring of a primitive mother. That is biblical and reformed. According to the Board of Trustees of Calvin College.

# Is Jesus Divine?

May 28, 1990

**Is JESUS THE SON OF GOD? Is He both human and divine? Was He without sin while on earth? Did He perform acts such as raising Lazarus from the dead? Acts which defy the laws of nature? And did He ascend bodily into heaven?**

How would Calvin College professors who advocate the theory of evolution answer these questions? These professors have developed a unique approach to the truth revealed in Scripture.

What the Bible reveals is only true, according to these professors, if that truth does not conflict with current scientific theories. Permit me to give you a devastating example to demonstrate how this works.

The Bible teaches that God created the universe **out of nothing** by the power of His Word. On earth God created a garden which the Bible calls the Garden of Eden. In this garden God placed the first human, Adam. Adam was perfect, without sin. That is the truth according to the Bible.

But not according to some Calvin College professors. What the Bible teaches about creation and Adam and sin and redemption should not be accepted literally. It conflicts with what science

presumably teaches.

What does science teach?

Scientists, people with believing and unbelieving hearts, and not science, teach that the universe and man came into being during a process of billions of years.

According to these scientists, including some Calvin College scientists, God started the universe with a “big bang” and then the process of evolution took over. Life began in a primitive form in the ancient biotic soup of the universe. Single-celled creatures evolved into complex creatures which ultimately evolved into humans.

According to these Calvin scientists, Adam is not the first human. Adam had a mother. A primitive mother. That is, Adam’s mother did not have a soul. Calvin professors do not know where the soul came from. They do not know whether the soul is the product of evolution or not. And they are not too concerned about it. It is not an issue among unbelieving, non-Christian evolutionists. And Calvin College evolutionists only concern themselves with items on the agenda of unbelieving evolutionists. At least, that has been their agenda to date.

So Adam had a mother. Says who? Say some Calvin College professors.

Then what do we do with the truth revealed in Scripture as this relates to the

creation of Adam? We adapt it to current scientific theories. We argue that Genesis is not to be read literally. We subject the truth of scripture to the unproven and highly improbable theories of scientists. We argue that Adam had a primitive mother and not so neatly force the biblical revelation of origins into the framework of evolution.

What do we do with the multitude of questions this approach raises for sincere Christians? If you are a Calvin College professor you smile, shrug your shoulders and reply, "Let the theologians answer those thorny questions." Meanwhile these professors ask you to pray for them.

Well, I for one am praying for these Calvin College professors. And my prayer to God is that these professors may be struck dumb until such a time that they abandon their godless nonsense.

"Let the theologians answer the questions of how we reconcile divine revelation with the evolution of the species." Calvin professors have decreed that the universe evolved more or less as described by unbelieving scientists. Adam had a mother. Adam may even have been a Neanderthal. Sub-human. Our crystal balls in physics and geology have revealed this truth to us. Let the theologians figure out the complications. Let the theologians figure out how to reconcile our views with Scripture.

**"And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God" (1 John 4:14,15).**

What has all this to do with the question whether or not Jesus is divine? Is there a relationship between whether Adam was the first human and whether Jesus is divine?

Yes, there is. Some Calvin College professors are arguing that Adam is the product of evolution. According to them **that** is what science teaches. And science should not be held hostage by the Bible. Which in practice means that science is autonomous, a law unto itself. The truth revealed in Scripture is subservient to the theories of scientists. So much so that Howard Van Till decrees that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are not to be read as saying what they are saying. The first eleven chapters of Genesis are in fact saying what Howard Van Till has decided they are saying in twentieth century evolutionistic concepts.

What is to stop Calvin College professors, a few years down the road, from applying the same principles of biblical interpretation for the questions of whether or not Jesus is divine?

Don't laugh! It is already happening. There are thousands of theologians

occupying professorships at seminaries and colleges across North America who argue that it is ridiculous, on scientific grounds, (that is, their theories) to believe that Jesus is divine. As ridiculous as believing that Adam is the first human being created by God.

Professors at Calvin College and Seminary are a long, long way down this path. Ask your sons and daughters who study at Calvin College and Seminary. A growing number of professors are employing the tools of higher criticism to dismantle the truth revealed in Scripture.

I can say this in print without fear of being challenged because it is true. Members of the board of trustees of Calvin College and Seminary will not lay a charge against me with my consistory. It would be paramount to publicizing the extent to which higher criticism of the Bible is being practiced by Calvin professors. Howard Van Till being the most vocal and public.

How long will it be before we teach that Jesus is not divine? Has science (scientists, that is) not said?

## God Against the Peabrains?

**October 8, 1990**

**GOD HAS ALWAYS HAD to tolerate great opposition. From the very outset.**

Adam and Eve opposed God. “Has God really said?” No! Not really! They disobeyed God and ate from the tree of good and evil. In the process they threw away the gift of eternal life.

Noah’s generation opposed God. God commanded Noah’s generation to repent. They refused. And perished in the great flood.

God delivered His people from the power of Egypt. Ten mighty miracles failed to convince Pharaoh. God prevailed. He brought His people to the borders of Canaan. When they arrived there, twelve spies were sent to reconnoiter the land. “This land is mine,” God said. “I am giving it to you, My special people.”

“No Way,” said ten of the twelve spies. “There are giants in the land. Let’s cut our losses and return to Egypt.”

“O.K.” God said. “Have it your pea-brained way. You’ll wander in the desert for forty years until this unbelieving generation has perished.”

Ahab, king of Israel, God’s anointed leader, bowed his knees to the pea-brained

Baal priests in Jezebel's service. They opposed God mightily.

"Tell those priests to meet Me at Mount Carmel," God instructed Elijah. "I will show them who is God."

Before the sun set on the day's activities the blood of eight hundred Baal priests turned the water in the brook Kishon crimson.

God's people relentlessly opposed Him. So God sent them into exile. They were banished from the land of milk and honey. They were reduced to a state of servitude in Babylon. They sat along the rivers and sang their sad songs.

Not all opposed God. Daniel and his friends were elevated to positions of great honor. Because they remained faithful.

Not Nebuchadnezzar. The king stood on the roof of his palace. He extended his arms toward the world at his feet. "This is the great Babylon that I have built!" he cried out proudly. "This is the city that I have built as a monument to my majesty."

"Eat grass!" God commanded. "Like the beasts of the field. Until you acknowledge that I alone am God."

They looked pious. They were scholars. In their clothes they had wide hems on which Bible texts were stitched. The people were unanimous in their assessment of the scholars of their day. Holy and pious academics.

Not God. God rejected their theories and speculations. God cringed at their interpretations of the life-giving laws He had handed Moses on Mount Sinai.

"Tell those scholars, those blind leaders, to repent," God instructed John the Baptist. "They are leading My people to hell with their empty speculations. They have closed the eyes of My people to life that is My Word. They have elevated their words above the Word of the living God."

Finally the time came. The cup was full. God had silenced the Old Testament prophets for four hundred years. His people were destitute. Now He would send a prophet greater than Elijah. He would come Himself. In the person of Jesus Christ. The Word Incarnate.

The situation among God's people had indeed grown desperate. The opposition which had begun in the Garden of Eden had come to a climax. If miracles that were performed in Capernaum had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

John the Baptist is beheaded by the puppet king of Israel. The voice of the Word is silenced.

The opposition is grim. Satan has marshaled all his resources. Silenced the Word.

Woe to teachers who shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces.



The Word was crucified. Buried. Gone. An impenetrable darkness covered the land. The execution and the burial were orchestrated by the teachers and leaders who sat in Moses' seat.

Men's deeds are not pretty to contemplate. For men stand in the service of the father of lies. Unless they subject themselves to the Word.

The Word has been under attack since Satan first uttered those abominable words in the Garden of Eden, "**Has God said?**"

In a recent editorial in *Calvinist Contact*, Bob Vander Vennen, staff member of the Institute for Christian Studies, headed the editorial, "**NOT THE BIBLE ALONE.**"

Such is the great controversy of our age. It was Israel's great controversy. The Word of God only. Or man's words alongside the Word of God?

The Word is again under attack. The Word has always been under attack. This time it is under attack in the Christian Reformed Churches in North America.

The attack upon the Word in our sister churches in The Netherlands is attested to by the empty pews. Young people in The Netherlands have left the denomination in droves.

When did this process in The Netherlands begin? It began with Jan Lever's book, *Creation or Evolution*. And it gained momentum with Harry Kuitert's

contention that the first eleven chapters of Genesis shouldn't be taken literally.

It wasn't long before the synod of the GKN (our sister church in the Netherlands) decided that much of what is written in the Word need not be taken literally.

Balaam's ass never spoke. The miracles recorded in the Word are highly contentious. The Bible doesn't speak out clearly for our age on **anything**. Your word is as good as my word. For that matter, it is as good as God's Word.

In North America, at the 1990 CRC synod, a group of feminists handed out a tract which decreed that the Bible, the apostles and Jesus are a hindrance to the woman's rightful place in the church. The authors of this tract teach at Calvin College. Their views are defended by Calvin Seminary professors.

Calvin College appointed two people to its Religion Department this year who do not believe that the early chapters of Genesis are to be understood as history. They do not believe that Adam and Eve were historical individuals.

Howard Van Till has rejected the authenticity of Genesis chapters 1 to 11. He openly publishes (teaches) that man is the descendant of animals.

Clarence Menninga has suggested that "Adam" may have been a Neanderthal. And Adam's "mother" may have been some

primitive creature. And the majority of Calvin's board of trustees is of the opinion that these views amount to scholarship.

The Christian Reformed Church stands at a crossroad. It stands with Adam and Eve in the garden, with Noah's generation, at Mount Carmel, with Nebuchadnezzar on the roof of his palace, with the biblical scholars living in the Roman Empire. The members of the CRC stand at the foot of the cross.

God's age-old command remains the same: **TAKE ME AT MY WORD. MY WORD IS TRUTH.**

That was God's message to humanity when He came in the flesh. My Word is life.

The CRC stands at the crossroad. It stands where many before have stood. Choose! The Word of God. Or the words of men. Pea-brained men. Men who can't remember their own telephone number. Men who can't give an accurate account of yesterday's events in the Middle East.

Does God want us to conform to the ways of the world? Because that is what it is all about. God's lifestyle or our own secular lifestyles. God's revelation or our "insight."

Were you an animal before you became a human being? Howard Van Till and Clarence Menninga say yes. You arrived at your humanity via a long chain of evolutions over a period of millions of years.

Van Till's and Menninga's idea of God's revelation is that God was silent for millions of years, hundreds of millions of years, while the human race was evolving. And out of this age-old mass of decrepit "humanity" God said to *someone*, "You are Adam. I am placing you and Eve in the Garden of Eden. There you are going to be tempted by Satan. And fall into sin. But I will redeem you."

Did the "creation" of life on earth follow the principle of the survival of the fittest? Van Till and Menninga say, Yes.

God says, No. God said He made the creation good. After its kind.

The fact that Van Till's pea-sized brain (compared to God's wisdom) cannot comprehend this does not mean that it was not so.

It is a question of Van Till's word against the Word of God.

It has always been a question of man's word against the Word of God. In the Garden of Eden, at Mount Carmel, on the rooftop of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, at the foot of the cross. God's Word or man's words.

We stand at the crossroad. God compels us to choose. A historical Adam and Eve. Or Adam in the arms of a primitive mother. And God's revelation of the creation of the universe in shreds.

The choice the CRC makes today will

determine the life of the denomination for decades to come. It will influence the future of its children, God's children.

We truly stand at the crossroad. What choice will we make for ourselves and our children? God's reliable Word or the words of men? Will we remain in "Canaan" or will we and our children be sent into exile?

God will not stand idly by while His Word is being voided.

### **Postscript:**

Who speaks for God? Who will take God's side in this controversy?

Of what value are Dordt College and Redeemer College if their scholars are too timid to address the great controversy of our age?

## **President Diekema Should Resign**

**October 23, 1990**

A MINISTER TOLD ME the other day that the only thing that holds the CRC together is its pension fund.

Perhaps this is true. Perhaps this is an overstatement. Whatever the truth may be, one thing is certain: the CRC is deeply and hopelessly divided in what it confesses.

Nowhere do the differences of what we confess and do not confess come into clearer focus than in the discussion surrounding our belief in creation or evolution.

It is assumed by many in the CRC that the views of Howard Van Till are the crux of the problem. This is not correct. Van Till's publicly expressed views are little more than the tip of the iceberg. Van Till has dared to do what few others have dared. Van Till has publicly stated, in book form, that the first eleven chapters of Genesis were never intended to be taken literally. The implications of that point of view have been discussed in detail in *Christian Renewal*.

But if Van Till is not the crux of the problem, who is?

Who is? The president of Calvin College, Dr. Anthony Diekema.

At a recent meeting of the Calvin College board of trustees, the president of Calvin Seminary, Dr. James DeJong, stated unequivocally that the views of Howard Van Till regarding Adam and Eve clearly fall outside our confessions.

Anthony Diekema was present at that meeting. He listened to James DeJong's concern about Van Till's views. DeJong could not have stated his position more forcefully: **Van Till's views fall outside our confessions.**

Did the concern impress Dr. Diekema? Not in the least. Diekema simply countered by stating that if the board takes action against Van Till “then they had better be prepared to take action against other faculty members too.”

Diekema is consistent in his views as president of our college. He permitted the appointment this year of two new faculty members who openly stated that they do not believe that Adam and Eve were real flesh-and-blood people. These new faculty members will teach theology. They will be expressing themselves directly to the issue of the historicity of Adam and Eve.

What is Diekema doing? Fortifying his view at the college? Will it now become necessary to dismiss these two faculty members as well?

It should be remembered that the two new faculty members in theology who do not believe in a historical Adam and Eve, could not have been appointed to their positions if the majority of **existing** faculty members did not agree with them.

That is something to ponder. The majority of eleven faculty members of the department of theology at Calvin College did not have difficulty appointing two new faculty members who do not believe the biblical revelation about Adam and Eve.

The problems surrounding the question of creation and evolution at

Calvin College are much more severe than the views expressed by Howard Van Till.

At the heart of the creation-evolution controversy stands the president of Calvin College. And he believes what Van Till believes. The view of James DeJong that Van Till’s views are outside our confession have not made any apparent impression on Anthony Diekema. Many professors at Calvin agree with Van Till. And it’s perfectly alright with Diekema that new members are added to the theology faculty who do not believe in a historical Adam and Eve.

And so the problem worsens. And will continue to worsen until Anthony Diekema is asked to resign as president of Calvin College.

Diekema has clearly violated the terms of his employment. Diekema agreed when he was installed as president that he would subject his views to Scripture and our reformed confessions.

He has violated that oath. He should therefore resign.

# Lying to Save an Institution

**November 26, 1990**

**TRINITY CHRISTIAN Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan published some materials dealing with the discussion surrounding Howard Van Till's views of Adam and Eve in particular and his views of Scripture in general.**

According to a letter dated October 16, 1990 under the signature of the secretary of Calvin College and Seminary, "Trinity's publishing of those individual judgments is clearly outside the accepted means that govern ecclesiastical procedure." And so the great soap opera dealing with what Van Till does and does not believe continues.

The Calvin College administration boards are paying a high price for their decision to come to the defense of Van Till's unbiblical views. An independent firm recently informed the Calvin administration to delay indefinitely plans to undertake a 30 million dollar fund-raising campaign. The administration was informed that negative feelings towards Calvin College are so strong and prevalent in the community that such a fund-raising campaign would not be a success.

Calvin's student enrollment continues to plummet. Some projections place future

enrollment as low as 3,200 students. One entire dormitory already stands empty as a silent witness of declining enrollment.

The obvious cannot be denied. A growing number of churches and individuals are angered by Calvin's refusal to deal honestly with the Van Till question.

The secretary of the board of Calvin College, Daniel R. Vander Ark, makes the charge that Trinity Christian Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan, has broken the confidentiality of the discussions between Van Till and the board. Vander Ark compares the Van Till debate to a committee of elders visiting a church member about that member's behavior. One of the elders then publishes a letter to the entire congregation explaining his dissatisfaction with the consistory's decision.

Vander Ark's charge that Trinity CRC, Grandville, has disclosed confidential information is ludicrous. In the first place, the discussions surrounding Van Till's views concern views which are openly published in Van Till's book, *The Fourth Day*.

In the second place, the board has been attempting all along to deceive the CRC constituency into believing that there is a basic unanimity at the board level concerning board discussion of Van Till's views. It is this myth that was shattered by the Trinity, Grandville, letter. There has never been any unanimity at board level.

At the first board meeting several years ago an impressive number of board members registered their negative vote against the manner in which the board intended to deal with the Van Till question. Those chickens are now coming home to roost. Furthermore, the **committee** appointed by the board to examine the views of Van Till is deeply divided.

In the third place, Trinity CRC, Grandville, did not initiate a **public** discussion of Van Till's views. Howard Van Till went public himself. As the party whose views are under scrutiny, Van Till decided to write (two more books) and to speak extensively about what he does and does not believe. Members of the Calvin College administration, including President Diekema and the provost of the college, have joined Van Till in this endeavor. They have written publicly about what Van Till does and does not believe.

It appears to this writer that Daniel R. Vander Ark's jeremiad against Trinity CRC, Grandville, going public with matters dealing with Van Till's views rings hollow. Individuals, and Calvin as an institution, have been going public with Van Till's views for years. As has Van Till himself.

There are a number of other matters discussed in the Vander Ark letter dated October 16, 1990 that merit comment. Because they are not true. **Van Till's reservation to sign the Form of**

**Subscription.** Vander Ark comments that Van Till has no reservation to sign the Form of Subscription. He has in fact signed it.

Yes, he has. Many years ago. But Van Till could not in good conscience sign the Form of Subscription today.

Vander Ark further states that, "In an interview before the full board in May, Dr. Van Till affirmed that he agrees with the creeds."

I don't doubt for a moment that Van Till made such an affirmation. What Vander Ark neglects to inform his readers of is that Van Till also affirmed that he does not believe in an historical Adam and Eve. And any affirmation Van Till makes about the creeds or the Form of Subscription should be seen within that context.

What does Vander Ark believe this discussion to be all about? If Van Till has no difficulty signing the Form of Subscription and if he faithfully confesses the teachings of our creeds, why are Van Till's views under investigation? Because, as Vander Ark neglects to inform his readers, Van Till holds views concerning Scripture which are clearly unscriptural and which clearly conflict with the creeds.

In conclusion, Vander Ark declares, "Furthermore, all of Calvin's faculty have signed the Form of Subscription and agree with the creeds."

That is an incredible statement to

## The Greatest

make in view of the fact that two faculty members employed to teach theology at Calvin this year made it clear that they do not believe in an historical Adam and Eve.

Does Howard Van Till agree with the content of our reformed creeds? Only if he is permitted to pour a new meaning into those creeds.

Van Till does not believe in a perfect and good creation which subsequently “fell” because of man’s disobedience. And Daniel R. Vander Ark knows this. That is why it is deceptive, to say the least, to state unequivocally that Van Till believes in the creeds.

Howard Van Till believes in the creeds as he has re-interpreted these to fit his evolutionary scheme of origin. That is what the debate is all about.

*Christian Renewal* commends Trinity CRC, Grandville, for the open, honest and pastorally sensitive manner in which it is dealing with this divisive issue within our denomination.

We would also caution Daniel R. Vander Ark, the majority of the Calvin College board of trustees and those in positions of leadership in the Calvin administration to cease the present deception in which they are engaged. Our God is a holy God. He will not be deceived.

### December 17, 1990

ENOCH LOVED GOD. God loved Enoch. God loved Enoch so much that he did not experience death.

The love of God fills the pages of Scripture and history. It is a love that fills the hearts of millions as God marches through time.

God’s love instills a peace that surpasses understanding. It is the peace the angels sang about in the fields outside of Bethlehem: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

God’s peace is not the world’s peace. The world’s peace does not surpass understanding. It is a peace that does not comprehend enmity and hatred towards God.

The Prince of Peace is born. He lives on earth. But in Ramah there is no peace. In Ramah a voice is heard weeping and there is great mourning. Rachel weeps for her children and refuses to be comforted. The puppet king of Israel, servant of Satan, has seen to it that Rachel’s children are dead.

And Joseph and Mary take the Prince of Peace and flee to Egypt, former land of slavery, at God’s command to spare their lives.

Peace on earth, God's peace. A peace the world does not understand. A peace many Christians no longer understand.

No one doubts that God loved David. The simple shepherd boy who tended his father's sheep and sang songs of praise to God on the hillsides of Canaan.

When Israel was deeply troubled by the Philistines, it was upon David that God's Spirit descended, empowering him to slay Goliath and rout the Philistine army.

Yet it was David whom Saul pursued with intent to take his life.

God loved Elijah. Israel's great prophet. God's faithful servant. It was God's Spirit that descended upon Elijah empowering him to call fire from heaven and destroy the prophets of Baal. Yet it was Elijah who cried out to God: "I have had enough, Lord. Take my life; I am no better than the prophets who came before me."

Peace on earth. But Elijah despaired because God's peaceable kingdom had been usurped by Jezebel, prophetess of Baal, enemy of God. And so there was no peace for Israel, God's chosen. Only drought and death. The fruits of Satan's kingdom.

God loved the prophet, Micaiah, an obedient and faithful servant. It was Micaiah's calling to proclaim repentance to Israel and to bring King Ahab to heel. He did so without compromise or double

talk. For all his efforts, Ahab threw Micaiah into prison and gave him nothing but bread and water. This was the same Ahab who had witnessed the manifestation of God's power and majesty on Mount Carmel. The same Ahab who was soon to die from an arrow "shot at random."

Peace on earth! God's peace is not the world's peace.

And so it came to pass, when God had determined that the time was right, that God sent the greatest prophet of all. The owner of the vineyard sent His own Son.

The angels understood the cosmic significance of this event. They sang with jubilant voices: "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.*"

And hard on the heels of this festive song followed the weeping in Ramah and the flight into Egypt. God's peace, not the world's.

God's peace is inseparable from obedience to God. To love God means to obey Him. And that was the cosmic event that was soon to take place. Unquestioning obedience. That is what the angels understood. That is why they sang of peace on earth towards people on whom God's favor would rest. God's peace, not the world's peace.

It is often said that those who oppose the unfaithfulness of God's people are



harshly critical and unloving in their attitude. That may, indeed, be the case. On the other hand, that is a charge leveled against every Old Testament prophet as well as the apostle Paul.

What if a prophet without sin, without human failing, an embodiment of the love of God were to address the people of God? Would such a perfect man suffer the fate of David, Elijah, Micaiah and Paul?

The life of Jesus teaches us that unfaithfulness recognizes no bounds. It is possible to proclaim God's truth in love and end up nailed to a cross.

God's love ignites Satan's fury, even as love for God sends Satan forth as a roaring lion, seeking out those lovers of God he desires to destroy. The Prince of Peace unleashes the wrath of Satan.

It has been said that the Christian church is built on the blood of its martyrs.

What have blood and peace in common? The angels sang it so well in the field outside of Bethlehem: "On earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Peace. God's peace. The peace that comes with love for God, God's favor.

Not the world's sickly, humanized, God-forsaken ideal of peace. Not a peace divorced from the Prince of Peace. Not a peace that Satan offers in the form of glistening fruit.

Members of Christ's first community

on earth suffered. They suffered terribly. According to the letter to the Hebrews, "Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. Some were stoned; some were sawed in two; some were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground."

They were the first recipients of the peace that a mighty choir of angels sang about in the hills outside of Bethlehem. God's peace, the unbeliever's wrath.

What have blood and peace in common? This: the peace of God that comes with living out of God's grace, will send the blood stirring in Satan and his henchmen. For Christian blood. And those henchmen, Jesus warns, can include your father or mother, brothers or sisters...all those who elevate their word above the Word of God; all those who bow their knees to the Baals of their age.

The world does not recognize the coin of the realm of the Kingdom of God. For that coin is peace on earth. The peace only God can give. And those who by God's grace have been given possession of this coin of priceless value, those who possess God's peace on earth, will be persecuted by the world. Even as the Man of perfection was

persecuted. At peace with God, at enmity with those who despise God. Unless and until they also gain possession of the coin of God's realm. Peace. And towards that end God has made us all ambassadors in His kingdom. So we fight the good fight. For peace. Peace with God.

It's Christmas. The world hasn't got a clue what it is missing. Christians are celebrating. They are celebrating an event of cosmic significance. The Greatest has descended from heaven to live among the least. He has come to offer His life as ransom for many. He has come to freely and generously distribute the coin of His realm. Man at peace with God. God at peace with those who seek Him with all their heart.

Rejoice. It's Christmas. God's peace on earth. Soon the Prince of Peace will come again. Satan will perish. The wheat will be separated from the tares. God will be all in all. Christ will rule God's peaceable Kingdom. Forever and ever!

## **Redeemer Prof Argues Genesis has Cartoon-like Features**

**January 7, 1991**

**DO THE FIRST ELEVEN chapters of Genesis have cartoon-like features? Al Wolters, associate professor of religion and theology and classical languages at Redeemer College, thinks so.**

In an article published in the December 14, 1990 issue of *Calvinist Contact*, Wolters writes: "I tell my students (at Redeemer College—J.H.) that the historicity of these chapters (early chapters of Genesis—J.H.) is of fundamental significance: the events described really did take place."

That sounds promising. Wolters says that the events described in the early chapters of Genesis really did take place. Howard Van Till on the other hand has argued that the early chapters of Genesis are primeval history and not to be taken literally. They should be taken **seriously** but not literally.

Wolters clearly states that the events described in the early chapters of Genesis "really did take place." So far so good as

far as the Reformed traditional view of Genesis is concerned.

But then Wolters continues: “At the same time, much of the language used to describe these events is symbolic or figurative...”

Wolters is here nudging his position on Genesis much closer to that of Howard Van Till. Neither wants to read the opening chapters of Genesis literally. Academics appear to have real difficulty reading Genesis literally.

Wolters does not want to read the account of creation and the early history of the human race literally either. He contends that much of the language used to describe God’s acts of creation and the early history of the human race is symbolic or figurative.

But nowhere in his article does Wolters take the pains to relate to his readers what in Genesis is symbolic or figurative. Or what is meant when it is said that much in Genesis is symbolic or literature (i.e., Jesus in front of the grave of Lazarus). He now goes on to talk at some length about a famous cartoon which appeared in the British magazine *Punch* in 1914. Wolters’ point is that although the cartoon is not in itself factual (there was no defiant Belgian farm boy, armed only with a stick, facing a heavy-set German bully brandishing a huge cudgel), it nevertheless portrays a factual, historical reality. Namely, the

bully Germany is about to invade peace-loving Belgium but is to meet considerable resistance. The non-factual events portrayed in the cartoon speak “volumes” about the historical reality of Germany’s planned invasion of Belgium.

Well, says Wolters, in a somewhat similar fashion the real history described in the early chapters of Genesis may very well be conveyed in stylized or symbolic language. In that way the Creation account may be said to have certain cartoon-like features.

The major problem (there are many more) with Wolters’ article is that he talks too much about the *Punch* cartoon and too little about God’s account of creation and the early history of the human race in Genesis.

What, in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, is written in stylized or symbolic language?

When Genesis says: “And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being,” is that stylized or symbolic language? If I say: “And the breath of life departed from my father, we buried his remains which are even now returning to dust,” is that stylized or symbolic language?

Did Adam and Eve exist as historical persons in the Garden of Eden? Did Satan,

in fact, speak to Eve through the serpent and tempt her successfully to disobey God? Was Eve tempted in the same factual manner that Jesus was tempted? Or does the scene in the Garden of Eden described in Genesis have cartoon-like features?

Cartoon-like features!! In the famous *Punch* cartoon the Belgian boy and the German bully did not, in fact, exist. They symbolized a more complex reality. Did Adam and Eve, in fact, not exist? Do they symbolize a more complex reality? And if so, what?

What is Wolters talking about when he suggests that the early chapters of Genesis “may have certain cartoon-like features”?

Tell us, Al. Remove the veil of mystery in which your article is enshrouded.

Did Cain slay Abel? If not, what does the story related symbolize?

Did Enoch walk with God? Is the letter to the Hebrews accurate when it relates that Enoch did not experience death? What does this event in the early chapters then symbolize according to you?

Did Noah and his family actually set foot on the ark, or are they, like the characters in the *Punch* cartoon, figments of the author’s imagination to convey a more complex reality?

Did the confusion of tongues actually take place at the construction site of the tower of Babel, is there a parallel

to speaking in tongues in Acts 2? Or is this merely a cartoon-like story used to illustrate a higher truth?

Just what are you talking about when you argue that the early chapters of Genesis have cartoon-like features? And convey a higher truth? If so, why not tell the reader what that higher truth is?

Space does not permit me to discuss endless contradictions raised by Wolters’ dubious and self-serving argument that Genesis has cartoon-like features.

But one issue begs for discussion. What is a cartoon? Yes, it is a modern artistic convention. But what kind of a convention? Is Wolters not now speaking the same contradictory language as Howard Van Till?

According to both my *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* and the *American College Dictionary* a **cartoon** is defined as: “a sketch or drawing as in a newspaper or periodical, symbolizing or caricaturing some subject or person of current interest, in an exaggerated way.”

The operative phrase is: “of current interest.” You teach languages, Al. You should know that a cartoon or something with cartoon-like features derives its effectiveness from the fact that the subject matter is of **current** interest. Everybody knows, or should know, what the greater reality is that the cartoonist is alluding

to. The *Punch* cartoon became famous because it captured, in a single drawing, the horror and audacity of German military objectives. The larger picture, so simply presented in the cartoon, was already etched on people's minds.

Not so with Genesis! People know nothing about what happened "in the beginning." There is no reality to relate to. God knows that. So He gives us Genesis—an extensive **narrative** about how He, God Almighty, created the heavens and the earth. Add to or take away from that account and you do so at your own peril. Even as Achan.

No, Al, the early chapters of Genesis do not have cartoon-like features. There is no human reality that the "cartoon-like features" of Genesis could allude to. The **only** reality in Genesis is the one Genesis relates. There is no escape for academics here.

The Genesis account of creation no more has "cartoon-like features" than it is a Shakespearean play. Genesis powerfully teaches the reader that God *spoke the creation into being*. **Let there be!**

Scientists want to know **how** the universe was "created," and they want to answer that question scientifically. Describe its history. They can't! To answer that question one needs to be more than a scientist. One needs to be God. But scientists, even very clever scientists, are

only human. Their ability to know is limited by their humanness. Limited by the will or law of God. But God is the law!

Man can split the atom. And he can travel to the moon. He can even transplant human hearts. These are human activities enabled by God. But he cannot create **ex nihilo** (out of nothing). Only God can do that. And **how** God did that surpasses human understanding. The best we can do is to confess with Scripture that He created by the power of His Word. See especially John 1.

Genesis teaches that God created man from the dust of the earth. There is at least some comprehensible confirmation of that revelation. When man dies he returns to dust.

Again, how does God create? Although there is no scientific answer to that question, God Himself goes a long way in His revelation to provide believers with an answer. God speaks, that is, He commands. And what He commands appears. Manna from heaven. Water into wine. Lazarus back to life.

Place yourself in the crowd surrounding the tomb of Lazarus. Lazarus is dead. His remains are in the early stages of returning to dust. Jesus is about to recreate Lazarus. Also in his physical being. How does Jesus do this? He gives a command. Lazarus, come out! Lazarus is re-created. It could hardly be more simple. And scientific.

Jesus commanded. Lazarus responded and walked out of the tomb. People *saw* it happen. No symbolism there!

But someone protests. The resurrection of Lazarus is a miracle. That is true. But it is equally true that everything, **absolutely everything**, that God does is a miracle. That is what it means to be God. That you are not a creation but the Creator, the One who creates.

There are two types of miracles that God does. But they are all miracles. The creation of the universe and everything in it is a miracle. That is, there is no human “natural” explanation for the origin of the universe and life. Other than to say it happened at God’s command! There is only God, the so-called supernatural. He originated the universe. And that is a miracle. There is no “natural” explanation.

Today God upholds, sustains the universe. Just because leaves appear on trees **every** spring makes it no less miraculous. Only God can do that. In accordance with His *law* for nature. So there are the great miracles of God which come at us with such unfailing regularity that we are deluded into believing that they are “natural.” But they are not. They are an act of God and supernatural. Part of God’s law order.

Then there are acts of God which are totally unexpected. They are not part of God’s law-order. They hit us with a

tremendous impact. Which is what they were intended by God to do. They establish God’s credentials as God. Because we are blind in our unbelief.

The axe head floats. Manna rains down from heaven (but even that is viewed as “natural” by the Israelites after a while). The water of the Red Sea parts. Jesus turns water into wine, walks on water, gives sight to the blind, raises the dead. Clearly miracles all. Because God is God. He commands. He creates. There is nothing symbolic about this activity by God. It is realistic. The acts enter history. At will. **Everything** God does is supernatural. Vollenhoven understood that, Al. And so do you. Only you seem to have temporarily forgotten it.

So there is no need, Al, for you to ascribe cartoon-like features to the mighty creative and redemptive acts recorded by God Himself in the early chapters of Genesis. All we Christians need to do is take God at His Word in Genesis. Because that Word is reliable and true. For Christian academics and non-academics alike.

God Himself has said! That has got to be sufficient for you and me. It’s all we’ve got. But it is a lot. *All* of Scripture testifies to this *reality*.

# Shortening God's Arm

January 28, 1991

**THE ANNOUNCEMENT is made thousands of times in Scripture. God is Almighty! God Himself asks Sarah in Genesis: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" In Genesis 17 when God announces Himself to Abram He says: "I am God Almighty." In the book of Revelation the twenty-four elders proclaim: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty." Thousands of times, from Genesis to Revelation, the truth is proclaimed that God is Almighty. Spoken or demonstrated. He is the Sovereign One. There is nothing that God cannot do.**

Our confessions emphasize this great biblical truth. Listen to what they say.

**Apostles' Creed:** "I believe in God, the Father **almighty** — Maker of heaven and earth."

**Nicene Creed:** "So likewise the Father is **almighty**, the Son **almighty**, and the Holy Spirit **almighty**."

**The Belgic Confession:** We all believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths that there is a... God (who is) **almighty**."

**The Heidelberg Catechism:** "Providence is the **almighty** and ever present

power of God (Lord's Day 10.)"

**The Canons of Dort:** Just as God Himself is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing, and **almighty**...(Article 11)."

God says that He is the **Almighty One**.

The Bible says that God is **Almighty** — thousands of times.

Our creeds all confess God as **Almighty**.

Our confessions declare that God is **Almighty**.

But a committee of academics who prepared a lengthy report for synod on the question of creation and science **do not believe that God is Almighty**. These academics have found something that they believe God cannot do. How? Science has told them so. That is, unbelieving scientists have told them.

What is it that God supposedly is incapable of doing? Listen to what these academics write on page 13 of their report for Synod: "Even perspectives of natural science have had an impact on our interpretation of Scripture. The classic case is the Copernican revolution. Thus H. J. Kuiper could write in *The Banner*,

**"When we read that at Joshua's command the sun and the moon stood still, this should not be taken literally, as if these two heavenly bodies were actually stopped in their course (Josh. 10:12,13). We know that this would have**

**been destructive for the entire solar system. The very form of the words reveal their poetic flavor. The passage merely teaches that by the miraculous power of God, the light of the day's victory over the Canaanitish hosts was prolonged far beyond its usual time." (17 July, 1959).**

According to Gabriel, *nothing* is impossible for God. The sun and the heavens are His servants.

The authors of the report on creation and science dare to go on to write that: "This example illustrates a traditional understanding, continued in Report 44, that perspectives from science can become the occasion for a new understanding of Scripture provided that the new understanding remains in harmony with the revelatory intent of Scripture."

Amazing, absolutely amazing! We are told by the committee that on the basis of our scientific knowledge, we know that God could not have stopped the earth in its course. These scholars have discovered something God cannot do. God is not Almighty. For God to have done so would have destroyed the entire universe. Our knowledge of the laws of motion tells us so. Yes, and the laws of pro-creation tell us that many cannot have a Son without the participation of a man. And, of course, God cannot bring billions of people back to life in the twinkling of an eye upon Christ's

return on the last day. And, of course, the Thessalonians cannot meet Christ in the air.

So what have our knowledge and our understanding—scientific or otherwise—to do with what God can and cannot do? Read your Bible.

God is greater than the laws of motion. *The laws of motion are God's servants and obey His every command.*

Yes, the light of the day's victory over the Canaanitish hosts was prolonged far beyond its usual time, by the miraculous power of God because God's power is miraculous. Who is H.J. Kuiper and who are the members of the committee on creation and science to decree that God **could not** have prolonged the day of Joshua's victory by commanding the earth, the sun, and the moon to obey His command while at the same time commanding the entire solar system not to destruct?

Listen! The following is why that is possible. God Himself has said, "**I am God Almighty!**" That is not an empty sound or a frivolous boast in the air around you. That is God speaking! Listen! And when God speaks, it is accomplished. For the entire universe is God's servant. When a master says to his servant, "Come," he comes. And when the master says, "Go," the servant goes. Even so the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars obey the voice of their Master. Not even a Copernican revolution or an



article by a conservative in *The Banner* is going to change that. O ye of little faith.

In order to accommodate their science and the limits of their understanding, the members of the committee on creation and science have put limits on the Almightyness of God. There are no limits to the power of God.

Jesus is fast asleep in the boat. The wind begins to howl and whistle. The stars disappear from the heavens. Dark, black clouds move in. Towering walls of water and foam crash into the boat. The disciples row for their lives. Jesus is fast asleep.

“Master, master, help us!” they scream. “We are drowning.”

Jesus awakens. He hears the storm and He sees the treacherous waves. There is not a trace of fear in His eyes.

Calmly He stands up and stretches out His hand. He commands the howling wind and the raging sea.

“Peace! Be still!”

Oh my God!

The storm ceases and the waves lie down. And the disciples whisper to each other, “Who is He, that even the wind and the waves obey Him?”

Even the sun and the moon obeyed Him in Joshua’s day.

The scientists looked at Lazarus. He had been laying in the hot tomb for four days. “Truly this man is dead,” they said.

His brain has ceased to function. It is in an advanced state of decay. All ten thousand million brain cells are dead. Each of the ten to one hundred thousand connecting fibers to each of the brain cells is in an advanced state of decay. To bring this man back to life would be as impossible as stopping the earth in its orbit, they said.

“Lazarus, this is your friend, Jesus. I have the power over life and death. Come out of your tomb!”

Lazarus came.

There are no limits to the power of God. Even the tiny, trillions of molecules and cells in our bodies obey Him.

Why wouldn’t the sun and moon obey Him as well!

### ***Postscript:***

For more than three decades some professors at Calvin College and Seminary have been undermining the faith of their constituents. They have been doing this by repeatedly claiming that the Bible should not be taken literally. The CRC denomination has come to accept this, disturbing as it is.

What is doubly disturbing is that professors at Redeemer College and Dordt College are joining this unbelieving parade. Al Wolters, professor of religion and theology at Redeemer College, is the chairman of the Synodical committee which has put together the badly flawed

report on creation and science.

We must assume that Al Wolters does not believe that God has the power to halt the earth in its course without destroying the universe. That being the case, the board of Redeemer College owes its supporting constituency an explanation.

## Reformed Scholars on Creation and Science

February 11, 1991

**THIS SUMMER THE CRC synod will discuss the committee report on “Creation and Science”. The argument is already being put forward to the public and Christian press that many reformed scholars do not have difficulty with the theory of evolution. Is this indeed so? The names of Calvin, Kuyper, Vonk and Bavinck have been mentioned, just to name a few.**

Since most people do not have the time necessary to review the writings of these scholars, we have put together a number of quotations from their writings which will give our readers an idea of where these reformed scholars come from.

### C. Vonk

In a recent article in *Calvinist Contact*, Al Wolters, associate professor of theology at Redeemer College, quoted Rev. C. Vonk at great length from his book on *Genesis*. (This book in its entirety will appear in English translation, hopefully later on this year.)

Here follows the introductory section of Rev. C. Vonk’s writing on the early chapters of Genesis which Al Wolters, for whatever reason, decided to **omit** from his article in *Calvinist Contact*.

**“If the creation story is clothed in poetic garb, it does not thereby lose its character as reliable instruction for Israel about God’s great works. It speaks in a poetic manner about matters that go far beyond our understanding, (It is these matters that go far beyond our understanding that Van Till, Menninga, Wolters and others are so keen on discussing—J.H.) but in a way that has won widespread praise for its natural, simple character.**

**“When the author of Genesis spoke about the days of creation, he did not worry about being misunderstood. He simply went ahead and used the word *day* in a bit broader sense. He worried so little about this term that in Gen. 2:4 and 8 he used the phrase ‘on the day that’ to simply mean *then or when*.**

**“That’s not the meaning we are to ascribe to the ‘days’ of Gen 1:1-2:4. The**

days meant there are just the sort of days that the Israelite readers had seen coming and going all their lives, that is, days with an evening and a morning. We lift the whole creation story out of its peaceful setting when we assign the word *day* a different meaning than the meaning it had for the Israelites every day.”

The Calvin College professors find no support for their views of evolution from Rev. Vonk.

### John Calvin

The following quotations are taken from John Calvin’s commentary on *Genesis*. Page numbers following quotations are placed in brackets.

“Since, however, by the Word of God things which were not come suddenly into being...” (p. 75).

“To nothing are we more prone than to tie down the power of God to those instruments, the agency of which he employs. The sun and moon supply us with light: and, according to our notions, we so include this power to give light in them, that if they were taken away from the world, it would seem impossible for any light to remain. Therefore, the Lord, by the very order of the creation, (Let there be light! Before the sun and moon are created—J.H.) bears witness that he holds in his hand the

light, which he is able to impart to us without the sun and moon” (p. 75).

“If therefore we inquire, how it happens that the earth is fruitful, that the germ is produced from the seed, that fruits come to maturity, and their various kinds are annually reproduced; no other cause will be found, but that God has once spoken, that is, has issued his eternal decree; and that the earth, and all things proceeding from it, yield obedience to the command of God, which they always hear” (p. 83).

“It must be remembered, that Moses does not speak with philosophical acuteness on occult mysteries, but relates those things which are everywhere observed, even by the uncultivated and which are in common use” (p. 84).

“By this method (as I have before observed) the dishonesty of those men is sufficiently rebuked, who censure Moses for not speaking with greater exactness” (p. 85).

“For astronomy is not only pleasant, but also very useful to be known: it cannot be denied that this art unfolds the admirable wisdom of God” (p. 86).

“When he (Moses) says that ‘the waters brought forth,’ he proceeds to command the efficacy of the word, which the waters hear so promptly, that, though lifeless in themselves, they

**suddenly teem with living offspring, yet the language of Moses expresses more; namely, that fishes innumerable are daily produced from the waters, because that word of God, by which he once commanded it, is continually in force”** (p. 90).

**“But, at that time, (the time of creation—J.H.) the method was different: God clothed the earth, not in the same manner as now (for there was no seed, no root, no plant, which might germinate) but each suddenly sprung into existence at the command of God, and by the power of his word”** (p. 110).

**“We must, however, entirely reject the allegories of Origen (an early church father—J.H.) and of others like him, which Satan, with the deepest subtlety, has endeavored to introduce into the Church, for the purpose of rendering the doctrine of Scripture ambiguous and destitute of all certainty and firmness... As it concerns the present passage, they speculate in vain, and to no purpose, by departing from the literal sense”** (p. 114).

**“Therefore, after he (Moses) has related historically what God had done...”** (p. 136).

### **Herman Bavinck**

Even Herman Bavinck is being dragged into the discussion on *Creation and Sci-*

*ence* as someone who supports evolution. Bavinck had the greatest respect for science and scientists. But not for evolution. Here are some quotes from Bavinck’s *Ge-reformeerde Dogmatiek*, Vol 2. Pages quoted follow each quotation in brackets.

**“In Scripture, heaven and earth are called into being by the Almighty Word of God...”** (p. 438).

**“The Copernican world view encounters no objections from Christian theology. The situation, however, is totally different when Christianity is confronted with the theories of present day science that deal with the origin of the planets and the earth”** (p. 447).

**“Geology teaches us what conditions the earth may have existed in earlier. But about the cause, the origin and length, etc. of those conditions of the early earth, geology tells us next to nothing”** (p. 465).

**“All origins lie obscured in darkness. If someone does not tell us who our parents and grandparents are, we will never know. Insofar as there is no creation story, the history (origin) of the earth will remain unknown to us. Geology can therefore never give us an account of the creation”** (p. 465).

On page 471-490 Bavinck discusses the origin of man. He gives numerous reasons for rejecting the theory of evolution.

On page 481 Bavinck underscores the conflicts that exist between creation and evolution and the age and origin of the earth and mankind. At one point he refers to the “fable-like time periods employed by the new anthropology.”

### **Abraham Kuyper**

Abraham Kuyper was an ardent opponent of the dogma of evolution in his day.

In 1899 Kuyper wrote:

**“Hesitation in the face of evolution amounts to a betrayal of one’s own convictions. Evolution is a new concept, a newly created faith which strives to encompass and dominate our entire lives. It has established itself in direct opposition to the Christian faith and seeks to establish its temple on the ruins of our Christian confession. No amount of infatuation with the many rich and splendid things the study of evolution has rendered can make us feel the least bit comfortable with evolution as a system. For that system remains evil, even though this evil has in some respects yielded positive insights.**

**“It is this *system*, featuring a mechanical universe without purpose, that we oppose in all its manifestations. We must not only defend ourselves against it; we must oppose it. The textbooks which have been infiltrated by the evolutionistic faith must be discarded and**

**the teachers who endorse evolutionism must not be entrusted with our children. Like a deadly virus intent on destroying all spiritual life, it must be tracked with microscopic scrutiny to be evicted from every segment of the fabric of our existence.**

**“I now consider it my calling to raise my voice against the even more subtle and deadly danger of evolution. It is a warning addressed not merely to people of Reformed persuasion, but to all those who walk on the holy ground of the Christian religion. I conclude by taking my stand where the Christian church on earth has always stood and will always stand by giving a reaffirmation, in the face of the false claims brought by evolution, of the first article of Christian faith where we confess: *I believe in God the Father, Maker of heaven and earth.*”**

In an attempt to lend credibility to their own arguments in support of evolutionary theory, some academics at our Christian institutions of higher learning are arguing that scholars such as Calvin, Kuyper, Vonk, and Bavinck are also sympathetic to evolutionary theory. This is a lie. Not one of the scholars quoted in this article would hesitate for a moment to confess that “the uniqueness of human beings as image bearers of God rules out all theories that posit the reality of evolutionary forebears

of the human race.”

The fact that the chairman of the committee on Creation and Science, Dr. Al Wolters, for whatever reason, cannot support the minority recommendation of the committee that *unequivocally* states that man did not descend from animals, should be of grave concern to all who support the institutions at which Dr. Wolters teaches our children. It is not for naught that Christian parents pay thousands of dollars to afford their children a distinctively Christian education. May that distinctively Christian education include the unqualified affirmation that man did not descend from the beasts.

## **Wolters Receives No Support from Dooyeweerd**

**February 25, 1991**

THE RECENT REPORT ON *Creation and Science* includes a *minority* recommendation. The *minority* report recommendation reads as follows:

**“The church declares, moreover, that the clear teaching of Scripture and of our confessions in the uniqueness of human beings as image bearers of**

**God rules out all theories that posit the reality of evolutionary forebears of the human race.”**

Of eight people who signed one of the two reports on *Creation and Science* only two people (Gordon Spykman and R. Maatman) supported the minority recommendation.

Why? Why could the other six signatories of the report not support a clear and unambiguous statement that man has not descended from animal primates?

One of the members of the committee, its chairman, Dr. Al Wolters who signed the majority report, gives his reason for not supporting the minority recommendation. Wolters states that although he is in agreement with the minority view, he does not think it wise for synod to make an official pronouncement on the matter.

Why does Wolters think that it is not wise for synod to make a clear and unambiguous statement on the origin of man? This, as usual, we are not told. In a word, Dr. Wolters’ behaviour is inexcusable. He is in effect saying that the Calvin College professors may continue to teach their unbiblical ideas.

Dr. Wolters and the others who favor the continued teaching of an evolutionary view of the origin of man are less reserved.

Howard Van Till has candidly stated in his book, *The Fourth Day*, that: “I see

no reason whatsoever to deny that the Creation might have an evolutionary history or that morally responsible creatures might have been formed through the processes of evolutionary development” (p. 258). Van Till denies, point blank, the church’s confession that the human race does not have evolutionary forebears. As does the minority report.

Another Calvin College professor, Dr. Clarence Menninga, stated in the Nov. 14, 1984 issue of *The Banner* that Adam may have been a Neanderthal and lived sometime after Lucy. In other words, Adam was the descendant of some evolutionary forebear.

Calvin College professors have publicly taught students the view that Adam may have had evolutionary forebears. And Dr. Wolters’ majority report states that is fine.

The *public* expression of the views by these professors was the catalyst that prompted the CRC synod to appoint a committee on *Creation and Science* three years ago.

And now the chairman of this committee, Al Wolters, who signed the majority report, does not believe that synod should make a clear and unambiguous statement to both the church and Calvin professors insisting that Adam did not have evolutionary forebears.

I find this to be a two-faced approach

which is deeply disturbing. Professors at Reformed institutions of higher learning have openly stated that Adam had evolutionary forebears. Why should the committee appointed by synod now not openly declare that Scripture and our confessions do not allow for the possibility of evolutionary forebears? Should synod ask anything less of the committee?

I think that Al Wolters, as chairman of the committee on *Creation and Science*, should reconsider his position before he goes to synod this summer to defend the majority report. Wolters should be prepared to explain the reason for his unbiblical position in writing. The pages of *Christians Renewal* are open to him. He may have all the space he requires. After all, Wolters teaches theology at Redeemer College. The supporting community of Redeemer has a right to know why he does not believe that synod should state that man does not have evolutionary forebears (i.e. animal ancestors).

I do not believe that Wolters would receive any support for his point of view from the great Dutch philosopher, Herman Dooyeweerd.

As professor of jurisprudence at the Free University of Amsterdam, Dooyeweerd was sensitive to the need for academic freedom. But Dooyeweerd also acknowledged that there are limits to academic freedom—especially for an

institution that bears the name of Christ. This is what Dooyeweerd wrote in his book, *Reformatie en Scholastiek in de Wijsbegeerte*,

**“History certainly offers sufficient evidence that the confession of the church has been attacked at its very foundations in the name of scientific freedom. In such cases, we surely cannot deny the church its right to issue binding pronouncements against such ‘scientific’ assaults on Christian doctrine; and such pronouncements therefore may have to venture formally into scientific territory.”**

The church of all ages confesses that in the beginning God created man and woman in His image as described in Genesis. *Without evolutionary forebears*. Any so-called “science” that undermines that confession needs to be challenged. With binding pronouncements.

Elsewhere in the same book Dooyeweerd addressed the question of watering down the absolute truth of scripture to the point where people are at a loss as to what to believe. Wrote Dooyeweerd:

**“If it is to maintain its true character, a world-and-life view must issue from the religious root, the *heart*, of human existence. It also must influence one’s entire perspective on life, not merely one’s theory. Such a world-view demands a strong communal faith**

**in the absolute truth of its religious foundations; and it simply cannot coexist with ‘theoretical relativism.’ A genuine world-and-life view is immediately recognizable by its *radicalism*, a radicalism that issues from the religious root of life.**

**“For this reason relativism can never be a genuine worldview. Relativism is the fruit of a process of decay in which spiritually uprooted theory brings man, inwardly set adrift, to the skeptical question of Pilate: ‘What is truth?’”**

And evolutionary theory, as presented by some Calvin College professors today, is a spiritually uprooted theory. Therefore we urge the chairman of the committee on *Creation and Science*, before he makes his case at this summer’s synod, to reconsider his position. The radicalism of the gospel demands it. The future of a meaningful Christian enterprise in higher education requires it.

## **Questions Wolters May Not Evade**

**October 23, 1991**

**AMOTORIST STOPS to ask for directions.  
A passerby is happy to assist. After giv-**



**ing the motorist careful directions, the passerby repeats those directions. Only in the repeating those directions, conflicting directions are given. The motorist becomes hopelessly lost.**

This is what happens in the report for synod on *Creation and Science*. The report is riddled with mutual contradictions. It cannot possibly be taken seriously by synod in its present structure.

Let me give the reader an example. (We will look in depth at this example in the body of the article.)

On page 42 of the report under the heading, *Summary of Conclusions*, the report states, "The Scripture clearly teaches that Adam and Eve, the progenitors of the human race..." Then on page 46 of the report, the committee argues that synod should **not** declare that Adam did not have evolutionary forebears (in other words, Adam and Eve may **not** be the progenitors of the human race) because members of the CRC are still considering the evidence (see page 46, XI, 2b.). Then how can the report state that it is a clear teaching of Scripture? Is the committee not limping on two legs?

Since the early part of January, Dr. Al Wolters, professor of theology at Redeemer College, and I have exchanged almost fifty pages of private correspondence. Since the correspondence is private, it will not be discussed here.

However, since January, I have also addressed the report on *Creation and Science* in the pages of *Christian Renewal*. Since Wolters is chairman of the committee which wrote the majority report, and since Wolters *declined* (to my great surprise) to support the minority recommendation which clearly states that Adam did not have evolutionary forebears, Wolters has figured prominently in those discussions.

In an earlier issue of *Christian Renewal* I stated that Wolters did not give a reason for not supporting the minority recommendation that Adam did not have evolutionary "parents." I was mistaken.

The reason given by Wolters is found on page 43 of the report where it states that "he (Wolters) does not think it wise for synod to make official pronouncements on the matter (i.e. whether or not Adam had evolutionary forebears). In addition to this reason there are, of course, the reasons given by the majority of committee members (found on page 46 of the report) for not asking synod to declare that Adam did not have evolutionary forebears.

Now the reasons given for not supporting the minority recommendation are riddled with mutual contradictions and raise some profound questions. Questions which I believe Dr. Wolters and other members of the majority report should publicly discuss *before* the report is presented to synod.

1. Page 42 of the report under H clearly states, “The Scriptures clearly teach that Adam and Eve [are] the progenitors of the human race...”

There we have it. According to the committee, in the *Summary of Conclusions*, Adam and Eve are declared to be the progenitors of the human race. According to the *American College Dictionary*, progenitor is defined as “direct ancestor.”

So the entire committee, since no one has objected to the *Summary of Conclusions*, is therefore saying that, **Scripture clearly teaches** that Adam and Eve are the direct ancestors of the entire human race.

Since the committee has already stated that Adam and Eve, according to the clear teachings of Scripture, are the direct ancestors of the entire human race, on what conceivable grounds can the majority object to the minority recommendation which affirms this clear teaching of Scripture by **underscoring** that Adam and Eve did not have evolutionary parents?

And since the committee has stated that Adam and Eve **are** the direct ancestors of the entire human race and that this is a clear teaching by Scripture, (according to the entire committee), why does Wolters state that “he does not think it wise for synod to make an official pronouncement on the matter” when the committee itself has already done so? And when it is a clear teaching of Scripture?

So the question to Dr. Al Wolters which he should not evade is: **Why may the church not confess in IX, F what, according to him as a member of the committee, Scripture clearly teaches in Summary of Conclusions, H?**

2. The committee is unanimous in its declarations that, “The church confesses that humanity is uniquely created as the image bearers of God and rejects all theorizing that tends either to minimize or to obliterate this created uniqueness” (IX, *Declarations*, E).

The question to Dr. Al Wolters is, “What can this statement possibly mean other than what is more specifically stated in F where we read that ‘the uniqueness of human beings as image bearers of God rules out all theories that posit the reality of evolutionary forebears of the human race’? And having agreed that that is indeed what IX, *Declarations*, E means, why is it not wise for synod to make an official pronouncement that Adam did not have evolutionary forebears when, in different words, he and the rest of the committee have already said as much on page 44 of the report under IX, *Declarations*, E?”

3. Dr. Wolters is among the majority of the committee who are going to urge synod **not** to accede to the minority recommendation that Adam did **not** have evolutionary forebears.

One of the grounds given to synod is

that, “historically the Christian church in general has been reticent to issue formal declarations or confessional statements in this area.” The question to Wolters is, “Is it not true that the Christian church has always confessed that Scripture clearly teaches that Adam and Eve are the progenitors of the human race. And is it therefore not true that Adam could therefore not possibly have had evolutionary forebears? And has that not always been part of our confessions? And is it not equally true that the reason synod is being asked at this time to declare that Adam did not have evolutionary forebears is because there are those in our college and seminary who are teaching precisely that?”

Was it not the great Dutch philosopher, Herman Dooyeweerd, who wrote that when the confession of the church is being attacked at its very foundation in the name of scientific freedom, the church, surely, has the right to issue binding pronouncements against such “scientific” assaults on Christian doctrine?

Furthermore do professors and ministers and elders and deacons not sign a form of subscription?

4. Another reason given to synod by the majority of the committee members on *Creation and Science* not to accede to the *minority* report that Adam did not have evolutionary parents is that, “Many members of the CRC are working in this

area and are considering the evidence and, what is not yet clear, the impact it may have both on the scientific theory and the understanding of the biblical account... Further study in this area is necessary.”

Is Dr. Wolters, and are the rest of the members of the majority report aware of what it is that they are saying?

They are referring to the minority report recommendation. And that recommendation makes a single point: *that Adam did not have evolutionary parents!* And this confessional stance requires a study?

The question to Dr. Wolters is this: “As a member of the majority report are you going to place the argument before synod that further study is required by members of the CRC before it can be determined whether or not Adam had evolutionary parents? And what impact such a view may have on the biblical account?” Are you not now suggesting that “scientific theory” may indeed convince the church that Adam **did** have evolutionary forebears? Is that question not comparable to the question whether or not Mary was a virgin?

What then are you saying in VIII, *Summary of Conclusions*, H, where you state that Scripture clearly teaches that Adam and Eve are the direct ancestors of the human race? In fact, the committee is not saying anything of the kind.

In the February 4, 1991 issue of *The*

*Banner*, Galen Meyer writes in his editorial, “The rest of the committee members (those not supporting the minority recommendation) do not **necessarily** (emphasis mine—J.H.) believe that human beings evolved from some lower stock millions of years ago. They only feel that this is a legitimate question for scientists to explore.”

Such double talk.

And that, in a nutshell, is precisely the issue: Whether or not it is “a legitimate question for scientists to explore” whether or not Adam evolved from “some lower stock.”

*But* the committee has already stated that Scripture *clearly* teaches that Adam and Eve are the progenitors of the human race, that is, our direct ancestors. Now if Adam and Eve had ancestors, animal or otherwise, they cannot be said to be the direct ancestors of the human race. Whoever Adam and Eve’s hypothetical ancestors might have been would then be the direct ancestors of the human race. The members of the majority committee cannot have it both ways.

5. The final reason given to synod by the majority of the writers of the report on *Creation and Science* not to accede to the minority report that Adam did not have evolutionary forebears is that, “The church should not bind the consciences of its members beyond what is clear and

indubitable teaching of Scripture and the creeds.”

The question to Dr. Wolters is this:

The church should not bind the conscience of its members beyond what is the clear and indubitable teaching of scripture and the creeds. Agreed. But the committee itself has stated, unequivocally, that it **is** the clear and indubitable teaching of Scripture and the creeds that Adam and Eve **are** the direct ancestors of the human race. So what is the point of giving **this** as a reason for asking synod not to accede to the minority recommendation that Adam did not have evolutionary forebears? Has the *entire* committee not already said that Adam does not have evolutionary forebears when it declares that such is the clear teaching of Scripture that Adam and Eve are indeed the direct ancestors of the human race?

Dr. Wolters and other members of the committee would be performing a valuable service to the Christian Reformed community if they would address this obvious contradiction before the report is dealt with on the floor of synod. As it stands now, the report presents synod with mutually contradictory points of view. And one of those views is presented as the clear teaching of Scripture and our confessions.

How can this possibly be?

<b>The Minority Report</b>	<b>The Majority Report</b>
God	God
Adam and Eve as special creations of God described in Genesis.	Further study is required to determine if Adam and Eve had primitive parents.
Adam and Eve are the parents of the Human Race.	A study needs to be done to determine if Adam and Eve are the parents of the Human Race.
The minority report states that the above is the clear teaching of Scripture.	Adam and Eve can no longer be said to be the parents of the human race; a study is required to determine if they themselves may have had parents.

## **With His Face in the Dirt**

**March 25, 1991**

**HE DREW ON THE LAST reserves of His strength. His clothes stuck to His bleeding body. Sweat poured down His face. His knees were knocking.**

**Then He collapsed.**

**The Son of God collapsed.**

The Word which had become flesh crumbled under the weight of a wooden cross. He Who upholds and sustains the entire universe lay sprawled in the dirt. Exhausted! Humiliated!

Do you fully comprehend the magnitude of this humiliation, dear reader?

God's Son lay exhausted, with His face in the dirt. God's righteousness demanded it. The world's sin's occasioned it.

The One who raised Lazarus from the dead did not have the strength to carry a wooden cross. A man named Simon easily carried it.

Christ could have "argued" His way out of this humiliation. He could have employed our contemporary arguments. He could have adapted our arguments, that what was written about Him in Scripture was not meant to be taken literally. The psalms that were written about His suffering were time-bound and culturally conditioned. The language should be viewed as stylized and symbolic. He could have evaded the will of His Father by reducing what was written in Scripture to trivialities. After all,

Christ also was the Son of Adam. He was human.

Satan would have rejoiced if this had happened. The sons of Adam would have all perished.

A stranger from North Africa was conscripted to carry Jesus' cross. That burden would become a blessing.

As Jesus walked towards the place of execution, He addressed the weeping women. "Daughters of Jerusalem," He said compassionately, "do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children. There will be days when people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.'"

It is a terrible thing for a sinner to fall into the hands of an angry God. Just *how* terrible is witnessed in the humiliation, suffering and death of Christ.

For three hours life drained out of Him as He hung on a cross. The worst punishment Roman justice could administer. God's punishment was worse.

He descended into hell.

Hell! "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Deep darkness covered the earth. Upon the One Who is the Light of the world.

There is a reformed minister in California who does not believe in hell. His name is Robert Schuller. He preaches in a ten million dollar crystal cathedral. He

preaches the love of an unknown god.

Schuller's god is not the God who sent His only begotten Son to a strangely shaped hill called Golgotha to pay the ransom for the sins of the sons of Adam.

Schuller's savior is not the Savior who cried with a loud voice, "It is fulfilled!"

And unless Robert Schuller repents from his blasphemous preaching, he will surely spend eternity in the hell from which Christ came to deliver him. He has God's Word on it, confirmed by Christ on the cross.

God's love may never be divorced from God's wrath. For God so loved the world that His wrath descended upon His only begotten Son. Good Friday. The sacrifice God did not exact from Abraham, He exacted from Himself. His own dear Son collapsed under the burden of the sins of the sons of Adam. He who lived from eternity, in the glorious presence of His Father, lay sprawled with His face in the dirt.

If that is what sin does to God's much loved Son, what will it do to us if we do not freely accept His ransom paid on our behalf?

We are all lying with our faces in the dirt. We will all descend into hell. God has said. His Son has confirmed.

Unless...

Suddenly it happened. The earth

trembled. Soldiers shrank in fear. Heavenly figures rolled away the stone.

### **CHRIST IS RISEN!**

Satan is doomed.

The full ransom is paid. For the sons of Adam. For you, too, Robert Schuller. If you will take God at His Word.

Eat, drink, believe. Christ has been raised from the dead. For you, sons of Adam.

Thanks be to God. He has lifted our faces out of the dirt. He has made a detour for us bypassing hell. Christ instead went on our behalf.

No longer will there be any curse. We will see His face, and His name will be on our foreheads (Rev. 22).

All things will be made new.

## **Perfect and Glorious**

**April 15, 1991**

**THE OPENING CHAPTERS of Genesis declare the almighty-ness of God and the perfection of creation. God is almighty and everything God does is perfect.**

Words escape us in our feeble attempts to give voice to God's power and majesty. Isaiah tries. He talks about God

measuring the waters in the hollow of His hand and measuring the heavens with the breadth of His hand. Isaiah talks about God holding the dust of the earth in a basket and weighing the mountains on scales and the hills in a balance. There is no limit to God's power. God is almighty. His power and majesty are awesome.

Scripture teaches that when God speaks, it is accomplished. The life of Christ witnesses to God's almighty power. Christ commands the storm to be still and the waves immediately subside. Christ commands Lazarus to come out of his tomb, and Lazarus obeys. The Son of God turns water into wine and multiplies the loaves and fishes. Lame people walk and blind people see—at the command of the Word of the Son of God.

The apostle John reveals in his gospel that Christ is the Word, and the Word was with God in the beginning. Through the Word all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.

Awesome! Jesus Christ is the Word. And by that Word the heavens and the earth were made. God said, "Let there be. And it was. And behold, it was very good."

Man destroyed the goodness of God's creation. Through man death came into the world. Christ, the Word who was with God from the beginning, took on our human flesh and our blood. He left His high estate in heaven and paid the ransom for the

disobedience of man. And He destroyed the power death has over us. So that we can once again become the sons of God.

Everything God does is perfect. And that perfection is still reflected in God's creation. We see it in the chick that is hatched by the mother hen. We see it in the young puppies that feed at their mother's breasts. We see it in the flowering shrubs and in the beauty of the Easter lily. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these. The sparrow and the robin, the cardinal and the hummingbird all witness to the power and glory of God.

God made each according to its kind. And each kind reproduces its own. We witness this great miracle of God's creation every day of our lives.

One thing no one has ever witnessed is a tulip bulb growing into a lily, or a cat giving birth to puppies. And our eyes are not deceiving us. All things give birth and reproduce according to their kind.

The theory of evolution explains nothing. It flies in the face of the reality we witness all around us. Mothers give birth to their children in nine months. Humans are the offspring of humans and always have been. Because God made each according to their kind.

The theory of evolution—theistic or otherwise—is a denial of the almighty and perfection of God. It teaches the pernicious doctrine that death and imperfections are

part of the being of God's creation. And that is blasphemy.

The creation did not give birth to that which is created. God alone creates. And that which is created gives birth to its kind.

God made man a little lower than the angels; He crowned man with glory and honor and put everything under his feet. From the very beginning, man was crowned with glory and honor. Through Adam's sin in Eden, mankind lost its high estate. But now we see Jesus. He also was made a little lower than the angels. He suffered and tasted death for us. So that we may regain our honor and our glory.

Everything that God does by His almighty power is perfect and glorious. God, for whom and through whom everything exists, has assured our perfection through Jesus Christ, our brother.

Brothers, do not be carried away by all kinds of strange theories.

## **Creation and Evolution**

**May 13, 1991**

**IN THE FACE OF mounting confusion about what Christians do and do not believe concerning creation and evolution, the Board of St. Catharines Christian elementary and secondary**



**schools, has formulated a position.**

The teachers who teach at Calvin Christian grade school and Beacon Christian High in St. Catharines must teach about creation and evolution within the context of the following guidelines.

*Knowing that science is not neutral and that scientific investigation is based on presupposition, we acknowledge that the presuppositions of the Christian doing science must be based on the inscriptured Word of God. To that end...*

1. *We believe the Bible speaks with authority on the origin of the universe. (K-12)*
2. *We accept by faith that God created the universe (Heb. 11:1-3). (K-12)*
3. *God created the universe and our world out of nothing and continues to sustain, to direct and to care for it. (K-12)*
4. *The history of the universe is open to scientific study but what we know today through scientific investigation is inconclusive. (K-12)*
5. *Creation is described in general as taking place within six days. We allow teachers and students room to interpret day in a scientific sense to represent a split second, a literal 24 hours, or a longer period of time. (7-12)*
6. *We believe God created distinct, unique kinds of life. (K-12)*
7. *Within species we may see micro-evolution. (7-12)*
8. *Man and woman were created out of the dust of the earth as unique creatures in God's image. Adam and Eve are the first human beings and all of mankind today are their children. Their creation, fall and subsequent life, has historical validity. (K-12)*
9. *Within creation Christian and non-Christian alike may discover God's laws. (Gravity,... norms for family, etc.) (K-12)*
10. *God may choose to accomplish His plans by using methods which defy scientific investigation or laws, i.e. miracles. (K-12)*
11. *Empirical evidence is not at variance with biblical truth. Theories developed from evidence may support biblical truth, may be distortion of biblical truth, or completely contradict biblical truth. Where theories compromise biblical truth, we acknowledge the Bible as the final authority. We realize that now "we see through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). (K-12)*
12. *The Bible gives us a broad overview of how creation came into being. Its language is not framed in scientific terminology. (K-12)*
13. *Students will be taught the following about the theory of evolution:*
  - (a) *How evolutionary theories have been developed (Theistic to Naturalistic). (7-12)*
  - (b) *How evolutionary theories have*

*been developed by scientists who look for a natural explanation to origins, in its own way a “religious” or “faith” explanation.*

*(c) How the theory of evolution serves as an organizing principle for history, geology, anthropology, biology and psychology. (11-12)*

*(d) Students will critique the theory of evolution from a biblical and scientific point of view to show how it denies God’s role as creator. (7-12)*

*14. The strengths and weaknesses of creation-science theory as an approach (deductive science) will be explored. (Grade 12)*

*15. Students will know that a biblical understanding of creation as it is found in Genesis 1-2 is integral to a worldview that is rooted in Creation, Fall, and Redemption.*

*Conclusion:*

*In the spirit of 1 Cor 10:31, whether we eat or drink, do research or speculate about the origin of the universe, may it all be done to the glory of God’s Holy name.*

*The board also has appended to this guideline the following preamble as well as Article 12 and 14 of the Belgic Confession, Lord’s Day 9 of the Heidelberg Catechism and Section 7 and 8 of the Contemporary Testimony (a CRC document).*

*That the curriculum remains faithful to the biblical truth in every regard and more*

*specifically with regard to the creation history as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity which underlie the Association’s Constitution.*

Although there are a number of weaknesses in these guidelines, basically the Board has taken a strong position against the secular theory of evolution. Point 6 of the guidelines emphatically states that “We believe that God created distinct, unique kinds of life.” This effectively eliminates the belief that lower forms of life evolved into higher, more complex forms of life. Point 13 (d) emphasizes that the theory of evolution denies God’s role as Creator. Where theories conflict with biblical revelation, the Bible is acknowledged as the final authority (Point 11). Calvin College professors Howard Van Till and Clarence Menninga would not be permitted to teach at Calvin Elementary and Beacon Christian High in St. Catharines.

The guidelines do have a number of weaknesses. The most glaring is point 9 which states, “Within creation Christians and non-Christians alike may discover God’s laws.” And then it gives as examples the law of gravity and norms for the family.

**Laws** and **norms** should not be confused or equated.

The laws of nature function according to God’s will without human involvement. These laws cannot be broken without **immediate** consequences. Man has no say in the laws of gravity. They are there and

they are binding in all. Anyone who jumps off the Empire State building will die. A ball or car will not roll uphill. At least not on earth. These God-created laws of gravity impinge themselves upon all. They cannot be disobeyed without immediate negative consequences.

The same is not true with **norms**. God-given **norms** demand a human response. They assume human responsibility. Unlike natural laws they can be disobeyed without “immediate” consequences.

God has established the norm that man may not kill his fellow man. It is a norm, a command. But man can “easily” break that command. He kills.

Man may not commit adultery. That is God’s command. God’s norm. But man does. Man breaks God’s command. He breaks the norm.

Now the glaring weakness of point 9 of the guidelines is that it fails to distinguish between the laws of nature (i.e. gravity) and norms (i.e. for the family).

The laws of nature are inescapable. They force themselves upon us. They are part of our human condition. We must obey them or die. The law of gravity is not dependent upon a human response.

The law not to commit adultery in a fallen world requires a human response. And the human response may be to obey or disobey. So that command is a norm. It regulates how humans **ought** to act.

The same is true for norms for the family. God’s commands for the family can be broken. In a hundred different ways.

So how do we know what the norms for the family are? Can Christians and non-Christians alike “discover” these in God’s creation?

Never! Not in a million years. According to the theory of evolution (evolutionary anthropology) the laws for the family evolved according to human custom and superstition. And that is nonsense.

For the sake of making our point, let’s use an extreme example. In a primitive tribe in Australia men “choose” their wives by shooting an arrow into their thighs. In the same tribe, when the supply of food is dangerously low, women dash the brains from their firstborn and turn calmly to suckle a pig. That is what creation, the environment, the law to survive “teaches” them to do.

In the city of San Francisco, which is almost as normatively primitive as the backwoods of Australia, homosexuals and lesbians are fighting for “family status.” That is their “understanding” of norms for the family.

In all of God’s creation, after the fall into sin, there is only **one** place we can find norms, commands for human behavior including norms for the family—and that is in the Bible. Leviticus, for instance, is

the handbook which God gave to Israel to ensure a healthy lifestyle.

The Board is going to have to take a closer look at point 9.

Point 4, where we are told that the history of the universe is open to scientific study, is also problematic. The Board concedes that scientific investigation of the universe is inconclusive. But is that adequate?

We can study the history of the universe. Within limits if we are mindful of the size of the universe. But can we study God's act of creating?

Man cannot understand the miraculous. All he can do is stand back in awe. Turning water into wine defies human understanding. Raising Lazarus from the dead defies human understanding. We can study how a plant grows and learn how a plane flies. God has given us that ability. We cannot "understand" manna falling out of heaven or a donkey speaking.

The act of God miraculously creating the universe is **not** open to scientific investigation.

In an otherwise good document, the Board may want to take a closer look at these two points.