

erspective

SPECIAL ISSUE

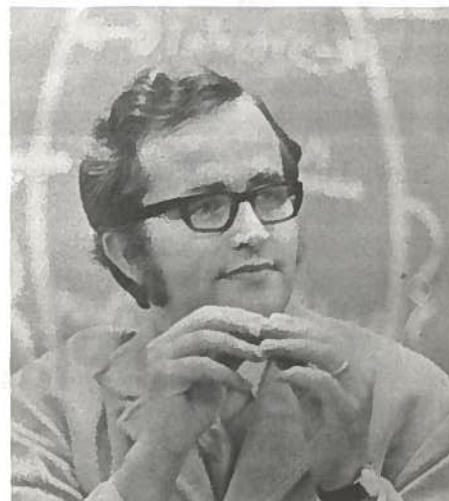
Newsletter of the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship
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The Place of the AACS in Christian Renewal

Frequently the actions and words of the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship and its Institute for Christian Studies come under scrutiny. At times we have not stated clearly our view on certain matters because we assumed cultural contexts or backgrounds which readers did not have. Recently we tried to explain clearly some of our central ideas in a series of five articles in THE BANNER, weekly publication of the Christian Reformed Church. These articles are reprinted with permission in this special issue of PERSPECTIVE so that you may more clearly understand the fundamental position of A.A.C.S./I.C.S.

At a time when public leaders need much advanced education, it would be tragic if Christians left university influence entirely to a public system that denies Christ. Read and share these articles so that we may work together, without fear or mistrust, in showing that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" also in advanced academic study.

Getting Acquainted Firsthand



Bernard Zylstra

AACS—The Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship is a society of 2300 members which supports the Toronto ICS. The AACS is like any one of our local Christian school societies, except that the AACS has members all over the country, in both the U.S. and Canada, and tries to raise support for this same Christian Institute for advanced, scholarly studies located in Toronto.

The AACS members (\$25 fee and subscription to its principles) believe enough in the claims of Christ for the kind of Christian academic work being done at the Institute that 1500 of them sacrificially gave \$140,000 in 1973 toward meeting the combined AACS-ICS budget of \$200,000. No big money is behind us. The pay checks were not always issued on time, and we have had to borrow. But a growing core of people, around the world, continue to believe this work is of the Lord and will bear good fruit in the coming generation among those who do Christian studies in Toronto.

As part of its ministry, ever since 1959, the AACS has organized educational conferences in the summer. At first they were series of lectures meant to serve especially Christian students who had to attend secular Canadian universities, to try to help them with a Reformed view of their studies (the Unionville conferences). In the late 1960's such conferences became stamping grounds for camping families, ragtag students, Canadian-Dutch immigrant stalwarts, all together

This first article in this series wishes simply to introduce you to the people who have tasks in the *Toronto Institute for Christian Studies* and the *Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship*. We should like to demythologize ourselves a bit, to have you note that we are people with a hometown and varying personalities. That we have been troublesome to some in the church is due partly to our sin and partly because of what we stand for.

ICS—At present there are six regular professors, called Senior members, who lead 35 graduate students, called Junior members, in research. The research explores foundational problems in different disciplines, what you might call the philosophy of psychology, the philosophy of politics, the philosophy of theology, the philosophy of art and literary critique, and so on. There is a communal Christian mind among the Senior members, a largely common Christian perspective out of which the study proceeds. Some call us Dodo-weirdians. Most of us have indeed studied with Vollenhoven, van Riessen, and Zuidema, in philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam, but we are not followers of Dooyeweerd or

disciples of anybody except Jesus Christ. We mean to accept responsibility for our thought patterns ourselves. Most of the Senior members are also graduates of Calvin College.

The Junior members are graduates of Dordt, Calvin, Trinity Christian, Geneva College, and various other evangelical or secular educational institutions throughout the States and Canada. They work toward a Master of Philosophy degree at the Institute (takes two full years), and can then be admitted into a limited Ph.D. program (only in dissertational topics of an interdisciplinary, "philosophy of" sort of study). We are applying to have these degrees accredited by a charter from the Ontario provincial government. We also offer a one-year Certificate in Christian Studies which is awarded to those who successfully complete a Biblical Foundations course, a Historical-Philosophical Foundations course, and one year-long course in their area of special interest. Some college graduates come to study at the Toronto Institute for a year or two to get Christian perspective on their academic task and deeper biblical insight into their field before they continue specialized study elsewhere.



Calvin Seerveld

for a long motley weekend of semi-academic lectures, campfire fellowship, and worship celebrations that rivaled any revivalist meetings. Now there are nine AACS-sponsored or AACS-supported conferences being held around Canada and the U.S.—Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, New Jersey, Michigan, Iowa, Pennsylvania—often getting an audience with the evangelical student world that has not known of the Reformed faith and what Christian shape it can give to transforming culture.

That mission of getting the historic Reformed faith, with contemporary bite, out to secular, Reformed, and evangelical public, has also been attempted by the AACS in five years of *Discovery* lectures. Speakers, including others than ICS Senior members, have all spoken on a special topic during a given year—Church, Family, Christian education, Bible reading, counseling—at key city centers from Toronto to Vancouver to Philadelphia. For two years now these lectures have been put on audio-visual tape and aired on cable TV, as a community service, throughout Canada.

REFORMATIONAL—What drives ICS and AACS on is a single-minded commitment to obey the scriptural imperative to bring every thought subject to Jesus Christ's lordship (II Cor. 10:3-6), to respond to the Lord's call to press the claims of Christ upon all who will hear; the conviction that the ministry of reconciling all culture into submission to the Lord is what gives

human life meaning (II Cor. 5:17-21, Rom. 11:36-12:2). We have great joy (and some rambunctiousness) in believing that the gift each one has been given is to be used to build up the body of Christ and to praise the Lord (Eph. 4:7-16, I Pet. 4:7-11), to the scandal of unbelief. This has led AACS-ICS to call for reform of scholarship and labor and political life, even of church—and home and art—so that one will not be unconsciously diluting his biblical intentions with the patterns of this secularized world.

This has earned us a lot of reproach. The "Liberals" were first offended because AACS asked for a rigorously *Christianly structured* cultural life; and who ever heard of that in North America? Now the "Conserva-



Hendrik Hart

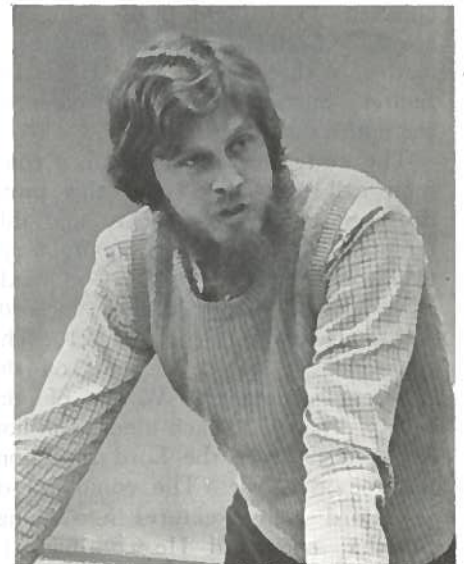
tists" have been offended because we believe *ecclesia reformanda est* should mean deed rather than just talk; and this unsettles the established power structure. Mix in a few early honest mistakes, a history of doctrinaire certainty, some conflicts of interests within the Reformed community, along with our normal sin and personality quirks, and you have a fair idea of why AACS-ICS has not been popular.

Add to that a fundamental misunderstanding. *We believe that a community of scholars* cannot respond fully and obediently to II Corinthians 5 and 10, Romans 12, Ephesians 4 and I Peter 4, *in their scholarship*, without a developed confessional vision, an articulated Christian world-and-life-view, an honest-to-God *philosophical systematics that shows the imprint of bibli-*

cally Christian insight inside its conceptions. Since the chief task of ICS has been scholarship and scientific studies, the philosophy business has gotten emphasis. But *we do not believe that (Christian) philosophy will save society*. Only the work of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit can do that. It is our believing response as philosophers—or as secretaries, fund-raisers, and specialists today—not to be secular but to be reforming—Reformational—till the work of our hands be conformed to what pleases God. The contours of this perspective are Calvinian and Kuyperian (cf. article next week); the roots and driving power are wholly and richly biblical.

God has been pleased to give us a solid building (with a large mortgage) in downtown Toronto, opposite the University of Toronto complex. The formative influence of Dr. H. E. Runner of Calvin College for 20 years and the difficult organizational charting carried on by lawyer John A. Olthuis as Executive Director for the past seven years have been greatly blessed by our covenanting God. At present Dr. Paul G. Schrotenboer (Grand Rapids) is president of the AACS trustees, and Dr. Peter A. Schouls (Edmonton) is chairman of the ICS curatorium.

One sin does not deserve another. So we ask very earnestly for forgiveness where it is due, and suggest that you seek out the truth rather than the myth about us, so that we may serve the Lord together with gladness. †



C.T. McIntire

Sphere Sovereignty

Sphere sovereignty—Why are some things we daily encounter alike? Why are other things different? Bed, soap, cornflakes, mother, policeman, factory, office, telephone, secretary, tulip, news, war, president, oil, jury, painting, apple, hockey. What do they have in common? What distinguishes them? The Christian, in trying to identify similarity and difference, finds his starting-point in the biblical revelation about creation.

All creatures have something in common. They are servants of God (Ps. 119:91) and exist for His glory. "From him and through him and unto him are all things" (Rom. 11:36). Psalm 148 sings about this. Sun and moon, fire and hail, fruit trees and cedars, kings and all peoples, young men and maidens, old men and children: "Let them praise sing Jehovah!" God is the loving Sovereign, clothed with majesty, since He is the Source, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the entire creation.

The unity of creation lies in a common call to service. But this unity does not eliminate diversity and difference. "O Lord, how *manifold* are thy works!" (Ps. 104:24) God made a variety of creatures, each "according to its kind" (Gen. 1:11, 21). The difference in service depends on the different ordinances—Words of the Lord—directed to each kind. The lion is called to serve the Lord as a lion, the roe as a roe. The command of the Lord calls creatures into being. By that command He continues to uphold them, fixes and prescribes their bounds, determines their measure-

ments, and says: "Thus far you shall come, and no farther" (Job 38:4-11; Ps. 148:6).

The Belgic Confession formulates this beautifully. "We believe that the Father by the Word, that is, by His Son, has created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures, when it seemed good unto Him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator; that He also still upholds and governs them by His eternal providence and infinite power for the service of mankind, to the end that man may serve his God." (Article 12)

The principle of sphere sovereignty, as part of a Christian view of the world, is based on this biblical teaching that God gave "unto every creature its *being, shape, form, and several offices* to serve its Creator." This principle rejects those views of the world which, like evolutionism, eliminates or downgrades the created distinctions between matter, plants, animals, and the life of man.

Since man is a creature, he too is simply a servant of the Lord (I Pet. 2:16). Man's service differs from that of matter, plants, and animals, for the whole of his calling is summed up in the two commandments: Love God above all and your neighbor as yourself! This is man's religion, man's undivided *office* on earth, which he is called to perform with single-hearted obedience and loving devotion.

The *one* inclusive office finds *many* expressions in distinct tasks and secondary offices to which the Bible ad-

resses itself in the Ten Commandments and in numerous ordinances. These are all specific instances of the two love commandments upon which depend all the law and the prophets. Moreover, the Lord Himself has created and instituted the basic social structures within which men and women are to channel their callings, such as marriage, family, state, the institutional church, and industry. Human relationships and organizations, when they appear in history as a result of mankind's cultural activity, must be shaped and directed within these divinely ordained structures.

The principle of sphere sovereignty affirms about social structures what we noticed above with respect to creatures in general. They too are servants of the Lord, each with its own *being, shape, form, and office*. Paul teaches this about office-bearers in the state, who are called to be servants and ministers of God (Rom. 13:4, 6), the institutional church, marriage, family, and the realm of work (cf. Eph. 4:11, 12; 5:25; 6:4, 9). These social structures differ in membership, internal rules, office, office-bearers, rights, prerogatives, and authority.

What is the *source and limit of the authority* which the office-bearers within these social structures exercise? Four basic answers have been given to this question. Political *totalitarianism* holds that each social structure depends on the state for the range of its delegated authority. In the final analysis they are all part of and accountable to the state. Traditional *Roman Catholic* social theory held that all social structures are dependent on the institutional church, at least with respect to authority in moral matters, since the pope is Christ's representative on earth. Classic *individualism* argued that social structures derive their authority from a social contract between autonomous individuals. The state in this conception is accountable to the people who exercise popular sovereignty. Since the individual is endowed with reason he can best manage his own affairs, and therefore "the least government is the best government." Finally, the principle of *sphere sovereignty* holds that each social structure derives its specific office and hence its

limited authority from the Triune God, to whom its office-bearers are directly responsible. The relation between social structures in this view is therefore not one of subordination (to state, church, or the people) but one of mutual coordination and service in a common allegiance to one Lord. Let's examine this further.

The Bible clearly teaches that there is a link between God's *total* sovereignty and the *limited* sovereignty of human office-bearers. First, Scriptures tell us that Christ is the ascended Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 17:14) to whom all authority in heaven *and on earth* has been given because He died and rose again (Matt. 28:19). "All things are put in subjection under him" (I Cor. 15:27) so that now "the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ *have come*" (Rev. 12:10).

Because Christ is Lord, sitting at the right hand of God, the Heidelberg Catechism justly confesses that *by Him* "the Father governs all things" (LD 29). Second, how does the Father govern the life of men by Christ? The Catechism answers that in explaining the petition: "Thy Kingdom come. That is, so rule us *by Thy Word and Spirit* that we may submit ourselves more and more to Thee" (LD 48). Third, the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Word, accompanied by the Spirit, enter our life in the many offices which the Father ordained. Hence we are called upon to show honor, love and fidelity to all in authority over us, "since it pleases God to govern us *by their hand*" (LD 39).

The principle of sphere sovereignty holds that exclusive sovereignty belongs only to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator. That total authority *in human hands* is always limited to the exercise of an office within a particular sphere of jurisdiction. Thus, the notion of office links divine sovereignty to human institutions. The one institution differs from the next, and thus may not lord it over another.

Of all the Reformers, John Calvin recognized most clearly the difference between the institutions in society; he paid special attention to the office of

the church and that of the state. The Belgic Confession echoes him in describing the marks of the church and the office of civil government (Articles 29 and 36). These marks and that office are judged to be distinct because they pertain to different institutions. To be sure, the lines of authority between their respective offices have been drawn differently in the history of Christianity. For instance, in the Middle Ages as well as in Calvin's time it was erroneously thought that the prevention of "all idolatry and false worship" belonged to the office of the state. This confusion of political with ecclesiastical authority was later admitted as an abuse of political power. Therefore, in proper recognition of the principle of sphere sovereignty, the Christian Reformed Church eliminated that phrase from Article 36, as the *Acts of Synod* 1910 indicate.

Are institutions in society then tight compartments, without contact? No! But their mutual intertwinement must be determined by the nature of their respective offices and callings. For instance, the very content of public justice which the state is called upon to administer requires it to *protect* the free exercise of the office of church, school, the press, industry, and *prevent* the abuse of power by the same.

Or again, the first mark of the church is the preaching of the Word, the infallible rule for faith and life—every area of life. The decisive significance of the pulpit for a renewal of both church *and* society is acknowledged by us all. Nevertheless, the church's proclamation for political and economic life does not mean that the officers of the *church* should engage in political and economic *decision-making*. This is not their business; it lies outside the sphere of their authority. Rather, the preaching of the Word in all its political and economic and educational relevance, should be directed to the revival of the office of all believers so that "every one may discharge the duties of his office and calling"—as citizens, politicians, homemakers, students, teachers, editors, artists, businessmen—"as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven" (LD 49).

In other words, the exercise of one

office should contribute to the proper execution of other offices, to the praise and glory of our God. This should not surprise us, for we—also in the discharge of office and authority—are members one of another, serving one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21), to whom we owe a common allegiance in the varieties of our service (cf. I Cor. 12:5).

The principle of sphere sovereignty belongs to the lifeblood of the Christian Reformed Church. Its founding fathers, in the Secession of 1834, defied the decrees of the *state* in order to protect the freedom and integrity of the office of the *church*. Its first congregations settled in Holland, Michigan, and Pella, Iowa, to regain a church free from political intervention. Conversely, while initially its Christian schools were governed by consistories, it did not take long before the application of the principle of sphere sovereignty led to a synodical resolution in 1892 favoring free Christian schools, established by societies of parents and friends. In 1914, Article 21 of the Church Order was revised accordingly.

Moreover, nearly every major Reformed theologian has affirmed the principle of sphere sovereignty. It is not an outlandish notion surreptitiously imposed on us by some "ideologists" like Kuyper and Dooyeweerd. The balanced Bavinck based it firmly on the biblical doctrine of creational offices. Charles Hodge and Geerhardus Vos of Princeton Seminary, R. B. Kuiper and John Murray of Westminster Seminary, Louis Berkhof and Clarence Bouma of Calvin Seminary, H. Henry Meeter and Henry Van Til of Calvin College: they all accepted this principle as part and parcel of a Christian view of the social order.

Understandably so, for this principle, thoroughly rooted in Scripture, has given Reformed Christians a compass to steer them from the cliffs of individualism and totalitarianism—in both political and ecclesiastical shapes. The elimination of this principle will paralyze the backbone of the Reformed community. The revival of this principle in other denominations of the Father's vineyard can bind us together in our common calling to witness and work in this secular age. †

The Word of God

The written Word—The Bible is the Book of books. It is the Word of God in the words of men. The Scriptures are the key to life's meaning and secrets, the Book of Certainty that bears the very authority of God Himself. Believing in God and in His Son Jesus Christ, we believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God for life. The Scriptures reveal to us the truth about God, ourselves, and creation. With infallible authority they show us the way of salvation in Jesus Christ. We realize that we cannot go behind or beyond the Scriptures to test their authority. In fact, we confess in the Spirit that they are the final court of appeal, the first and last Word.

"By Scripture alone"—*sola Scriptura*—was a watchword of the Reformation. It must remain so for us. The Basis Article of the Constitution of the AACS continues in this reformational tradition:

"The supreme standard of the Association shall be the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, here confessed to be the Word of God in the sense of the historic creeds of the Protestant Reformation."

The Word for creation—Taking the Scriptures seriously as the Word of God written, we learn that the Word of God may not be limited to the Bible. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth For he spoke, and it came to be, he commanded, and it stood forth" (Ps. 33: 6-9). Peter assures the church that although many choose to ignore this fact, in truth the "same word" still upholds the creation today until the Day of Judgment. "They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the Word of God heavens existed long ago But by the same word the heavens and

earth that now exist have been stored up for fire . . ." (II Pet. 3:5-7). By His powerful Word, God called creation into existence and holds it in existence.

The Word is His claim and appeal to man and to the whole creation. In obedience to this Word, man and creation found their meaning and fulfillment. But sin spoiled the communion between God and man, and darkness descended. God in the greatness of His love reclaims the creation and renews the covenant through His Word.

The Word became flesh—In many and various ways God spoke of old by the prophets (Heb. 1). He gave mankind the Book of the Covenant, the Bible, the Written Word through which man once again could learn to walk the way of life. In the last days He has spoken to us by His Son (Heb. 1). The Word by which all things were made (John 1), the Word which is the focus of all Scripture (Luke 24: 27), that Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

The Son of God was incarnated, crucified, raised, and glorified for our salvation. In Jesus Christ, the Word of God (Rev. 19:13), all things hold together. For of him and through him and unto him are all things (Rom. 11: 36). He is the "beginning" of creation, the "head" of the church, and brings together in Himself the dynamic relation between creation and redemption. In Him the fullness dwells (Col. 1); He is the full revelation of the Word and the perfect fulfillment of the Word, the mediator of both creation and redemption. The Word is life and the life of man. To live "in Christ" is to live in the One in whom the universe is held together.

The unity of the Word—The scrip-

tural evidence is clear: the Word of God which creates, directs, and upholds the universe is the same Word redemptively published in the Scriptures and redemptively incarnated in Jesus Christ. The Belgic Confession (Articles 12 and 2) captures the intent of the biblical witness: "We believe that the Father by the Word, that is, by His Son, has created of nothing the heaven, the earth, and all creatures . . . We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word . . ." Report 44 (CRC Acts of Synod, 1972) puts it in these words: "Both in creation and in Scripture, and supremely in Christ, God has spoken with full divine authority."

Rather than indicating slippage from the firm ground of scriptural authority, acknowledgement that the Word of God in all its fullness includes more than the Bible signifies the utter seriousness in which biblical authority is confessed. If the Scriptures did not tell us that God's Word continues to uphold the creation till this day, who would or could believe it? "It is by faith that we understand that the world was created by the Word of God" (Heb. 11:3). Many Christians find it most difficult to take the Scriptures as infallible on this matter.

The Bible, our final norm—Some suggest that acceptance of the Word for creation contradicts *sola Scriptura*. It does no such thing. Just as *sola fide*—by faith alone—in emphasizing that man is saved only by faith does not mean that faith is to stand alone without works, so *sola Scriptura*—by Scripture alone—in emphasizing that no other human writing or tradition is the final norm for man does not mean that the Bible exhausts the Word of God.

Nevertheless, the Bible retains its indispensable first place in our lives as the final norm by which we must live. Only in Christ, according to the Scriptures, can we know God's will. The Scriptures are the "spectacles" (John Calvin) through which our eyes are opened to "read God's revelation in creation faithfully" (Report 44). At the same time, the Scriptures remain the final court of appeal to test



James H. Olthuis

what is seen. The Scriptures urge us to surrender our lives to the Lord and place before us the way of obedience. They unfold for mankind the vision of Christ's kingdom and the necessity of confessing His name to live in that kingdom.

The Scriptures lay the main lines of a confessional vision which is to guide our day-to-day activities. They tell us who we are (God's servants), where we are (in a creation in grip of His Word), where we are going (in Christ to the final perfection of His already dawning kingdom), and what our task is (to be obedient gardeners, agents of the reconciliation). Driven by this vision of the kingdom as both the Reign of God by His Word and the Realm where the Word is obeyed, the Body of Christ is called to work out its meaning in all details of its existence.

Overcoming the nature-grace dualism
—Here the importance of understanding the Scriptures as the Inscripturation of the Word comes into clear focus. They can no longer be conceived of as an extra, supplemental or additional word added to the realm of creation or nature. The Scriptures, as the redemptive republication and interpretation of the Word of creation, are completely in tune with this Word and are thus intrinsically relevant for life in the creation. Grace renews nature; it is not above, beyond, or beside nature.

Consequently, any charge of disunity or competition between the Scriptures and God's Word for the

world is nonsense. The unity of the Scriptures and the Word of God for creation means that in proclaiming redemption in Jesus Christ the Scriptures spell out God's plan for creation in human words, language that we can read and understand. The Word for marriage is an example. At creation God spoke His "Let-there-be" for marriage. But man-in-sin could no longer hear and do this Word. God in His mercy republished it in the Scriptures. "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). "You shall not commit adultery" (Exod. 20:14) puts the same Word in negative form. Christ shows us the way by pointing to the Word of marriage in the beginning (Matt. 19:4-6).



Arnold De Graaff

Since the Scriptures republish the Word for creation, they give us in Jesus Christ ready and true access to the world; they chart our voyages of discovery; they are the compass that gives direction. "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105). In urging us to live lives worthy of the gospel, they assure us that there is a Word of God for trees and birds, rocks and flowers, men and angels, marriage and state, school and church. God created everything, and it was good.

We are to work out the meaning of these words—the "Let-there-be's" of Genesis—for our lives. In this way we work out our salvation, revealed in Scripture and given in Jesus Christ, with fear and trembling, for it is the

Lord that is at work in us (Phil. 2:12, 13).

The Word for life—The cosmic scope of the Word of God is comforting and liberating for the church of Christ. Living the Christian life is more than Bible study and Sunday worship. Everywhere the Word surrounds us and invites obedience. Testing the will of God is no longer limited to a futile effort to turn the Bible into a computer with a detailed answer for every question from farming to sailing, from inflation to energy, from science to art. Instead, guided by the Scriptures and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we are called in the specifics of our tasks as marriage-partners, homemakers, teachers, farmers, statesmen, secretaries to make good our confession in terms of the creational words of God. We are liberated to know that offering up our bodies in service to the Lord is not mystic absorption into an ethereal, never-never land or pietistic escape from the big, bad world, but down-to-earth blood, sweat, and tears in the nitty-gritty of life. This conviction held high in the Reformed tradition was captured in Abraham Kuyper's confession: "There is not a single square inch of the entire universe of which Christ does not say, 'This is mine.'"

Searching out the Word of God that He speaks for all creatures, saved by the Word of God incarnate, led by the Word of God inscripturated, we pray for the presence of His Spirit that we may be faithful in our ministry among God's people. †



Albert Wolters

Biblical Principles for Education

Biblical principles for education—Most Christians will agree that education is an important area of human life. What they may not agree on, however, is how education is to be conceived and carried out. Differences may concern the objectives of the school, the nature of classroom discipline, and the kind of teaching methods used. In the midst of all such discussions stand the Scriptures. They provide us with a common basis that allows us to work out our differences without breaking the bond of faith. From the beginning of its history the AACCS has been concerned to help develop biblical insights in education.

Two biblical principles in particular stand out in their significance for education. First of all, many passages in the Bible proclaim what the *ultimate goal* of all nurture ought to be, whether at home, in the church, or in the school. Second, without prescribing a specific method of upbringing or teaching, the Bible also tells us *how* we must go about our nurturing. By giving us indications of the goal and the way to achieve the goal, the Lord makes it possible for us to work toward a deeper understanding of educational questions.

Love toward God and His commandments—The Scriptures clearly command parents and the Christian

community as a whole to nurture their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). In Deuteronomy 6:4-9 we read: "These words [the great commandment] which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them . . ." In His love and concern God did not instruct only the adults in the way of life, but through the grownups He wanted the children to be taught as well. Adults, through their own personal commitment, example, and explicit instruction are to lead children to surrender their hearts to God and follow His commandments in all activities. In Psalm 78 we find the same emphasis: "Things that we have heard and know, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation . . . so that they should set their hope in God, . . . [and] keep his commandments."

In Jesus Christ, God lays claim on our children; so great is His redemption. He does not only save our souls, the core of our existence, but He redeems our entire life in all its relationships, including our families and the upbringing of our children. Our children belong to the body of Christ; therefore, God desires that the mature

members of the body lead the immature ones along the way of life. With reference to all young or immature members of His body, Jesus said, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15). "Feed my lambs" because I have laid My hands upon them and now they are Mine. "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belong the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14; cf. 18:6). Through Christian parents, children are brought into a special relationship with God, as Paul in the context of marriage explains: "Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy," that is, dedicated to the Lord (I Cor. 7:14).

Thus God comes to us with a command that we are to obey. But in Jesus Christ we immediately understand that this command is, in fact, another expression of God's love. In Jesus Christ, God wants us to lay claim upon His salvation for our children. He gives us the commandment to discipline and instruct our children in the fear of His name, but it is a commandment with a promise: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

Personal surrender to God and love for His commandments is the basic content and the ultimate goal of all nurturing and instructing. The child's only calling in life is to serve God according to His will. This scriptural guideline for the upbringing of our children means that the knowledge we are to convey must be heart-knowledge, knowledge that fosters and builds discipleship. In the middle of daily life—where it counts—children must learn to confess Christ.

It is this biblical principle that we are to give concrete form in our day-to-day dealings with our children, at home, in church, and in school. Schoolteachers are particularly challenged by this guideline to continue to develop programs of learning that help the children to grow in the knowledge of the Lord. It is one thing to believe and to say that we need Christian education for our children, but it is quite another thing to teach the facts about the concrete details of daily life from a Christian perspective. Yet, through the ordinary things the children study from day to day, such as numbers,

stores, subways, weather, caterpillars, and so on, they are to be motivated to serve their Lord in every thing they do.

Christ-centered, teacher-directed, child-oriented—The second scriptural norm that stands out in its significance for education has reference to the *manner* in which we bring up our children and teach them. Not only the content of our teaching must be genuinely biblical but also the way in which we teach.

The Bible warns and guards against two evils with respect to the way we instruct: permissiveness and authoritarianism, to use contemporary terms. Many passages in Proverbs remind us that to let the child do as he pleases in life is utter foolishness and betrays a lack of love and concern for the child. "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" (Prov. 13:24; cf. 19:18; 22:15; 29:15; 17).

Children must come to know their Lord personally as they grow up. For this knowledge they are utterly dependent on adults. Someone must guide and teach them. Left to themselves, they would not find the way. To permit a child's life to be unstructured and undisciplined is lovelessness and stupidity. Just as the Lord disciplines adults, so adults are to correct children. "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:11, 12). Hebrews 12:5, 6 reminds us that this saying is an encouraging word, for God's correction comes through Jesus Christ and is always aimed at restoring the relationship between God and man—calling us back from the way of death to the way of life. And the manner in which God corrects us, seasoned sinners, is compared to a concerned father correcting a dearly loved child. In the same manner and with the same intention, adults are to care for, direct, and correct children.

Over against this clear call to guide and correct children stands the sorry record of foolish, neglectful, loveless, sinful parents. In passing it is good to notice that the Scriptures have more to say about disobedient parents than disobedient children. To give just a few examples: Isaac's sinful

favoritism becomes a stumblingblock to both Esau and to Jacob; Eli's permissiveness becomes the downfall of his sons; David's violence and immorality has a corrupting influence on his children; Solomon's marriages with pagan women sets the pattern for his descendants. Indeed, it is the sins of the fathers that are visited upon the children, so much so that the exiles in Babylon say to Ezekiel: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"; that is, our fathers have sinned and now there is no hope for us (Ezek. 18:1, 2).

In view of this parental record it is not surprising that Paul felt urged to add a phrase to the fifth commandment. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Or, as Paul says in Colossians 3:21: "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged." Parents must indeed lead their children to love God and His commandments, but they must do so in a way that does not make their children despair. They must not be harsh or arbitrary.

The Scriptures warn us against both permissiveness and authoritarianism. Both evils have the same root. In the one the child does what he pleases, in the other the parents are always right; in the one the child is the final norm, and in the other the adult. Both ways are arbitrary and make man the final authority. Nurturing that is obedient to the Scriptures, however, will always acknowledge and appeal to God and His will. This third dimension delivers the pedagogical situation from all arbitrariness. Parents cannot do as they please and neither can children. Adults are commanded to teach love for God and His will, and children are called to obey and surrender to the instruction they receive. Neither adults nor children but God's Word is the norm.

Many discussions about discipline fail because they do not sufficiently take into account this third dimension. Over against a permissive, pleasure-seeking, materialistic society we should not appeal to "authority," "discipline," or "law and order" *as such*, but rather to true nurture that submits adults and children to God's law—to His way of life. Obedience to God's way for

life always requires a personal relationship to Him and a loving surrender to His will. This surrender must come from the heart. Thus, the child himself must do it. Genuine forming, therefore, will always lead to self-forming, to self-discipline.

This second Biblical principle presents teachers with an equally challenging task. For the rejection of both permissiveness and authoritarianism does not imply some kind of happy medium in our approach to teaching; rather, it commits us to a *third alternative*. If through our teaching we are to foster love toward God and His commandments, the children must have the *freedom* and the *responsibility* to accept and follow the instruction they are given. Our classrooms must be organized, therefore, in such a way that there is genuine guidance and a truly free and open atmosphere to struggle with the Truth and to come to a personally acquired understanding of God's will.

Regrettably, we have only the behavioristic, managerial model and the freedom-school model to "guide" us in the concrete working out of this second biblical norm. The first model involves a mechanical conditioning and manipulation of the child, while the second model makes the child's freedom the ultimate norm. Neither model can be a pattern for our Christian schools. Rather, the biblical principle of loving self-surrender challenges us to work out a third, alternative way of organizing our schools.

To teachers and parents who are interested in finding out more about how these two principles have been worked out in greater detail, we recommend the curriculum guide, *Joy in Learning*, which is published by The Curriculum Development Center (229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario). This book describes an initial model for an alternative organization of the classroom. The purpose of this unique guide is to help children attain the goal of heart-knowledge and discipleship.

If we can accept and trust each other in our commitment to these scriptural principles, we should not find it difficult communally to develop both radically Christian programs of learning for our children and classroom settings in which they can freely take to heart what is taught. †

Faith, World and Life View, and Philosophy

Faith, world and life view, and philosophy—Philadelphia is a beautiful name because it means city of brotherly love. There are many words with *phil*, meaning love, lovely, or loving in them. For example, philanthropist (person who has love for mankind), philodendron (a lovely tree), and philatelist (a person who likes postage stamps). And so the word philosophy means love of wisdom. Taking the word in its basic meaning, and remembering that “the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord,” we can immediately see that all Christians should love wisdom, or, “philosophy” in this basic sense. When the apostle Paul warns against philosophy, he is not warning against love of wisdom. He says, “See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, *according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe*, and not according to Christ.” (Col. 2:8). He means, stay away from that false wisdom which does not begin with the fear of the Lord, which does not begin with a heart commitment in Christ.

Faith—Much confusion exists about the three terms: faith, world and life view, and philosophy. True faith is surrender and commitment to Jesus Christ which the Holy Spirit works in our hearts. This faith is the foundation and hope of our life. Faith involves an acceptance of fundamental answers to life's basic questions before all other questions come into the picture. A Christian cannot look to science for faith, or to science to prove that his particular faith is correct. If he did, he would place a prior faith in science, *believe* in science first. God proclaims that there are no other gods beside Him; we may put our trust

in Him alone.

World and life view—World and life view is a unified confession of what life is all about. It is based on faith. Every Christian has a world and life view in which he accepts by faith that God created the heavens and the earth, keeps everything in order and working according to His plan and will, and that God accepts the redeemed sinner again, through Christ, as a new creature who has a place and task in God's creation. Thus, in a world and life view, faith in God as Creator, Redeemer, and Lord is related to creation, history and man's task in the unfolding of creation.

Even within one basic faith, however, there may be different world and life views. For example, within Christianity, the Calvinist, Reformed world view exists alongside the Lutheran, Anabaptist, Roman Catholic conceptions. The key question is whether one's world and life view is in accordance with the Bible. And even within the basic unity of the Reformed view, there are different emphases when it comes to working it out in daily life.

Many of our North American neighbors have a world and life view in which they ignore God and live for sports, pleasures of the moment, escape, material wealth, comfort, and leisure. Everyone has a world and life view: some may have it more clearly worked out than others, but no one can do without a basic confession about life. A person who walks looks where he is going. He has a view of life. Walk of life and view of life are an unbreakable unity; a wrong view of life results in a wrong walk of life.

Philosophy—In its modern meaning

philosophy puts into an orderly thought system at an advanced, scientific level what a world and life view expresses in an easier, more general and less defined way.

The modern scientist needs philosophy, since philosophy deals with the relationship of one science to another, and all the sciences to daily life. In North America's industrial culture, many areas of life depend on scientists and specialists. In a very complex society, the scientist is becoming more and more predominant. As each person concentrates in a smaller and smaller specialty, he needs, more than ever before, a framework, an overview that helps him see his work in relationship to that done by hundreds or thousands of others. This is true for chemical, agricultural, and medical researchers. It's no less true for psychiatrists, teachers, lawyers, mathematicians, and archaeologists. Anyone who does theoretical work is a scientist in some sense. Philosophy forms the framework, the unity for the special sciences just as the world and life view forms the framework and unity for daily life and for philosophy itself.

A baby can drink and learn to walk and talk without a conscious world and life view, but as he grows into a mature person, he will develop such a view and know the reason and purpose for his existence. That's the importance of Christian schools: to teach a Christian world and life view, to teach how everything hangs together in dependence upon God. So also a chemist can do scientific experiments with plastics without a philosophy, but if he wants to know how his scientific work relates to other scientific work, how a discovery is to be implemented to serve mankind and

God, then he must have some kind of philosophy.

Interrelations—Let's use an illustration in which we use each of the terms discussed so far: faith, world and life view, science and philosophy. A family looks at a home and wishes to buy it. They have a world and life view, based on their faith, which leads them to choose this house as the most responsible way to meet the need for shelter in God's Kingdom. When they have moved in, they experience the home in many and various ways as they eat and sleep there, as it is part of a neighborhood, as it is far from or near to work, church, stores and school, as it has a certain style and maintenance needs. They experience the home as a unity that pulls things together like a world and life view.

The specialists that built the house such as the bricklayers, framers, carpenters, plasterers, electricians, plumbers, and painters each had an important part in the house-building process, and each had an idea of what he was doing because he could see the relationship of his work to the finished product. These people are like the scientists who perform important functions in our culture and society. But as the architect and designer and their plans gave the house project unity and kept all the various tradesmen and specialists working harmoniously toward a common goal, so it is the philosopher and philosophy which give a systematic and unifying explanation and direction to the theoretic work of the scientist. At the same time, as it is people with housing needs and views as to how to meet these needs who commission architects and designers, so again the philos-

opher works out a certain world and life view into a theoretic system.

To be a laborer, housewife, consistency member, father or mother, music lover or tennis player, a person needs and has a world and life view expressing his faith, but he does not need a philosophy. On the other hand, the political theorist, economist, and research scientist, have a world and life view but for their specialty *also* need a unifying philosophy. These people deal with the *theory* of the state, of economics, of atomic molecular structure. Two questions are crucial at this point. *Do* these people *have* a philosophy, and secondly, is it in harmony with their world and life view, their faith and the Scriptures?

Needed: A Christian philosophy—University education generally is so specialist oriented, or so chopped up into different courses without relationship, that many graduates do not have a clear philosophy, or have an eclectic one with various pieces gained from different professors who have opposing philosophies. (It's a bit like taking four blue-prints and taking a quarter of each and sticking them together to build a house.) Furthermore, there are so many anti-Christian philosophies and theories in North America, that many Christians who have a Christian world and life view end up with an unchristian philosophy, often not even realizing that it has happened. Just as Christian schools are to teach a Christian world and life view, so our Christian colleges and universities must teach a Christian philosophy to all who work at the scientific level.

Nowhere is there a finished, well rounded generally accepted Christian philosophy. But we do think that the

kind of thinking done in AACCS circles gives evidence of a sincere and thorough attempt at philosophizing in a Biblical manner. At the Institute for Christian Studies we have found the Christian philosophy developed by Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven so useful that we desire to test, rework, and integrate it with other Christian philosophical traditions. And to many it has proven to be a useful instrument in integrating the various subject areas as well as bringing science closer to life.

You have probably realized by now that the meaning of philosophy of the last few hundred years differs from that used by St. Paul in the New Testament. Paul's use of philosophy came closer to what we now call world and life view. He urged, follow the world and life view that begins with the fear and love of God, with faith in God. In the twentieth century, with the development of science over the last several hundred years, people whose calling in life presupposes scientific insight also need, besides faith and a world and life view, a third element, a philosophy. Mind you, no one needs a Christian philosophy for salvation, but for a Christian in scientific work, a Christian philosophy is important in helping to produce works pleasing to the Lord. So there is great need in our complex society to encourage Christian scholars and students to continue in developing an integral Christian philosophy founded in God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ. For indeed, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." (Prov. 1:7)

†

ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP

PREAMBLE

In humble awareness of our dependence upon the Triune God, Who called all things into being to His own glory and proclaimed to men, after they had transgressed His Law, His forgiving love, which was revealed to us fully in the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ, we do, out of gratitude for His undeserved favour and in conformity with His requirement that we consecrate ourselves and all things to Him, establish in accordance with the principles and provisions herein set forth, an association for the promotion of scripturally directed higher learning. To this end we beseech of Him that He graciously grant us both now and in the future men equipped for our task with special gifts of heart and mind together with the means to enable them to do this work, and that He always bless our association to His honour and to the salvation of His people, particularly in Canada and the United States of America, in order that they may be a blessing to both lands and all their inhabitants.

NAME

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP

PURPOSE

The purpose of the association shall be to undertake or promote whatever activities it shall deem conducive to the development of scripturally directed learning and scholarly enterprise, and particularly to establish, control and develop a Christian university, and in these ways to equip men and women to bring the Word of God in all its power to bear upon the whole of life.

BASIS

The supreme standard of the association shall be the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, here confessed to be the Word of God in the sense of the historic creeds of the Protestant Reformation.

EDUCATIONAL CREED

Believing that Scripture reveals certain basic principles intensely relevant to education, we confess that:

LIFE: That human life in its entirety is religion. Consequently, scholarly study unfolds itself as service either of the one true God or of an idol.

SCRIPTURE: That Scripture, the Word of God written, in instructing us of God, ourselves, and the structure of creation, is that integral and active divine Word or Power by which God, through His Spirit, attaches us to and enlightens us in the Truth, which is Christ.

CHRIST: That the Christ of the Scriptures, the Word of God Incarnate, is the Redeemer and Renewer of our life in its entirety and therefore also of our theoretical thought.

REALITY: That the essence or heart of all created reality is the covenantal communion of man with God in Christ.

KNOWLEDGE: That true knowledge is made possible by true religion and arises from the knowing activity of the human heart enlightened through the Word of God by the Holy Spirit. Thus religion plays its decisive ordering role in the understanding of our everyday experience and our theoretical pursuits.

SCHOLARSHIP: (a) That the diligent pursuit of theoretical thought in a community of scholars is essential to the obedient and thankful response of God's people to the cultural mandate. The task of the scholar is to give a scientific account of the structure of creation and thereby to promote a more effective ordering of the everyday experience of the entire community.

(b) That because of God's gracious preservation of creation after the fall, men who reject the Word of God as the ordering principle of life provide many valuable insights into the common structure of reality; nevertheless, the central religious antithesis of direction in life remains. We therefore reject the possibility of the synthesis of scripturally directed thought with any other system of thought.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM: The scholarly pursuits are to be undertaken in the God-given freedom of a complete and voluntary submission to the Word of God and the divine laws that govern human life. The responsible freedom of the scholar must be protected against any constraint or domination of church, state, industry, or other societal structure.

SUMMARY: That all scholarship pursued in faithful obedience to the divine mandate will heed the normative direction of God's Word, will acknowledge His Law to which creation in all its spheres is subject, and will bow before Christ's Kingship over all scientific work.

If you feel the teaching of the Bible coming through these writings, and agree that Christian work at the university level is very important, we very heartily invite you to share both the work and the benefits of the A.A.C.S. Please return this form to let us know how you wish to relate to us.

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