

WHAT GEOGRAPHY FOR THE COVENANT CHILD IS

by Beverly B. Hoekstra

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Geography is a study of spacial patterns in creation, the Heavens and the Earth, the product of the hand of God, a work beheld as being very good in the eyes of the perfect, all-knowing, all-seeing Artificer. Although the excellency of that work has been marred by sin, the Heavens still declare the glory of God and His righteousness (Psalm 19:1 and 50:6), and the earth, His handiwork. We, who not only dwell on the Earth under the Heavens but who shall inherit the Earth, certainly desire a study of the spacial phenomena of our temporal home for ourselves and our children.

In geography we study arrangements and interrelationships of people and places and other entities, whether great or small. Considering arrangements of situation, the surface of the Earth as a whole could be studied for placement patterns, while on the other hand it may be the frequency of particular things on the Earth, such as silicon or aluminum, very common items, or it may be a rather rare item, such as diamonds. It could be general, such as the placement pattern of all people on Earth, then again, it could be a very specific placement pattern, such as the placement pattern of Protestant Reformed people. It could be the distribution of all ant hills, then again, it could be

the distribution of a very select group of ant hills, such as that of the fire ant. We could study comparatively the distribution pattern of *The Chicago Tribune* with the pattern of *The Doon Press*. It may be the pattern of place and density of cancer patients in 1975 in the United States. It could be the number of people eaten by bears in 1974 in Montana. These are examples of parts or components of the one plan of God in the Earth even though the involved individuals of concern may not be aware of this. In this apparent human chaos there is an order. Among them, there may be children of God, struggling.

Dealing with interrelationships, one example will do. Let us use the example of a Protestant Reformed man who makes a living by working in Factory X. On Sunday morning he will arise and array himself in cloak and ornaments that have come from many different locations, and if there is the possibility that his wife sews, the materials are likely to have come from a number of places. Again, if the wife should even spin her own thread, one can still consider the place or places where the cotton or wool came from, and in the case of a modern man-made fabric, what the components are and where they came from. Where was the cotton field? Who handled the cotton since? Where did the sheep or alpaca live? Just one place? Where? Many places? Where were these places? Back to the man. He ate breakfast. Where did his food come from? How many terminals did some items have to change routes to get to his house? Where were these terminals? Maybe his wife bakes. Where did the flour come

from? Where did the sugar come from? How? Who all were employed in the growing of the crop? the reaping? the refining? the shipping? This man also reads the Bible. What factory bound it? Where was it last translated? When was it last translated? He has a car. Where did it come from? Where did the materials come from? Who was employed in the making and shipping of it? This man goes to church. What route does he take? Is it always the same one? How far is it? How many turns does he make? How far does he go before he makes a turn? How about the roads he rides on? What were they made of? Where did those materials originate? Who made them? What kind of weather was it? Cold? Hot? What were the road conditions? Dry? Wet? Slippery? The man arrives at church. Where does he park? Where do all the people in church come from? What was the pattern of their journey-to-church? Who is the minister? Where is he from? Just one place? From many? What places were they? Does his background influence him? If so, How? Where are there other Protestant Reformed Churches? Church is over. Do all the people of this church take the same route back home again? Maybe our man goes visiting. Does this change his route? We will skip over to Monday morning. This man dresses himself in overalls with the intention of going to Factory X. Where did these clothes come from? We again could ask the same questions that we asked about his Sunday apparel and more, but we will not use more space. He goes to work. Does he use the car? Is it the same car? What direction is work? How far is it? Does he take the car all of the way, or does he use another means of transportation also? If so, what is it? How far? Why does he do this? How far does he have to walk in addition? Is this method of going to work the shortest? the fastest? the most entertaining? Is it the same everyday? He arrives at work. What

is the factory like? What do they make there? Where do the materials come from? Where does the finished product go? Is there a small or large distribution area? Where is this area? Where do the people come from who work here? Why do they work here? All possibilities were not sifted but would be similar anyway. However, we can conclude that the average man of 1976 is involved in many interrelationships and is the recipient of many items that have caused many other interactions or interrelationships.

If all the answers to the above questions were found, what would it all mean? Would we then become the recipients of many little tidbits of knowledge? Perhaps, but more than just that. There were several organizations and kinds of organizations involved in what may have appeared as a chaos of unrelated questions. We will mention a few of them for examples. First, there was the sequence of events that provided this man with the needs and luxuries that he had. God uses many means to give to His people their daily needs, such as food and clothing and the preaching of the Word, as well as much luxury in many cases. How can we ever thank Him sufficiently for them? We cannot, but He draws forth praise and thanksgiving to Himself to His Own Magnificent purpose. Second, there were the clothing, car, road, and church edifice, to mention a few. These are consolidated groupings of elements to make one new complete entity. Third, there was the person or group of persons who were authorized to employ people in the factory. God has prepared and uses this type of a place for many people to work to earn money for supporting themselves, supporting the church, and giving alms. Fourth, there was a systematized plan of roads of which the man used a select few. If we would think here of how everyone came to church, we might have another pattern, perhaps of a wagon

wheel, or maybe half of one, or maybe even three-quarters or one-quarter of one, or maybe even the outline of a tulip. Fifth, there was the instituted group of persons who made up the one whole congregation of the militant Church in that particular place of which each believing person would be a pilgrim being prepared for his everlasting home. Sixth, there was also the predictive aspect in the life of the man himself. He would possess not only an outward organization of life, but also an inward love for truth which is a spiritual organization of experiences and events, some of which will have overt connotations, such as the use of the Bible and the Church institute and edifice. Thus many intricacies have made up one complete whole in but a few scattered moments in the life of one individual. It would remind one of many stones fitted together to make one beautiful structure. In the light of all this, one can appreciate all the more the fact that the Apostle Paul described the household of God as "the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. Ephesians 2:19, 21."

The covenant child must be brought to see that many patterns, with pattern within pattern, and organization within organization, of many items and means contribute to the life of one person. He must also be brought to know what the patterns and organizations are and how they interrelate. Then in a special way he must understand that the patterns sometimes contribute to the life of one child of God and that he may be one of them. Following that, he must understand that many children of God pass through this world with many similar experiences. In it God will refine them to make them fit objects for glory.

Geography is a subject that would appear in the curriculum of most schools that offer courses in the sciences and the humanities. It is usually given a place in the curriculum among the social sciences,

but sometimes it is given a name among the humanities. There are also those who ignore it altogether. Shame on them!

As a science, geography is studied in detail by using a particular method called the scientific method appropriate especially for the cumulation of select quantitative data. This means that a problem is stated, an attempt is made to solve the problem by searching out related facts through observation, appropriate interviews, reading related materials, and in some appropriate cases testing by using related constants and variables, and a conclusion is drawn. Finally, in the more mature studies, recommendations are prescribed to similar phenomena that might be in the process of locating if it be an entity resulting from the imprint of man on the scene of creation.

Since science is a matter of knowing, then, the best methods and the best sources of information must be searched out to find the answer for a particular problem. This means, then, that the open mind, the mind that is open to Scripture, for that after all is the only open mind contrary to popular thought, will in appropriate instances explore the infallible data recorded in Holy Writ first. This data cannot be fairly overthrown and need no human verification. God in all His wisdom does not give to man information that the latter need verify for truth. One example will suffice. There are so-called modern geologists, brothers and assistants to geographers, who wish to prove the age of the Earth by testing elements. The problem is that the workers lack the wisdom to go to the proper source at the proper time, and therefore, their methods can properly be called unscientific.

Science is to know, and in a sense we can know many things but only through the use of the proper tools at the proper time. In this way we portray the gift of wisdom that God has imparted to us. Who can be more scientific than those to whom

God has imparted the gift of wisdom to use His creatures in the right way? Let us pray for that wisdom and for the grace to always follow the way of wisdom.

The name of geography among the humanities dates back to its history in classical Greece, and certainly it is most important in the realm of human relations and interrelationships, and holds within itself connotations of real qualitative aesthetic values. Did not God Himself upon His completion of the universe behold the work of His hands as being very Good? Is it not the home of man, the highest creature, the king in creation? More importantly, for us, is it not the temporal home of His chosen, the redeemed of the earth? Do not all human relationships take place in the Earth under the Heavens? More importantly for us, was it not the temporal dwelling of The Chosen One, the Redeemer of His chosen and of the earth? Is it not the place where the world as chaff serves the Church, the wheat? To ask these questions is to answer them. The earth is also a mammoth source of art and beauty, the like which no creature can compare. It is the work of The Creator. So great is this Work of Art that man will spend millions of dollars yearly to behold this work, while many chosen are even able to see in part a part of the Work of Art.

It does not make much difference in

which division of learning we place geography. Since it would be more usual for a Christian science department to include an aesthetic view than for a Christian humanity department to be scientific, perhaps the science department might be the better place. However, for an adequate study, both the scientific and the human and aesthetic views are of primary importance and must properly be incorporated into one complete subject for the covenant child.

The earth, the world, the cosmos is an entity which exists closest to man physically, but which often has been ignored by man intellectually. May we not be named among them. We must know God in His work of creation. We must know God in His work of preservation, His preservation of things, and also His preservation of His Church. We must know God in His work of redemption. It will better help us to look forward to the Advent of Recreation when there will be no more contamination and unrighteousness under Heaven.

The teaching of geography, then, is mandatory at all academic levels. It is expedient that the covenant young person in his pilgrimage to his everlasting Home be better equipped to better know God and the ways of God in Creation. Who can better know God than those to whom the riches of His heritage are bestowed?

P O T P O U R R I

“What Do We Gotta Learn This For?”

by Mr. Peter Vander Schaaf

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