

Volume 55, No. 13 • June 23, 2006

*Our King has  
Come*

*Towards a  
Common  
Songbook*

*The Unity of  
Academic and  
Spiritual  
Training in  
Reformed  
Education*



*Azusa Street Revival*



Dr. A.J. de Visser is professor of Diaconiology and Ecclesiology at The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario  
[ajdevisser@canrc.org](mailto:ajdevisser@canrc.org)

# Azusa Street

*We need to resist claims of a “fullness” that surpasses the saving and sanctifying work of Christ*

## Azusa Street!

If that name means nothing to you, you are probably not a Pentecostal Christian. If you were one, you would know that this name symbolizes the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, a hundred years ago.

Azusa Street is a street in downtown Los Angeles, in an area that is nowadays called "Little Tokyo" because of the large Japanese community that lives there. This is the place where a remarkable revival took place in 1906.

In April this year thousands of Pentecostal Christians celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Azusa Street revival with a huge manifestation at the place where it all started. According to the *Los Angeles Times*<sup>1</sup> about 30,000 Pentecostal Christians got together for a week for worship and celebration. The report mentions that there was praying, singing, and dancing until midnight, when the participants were anointed with "special oil from Jerusalem." On the podium they had well-known Pentecostal preachers such as Kenneth Copeland, T.D. Jakes, Benny Hinn, and Creflo Dollar.<sup>2</sup>

## *Why does this movement appear to be so attractive to many people?*

So what happened in Los Angeles in 1906? In that year a black Holiness preacher with the name of William J. Seymour came to Los Angeles with the message that baptism of the Holy Spirit should be expected among those who have been converted. The special sign to accompany baptism with the Spirit, he said, would be speaking in other languages.

During a prayer meeting in a private home where Seymour was speaking, people began to speak and

sing in tongues. Within a few days the small group had grown so large that the house became too small. A larger accommodation was found at 312 Azusa Street, an old church building that had been abandoned by the Methodist church.

The Azusa Street revival caught the attention of the outside world when journalists started to visit the meetings and reported about it in local newspapers. People flocked to the building to find out what happened there. Both black and white people visited the congregation and many of them spoke in tongues themselves. The *Los Angeles Herald* reported: "There were all ages, sexes, colors, nationalities and previous conditions of servitude. The rambling old barn was filled and the rafters were so low that it was necessary to stick one's nose under the benches to get a breath of air."<sup>3</sup>

## Tongues

Starting in April 1906, the Azusa Street revival lasted for almost three years. During these years revival meetings ran almost continuously. What made Azusa Street different from other revival meetings was that there was not only talk about sin and salvation, but also the experience of spiritual gifts that are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12: tongues, interpretations of tongues, and prophecies. There were claims that some had seen visions and that others were able to speak freely in foreign languages.

Those who took part in the movement believed that it was a second Pentecost and that this was the beginning of a new movement to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the earth. Many of those who had visited the Azusa Street Mission took the "fire" with them. The movement spread across North America and soon to other continents as well.

In this way Azusa Street was the beginning of a century of Pentecostalism. The Azusa Street website



claims: "Today, over half a billion Pentecostal and Charismatic believers throughout the world are a testimony of the pivotal impact that the Azusa Street meetings had on Christianity."

Things did not go well with the Azusa Street congregation as such. There were struggles and divisions among the leadership. Soon after the remarkable beginnings in 1906 the group fell apart and different congregations were formed. The racial harmony that prevailed in the beginning did not last long either. There were tensions, not only between blacks and whites, but also between blacks and Mexicans.

Another disappointment was the fact that the gift of "speaking in tongues" was not the same as "speaking foreign languages." Initially, the expectation was that the Spirit had given the gift of speaking foreign languages as a way to speed up mission work around the globe. However, the missionaries who went from Azusa Street to foreign countries discovered that they were unable to speak local native languages.

A hundred years after the original Azusa Street revival, one thing cannot be denied: The growth of the Pentecostal movement during the last century has been phenomenal. The Pentecostal movement has spread across the globe with such force that it has become the second largest group within Christianity (after the Roman Catholic Church).

During the last fifty years the Pentecostal movement has started to exert considerable influence on mainline churches. Members of established churches became "charismatic" in their views, and since they stayed where they were, many churches today (from Roman Catholic and Anglican to Methodist and Baptist) have charismatic wings.

Even Reformed churches are not immune to the influence of the Pentecostal movement – maybe not in its extreme forms such as the Signs and Wonders movement, but definitely in its moderate forms. To mention an example, we hear and read that our sister churches in The Netherlands are confronted with the fact that many of its members feel attracted to the New Wine movement with its emphasis on "Spirit-filled life and ministry."<sup>4</sup>

## Heresies

From a Reformed perspective, the 100th anniversary of the Pentecostal movement causes us to do some reflection, not only on the heresies that are found in the Pentecostal movement, but also on the

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

*Editor: J.Visscher; Copy Manager: Laura Veenendaal  
Coeditors: R.Aasman, W.B. Slomp, Cl. Stam, C.Van Dam*

### ADDRESS FOR COPY MANAGER:

*Clarion, 57 Oakridge Drive South, St.Albert, AB T8N 7H2  
E-Mail: [veenendaal@shaw.ca](mailto:veenendaal@shaw.ca)*

### ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

*CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.  
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5  
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202  
Email: [clarion@premierprinting.ca](mailto:clarion@premierprinting.ca)*

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:  
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5

	Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada*	\$46.00*	\$ 75.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds		\$55.00 \$ 70.00
International		\$82.00 \$120.00

\*Including 7% GST – No. 890967359RT

Advertisements: \$14.00 per column inch

Full Colour Display Advertisements: \$20.00 per column inch

We reserve the right to refuse ads.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

### Cancellation Agreement

Unless a written subscription cancellation is received we assume you wish to continue to subscribe. You will be invoiced prior to the subscription renewal date. Agreement No. 40063293; PAP Registration No. 9907; ISSN 0383-0438

### Copyright © Premier Printing Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part may be reproduced in any manner without permission in writing from the publisher, except brief quotations used in connection with a review in a magazine or newspaper.

Useful Link: [www.canrc.org](http://www.canrc.org)

## IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial – Azusa Street	306
— A.J. de Visser .....	306
Treasures, New and Old – Our King has Come	309
— W.L. Bredenhof .....	309
A Lesson in History: The Baptism of '44 (3)	310
— C. Bouwman .....	310
Towards a Common Songbook (1).....	312
Ray of Sunshine — C. Gelms and E. Nordeman.....	314
Education Matters – The Unity of Academic and Spiritual Training in Reformed Education	315
— R. Faber .....	315
Press Releases – Theological Education Committees of the URCNA and CanRC, Classis Manitoba, Classis Alberta (contracta) .....	319

question why this movement appears to be so attractive to many people, even to people who have been raised in the Reformed tradition.

From a theological perspective we cannot do otherwise than to distance ourselves from the Pentecostal movement because of its inherent heresies. The core doctrine of the Pentecostal movement is the idea that there are two kinds of faith: a basic level and an advanced level. At the basic level a person is saved from sins through the work of Christ. That is appreciated, of course, but it is not seen as the "fullness" of Christian life. The fullness is only experienced at the "advanced" level: that is when a person is baptized with the Holy Spirit, with accompanying signs such as speaking in tongues and prophecy (although not all Pentecostals emphasize speaking in tongues).

## *We need the Holy Spirit to work powerfully among us*

As a result of this view, Pentecostals tend to look down upon "lower level" believers with a kind of pious haughtiness. If you are a traditional kind of Reformed believer, they will likely tell you that you have made a good start but you "have not found fullness yet" and they would encourage you to "open up yourself" to the power of the Spirit.

From a biblical perspective we need to resist claims of a "fullness" that surpasses the saving and sanctifying work of Christ. Already the Apostle Paul had to struggle against "fullness preachers," as his letter to the Colossians shows. The one thing he emphasizes in that letter is: "You have been given fullness in Christ!" (Col 2:10) Paul warned against any person who claims to be on a higher spiritual level, while in fact his "unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions" (Col 2:18).

### **Self-examination**

Having said this, as believers and as churches we always need to be prepared to examine ourselves, because we confess that in this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of the new Christian obedience (HC, LD 44). In the New Testament we see

that already some of the first Christian congregations needed to be admonished because they were lukewarm and lacked the fruit of the Spirit.

Although the Scriptures do not teach that there are two distinct levels of faith, they do teach that we need to become more mature and "grow up into Christ" (Eph 4:15). We are called to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). The Apostle Paul encourages the churches to live a life by the Spirit. He speaks about gifts of the Spirit that are to be used for the edification of the church (1 Cor 12, 14) and he highlights the fruit of the Spirit in our lives: joy, patience, kindness, and so forth (Gal 5:22). The church of Jesus Christ is a church that lives a life by the Spirit.

If the church loses these fundamental characteristics, and if the work of the Spirit is being resisted (Eph 4:30), it is to be expected that some members feel uncomfortable and start to seek the spiritual renewal of the church. If that leads to confrontation and estrangement within the church, there is a real danger that these members could drift towards charismatic groups, for the simple reason that there appears to be more spiritual life there. I'm afraid that this has happened all too often in the past.

It is clear, therefore, that the church should stand firm and resist the onslaught of the Pentecostal movement. At the same time, the church should examine itself and see whether we have not resisted the work of the Holy Spirit.

If there is one thing that is obvious after witnessing 100 years of Pentecostalism, it is that we need the Holy Spirit to work powerfully among us. The gifts we need urgently are not the spectacular ones such as speaking in tongues, but rather the edifying and peace-bringing ones, such as discernment, wisdom, and love.

<sup>1</sup> "Pentecostal Enthusiasm Is Spreading," Los Angeles Times, April 28, 2006

<sup>2</sup> Official website of the Azusa Street Centennial: [www.azusastreet100.net](http://www.azusastreet100.net)

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. in his book *The Azusa Street Mission & Revival. The Birth of the Global Pentecostal Movement*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), p. 1. (This book is a good resource on the Azusa Street revival.)

<sup>4</sup> For Dutch discussions about "New Wine" see *Nederlands Dagblad*, [www.nd.nl](http://www.nd.nl), in the Dossier section.



Rev. W. L. Bredenhof is co-pastor of the Canadian Reformed Church at Langley, British Columbia [wbredenhof@canrc.org](mailto:wbredenhof@canrc.org)

# Our King has Come



MATTHEW 13:52

*“Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel!*

*Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem!*

*The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm.*

Zephaniah 3:14, 15

We often think of kings as being powerful people and rightly so. Though not so much today anymore, kings, queens, and other royalty once meaningfully ruled over much of the world. Today, our Queen has a role that is nothing more than symbolic. For all practical purposes, she is a figurehead. Nevertheless, we still hold her in high esteem as an authority placed in her position by God. Such esteem for royalty is not to be taken for granted. After all, the role and position of monarchies is rapidly diminishing throughout the world. People in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and other Commonwealth countries also question the viability of the monarchy if it has nothing more than a symbolic role. The pragmatists among us wonder: what is the point of spending tax dollars on this institution? The existence of royalty is thus questioned and threatened.

Zephaniah 3 speaks prophetically about a King who has not only his royalty questioned today, but even his very continuing existence. Among its first readers (living in the time of King Josiah, 640-609 BC), it may have been understood as something in the near future. Zephaniah prophesied about a coming judgment, but also about a time of transformation and renewal. As readers living in the New Testament era, we read these words and understand something of the depth of what God is revealing here. Through faith we know a King

of Israel, a royal leader of God's people. We know that our King is not one of fairy tale castles. Rather, we are confident that He is real and ever present. Our King cares deeply for us living in recognition of his rule; in fact, He cares so much for these subjects that He even laid down his life for them.

King Christian X of Denmark was a remarkable man about whom many stories have been told – some of them apocryphal, some of them true. He was king during the Nazi occupation of Denmark in the Second World War. Although the Nazis were in control, the king stayed in Denmark and even had some freedoms. On occasion, he would drive through Copenhagen. Once while doing this he noticed a Nazi Swastika flag flying over one of the Danish government buildings. This outraged the king because it contravened the terms set upon Denmark when it surrendered. The king stopped and directed the German officer in front of the building to take down the flag. The Nazi officer refused because he'd been given orders to put it up and leave it up. The king then replied that he would send one of his own soldiers to do it. The officer countered that the soldier would be shot dead. The king then boldly retorted that he would then be that soldier and he went and took down the flag himself.

I haven't been able to find out for sure if that story is true, but even if it's not true, it shows what people thought that King Christian X would

have done. In some ways, the actions of the Danish king and what Christ did are similar. While he did not die in the place of his subjects, he was willing to do so. That's a remarkable man. There are probably very few earthly monarchs who would lay down their lives for their subjects. Yet, this is the very thing that Christ has done for us. Our King came with grace and has taken away the punishment we deserved. Without King Jesus, we would surely be lost – it's no wonder then that Zephaniah has such high words of prophetic praise and exultation!

Our King made the ultimate sacrifice for us. He emptied Himself completely of all the trappings of royalty. In many ways, the Prince became a pauper. But after his humiliation also came his exaltation. He was lifted on high and now sits at the right hand of God. Today, our King is with us. Perhaps not yet in the physical sense, but He is certainly with us in a spiritual way. Because we have a King who knows our earthly condition, we look to Him as our advocate in heaven. He constantly intercedes for us and has blotted out all our sins and weaknesses. Now, we wait for his return. We wait for the ultimate and final fulfillment of Zephaniah's prophecy – a time when every knee will bow and every tongue will acknowledge his royal rule. Surely the day is coming when our King will be with us in the deepest and richest way possible! Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!



Rev. C. Bouwman is minister  
of the Canadian Reformed  
Church at Yarrow,  
British Columbia  
[cbouwman@canrc.org](mailto:cbouwman@canrc.org)

# A Lesson in History: The Baptism of '44 (Part 3 of 3)

*During the war the fathers had to confront very directly and personally the sensitive question about their children's identity. Did these little ones truly belong to God, or not really? While the Synod gave a comfortless answer, the fathers found in Scripture a doctrine of greatest comfort: God claims for Himself the children He entrusts to believing parents.*

This glorious teaching of Scripture has a consequence. Though covenant children are rich, much richer than the richest neighbour on the street, they do not automatically know this glorious fact. In the words of the Form for Baptism: "Our children do not understand all this." Hence the obligation God lays on parents: "As [the children] grow up, their parents have the duty to instruct them in these things."

*Parents are the means God is pleased to use to teach his children of their royal identity and its wonderful implications*

Parents are the means God is pleased to use to teach his children of their royal identity and its wonderful implications. In Deuteronomy 6 God tells the

parents of Israel to teach his words diligently to the children: "Talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (v 6). God wanted those children to know that in heaven they had a gracious Father for Christ's sake who provided them with all good and averted all evil or turned it to their benefit; parents had to teach this to their children. God wanted those children to know that they had a Saviour in God's Son who washed their sins away and made them righteous before God; parents had to teach this to their children. God wanted those children to know that the Holy Spirit dwelt in their midst, renewed them, and on the last day would perfect them; parents had to teach this to their children. All the commandments contained in the books of Moses taught Israel that wealth and this is the treasure the parents were to pass on to their children as they did the dishes and chatted at bedtime. Their identity demanded God-centered training!

Over the years that followed nothing on this point has changed. God still makes his covenant with believers and the children He entrusts to them. God is still pleased to use the parents to instruct his children of their glorious identity. So we today have a wonderful – and at the same time awesome – duty of impressing on

our children what their glorious identity really is.

## **Believe it!**

To do that we ourselves first need to believe that our children are God's children, that our children have a fundamentally different identity than do the children across the street. Let's face it: if I as a parent do not believe that my children are different, different because they belong not to Satan but to God, why should I bother raising my children differently than my neighbour does? Here, then, we are confronted today with the same question our grandparents faced years ago: do we accept God's Word at face value or not?

---

*We need to put into radical practice what we learn from Scripture about the special identity of the children God has entrusted to us*

---

He said that our children are his; do we believe it or do we not? If we accept that Word, we have no choice but to impress on our children that they are different, have another Father than do the other children on the street, and

therefore other comfort and purpose in life and ways of living.

Our faith on this point results in concrete action. To embrace what the Lord has told us – and our parents rediscovered – means that in practice we talk with our children at the table and the kitchen sink, on the beach and in the garden about their privileged identity. To embrace in faith what the Lord has revealed means that in practice we ensure that the influences that mould our children's attitudes and character agree with their identity as God's children. To embrace God's revelation means that in practice at home and at school, in extra-curricular activities and through friends, we see to it that our children receive different instruction than other children receive, that we pass on different values to our children than other children receive, that we expect different responses from them than what other children can get away with. In a word, we impress upon them, through word and deed, that they are different, "distinguished from the children of unbelievers" as our Catechism has it in Lord's Day 27.

### A question

That implication gives us something to think about. We take God's promises seriously and so in the home we teach the children God's revelation in Scripture. More, we send our children to a Reformed school, to "church," and to catechism, and so on. And all of that is wonderful and the way it's supposed to be.

But look around you now. What else do we do? Do we allow our children to talk with the same tone of disrespect to authority as our neighbours' children, allow our children to go to the same sports events which the world around us idolizes, watch the same programs on TV, play the same computer games, appreciate the same music, dress as the world does...?

That would be distressing. For when we as parents permit these things, we teach our children that they are different from the world only in degrees, only on the surface, or only on Sunday; underneath they can still appreciate the humour of the world, the attitudes of the world, the values of the world, etc, and so still belong to this world. But such a message is not in agreement with God's declaration at baptism that these children belong to Him.

They are different, they are enormously rich in God through Christ, and in no way are we as the older generation allowed to let the younger generation understand that this difference is only in degrees. Rather, we need to put into radical practice what we learn from Scripture and believe by God's grace about the special identity of the children God has entrusted to us. By the grace of God we believe God's promises about our children, and so in his strength we need to treat them as very special and so distinguish them clearly and completely from the children of unbelievers.

It's by so doing that we demonstrate that we've understood the lesson God taught us in the liberation of six decades ago and understood too the riches of his promises to us.



# Towards a Common Songbook

## (Part 1)

### A Conversation between Rev. Rand Lankheet and Rev. George van Popta

**RL:** Brother van Popta, you and I have been asked by our respective Songbook Committees to write a series of articles to better explain our work to our churches. Maybe you could begin by giving a brief history of your committee for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

**GvP:** I could do that. The *Book of Praise* Committee has been around since the early days of the Canadian Reformed Churches (early 1950's). When our mothers and fathers immigrated from The Netherlands, they brought the Dutch-Genevan Psalter with them from which they and their ancestors had been singing since the time of the Reformation. They looked around and found a number of Reformed songbooks, but no English Genevan Psalter. Very quickly the desire grew to produce an Anglo-Genevan Psalter. Remarkably, this was accomplished by 1971. The second, and present, edition is the 1984 version. The committee is charged to protect its copyright and to make any corrections that are needed. As well, the churches have said they want more hymns. Presently, the *Book of Praise* has sixty-five hymns. A recent synod said this may be increased to 100. Our committee has been busy reviewing suggestions from the churches.

**RL:** Why did the synod limit you to 100 hymns?

**GvP:** This was at the committee's suggestion. As we are primarily a Psalm-singing church, we thought the balance of Psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise* should reflect that. The churches agreed.

Could you tell us about your committee?

**RL:** The URC songbook committee was formed by the first synod of the United Reformed Churches, meeting in St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada, in 1997. I was not at that synod, but those who were there tell me that the delegates recognized that the URC churches needed their own songbook. Though the blue Psalter Hymnal would serve as a "temporary book," the consensus was that it was too much identified with the CRC. Also, it was recognized that other good church music was found in other books, such as the new Trinity Hymnal, and we should make use of some of that music.

**GvP:** In that respect, our history as a church federation and as a songbook committee is different from yours. Although we have only been here for about sixty years, we have established ourselves, also

as far as our songs and liturgy go. We presently have a songbook that is greatly loved by our people.

**RL:** So your mandate has been to produce and maintain an English version of the Genevan Psalter. Our mandate was first to produce a new songbook for URC churches. Later, as discussions between our two federations developed, a second mandate was added....

**GvP:** That's right! Phase Two calls for the production of a new songbook that will be used in the united federation of churches once our two federations merge, Lord willing.

**RL:** I think it's fair to say that each of our committees struggles a bit with two mandates: a more "narrow" mandate, for our own churches, then the "broader" to work together. I think, in general, our URC committee is saying, why produce a book just for our churches, if someday (soon?) our churches will merge together? We don't want to have to go through all of this again in another ten years. Maybe you could say something about how our two committees have been able to work together. What are some things that have surprised you in a positive way about our joint meetings?



Rev. Rand Lankheet

Rev. G. van Popsta



**GvP:** Yes, the two mandates. The synods have not made it easy for us! On the one hand they mandated us to improve and expand the *Book of Praise*; on the other hand we are to work together with your committee to produce a new songbook. But it is all great work! I really enjoy our semi-annual, two-day meetings with the URC brothers and sisters. I have developed a real appreciation for how we work together in collegial harmony. Mutual respect, fraternal love, and friendship have developed between the members on the two sides of the joint committee.

I am curious, Brother Lankheet, what your impression of us is.

**RL:** For myself, being added to the committee at a later synod and serving as a URC pastor in southern California, I had absolutely no connections with Canadian Reformed churches or pastors or people. I read one book on Dr. Schilder while I served in California, but that was the extent of my knowledge. And I must say that I had formed some negative opinions about the Canadian Reformed Churches.

**GvP:** What sort of "negative opinions?"

**RL:** For example, I thought that the Canadian Reformed were "ultra conservative." I also feared that instead of moving forward in a North American context, by merging with the Canadian Reformed Church we might further "dutchify" the United Reformed Churches. In my context in

southern California, with a variety of members in those churches from backgrounds other than Dutch, I have come to believe we need more diversity, ethnically, while at the same time maintaining our full commitment to Reformed confessions and biblical practices.

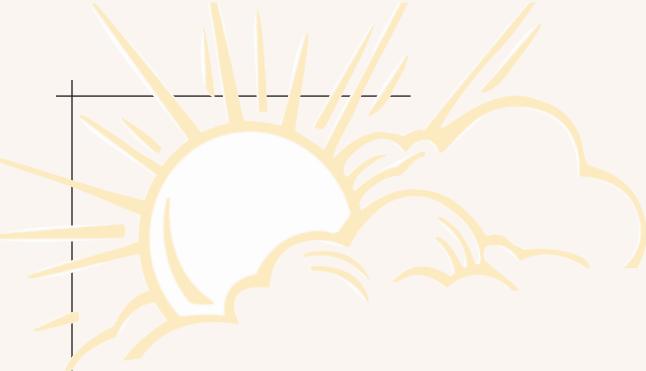
**GvP:** I said earlier that we have only been here for about sixty years. That's not long! But, looking at another way, we are into the third and fourth generation. I was born in Canada; my children and grandchildren are born and bred Canadians. The third generation, while standing on the Reformed foundation, wants to have a missional impact on North American society.

**RL:** It's probably true that you have your share of "traditionalists" who stand against any change, but the URC does as well. And I've come to appreciate your global commitment to mission and outreach. I think of your local work in the downtown area of Hamilton, Ontario. I've met Rev. Barros, from Brazil, who works in a Canadian Reformed church planting effort in Toronto among the Portuguese speaking peoples. So, some of my "characterizations" of the Canadian Reformed Church have been proven wrong.

**GvP:** I think it is fair to say that although the Canadian Reformed Churches are pretty conservative, there is at the same time a strong and growing desire to reach out with the gospel of Christ and the Reformed faith. I think conservative and evangelistic is a good thing to be.

**RL:** At our last meeting we discussed how your committee has taken a position, in general, to use "you and your" not "thee and thou" in your Psalms and hymns. You also tend to use the NIV translation as the basis for your work on the Psalms. Those things, among others, have surprised me. In some ways, your committee has been more "progressive" than some of our URC members! Within our respective committees, I think we have something of a "spectrum" of opinions. For example, some of us are more open to "altering" an old text to remove archaic expressions; but others think it is best not to change an artistic composition at all. Yet I think in all of our voting, on our principles and guidelines, and 98% of our song recommendations, we find consensus. That shows a developing sense of trust and friendship among us.

**GvP:** I'm with you in rejoicing in the broad consensus we have maintained in our work on the new songbook. I'm entirely confident that we'll continue on the same page "singing from the same hymnbook." I very much look forward to co-authoring with you this series of articles. We hope to show our readers that we have adopted very good guidelines and principles that will help us to produce a songbook which is faithful to the Bible and the Reformed confessions, one that will be a real joy to sing from as we worship God in our churches from Lord's Day to Lord's Day.



# Ray of Sunshine

By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

*"The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."*

Revelations 12:9

To the petition "Lead us not into temptation" the Lord Jesus teaches us to add: "But deliver us from the evil one." When we study this petition, one might think the Lord has already taught us to ask his Father not to lead us into temptation. Does it not seem somewhat repetitive to add, "But deliver us from the evil one"? What may not be overlooked is that Satan is a real person and a real threat. Satan is always busy tempting God's people and trying to draw them away from the Lord.

In 1 Peter 5:8 we read, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." When we think of nature, lions will attack sick, young, or straggling animals; they choose victims who are alone or not alert. Therefore, Peter here warns us to watch out for Satan when we are suffering or being persecuted. At times we may be so focused on our own problems that we forget to watch for danger. This is when we become very vulnerable to Satan's attacks. We must keep our eyes on Christ and resist the devil. For then says James (4:7), Satan will flee from you.

Although God and the devil are at war, we do not have to wait until the end to see who will win. God has already defeated Satan and when Christ returns, the devil and all he stands for will be gone forever. Satan is doing his evil work with strong force right now. He is trying to win over as many as he can to his evil cause. Yet with the Holy Spirit's power we can resist the devil and he will flee from us.

We may never overlook the activity of Satan and his very real army of demons. We can surely see this in the book of Job. There we learn how Satan is accountable to God. Satan cannot see into our minds or foretell the future. For if he could, he would have known that Job would not break under the attacks he endured. Since Satan can do nothing without God's permission, God's people can overcome his attacks through God's power.

Whenever something happens in our lives we are inclined to say that it is the Lord's will, knowing that nothing happens outside of his eternal counsel. Indeed, nothing happens without divine permission;

let us not forget that the Lord still permits Satan some room to continue his activity.

Satan's temptation of Christ Jesus was very real. Satan was trying very hard to make Christ stumble and fall. Yet, through all this we may find comfort in the knowledge that God is in control of all things. "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 5:9).

Living in a sinful world, we must be aware of our many weaknesses and our sinful human nature. Then we must humbly pray for God's grace, strength, and Holy Spirit to help us fight against our enemies: the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh.

"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast" (1 Pet 5:10). What a comfort for us, who could easily be overpowered by the evil one, when the Lord Jesus teaches us to ask his Father, "Deliver us from the evil one."

## Birthdays in July:

- 4    **JAMES BUIKEMA** will be 45  
c/o R. Feenstra  
278 St. Catherine Street, PO Box 662  
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
- 20    **CHARLIE BEINTEMA** will be 31  
29 Wilson Avenue, Chatham, ON N7L 1K8
- 28    **JIM WANDERS** will be 41  
2142 Deerwood Drive, Burlington, ON N7L 2A9
- 29    **TOM VANDERZWAAG** will be 53  
Anchor Home  
361 Thirty Road, RR 2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2

Congratulations to you all who are celebrating a birthday this month. May our heavenly Father grant you all an enjoyable day together with your family and friends. May you receive many rich blessings from above. Till next month,

Mrs. C. Gelms & Mrs. E. Nordeman  
548 Kemp Road East, RR 2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2  
905-563-0380

Dr. R. Faber is professor of Classical Studies at University of Waterloo  
rfaber@watarts.uwaterloo.ca

# The Unity of Academic and Spiritual Training in Reformed Education



*This article summarizes a speech presented to a conference of Free Reformed Teachers in Western Australia (September 2005) and to the National Principals' Conference of the Canadian Reformed Schools (October 2005).*

## Introduction

Evidence from the early history of the Reformed churches and schools in The Netherlands reveals that academic and spiritual instruction were joined. Contrary to the Roman Catholic separation of the sacred from the secular, the Reformed belief maintained the unity of faith and learning in the education of the youth. However, from about 1650 until the end of the twentieth century, in reaction to movements that over-emphasized the subjective, experiential, or humanist aspects of the faith, Reformed teaching stressed objective, impersonal, and anti-humanist elements. As a result, the schools' responsibility regarding spiritual nurture was suppressed or neglected. Whereas some other branches of the Christian faith have developed principles and practices that apply religious values to students' lives, Reformed

schools do not possess a rich heritage of spiritual instruction.

In the following paragraphs we shall present a few pieces of the evidence for the emphasis on the combination of academic and spiritual training in early Dutch Reformed schools. By means of the phrase "spiritual training" we seek to render several terms in the relevant Dutch and Latin texts. These include instruction in godliness, in being devout and sincere ("onderwijzen in godzaligheid"); imparting piety and holy conduct ("pietatem ... imbuere"); and producing students who are trained in the fear of the Lord ("onderwezen in de vreze Gods"). Opposite to these is being corrupted, or ruined morally ("verdorven").

In order to explain how the spiritual training in schools was demoted for much of the last four centuries, we shall review three major religious developments. These are the so-called Further Reformation, Pietism, and Puritanism. In reacting to each of these movements, the Dutch Reformed churches tended to suppress the schools' role in promoting holiness in thought and action.

Also in the last decades of the twentieth century, we shall observe, orthodox Reformed schools displayed ambivalence about their responsibility for students' spiritual development. This ambivalence arose in part from uncertainty in responding to Evangelicalism, a movement which may be traced back to Pietism and Puritanism. We shall conclude that on the basis of proper Reformed principles school societies should once again pay concerted attention to the spiritual development of students by promoting explicitly Reformed criteria and guidelines.

## Academic and spiritual training in early Dutch Reformed schools

The decisions at broader assemblies of the early Dutch Reformed churches attest to a conjunction of academic and spiritual training in the schools. One of the first formal meetings of the young churches was held in 1587 at Dordt. There it was determined that efforts should be made to establish schools "in which children learn not only eloquence and the arts, but are taught also and especially the

Christian Catechism, and are guided towards the preaching (Chapter 3)." The churches had observed that the state-controlled schools were slow to discard their Roman Catholic character; they sought to ensure the teaching of the Reformed confession and to prepare the young minds to receive the proclamation of the true gospel. In a similar vein, the Synod of Rotterdam (1594) determined that "for the purpose of improving unity between churches and schools, both the churches and the schools should be charged to supervise the schools and the teachers." By means of collaboration of church and school, youths would be instructed in matters of the faith as well as in the liberal arts.

The churches advanced the union of academic and spiritual training not only because of the religious upheaval of the late-sixteenth century; they advanced it on grounds of Scripture and confession. After the Reformed religion was well-established in the lowlands in the first decades of the seventeenth century, the churches continued to promote spiritual training at day-schools. The article in the Church Order of the well-known Synod of Dordt (1618-19) that pertains to schools states that teachers should be appointed who are qualified academically and spiritually: "Everywhere consistories shall see to it that there are good schoolmasters, who shall not only instruct the children in reading, writing, languages and the liberal arts, but likewise in godliness and in the Catechism (Art 21)."

Article 44 of the same Synod of Dordt, which deals with the

practice of church visitation, states that the visitors must confirm that also "schoolmasters faithfully perform their duties, remain true to the doctrine. . . and promote the edification of the congregation, including the children. . ." Not only from these articles, but also from the extant minutes of consistory meetings, classical records, and reports of church visitation it is clear that the early Dutch Reformed churches made a concerted effort to encourage school-teachers in nurturing piety in the hearts of students.

### **The devaluation of spiritual training in Reformed schools**

In the centuries following the Synod of Dordt there arose movements in The Netherlands which caused the Reformed churches to emphasize aspects of the faith that devalued the importance of spiritual training in school. One such movement was the Further Reformation (in Dutch, "nadere Reformatie").

---

*Consistories shall see to it that there are good schoolmasters, who shall instruct the children in godliness (Church Order of Dordt, Art 21)*

---

This movement sought to correct the tendency in Dutch theology and preaching towards scholasticism, that is, expression of the Christian faith in purely objective terms, by means of

rational argumentation and barren confessionalism. In schools, too, spiritual instruction stopped short of a direct application of the faith to the lives of the youth.

However, in counteracting the growing separation of faith from practice, certain extremists promoted non-scriptural aspects that caused a reaction from Reformed thinkers – which in turn led to a depreciation of spiritual nurture at schools. Downplaying the importance of the formal aspects of religion, the Further Reformation focused on the personal, subjective experience of the faith. As far as education was concerned, it had been part of the teachers' duties to encourage in the student the "subjective experience of the faith." From a theological perspective, however, these personal elements smacked of the heresies in Anabaptism and Arminianism, against which the Reformed faith had contended in recent decades.

Though the movement of Further Reformation was distinctly Dutch in character and scope, it was affected by Pietism in Germany and elsewhere. Pietism sought to strengthen the believers' devotional life rather than to insist on theological definitions and liturgical norms. Focusing more on the human heart than the mind, Pietism stressed the believer's duty to reform his life. Some extreme Pietists taught and lived a mystical lifestyle. To many orthodox Reformed thinkers the Pietist (over-)emphasis on conversion and sanctification threatened to undermine the doctrines of justification by faith alone. The reader will understand that the

emphasis on devotion and introversion in the Pietist movement touches the Reformed teacher's duty of inculcating holiness. In exposing the dangers inherent in Pietism, Reformed leaders pointed to the extreme value placed on spiritualism. As the Reformed pendulum swung away from the extreme of experientialism, proper spiritual nurture in the schools tended to be devalued.

---

*During the eighteenth century an explicitly Reformed understanding of the schools' role in spiritual nurture remained undeveloped*

---

Another movement which similarly caused suspicion of the schools' role in spiritual instruction is that of English Puritanism, which influenced Dutch believers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Beginning as a reaction to formal aspects of the liturgy in the Church of England, Puritanism developed into a broad movement that promoted holy living in precise accordance with the Bible. It tended to be non-confessional in outlook and it depreciated the church as a formal institution.

In response to the influence of Puritanism, Dutch Reformed thinkers emphasized the institutional church, the importance of the preaching of the gospel, justification by grace

through faith, and corporate rather than individual experience of the faith. A sharper distinction was drawn between the jurisdictions of church and school than had been the case in the early seventeenth century. Reformed leaders wished to prevent the erosion of the church as institution, including its task in proclaiming the gospel and in teaching the Christian belief.

As the Reformed churches emphasized these roles of the church, the restoration of spiritual training at schools was not advocated, for such restoration was perceived to accord with movements that in other respects differed with the Reformed faith. From the preceding paragraphs it is clear that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the inculcation of "godliness" (as the Church Order of Dordt had put it) was associated with explicitly non-Reformed movements. As a consequence, spiritual instruction in the day-schools was unsupported; an explicitly Reformed understanding of the schools' role in spiritual nurture remained undeveloped.

Similar explanations may be given for the repercussions from theological issues in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the Secession of 1834 and the Liberation of 1944. One example from the North American context of the Reformed faith will have to suffice to illustrate the continued ambivalence that exists towards the schools' responsibility in providing spiritual nurture. During the last three decades of the twentieth century Evangelicalism has become a powerful movement

in the United States and Canada. This movement shares with the Reformed faith several scriptural teachings, including, most notably: the sovereignty of God; the authority of Scripture; Christ's substitutionary atonement; and salvation by grace through faith alone.

Distinguishing characteristics of Evangelicalism include a suppression of the authority of creeds and confessions; a strongly apologetic, missionary role for individuals as well as Christian communities; a view of the church as organism rather than institution; and a stress on sanctification rather than justification. The reader will have observed that some of the features of Evangelicalism are the same as in the Pietist and Puritan movements discussed above.

---

*In the Reformed tradition, Christian education involves both academic learning and instruction in holy living*

---

Several aspects of the Evangelical approach to education deserve critical examination, but for many people the missiological role of Christian schools especially distinguishes Evangelicalism from the Reformed view, which holds that converting children to the faith lies not in the jurisdiction of day-schools. In responding to the missiological objective of Evangelical education, however, there may

# Church News

have been a tendency to over-react, by claiming that no spiritual nurture ought to be provided by the schools. While the separate jurisdictions of church and school are both clear and defensible from Scripture, it is Reformed to hold that schools have a certain task in the spiritual nurture of the covenant children.

## Conclusions

In the Reformed tradition, Christian education involves both academic learning and instruction in holy living. Due to specific characteristics of certain non-Reformed movements in history, however, the advancement of spiritual nurture in the schools was hampered. While there is no doubt that today's Reformed teachers promote piety by means of their

exemplary conduct and instruction, it behoves school boards, societies, and indeed the larger church community to pay greater attention to this important aspect of Reformed education.

In comparison with Evangelical principles and methods of imparting religious values, the Reformed community in North America may be encouraged to articulate explicitly Reformed criteria and guidelines. Hereby teachers would be supported in conveying the religious qualities of each subject they teach and in nurturing the entire student as he gains both intellectual and spiritual maturity. To this end, education committees may be encouraged to pay greater attention to the way in which the distinctly Reformed character of

Called by the Free Reformed Church of Darling Downs, WA, Australia:

**Rev. J. Van Woudenberg**  
of Guelph, Ontario.

Called by the Church of Chilliwack, British Columbia:

**Rev. R. Ijbema**  
of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands (Liberated) at Voorburg, the Netherlands.

Called by the Church of Winnipeg-Redeemer, Manitoba:

**Rev. R. Schouten**  
of Abbotsford, British Columbia.

the curriculum is appropriated by the students and to supervise more actively the spiritual nurture in the various grades.

Especially in post-modern Canadian society Reformed students should be encouraged to develop skills of maintaining, defending, and promoting their faith, whether it be in the work-force, college, or university. To this end also consistories may exercise their responsibilities regarding Article 58 of our Church Order more actively. And, as the primary teachers of their children, parents may be reminded of their duties in instructing their children in the Christian faith and in godliness, so that home, church, and school work together in raising covenant children in the fear of the Lord.

The *Education Matters* column is sponsored by the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association East. Anyone wishing to respond to an article written or willing to write an article is kindly asked to send materials to Clarion or to Otto Bouwman [obouwman@cornerstoneschool.us](mailto:obouwman@cornerstoneschool.us)



## **Press Release of Joint Meetings of the Theological Education Committees of the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA) and the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) held in at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, Indiana, United States of America, November 7 – 8, 2005**

### **Background**

Since this is the first press release of the Theological Education Committees, some background information is in order. At present the URCNA primarily support the theological training at Mid-America Reformed Seminary and Westminster Seminary California, without direct official federative control. The CanRC provide theological training by way of the Theological College in Hamilton which is maintained, supported, and controlled by the federation of these churches through synod.

Earlier joint meetings of the two Theological Education Committees had been held on January 13, 2004 and June 15, 2004. The first meeting included a discussion of two position papers: "Why do the Canadian Reformed Churches have their own Seminary" and "Theological Education in the United Reformed Churches." This meeting ended with the adoption of the following statements of agreement.

1. It is the task of the churches to train ministers;
2. Ministers of the churches must receive sound Reformed theological training;
3. As a principle, the training of ministers should be done by ministers;

4. Such training is best accomplished in the context of institutional theological education;
5. It is acknowledged that active involvement of the churches is required for the training of ministers and to protect the confessional integrity of such training; and
6. The churches, i.e. the URCNA and CanRC, should work towards theological education that is properly accountable to the churches.

The joint meeting of June 15, 2004 was held in conjunction with the URCNA Synod meeting in Calgary, Alberta. This meeting continued the discussion but did not result in any further agreement on the outstanding issues.

### **Current press release**

The November 2005 meetings of which this is a press release were held Monday evening, Tuesday morning and afternoon of November 7 and 8. It was agreed that Rev. J. Barach would chair these meetings and that Mr. K. Veldkamp would record the proceedings.

Present from the URCNA were: Rev. John Barach, Mr. Jonathan Gross, Rev. Bradd Nymeyer, Rev. Cal Tuininga, and Rev. Mark Vander Hart. Present from the CanRC were: Dr. James Visscher, Dr. Cornelis Van Dam, Dr. Nicolaas H. Gootjes, Rev. Robert A. Schouten, and Mr. Karl J. Veldkamp. Absent was Dr. W. Robert Godfrey of the URCNA.

For this meeting, the following items were part of the discussion:

- a. The position paper of URCNA committee dated May, 2005
- b. The response of the CanRC committee to the May, 2005 URCNA position paper dated September 12, 2005
- c. A presentation by representatives of the CanRC

committee as to how theological education is provided in the CanRC and the manner in which it is delivered.

An extensive free flowing brotherly discussion took place in which many aspects of trying to come to grips with a common approach to theological education received due attention. By the end of the time which was available for our meetings, a motion was made that we adopt the model of one federational seminary, with two officially approved independent seminaries (this was without presumption as to which of the present seminaries would be which). The intention was to jointly agree on a model which could be worked with, expanded upon, and developed for presentation to the respective synods of the URCNA and CanRC which are both scheduled for 2007.

A break is taken to allow the URCNA committee to consider the matter. Following their discussion, the URCNA committee advised they had unanimously agreed that "we as a committee are not prepared to entertain any proposal for theological education that mandates at least one federational seminary: Grounds:

1. We are not convinced that this is biblically mandated; and
2. We do not believe that this will serve the churches well."

From this resolution it was determined that we were at an impasse since the mandate of the CanRC committee requires at least one federational seminary. There was no common ground to move forward and we would need to report to our respective synods.

*The Theological Education Committees of the CanRC and URCNA*

## **Press Release of Classis Manitoba, held Monday, March 20, 2006 at 9:00 AM at Grace Canadian Reformed Church, Winnipeg**

After the brothers sang Psalm 67:1-3, Rev. K. Jonker opened the meeting on behalf of the convening church of Winnipeg-Grace. He read 1 John 5:12-21 and led in prayer. Under memorabilia he mentioned that the work in the churches could continue. The church building of Carman-West is nearly finished. Rev. Van Raalte was congratulated with the birth of their daughter and with his acceptance into the Ph.D. program at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids. Rev Jonker also wished the church of Redeemer strength in filling the vacancy. Further, he mentioned that Prof. Ohmann had passed on to glory and God's blessings to the churches through him were commemorated.

The delegates of the convening church examined the credentials. All churches were represented by their primi delegates.

The chairman declared Classis constituted. The following executive officers took their places, according to the suggestions made by the previous classis: Rev. P.H. Holtvlüwer (Chairman), Rev. D.M. Boersma (Vice-Chairman), and Rev. T.G. Van Raalte (Clerk). The chairman thanked the organizing church for the arrangements made for the meeting. He noted with thankfulness that Rev. Jonker had returned to active duty and was present at classis.

The agenda was adopted after some additions.

Seating of fraternal delegates: Br. H. Nagtegaal was welcomed as fraternal delegate of Providence United Reformed Church (URC).

The Classis Treasurer Report was received, discussed, and gratefully accepted.

The Church of Carman West reported that the books of the Treasurer were found in good

order. Classis thanked the church for their work.

The church of Winnipeg-Redeemer reported that the inspection of the classis archives had not been done yet. A report will be expected at the next spring classis.

Contact with Provincial Governments: Rev. Jonker reported on his activities. Discussion developed around the registration forms for marriage licenses which have become gender neutral. The government allows changing of the gender-neutral terms to their biblical terms.

The church visitors presented the reports of the visits they had brought to the churches of Carman East and West and Winnipeg Grace and Redeemer. They were received with thankfulness. After every report and subsequent discussion one of the elder-delegates led in prayer for the church.

Report on visit to URC Classis in Pella: Rev Holtvlüwer reported on his visit to Classis Central U.S. of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). This was the first visit on our behalf to their classis and it was much appreciated.

The chairman read art. 44 C.O. and asked each church the three questions.

One church asked for advice. Advice was given.

Fraternal contacts: Br. Nagtegaal conveyed the greetings from Providence URC and expressed appreciation. The chairman thanked him, commented on the meaning of these contacts for all the churches, and asked him to convey the appreciation of Classis for the continued contacts. Rev. Van Raalte led in prayer for Providence URC.

A letter of greeting was received from Classis Central U.S. of the URCNA.

A letter of greeting was received from the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC.

Correspondence: Fraternal greetings had been sent to Classis

Central U.S. of the URCNA, Classis South-West of the URCNA, and Northern Plains Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS).

Appointments: the convening church for the next classis will be Winnipeg Redeemer. The following dates were chosen for next classis: June 19 or, if not needed at that time, September 18. Suggested executive officers for the next classis: Rev. Jonker (chairman), Rev. Holtvlüwer (vice-chairman), and Rev. Boersma (clerk). Appointments were reviewed; no changes were made.

Personal question period was held.

The chairman noted that no brotherly censure was necessary according to article 34, C.O.

The Acts were read and approved and the Press Release adopted.

The chairman spoke words of gratitude to Rev. Van Raalte on behalf of Classis.

Rev. Holtvlüwer closed the meeting with prayer after the brothers sang Psalm 122:3.

*Written on behalf of Classis,  
Rev. D.M. Boersma*

## **Press Release of Classis Alberta (contracta) held April 10, 2006**

Rev. J. Kalkman opened the meeting of Classis with scripture reading and prayer. The credentials were examined and found to be in good order. The primary delegates were present from Calgary and the neighbouring church Coaldale.

Rev. Kalkman was appointed as the chairman and Rev. D. Poppe as clerk. After perusing the documents and finding them to be in good order, Classis decides to honourably release Rev. J.L. van Popta from all his duties in Classis Alberta and supply him with a copy of this release. The Acts of Classis were adopted, the press release was approved, and Rev. D. Poppe closed in prayer.