

# Clarion

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*Holidays can also be a time to share God's blessings with others*



**Inside this issue**

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C. Van Dam

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# What's a Good Holiday?

*All these feasts involved rest and a break from the routine struggle of work in a fallen world*

Who doesn't enjoy going on a holiday? Holidays are great! When you return, people ask, "Did you have a good holiday?" The answer given is often determined by the weather that was experienced. It was a great holiday if it was sunny and a bad one if rainy and wet.

But, what really constitutes a good holiday? In our day and age, we almost take holidays for granted. We have them all through the year and especially in the summer many people can have an extended period of relief from their daily work. It was not always this way. And yet holidays are nothing new. God's people, living under the Mosaic law in Old Testament times, did enjoy many days off. It may be good to pause for a moment and reflect on this.

## **The Lord was generous with holidays**

God was and is no slave driver. He came to set his people free from bondage! Out of Egypt He called them, away from the backbreaking labour of making bricks for a despotic Pharaoh who did not even supply the straw. En route to the Sinai He reminded them of the blessing of the Sabbath, by making it impossible for them to go out to get manna on that day, for there was none. They had been instructed to get twice as much the day before and rest on the seventh day (Exod 16:23-30). And at the Sinai the Lord renewed his covenant with his people and, among other things, gave his people holidays to celebrate!

When one stops to think about it, the number of holidays Israel had was truly astounding. Besides the weekly day of rest, there was a monthly day of rest called the New Moon (Num 10:10; 2 Kings 4:23; Amos 8:5) and analogous to the Sabbath, every seventh year constituted a Sabbatical year when the land and the vineyards were not to be worked for an entire year

(Exod 23:11; Lev 25:1-7). Furthermore, every fiftieth year, the year of Jubilee, was to be celebrated which like the Sabbath year meant, among other things, that Israel was released from working the land (Lev 25:8-22). Annually three pilgrimage feasts had to be observed when all the males were expected to go up to the place which the Lord would choose for the Passover (which was immediately followed with the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread), the Feast of Pentecost, and the seven day Feast of Tabernacles (Deut 16). Furthermore, there were the annual Day of Atonement (Lev 16) and the Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25).

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*As Christians we may also look forward to periods of rest from our daily labour, but we will do so differently*

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It is significant that all these feasts, as God ordained them, involved rest and a break from the routine struggle of work in a fallen world. Also, in all these feasts God was telling or reminding his people in one form or another of his salvation and redemption. For example, the Passover spoke of God's delivering his people from the bondage of Egypt, but it also reminded the people of that great deliverance from sin that would come through the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God. That salvation and redemption included the promised rest for his people. For the rest that was promised in the land of Canaan was to be in anticipation of that glorious perfect rest to come (cf. Heb 3:7-4:11).



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It is, therefore, also significant that the Lord remembered the disadvantaged in Israel when he legislated feasts for his people. They too had to share in the joy of their Lord and experience something of a foretaste of that beautiful rest that was waiting for the people of God. In all the struggle of the old creation, his people could know that debts would be erased every fiftieth year and families could return to the inheritance of their fathers (Lev 25). And if they had become enslaved because of unpaid bills, they would be set free in the seventh year (Exod 21:2) or in the Jubilee (Lev 25). The poor could celebrate and share in the bounty of God's blessing of food and drink during the feasts (e.g., Deut 16:11, 14).

One could summarize by saying that God gave his people many days of rest and celebration in which he reminded them of the gravity of their sin, but also of the redemption that was theirs. The respite they could enjoy pointed to the future rest!

**Holidays are holy days**

It is clear that Israel's holidays were holy days, days dedicated to the Lord and his service. Historically this is also how we got the term "holidays." "Holidays" means holy days. In medieval Christianity, no distinction was possible between a day of rest from work and a day of celebrating one sort of feast or another. We do not want to go back to the "holy days" of that era in which one saint after another received a special day. However, because we live in a secular society, we do well to honour the origin of the term "holiday" in the sense that it literally means a holy day. While society as a whole does not want God at the centre of their life, we still do, do we not? And are our vacations then, like the rest of life, not to be holy to God with all the consequences this brings with it? Indeed, we do well to remember some of the riches of the Old Testament for this subject.

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## What is the sense of a holiday?

Today people often live for the weekend. In our neo-pagan society this means the Saturday and the Sunday (although in the Christian calendar Sunday is the first day of the week and Christians should not include it in the "weekend"). When the warmer weather comes, many live for the long weekend, which includes the Monday and they start counting down the days to their holidays of a week or more.

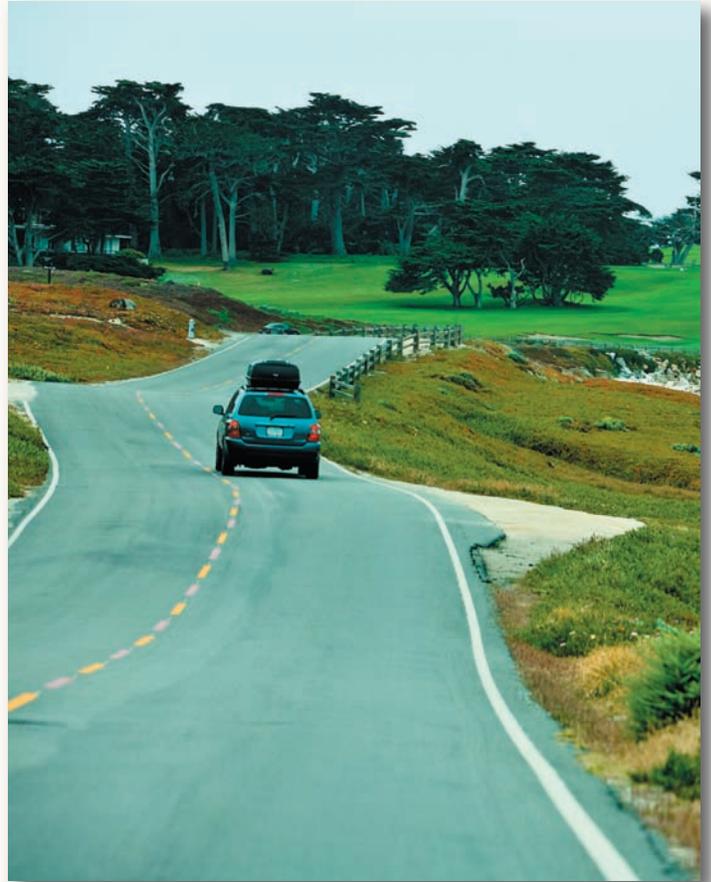
As Christians we may also look forward to periods of rest from our daily labour, but we will do so differently. What constitutes a good holiday? Merely being physically or mentally refreshed? That is an important element, but it is only the beginning of the benefits that can be received! The Lord never gave his people holidays and feasts only for physical relief. He always included a reminder of the larger picture; namely, that He as covenant God was busy working salvation for his people and this salvation included removing the curse from work and from life generally so that the real rest, the full rest would come. It can also mean (where this is possible) to help those with special needs, as was done in Israel within this context. Think of the blessings realized in participating, for instance, in a camp for the handicapped or by going abroad to help those who have less.

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*Those refreshed spiritually will have had a foretaste of that joyous rest to come*

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Holidays are, therefore, an excellent time to ponder and reflect on the great things God is doing for his people and to take more time than may be available otherwise to share and discuss the great things of God at leisure in the family circle. Holidays should be a time not only of physical or mental refreshment but also of spiritual rejuvenation and renewal. The key holiday we may enjoy is of course the Sunday, the Lord's Day. We may start each week with a celebration



of the great things God has done in Jesus Christ and the new creation He is raising up. Let us never underestimate the great blessing of the Lord's Day, the day of the resurrection! But when the Lord in his goodness also gives us more and more days off from our daily work, let us not abuse this gift by simply putting ourselves in the centre of it, but treat them as holy days which are holidays to be used with the Lord in mind, for is it not for Him that we live? Let us thank our God and give Him the glory also in the manner in which we holiday by using the many opportunities to realize more and more our richness in the God of life who is taking us to his eternal rest.

Will you have or have you had a good holiday? The best holiday that one could have is the one in which you come back refreshed and reinvigorated, not only physically and mentally, but also spiritually in the Lord, ready to do one's task in a fallen world. For those refreshed spiritually will have had another foretaste of that joyous rest to come, the rest that still remains for God's people (Heb 4:9), the rest in a perfect world where there will be no more struggle against sin or the brokenness of a fallen world, but where all will be whole and beautiful before the sight of God and his people.



E.J. Tiggelaar

# Tears for Food



**MATTHEW 13:52**

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*“My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’”*

Psalm 42:3

People cry a lot nowadays. Quite often it can be for the simplest of reasons. It can be while watching a movie, or while sharing a thought with a friend. In our hug-and-kiss society, one man’s sorrow quickly becomes another man’s reason to cry. We’ve become much more sensitive to things around us and we’re not afraid to show it.

I don’t remember people being quite as demonstrative in showing emotion when I was younger. Recently I was reminded of how emotional and sensitive issues have become when a majority of MPs in The Netherlands voted in favour of phasing out hundreds of mink farms over the next ten years. Fifty years ago we showed little emotion on our mink ranches in southern Manitoba when pelting season rolled around and mink were put on the “carousel of death.” Neither were we sympathetic when Bridget Bardot made it her mission to stop the seal hunt.

We’ve tried to be happy and carefree since the last world war. It was felt that by letting the children make their own decisions instead of taking over the flawed ones made by their parents, society would be better off. “Give peace a chance,” the children said in the 60s. Not all of their efforts were wrong. Becoming more sensitive to animals and the environment was indeed a needed thing. But is our society where it needs to be as result of these efforts?

It’s difficult to keep a brave face when the evening news gives evidence that our attempts at being good have failed miserably. Efforts to offer concessions for our human weakness have not offset the reality that something has gone terribly wrong in our society. At no time in recent memory have we seen so much in the way of murder, stealing, anarchy, disrespect, divorce, pornography, child abuse, alcoholism, promiscuity, rape, and violence in general.

Humanity’s hugs and tears have attempted to say: “We can make it together.” But I believe that more often than not they have become an expression of fear. And why is that? Our society is missing a foundation – a comfort zone – namely, the providential care of God. Those who have pushed God aside have only themselves to hold onto. Obviously it is not enough, judging by the rise of drug use and the abandonment of social principles.

The psalmist of Psalms 42 and 43 gives us the answer we need to know in such times. He knows that life in itself does not hold the solutions. He has felt the effects of a well-intended society and he has suffered much: “My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’” (42:10).

However, he has not given in to despair on account of this. He knows about a way out of this

agony. And it is not a conventional way. To counteract those who taunt him, he gives us the words of verse 3, as a parallel to the words of verse 10: “My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’”

Tears for food, the psalmist says. Hugs and tears in our society suggest helplessness and fear. Those who cry, cry only to each other. But in the brokenness of life, tears open the door to a solution for the psalmist and for every believer. Jesus would later say in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Tears lead us to blessing.

It is only when we see the reality of this world being a broken place that we will stand in a position to look to God for help. I don’t know how many of us are willing to go that far. All too often we are content to live with sin and hurt and not to look for the help that is offered by God. What is it to pant and thirst in our souls for the living God “as the deer pants for streams of water”? What is it to “go and meet with God” through weeping, on account of the persecution of our souls? Are tears not the food that is needed for finding hope and contentment with the living God through Jesus Christ our Lord?





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# Weed Control

A generation or two ago a problem in society and many churches was the abuse of alcohol, though often it was kept behind closed doors. To a large extent, that problem has come out of the closet and is being dealt with more openly in society at large and in the church as well. Not perfectly, but more openly. Alcohol abuse still exists today and sadly continues to cause strife in many homes and deep concern for many elders and pastors. Most of us have heard in the media about a newer problem in the world, smoking marijuana (and other drugs). It may surprise many (but not all) that this is also a fast-rising problem within the church. Society has begun to tackle it and now it is time for the church to open up the closet and deal with it too.

## Out of the closet

Smoking "weed" or "pot" came into vogue in certain segments of society already fifty years ago. Undoubtedly it has been present within the church for longer than many of us might think. My guess is that the world-wise among the "under fifty" crowd know all about this practice. If so, I call upon them to help bring this matter out of hiding. Those in the know need to be on the forefront of helping parents, elders, and young people

deal with the present dangers of pot smoking that is or could soon be wreaking havoc in the lives of many.

And it is damaging many. My experiences and pastoral contacts in Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario confirm the reality of pot smoking throughout the federation of churches. It is most prominent among teenagers and young adults but is also known among the thirty and forty somethings. Where people fall into it, the effects can be devastating on relationships, families, and careers.

Let's not make the mistake of thinking, "Surely not my son! Not my daughter!" Every heart by nature is deceitful above all things (Jer 17:9) and smoking marijuana is not above anyone's child. For the sake of God's glory, the church's edification, and the salvation of those ensnared by this sin, it's time we as Canadian Reformed community pay attention to this concerning issue and deal with it openly, biblically, and constructively.

## Smoking pot a sin?

One of the most concerning things I've noticed is that many young people don't see anything wrong with smoking pot. Marijuana is often thought to be the "softest" of drugs, rather safe

and risk-free. A person gets "high," feels relaxed, and the effects seem to quickly wear off. Many defend smoking pot by saying it harms no one and is no different than having a few drinks. If even parents can have a few drinks, what's the harm in their son or daughter having a joint?

These arguments do not hold water. While drinking wine or beer is permissible in the Bible, getting drunk is strictly forbidden. Alcohol in small doses is acceptable, permissible, and can produce a "gladdening" effect upon the heart (Ps 104:15). But consuming it to the point where a person loses control of his mind is condemned by God as sin (Prov 23:30-35; 1 Cor 6:10). Recreational use of marijuana produces the same basic effect as consuming too much alcohol: a person loses control of his mind.

## Fighting the Holy Spirit

The reason people smoke pot is to let the mind be taken over by the drug in order to produce the "high" or the "relaxed" feeling. This is not only the mental equivalent of getting drunk but in giving up control of one's mind (to the drug), one works directly against the Holy Spirit who is given us to produce *self-control* (Gal 5:23). This loss of self-control, says Scripture, leads

on to other sins and belongs to the darkness of the old, sinful nature:

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph 5:17-20)

The greatest spiritual danger in using marijuana lies in the fact that it fights against the very Spirit of God (who lives in every Christian). This not only grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30) but it puts a covenant child at great risk of falling away. Looking to this or other drugs to supply us with better feelings and experiences than we have had with the Holy Spirit is to sin against the first commandment (see LD 34, Q/A 94, 95). It is to put something ahead of God.

### **Possible enslavement**

There are other reasons which give cause for great concern and may even add to the sin. Marijuana use can be addictive. Some people who start using cannot stop and so become enslaved to it. This potential for addiction is even greater today than years ago as street sellers are often lacing the marijuana with traces of stronger and more addictive drugs. (They do this to maintain and enlarge their customer base.) This enslavement to a substance is contrary to the command of the Bible to be slaves of God and of nothing else. The Bible warns against letting sin rule in our bodies so that we obey its

evil desires, since we have become slaves of righteousness (Rom 6:12).

Marijuana is also often described as a "gate-way" drug. Once the "high" obtained by pot smoking no longer satisfies the user, more powerful drugs are desired and sought. This can lead to a worse enslavement to drugs like methamphetamine ("crystal meth") or cocaine ("crack") or others. Willing enslavement to anyone or anything is also sin against the first commandment.

### **Russian roulette**

Further, marijuana usage can be harmful to the mind, even in mild usage. There is a growing body of evidence that pot smoking brings a higher risk of psychosis,

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*It's time we as Canadian Reformed community pay attention to this concerning issue and deal with it openly, biblically, and constructively*

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including schizophrenia. Here is a quotation from a recent study which followed 2400 German marijuana-using youths (aged fourteen to twenty-four) for four years:

Four years later, about 17 percent of all participants had had at least one psychotic symptom. Psychotic symptoms include hallucinations, such as seeing or hearing things that aren't really there, and delusions, which are false beliefs that do not go away with logical or accurate information.

Other possible psychotic symptoms are incoherent speech, confused thinking, and strange behaviour. The most common psychotic disorder is schizophrenia.<sup>1</sup>

Putting one's mind at such risk by way of recreational marijuana use violates God's sixth commandment (see LD 40). It is the chemical version of playing Russian roulette, that is, putting a partly loaded gun to your head and pulling the trigger, gambling that you will fire a "blank" and not a real bullet.

### **Against the law**

Finally, it remains illegal in Canada to possess even small amounts of marijuana for recreational use. There may be a debate in our country right now as to whether this should change, but presently it remains against the law. Since we are called by God to honour and submit to all governing authorities (Rom 13:1-7), we may not ignore the law of our land but are obliged to uphold it. Saying that marijuana is legal in certain other countries does not make it legal or morally right to possess and use it recreationally here. Smoking pot is thus clearly a sin against the fifth commandment as well (see LD 39).

### **Personal and mutual discipline**

Once we understand smoking pot to be a serious sin, we must stop excusing it and begin to address it from all aspects. As a sin, it needs to be addressed like other sins: according to the steps of discipline outlined by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18. All church members have a responsibility to curb this sin through self-discipline as well as mutual discipline. If

there are people you know using this (or other drugs), you have a responsibility to address them on their sin in a spirit of humble love. I urge all parents to have a frank discussion with their teenagers or young adults (and even pre-teens) about this issue, whether to prevent their falling into sin or to help pull them out of it.

### **Openness and vulnerability**

Still, we must do more. Identifying this practice as a sin is the first necessary step but once someone confesses this sin, we need to surround them with support and meaningful assistance. This is equally true for the sin of alcohol addiction, something that is not our strong suit as Canadian Reformed churches. One of the huge hurdles for recovering addicts is finding acceptance, sympathy, and direction within the body of Christ.

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*Looking to this or other drugs to supply us with better feelings and experiences than we have had with the Holy Spirit is to sin against the first commandment*

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We need to create a safe and welcoming environment for struggling sinners to open up and fight this sin *within* the church and supported by the church.

To do that, we need to allow others to be vulnerable with us about their great needs. The best way to encourage that is for ourselves to be vulnerable about our own struggles. Too often we put

on appearances with each other, allowing others to think we are okay, that we've got it all together. The truth is, every one of us is a struggling sinner and many of us carry hurts and scars that are not that far below the surface. Do you know how encouraging it is to meet someone who has struggles like you? It can be a great relief to find that sort of companionship and support. It's that concept of strugglers helping strugglers that we need to develop within the churches.

I readily admit that I do not have easy answers for how to do this but I would call upon each local church to brain-storm ways of helping the struggling brothers and sisters, whether it's with these addictions or others. Could we not, for example, establish small local support groups which meet regularly to encourage and pray for the struggling? To also draw strength and comfort from the Word of God? Would that not already be a boost for those who often feel overwhelmed by temptation? Could we not remember those wrestling with these sins more often in congregational as well as family prayers? After all, no sin can be overcome without the power of Christ's blood and Spirit.

### **Other means of help**

So far I have concentrated on what the local church can do to help. I have done this deliberately because too often we (and I fully include myself in that) have looked to the "professionals" for help first and foremost. Too often (when we have made the effort to help addicts), we have quickly farmed out the work to de-tox centres and addiction counsellors with a little pastoral support on the side.

I do not wish to disparage these professionals or seeking their services for help. I have done so myself and will likely do so again. I would only plead that we not *leave it* to the professionals nor even rely on their help as the *mainstay* of combating the sin.

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*We need to create a safe and welcoming environment for struggling sinners to open up and fight this sin within the church and supported by the church*

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What we need more than anything is the power of Christ's blood and Spirit by which alone we can fight against and overcome sin and that power comes primarily through the ministry of the church. Professional help can supplement this but it can by no means replace it. Even the professionals will tell you that their help is far more successful when it is supported by a caring community. How much more so when that caring community is the body of Christ!

I hope this article finds a wide reading and an even wider discussion. By all means, please send in ideas to help or email me with them off the record. We need to open our eyes to sin among our own and deal with it in a way that truly brings honour to our Lord and assists our neighbour.

<sup>1</sup>*Smoking Pot Raises Psychosis Risk in Youths*, by Miranda Hitti (Dec 01, 2004). This article can be found in various places on the Internet, for example at [www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com) and follow the health link.



## What's New???

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In the perusal of the many church bulletins faithfully sent my way, a variety of items caught my attention that are worth sharing with the readership of *Clarion*. We begin with an item in the congregational news of the Redeemer Church at Winnipeg from February 22, 2009, which read as follows:

Recently, one of our members applied for and received an exemption from being required to be part of a union in a place of employment where the other employees are required to be part of the union. Such an exemption was granted due to the fact that we are "members of a religious group which has as one of the articles of its faith the belief that members of the group are precluded from being members of and supporting any union," and that our member "has a personal belief in those articles of faith." We see this as a real blessing from the Lord, who allows us to function in our secular society, even though we are Christians. What was striking about the decision made by the Manitoba Labour Board is that it based its decision in part on the precedent set by other members who have applied for similar

exemptions. This shows the need for us as church members to be consistent in our approach to union membership. We should not pledge allegiance to some labour union, and give assurances that we will support it in strike action. If any of you are in the position where somehow you have been caught in a situation where your place of work is unionized, and you seek help in requesting an exemption from union membership, please contact one of the elders.

It is worth drawing attention to this as an encouragement to all who may find themselves in similar situations. There is a need for solidarity among God's people. This also applies in such a matter as working on Sundays. There can be great pressure to do this, especially for young people as they look for a part time job. If only one member of the church is willing to compromise, it jeopardizes the stance of all the others. There is a need to stand together.

The second item comes from the March 9, 2009 congregational news of the church at Grassie. It read, You will have noticed that the bulletin looks a bit different today. It was decided that the Grassie bulletin would only

contain items which pertain directly to the Grassie congregation in order to better highlight these events and clear the bulletin of a lot of other events which are more removed from congregational life. These other announcements will now be included in a separate Regional News which will be published bi-weekly. Most announcements are included far enough ahead of time for this not to be a problem but if you do need to submit announcements which are of regional interest, keep this new bi-weekly publication frequency in mind.

It is not that Grassie needs my commendation for this move, but it certainly has my sympathy. A church news should be a church news. Often one sees local church bulletins where the actual congregational matters are only a minor part of the bulletin. I have noticed that some churches are putting limits on lengths and frequency of announcements, but it seems Grassie's decision is an even better move toward letting the local congregational activities receive their proper emphasis.

From various bulletins it can be noticed that liturgy continues to be in a state of flux. In Vernon it was

decided to have a trial period of having the congregation stand for the song after the sermon. The purpose "is not just to have everyone stretch after sitting through the sermon, but it is meant to draw attention to the importance of responding with praise to the preaching of God's Word. Council will review this matter in two months, and in the meantime the congregation is invited to express their thoughts about it to a council member." My only question upon reading this is, why then not stand for all the songs as a way to draw attention to the importance of the congregation's praise of God?

The church at Aldergrove also made a few changes in their liturgy. In essence, they brought their liturgy more in line with the B format as found in the *Book of Praise*. They also introduced congregational "amens" following the greeting and the benediction. They also allowed for the collective saying of the "Lord's Prayer." My understanding is that this is a very common practice in the English speaking world. It is very much in keeping with the collective nature of the prayer. Finally, it was decided to end the practice of having a pre-service song once they had worked their way through the revised Psalm rhymings. These pre-service songs seem to come and go. I remember them from my teenage years during the seventies. Then churches did away with them. Later churches introduced them again. I suspect that over the next few years that pattern of ebb and flow will continue. In terms of the pre-service songs, my preference is for the ebb. There is something powerful in having the first

congregational singing as a response to the covenant greeting of our covenant God.

The following item from the Kerwood bulletin of March 29, 2009 caught my eye as worth sharing. Rev. Kleyn wrote,

It was brought to my attention how often Facebook is misused also in our circles. Facebook is a new and modern way that people connect with each other, and so also another means to be a witness to a world lost in sin. When others look at our accounts on Facebook, what do they read about us? And what sort of pictures do they see about us? Does what we write and show on Facebook really witness that we are children of a Sovereign Father? Let us be careful with what we share for many to see and honour our God also in this.

Staying with Kerwood for our next item, the consistory report of March 24, 2009 informed the congregation of plans "to have phone calls to the church forwarded to the manse instead of the message machine in the consistory room." The aim is have a more prompt response to inquiries. While one can appreciate the effort to respond more promptly, my experiences with being too available is not positive. The church phone number is fair game for a host of telephone solicitors. Further, the vast majority of other calls were for money, often from people who did not even living remotely in the vicinity of the church. Hopefully, it will be different in this case.

The councils of Smithville and Toronto dealt with the matter of e-mail correspondence between council and members of the

congregation. While allowing for some flexibility, both decided that official council business should go through official channels, which means a written letter. It is a sign of our electronic age that such a decision has to be made but I think it is a good one. Emailed letters are not even signed, and a signature still is a sign of authenticity.

Finally, one consistory addressed the matter of wedding receptions. It decided that "couples wishing to marry in the Lord will be advised to have a Godly reception and to exercise discretion in their choice of an MC, entertainment, and music that is God pleasing and upbuilding to a Christian life. The minister, in consultation with the consistory, reserves the right not to solemnize a marriage if it is not in keeping with Godly guidelines, Gal. 5:16-26." It is regrettable that a council has to make such a decision but I suspect it addresses a concern also found in other congregations. Over the years I have been in situations where there was reason to question the propriety of skits and speeches at the reception. The Marriage Form speaks of a couple desiring to begin marriage in the name of the Lord and to complete it to his glory. It is to be expected that the celebration of their marriage sets the tone for such a life. At the same time, it is hard to visualize how this policy can be implemented since the details of a wedding reception are usually beyond the control of the couple and even with the best planning there can be unwelcome surprises.

With this we wrap it up for another time. Hopefully it will serve as food for thought and edifying discussions.



# Kerwood Welcomes Rev. Kleyn and Family

The Kleyn family had moved into the Kerwood manse at the end of September. Despite the pouring rain, they were met at the house by a group of men eager to help them move in. After a couple of short hours and many hands later, they were settled into their new house. Candidate Kleyn quickly became involved in the church: attending meetings, visiting families, and teaching catechism classes, all while preparing for his upcoming examination in October.

## Installation

On November 16, 2008, the much anticipated ordination and installation of Candidate Cornelius Kleyn took place. After being a member of our church, we could now call Candidate Kleyn our minister!

Rev. and Mrs. C. Kleyn sr. made the trip to Kerwood from South Africa to administer the ordination and installation. As text for his sermon Rev. Kleyn chose John 21:1-14. In his message, Rev. Kleyn spoke of how the disciples had been out fishing all night and had caught nothing. Jesus appeared but the disciples were prevented from recognizing Him. Upon hearing Jesus' direction and witnessing the filling of their nets, their eyes were opened and they realized who Jesus was. Jesus

wants to prepare them for his ascension, when they will have to do without a direct connection, but will have to do with his words and deeds. The disciples, upon catching nothing, had to admit the futility of their situation; the Lord had driven the fish into their net. On their own, the disciples will be unable to catch men, but the Lord will drive men into the net of preaching. He will take care of the catch, as long as they follow his instruction. The Lord supplies his servants with all that they need for service.

That afternoon the new Rev. C. Kleyn presented his inaugural sermon. As text, he used 2 Corinthians 4:7, and as theme: God gives treasure in jars of clay to show the all surpassing power is not from us but from God. Rev. Kleyn asked: what do we expect from a preacher? Do we expect him to answer all our questions? To have a high level of knowledge? To visit often? The church at Corinth expected the preacher to display the power of God by performing miracles. In their opinion, Paul displayed much weakness and so they were not able to boast about him. Paul confirms that he is weak and unworthy to proclaim the gospel. Yet this does not disqualify him, but rather points all the more to the power of God. The treasure



*The Kerwood men's choir sang  
"Be Strong in the Lord"*

that we have is the glorious message of salvation in Christ alone. This treasure is stored in clay jars: something that is weak, brittle, cheap, and very common. They are worth little, but the treasure is worth much. The message, not the vessel, is what needs to be our focus. Rev. Kleyn stated that he may not please everyone in the congregation. He is weak, yet hopes that this will not stand in the way of the treasure that is coming from him. A weak preacher shows God's strength. If Paul had reason to boast of himself, God's power would not be central in his life. We may boast in Christ, the central part of the message that we receive. No one is worthy to preach this message; the weakness and vulnerability of the



The Young Peoples sang  
"Here I am to Worship"

one who brings the message should strengthen the message that they bring.

### Welcome evening

To complete an already full day, everyone remained at church after the afternoon service for a dinner of soup and buns and the welcome program. John Boeringa opened the evening and said a few words to get things started. He made mention of the fact that this is the first time Kerwood has had a minister come from our own congregation! Yet this certainly had its benefits as it allowed Rev. Kleyn to start visits, teach catechism classes, attend council meetings, move to a new town, and adjust to a new baby, etc.

Next came an "unscramble" activity. A member of each congregation clan went to the front with a letter. The Kleyns were asked to unscramble the letters and quickly determined that they spelled "Welcome to Kerwood." Each clan had to describe their family, using the letter that they had received. They were also asked to have their family stand up and present the Kleyns with a gift that corresponded with their letter and word. People certainly got very creative in this activity! Words ranged from excited to kippen to economical to overhaul and

Ontario. The Kleyns received a variety of gifts: from a toy car for little Jonathan, a set of *lange broek* for each person to prepare for the Strathroy winters, to an Esso gift card to help them make the drive from Strathroy to Wyoming. One clan even sang the famous jingle "Good things grow in Ontario" and presented the Kleyns with a variety of food fresh from their garden.

A rousing game of trivia was played. The game very quickly became rather competitive, with Rev. Kleyn also racing to the front of the church to ring the bell first. Some of the questions included were: what is the full name of the youngest member of our church? What is the name of the first baby born in the Bible? What year was the church built in? What is the most common first name in the church? Who is the member that lives the farthest?

Rev. and Mrs. Kleyn were then presented with a scrapbook from the congregation. The scrapbook was no ordinary scrapbook, for included with each page was a voucher to be redeemed by the Kleyns at their leisure. The vouchers covered dinner, coffee, a shopping trip, a hand drawn family portrait, a selection of homemade cards, and so much more. This is an excellent way for the congregation to display their various talents and for Rev. and Mrs. Kleyn to further get to know the members of the church.

This presentation was followed by coffee and dessert and further opportunity to speak with Rev. and Mrs. Kleyn, as well as Rev. and

# Church News

Examined by Classis Ontario North on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009 and declared eligible for call:

**Candidate Ryan DeJonge**

Called by the church at Langley, British Columbia, as co-pastor:

**Candidate R. DeJonge**

Called by the church of Tintern, Ontario:

**Candidate R. DeJonge**

Declined the call to Chatham, ON:

**Rev. W. den Hollander**

of Toronto, Ontario.

Called by the church of Armadale, Australia, for mission work (as a third missionary in Lae, Papua New Guinea):

**Candidate Ryan DeJonge**

Mrs. Kleyn sr. May the Lord continue to bless the church of Kerwood and the new ministry that has begun!



The new Rev. C. Kleyn with his wife and son, along with Rev. and Mrs. Kleyn Sr.

# Elora Welcomes Rev. VanderVelde and Family

The newly renovated manse in Elora bustled with activity during the March break; the new minister was moving in! In short order the family was unpacked, the unfamiliar surroundings becoming more like home.

## Installation

The installation was set for Sunday, April 5. Elora's counselor, Rev. Geurts, led the morning worship service, choosing as text 2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:2: "All scripture is God-breathed" and "Preach the Word." When the Lord sends a minister to his congregation He also sends his Word. The minister serves the Lord by bringing the Word. The whole counsel of God is proclaimed for training in godliness, the Word is the foundation of our lives. Secondly, the congregation serves the Lord by obeying his Word. There is a response to the preaching; it is given by grace, resulting in a life of service and good works.

Then, with the appropriate form being read, Rev. C.J. VanderVelde was installed. And, while the congregation looked on, the form of subscription was presented and signed. A number of brothers representing neighbouring churches were



*Our MC for the evening,  
Br. John Hutten*

present and spoke words of congratulations and God's blessing. A coffee social was enjoyed by all present following the service.

The afternoon service saw Rev. VanderVelde take as text Psalm 27:4-6. The text was set in the context of the covenant fellowship we may have with the Lord, knowing the Lord as the God of our lives through Jesus Christ our Saviour. It is this gospel of comfort that a preacher may bring to the congregation every week. The believer prays and rejoices about covenant fellowship with the Lord. The author David was in grave

danger and hardship, also suffering because of his sin; even so he maintained his trust and confidence in the stronghold of his life, the covenant Lord. The character of the covenant fellowship was that David wanted to be in the temple of the Lord – to have the Lord in the centre of his life, to experience his grace. The Lord blesses us with safety and security; He will never forsake us. The consequence of fellowship with the Lord is the joy of living in faith, the comfort of having the Lord as our Head; this is reflected in our lives of thanksgiving. Thanks be to the Lord for the covenant fellowship we have in Him. The words with which Rev. VanderVelde ended the sermon were "and this is the gospel that I may preach to you."

## Welcome evening

Then, on Friday evening April 17, the congregation was invited to the school gym where Rev. and Mrs. VanderVelde, Nicolette, and Garret were, in a literal sense, warmly welcomed into the congregation. The evening was full of fun and laughter, food and drink, all in the context of thankfulness. There were a number of items on the agenda



*The VanderVelde family enjoying the evening*

Needless to guess who received the basket! These, among presentations by the study societies, young people, children, an impromptu choir, and much singing gave a thoroughly enjoyed evening for all.

intended to introduce the VanderVelde family to the congregation: a "story" slightly embellished describing the professions of each family, a number of members on stage which the minister had to arrange in order by age. There was one which the ladies led in which the congregation was asked to stand and then only after successfully answering one of the (interesting!) questions could be seated – the one remaining standing at the end would receive a gift basket.



*Mrs. Claire Hutten introducing the members of the congregation*



*The VanderVeldes are presented with a painting of the Elora Mill*

In summary, Elora's desire and prayer has been realized, a pastor and shepherd for the flock in this area. The Lord's gracious hand continues to provide, the church gathering work continues by God's grace, also in this community, and we together look forward to years of fruitful service in his kingdom, under his direction and blessing. Indeed, what a blessing it is! Praise God from whom all blessings flow!





# Ray of Sunshine

By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Patricia Gelms

## Psalm 121

### A song of ascents

I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip – He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you – the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm – He will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

### Birthdays in August:

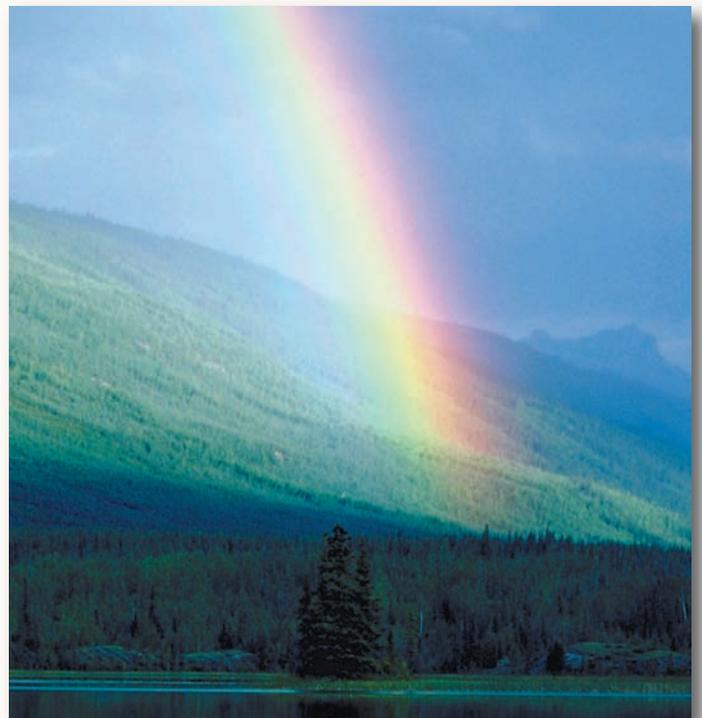
- 4 **TERENCE BERENDS** will be 33  
6528 1st Line  
RR 3, Fergus, ON N1M 2W4
- 5 **PHILIP SCHUURMAN** will be 50  
1156 Diltz Road  
Dunnville, ON N1A 2W2
- 9 **ROSE MALDA** will be 52  
Mt. Nemo Christian Nursing Home  
RR 2, Milton, ON L9T 2X6
- 18 **FENNY KUIK** will be 57  
140 Foch Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R2C 5H7

We would like to share Psalm 121 with you as the time of your birthdays approach. The summer time is often a time of travelling and vacationing; it is good to reflect that the Lord is watching over our comings and goings at all times and especially while we go from place to place. Birthdays are also milestones for us and it is a good time to reflect on the Lord's care

for us over the past year. We offer you our congratulations as you celebrate your special day. We hope you have a great time celebrating with family and friends. We are thankful that the Lord has kept you in his care over this past year and we pray that He will continue to give you all that you need in the next year. Remember that the Lord is your keeper and He will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

If you have somebody to add to our birthday list or contact information needs to be changed, please let us know:

548 Kemp Road East, RR 2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2  
Phone: (905) 563-0380  
Email: [jcorgelms@porchlight.ca](mailto:jcorgelms@porchlight.ca)



Reviewed By W.L. Bredenhof

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

**Guide to the Writings of Herman Bavinck,**  
**Eric D. Bristley,**  
**Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008**

**Additional Information:**  
**Paperback, 157 pages, \$15.00 USD**

With the publication of the English translation of all four volumes of his *Reformed Dogmatics*, there has been a surge of interest in Herman Bavinck (1854-1921). A contemporary (and equal) of Abraham Kuyper, Bavinck was a significant figure in the history of the Reformed Churches in The

Netherlands. Bavinck's influence has also extended into North America and scholars are only beginning to grasp how much he influenced Dutch-American Reformed theologians such as Cornelius VanTil and Louis Berkhof.

The publication of this little volume will prove to be very helpful for further studies of Bavinck in the North American context. W. DeGreef wrote a similar guide to the writings of John Calvin, and like Calvin, Bavinck has a huge body of writings available. From books and articles to forewords and reviews, Bristley compiles virtually all the bibliographical information available. Most of the material out

there is still in Dutch; however, the book also features a helpful essay by John Bolt on English translations of Bavinck. Rounding out the volume is a short introductory biography.

Nearly a century after his death, the English-speaking Reformed world is finally discovering (or rediscovering) how tall this giant really was. This guide will be the go-to source as a new round of Bavinck studies commence. We owe a debt of gratitude to Eric Bristley for compiling this guide and to Reformation Heritage Books for publishing it. As a final note, the book also has a companion website, [www.bavinckguide.com](http://www.bavinckguide.com).

**Why We're Not Emergent (By Two Guys Who Should Be),**  
**Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck, Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008**

**Additional Information:**  
**Paperback, 256 pages, \$18.99**

Kevin DeYoung is a young Reformed pastor in East Lansing, Michigan. Ted Kluck is one of his parishioners and a journalist. Both have many of the qualifications to be part of the emergent movement, but neither is. In this book, they explain why they are where they are.

For those not in the know, the emergent church movement is a diverse coalition of authors, pastors, and theologians who have become disillusioned with much of North American Christianity. They share common themes, protests, and ideas. Essentially, the

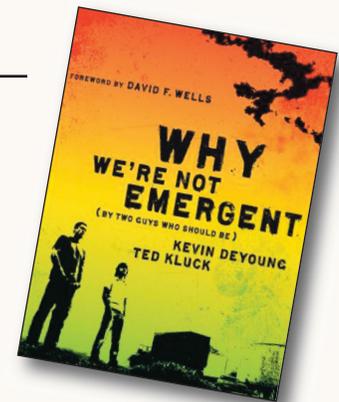
emergent church movement is an application of postmodernism to Christianity. It has been very influential throughout North America and beyond. Some of the popular figures include Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, Leonard Sweet, Doug Pagitt, and Tony Jones.

*Why We're Not Emergent* is a deft, critical examination of the emergent church movement. The authors share some of the concerns of the emergent crowd, but they find their remedies to be troubling. Ambiguity, skepticism, uncertainty, and doubt are embraced by emergents. Creeds and confessions are found to be seriously alarming, as are other careful formulations of doctrine. Further, many of them are uncomfortable with Scripture as a foundation for faith and life, even to the point of vigorously protesting the Reformation motto *sola Scriptura* (by Scripture alone).

What makes this book worth recommending is not only the

helpful description and analysis, but also the manner in which this is all communicated. This is a well-written volume. DeYoung and Kluck alternate with most of the chapters. DeYoung's chapters tend to be more analytical and theological, whereas Kluck offers are a more breezy, lay-man's description and assessment of the movement. If you're going to read just one book about this subject, I'd say make it this one.

Note to the readers: those interested in a more detailed, theological analysis will want to read D.A. Carson's *Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).



## A Reformed Bible College?!

For some time already a number of brothers and sisters from the Fraser Valley have occupied themselves with efforts to establish a Reformed Bible College. They envisioned an institution of learning where persons who have completed instruction at Credo Christian High school or its equivalent would be able to continue Reformed studies while they attended university or college. An early public meeting on the subject showed considerable community support for the concept. Rev. K.A. Kok has subsequently presented a brief lecture series on the Psalms and another on idolatry in an attempt to give a sense of what a Reformed Bible College would be about. To build on the success of these lectures, further events are in the makings for the end of August to speak about life at university under the leadership of Dr Ben Faber and at the end of October to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth featuring br. Jeff Temple.

What's behind the vision of a Reformed Bible College? Let's put it this way: once our students graduate from high school, many continue to learn more about history or English or woodworking or whatever suits their fancy. It is understood that further learning and further development of skills is necessary for employment purposes as well as for the development of God's kingdom. As a result, we expend considerable effort and money to make this learning possible. When it comes, however, to developing their knowledge and skills in relation to Bible studies, our young people receive very little opportunity. By and large catechism instruction ends more or less when the youth finish high school and all that's left is Young Peoples' Society and personal Bible study. Neither of

those two have a strong track record of helping the youth grow by leaps and bounds in their Bible knowledge. (None of this, of course, takes anything away from the preaching, but preaching has a different focus than increasing Bible knowledge and Bible skills.) As the Lord gives financial and political opportunities to do more in Bible studies, we do well to make work of improving these possibilities. This is the more so because there are young people who expressly want further Bible instruction.

One could reply that there are a number of Bible colleges available in the Valley already. That's indeed true. And perhaps that's part of the problem. The Bible colleges where our young people could (and do) enrol tend to embrace evangelicalism, complete with its typical Arminian and Pentecostal overtones. On top of that, a critical way of reading the Bible has of late embedded itself in these Bible colleges. This is undeniably a factor contributing to why so many covenant youth have withdrawn from the churches across the Valley over the years. All of it points in one direction: establish a Reformed alternative to the Bible colleges of the Valley.

A self-appointed board has drafted a Mission Statement and a Rationale for a Reformed Bible College. They are as follows.

### Mission

*The Reformed Bible College provides in-depth instruction in the Bible and in the defence of the Reformed faith. Growing knowledge of the Word of God together with an understanding of how to interpret and apply it in the contemporary world will help graduates to live biblically. Academic instruction in the Bible and in how to promote and defend it in present day spiritual and social realities will help*

*graduates to integrate faith and life, and will train men and women to fulfill their calling in church, family and vocation.*

### Rationale

*In light of increasing challenges of secularism, modified Christianity and stronger influences of other (false) religions it is prudent for members of the churches of Jesus Christ to encourage the establishment of a Reformed Bible College. The college is based on and committed to the Holy Scripture or the Bible as the Word of God. This Word is:*

- *Inspired by God the Holy Spirit,*
- *Infallible, that is, completely reliable and trustworthy,*
- *Inerrant, being without error, contradiction or misrepresentation,*
- *Sufficient, revealing all that we need to believe in order to be saved.*

*This Word is the final rule of faith and life, and functions as the basis for all authority.*

*In conformity with the Word the basis will also include the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort (confessions adopted by the churches in defence of the faith during the time of the Great Reformation) as well as the ecumenical creeds of Christendom (the Apostles', Athanasian, and Nicene Creeds.*

### Vision

*In fulfilling its Mission, the Reformed Bible College offers stand-alone courses on specific Bible books, Bible themes, and on promotion and defence of the Reformed faith. Courses vary in length and credit value, but generally, one credit consists of twelve hours of instruction (contact time). Initially, the*

offerings may not be fully available or regularly scheduled, but in time it is anticipated that an increasing catalogue of courses will be regularly available. The following are examples of the courses that are envisioned:

- Old Testament Survey
- New Testament Survey
- OT and NT Book Studies
- Introduction to Hermeneutics
- Apologetics
- Reformed Confessions
- Christian Ethics
- Christian and Culture
- Church History

Course credits can be accumulated over an extended period of time. A program of study, prescribing the completion of a specified selection of courses and a specified number of credits will be designed and offered. The completion of such a program would lead to the awarding of a diploma. Individual course completion would be recognized by the issuance of a certificate. To be acknowledged as having completed a course, students must complete the requirements set out for the course, including reading and writing assignments. Those who audit a course will receive a certificate of audit.

All courses at the Reformed Bible College will be open to everyone. They will be tailored in an academic structure in line with what can be expected at a post-secondary institution of learning. They will benefit all who wish to enhance their knowledge and understanding of God's revealed Word and who desire to grow in faith and to be better equipped to fulfill their calling and leadership role in family, church and society.

The board would, of course, love to be in a position to implement its goals immediately. We realize, however, that it will take time – and other necessities. As we strive to bring our hopes into reality, we take the opportunity to solicit your prayerful support in whatever way you see possible.

Contact address: Peter deBoer,  
# 54, 20788 – 87th Avenue, Langley,  
BC V1M 3W7

### **Press Release of the Combined Meeting of the Board and Committee of Administration, Inter-League Publication Board held May 4, 2009 in Guelph, ON**



The chairman of the Board, Dan VanDelden, opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer and welcomed everyone. The agenda was established.

In attendance for the Board: representing the League of Men's Societies in Ontario, Dick Nyenhuis and Dan VanDelden and representing the League of Women's Societies in Ontario, Mary DeBoer and Betsy Kingma. In attendance for the Committee of Administration (CoA): Paul DeBoer as chairman, Cathy Jonker as administrator, Annette Nobel as secretary, and Debbie Swaving for sales. Brian Jager, treasurer, and Theresa Westrik, marketing representative, were absent with notification.

Cathy Jonker gave a progress report on books being worked on. Currently, work is being done to republish *The Bride's Treasure* and *To the Praise of His Glory* as one combined volume. This book may be offered online rather than in a hard copy. There are a few new

workbooks being developed, which are usually in high demand. Several other books will be re-printed since inventory is low.

In terms of marketing, it appears that the ILPB is not well-known among the study societies. Advertising in *Clarion* and *Reformed Perspective* will be increased to generate more awareness of the ILPB's resources.

The financial statements were reviewed and the financial picture is very good. The treasurer has requested to be relieved of his duties and the CoA and Board will search for a replacement. Due to a large amount of old receivables, the practice will be implemented that no books will be sent to accounts which are more than 180 days old.

Sales for the current year are up from the previous year. Some new books were received from Pro Ecclesia in Australia for our review.

The website [www.ilpb.ca](http://www.ilpb.ca) is fully functional and is still being worked on to give more information about individual books. Various possibilities to make the website more extensive and user-friendly were discussed and will be pursued.

A questionnaire was sent out to as many study societies in Canada as possible to help determine awareness of the ILPB, its website, and how much the study guides are used. Response has been good and results are still being tabulated. These results will be used to direct future policies of the ILPB. A number of books from a couple of other publishers will be reviewed for recommendation to the societies. Possibilities for additional workbooks look quite promising and will be followed up on.

General question period was held and the press release approved. Paul DeBoer closed the meeting with prayer.



## Press Release of Classis Alberta, June 9, 2009

### 1. Opening

On behalf of the convening church of Taber, Rev. M. Jagt opened the meeting in a Christian manner. A special welcome is extended to brother Tim Sikkema who is a theological intern with Rev. R. Aasman in Edmonton and to brother K. Veldman of the URC in Lethbridge. The following memorabilia are mentioned: Rev. R. Bredenhof and his wife were blessed with a baby daughter; Rev. R. Aasman was away for teaching in a foreign country this past January; Rev. E. J. Tiggelaar's daughter had a stillborn daughter recently; Rev. J. VanVliet has taken over as professor of dogmatics at our College; sadly, this points to the fact that Dr. N. H. Gootjes is unable to return to the College because of health reasons; Dr. J. DeJong's health has deteriorated; Rev. J. Louwse and his wife were blessed with a baby daughter.

Credentials are in good order. Classis is constituted and the following brothers took their place as executive: Rev. R. Bredenhof, chairman; Rev. R. Aasman, vice-chairman; Rev. J. Louwse, clerk.

### 2. Reports

- a. The Committee for Financial Aid to Needy Students for the Ministry submitted a report to Classis. The committee proposes to support a theological student at our college for 2009/2010 to the amount of \$14,760.00 per year which works out to \$10.00 per communicant member. This is approved.
- b. The church at Immanuel submitted a report on the archives of Classes Alberta indicating that the archives are in good order.

- c. Church Visitor reports to the churches at Edmonton-Immanuel, Edmonton-Providence, St. Albert, Coaldale, and Taber were dealt with in closed session. These reports were received with gratitude to the Lord that things are done decently and in good order in these congregations.
- d. Rev. E. J. Tiggelaar reports on contact with the Alberta government. Mostly this has to do with Canadian Reformed ministers being allowed to officiate at marriages.

### 3. Proposals and instructions

- a. The church at Taber submitted an instruction that suggests Classis Alberta seriously consider using electronic media such as web/teleconferencing when there is no material for the agenda. The church at Barrhead also submitted a written report outlining the use of video conferencing. The church at Barrhead is asked to look into this matter and to present a proposal to the next classis.

### 4. Question Period Article 44, CO

Some advice was requested by two congregations regarding the matter of church discipline and it was given.

### 5. URC Greeting

Brother K. Veldman gives greetings from the URC and expresses the wish for true unity between our churches. Rev. D. Poppe responds and expresses the desire on our part for unity.

### 6. Appointments

- a. The next classis was scheduled to be convened by the church at Barrhead on

October 20, 2009, with alternate date December 8, 2009. The proposed officers are: chairman, Rev. M. Jagt, vice-chairman, Rev. R. Bredenhof, clerk, Rev. R. Aasman.

- b. Delegation to Regional Synod Abbotsford, November 3, 2009: elders: M. Tams and J. Vanveen; alternates (in order) H. Stel and H. Voorhorst; ministers: R. Aasman and H. Kalkman; alternates (in order) E. J. Tiggelaar and W. B. Slomp.

### 7. Personal Question Period

Several brothers made use of the question period.

### 8. Closing

After the acts were adopted and the press release approved, the chairman closed the meeting in a Christian manner.

R. Aasman

