

Clarion

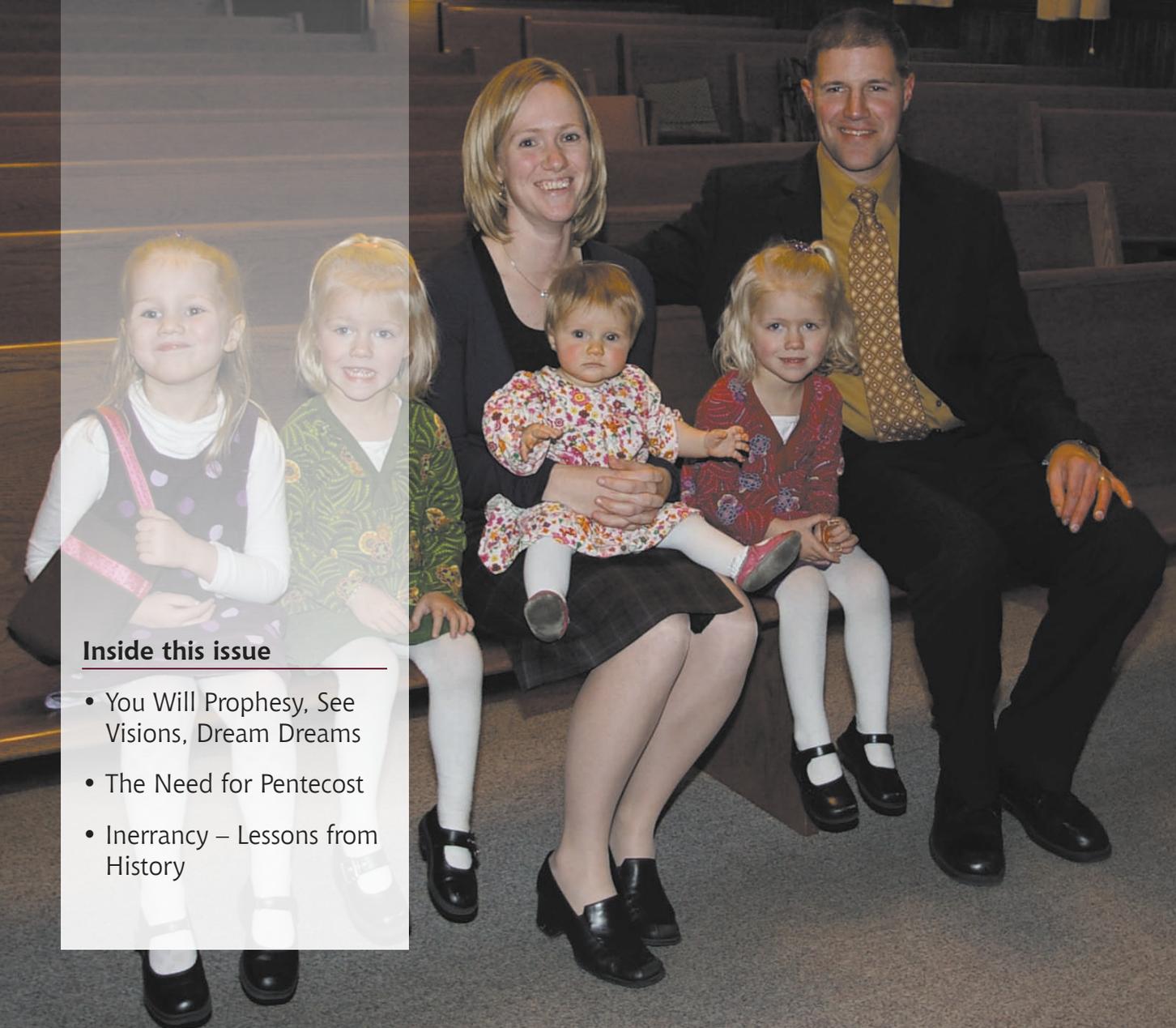
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE • Volume 59, No. 11 • May 21, 2010



London Welcomes Rev. Bredenhof

Inside this issue

- You Will Prophecy, See Visions, Dream Dreams
- The Need for Pentecost
- Inerrancy – Lessons from History





Rev. Richard Aasman is minister of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton, Alberta
raasman@telusplanet.net

You Will Prophecy, See Visions, Dream Dreams

Moses' dream would become reality

Pentecost is associated with vivid images. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and they began to speak in tongues. In the time that followed, other believers were speaking in tongues, prophesying, and performing miracles. To this day, some are of the opinion that the gift of the Holy Spirit enables believers to prophesy, speak in tongues, interpret tongues, and perform miracles. Is this really true? In fact, is that really the message of Pentecost?

We read about what happened on Pentecost in Acts 2. On that day Peter delivered a Pentecost sermon. After explaining that he and the other disciples were not drunk, he quotes Joel 2 to show what is really happening. We are probably familiar with these words:

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

What did Joel mean with this prophecy? We don't know a lot about the prophet Joel except that he preached to the southern tribe of Judah and called them to repentance. The first part of Joel's prophecy deals with punishment for sin and a call to repent. The promise of the outpouring of the Spirit in Joel 2:28-32 is a turning point that shows the blessings and protection of God for his people.

In the last days

By saying that God will pour out the Spirit "in the last days" Joel makes clear that this is a future event. Does that mean Old Testament believers did not have the Holy Spirit? The only way a person can have a relationship with God is through faith, and faith is

worked by the Holy Spirit. Also in Old Testament times every true believer had to be touched by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. However, in Old Testament times believers did not enjoy *the full gift* of the Holy Spirit. At that time the Holy Spirit was given in rich measure to only a select group of people – prophets, priests, and kings. The gift of the Holy Spirit gave them insight to prophecy and power to rule over the people.

Joel's revelation that young and old, male and female will prophesy seems revolutionary

We see in Numbers 11 that Moses was endowed with the Holy Spirit and that endowed him with special gifts. The Spirit was also endowed to the seventy elders who were to guide the people. In connection with this, there is this remarkable story in Numbers 11:26-29 about Eldad and Medad who received the Spirit and prophesied. When Joshua protested and encouraged Moses to stop them, we read Moses' reply in verse 29: "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" Moses had a dream: he dreamt of a day when not just special men like him or the seventy elders would have the Spirit but that all God's people would receive the Spirit and would prophesy. Quite possibly Joel was thinking of Moses' words when he was prophesying about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Moses' dream would become reality. A day is coming when God will pour out his Spirit on all people. And that means the full gift of the Holy Spirit.



Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Visscher; Copy Manager: Laura Veenendaal
Coeditors: R. Aasman, E. Kampen, K. Stam, C. Van Dam

ADDRESS FOR COPY MANAGER:

Clarion, 57 Oakridge Drive South, St. Albert, AB T8N 7H2
E-Mail: veenendaal@shaw.ca

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202

Subscriptions: clarionadmin@premierpublishing.ca

Advertisements: clarionads@premierpublishing.ca

Website: www.premierpublishing.ca

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

Subscription Rates for 2010

	Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada*	\$49.00	\$ 85.00
U.S.A. U.S. Funds  	\$65.00	\$ 90.00
International	\$95.00	\$145.00

*Including 5% GST – No. 890967359RT

Advertisements: \$17.00 per column inch

Full Colour Display Advertisements: \$21.00 per column inch

We reserve the right to refuse ads.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, Canada[™] through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

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

In This Issue

Editorial – You Will Prophesy, See Visions, Dream Dreams
— R. Aasman 278

Treasures, New and Old – The Need for Pentecost
— D. Wynia 281

Inerrancy — Lessons from History (6) — W. Bredenhof 282

Ecumena – Parish Nurse — G. van Popta 285

College Corner — G. Visscher 287

Roadside Assistance — F. VanWoudenberg Sikkema 290

London Welcomes Rev. Reuben Bredenhof
— L. Schouten 292

Our Sixtieth Anniversary — D. Kok 293

Book Reviews – reviewed by S. Harsevoort, C. Bouwman 295

Press Releases – Classis Central Ontario,
Classis Ontario-West 297

On all people

In his Pentecost sermon Peter makes clear that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had now happened, based on the victory of Jesus Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. Joel uses amazing imagery when he speaks about God pouring out his Spirit. The Spirit will come not in drops – he will *pour like a stream of living water!* The Old Testament believer could not claim that reality. For them – to use the imagery of Joel – the Spirit had come in drops: enough, but not nearly in fullness. The time before Christ was a time of shadows waiting for the fulfillment. Joel adds that God would pour out his Spirit “on all people.” There are two things we should note here. First, that does not mean automatic salvation for everyone; notice the last line of the quotation from Joel: “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Secondly, “all people” means more than the Israelites. At Pentecost the promises made to Abraham were now being realized: true Israel is not comprised of direct, physical descendants of Abraham but all true believers. The gift of the Holy Spirit would be extended to believers of every nationality and walk of life.

Prophecy by young and old, male and female

In the Old Testament, prophecy was typically delivered by men of mature age. Therefore Joel’s revelation that young and old, male and female will prophesy seems revolutionary. Both male and female, young and old, free and slave, would have the Holy Spirit poured upon them. They will all prophesy, dream dreams, and see visions. We need to appreciate the terminology used by Joel and Peter. God reveals Himself in prophecy, in visions, and in dreams, as the Scriptures repeatedly testify. Therefore, when Joel and Peter speak of prophesying, dreaming dreams, and seeing visions, this is reference to the different ways that God has revealed Himself to his people. Now through the Holy Spirit amazing revelation would come to young and old, male and female. Here we come to the all-important question: does this mean we receive new revelations that prophesy of the future?

What is a prophet?

To answer this question and understand what Joel and Peter were saying, it is important that we understand what it means to be a prophet. Often one thinks of a prophet as someone who predicts the future. More recently some have supposed that a prophet is one who speaks in tongues. In the Bible some prophets did predict the future and after Pentecost in the very early church there was speaking in tongues. But speaking in tongues and prophesying of the future ended as the New Testament gospel was actually written down. For instance, the Book of Revelation gives remarkable insight into what we need to know about present history right up to and including the consummation of history. There is no need for more prophecy or speaking in tongues to communicate things not yet known.

I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts

However, prophecy as described by Joel and Peter is still needed. How do we understand this? Notice that Lord's Day 12 says of the office of all believers: "as prophet confess his Name." A prophet is, in the first place, someone who is intimately familiar with the Word of God. To be a prophet is to know God's Word. The statement "Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams" means that with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, all believers, without distinction of gender, age, and social status, receive the wisdom and ability to know God. Moses' dream is fulfilled with Pentecost. In the time following Pentecost, being a prophet filled with the Spirit is not about predicting the future, but knowing the deep truths about the Word of God: it is being intimately familiar with the prophecies, dreams, and visions that are recorded in Scripture. Just look at Jeremiah 31:33-34:

"I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord.

This is like Joel 2: a prophet will know the gospel in his or her heart. That is the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on Pentecost: every believer will be a prophet who receives incredible insights into the Word of God. As a believer you know this. You know of the love of God in Jesus Christ; you know deep truths about time and eternity, life, and death. You know how to evangelize to your neighbour. You are still learning from Bible study and the preaching of the gospel. But you also know enough and are spiritually rich enough that you can personally go as a prophet to others and teach them the gospel. We think of 2 Peter 1:19: "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." It is a tremendous gift to us from our Lord Jesus Christ that we not only have his complete Word, but we have the Holy Spirit in us to illumine our hearts with that Word. It can be said to each believer: you prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams as the full revelation of the Word of God shines in your heart. With that privilege also comes responsibility: study the Word of God that you are a knowledgeable prophet who can apply the Word of God to personal life and be able to share it with others.

C



Dick Wynia



Rev. Dick Wynia is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Lincoln, Ontario
dick.wynia@gmail.com



MATTHEW 13:52

The Need for Pentecost

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

Galatians 5:16

Why did Christ send the Holy Spirit? What part does the Holy Spirit play in God’s work of salvation? If we’re ever going to see what Pentecost is really all about, if we’re ever going to begin to celebrate this great day the way we should, we need to know why the Lord Jesus had to send the Spirit.

When the Spirit fell on people in the book of Acts, they spoke in tongues. Paul speaks about the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12-14. But is that how the Bible presents the meaning or the importance of the Spirit’s work? Is that why Christ sent us the Holy Spirit from heaven: to give us the special experience, the special feeling, that comes with speaking in tongues? Is that our great need?

Paul says a lot about the work of the Spirit in his letter to the Galatians and especially in the last part of chapter 5. In this last part of the chapter, he’s contrasting the work of the Spirit and the acts of the sinful nature or “the flesh.” And it’s in that contrast between the acts of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit that we find the answer to our question of why Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit.

When Paul talks about the sinful nature, he’s saying that we’re born sinners. Sin in all of its forms is completely natural to us. It’s as natural and as automatic as

breathing or feeling hunger or thirst or pain or pleasure. And it’s as close to us, as much a part of us, as our flesh is. When Paul says in Romans 7 that evil is right there with him and that he sees a law at work in his members, in his body, controlling his body and waging war against the law of his mind, he really means it.

And so we’re selfish. To use the expression, that’s the way we’re “wired,” or the way we’re “programmed.” So I look at the world only from my own point of view and it’s incredibly hard for me to see things from someone else’s point of view. And not so much because I can’t; it’s worse than that, it’s because I don’t want to! Because I feel like if I do, my interests will suffer, and I won’t get what I want, or what I think is best. That’s where the struggles in my family and my marriage come from. That’s where my disagreements with other people come from. And when I take that selfishness to extremes, when I let that run, then I come to things like slandering and lying and cheating other people, stealing and sexual immorality and even murder.

So when Paul speaks about “the flesh” or the sinful nature, then he’s saying, “This is why we need the Spirit. This is why we need Pentecost.” Because unless the Lord Jesus goes to his Father and receives all authority in heaven and on earth,

and receives from his Father the freedom to use all authority and power and every means to do his work of salvation in us, we won’t be saved. Unless the Lord Jesus is able to give us the gift and the power of the Holy Spirit, unless He is able to pour Him out on us so that we’re born again and our bodies become his temple, we can’t be saved. Our need is so great and so deep, sin is so powerful and so natural to us, that we need a miracle that’s a million times more miraculous and wonderful than speaking in tongues.

And this is why we have to celebrate today and rejoice. Because as remarkable as it was that the apostles could speak in tongues, as emotionally exhilarating as a person might claim it is to speak in tongues, the real glory and gospel of Pentecost is Christ’s gift of the Spirit, to come into my heart and to transform my mind, to make me a new person.

That’s what Paul is talking about in Galatians 5, that Christ has given you the Holy Spirit to give you a new nature. And that means a new way of looking at life. It means a new set of instincts, a new set of priorities and feelings and attitudes – toward God, toward your family, toward your work – that by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit are going to become natural and “automatic.”

C



Rev. Wes. Bredenhof is pastor of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ontario
wbredenhof@bell.net

Inerrancy – Lessons from History (Part 6 of 6)

We began this series by defining inerrancy and we saw that a form of this doctrine is found in the Belgic Confession. We've also surveyed what happened with this doctrine in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in the 1960s and '70s. Early in the 1960s, the CRC held to biblical inerrancy, but in 1972 this was left in question with the adoption of Report 44.

The case of Allen Verhey

Our story continues further into the 1970s and the case of Allen Verhey. Verhey graduated from Calvin Seminary in 1975 and was then examined by Classis Grand Rapids East on September 28 of that year. An eyewitness report of this exam was published in the February 1976 issue of *The Outlook*:

This fall a candidate in a preliminary examination had repeatedly told us that he intended to teach people to read the Bible *critically*. Questioned about this matter he stated that he did not believe that the serpent spoke to Eve as reported in Genesis 3. Questioned further about the earthquake mentioned in Matthew 28:2, he explained that whether or not this happened was a wrong question and the earthquake in the account should be understood as an apocalyptic literary symbol of the end. Some of the results of such a view of the Bible were also apparent in views he expressed on some moral questions. His view of abortion differed from that officially expressed by the church. The command, "Servants obey your masters" was no longer to be repeated in 1850, but the Bible taught a principle of equality under Christ which brought an end to slavery. The same principle, in his opinion, applied to the place of women in the church. Although it was plain that he held many orthodox opinions, regarding the Bible he was convinced that we cannot identify the words of biblical authors with the words of God in other times. What became apparent in the examination was that such views were held not only by him.

Despite all that, the classis still passed him and opened the way for his ordination as a minister in the CRC. That eye-witness report came from one of "the founding fathers" of the United Reformed Churches, P.Y. DeJong. His church, the Dutton CRC, decided to appeal to Classis Grand Rapids East.

The matter was not discussed until the following May and it became clear then that the classis was paralyzed. Verhey was a member of the Neland Ave CRC and so a delegate asked whether the church was interacting with Verhey on this matter. They insisted that Verhey "still holds to the authority of Scripture, creeds, teachings of Scripture. That is a hermeneutical problem. . . It's Report 44."

Dutton did not waste any time appealing Verhey's ordination to the next CRC synod. There was a lengthy and heated discussion on the appeal. A minority report was prepared which proposed to sustain the appeal of Dutton. However, although this was recommended to Synod 1976, it was not voted on. The Majority Report, which proposed to reject the appeal of Dutton, was, however, adopted. The grounds boiled down to procedure. Classis Grand Rapids East had followed the correct procedure, while Dutton's concerns about Verhey had not been expressed correctly according to the CRC Church Order and Form of Subscription.

Following Synod 1976, Dutton attempted to follow the procedure mandated by the synod and, after failing to see satisfactory results, took it to the next synod as well. Numerous churches, classes, and individuals sent overtures and appeals relating to the case. The Synod decided to pass the matter over to the Neland Ave CRC and asked them to bring a report to the next synod on Verhey's views. One conservative commentator noted that it was ridiculous to ask Verhey's church (which was on record as clearly being in favour of his views) to study his views. As it turned out, Neland Ave appointed Verhey's pastor and a number of his friends to interact with him – with predictable results. Verhey continued to be a minister in good standing.

The Verhey case gave more clear evidence that the CRC was steering for a dangerous reef. As for Verhey, today he teaches Christian Ethics at Duke Divinity School, a United Methodist institution. At some point, he was released from the ministry in the CRC.

There is a Canadian Reformed connection to this story, because in a 1977 article in *Clarion* (later republished as chapter 2 in *Essays in Reformed Doctrine*), Dr. J. Faber interacted with Allen Verhey's attack on Harold Lindsell's doctrine of inerrancy. While he chided both Verhey and Lindsell for drawing parallels between the incarnation of Christ and the inscripturation of the Bible, Faber stated that "our place on the battlefield is over against Verhey." It was clear that Faber was more comfortable with Lindsell than Verhey. Moreover, in 1977 when the Canadian Reformed Churches issued their "Appeal to the Christian Reformed Church," the Verhey case was mentioned as giving concern "that there will be a lack of doctrinal church discipline in your own church. . . ." Dr. J. Faber had also written that Appeal, together with D. Vanderboom and W.W.J. VanOene. From the Canadian Reformed perspective, it was clear that not disciplining someone who denied and attacked inerrancy was a serious reason for concern – even if said person claimed loyalty to the Three Forms of Unity.

Synod 1979

Verhey was not alone in his undermining of biblical inerrancy. In 1977, Dr. Harry Boer's book, *Above the Battle: the Bible and its Critics*, was published. Boer distinguished between infallibility and inerrancy, affirming (and redefining) the former and denying the latter. In an April 1980 article in *The Outlook*, Boer was quoted as saying, "I see no evidence in the Bible for the teaching of the inerrancy of Scripture. On the contrary, I see evidence in many places against it."

Boer's book combined with Report 44 led Classis Chicago South to submit an overture to Synod 1979 requesting reaffirmation of biblical inerrancy. The grounds were as follows:

1. Report 44 for the Synod of 1972 and its guidelines have been used to affirm that there are errors in the Bible.
2. This declaration agrees with Articles 4, 5, the Belgic Confession.
3. The Synod of 1973 claims that neither Report 44 nor its guidelines raises any doubts concerning the fact that "all that Scripture says is to be believed because the author says so" (Acts of Synod 1973, Art. 32, II, B, 2, p.34).

4. This declaration is consistent with the statement of the Synod of 1959 "that Scripture in its whole extent and in all its parts is the infallible and inerrant Word of God" (Acts of Synod 1959, Art. 134, I, B, e, p.64).

Classis Illiana submitted a similar overture, offering as grounds the need for denominational clarification on this issue.

Discussion of these overtures did not take place until the last day of Synod 1979. The synod reaffirmed the CRC's commitment to biblical inerrancy and the statements made to that effect by Synods 1959 and 1961. One might look at this and think that a major victory had been won by CRC conservatives. However, there are two mitigating factors that should dampen our enthusiasm about what happened at Synod 1979.

First, the decision was made late in the morning of the last day of the synod. According to an eye-witness report in the August 1979 issue of *The Outlook*, many delegates were leaving throughout that morning and decisions of that day were made "in great haste." Second, the decision changed nothing in the CRC. Men like Harry Boer and Allen Verhey continued to teach what they had always been teaching and no one held them accountable. They remained ministers in good standing in the CRC.

At Synod 1981 Clayton Libolt was examined for candidacy in the CRC. The September 1981 issue of *The Outlook* reported that Libolt "maintained the events of the fall and resurrection but rejected many of the details of the descriptions of these events." With one exception, the Calvin Seminary faculty had endorsed Libolt. The Calvin board of trustees likewise endorsed him with a vote of forty-two to seven. However, Synod 1981 denied him candidacy by a significant majority. Despite Synod 1979's reaffirmation of biblical inerrancy, it was necessary for Laurie Vanden Heuvel to write, "The time has come when consistories and school boards should no longer assume that applicants for positions hold to the inerrancy of Scripture. It is necessary for consistories and school boards to be more specific in their questioning." As for Clayton Libolt, he was eventually ordained as a CRC minister in 1986.

Inerrancy and the United Reformed Churches

At one time, the CRC had held to inerrancy in a meaningful and sincere way. But through the 1960s and 1970s, this position was eclipsed by the import of higher critical views from The Netherlands. After Report 44 and Synod 1972, the direction of the CRC became increasingly latitudinarian. The Verhey, Boer, and

Libolt cases were just the tip of the iceberg. Before long, the CRC had adopted a heterodox position on women in office – a position which conservatives linked to adoption of Report 44 and the drift away from inerrancy.

All along the way there were protests, overtures, and appeals. The CRC didn't deteriorate without a fight. Men who loved the CRC fought valiantly for her. Louis Praamsma, Peter Y. De Jong, Jelle Tuininga, Henry Van der Kam, and many others did everything they could to turn the tide. However, ultimately they were not able to succeed.

The debates over the authority of Scripture and the inevitable consequences led to the formation of the first Orthodox Christian Reformed Church (OCRC) in 1979. Others would soon follow. Eventually, as CRC conservatives realized that the hegemony of Calvin Seminary played a crucial role in the deterioration of the church, Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS) was established as an alternative. Conservative CRC members aspiring to the ministry would study at MARS for three years, but then would still have to do the "year of penance" at Calvin. Throughout the 1990s, many concerned CRC members and ministers would leave the CRC and form independent Reformed churches. Eventually, many of these independent churches would federate into the United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA). In 2008, the OCRC merged with the URCNA.

It is fair to say that the URCNA owes its existence to the fact that the CRC reneged on its commitment to biblical inerrancy and adopted higher critical views in its stead. Therefore, it's no surprise that the MARS website states that the seminary is committed to the "Holy Scriptures as the infallible and inerrant Word of God." Westminster Seminary California is another institution that supplies many of the candidates for the URCNA and it likewise affirms biblical inerrancy. Given the history of the CRC, it should also not be surprising that the existing URCNA Church Order also states, "We as a federation of churches declare complete subjection and obedience to the Word of God delivered to us in the inspired, infallible and inerrant book of Holy Scripture."

Given all this history, it should also be expected that the introduction to the Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO) going to the URC and CanRC synods in 2010 would use similar language: "We Reformed believers maintain that the standard for personal, public, and ecclesiastical life is God's Word, the inspired, infallible, and inerrant book of Holy Scripture." Inerrancy is

naturally a point of concern for our brothers and sisters in the URCNA.

Now, as we noted earlier, there are those who say that this introduction brings in a kind of "extra-confessional binding" to the CanRC. However, as I have argued before, the notion of "no extra-confessional binding" in the CanRC is a convenient myth. The reality is that we do have extra-confessional binding. As an example, there is nothing explicit in the Three Forms of Unity to prevent me or any other minister from saying that committed homosexual relationships are within the will of God. However, both our liturgical forms and our Church Order (after revision at Synod 2007) state that marriage is a relationship between one woman and one man. That is extra-confessional binding and there is *nothing* inappropriate about that. More examples could be given. In fact, as Dr. R. C. Janssen argues in his recent dissertation (*By This Our Subscription*), we have layers of confessing in our churches and that includes things like the Church Order and our liturgical forms. Moreover, we are bound first of all to Scripture – "no extra-confessional binding" can easily become a sort of *confessionalism* where the authority of Scripture itself is undermined.

As explained at the beginning of this series, in the nature of the case, the CanRC has already committed themselves to inerrancy by applying for and being received into membership in the North American and Presbyterian Reformed Council (NAPARC). NAPARC's constitution includes a commitment on the part of all its members to Scripture being "without error in all its parts," which is another way of saying "inerrant." I would reiterate that this is simply the contemporary and necessary outworking of the doctrine of Scripture found in the Belgic Confession. Indeed, since we have already affirmed inerrancy at NAPARC, why should we balk at affirming inerrancy in the PJCO introduction?

Conclusion

In conclusion, the history of the CRC instructs us on what happens when inerrancy is questioned, given lip service, and then abandoned. The URCNA exists because of this struggle. As many do, I have my questions about the possibility of a CanRC/URCNA merger anywhere in the near future. However, if we want to make ourselves more attractive to the URCNA, drawing inerrancy into question is certainly not a way to do it. In fact, if we were to raise questions about this doctrine, also when it comes to NAPARC we may soon find ourselves on the outside looking in. 



Rev. George van Popta is minister of the Jubilee Canadian Reformed Church at Ottawa, Ontario
gvanpopta@gmail.com

Parish Nurse

There have been moments during my ministry that I wished for deaconesses. On many occasions, I was confronted by pastoral situations that really called out for the greater involvement of women. I am sure that, as a pastor, I am not unique in this. Thankfully, in the several congregations I have served, and am serving, there have always been godly women who, at a moment's notice, filled a need that only a woman can fill. Pastors, elders, and deacons are limited by their maleness.

I never went too far with my thoughts about deaconesses since that road seems to be fraught with many pitfalls.

And yet, there always are those situations that call for a woman. Some members are chronically ill. Some mothers suffer postpartum depression. Yet others struggle with mental and/or physical health issues due to abuse they have suffered. There are the struggles and frustrations of leaving a career to raise a passel of young children. The office-bearers can visit, offer support, encouragement, and spiritual guidance also to the struggling sisters. Thankfully, our churches have faithful office-bearers who do what they must and can with love and diligence, but how often does not an office-bearer minister to an old member, an ill sister, a struggling woman, a mother with a newborn baby, a young girl "in trouble," conclude his visit knowing that he is leaving loose ends behind?



Recently I read some articles about Parish Nurses and what I read really struck a chord in my heart.

Aaron Epp, in *ChristianWeek* (March 16, 2010), writes that parish nursing is a concept that began in Europe and spread to the United States and Canada in the 1980s and 1990s. Parish nurses promote health, healing, and wholeness through health advocacy, counselling, education, and resource referral.

Epp reports that at least 120 nurses from a variety of churches work for parishes across Canada. The nurses have formed an organization, the Calgary-based Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry (CAPNM).

Some nurses are paid by their parishes while others volunteer their time. Some work in individual congregations while others are affiliated with local hospitals and health care clinics.

A parish nurse would visit people of the congregation who are ill, to make sure they are taking their medications, answer questions they may have, perhaps accompany people to doctor visits and act as a liaison. She would address health issues and concerns to congregations or groups of members, young and old, and would be available for consultation, education, and advice. A nurse would liase with the local "Sister Help" and "Helping Hands." These circles are great resources in our congregations, but often they address situations *ad hoc* and are reactive whereas a nurse would be proactive. She should work in close consultation with the pastor, elders, and deacons.

We have an increasing number of very aged people in our churches. Their own children have the primary responsibility to care for them, but it would be good to have a parish nurse to help out with the care needed.

Today's healthcare has a more holistic view of health than the past. This is a positive development, for a holistic view enhances health. The wellness or illness of either the mind or the body often reciprocally affects the other. A parish nurse would integrate the physical

From the Canadian Association for
Parish Nursing Ministry
webpage: www.capnm.ca

PARISH NURSING MINISTRY

Parish Nursing is a health ministry of faith communities which emphasizes the wholeness of body, mind and spirit. Rooted in the vision of Christ as Healer, this ministry grows out of the belief that all faith communities are places of health and healing and have a role in promoting wholeness through the integration of faith and health.

MISSION

The Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry (CAPNM) is committed to the development of parish nursing as a health and ministry resource within Canada.

VISION

Parish Nursing is recognized as an essential dimension in the integration of faith and health within diverse faith communities throughout Canada.

PARISH NURSE

A parish nurse is a registered nurse with specialized knowledge, who is called to ministry and affirmed by a faith community to promote health, healing and wholeness.

THE ROLE OF A PARISH NURSE

The role of a parish nurse is to promote the integration of faith and health in a variety of ways that reflect the context of the faith community.

Specific examples include:

- Health advocacy
- Health counselling
- Health education
- Resource referral

Church News

Called by the church of Chatham, Ontario:

Rev. C. Bouwman

of Yarrow, British Columbia.

Declined the call to St. Albert, Alberta:

Rev. J. VanWoudenberg

of Guelph, Ontario.

Declined the call by the Free Reformed Church of
Armadale, WA, to Lae, PNG as missionary:

Rev. H. Alkema

of Houston, British Columbia.

and the spiritual. For an elderly man or a young mother to have a nurse visit who would help them with medical issues, or with how to cope with life, and who would also pray with them, would be a great blessing. Such a nurse could do more than one working in a hospital in that she could address the whole person, body, mind, and soul.

Historically, there has been a close connection between hospitals and churches. The First Council of Nicaea, 325, urged the churches to provide for the poor, sick, widows, and strangers. It ordered the construction of a hospital in every cathedral town. Many Canadian hospitals are still associated with churches. In the past, the United Church of Canada and the Roman Catholic Church operated hospitals, though in the past decades, the tendency has been for these hospitals to be taken under government control. By introducing the practice of parish nursing, we would be completely in line with what Christians have done in the past for their congregations.

This is something that our churches should consider. Naturally one thinks of our larger Canadian Reformed centres as places where the idea is more immediately feasible. If a nurse were employed at a classis level, she could also be available for consultation to our small and more remote congregations.

Several Canadian colleges and universities offer programs in Parish Nursing. Please see www.capnm.ca/education.htm for options. Ideally, a parish nurse would be a Registered Nurse with a certificate in Parish Nursing from one of the schools offering the program.



Dr. Gerhard H. Visscher is the principal and professor of New Testament at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario gerhard.visscher@canrc.org

Appreciation for the College

Expressed by our members

Whatever our task and wherever we work, the challenges are always lightened somewhat by the knowledge that others appreciate the work we do. That applies also to the life and work of the Theological College. While we labour for the Lord of course and for his commendation on the last day, it is still wonderful when in the interim people display their appreciation. Brother Jack Wieske of Ancaster recently displayed that when he presented us with a wonderful Iraqi scroll with the words of Exodus 19 and 20 in the original Hebrew. It was also wonderful to be thought of by brother Dennis Teitsma of Winnipeg who commemorated Calvin 500 by sending us a wonderful wooden portrait of John Calvin which he himself made intarsia style. We thank these brothers for their gifts to the College which now hang side by side on a wall in the library.

Expressed by some of our students

Along with teaching fifteen students who come from Canada and Australia, we presently have the privilege of having three students who come from three different corners of the world, and study with us for very different reasons. They too express appreciation for the work we do and appreciation for the College which exists only because of your support, both prayerfully and financially. We thought we should give you a little glimpse into this aspect of seminary life by letting these three students introduce themselves in their own ways. Enjoy.

From Nam Tuck Chong (Singapore)

My name is Nam Tuck Chong from the First Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore. Prior to coming to the college, I served as an elder in our church and at the same time was employed as a full time

worker for the Chinese congregation of our church.

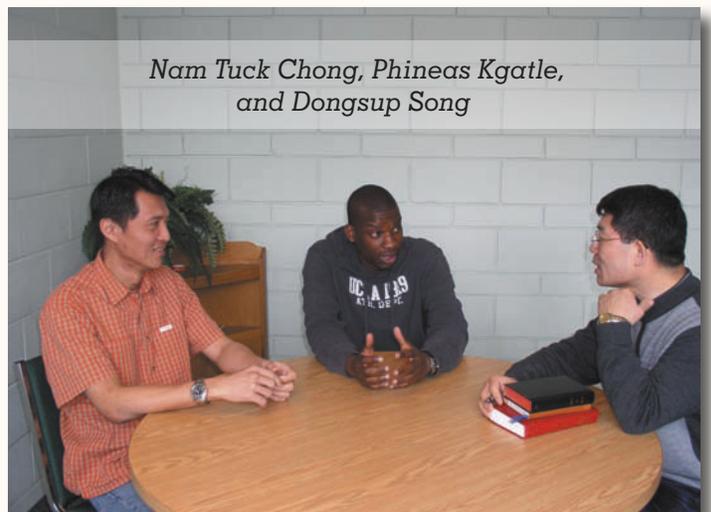
Due to the differences in conviction about the issue of remarriage, the sisterly relationship of our two churches in Singapore was severed about three years ago and the English congregation of my church was left without a pastor when he resigned and went over to our former sister church.

Thereafter our church decided to send me for theological training with the view of calling me to the ministry.

As there is no college or seminary in Singapore that is Reformed in persuasion, our church looked overseas for options and by the providence of God, we were referred to this college by the recommendation of Pastor Winston Huizinga.

I have never imagined that I would go back to school at the age of forty three, but our heavenly Father's ways are higher than our ways and so I flew into Hamilton last September to begin my studies at the Theological College.

Nam Tuck Chong, Phineas Kgatle, and Dongsup Song





Phineas Kgatle, Nam Tuck Chong, and Dongsup Song

I have thus far enjoyed every moment at the college and am thankful to God for such an opportunity. The lessons are biblically grounded and I have learned much not only from the lessons, but also from the patience and pastoral ways of the professors.

As I will not be going through the complete course at the college but am only able to be here for slightly over a year, I am thankful that the college has been very accommodating to my needs, allowing me the flexibility to choose a combination of subjects which are most needful for me.

One of the things that I have enjoyed very much of the college life here is the friendship among fellow students; the difference in our age and background makes no difference as we are one in our Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone is always very willing to help and they have extended their fellowship to me from the first day I came, which made me felt very at home right away! Unlike most secular institutions, there is no competition here between fellow students and we often encourage and help each other in our studies and spiritual lives.

I can only thank and praise God for giving me this experience and pray that as long as the Lord tarries in his coming, this college will continue to be the place where faithful men of God are nurtured and trained to serve our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

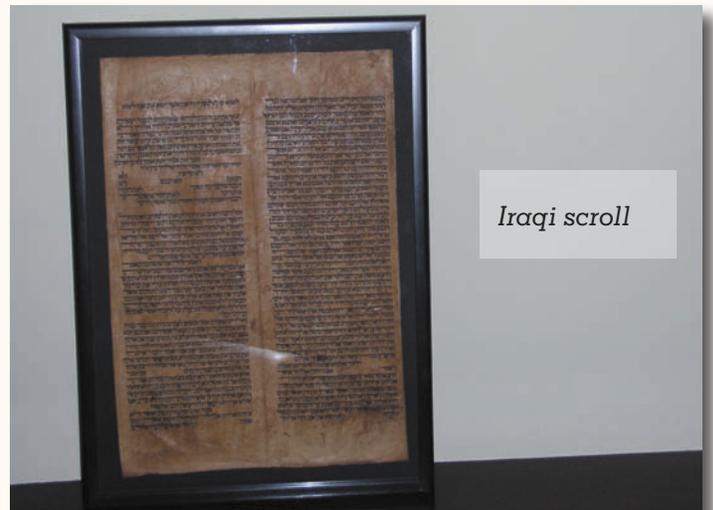
From Dongsup Song (Korea)

I have been a minister of Jayoo ("free") Reformed Church in Jeonju since 1996. My church belongs to the Reformed Churches in Korea, federated a few years ago. From 1983-85 I completed the M.Div. degree at

Hapdong Presbyterian Theological Seminary, which was started by the late Dr. Yoonsun Park who, for a time, was assisted by an emeritus minister of FRCA, Dr. S.G. Hur. In 1986 I worked for Agape publications (Seoul) as a member of the editorial staffs involved in editing the Open-Bible, and in 1987-94 for Christian Books (Seoul) as a translator and editor of Albert Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament.

In 1995-2001 I had been a lecturer of the Old Testament at a Bible College in Seoul, founded by Robert S. Rapp, a missionary from Westminster Board of Mission in America.

But now I am the least and oldest student in Hamilton Theological Academy. I am so excited to study here for the purpose of strengthening the Reformed Church in Korea. I have two favourite places in this college. One is the lounge for coffee breaks. In this room, we write our unofficial stories behind the college history. The other is the Library where I am the first and the last almost every morning and every evening. This library gives me all the opportunities I need (which sometimes involves taking a nap!). Moreover all conditions of this college including the library make my daily life vital and interesting in Hamilton. In this respect I agreed with someone's idea that Hamilton looks like a huge library as the database of the Reformed world.





Intarsia work

I met a member of Committee on Relationship with Churches Abroad of Canadian Reformed Churches one month ago and he asked me what is different from my seminary in Korea. My response is this. The main reason why I got to love this college is that all the classes of the four professors make me happy in understanding the Scripture and learning about the Reformed world with harmony. I become one of a great cloud of witnesses that this seminary works well as the cradle of genuine Reformed Theology, the heartland of true Reformed Churches. I am a stranger here in Canada but this college seems like my spiritual hometown. Now and here I have a new and small beginning of my best life as a Korean Reformed minister.

From Phineas Kgatle (South Africa)

My name is Phineas Kgatle. I am twenty-seven years old. I am a member of the Free Reformed Church of Mamelodi, in South Africa. I joined the Free Reformed Church in 1999 while I was in high school through a friend. I was confirmed as a member two years later. In 2003, I received my theological studies in a College called Mukhanyo Theological College. The College is Reformed in its teachings, but it is also an inter-denominational college.

In 2007, I graduated with a Bachelor of Theology degree. Then I went to study the biblical languages, Greek and Hebrew, for two years in the University of Pretoria. The reason I came to the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches is because I wanted to broaden my knowledge in the reformed theology. The college which I attended in South Africa did not offer the in depth teachings in the Reformed confessions and the ecumenical creeds. After a student completes his studies in the Free Reformed Churches of RSA, he is required to do some courses which have to do with the history of the Free Reformed churches, the three forms of unity, and the ecumenical creeds. One of my coaches for further studies visited Canada two years back and it was through his recommendation that I came to study here.

It is a privilege for me to study at the TCCRC. The students and the staffs are friendly. I am learning a lot of things, being at the college, both from the classes and outside. The facilities are great; the library is one of my favourite places, because of all the books. We also get the opportunity to hear the Word being preached, by the students and the Professors, through the chapel we attend every Monday and Friday. Sometimes, I feel as if it is my first time I hear about theology. I can't wait to go back to RSA, to apply everything I have learned at the College.





And in Walks Another Image-of-God. . .

Francine VanWoudenberg Sikkema

Names and situations have been changed

I work at a Christian youth shelter. Many lost and broken children of God¹ walk in through our doors. Today I am stationed at the desk. As they enter, I write down their names – their real or contrived identities. Either way, I find it fascinating how they often identify themselves with beautiful Hebrew names. . . names that speak of hope and purpose. They are walking manifestations of the image of God. But they don't know it. How could they? No one's ever bothered to tell them. I sure haven't. I'm busy just trying to find them in the system.

Testimony of names

In walks "Gift of God." Today he treats me like a real gentleman. He is genuinely interested in how my day has been. I ask him about his. "You know, I can't complain," he answers decisively. "Well, I wish you a good evening and I hope they don't give you too much trouble tonight." He winks at me and proceeds to the guys' section. He's barely through the door when a string of blasphemous words leave his mouth which seem to cancel out the pleasant conversation we've just had. But who am I? I know in my heart that I've often felt the same angry frustration he's expressing at this moment; I'm just careful to sin in a more socially acceptable way. But I have to enforce the rules, so I give him a "look" and he apologizes. He's trying so hard. And he's had a hard day. He's been looking for his brother, always anxious that he may have gotten into

some kind of irreversible trouble. I've never seen a truer example of a "brother's keeper."

Here comes "My God is Yahweh." This is not the name his parents gave him. His Muslim family disowned him. He's a Christian now. I'm not sure if this was a cause or a result. He's pretty new around here. "Hey, I just want to thank you guys for what you're doing. . . . I'm not going to be staying here for long. As soon as I get a job, I'm outta here. I have an interview at the bank on Monday." We promise to pray for him. He yawns and says, "Hey, it's Sunday tomorrow, isn't it? Man, I should go to church. You know of any good places I can walk to?" It's funny he should ask that, because just a few hours earlier I overheard some of the staff talking about "Megachurch Triumphant" down the street. Stacey said she's been going there but feels like just a number. The Sunday messages aren't that great, either. I'm about to suggest my church, but then I realize this kid has no way of getting all the way to the outer fringes of the city on a Sunday city bus schedule by 10:00 AM. What about. . . ? Oh, no. That one's on the *other* outer fringe, even further away. I keep my mouth shut. Stacey pipes up, "You can always try 'Megachurch Triumphant' down the street." What?! But I thought she just said. . . . Never mind. That's the way it is down here. Where have all the good churches gone? Oh yeah, to the suburbs, to escape the riffraff – never mind that some of them are actually still searching for God.

Next comes "God Has Heard." But to him, it must seem like God hears any prayers but his. Then one who is "Beloved" barges through the door. But his life reads

more like "Used." A tough guy whose name (going way, way back) is "Dove" follows and starts flirting with me. "Oh, new staff, eh? You wanna do my pat-down?" My fellow staff member Jason rolls his eyes as he pulls on his latex gloves and proceeds to pat down "Dove's" clothing. No weapons or drugs today. He's allowed in. "Hey, keep it clean, OK?" Jason yells after him.

Pretty soon a storm cloud named "Yahweh Will Set Free" shows up. He's bitter and angry, as usual. He's been trying to get into a detox program, but the staff don't do so well at keeping appointments. They must think he's got nothing better to do with his time. The conversation shifts to a more positive note. He says he's been working on a sketch. He'll show it to me in the morning.

Time passes. There's no one at the doors for awhile. Then "Victory of the People" stumbles in. He's looking pretty defeated, though – by alcohol. The staff have a little radio dialogue over whether to allow him in. He promises to be good and we note the fact that he hasn't threatened anyone lately. He's in. Well, his brother will be happy to see him anyway. At least he'll be able to sleep easier tonight.

It's a bit later when some of the girls begin trickling in. The first one I greet tonight is "Weary." And truly, she is. Despite her perky demeanour, she's worn out. How long does a girl stick with a guy who keeps acting like a jerk? I ask her, "Why. . .?" She gives me this incredulous look that says: *wow, you really don't get it, do you?* She tries to explain. Of course she'd rather be free of this guy. But she can't. Girls don't last long alone on the street. They need a guy to watch their backs. Unfortunately, the calibre of available guys stinks. Besides, she thinks she might be pregnant.

Then "Admirable" shows up. And there is so much to admire: her courage, strength, fearlessness. . . on a good day. But we need to help her up the stairs tonight. She's weak and vulnerable, overcome by a poisonous concoction of drugs. She's ticked off that they won't let her stay with her boyfriend at the adult shelter. They discovered she's just too young. "But it's my birthday next week!" she keeps insisting. We smile and nod and get her settled on her mat for the night. She may or may not thank us tomorrow.

Passing the night

2:00 AM. We're closed for the night. It's my turn to make the rounds. *Don't forget your radio; you never know what might happen.* I have to chuckle at the irony of the oft-repeated warning as I tip-toe past row upon row of sleeping bodies. Look at all these tough guys – so vulnerable in sleep. I feel like something of

a guardian angel. Yet I am much more comforted by the knowledge that there are *real* God-sent angels hovering over their sleeping bodies, ready to follow them into the fray of another day come dawn – just as they will watch over me.

The staff pass the rest of the night clicking away on Facebook and sharing tidbits of gossip about the youth – out of genuine concern, of course. We work here, but we really can't relate sometimes. What bizarre lives some of them lead. How did things get so messed up? What a broken, broken world. How on earth can we expect to be part of the solution when we're such a big part of the problem? We're part of the same culture that marginalizes these youth, telling them to get a job, and at the same time, sympathizing with any employer who doesn't dare give them a chance.

Rise and shine!

5:00 AM. Time to start wake-up calls. Some of these youth get up before the crack of dawn to line up at the temp agencies, hoping to land a job, even if just for the day. Who knows? Maybe someday they'll even find something steady enough to let them get an apartment of their own. A quick shower. A bowl of cereal. Then they're at the desk, asking for their work boots and wallets that we've safely stored away. One guy takes a little more time to put on his jewellery. "Just because you're homeless, doesn't mean you need to look like a slob!" he grins. I am amazed at these guys. Despite all my good intentions, I never get up that early to get a head start on the rest of the world. Some will walk many, many kilometres because they can't afford bus tickets.

"Look at this." The angry guy shows me the sketch he finished in the dim light last night. "This is incredible!" I gasp. It's an intricate drawing of a ferocious mystical creature. I am in awe of his skill and just a little jealous. He grins. "You can keep it." He's twenty-something, but at this moment, he seems like he's ten. My heart melts.

Enough of that. It's 8:00, and there are a million things to do before we can finally go home. Sweep. Mop. Sanitize. Bathrooms. Bedding. Notes. OK, we all gather to debrief with the day staff and have a time of prayer. We mention the youth we're especially worried about and praise God for good conversations that happened last night. I silently praise him for the survival of his holy image in these youth, no matter how hard Satan tries to mask it. We go home, exhausted.

¹I use "children of God" in the sense that Peter did in Athens (Acts 17:24-34).



London Welcomes Rev. Reuben Bredenhof

The year 2009 has been described by some at Pilgrim Canadian Reformed Church in London as bittersweet; bitter because of the departure of Rev R.E. Pot and his family to West Albany, Australia but sweet because of the arrival of Rev. Reuben Bredenhof and his wife Rebecca and daughters Abigail, Sasha, Kyra, and Tori from St. Albert, Alberta.

Professor G. Visscher, who served London as counselor during our brief vacancy, led the morning worship service on November 22, 2009 and he preached to us the Word of God from Jeremiah 9:23, 24, "Let him who boasts, boast that he knows the Lord." People are inclined to boast in three areas: intelligence, strength, and wealth. When a man boasts in these, he boasts about himself and his own accomplishments, in essence making himself a god. God, however, does not seek out rich, wise, or noble people. He chose the foolish to shame the wise and the weak to shame the strong. One can only boast about knowing Jesus Christ. The task of the minister is to shame those who are rich, strong, and wise of themselves and to boast in the cross of Christ. Do we glory in things or in the Creator of all things? God is characterized by justice, kindness and righteousness. Once we know God, by grace through Christ, we gain these three qualities for the fruit of the Spirit is ours when we know God. Rev. Bredenhof was exhorted to teach and challenge the congregation at London to know God in Christ by the power of the Spirit.

After the installation service congratulations were extended to us, either by letter or representatives from all the other churches in Classis Ontario West and from the neighbouring URC churches of Aylmer and London. We were reminded that though we have a new minister, he's really just another "pot" (2 Cor 4).

In the afternoon Rev. Bredenhof preached to us his inaugural sermon using 2 Corinthians 4:5, "What a minister is supposed to do." Paul teaches us that when our expectations for a minister are for him to preach Christ and Him crucified, then we will be able to see past the shortcomings

of the earthen vessel. When the minister preaches, let all eyes be on Christ, the message he brings is life changing and we are called to action by Christ our King who, having paid our ransom, lays claim to everything in our life.

The following Friday evening we gathered again at the church for a short program to welcome the Bredenhofs. The evening consisted of musical performances by various groups and the introduction of the study societies by means of poems and games. The men's society even spelled out their selection process for calling a new minister with the inevitable result: BREDENHOF. The Bredenhofs were presented with vouchers (with no expiry date) which they can redeem in order to get to know all of us. A fully loaded (London version) GPS was also presented to aid in the navigation of their new city. The next morning we came together again for a pancake breakfast where we all enjoyed sausage, eggs, pancakes, and best of all, fellowship with one another.

Rev. Bredenhof has been busy in our midst preaching, teaching, and visiting and it is our prayer that he may be blessed with the strength he needs to fulfill his task among his fellow pilgrims here in London. Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage (Psalm 84:5).

C



Our Sixtieth Anniversary

It is with thanks to God our Heavenly Father that the church at Coaldale may celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the institution of the first Canadian Reformed Church in Canada. This is not only a significant event for the church at Coaldale, but indeed, for the entire federation.

It all started when the late Br. John de Haas and his family immigrated to Canada. After living at Bow Island for some time, they moved to what was then called the "Holland Yard." This was located midway between Lethbridge and Coaldale on the #3 highway. The location can still be identified by a small knoll. Br. De Haas and his family became members of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) at Nobleford. He did not hide the fact that he had liberated himself and his family from the synodical hierarchy in The Netherlands and that immediately caused problems. He was told in no uncertain terms that he was not to speak of this and certainly his request that sermons prepared by ministers of the Liberated Churches in Holland be also read in the worship services was denied. He was told that the CRC was not and did not want to become involved in the problems existing in The Netherlands. His appeals to classes and synods were to no avail. The families P. Kok and D. Barendregt who arrived in 1949 received similar treatment from the CRC. Br. De Haas, through contacts with the immigration societies in The Netherlands, obtained names and locations of other "liberated" families and contact was established. A few more families had arrived and it was decided that rather than continue with the fights with the CRC these families would meet on Sundays and read sermons and worship together. These meetings took place at the Holland Yard, weather and road conditions permitting. All were convinced that this situation could not continue and that contact would have to be made with an established church community.

The advice of the late Prof. Klaas Schilder of The Netherlands was sought. He advised that the house congregation at Lethbridge contact the Protestant Reformed Church (PRC) at Manhattan, Montana, USA.

In September of 1949 a letter was sent to the PRC at Manhattan. In November Rev. P. Vis, Elder M. Flikkema, and Deacon G. Visser visited Lethbridge. It became clear that there were different views relating to covenant and baptism. From our stand point, these diverse views were not considered to be of such consequence so as to preclude union with the PRC and so on November 20, 1949 a letter was sent to the Manhattan consistory formally requesting admission to their congregation. The reply that was subsequently received was disappointing. The consistory was of the opinion that they needed advice from their classis. Their classis would meet in March of 1950. We were advised that the problem was not doctrinal, but rather with practical matters, such as finances and the geographic location of Lethbridge being almost 600 km from Manhattan. On March 13, 1950 Rev. Vis and Elder Van Dijken visited us again. They did not bring us the expected report of their classis but we were again assured that the practical matters had to be dealt with first. It became very clear that this was not the entire truth when Br. Van Dijken remarked that further discussions would have to be held with regard to our views on the covenant. Rev. Vis did offer to come again and preach the Word and this offer was appreciated. It became very clear, however, that admission to the PRC would not take place in the near future.

In the meantime many new immigrants were arriving in the Lethbridge region and, in the opinion of the Lethbridge house congregation, these new immigrants needed a church home on arrival. This could not wait for a decision by the PRC. It had become very clear that the PRC did not want us; from their point of view, there were too many obstacles. Therefore, on April 16, 1950 the decision was made to abandon efforts to join with the PRC and that the church of Jesus Christ needed to be established in Lethbridge.

In the afternoon service the ten male members voted for the office bearers. Brs. D. Barendregt and C. van der Gugten were chosen as elders and

Br. J. de Haas as deacon. Br. Barendregt, as the oldest member, first ordained the other two office bearers and then Br. van der Gugten ordained Br. Barendregt. The name for the new church was agreed to be: The Free Reformed Church of Lethbridge. Br. Barendregt led the congregation in humble thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father. We asked for the Lord's blessings on the newly formed congregation, in the full realization that our efforts would come to nothing without his blessings. Psalms of thanksgiving were sung. There was a Christian display of happiness, of brotherly love, and an acute awareness that we depended on each other, on the communion of the saints, and that the Lord had worked all things in such a way that a truly Reformed church, his church, had become a vibrant reality in Canada. None of us knew where this would all lead. There was no precedent, but in utter and sole dependence on the Head of the Church this small congregation confidently faced the future.

It was on June 17, 1950 that Rev. J. Hettinga of The Netherlands, while on a personal visit to Canada, also came to Lethbridge. He preached and celebrated the Lord's Supper and a child was baptized. It was his suggestion that we should identify ourselves as being truly Canadian and that the name be changed to the Canadian Reformed Church at Lethbridge.

Conclusion

Many years have passed since that historic event. The congregation outgrew the Holland Yard and services were conducted in a school. With the influx of more members the old Community Hall in Coaldale was rented and we became the Canadian Reformed Church at Coaldale. When this facility became inadequate we built our first church building in about 1958 or 1959. The second church building was put to use in about 1963. In October of 1992 we took possession of the present building.

During the early years membership had a tendency to fluctuate. This slowly stabilized and at present our membership is well over 300. The Coaldale congregation has been served by seven ministers, the first being Rev. G. Ph. Pieffers and with Rev. D. Poppe presently occupying the manse. The past sixty years have not always been easy. There have been many difficulties. There have also been many years of contentment, growth, and faithfulness. Even when the problems sometimes seemed overwhelming, the Lord sustained his church and the congregation has been blessed in so many ways. We bring our humble thanks to the Lord for all He has done for us in the past sixty years and for the faithfulness He has shown to his people.

C



reviewed by Stuart Harsevoort

Bruce A. Ware, *Big Truths for Young Hearts: Teaching and Learning the Greatness of God* Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2009

Urged by his two daughters, to whom this book is dedicated, Professor Bruce Ware (of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) has put into book form the theology lessons he taught his daughters when they were young. Each lesson is two or three pages long, includes a couple of questions for discussion and consideration, and a relevant biblical passage for memorization.

The book is separated into ten chapters, each chapter focusing on a doctrine, with each chapter divided into smaller lessons which teach the details of the doctrine. For example, the first chapter is "God's Word and God's Own Life as God," and is separated into six lessons: God has made himself known, God talks – the Bible is God's true and lasting word, God is God apart from us, God is God with us, Some truths about God's richness that make him God, and Some truths about God's kindness that make him God.

While this is a book aimed at children (I would say mid elementary school and older), I found it useful myself as well. The lessons are explained clearly and in simple language using relevant imagery or examples that are readily understood. This is the beauty (and difficulty) in writing for children, the simplicity of language. This also benefits older readers, since many theological works use terms and language accessible to those who have studied at least a little.

In my reading some issues became clearer in my mind for being explained in such simple language and clear terms.

One of the great benefits of this book is that though its audience is young hearts, Ware does not gloss over or skip the difficult issues. The problem of evil is given two lessons in this book ("God controls all the bad things in the world" and "Pain and suffering in the world God controls"), and their perspective is biblical, thorough, and useful. He even enters into the discussion

of whether or not it was possible for Christ to have sinned in the face of his temptations. Using plenty of biblical references (each of which are given some lines of explanation – not just listed), Ware grounds his lesson in Scripture, and so provides a clear biblical clarification of these issues.

There are a couple of lessons in this book which may not be so useful to a Reformed audience. One area, although debated among Reformed scholars, is the status of the modern Israelites, the Jews. Ware sees the Old Testament promises of God to the nation of Israel as still in effect. In the lesson "The promise-keeping God and the salvation of Israel," Ware teaches that the people of Israel will one day be saved, but whether this is through Jesus Christ or based on the Old Testament promises is not made clear.

One area in which there is little or no debate among Reformed Christians is that of baptism. Ware, as a Baptist Christian, argues for credobaptism (believer's baptism) in the lesson "Baptism: picturing Jesus' death and resurrection." Based on the New Testament texts which describe baptism, Ware argues that baptism comes after belief and is a sign of that person partaking in the death and resurrection of Christ. Thus for Ware baptism is a *sign of faith* and not a *sign and seal of the covenant*. He acknowledges, however, that there is another understanding of baptism (paedobaptism) and asks that as Christians we be gracious to one another in our differences, for there is much, even in the doctrine of baptism, on which we agree.

Altogether, I would highly recommend this book for families seeking to learn together or for students seeking to study these things themselves, even as evening devotions or a family activity on a long road trip. Even for those of us who have studied these things this book can be put to good use, so that we may more effectively communicate the theological doctrines. The language Ware uses is clear and simple, the lessons are deep and thorough, and the final result is commendable – even if some further clarification may have to be made on some issues.

C



reviewed by Clarence Bouwman

Rev. Clarence Bouwman is minister
of the Canadian Reformed Church at
Yarrow, British Columbia
cbouwman@shaw.ca

Free Reformed Pioneers: A history of migrants from The Netherlands to Australia, and the early days of the Free Reformed Churches in Western Australia in the 1950s by Gerrit Johannes Bosveld

With pleasure I draw to the attention of Clarion's readers an excellent book from my good friend and brother, Johan Bosveld, currently member of the church in Darling Downs, Australia. I had followed the development of this book for considerable time as Br. Bosveld submitted chapter after chapter for publication in *Una Sancta* in the early years of our current decade. When the articles were published in book form late in 2008 (recast and expanded), I was privileged to receive an early copy and read it again eagerly – if the children weren't curled up somewhere with it.

Allow me first to introduce the author. Br. Bosveld was a very active member of the congregation of the Byford when I was minister there in the late 80s and early 90s, and so I got to know him rather well. He was a builder by trade and definitely not "a man of letters" (as he himself writes in his preface). But Br. Bosveld is nothing if not a fighter – and books were to him worlds to conquer. In his spare time he set himself to reading anything and everything he could in relation to church life and so he honed his powers of analysis and debate.

This man, now, has used his retirement years to interview dozens of early migrants, read through pages upon pages of journal entries, consistory minutes, and school board minutes, and sift through hundreds upon hundreds of old photos. With this raw material in hand, this unschooled brother has written a very easy-to-read account of the establishment of the Free Reformed Churches in Western Australia. In forty-two chapters totally 345 pages, Bosveld covers the first ten years of the church's existence in that state. To make his vivid material more vivid still, Bosveld has interspersed the text liberally with hundreds of pictures. More significantly, Bosveld repeatedly turns the reader's attention to the God who controls all things, including where and when and how He gathers his church.

His account begins in The Netherlands, with the events of the Second World War and the Liberation from the Germans – and the bigger Liberation from synodical heavy-handedness. From his own experience the author explains what these Liberations were about, then moves on to explain why migration to a new country followed. In detail he describes the challenges of being strangers in a strange land. How do you buy

a bike in a foreign tongue? How do you share a house with cockroaches and lizards? How do you find a church where the children (and of course the parents) shall hear the faithful and undiluted proclamation of the gospel of free grace? Would a Methodist church do? Or a Presbyterian Church that had adopted Arminianism? How do you institute a church when all your advice has to come from overseas via snail mail? Who administers the sacraments when there is no minister in the land? What are the reasons why family men resigned their job in slow economic time in order to avoid joining a trade union? Why spend Saturday after Saturday making your own bricks to build a Christian school? What, concretely, does faithfulness to God look like in a society where the faith was never its strong point? Truly, it makes for gripping reading for old and young alike.

Of course, Australia is a long way from Canada, and not too many Canadians can claim direct knowledge of the places and names mentioned in this book. But I doubt that's a problem; on the contrary! The experience of migration is the same for Canada and Australia alike and I dare say that what Br. Bosveld writes will resonate strongly with many Canadian readers. Besides, is there not something vaguely mysterious and exciting about Australia?! Here's your point of entry into the mystic of that romantic land!

The book was published by Pro Ecclesia Publishers in Armadale and is available in Canada from Anchor Book Centre in Langley as well as R Books in Agassiz for some \$40CND. And not to forget: the book is hardcover and currently in its second printing.

C



**Press Release of Classis Central Ontario,
March 12, 2010**

On behalf of the convening church at Flamborough, the Rev. J. DeGelder led in opening devotions. He suggested the singing of Hymn 35, read Matthew 25:1-13, and after a brief meditation on the passage led in prayer. He welcomed the delegates to Classis. The delegates of the church at Burlington-Waterdown reported that all six churches of Classis were duly delegated; the church at Ottawa had only one delegate present. Classis was constituted. The suggested officers took their places, with the Rev. J. DeGelder as chairman, J.L. Van Popta as clerk, and W. den Hollander, as vice-chairman.

The chairman noted as memorabilia: presently there are no vacancies among the churches in Classis, which we note with gratitude; he congratulated Rev. W. den Hollander with his twenty-fifth anniversary in the ministry; he also remembered the health concerns regarding the Rev. J. Mulder, the Rev. C. Stam, and the long-term disabilities of Prof. DeJong and Prof. Gootjes.

The provisional agenda was tabled and the agenda of Classis established. Under Question Period Church Order Article 44, the churches reported that the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued, that the decisions of the broader assemblies are being honoured, and that there was no need for advice from Classis for the proper government of their churches. This was noted with thankfulness.

Classis received a letter from the Rev. J. DeGelder, requesting to be relieved from church visitation duties this year. Upon discussion of the request, Classis appointed the Rev. J. van Popta as alternate for this year.

The following appointments were made:

Convening church for the next Classis: Ottawa, June 11, 2010.

Suggested officers: Rev. G. Nederveen, chairman; Rev. J. DeGelder, vice-chairman; Rev. W. den Hollander, clerk.

Question Period was held: one of the delegates requested that classis be convened in the evening when the agenda is as light as for today's classis. He also raised a question related to Ottawa's presence by one delegate. In reply some comments were made.

The chairman judged that Art. 34 CO. was not required. The Acts were read and adopted, after which the Press Release was read and approved. The chairman requested the singing of Psalm 121, after which the vice-chairman led in thanksgiving prayer. Thus Classis was closed.

*For Classis, Rev. W. den Hollander,
Vice-chairman at that time*

**Press Release of Classis Ontario-West,
March 24, 2010 in Kerwood, ON**

On behalf of the convening church, Rev. C. Kleyn called the meeting to order and led in opening devotions. The delegates of the convening church reported that all the credentials were in order. Classis was declared constituted. The appointed officers, as suggested by the previous classis, were Rev. B. DeJong, (chairman), Rev. J. Ludwig (vice), and Rev. W. Bredenhof (clerk). The chairman welcomed the delegates and guests, among whom were Rev. R. Klynsma, a fraternal delegate of the Covenant-East Classis of the Reformed Church of the United States, and Rev. John Ferguson, a fraternal delegate from the Presbytery of the Michigan-Ontario of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The convening church was thanked for their work in preparing for classis. Mention was made of several special circumstances: Rev. J. VanWoudenberg declined the call extended by the church at Chatham; the church at Grand Rapids continues to be vacant; Rev. R. Vermeulen was ordained in Glanbrook on Oct. 4, 2009; Rev. R. Bredenhof was installed in London on Nov. 22, 2009; the declining health of Dr. N. Gootjes and Dr. J. DeJong was remembered; Rev. C. Stam is recuperating from triple bypass surgery.

The agenda was adopted. Four students, Abel Pol, Justin Roukema, Steve Vandeveld, and Ted VanSpronsen, presented themselves in order to receive permission to speak in an edifying word in the churches. The students were examined in alphabetical order after having submitted the required documents for the examination. In closed session the sermon proposals and the examinations in doctrine and creeds were judged sufficient to grant Brs. A. Pol, S. Vandeveld, and T. VanSpronsen permission to speak an edifying word within the churches for approximately one year. After each of the examinations the assembly celebrated in song and in prayer to the Lord and opportunity was given to congratulate the students. Since br. Justin Roukema's sermon proposal was considered insufficient, he was informed of this privately and in a pastoral way. The fraternal delegates were given an opportunity to address the assembly. The Form of Subscription was read and signed by the Revs. W. Bredenhof, R. Vermeulen, and R. Bredenhof. Question period according to Article 44 of the CO was held. The chairman asked the three questions contained in that article.

All the churches answered that the ministry of the office bearers was being continued and that the decisions of the major assemblies were being honoured. The church of Ancaster asked advice regarding the use of the Abbreviated Form for the

Celebration of the Lord's Supper. Advice was given. The church at London asked advice for proceeding in the discipline of several members. Advice was given. The churches at Grand Rapids and Chatham requested pulpit supply up to December 2010. This request was granted.

Classis received with gratitude reports of visitations to the churches at Glanbrook, Grand Rapids, Ancaster, Kerwood, and London. These reports gave testimony to the desire and striving of these churches to remain faithful to the Word of God, the confessions and the Church Order.

The following appointments were made: London as the convening church of the next classis; suggested officers for the next classis: clerk Rev. R. Bredenhof, chairman Rev. W. Bredenhof, vice-chairman Rev. B. DeJong; date and place of the next classis: June 16, 2010 in London. Personal question period was held.

Censure according to article 34 was deemed unnecessary. The Acts were read and adopted and the press release approved. Rev. J. Ludwig led in closing prayer.

For Classis,

Rev. J. Ludwig (vice chairman, e.t.) 



Clarion Advertisements

Advertisements:

Announcements of Weddings, Anniversaries (with Open House) should be submitted six weeks in advance.

WEDDINGS

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

With thankfulness to God for his guidance and direction in their lives, we, Remie and Linda Vander Vegte joyfully announce the upcoming marriage of our daughter

CAYLE ELAINE to JORDAN ALEXANDER

son of Blair and Alice Lutz.

The ceremony will take place, the Lord willing, on Friday, June 4, 2010 at 1:00 p.m. in the Grace Canadian Reformed Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Rev. R.J. de Hollander officiating.

Address: 47 Courageous Cove, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4G1

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

1975 ~ May 17th ~ 2010

Glorify the LORD with me; and let us exalt his name together. Psalm 34:3

We joyfully announce the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents

HENK and RIA VANDENBERG (Vanderpol)

We are thankful for all that we have received through you and pray that God will bless you as you continue to serve Him together.

Much love:

Hamilton, ON: Gregg and Laura Vandenberg
Hannah, Joshua, Benjamin, Andrew

Chilliwack, BC: Matt and Ruby Vandenberg
Cason, Alia, Dallan

Abbotsford, BC: Marie Vandenberg

Aldergrove, BC: Pat Vandenberg
27032 25th Avenue, Aldergrove, BC

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

50th Wedding Anniversary

1960 ~ June 11 ~ 2010

And walk in love as Christ also has loved us. Ephesians 5:2a

With thankfulness to the Lord we announce the 50th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents

JOHAN and WILLY LUDWIG (VanAmerongen)

Veronica and Wolter Vis

Leanne and Will Dykema, Brenna

Steven, Wesley, Justin, Brandon, Rebecca, Michaela

John and Esther Ludwig (Vanderbrugghen)

Christina and Nick Boersema, Brennen

Rhea, Rachele, Jonathan, Timothy

Tammy and Peter Ravensbergen

Michelle and Scott, Stephanie, Laurissa, Nicole,

Joshua, Peter, Sarah

Mark and Arlene Ludwig (Jansema)

Sharon and Jon Kingma, Avaiya

Jessica and Jacob DeJong,

Jonathan, Alaina, Kristen, Mark, Lisa

Ed and Marge Ludwig (Krijswijk)

Matthew, Aaron, Joel, Ashley, David, Jordan, Amanda

Mike and Aimee Ludwig (Jagt)

Hannah, Samuel, Leah

J.B. Ludwig

RR 1, 5946 Highway 20, St. Anns, ON LOR 1Y0

Advertise in

