THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
Volume 60, No. 22 • October 21, 2011

Clarion

Numbers 10:1-10

The remarkable story of the Belgic Confession

Inside this Issue

- Being Faithful Even to the Point of Death
- "Your Word is Truth"

Cornelis Van Dam

Being Faithful Even to the Point of Death

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During the ages countless children of God have given up their life for the cause of Christ

It is difficult for us to imagine what the Lord's command to be faithful unto death (Rev 2:10) really entails. Yet it is good to reflect on what our Saviour's words have meant in the history of the church and still mean today, especially as we celebrate Reformation Day on October 31. After all, during the ages countless children of God have given up their life for the cause of Christ. Also in the time of the Reformation and in the following century many paid the ultimate price for their faith and today many continue to do the same.

Martyrs' Monument

As Reformed believers we are familiar with the martyrdom of men like Guido de Brès and the killings and suffering that the Huguenots in France endured. Presbyterian believers in the British Isles were also not spared the anguish of being faithful to death.

There is a poignant monument in the cemetery surrounding the historic Greyfriars church in Edinburgh. This memorial commemorates the suffering of 18,000 Scottish Covenanters who died between 1661 and 1688 during "the Killing Times." A key reason for the persecution was the refusal of the Covenanters to affirm that the reigning monarch was the head of the church, for this would be a denial of Christ's preeminent position. In other words they resisted with all their might the establishment of episcopacy as found in the Anglican church. It was William of Orange who in 1690 eventually established Presbyterian church government in Scotland. However, in the meantime much suffering took place and the Martyrs' Monument attests to it.

At the base of this monument are found three passages from the book of Revelation in the King James Version. They are instructive for shaping a biblical view on the persecution of God's children. For ease of comprehension, I will quote them in the New International Version (1984). The first passage is from Revelation 6:9-11,

> When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

By quoting this passage, the Martyrs' Monument cries for vengeance! Is this right? Should Christians not love their enemies and want to forgive them? However, a careful reflection on this passage leads to the conclusion that those killed for the faith are not crying for personal vengeance. They address God as the holy and true One. By doing so, they indicate their desire that God's holiness and truth be vindicated. Has God not said that he would avenge the death of his saints (Deut 32:35, 43; Heb 10:30)? Well, Lord, show the world that this is true and avenge our blood! This is a legitimate cry for vengeance, for it seeks God's honour. However, God's time is not our time and in Revelation 6 the Lord indicates that he will restrain his wrath until the very last martyr has suffered. The saints however are dressed in white robes as they await that great day.

We need to continue to remember these Christians in our prayers as they pay the ultimate price

The next passage on the monument elaborates on the white robes. Speaking of the believers before the Lamb in heaven, Revelation 7:14 says, "These are

they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Those who have come out of the great tribulation and placed their trust in Christ's one sacrifice for the complete atonement of all their sins are not disappointed. The blood of the Lamb has made their robes white. The white robes symbolize the purity and holiness that comes only through Christ's saving work. This reality is of great encouragement for those still struggling to be faithful on earth.

The third passage on the memorial is therefore one of exhortation and it is addressed to those still living in this world. "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev 2:10). In this way the Martyrs' Monument speaks to one generation of Christians after another, urging them to be faithful as those who preceded them have been. Surely a timely message, because Christians must always be ready to give up all for the sake of Christ.

Be faithful even to the point of death

To be faithful in North America presents challenges that are different from those who struggle to be true to God in parts of the world where open persecution enforced by death is a daily threat and reality.

What's Inside

Issue 22 is our annual Reformation Day issue. Dr. Cornelis Van Dam's editorial discusses what it means to follow the Lord's command to be faithful unto death (Rev 2:10) as we celebrate Reformation Day on October 31. Rev. John Louwerse writes about Luther's Ninety-five Theses in his Treasures New and Old meditation.

As it has been 450 years since a copy of the Belgic Confession was thrown over the castle wall in Doornik, Dr. Arjan de Visser takes readers on a trip to present day southern Belgium, where this historical event once took place. Dr. Wes Bredenhof includes an article on another confession that was prepared by Guido de Brès.

News from the federation includes a report on Camp Eden 2011, the summer camp held in Denver, Colorado, as well as a report from the annual Reformed String Camp held in Langley, B.C.

Issue 22 also contains the second half of an Education Matters article on drama in Reformed schools. In addition readers will find two press releases and a Mission News insert.

Laura Veenendaal

Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.,Winnipeg, MB

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:
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Coeditors: P. Holtvlüwer, E. Kampen, K. Stam, C. Van Dam

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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 2011	*Regular Mail*	*Air Mail*
Canada*	$48.00*	$ 82.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds	$67.00	$ 90.00
International	$95.00	$145.00

***Applicable GST, HST, PRT taxes are extra**. GST/HST – No. 890967359RT
Advertisements: $17.00 per column inch
Full Colour Display Advertisements: $21.00 per column inch
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Agreement No. 40063293; ISSN 0383-0438

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Useful Link: www.canrc.org

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Cover photo: The Belfry of Doornik where Calvinist believers were once imprisoned

The Martyrs' Monument in the Greyfiars' cemetery in Edinburgh

According to current estimates, the persecution of Christians has never been so intense and widespread. Especially Islamic countries are notorious for the rigorous oppression of Christians. This is usually due to Shariah or Islamic law being the single most influential judicial norm of the nation. Here are some recent examples. In Iraq, the very survival of one of the world's oldest Christian communities is in doubt. Many Christians are fleeing their homeland where between 2003 and 2010 more than an estimated two thousand Christians have been killed. In Afghanistan, where Canadian troops have paid with their lives to secure a future for that nation without the Taliban, there is no legal basis or freedom for being a Christian. If brought to trial, those converting from Islam to Christianity are sentenced to death. In Nigeria, Muslims have killed thousands of Christians since 1999 as part of a larger attempt to drive them out of the northern part of that country. No one is ever called to account.

Many more examples from countries like Pakistan, Egypt, Sudan, and Indonesia can be cited, not to mention oppression in communist regimes like North Korea. More detail can be found with organizations such as Compass Direct News and reports like *Persecuted and Forgotten?* (2011) which are found on the web and are sources of information for the above statistics. Being faithful to the point of death is a life reality for many Christians today. The souls below the altar are crying to God for his just wrath. We need to continue to remember these Christians in our prayers as they pay the ultimate price.

Our situation

The peace and tranquillity we enjoy as Christians is a far cry from the turmoil and oppression elsewhere. Does this make the testimony of the Martyrs' Monument irrelevant for us? No. After all, the call for vengeance for the sake of God's honour and the demand for faithfulness are from Scripture. As such these passages also address us and remind us that in spite of an outward peace, there is a battle raging in our country as well. It is the struggle between the agents of darkness and the children of God. We must never forget this conflict. Our foe is crafty.

Satan has thousands of years of experience and he uses the spirits of the times to his advantage. We have a holy obligation to discern the battle lines and to stay faithful to God's work in the great Reformation of the sixteenth century.

By God's grace we are heirs of a rich heritage that we must protect and use. That includes maintaining the norm of Scripture for all our talk and walk in the face of an immoral and highly sexualized culture. It means holding fast to the historicity and trustworthiness of Scripture also for the events in the opening chapters of Genesis. Such faithfulness includes affirming the doctrines of the Reformation, including infant baptism. In short, safeguarding and using the Reformed heritage with which we have been entrusted means that our mind-set and way of thinking must be completely moulded and shaped by Scripture. For that to be possible we must not quench the fire of the Spirit who works through the Word (1 Thess 5:19; Rom 10:17). Then by God's grace we see through the deception which undermines faith and weakens resolve and we are strong over against the spirits of the times. We recognize the reality of the conflict between Satan and the children of God, also in our culture and our country.

But, all of this is only possible if we have died with Christ and been raised by him to a new life (Gal 2:20). Then, should it ever be necessary, God will also enable us to be faithful to the point of death.

Hymn 53

1. *A mighty fortress is our God,*
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate.
On earth is not his equal.

2. *Did we in our own strength confide,*
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth His Name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

3. *And though this world, with devils filled,*
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God has willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.

4. *That word above all earthly powers –*
No thanks to them – abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill,
God's truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever.

After all, we will already have put to death whatever belongs to our sinful earthly nature (Col 3:5-6) and we already possess the life that never ends (John 11:25-26). Such a reality makes us strong in the Lord and we can take our stand against the devil's schemes. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand" (Eph 6:12-13). Yes, to stand and be faithful, even if it should be necessary, to the point of death! Remember those who have gone before us and those who suffer now.

The promise

When the Lord admonishes to be faithful even to the point of death, he also encourages with the promise that he will dress his children in white robes of salvation and give them the crown of life (Rev 2:10; 7:14). Christ's admonition and encouragement are powerful reminders on Reformation Day that we are ultimately but pilgrims in this life. One can be faithful even to the point of death for death is not the end. Christ is the victor who has triumphed over the grave and he will triumph over the present forces of darkness. He gives the crown of life, that is life eternal, to all those who stand fast in him. And therefore, as Luther's hymn puts it:

Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill,
God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever.

The Scripture passages on the Martyrs' Monument

C

John Louwerse

"Your Word is Truth"

MATTHEW 13:52

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"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:17)

It was not surprising that Martin Luther wrote his Ninety-five Theses against the sale of indulgences and nailed them on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. Five years earlier at his promotion to doctorate, Martin Luther took an oath on the Bible to teach only the true doctrine and to report all who promoted falsehood. Since then he had been lecturing on God's Word, specifically on the books of Psalms, Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. Thanks to the illumination of the Spirit he had come to a better understanding of God's Word. He came to rediscover that man's salvation is in Jesus Christ alone and not with the buying of indulgences from Johann Tetzel. And so the return of Luther to God's Word triggered the great Reformation of the sixteenth century in Europe!

And why was God's Word so important? As Jesus prayed to God in John 17, "Your word is truth." The church was led away from blinding falsehood back to truth, as defined and determined by the Word.

These words were part of Jesus' lengthy prayer to his heavenly Father. When he had finished, he left with his disciples for the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus was betrayed by Judas, arrested by the chief priests and scribes, and eventually handed over to Pontius Pilate to be condemned to death on a cross.

This prayer consists mostly of Jesus' intercession for his disciples throughout all ages. When the task for which the Father had sent him into this world was completed, he would be going back to the Father. Then the church would have to continue without the Lord's personal presence in her midst. Therefore the accent of Jesus' prayer lies strongly on the preservation of the church in this world by the Father.

So Jesus prayed for his disciples, for they would be the ones sent out to preach the Word in this hostile world. Those who would believe in Christ would do so through their word (v. 20). Through the Word the Lord Jesus would gather, defend, and preserve his church.

That is why Jesus prayed to the Father for his disciples: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth!" Sanctify them: make them holy. They were to be holy men, set apart from this world and set apart for God's service in this world. And their sanctification is to be in the truth; their hearts were to be changed by the truth that is God's Word. Without the Word, the work of sanctification in the disciples and in the church is impossible!

Indeed, God's Word is truth. Truth is a very important word in the gospel of John. This is truth with a capital T; truth which is permanent, clear, sufficient, necessary, and authoritative for us. This truth must be accepted in faith and acted upon by us in every aspect of life. We too need to be sanctified in the truth.

This is what happened in the time of the great Reformation. The church was guided back into all the truth, the truth of God's Word about salvation in Jesus Christ alone by faith alone. So the church experienced sanctification by the Spirit through the Word of truth.

With the great Reformation there was also application of God's Word of truth to all areas of human life and activity. For as Luther once wrote, "The Word of God is the greatest, most necessary, most important thing in Christendom." Once again, Jesus Christ was acknowledged as King over all of life!

And today there is the same need for the church to return continually to the truth of God's Word, for us to live everyday of the week in submission to it, and to listen to the commands of Christ our King. As he would later say to Pilate: "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (18:37).

But then a cynical Pilate asked, "What is truth?" We live in a world which asks the same question. Today truth is whatever you want it to be; it is whatever suits you. The truth of God's Word no longer guides many in our western world. The truth of God's Word has been sacrificed on the altar of selfishness and self-centredness, and as a result many live enslaved to falsehood. Yet does he not call us as church to be the pillar and foundation of the truth in the midst of this world! May the truth triumph through us!

Thankfully, God's Word is truth. And as Martin Luther concluded in "A Mighty Fortress," his famous Reformation hymn: "God's truth abideth still/ His Kingdom is forever."

Arjan de Visser

Tracing Guido de Brès in Doornik

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Most Reformed people know the remarkable story of the Belgic Confession: How it was written by Guido de Brès and how on the night of November 1, 1561, a copy of the confession was thrown over the wall of the castle in Doornik (French: Tournai).

This year we celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Belgic Confession. It is about time, I thought, to find out whether the castle wall is still there in Doornik and whether there might be any traces of Guido de Brès in this town in southern Belgium. In June this year I had an opportunity to visit Doornik together with my dad and my uncle, Frans Hamelink. The distance between Zaamslag, where my parents live, and Doornik is only 120 kilometres. Thus, less than two hours after leaving home we found ourselves enjoying a cappuccino at Café Le Central on the main square of Doornik.

We had chosen Café Le Central for a reason: Apparently it was from a balcony of this building that announcements were made about executions of Protestants in the sixteenth century. During those years the scaffold had a permanent place on the main square. When Guido de Brès came to Doornik in the late 1560s, many Reformed believers had already been executed at this place. One of the first martyrs was the well-known minister Pierre Brully. He was burned at the stake in February 1545. Others were hanged or beheaded.

It is a beautiful summer morning in early June. As we watch waiters putting out tables and chairs in the main square, it is hard to imagine that once upon a time people were executed at this place for no other reason than that they professed Reformed beliefs.

Yet, some of the buildings have a story to tell. The Belfry, for example. This bell-tower catches the eye with its architectural beauty. Dating back to the twelfth century, the tower is registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List. But there is a dark side to this building as well: During the sixteenth century it served as a prison for Calvinist believers. As you walk around the Belfry it is quite something to imagine that once upon a time fellow believers used to be imprisoned here.

Christine de Lalaing

While many historical buildings in Doornik trumpet the victory of Roman Catholicism, there is one remarkable exception: the statue of Christine de Lalaing in the main square. She was the wife of the governor who ruled Doornik during the few years the city was actually under Protestant rule. It is a history that is largely forgotten, but during the 1570s many cities in the southern Netherlands joined the revolt led by William of Orange. Important cities like Doornik, Ghent, and Antwerp revolted against the Spanish and accepted the Protestant faith. In fact, during those years

Statue of Christine de Lalaing

Rue de Marvis (left) with part of the old city wall

the Reformation was stronger in the southern Netherlands (present-day Belgium) than in the northern provinces.

In order to stamp out the rebellion King Philip II of Spain sent a strong army to the southern Netherlands, led by the Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma. Under Parma's capable leadership the cities that had turned Protestant were besieged and taken back one after the other. Doornik was one of the first cities on Parma's list. He besieged the city in 1581. Christine de Lalaing played an important role in organizing the city's defenses and inspiring the defenders to persevere. In the end, however, the attackers were too strong and the city fell into the hands of the Spanish. The Calvinist believers left and Doornik has been predominantly Roman Catholic ever since.

In an ironic twist of history Christine de Lalaing still got the upper hand many years later. In 1863 the city council of Doornik decided to place a statue of the brave woman in the main square of the city. It was felt that she exemplified the courageous spirit of the people of Doornik. This decision did not sit well with the local Roman Catholic clergy. They hated the statue of the female Protestant warrior and for many years the priests decreed that the annual *Grande Procession* through the city should not pass through the main square. It is only since the last decade or so that the procession passes through the main square again!

Rue de Marvis

Although the main square of Doornik has many connections to the history of the Reformation, there is nothing here that reminds the visitor of Guido de Brès. In order to find traces of him we need to leave the center of the town and move to the east side of the river that flows through the city. During the sixteenth century this area constituted the St. Brixe parish. It was a clever decision by Guido de Brès to settle down in St. Brixe because this parish was part of the diocese of Kamerijk (Cambrai). The bishop of Doornik had no direct authority here and living in St. Brixe might be just a little bit safer for a Reformed minister.

As far as we know, Guido de Brès lived in a house on Rue de Marvis. This street is still there today and it still speaks to the observant visitor. Especially when exploring the side alleys with their small and sometimes dilapidated houses, you get a feel for the historical situation. It is not difficult to imagine Guido de Brès walking through these alleys, carrying a Bible and a few copies of the Belgic Confession under his cloak, on his way to a meeting of Calvinist believers somewhere in the city.

In this area, in a friend's backyard and nestled against the city wall, Guido de Brès had a shed in which he kept his books and documents. In January 1562, shortly after De Brès had left the city, the authorities found the shed and confiscated everything. According to historical records they also found two hundred copies of the newly printed Belgic Confession.

Today only a few parts of the old city wall are left standing. It is impossible to find the place where Guido de Brès kept his books. Yet,

it is impressive to walk around the old ruins of the city wall and realize that the Belgic Confession was written here in this area. Today the document is virtually unknown in Doornik itself, yet, it has had a remarkable influence on the faith life of hundreds of thousands of people around the world.

Henry VIII Tower

The final part of our exploration is a visit to the Henry VIII tower. It was in this tower that Guido de Brès was imprisoned for about two weeks after he had been arrested in March 1567. The tower is presently being refurbished. It is closed and surrounded with scaffolding – which only adds to the cold and impregnable impression it makes. What a horrible place to be in! As we walk around the building we try to imagine how it was for Guido de Brès, his colleague Peregrin de la Grange, and a few other brothers, to be held captive within these walls. From letters which De Brès wrote to his wife, we know that various members of the local nobility came to visit him during this time, some to mock him, others to reason with him about his faith, others to show sympathy. On April 11, 1567, De Brès and friends were shipped off to a prison in Valenciennes. Six weeks later, on May 31, they were executed on a scaffold in the main square of Valenciennes.

Remember Guido de Brès, even though there is nothing in Doornik that carries his name

The Henry VIII tower used to part of the defensive walls around the castle of Doornik. Somewhere, not far from here, on November 1, 1561, Guido de Brès or one of his helpers threw a copy of the Belgic Confession over the wall. It has now been 450 years since that happened. Guido de Brès himself would never have expected that his confession would have such an enormous impact on the history of the Reformed Churches, first in the Netherlands, and then in so many other countries as well. As we commemorate the event this year, we marvel at how God used the actions and writings of this courageous preacher in order to build his church around the world.

Entrance of the Henry VIII tower

Wes Bredenhof

The Other Confession of Guido de Brès

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This year we have been celebrating the 450th birthday of the Belgic Confession. Many people know that Belgian Reformer Guido (or Guy) de Brès was the author of the Belgic Confession. What few realize is that this was not the only confessional document that he was involved with preparing. There is another confession.

Background

In 1564, de Brès was serving in France as a chaplain for the Duke of Bouillon, Henri-Robert de la Marck. De la Marck was well known for his Huguenot sympathies. The Duke sent him on a mission to Brussels to meet with certain high level political officials, one other Reformed minister, and a Lutheran delegation. The goal of this conference was to unite the Reformed and Lutheran churches in the Low Countries (and hopefully elsewhere) so as to present a united front against the power of the Roman Catholic Church.

The conference concluded without any agreement. However, de Brès went home with a copy of the Wittenberg Concord of 1536. This had been drawn up in a meeting of Reformed and Lutherans as a way to resolve their differences, particularly on the sticky subject of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. De Brès was charged by the Duke to study the Concord and to give his opinion.

A new confession to bridge the gap

In a letter to the Antwerp consistory in 1565, de Brès wrote that, at first glance, the Wittenberg Concord may appear to be a bridge too far, but he was confident that it could be used partly as the basis for unity with the Lutherans. But there were other outstanding issues and those led de Brès to meet with two other Reformed pastors, Jean Taffin and Pierre van Ceulen. Meeting in Metz (in northern France), they drafted a confession dealing with baptism and absolution. De Brès had high hopes for this confession and according to one biographer (Braekman), he was even willing to risk his life for it. It was sent to Geneva for review and then also to the Reformed churches of the Low Countries.

In the end, it was all for nothing. In Geneva, John Calvin had been dead for a year, so it fell to his successor to review this new confession. Theodore Beza was not all that impressed with it. In the Low Countries, it was decided to focus on unity with the Reformed churches in France, rather than on with the Lutherans.

Unfortunately, the confession does not appear to be extant. No one has ever found it. There are two sources that mention it. The main one is the July 10, 1565 letter of de Brès to the Antwerp consistory. The other is the August 24, 1565 letter of Beza to Jean Taffin.

The episode is insightful for it reveals the sentiments of de Brès with respect to the Lutherans. Yes, it would have been politically expedient for them to unite, but more than that, they belonged together. Throughout his writings (including the Belgic Confession), de Brès emphasized the antithesis between true and false religion. The Anabaptists and Roman Catholics were essentially the world, on the dark side of the antithesis. Not so for the Lutherans. The Lutherans were regarded as close allies in the work of Reformation. There were outstanding issues between them, but these were not viewed as insurmountable.

Comparing the Belgic and Augsburg Confessions

This is particularly evident when we compare de Brès' first confession with the Augsburg Confession. The Augsburg Confession was the earliest Lutheran confession, dating back to 1530. It had originally been written by Philip Melanchthon as a testimony to Emperor Charles V. Later Melanchthon revised the Augsburg Confession in an effort to reach out to the Reformed churches. This 1540 edition, commonly called the Variata (changed), was palatable enough to John Calvin that he subscribed it when he was working in Strasbourg. The main difference between the Variata and Invariata (the original) has to do with the doctrine

Church News

Sustained Candidacy Examination

Examined by Classis Ontario West of September 21, 2011 and declared eligible for call:

Steven Vandevelde

Called by the Carman East Canadian Reformed Church:

Candidate Steven Vandevelde

Called by the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ontario to serve as co-pastor:

Rev. John Louwerse

of Neerlandia, Alberta

Called by the Canadian Reformed Church at Chilliwack, British Columbia:

Rev. Hendrik Alkema

of Houston, British Columbia

of the Lord's Supper. The original Augsburg Confession said that the "body and blood of Christ are truly present and distributed to those who eat the Lord's Supper." The Variata stated that the body and blood of Christ are truly exhibited with the bread and wine to those who eat the Lord's Supper. This is not far from what the Belgic Confession says in Article 35: "Yet we do not go wrong when we say that what we eat and drink is the true, natural body and the true blood of Christ."

The doctrine of salvation is also a significant commonality. Both the Augsburg and the Belgic Confession give the true biblical doctrine of original sin. Both confessions recognize the dire situation of fallen man and the need for the gospel. When it comes to the solution, both confessions sing harmony off the same page. Both confess the same doctrine of justification by faith alone through Christ alone.

When it comes to the response to our salvation, sometimes it is said that Lutherans deny or minimize the third use of the law, the law as a guide for our thankfulness. But this is certainly not found in the Augsburg Confession. Article 6 states it plainly: "Our churches teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruit. It is necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God's will." And again in Article 20, "…we teach that it is necessary to do good works. This does not mean that we merit grace by doing good works, but because it is God's will." The Belgic Confession speaks in the same way in Article 24. Good works are necessary and inevitable for believers, but "they do not count towards our justification."

Now, as mentioned, there were still some differences. But the fact that Calvin could sign the 1540 Variata Augsburg Confession is telling. The Reformed and at least some of the Lutherans were as close at that time as they would ever get. With the passage of time, theology continued to develop and the Lutherans expanded their confessional library. If Calvin and de Brès had been alive to read the 1577 Formula of Concord, they might not have been positive about the possibilities for unity between the Reformed and the Lutherans. The Formula of Concord entrenched several distinctively Lutheran positions in extensive detail.

Conclusion

Where does that leave us today? In God's providence, the Lutherans and the Reformed went their separate ways in the sixteenth century. Yet in the sixteenth-century Low Countries, faithful Lutherans were regarded as allies, not foes. They were regarded as estranged brothers to be sought out. When de Brès wrote Article 29 regarding true and false church, he did not consider the Lutherans to be the false church or a sect. Rather, de Brès was thinking of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anabaptists with those appellations.

Today there are nearly 500 years of history behind the Lutherans. Many things have changed and many who go by the name "Lutheran" would send Luther himself into a cardiac arrest. There is much unfaithfulness among Lutheran churches around the world. Yet, thankfully, there are still those where the pure gospel is preached – where the good news of Christ is clearly and powerfully proclaimed. While the doctrines of the sacraments are not as biblical as one would wish, there are Lutheran churches where they are still administered as Christ commanded. And yes, some Lutherans still do practice church discipline as well. When we encounter such Lutherans, we do well to remember our church history and the efforts of Guido de Brès to reach out to these estranged fellow believers. C

Rachel Padro

Camp Eden 2011: Grabbing Hold of the King in Prayer

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims his handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)

When I heard that our church's camp theme for this year was *Grabbing Hold of God in Prayer,* I was instantly excited. A few weeks before God had been revealing to me just how stale my prayer life was and how empty words and lukewarm hearts are not what he wants. It was a time of asking him, "But *how* do I pray?" and then remembering that the disciples of old had asked him the very same question. I began to pray using The Lord's Prayer and the Holy Spirit as my guide – and watched him bring to bud in me a fruitful and blessed prayer life that truly burst into a new bloom over our weekend at Camp Eden, the annual summer camp organized by members of the Denver, Colorado congregation.

As Pastor Ted said during one of his marvellous speeches, God has a sense of humour in his delightful surprises. This concept was one of the very first things we delved into during our weekend in the mountains. I will admit that I was, just as Pastor Ted expected some of us would be, a bit cautious with that very bold thought of "grabbing hold of God." But as we came to see, it is a very biblical and very real thing. A thing we get to enjoy only for his name's sake, only because he is goodness, only because of the blood that covers us! In the face of it, how can we not marvel, not pray from the heart?

What a time we had with our brothers and sisters from far away! From Canada or here in the U.S., from any and all spheres of life – there's a love that binds us that simply can't be found anywhere outside of his church.

There were times of just meditating on him on the benches before our cabins, times of stealing away on the stunning lodge balcony with grand company. There were supposedly meteor showers – I can't say I saw anything in the time I was awake – but the clarity of the present stars was awesome enough! There were heartfelt talks, *plenty* of laughs, hikes with breathtaking views, and towers made out of plates, cups, and saltshakers.

For games, we had a mystery box – in the form of a cow. One had to stick their hand up his muzzle and feel inside his tummy to guess what he'd eaten. Though some of the younger children wrote down "grass" as their answer, the cow had devoured some surprising things, like hand cream and a hot sauce packet.

There was a scavenger hunt great for roaming the outdoors with friends, shuffle board for some indoor fun, and ball games that all ages enjoyed. Not to mention our annual and beloved Bible Trivia! Prizes for the arranged activities were appreciated (who doesn't enjoy candy?), but the joy and companionship we got out of them was far better.

We studied and practiced the blessing of coming before his throne. We revelled in just how awesome it is that we can do this by seeing just how small we are. It was displayed to us by the mountains and trees and green stretching into skies periwinkle and endless, the refreshing rain and rousing thunder that came on the Sabbath, the tranquil sun on the brimming pond, the pearly full moon, the stars seared into black – all only merest glimpses of the King of eternity!

If ever you are around Denver, Colorado in August, do join us. You will treasure the fellowship and the spiritual truths forever.

Cynthia Bultje

Reformed String Camp 2011

The fifth year of the Reformed String Camp took place in B.C. at the Langley Canadian Reformed Church and Credo Christian Highschool, on July 4 to July 9. Some seventy students plus volunteers came together to make music together with stringed instruments. The idea for this camp came from Jenny Dykstra, who for many years took her own kids to an annual string camp in the Vancouver area. Wouldn't it be nice to have a Christian string camp, which might be more affordable, for others in our circles to enjoy as well? So after consulting with her son, Kent and daughter, Roxi, they agreed if they could get twenty students then they would give it a try. They found thirty willing students, and thus the Reformed String Camp was born; it has grown to seventy students this year, from all over the country.

So what is it that could induce seventy students to come for violin, viola, and cello lessons for a whole week straight? Perhaps many of us are used to hearing the moans of unwilling children as they are told to practice their music, let alone to willingly subject themselves to this much practicing and playing in a week. One would have to see it to believe it, but having seen it happen three times and having children in it for the last four years, I can tell you it is quite exciting to see these young people with so much eagerness

Dykstra siblings doing a masterclass

An excited group of musicians ready for tour!

and desire to play. It has been a real blessing for those who participate. Many of these young people practice all year long, with very little opportunities to play with others, let alone with those who also play stringed instruments. After many long hours of practice by oneself, including perhaps not so very exciting and often very tedious technical aspects, it is very gratifying to sit with others and make beautiful music together, to enjoy this gift that God has given us. At the Reformed String Camp you get to do it to the glory of God, with others who are willing and interested in doing it to the glory of God, with directors who are very eager to do it to God's glory and they get to play these really great arrangements of our Genevan Psalms written by Kent Dykstra. What more could one ask?

And yet there are blessings associated with giving God glory. We develop our senses. As Pastor Ted Van Raalte pointed out in his meditation one morning,

> Our senses have a connection to reality. They tell us how things really are. . . . These senses need to be formed by experience and conformed to reality . . .at a string camp your sense of hearing is important. . . . There's a deep reason why music doesn't need to be translated into German or French or English, why it speaks to people the world over. That deep reason is because music is part of God's creation. . . embedded in the creation. It is the beautiful ordering of sound.

String Camp is part of an attempt to conform and develop your ears and minds to beautiful sound, it is getting to know God better through those things he has created for us to enjoy. It is for these young people to enjoy making good music, but also so they can share that music with others, that others may enjoy listening to good music.

String camp is also an opportunity to learn to use their weapons of music even better. As Rev. Theo Lodder pointed out in his meditation, in the Bible the same word is used for musical instruments that are used for weapons of war. Weapons are called *instruments* of war and musical instruments are called *instruments of song* and also sometimes *instruments of power*. One has to look no further than David, to see the power of music. This man of war wrote the majority of the Psalms in the Bible. This man used his music to drive away the evil spirits from Saul and after war or trials would make music to God. Music is powerful for believers. It is like a weapon that God gives us to win spiritual battles, to silence Satan. But as with any instrument, it takes much training to use it well.

And then in addition to that, one cannot just go off on do your own thing, but you need to learn to work with others in harmony, to learn to follow the leader's instructions, to work with those around you. String Camp has given these young people much motivation to work together and listen to each other, so as to make harmony. Granted not all the music sounds harmonious at the beginning of the week, but as the week progresses it becomes more and more harmonious, and in the imperfect world, we may not attain perfect harmony in our music, but we certainly need to strive for it. We cannot be self-centred and only listen to ourselves, but we have to listen to those around us as well, as well as take instructions from the directors. These young people come to learn more this working together, this time in music. In the words of Psalm 133 in our Book of Praise, "How good it is when brothers are united, with one another's company delighted, and live in pleasant harmony."

There is the sense of encouragement and motivation derived for a week of being with others who share a similar interest. Kent and Roxi are an energetic and enthusiastic pair that keep all the participants excited. But the less advanced students are also looking up to the more advanced students, knowing they would like to arrive there someday, and they are encouraged and motivated to work through those hours of practice on their own. Those more advanced students are encouraged and challenged to work harder so as to play well and contribute to the beautiful music being played. It is too easy to become complacent with your progress, to avoid the technical boring practices that really improve your playing, but when with others, you are pressed to do your best even more, then and latter at home in your regular practice. There is the opportunity for those more advance players to encourage and help the less advanced players. This year some of the senior students had the opportunity to go on a tour on the week following String Camp. People in Vernon, Coaldale, and Calgary got to share in the fruits of the Reformed String Camp.

The Reformed String Camp has truly been a blessing to our circles and let us encourage the use and developments of these talents among us, and take delight in them, so that we may give God the glory in every area of our lives. Check out the website of the Reformed String Camp at www.reformedstringcamp.org. To quote Frank E. Gaebelein, "All truth is of God. Therefore, music that has integrity is part of God's truth and belongs in the Christian Life." C

The participants, helpers, and leaders

Arthur Kingma

"To Be or Not To Be" in Christian Education (Part 2 of 2)

Mr. Arthur Kingma is vice principal of Emmanuel Christian High School in Fergus, Ontario
abkingma@kwic.com

In the first half of this article, I argued that although we may not use drama to tell God's Word, we may use drama in our Christian schools. If we do not define a proper place for drama in the curriculum of our schools, its place will be defined by the culture of our post-modern western world.

We need to take up the challenge. Drama should have a well-defined place in our Reformed curriculum.

Process drama

At the primary and early elementary levels, teachers mainly use informal or process drama. Process drama involves the teacher, the students, and the subject matter, but does not really involve the audience. Its primary purpose is to give students a "live through" experience, not to have a "show to" experience. True, process drama may seem very child-centred, since the teacher does not know in advance what is going to happen or what exactly will be expressed, but that is where in the first place, our Christian schools will differ from a truly child-centred education. We do not begin with what the child wants to know and explore, but with what the teacher wants the children to understand. Our education must remain teacher-directed. In our Christian schools, then, process or informal drama must be placed within a context that the teacher provides.

Process drama is not undirected play, nor a break for the teacher, but a well-structured, student-involved learning activity that deepens understanding. For example, after studying Canadian pioneers, a teacher may ask students to prepare a drama script that explains a typical school day for students and their teacher in a typical one-room prairie school house during the 1830s. While the students are preparing their scripts, the teacher will be urging students to make connections with what they have learned. And once the scripts have been prepared, the teacher will have the various groups practise them. The writing and the practising of the script will satisfy the main objective of the teacher. After a few rounds of practice, and consequent dialoguing about the practices, the teacher could allow students to perform their plays to classmates. Throughout all this process drama activity, however, the teacher must remain fully involved and fully in control. Only when the teacher remembers the primary purpose of this drama activity – to recall and include what they have learned in their pioneer unit – will she provide the best learning situation for the students.

A myth about drama is that the activity is free. It may allow for a lot of student input and interpretation, but the activity is far from free. To memorize lines is not free. What to do and who to be are not free; the individual's interpretation of *how* to act or *how* to speak is free, although even that may be modified by teacher or fellow students. The content is not free either; students need to write content (if they are writing the scripts) that fit with the learning situation established by the teacher. Even what a character says may not be free, for the words of a character must exemplify the manner and thoughts of that character. Process drama is and must remain a structured learning activity that enhances the learning of the students.

Drama and student growth

It is true that most children love to act, and it is true that drama, which is acting, stimulates the imagination of children, but drama can do more than simply allow children to act and develop their imaginations. Through it, students also will be able to develop the use of the five senses, the mastery and control of one's physical self, the use of speech, the discovery and control of

emotion and the intellect. Short acting activities can be provided to students to demonstrate how certain emotions can be conveyed through our actions. Especially in the primary classroom, teachers can use informal drama to broaden socially acceptable and socially unacceptable demonstrations of verbal and non-verbal expressions of emotions beyond the child's family setting. In longer drama activities, students learn to remain in character, to limit actions to their character, and to think as the character. All these activities will involve the imagination and will provide for acting, but in a purposeful and meaningful way.

In our Christian schools, we have traditionally included drama in our Language Arts or the English programs. As students must study novels in high school, so students must study plays in high school. Studying plays is similar to studying novels in that students examine and analyze setting, plot, conflict, character, motives and themes, but it is also different from studying novels, in that the teacher will have students focus more on *how* the setting is prepared, on *how* the atmosphere is achieved, on *how* the character moves and speaks, on *how* conflict can be created verbally and non-verbally. By studying the *how* in plays, students can easily focus only on the *how* without looking at the *what* and the *why*. Christian teachers must ensure that all three aspects of the play are carefully examined. Even when drama is taught as a separate course in high school (in Ontario, drama is part of the Arts courses), where the emphasis on the how will be greater, the Christian teacher must never forget the overall context into which the drama instruction must be placed. The teacher must help students analyze the motives of characters, the themes in the play, or the necessity of setting to produce the right atmosphere. And when acting out parts of the play the class is studying, the students must not only evaluate how best to present what the play writers intended for that character or scene, but also what we as Christians may or may not act or present. In both the study of the novel or of the play, a Christian teacher must always keep the study in the context of God's Word. They must have the students analyze and evaluate how the play or their enactment of the play speaks what God reveals about man's depravity, God's love and redemption, and our need to show love and obedience.

Which ones? How?

So what play can a Christian school teacher choose for his or her students to study? It is obvious that many plays, especially those more recently produced by our culture, cannot be studied or played by our students. A play must represent the real world, and the real world is not a paradise. Plays that show conflict due to misunderstandings, like a Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore,* or a play that deals with hardships in life, like Goodrich and Hackett's *Diary of Anne Frank,* would be good plays to choose. A play that provides clean comedy (hard to find in today's lists of plays) would also be great. Plays that demonstrate conflict

due to jealousy, lack of love, or personal gain, as in *Scrooge*, can also be good, provided that the language is appropriate, and that the wrong motives are exposed.

But more criteria must be added. We may not have characters act out socially and biblically unacceptable behaviours. So many plays call for characters to smoke, do drugs, use foul and vulgar language or take God's name in vain. We may not allow students to actually do these things on stage. To have characters verbalize or demonstrate a sin would be acceptable only if both the players and audience realize that the action is not condoned. For example, if a player acting as a teenager expresses a rebellious attitude to his dad, but later repents from it, the action is acceptable, and the play then expresses a biblical theme.

It is urgent for teachers to carefully choose the right plays to study or perform

It is very understandable that drama has been frowned upon by many faithful Christians, whether they be our parents or grandparents, or whether they be Reformed Christians in other churches. Whereas drama is not the tool to use to teach Christian doctrine or biblical knowledge, it can be used in our Christian schools as a tool to aid verbal classroom instruction. It can be studied and even performed by our students, but always in well-defined manner and in proper context. The very nature of drama can easily lead one to act out sin without even acknowledging that action as sin. It can easily lead teachers and students to not focus on the analysis and evaluation of what is being dramatized. It is therefore all the more urgent for teachers to carefully choose the right plays to study or perform. It is most urgent for the Christian English teacher to be steeped in Scripture so that he or she will apply biblical norms to the stage. If the performance of the play or of the scene does not do justice to the playwriter and to God's Word, it should not be performed. If the play does not underscore what God's Word instructs, it should not be.

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

Ray of Sunshine

by Corinne Gelms and Patricia Gelms

Farther On

In this world we have trials,
We may be troubled at dawn;
There may be illness or death, but
It will be better farther on.
Friends may reject or disown us,
We long for trials to be gone;
It hurts us, but we still endure,
It will be better farther on.
We may be lonely or with sorrow,
Our burdens here may not be won;
There may be pain to bear, but
It will be better farther on.
Things may trouble our mind,
From dawn 'til setting of the sun;
These trials will not forever last,
It will be better farther on.
Farther on...when this life is past,
We'll rest with Jesus. . . God's Son;
Heaven will be a Glorious Home,
It will be better. . . farther on.

Birthdays in October:

3 **JANELL DEBOER will be 21**
6311 Silver Street, RR 2, St. Ann's, ON L0R 1Y0

6 **HENRY VANDER VLIET will be 44**
c/o Anchor Home
361 Thirty Road, RR 2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2

12 **LEONA BARENDREGT will be 28**
Box 2184, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

13 **NANCY SCHIPPER will be 55**
653 Broad Street West, Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8

17 **ALAN BREUKELMAN will be 45**
225-19th Street, Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4

22 **NELENA HOFSINK will be 51**
Bethesda Clearbrook Home
32553 Willingdon Crescent,
Clearbrook, BC V2T 1S2

28 **MARY ANN DE WIT will be 55**
31126 Kingfisher Drive,
Abbotsford, BC V2T 5K4

Birthday in November:

3 **WILMA VAN DRONGELEN will be 54**
306-33375 Mayfair Avenue,
Abbotsford, BC V2S 1P4

The blessing of another year is approaching for those who will be celebrating a birthday in October and November. It is a rich gift each day again, when we can give our heavenly Father the glory due his Name, and to thank him for the continued grace and love in our lives. It is our prayer that you may all be richly blessed by having a very enjoyable day together with your family and friends.

Also through this column we will let you all know that our Sr. Mary Vandeburgt was taken to eternal glory soon after celebrating her fifty-fifth birthday. It is with joy and thankfulness that Mary could pass peacefully in her sleep to be with her heavenly Father. It is with that joy that we await the day that we can all be with our faithful Saviour.

A note to all parents and caregivers

If there are any address or other changes that we need to be aware of please let us know as soon as possible.

You can contact us by the following means:

Mail: Corinne Gelms
8301 Range 1 Road, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Phone: 905-957-0380
Email: jcorgelms@porchlight.ca

Press Release of Classis Central Ontario, September 16, 2011, convened by Fellowship Church at Ebenezer Church in Burlington

On behalf of Fellowship Church, the Rev. John van Popta opened the meeting with the reading of John 5:1-15 and some edifying words. After we sang Psalm 80:1 and 7, Rev. van Popta led us in prayer. He then welcomed all the delegates, including the Rev. Henry Van Olst, fraternal delegate of Classis Southern Ontario of the URCNA. The delegates of Ebenezer Church reported that all the churches of the classis were duly represented by two delegates. At that point, Rev. van Popta declared Classis constituted. The moderamen were Rev. John van Popta (chairman), Rev. George van Popta (vice-chairman), and Rev. Douglas Vandeburgt (clerk).

We entered into closed session for the church visitation reports for Ebenezer, Fellowship, Rehoboth, Flamborough, Jubilee, and Bethel churches, which were all thankfully received.

In open session other reports were read and received: inspection of archives, treasurer's report, inspection of the treasurer's books, committee for needy churches and the report of its inspection. Flamborough is asked to report to a future classis regarding the merging of the classical fund with the national one administered by Covenant Church at Grassie. As per the recommendation of the committee for needy churches, Classis granted Jubilee Church financial assistance for the next year. Brother Malcolm Wildeboer of Jubilee expressed the gratitude of the consistory and congregation for the ongoing and loving support of the churches of Classis.

Question period *ad* Church Order Article 44 was held and revealed that the work of the office bearers continues, that the decisions of the broader assemblies are honoured in all the churches, and that none of the churches needed special advice.

Rev. Henry Van Olst brought greetings on behalf of Classis Southern Ontario of the URCNA and expressed thankfulness for the wide variety of contacts our respective churches enjoy. Rev. George van Popta responded and asked Rev. Van Olst to return our greetings to his classis.

The Church at Flamborough asked that the regulations of Classis be amended to reflect that, as of the last general synod, we no longer need a classical fund for needy students since but we now have a national fund. Classis decided that the regulations do not need to be amended but that, rather, the pertinent articles be stricken.

Classis dealt with an appeal in which a brother disagrees with a decision of a church to consider Article 176 (Women voting in the election of office bearers) of General Synod Burlington as settled and binding. The appeal was denied.

Arrangements were made for the next classis which will be convened by Rehoboth at Ebenezer on December 9. Rev. De Gelder will serve as chairman, Rev. John van Popta as vice-chairman, and Rev. George van Popta will be the clerk.

All examiners and church visitors are reappointed as are churches for taking care of and inspecting archives. The treasurer, Brother H.J. Sloots of Burlington, was reappointed. Various committees were reappointed. Brother Ed Jans of Flamborough was appointed to the committee for needy churches until 2014. The treasurer of this committee is Brother Leo Kampen of Burlington.

As there will be a regional synod in Fergus on November 9, 2011, Classis appointed the following as its delegates: Elders Rob Hofsink and Leo Kampen with G.J. Nordeman as first alternate and Art Van Halteren as second; Ministers, Rev. W. den Hollander and Rev. John van Popta with Rev. George van Popta as first alternate and Rev. G. Nederveen as second alternate.

The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved. The chairman asked the vice-chairman to end the meeting with prayer after which the classis was closed.

G. Ph. van Popta
Vice-chairman, e.t.

Press Release Classis Niagara of September 21, 2011 in Tintern, ON

On behalf of the convening church, Rev. P. Holtvlüwer called the meeting of delegates to order. He read Psalm 122 and opened in prayer. He then requested the delegates sing Psalm 122:1, 2. Rev. Holtvlüwer welcomed all the delegates. He extended a special welcome to Rev. C. Bouwman who has accepted the call to the Smithville Canadian Reformed Church. The delegates of the Spring Creek Canadian Reformed Church of Tintern examined the credentials. All the churches were represented. Classis was declared constituted. The officers were:

Rev. D. Wynia – Chairman
Rev. S.C. Van Dam – Clerk
Rev. K.A. Kok – Vice-Chairman

The chairman thanks the convening church for all the preparatory work. He notes that Rev. Bouwman has accepted the call extended to him by the church at Smithville. He also remembers the death of Sr. J. Geertsema, the wife of Prof. J. Geertsema. The agenda is adopted.

Classis proceeds to the approbation of the call of Rev. C. Bouwman. After the examination of the necessary documents, Classis approbates the call. The chairman welcomes Rev. Bouwman as a minister within this classical region. He then reads the classical Form of Subscription, after which Rev. Bouwman signs the Form.

The chairman asks the questions required in Article 44 of the Church Order. The churches in Attercliffe, Blue Bell, Dunville, and Grassie all request advice in matters of discipline. In closed session, advice is given.

A proposal from the Spring Creek Canadian Reformed Church of Tintern to amend the regulations of Classis is discussed. It is proposed that Classis establish a standing committee to aid both appellants and Classis in dealing with appeals. This proposal is defeated.

A letter is received from the Theological Seminary of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The request is made that if there are students to be examined for permission to speak an edifying word, Classis be convened at the end of May rather than in June. This letter is received for information and passed on to the churches to keep in mind if they are the convening church at that time of year.

The consistory of the Spring Creek Canadian Reformed Church of Tintern reported that it has examined the classical archives kept by the church of Attercliffe and that the archives were found to be in good order.

The consistory of the church of Grassie reported on the audit of the books of the classical treasurer, Br. D. Van Amerongen. The books were found in good order. Br. Van Amerongen is thanked for his work and released for the period from September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2011.

The report of the classical treasurer is discussed. He suggests an assessment of $2.00 per communicant member. Classis sets the assessment at this amount.

The consistory of the church of Smithville reports for the Fund for Needy Churches. The Church of Blue Bell has made a request for support for the next year. Classis decides to grant this support and an assessment of $39.00 per communicant member is set.

For a variety of reasons, there is no written report of the church visitors available at Classis. An oral report of the visits made to the churches of Attercliffe, Dunville, Grassie, Lincoln, Smithville, and Tintern is given. A written report will be presented at the next classis.

Classis made the following appointments. For the next classis: The date of the next classis: December 14, 2011. Convening church: Attercliffe. Proposed officers: Rev. C. Bouwman, chairman; Rev. S.C. Van Dam, vice-chairman; Rev. D. Wynia, clerk.

Br. D. Van Amerongen is appointed as classical treasurer.

The church at Grassie is appointed to represent Classis at the installation of Rev. C. Bouwman.

Revs. J. Huijgen and K.A. Kok are appointed as deputies for examinations.

Revs. C. Bouwman and K.A. Kok are appointed as church visitors, with Rev. D. Wynia as alternate.

The convening church for the next classis is responsible to extend invitations to the United Reformed Churches, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Churches of the United States, and the Free Reformed churches to send observers to the next classis.

Rev. R. Wynia is appointed to represent Classis at the next Classis Southern Ontario of the United Reformed Churches, if that classis is convened within classical region Niagara.

The following brothers were chosen as delegates to the next Regional Synod East. For elders, Brs. A. Kingma and C. Oosterhof were chosen as primary delegates; Brs. K. Jager and E. Feenstra (in that order) were chosen as alternates. For ministers, Revs. P. Holtvlüwer and R. Wynia were chosen as primary delegates; Revs. D. De Boer and K.A. Kok (in that order) were chosen as alternates.

Personal Questions period was held. The chairman judged the Censure ad Art. 34 C.O. is not necessary. The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved.

Rev. D. Wynia leads in a prayer of thanksgiving and closes Classis.

For Classis Niagara
September 21, 2011,
K.A. Kok, vice-chairman C

Clarion Advertisements

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

Births

Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him.
Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.
Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.
Psalm 127:3-5a

With thanks and praise to God, we announce the birth of

JORDAN PIETER

on July 21, 2011
Klaas and Jaclyn Kooiker
Dallen†, Keasha† Tristan, Caleb and Lucas
Thankful grandparents are
Hank and Jackie Versteeg, Jan and Annie Kooiker
and Pieter and Elsien Nijenhuis
Carman, MB

Wedding Anniversaries

45th Wedding Anniversary

1966 ~ November 19 ~ 2011

Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. 1 Samuel 25:6b

With thankfulness
to the Lord,
we announce the
45th Wedding Anniversary
of our
parents and grandparents

ARIE
and
REINA NIEZEN (Schutten)

With many years of health concerns for Mom and Dad, we pray that the Lord will continue to keep them in his care and bless them with many more years ahead.
Paul and Margaret Janssen (Niezen)
Natasha, Timothy, Daniel, Matthew
Rob and Lynn Niezen (Dykstra)
Michael, Devon

Open House on November 19, 2011, D.V. from 2-4 p.m.
Laurel Dufferin Area Christian School
Orangeville, Ontario

Mailing address:
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Wedding Anniversaries

October 15, 1971 ~ October 15, 2011

Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Ruth 1:16

The Lord has richly blessed our parents and grandparents

TED and HENNIE VAN GORKUM (nee Vandersluis)

with 40 years of marriage. Our prayer is that He will keep them in his care as they continue their life in his grace.

Cloverdale, BC: Tara and Chris Borst
Janaya, Gerrit, Luke
Aldergrove, BC: Sheri and James Vander Zwan
Chantel, Curtis, Carissa
Abbotsford, BC: Lisa and Jason Devries
Michaela, Zachary, Autumn, Everett, Savanna, Marshall
Vancouver, BC: Denise Van Gorkum
Abbotsford, BC: Greg and Megan Van Gorkum

#11, 6467 - 197th Street, Langley, BC V2Y 1K7

50th Wedding Anniversary

1961 ~ November 10 ~ 2011

Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him, and He will act.
Psalm 37:5

With thankfulness to our heavenly Father, who has graciously guided and protected them, we joyfully announce the 50th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents

TONY and DINY VANDERHOUT (nee Bartels)

May God continue to keep them in His care and bless them.
Brian and Lisa Vanderhout
Laura, Marlaina, Bradley
Marian Vanderhout

Open House to be held, D.V., Saturday, November 5, 2011, at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum
9280 Airport Road, Mount Hope from 2:00 to 4:30 pm.
Free admission to the museum.
(Best Wishes Only)

3541 Cemetery Road, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0

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Anniversaries

1966 – September 25 – 2011
With thankfulness to God, we remembered that

CORNELIUS VANSPRONSEN

has served as minister of the Word for

45 YEARS

We are thankful that the Lord gives health to continue in His service, as minister emeritus, in churches in Canada and abroad.

Johanna VanSpronsen and family

Obituaries

Entered into the presence of God

BARTHA ANTONIA (Bartels) LOOPSTRA
nee Heyerman

Born January 29, 1916, Hellendoorn, The Netherlands
Fallen asleep in Jesus
Thursday, September 8, 2011
At her residence, Shalom Manor, Grimsby, ON
in her 96th year
Missed and loved

Predeceased by her first husband
the late Willem Bartels

Predeceased by her second husband
the late Reverend Willem Loopstra

Caring and devoted mother of
Geraldine and the late Jacques Sluyter,
Buitenpost, The Netherlands
John and Willie Bartels, Caledonia, ON
Bill and Annemarie Bartels, Ancaster, ON
Henry and Nancy Bartels, Grimsby, ON
Ben and Ingrid Bartels, Ancaster, ON
George and Marta Bartels, Ancaster, ON
Hans and Coby Bartels, Hamilton, ON
Wilma and John Hutten, Owen Sound, ON
and step-mother of
the late Dr. Larry Loopstra and Pam Loopstra, Ancaster, ON
Chuck and Claudia Loopstra, Toronto, ON
Allard and Margie Loopstra, Carlisle, ON
Bert and Willy Loopstra, Meaford, ON

Dear Oma of 42 grandchildren, 124 great-grandchildren
13 step-grandchildren, 17 step-great-grandchildren
Further predeceased by 3 great-grandchildren,
2 brothers and 1 sister
Survived by her dear sister, Johanna Beldman

She chose Romans 14:8 (KJV) as headstone memorial

Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Thank You

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the many best wishes we received on our 40th Wedding Anniversary, as well as on the occasion of 40 years in the ministry of the Word and retirement from the Seminary. We treasure experiencing the fellowship of the saints in this way. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Dr. Cornelis and Mrs. Joanne Van Dam

Teaching Positions

The Board of the **Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School** (in the Bulkley Valley) invites applications from certified teachers to fill a

MATERNITY LEAVE IN A GRADE 2 CLASSROOM

The applicant must be a professed member in good standing of a Canadian Reformed or United Reformed or sister church. This position will commence in January 2012. It may become a full-time position in the 2012-2013 school year.

We are looking for teachers who:

- love God and his covenant children
- set and maintain high personal standards
- are professional in their work
- are committed to lifelong learning
- are committed to contributing to a cohesive team
- understand the responsibility they are entrusted with as teachers, and continually evaluate their practice to better bring it into submission to God.

If you meet the above criteria we urge you to contact us soon about working at ECRS.

If you have questions please call or email the principal,
Derek Stoffels, at work: (250) 847-3492
principal@ebenezerschool.com

To apply please email your application to the principal or mail it to: The Education Committee
Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School
Box 3700, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

Browse our website for a "taste" of the school:
www.ebenezerschool.com

Check www.town.smithers.bc.ca and www.tourismsmithers.com for information on the community the school is located in.

JOHN CALVIN SCHOOL
320 Station Street, PO Box 280, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Due to the pending retirement of its principal, Mr. F.C. Ludwig, at the end of the 2011-2012 school year, John Calvin School is seeking

QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

to take over the leadership of the school and its educational program. JCS has a student population of approximately 250 students spread across eight grades and thirteen classrooms, taught by eighteen full and part-time staff.

An additional two rooms are devoted to Special Education, staffed by a Special Education teacher and an E.A. It also boasts a recently up-dated and expanded, well-supplied facility of fourteen classrooms, a modern 30-machine computer lab, a full-sized gymnasium, a professionally-equipped kitchen, administrative offices and a large property including several sports fields, baseball diamonds and a groomed track.

Any interested persons are encouraged to contact either of the persons listed below as soon as possible to receive particulars about the process and details of application.

Chairman of the Board: Mr. E. Ludwig
905-957-4502
E-mail: ludwig@talkwireless.ca
Secretary of the Education Committee: Mr. D. Bos
905-957-5058
E-mail: donmonbos@talkwireless.ca

GUIDO de BRÈS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

Guido de Brès Canadian Reformed High School Society in Hamilton, Ontario via its SEARCH COMMITTEE having completed its inquiry phase NOW INVITES **APPLICATIONS** FOR

PRINCIPAL

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- Applicants should possess suitable qualities of leadership and collaboration and should be committed to the field of Reformed Education within the framework of the Scriptures as summarized in the Reformed Confessions.
- Seasoned enthusiastic teachers/administrators looking for a leading teaching position within a vibrant, competent staff and dedicated community are encouraged to apply.
- Professional educators desiring a unique, stimulating opportunity are heartily invited to join our supportive school society.
- The position is to be filled D.V. July 1, 2012.
- To facilitate the transition, October 31, 2011, has been set as a deadline for receiving applications.

Applications submitted should include a résumé, statement of philosophy of education, a statement of faith and references, including one from your current pastor.

Please forward applications and additional inquiries to:
Mr. Leo Kampen, Search Committee Secretary
624 Sandcherry Drive, Burlington, ON L7T 4L9
905-529-3130; Leo@penlieu.com

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The board of **Tyndale Christian School** of Calgary, Alberta, Canada invites applications for the 2012/2013 school year for the possible positions of

PRIMARY and SECONDARY GRADES TEACHERS

Tyndale Christian School currently offers grades K-12, with an enrollment of approximately 70 students, and 6 full-time staff.

If you would like further information about the opportunities, school operations, or Calgary living; please contact the board chairman:

Mr. Eric Veenendaal
Home: (403) 698-1858
eric.veenendaal@gmail.com

Or the principal:

Mr. Ed Hoogerdyk
Home: (403) 285-4680
ed.hoogerdyk@gmail.com

Applications can be sent to:
Debbie Chin, Secretary of the Board
5851 22 Avenue NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 2C1
debbiechin@telus.net

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If you are a recent business graduate (with preference given to a graduate of a Christian University) and are called to a career in financial services, visit **www.christiancu.ca** for more information.

Closing Date: October 14
or until position filled

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Essays in Honour of Cornelis Van Dam
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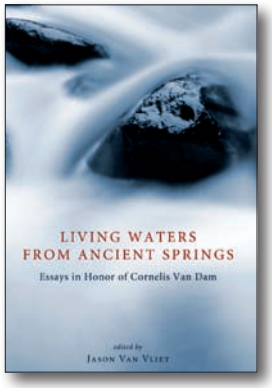

"Dr. Cornelis Van Dam has given so much to the churches of Jesus Christ in his teaching, writing, preaching, and public speaking. This Festschrift written by fifteen scholars is a wonderful tribute to a man who has given so much to others. It covers a wide variety of topics that will interest everyone from the theological scholar to the person in the pew."

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The Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) Canada is looking for members of Canada's Reformed churches to come along side us as we carry out a mission that has been richly blessed in the four years since we started.

We do politics differently. We aren't a charity, a political party, a lobby group, nor a think tank. We exist with a two-part mission:

1) to give a voice to members of Canada's Reformed churches in the public square and
2) to bring a Christian perspective to our leaders.

In recent months, ARPA's work has been noticed by Canada's largest newspapers and media outlets (Toronto Star, CBC, CTV, etc), we have brought our *Stand Up for Freedom Canada* campaign to over 40,000 Albertan homes, and we started an office in Ottawa with the hiring of lawyer André Schutten as our full-time Ontario Director and Legal Counsel. By God's grace, in the few years since we started, ARPA Canada has grown to become one of the most active and effective Christian political advocacy groups in Canada, with an excellent reputation among both our government officials and the Christian political and legal groups we work along-side. You can learn much more about our events, presentations in Parliament, resources for churches and schools, and submissions to government officials at **www.ARPACanada.ca** or by calling 1-866-691-2772.

Who pays for this work? All of our funding has come from individuals who like what they see and want this work to continue. The amazing thing is that we have had this support even though we are forbidden from being a charity (because of the political nature of our work), we can't give huge tax credits like political parties give to donors, and we aren't financially supported by churches.

With a new full-time presence in Ottawa, our budget has grown to $160,000 this year. If God has provided you with extra funds, we ask that you consider using some of them to support ARPA's work financially, in addition to prayer. Many of us have waited a long time to find an effective and faithful means for engagement in Canadian public life. Now that it is here, please help us ensure that it flourishes.

Donors will be kept up to date of our activities via a biannual report from the Executive Director. Please make use of the form below to set up monthly donations (giving us the most stability). Questions about donations can be directed to John Voorhorst, chair of the board, at 403-315-2617 or john@arpacanada.ca. Questions about ARPA's work can go to Mark Penninga, Executive Director, at 1-866-691-2772 or mark@arpacanada.ca.

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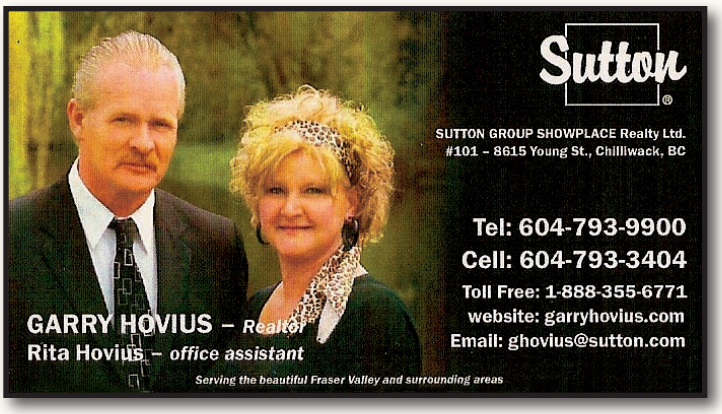

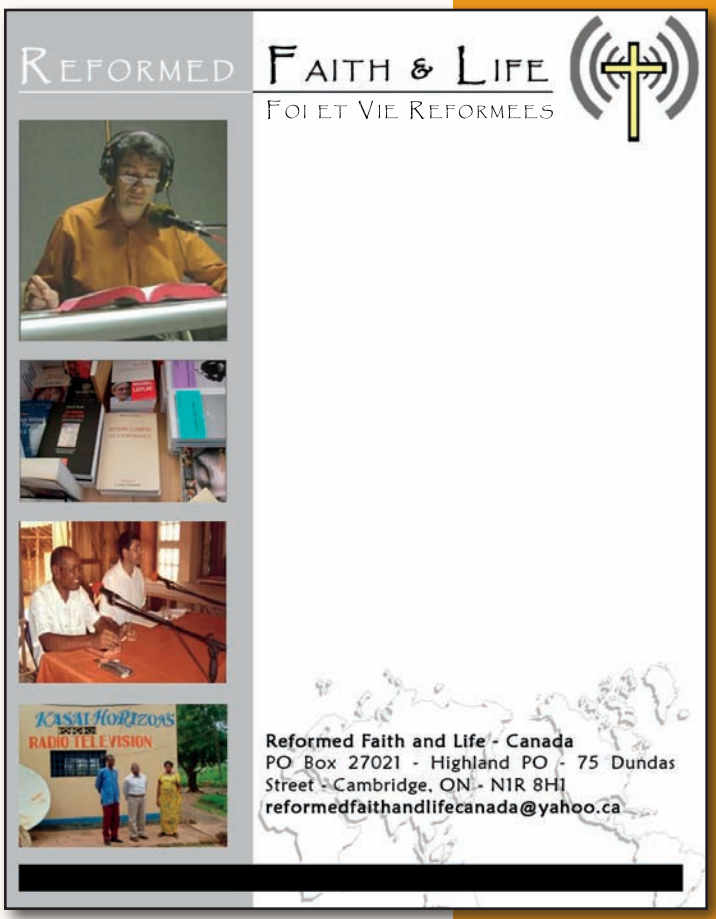

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