

# Clarion

Numbers 10:1-10

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
Volume 61, No. 14 • July 6, 2012

*Adultery  
is a  
problem  
of the  
heart*

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- *God Rejoices Over His People*





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# Love-In in Lawrenceville

*The view that exists in the CanRCs with respect to the church is properly characterized as being catholic rather than exclusivist*

## Expelling Canadian Reformed exclusivism?

I am not among those who consider membership of our churches in NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council) necessary or beneficial. It's not that I do not see the value of this organization. But we have focused our full energy and limited resources on membership in the ICRC (International Conference of Reformed Churches) and, really, this is enough of a good thing. We can easily spread ourselves out too thinly and unwittingly run into complications. Being a small church federation with a big heart, we may tend to embrace more than our bosom allows.

What do they do at such a council? Beside the regular agenda, there is also opportunity to meet with other churches with whom some kind of a relationship exists. The extra benefit of the 2011 NAPARC was that "it provided opportunity for *personal and extended engagement* between representatives from the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)." A report of this engagement was published in *Christian Renewal* (Vol 30, No 9, Feb 29, 2012).

The gathering of our committees (CanRC and URCNA) was a real old fashioned love-in. The meetings "presented opportunity for the representatives to develop personal relationships and grow in appreciation for one another." This is a good thing. Apparently the meetings of the CanRC and URCNA delegates also provided opportunity to be very open with each other, time to come clean, as it were.

## An element of exclusivism?

I need to ask your attention for a longer quote from the CR press release. Sink your teeth into this one, It was also acknowledged that there has existed in the CanRCs *an element of exclusivism* which could also create disinterest among URCs to join with them. The old thinking that existed among some in the CanRC

was that there could be only one visible manifestation of the true church so that every other church, other than one's own, must be a false church. As Dr. Godfrey mentioned in his address to NAPARC the recognition of denominations entails acknowledgement that there are other Christian bodies that are faithful manifestations of the true church.

This explains why some in the CanRCs think that membership in NAPARC also automatically means having a sister church relationship with all the NAPARC churches.

But there is more to relish. I quote again from the press release, "The CanRC representatives humbly acknowledged personal and denominational development with regard to this view." This acknowledgment fell short of a formal apology, but one senses that this is a giant leap for CanRC-kind.

I wonder if our representatives had the mandate to express, even humbly, some development regarding an exclusivist true church view. One may, perhaps, use this forum for personal comments, but was there a mandate from Synod to express that a *denominational* shift had taken place? I could not find such a mandate in the Acts of our last Synods, and hopefully someone will direct me to such a mandate if it indeed does exist. I trust that our deputies will inform our next synod that a denominational shift was rectified in Lawrenceville. Sounds like something to celebrate.

I have more reason to ask about a possible mandate of this kind. The wording of the press release does not really clarify what is meant. We read about acknowledging "an *element* of exclusivism." Who asked for this acknowledgment? What is an *element* of exclusivism? Was it a major or a minor element? Was this element a matter of official church doctrine or the personal view of battle-weary and excommunicated immigrants?

We read about "the old thinking" as the thought that there could be only one visible manifestation of the



Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

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

**Subscriptions:** [clarionadmin@premierpublishing.ca](mailto:clarionadmin@premierpublishing.ca)

**Advertisements:** [clarionads@premierpublishing.ca](mailto:clarionads@premierpublishing.ca)

**Website:** [www.premierpublishing.ca](http://www.premierpublishing.ca)

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One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5

**Subscription Rates for 2012**

	Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada	\$49.00*	\$ 84.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds  	\$69.00	\$ 92.00
International	\$98.00	\$149.00

\*Applicable GST, HST, PRT taxes are extra. GST/HST – No. 890967359RT

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Agreement No. 40063293; ISSN 0383-0438

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true church so that every other church, other than one's own, must be a false church. Where is this old thinking stated? When, exactly, did we step over to a new thinking? What is the "new thinking"? Is it that many true churches do and can exist in one place? Or is it just a few? What does our confession say on this point?

I am convinced that the presentation of the so-called old view is seriously flawed and perpetuates the myth that the CanRCs (and Vrijgemaakte or Liberated churches) have or had an exclusivist perception of the church as confessed in the Belgic Confession, Article 27-29. We must do justice to our parents and grandparents and have a proper view on the struggle they fought and the hardship they endured for the sake of the truth.

**An element of Catholicism**

The view that exists in the CanRCs with respect to the church is properly characterized as being catholic rather than exclusivist. This view is clearly expressed in the Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession. It goes as follows. Article 27: we believe that the church of Christ is universal and catholic. Some call this the invisible church, but that is a misnomer. This article speaks about the church of all ages. The church described in Article 27 is not invisible but it is un-over-see-able.

How can I join this vast and innumerable church? Where does the rubber hit the road? Article 28: the catholic church is established locally by our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is my stated calling to seek this church and to join it, thus maintaining and expressing the unity of faith. But how will I know which church is true,

**What's Inside**

This issue begins with an editorial from Rev. Klaas Stam. He discusses the difference between an exclusivist versus catholic view of the church and where the CanRC falls along those lines.

In "Get Wisdom! Adultery and Young, Modern, Tech-Savvy Christians," Rev. Ryan deJonge discusses Internet pornography, applying Proverbs 7 to this danger of our modern culture.

News from the federation includes a report of the first office bearer ordination in the Chinese Reformed Church. We also have an article from Stepping Stones Bible Camp, encouraging support (in the form of prayer and volunteering) for their annual camp.

Regular columns featured in Issue 14 include Treasures New and Old and Education Matters. We also have a press release and a Mission News insert.

Laura Veenendaal

that is, faithful to Christ and his Word? There are so many sects that call themselves "church" but are not. Well, Article 29 directs us by giving the marks of the church. I do not need to repeat them here. It is not hard to find the true church of Christ, says the Belgic Confession, but you must fully apply the marks that Christ has provided. Can there be more than one true church in the same place? This happens. If there is more than one, these churches shall seek one another and live together as one. True churches in one place strive to become one, because there should only be one, for Christ is not divided (John 17:20, 1 Corinthians 1:13). The holy catholic church manifests itself locally in the unity of the true faith. This is what we confess in the Belgic Confession, and this is not in any way an element of exclusivism. The CanRC committee should have explained this clearly to the brothers in the URCNA.

There is no element of exclusivism. Ah, yes, it has probably happened that some members of the CanRC gave that impression. They did not always articulate things clearly and often faced an unreceptive audience. As CanRC believers we were grateful that by God's grace we belonged to a true church and we were not afraid to say this. Perhaps the tone and the manner of such statements were not always gracious and did some damage, even in close families, but *the doctrinal point that there is only one true church in one place has not been disproven.*

To give a simple example: our grand/parents were informed by the Christian Reformed Church that unless they agreed with the Synod's view on baptism, they were not welcome as members. Therefore they had *no other option* but to organize a Canadian Reformed Church! And must we now say about our parents that they had "an element of exclusivism"? Who was excluding whom? The only exclusion was perpetrated by the church that expelled them. If there needs to be any apology or acknowledgment of wrong-doing, our forefathers and leaders of the 1950s should receive one for the shameless way they were treated first in The Netherlands and then in North America.

### Seeking the brotherhood of faith

You can know a tree by its fruits, says the Lord. One of these fruits is that you earnestly reach out to other believers, especially to those who live in a false church. Or, if there is another true church in your vicinity, you approach it to acknowledge and promote unity.

The record shows that this is exactly what the Canadian Reformed Churches, coming out of the Vrijmaking or Liberation in 1944, have done. After WWII when a general synod again became possible in The Netherlands, the "Liberated" churches had their first General Synod in Groningen in 1946.

What was their prime concern? The Synod decided to actively seek "unification of all church federations which in word and deed place themselves on the basis of God's Word" (Article 88). There was not even a hint of exclusivism. The same Synod appointed Deputies for Contact with the Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken (Free Reformed in Canada and the USA). They sent a moving appeal to the (Synodical) Reformed Churches that the unity of faith would be properly restored on the basis of Scripture, confession, and church order. This synod even appointed deputies for the purpose of speaking together (*Acts*, Groningen, Art 103). After the decision to appoint these deputies, the chairman of Synod said about the (Synodical) Reformed Churches (in NA the CRC). "We cannot forget you. Here speaks the heart of a brother that seeks brothers, even though they have cast us out. . . ." Is this an element of exclusivism or evidence of catholicity?

As a side-note of interest for our situation in North America, I mention that copies of these decisions were also sent to foreign sister churches such as the Free Reformed Church, the Protestant Reformed Church and the Christian Reformed Church. Not one church federation of Reformed background in North America can rightly claim that they did not know about our sincere catholic striving.

From the beginning of their establishment in Canada, the Canadian Reformed Churches sought out other faithful federations or true churches in the sense of Article 27-32, Belgic Confession. *The contacts mostly originated from CanRC side.* Check it out. Big deal, Klaas. I am not looking for an accolade but seeking to dispel the myth of exclusivism.

Meanwhile the CanRCs have sought and established relations with the Free Church of Scotland, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church in the United States, the Korean Presbyterian Church (Kosin), and the United Reformed Church in North America. Many appeals were sent to the Christian Reformed Churches to resolve differences. These appeals were cast aside as worthless. So, pray tell, where is the evidence for "elements of exclusivism"? Our churches have diligently, not perfectly but diligently, sought the brotherhood of faith and established relations with churches that are Reformed.

It is easy to become exclusivist. There are some sick jokes about Canadian Reformed exclusivism. There is the joke about us that we think we are the only ones in heaven. But we know that someone cannot go to heaven just because he is Canadian Reformed. There is no automatic ticket. Personal faith and sincere holiness are required. In this we need the support and help of other true churches. Let us pursue true ecumenicity. The CanRC and URCNA, if they are close to where you live, are good places to start. Let the real love-in begin. 



**MATTHEW 13:52**

# God Rejoices Over His People

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*"He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love,  
he will rejoice over you with singing."*

(Zephaniah 3:17)

What a beautiful text this is: "The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing" (Zeph 3:17). It is beyond human comprehension that the Almighty God actually tells us that he rejoices over his people with gladness and singing. We normally think of ourselves rejoicing in God or finding our peace in him. But for God to say that he also rejoices over his people is tremendous!

I recently undertook a search to find whether there are other portions of Scripture that also speak about God having joy or happiness over his people. And there are in fact other texts that proclaim this wonder.

For example, Moses is speaking to Israel after he has explained the laws of God to them. And he says in Deuteronomy 27:9, "You have now become the people of the Lord your God." He follows this up with saying in 28:63, "It pleased [or delighted] the LORD to make you prosper." And again he says in 30:9, "The LORD will delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers." Then in Jeremiah 32:41 we find this similar promise of God to his people, "I will rejoice in doing them good." It is clear that God has long rejoiced over his covenant people!

There are also conditions for this rejoicing of God, which is that the people must follow his precepts and do his commandments. Then the Lord will rejoice over them to do them good. If his people do not fulfill their obligations, then "the good" that God intends for them will certainly not come about. Instead there will be discipline, and finally a curse. Here we see that God promises he will rejoice to do us good. But we see also the obligation that the Lord requires of us when he rejoices over us.

Isaiah 62:5 phrases this idea in an even stronger way: "As a young man marries a maiden. . . and as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you." A maiden, or a virgin, is pure, which means that God's people need to be pure in heart, or to have our hearts circumcised. This is how God can rejoice over his people, when we have our hearts circumcised and when we have died to sin. It is then that the LORD says, "I will rejoice over Jerusalem, and take delight in my people" (Isa 65:19).

Israel was given instruction in the law on how they needed to live, yet at the same time the priests were there to offer atoning sacrifices for the human failures that were inevitable. In the new dispensation Christ came and

fulfilled the law, but he also made the ultimate sacrifice with his own blood. God now rejoices in his people because of the sacrificial work of his Son. The bottom line is that when we are in Jesus Christ our Saviour, God will rejoice over us and delight in us.

Yet there is still the obligation that we have as God's people, just as Israel had. God instructs us in the New Testament: "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16). The Lord Jesus himself tells us: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48). Old Testament Israel was often lax in doing what God required of them, and later they even rejected the Saviour whom God had sent. The problem is that we are also sometimes lax in doing what God requires of us.

So the question is: How are we in our acceptance of the Saviour's demand? Are we willing to take up the cross of self denial, to follow in his footsteps, and to have our hearts circumcised? That cross is light when we take it up while dressed in the spiritual armour that God provides for us (see Ephesians 6:14-17). It is an impossible task when we try to do this in our own strength. But what a joy when it is true and applies to the Christian, when the Lord says that he will rejoice over us with singing.





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# Get Wisdom! Adultery and Young, Modern, Tech-Savvy Christians

The book of Proverbs is a book about two ways to live, the paths of wisdom and folly. The way of wisdom is the way of the righteous, the way of blessing, and the way of life. The way of folly is the way of the fool, the way of curse, and, ultimately, the way of death. Along each path sits a guide who calls out to pilgrims on the road, urging them to join their path. They are both women and they both address the simple. They both sound enticing and they both promise great things, but only one delivers on her promises. The result of embracing the wrong woman is death.

The issue that I want to explore in this article is adultery, especially for young, modern, tech-savvy Christians. The issue of adultery has always been about embracing the wrong woman, and so it is easy to see why Solomon would spend so much time addressing his son on this topic in at the beginning of Proverbs. Adultery is still a real and present danger for you. It comes in a slightly different package than it would have in Solomon's day, but the Adulteress is still alive and well, and I would be so bold as to say that many of young, modern, tech-savvy Christians know her well.

In the days of Solomon, people walked on paths a lot. People walked a lot – period. Since they didn't have cars, their roads were a lot different than the roads we have today. So if adultery is a path, what does it look like today? Should we expect that it looks like a dusty, uneven, meandering footpath? Probably not. Today we travel on concrete and asphalt. We travel fast and we travel often. And we have a path that is taking over more and more of our lives. It used to be called "the information superhighway." You might call it the superhighway to death, because that is where it is currently taking a lot of people. The path of adultery for many young, modern, tech-savvy Christians is the Internet. And the woman along that path who is calling

your name, looking for youths who lack judgment, leading the way to death, is Internet pornography.

Proverbs 7 is where Solomon speaks most extensively about the person of the adulteress. His words are strikingly fitting to our modern epidemic of Internet pornography.

## The youth who lacks judgement

Solomon communicates the dangers of adultery to his son by telling him a parable. This is how it begins. "At the window of my house I looked out through the lattice. I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment. He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in" (Prov 7:6-9).

The main character of this parable is the youth who lacks judgment. Perhaps you know someone like this. The thing about this youth who lacks judgment is that you can pick him out in a crowd. Solomon says that he looked out his window and he saw him immediately. He could just tell that this guy was in for some trouble. For Solomon this is just an observation, but for someone with evil intentions, this guy is easy prey. He is the weak and slow antelope that gets picked out, pounced upon, and devoured by the lion.

Notice that this young man walks into his trap: "He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house." Path, anyone?

What does this look like today? Today the youth who lacks judgment can probably not be observed by looking out of your window onto the street. A modern youth who lacks judgment sequesters himself indoors, finds himself or herself at the computer late at night after everyone has gone to bed, or has a computer in their room. There was a time when having a computer

in your room was relatively safe – that time is long gone. This is the sixteen-year-old with an iPhone, android, or iPod touch with WiFi, a tablet, or whatever other personal pleasure machine in their pocket to be polluted with porn whenever they please.

Where does the problem start with this young man? It is not with his parents, as Solomon doesn't mention them. Neither is it his friends, for he leaves their company. His problem is not his environment or even the adulteress herself. This young man's problem is himself. He lacks judgment; he heads down the path of foolishness, and straight into the trap. His adultery problem is a problem of the heart.

This remains the biggest issue for users of pornography today. The problem with porn is not porn. It is us. It is the men and women who use it. In an interview for *covenanteyes.com*, Rick Thomas was asked why kids get in to porn today. What do you suppose was his answer? They have raging hormones? The porn is so good? His answer is none of the above. Rather, the reason teens get into porn is that they lack judgment:

1. They are lazy – they spend too much time doing nothing.
2. They are disobedient – they don't listen to their parents and others' warnings.
3. They lie – they lie to others about what they are doing and to themselves about the nature and effect of pornography.
4. They are self-righteous – they suppose that porn is their right, and that those images are offered for their viewing pleasure.
5. They are self-centred – they have sexual desires, so why not fulfill them?
6. And they are ignorant – they don't realize the danger they are getting themselves into with Internet porn.<sup>1</sup>

As you will be able to deduce from this list, porn is not only attractive to teens. Laziness, disobedience, self-righteousness, self-centredness, and ignorance are no respecters of age. Do you know what the problem is with Internet porn? It is you and me. This is why Paul's words to the Thessalonians about sexual immorality (1 Thess 4:3-8) are not "You need to leave that sinful city!" or "You need to have accountability groups!" or "You need to campaign against temple prostitution!" or anything like that. What he says is that you need to be sanctified. You need the Holy Spirit to change your heart. The problem is with our hearts.

Our own hearts are what lead us to sin, as Jesus taught when he said: "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality,

theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person" (Mark 7:21). Commenting on this passage Mark Driscoll writes, "Sexual sins are not 'out there' in the media, strip clubs, a gal with low-rise jeans and high-rise thong. Truly the problem is 'in you.' It is from the sinfulness of your heart that lust and sin proceed like sewage from a culvert. This is the painful, unvarnished truth."<sup>2</sup>

## The adulteress

The next character in Solomon's parable is the inevitable destination of this judgment-lacking youth, the adulteress.

Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home; now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.) She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said: "I have fellowship offerings at home; today I fulfilled my vows. So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you! I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let's drink deep of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love! My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon" (Prov 7:10-20).

Within his description of this shady lady, Solomon highlights four characteristics of the adulteress:

1. She is devious – She moves, according to v. 10, with "crafty intent."
2. She is restless – As v. 11 tells us, "her feet never stay at home."
3. She is brazen – She flaunts her sexuality and availability, as in v. 13: "She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said: I have fellowship offerings at home; today I fulfilled my vows, so I came out to meet you."
4. She is one – dimensional – This woman is about one thing, and she makes that clear. She is completely sexualized. She communicates nothing else. She tells the young man about her sacrifices because in Canaanite worship, sacrifices were to be accompanied by sex (v. 14). She gives a lengthy description of her bed (v. 16), but not because she thinks this guy looks tired. She propositions him with love (v. 18), but she really means sex.

Do these characteristics not represent very well the ways and means of Internet porn, the adulteress of our time?



# Church News

Caled by Chilliwack, BC Canadian Reformed Church:

**Candidate Abel Pol**

1. Pornography is devious. Porn promises sexual fulfillment, an outlet for lust and sexual desires. It invites you to enter into its dream world of fantasy and fulfillment. It calls out for those who lack judgment to come along and step into its trap.
2. Pornography is restless. The porn industry is a multibillion dollar industry. I've read numbers as low as two to three billion dollars spent in the US on porn, but I've also seen numbers as high as sixty-seven billion and ninety-seven billion for what porn is worth worldwide. Think of those numbers and then consider this even more troubling fact: eighty to ninety percent of porn that is consumed on the Internet is available for free. So pornography is a multibillion dollar industry and only ten to twenty percent of those who use it are paying. How much porn is out there?
3. Pornography is brazen. It flaunts its stuff. It finds a way to get to you through advertisements, spam, popups, hyperlinks, etc. It invites you to come, to taste, and to see for yourself. We need to realize that the people who promote pornography are master marketers – they know how to get you in, and they know how to keep you in.
4. Pornography is completely one-dimensional. Pornography promises one thing for you: the fulfillment of your sexual desires. Porn tells you that there is one thing that matters to you right now and it has everything that you need to meet that desire. Isn't this what that woman (or that man) on the screen is telling you: "Come, let's drink deep of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love" (v. 18)? Click, click, click. And you are lost in a dream world of fantasy, gratification, and self-centred sexual fulfillment.

## The path to death

Internet pornography, however, is a classic case of bait and switch. You go in looking for one thing, but come away with something completely different. Solomon explains the process as he continues. "With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life" (Prov 7:21–23).

With the adulteress you start in a dream world, but very quickly you find yourself in a nightmare. Notice the progression that verses 21-23 describe: first you are lead astray, then you are trapped, and then slowly, unknowingly even, you head to your death. You don't

die right away. You only start dying. But just like a deer in a noose, your doom is certainly coming.

This is precisely what happens with pornography. You get into it because you have a desire to fulfill or a fantasy to explore, but very quickly it starts to unravel and destroy you. The negative effects of pornography use on especially the male mind are well documented. Here are just a few.

1. Pornography use contributes to social and psychological problems. Studies show a correlation between increased use of porn and increased neglect of work, social isolation, and even depression.
2. It rewires the brain. Just like a path in the woods is formed by frequent use, so are the neural pathways in the brain. Frequent use of porn changes the footpaths in that part of the brain that is used in relating to women, and so it becomes more and more difficult to relate with them in a God-glorify, pure, and loving manner.
3. It feeds selfishness, because it is profoundly selfish.
4. It leads to premarital sex or, more frequently, masturbation. In both cases the result of pornography use is not sex as God intended it, namely between a male and a female in the relationally safe and secure confines of marriage.
5. It leads men to demean and objectify women. When you turn women on a page or a screen into sexual objects, very quickly the women in your life will become no more than sexual objects.
6. It distorts the beauty of the God-made female body. Tragically, some Christian males suppose that pornography is good because it highlights the beauty of the female body which was, after all, created by God. But porn in no way represents the beautiful diversity with which God has created females, nor does it seek to promote this beauty to God's glory, nor does it reckon with the fact that God himself provided clothing for the man and woman after the fall into sin.
7. It distorts reality, especially in the context of marriage. Think about the effects of porn use for a man engaged to be married. Porn feeds supersized expectations about sex and diminished emotions about women. Can you spell disaster? Many guys say that they hope that marriage will fix their pornography problem. Marriage is not a fix for a pornography problem; repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is. What porn will do for your marriage is destroy it.

8. It makes gender and sexuality one-dimensional. Both women and men are far more than merely sexual objects, but porn promotes this popular idea that women are for giving sexual fulfillment and men are for taking it. Please don't buy that perverse distortion of God-created gender. And sex itself is about far more than simply a fulfillment of your physical desires – it is a deeply emotional, mental, physical, and even a spiritual activity, one that is to be enjoyed.<sup>3</sup>

The above only begin to scratch the surface of the negative effects of porn. Porn kills. Perhaps you have heard of the infamous serial killer Ted Bundy. Ted Bundy was executed in the electric chair in 1989, after he confessed to killing thirty young women whom he had kidnapped, raped, and killed, and sometimes raped again after they were dead. On the day before he walked the last mile, Ted Bundy was interviewed by James Dobson and he had one message that he wanted to communicate to the world. The single most significant factor in his sexual crimes, in his opinion, was his habitual viewing of pornography.<sup>4</sup>

Not convinced that porn kills? What about the other partner in that selfish embrace, the woman on the screen? Where does she come from? What is her life like? What does she gain from being on your screen? The reality is that for so many of these girls – yes, many are girls – life is no life at all. It is death. Pornography is directly tied with the global sex trade, where women and girls are kidnapped or promised a great modelling career, only to be reduced to sex slaves, gang-raped, hooked on drugs, and held under the thumbs of their abusive pimps and managers. There may be a few stories of a "working girl" who works a regular job, has a family, and does X-rated films for some extra money. But for each one of these there are certainly hundreds of stories of lives that are utterly destroyed by the industry that feeds youths who lack judgment staring at their computer screen in the middle of the night.

Adultery is death. Internet pornography is an ongoing massacre.

### The call

But Solomon, and the Spirit of God working through him, does not desire that we should take this road, and so his message is clear: get off that path and on to the right one! The difference is life and death. "Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.

Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death" (Prov 7:24–27).

### Step one: repent

What do we do against the depravity of our heart and the wiles of pornography? Solomon says, "Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say" urging us to hear his voice and turn from adultery.

I mentioned all the relationships that porn destroys, but I didn't mention yet the most important one, the one that we have with Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ, with our Heavenly Father. Losing or ruining our relationships with women, with friends, with family might be painful and tragic for us, but ruining or losing our relationship with Jesus Christ is absolutely devastating.

In 1 Corinthians 5, when urging the Corinthians to avoid sexual immorality, he says, "Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!" You cannot be united both to Christ and to the adulteress. You must leave one to pursue the other. You cannot be on the path of folly and of wisdom – you must leave one and follow the other.

To lose that relationship, that unity, with Jesus Christ would be devastating. Why? Because you have so much to lose. Only in Christ are you God's child, justified, sanctified, glorified, redeemed from sin, saved from judgment, renewed in love, protected from Satan, a temple of the Holy Spirit, and God's workmanship, created for good works. Are you ready to give that up?

If you are currently pursuing pornography but want to remain in Christ, what do you do? Repent. Repent from your sins. Turn from your temptations. Reject those lustful desires and repent. We must recognize sin for what it is and follow the course of action that God lays out for us. We cannot tread the path of adultery and the path of discipleship at the same time. To get off the path of adultery recognize the sin, confess it to the Lord, seek forgiveness through the blood of Jesus Christ, and ask God to renew your desires.

### Step two: get wisdom

The next step brings us to the first verses of chapter seven. Everything that Solomon writes about adultery is in the context of this greater command: Get wisdom. "Say to wisdom, 'You are my sister' and call understanding your kinsman; they will keep you from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words" (v. 4-5). To overcome sin you don't need to just turn from sin, you need to cast yourself, your

whole self, heart, soul, mind, upon God. Yes, you need a new heart; but you also need a live new life. This too is the work of Jesus Christ, the way of wisdom, and the path of life. Solomon does not outline all the ways that this can be done, but here are a few route markers on the path of wisdom:

### 1. Listen

First of all, listen to God's Word. Wisdom speaks the Word of God. The Word of God is the Bible. The Word of God is preached to you every Sunday. Through the Word of God you gain access to wisdom, and through wisdom, you come face to face with Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of your faith. God's Word is where you will expose the deceitfulness of sin, where you discover the atonement through Christ's sacrifice, and where you learn to live a new life of love.

Second, listen to those who have learned this lesson already. Sin, and especially sexual sin, with its accompanying isolation, loneliness, and shame makes you feel like you are the only one who has struggled with the sin and that no one else would understand what you are going through. It can be liberating just to hear accounts of how other men and women have fought this battle. You are not alone in your struggle against sin. Hear the supportive voices of others who have their help in the name of the Lord.

### 2. Talk about it

Satan feeds off of embarrassment and shame. Darkness creates secrecy, shame, lies, and embarrassment. But the light brings them into the open. Bringing your sins into the light with trusted friends, elders, pastors, and parents allows the light to begin to work on it. You don't need to fight this battle alone.

Talk to your friends. My good, godly friends were indispensable in helping to deal with my struggles with sexual sins. Being a good, godly friend to others allowed me the privilege of praying for and helping them when they were struggling. For about four years I would meet with two or three close friends for accountability sessions every three or four weeks on a Saturday morning over breakfast. As we all broke from the grip of sexual temptations we all joined in the powerful grip of godly friendship.

### 3. Inform yourself

The best way to expose the lies of the seductress is to know the truth. Again, immerse yourself in God's word every day. I recently heard a well-informed pastor say that he has never heard of a pastor who fell into deep sin who had a regular, daily time with God in Bible reading and prayer. Some might cast this off as a pietistic approach, and certainly the Christian's strength does not come from a mere devotional

exercise, and yet it hard to imagine engaging in regular, daily, significant pornography use alongside regular, daily, significant devotion time.

In addition to God's Word, get good, godly information on sex, sexuality, lust, and pornography. Here are a few resources that are particularly accessible for youths who desire judgment:

- *Sexual Detox* by Tim Challies. This is a short, very readable, and very helpful book by a well-known and respected Christian blogger. You can read it as posts on Challies' blog ([www.challies.com](http://www.challies.com)), purchase it as a book, or download an eBook version.
- *Porn Again Christian* by Mark Driscoll. In suggesting this resource, which I found to be quite good, I feel compelled to include a caveat. In my opinion Mark Driscoll is on the right track when he is speaking to unmarried and married men about pornography, but he is not so helpful when he is talking to married men about other intimacy topics.
- *Undefined* and other resources by Harry Schaumburg. *Undefined* is probably the most popularly recommended book about sexual purity for Reformed folks. I don't have a copy yet, so I can't say for sure, but I've ordered my copy. Perhaps you'll consider doing the same.
- Websites: The Internet might be the home of pornographers, but it is also the home of many great resources to help you fight porn, like [www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com) and [www.settingcaptivefree.com](http://www.settingcaptivefree.com). What better way to stick it to the Adulteress of the Internet than to use the Internet in a good, up-building, God-glorifying way?

This article has covered a lot of ground. I hope that you will cover a lot more ground on the path of wisdom. If you are immersed in a fight, do not lose hope. We always have hope, because we have a Saviour who is far more powerful than our sin, far more beautiful than our temptation, and far more loving than we can even comprehend.

<sup>1</sup> Rick Thomas, *You Just Caught Your Child Looking at Porn. What do you Do?* 2012. <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2012/01/24/you-just-caught-your-child-looking-at-porn-what-do-you-do/> (accessed March 21, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Mark Driscoll, *Porn Again Christian* (2009: Mars Hill Church), 13

<sup>3</sup> This is a modified list of those found at B.J. Stockman, *7 Negative Effects of Porn*, 2011, <http://theresurgence.com/2011/11/19/7-negative-effects-of-porn> (accessed on March 21, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> "Fatal Addiction." 2009. Online video clip. [http://www.focusonthefamily.com/popups/media\\_player.aspx?MediaId=%7B710D67E8-7AFB-411F-8A37-503EA8B69B5B%7D](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/popups/media_player.aspx?MediaId=%7B710D67E8-7AFB-411F-8A37-503EA8B69B5B%7D) (accessed on March 21, 2012).



# First Time Ordination of Office Bearers in the Chinese Reformed Church

History was made on March 25, 2012. The Chinese Reformed Church ordained office-bearers for the first time! Three capable men took on new roles that day: two as elders and one as deacon. Eric Yan and Michael Li became the former, and Eugene Yu the latter. It was an emotional day with an emotional service.

Pastor D began his sermon (with Michael Li ably translating it into English) by giving thanks – thanks to God, and thanks to the two mother churches, Cloverdale and Langley Canadian Reformed Churches. The members of the Chinese congregation had also participated in much preparatory work to reach this day. They stand at the threshold of new beginnings. But that brings a question to the surface. How is this fledgling flock going to be governed?

Basing his theme on 1 Peter 5:2-5, Pastor D answered the question: What was necessary for good governance of the church? First, we need a shepherd to take care of the flock. Second, the shepherds need to have the right attitude. Third, the correct attitude of the sheep is obedience. The office-bearers should remember that their flock belongs to God. They are not to act as if they are the boss of a corporation, but they



*Rev. D. leading the worship service*

are to care diligently for the sheep. In John 10, Jesus describes the attributes of the Good Shepherd: he is willing to sacrifice himself for his sheep; he knows his sheep by name, and they know him; he leads his sheep to fertile pastures and refreshing water streams. This is the pattern for the office-bearers to follow. The elders and deacons need to be alert and diligent, ready to protect the congregation from attacks of false teaching. They are to know the congregation members well, understanding their needs. Sometimes that means rescuing them from a difficult situation; sometimes it means helping them find a clear pathway through challenging choices.

Shepherds are to have the same attitude as Jesus, the good shepherd, willing and eager to serve. They are not to dictate their personal opinions as a rule for the church members; they are not to compete to be the greatest. They are to follow Christ's example, who said, "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22: 27). And the attitude of the congregation is to be one of submission and obedience to the office-bearers. Humility is essential, and not something that can be faked. The church community will be very different



*Pastor Visscher (on behalf of Langley church) congratulates the congregation*

show for the congregation that as office-bearers they hold a significant amount of responsibility, comparable to the pastor's. Pastor D blessed each man, and the congregation responded in songs of thanksgiving to the Lord.

It should be noted that the Chinese Reformed Church will still operate under Cloverdale church until it is decided that they institute as a church officially. Pastor D will remain as their missionary (not pastor).

After the joyful service, two representatives spoke – Pastor Visscher from Langley church and elder Siebe DeJong from Cloverdale church – expressing congratulations and encouragement. Coffee and cake were served and enjoyed by many. It was truly a milestone day of celebration and thanksgiving. Praise the Lord!



from the world. In the congregation there is be no competition for power or control. There is to be no jealousy, but joy. The members thankfully accept the guidance of the office-bearers. Together they will become a community that is pleasing to the Lord. Pastor D concluded with a prayer that God's blessings may pour richly on the Chinese Reformed Church!

The form for the ordination of office-bearers was then read. Each man was asked for their answer and after their reply in agreement, each one knelt while three elders of the Cloverdale church, three elders of the Langley church, and Pastors D and V placed their hands upon them. It can be noted that this practice of the laying on of hands for the ordination of office-bearers (for the first time only) is done in other missionary congregations (e.g. Brazil) as well and has great benefits. It encourages and uplifts each man to



*Brother Siebe DeJong (on behalf of Cloverdale church) congratulates the congregation*





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# Why did CanRC Members Start Their Own Schools?

*Note from Writer: This article is a summary of a speech delivered at the National Principals' Conference 2011. I would like to thank Otto Bouwman for his assistance in trimming down a lengthy speech to a less lengthy article. Any errors or lack of clarity remain my responsibility of course.*

Schools founded by members of Canadian and American Reformed Churches (CanRC) are well established today. Over 4,000 students are enrolled in them, and they employ close to 300 teachers full-time. In two presentations, one in 1999 and the other in 2009, Leo Kampen, a school board member from Ontario, suggested that the reasons why these schools exist may not be well known anymore. To understand why these schools came into existence one needs to begin by looking at recent church history.

## Roots

The roots of the CanRC are in The Netherlands, particularly in the so-called Liberation of 1944. At this time, the Gereformeerde Kerken of The Netherlands (GKN) split into two, one called the GKN-Synodical (GKNs) and the other the GKN-Liberated (or Vrijgemaakt-GKNv). The first CanRC were established in 1950. Their founders were part of the post-World War II Dutch immigration to Canada which began in 1946 and continued into the early 1960s. The CanRC arose from immigrants who had been members of the GKNv church in The Netherlands. When they arrived in Canada, they looked for a church to join and for various reasons soon decided to start their own. They did the same with schools, although implementation of their schools took much longer in most cases.

Many CanRC members may assume that these Dutch ancestors were used to having their own GKNv schools in The Netherlands, but this is not the case. The



John Calvin School, Yarrow, BC

first "from scratch" Liberated school in The Netherlands did not come into existence until nine years after Liberation, in 1953. After 1953 the growth was rapid in The Netherlands, with there being fifty-five Liberated schools in The Netherlands by 1967/68. In Canada, there were six schools by 1967/68. The significance of this is that the establishment of single-denomination Reformed schools was a newer development and occurred simultaneously in The Netherlands and in North America. So why were they established?

In the book *Vrijmaking – Wederkeer (Liberation – Return)*, H. Veldman writes that the primary reason the GKNv schools were established is because of a return to faithfulness and to the confessions by the GKNv. The eyes of the GKNv members were opened or re-opened to the significance of the covenant, the baptismal promises, and the implications that they had for the unity of the home, church, and school. To those raised on stories of the Liberation, this is consistent with the well-known emphasis on covenant by Dr. Klaas Schilder and those who followed him from the GKN.

A lesser reason is what is called the *ethical conflict*. This is the idea that if you cannot sit in church with someone, how can you cooperate in a school with them? GKNv members felt that they on the one hand had been "kicked out" of the GKN, but then on the other hand were told by the same people that they should continue to cooperate in institutions like



*Maranatha Christian School, Fergus, ON*

schools. Dutch historian James Kennedy asserts that a shift in understanding of the *antithesis* also occurred at this time; namely, from between the church and the world to between the true church and the false church. This antithesis was then extended to include the GKNv schools versus other schools.

### North America

Let's move now to North America. A potentially significant fact has to do with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). Some readers may assume that the CRC is a denomination with a long history and a significant presence in Canada; however, in 1942 there were only thirteen CRC congregations in Canada. In many of the communities where CanRC were first founded (I used 1950-1970 as the range of dates here), the local CRC is less than ten years older.

The CRC in the USA set aside money, the Church Help Fund, and established a special Immigration Society to welcome and enfold the post-world War II Dutch immigrants to Canada. This Dutch immigration fuelled extraordinary growth of the CRC in Canada. According to Adriaan Peetoom (*From mythology to mythology: Dutch-Canadian orthodox-Calvinist immigrants and their schools*), one-third (approximately 50,000) of the Dutch immigrants from 1946 to 1961 joined the CRC. By 1954 there were 107 CRC congregations. This period of time also spans the origins of the CanRC. Many of these immigrants were from the GKNs and GKNv denominations. Herman Ganzevoort shows that this CRC-organized welcome was not without friction between the CRC fieldmen and GKNv immigrants. This friction, I think, was potentially significant as well for future developments both in terms of CanRC and their schools.

### Reasons for CanRC schools

There were no clear-cut formulations that I found saying that the CanRC members establish the schools for the following five reasons. The reasons seem to have been taken for granted and were therefore not necessary to record. The two core reasons are identical to those in The Netherlands and are very similar to the reasons for the CRC-founded schools.

The two core reasons were the parents' baptismal promise and the need for unity between home, church, and school, or as one person called it, referring to Ecclesiastes 4:12, the three-fold cord. These seemed to be self-evident reasons. The point of departure in The Netherlands with the GKNs, and in North America with the CRC, is in the interpretation of the breadth of the unity. It is clear that not all CanRC members felt that a school of their own was needed. Some argued from a church-unity perspective, seeing the establishment of CanRC schools as obstacles to possible union with the CRC. Others opposed CanRC schools on the basis of cost. In the end the advocates of CanRC schools prevailed.

*The establishment of  
single-denomination Reformed schools  
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There was also a negative reason that came up. Several of the school histories I read had expressions of distrust in the staff of CRC-founded schools. Staff in those schools were not required to be specifically *Reformed*, and GKNv people felt that was not consistent with an integrated understanding of unity of faith.

Another reason, mostly from non-CanRC members, was to isolate the children to maintain the "purity" of the church community. In the school context this is most commonly heard as the claim that the real reason for CanRC schools was to make sure the CanRC members' children did not marry children from the CRC or other churches. In the church context it was often expressed as the accusation that the CanRC think they are the only true church.

One final reason given is an *ethnographic* one. Ethnographers say that the Dutch orthodox Calvinists immigrants transplanted their culture from The



*Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School, Smithers, BC*



Guido de Brès Christian High School, ON

Netherlands to Canada and Christian schools were just a part of that. Rev. Van Oene rejects this assertion saying, "whoever speaks of 'Dutch schools' or is of the opinion that we want to have 'our own' schools because that is the idea which we brought along when immigrating into Canada, proves thereby that he does not have the slightest idea of the specific character of a Reformed school and of the reasons why Reformed people pay double rather than send their children to an allegedly neutral public school" (*Inheritance Preserved: The Canadian Reformed churches and Free Reformed churches of Australia in historical perspective*, p. 227). Harro Van Brummelen, a respected historian of Christian schools in North America, says that he agrees with Van Oene.

### Defensibility of the reasons

Are any of these reasons defensible? A common saying is that hindsight is twenty-twenty. I do not think that is true in historical matters. To determine defensibility, I think we should try to understand the mindset of the immigrants and to not claim a cool objectivity purchased through time. An important starting-point for determining defensibility is the understanding that for many GKNv immigrants the CRC was equal in their minds to the GKN. This may not be how the CRC saw themselves, but based on their actions towards the GKNv, it was how the GKNv immigrants saw them. Furthermore, Dr. Schilder recommended that GKNv immigrants consider joining the Protestant Reformed Churches in light of the CRC position on several issues. This recommendation from Schilder would have made GKNv immigrants cautious about joining the CRC. Additionally, the CRC required the assurance from the GKNv immigrants who were seeking membership in the CRC that "as members of our denomination they will not agitate the differences which existed amongst the Gereformeerden in The Netherlands" (Van Oene, *Patrimony profile: Our Reformed Heritage Retraced, 1795-1946*, p. 371). That is not an atmosphere that is conducive to a feeling of unity as brothers if you were a GKNv immigrant looking for a church to join.

### Baptismal promises

This reason is well known and accepted by CanRC and CRC alike. It is worth noting that this position is uncommon to most Christian denominations. There are Christians who feel that their children ought to attend public schools as part of functioning as salt and light in this world. Noble and right as that sounds, I think it is quite conclusive that public schools are inimical to Christianity and that exposing your children to that environment six hours a day, 180-plus days a year for twelve to eighteen years will rob your child of a very significant portion of training in the fear of the LORD that the baptismal promise demands.

### Three-fold cord

In The Netherlands in the years following the Liberation of 1944, a portion of the GKNv opposed the idea of establishing schools that were specific to GKNv. In North America, CanRC schools often came about due to a small core of very strong supporters of the idea. These supporters pressed forward against resistance based on finances and/or church unity. So is this unity between home, church, and school a defensible point or did the CanRC members get carried away? Is Kennedy right in saying that their understanding of the antithesis shifted? Did it shift too far?

Having a school working in concert with the home and church is like eating the most healthful diet possible. Sending your children to schools further removed from the teaching of the church and home is like adding a regular component of processed food to your diet. You can compensate for this weakness in your diet by being active in the school and in talking with your children about it each day, but why not strive to eat the optimum diet if it is at all possible?

### Distrust

This reason is perhaps easier to justify in hindsight than it is at the outset. Looking back, for instance, we can see that the CRC have deviated from God's word in important ways. The CRC-dominated schools



Dufferin Christian School, Carman, MB



*John Calvin School, Yarrow, BC*

sometimes had a role in leading that deviation.

I heard several times in interviews and conversation that CRC members simply do not understand why CanRC members felt they had to establish their own schools. They are left thinking that it must be because the CanRC felt they were better than the others and therefore needed their own schools to prevent mingling with "the unrighteous."

A reason that came up was that since the teachers in CRC-dominated schools were members of various denominations oversight of their doctrine could not be practiced. If all staff must be CanRC members, then you as a school society member can be comforted that you have effective control of the direction of the school in this crucial area.

### **Isolation/purity**

This is a controversial reason most often voiced by non-CanRC members. CanRC members have been tarred with this brush repeatedly since the beginning of their history. Some CanRC members have certainly made and I suspect some still make comments that justify this perception.

To be realistic, we should realize that we are not the first nor will we be the last to be described that way. David Sikkema, when describing the CRC schools in the USA during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, calls them "fortresses of isolation" (*Between isolation and engagement: The history of the Dutch Calvinist school movement in the Netherlands, the United States, and Canada*). When describing the state of CRC schools in the USA just prior to WWII, he says (p. 67) that they "did not abandon a protectionist and isolationist Afscheiding mindset completely. They continued to support Dutch Calvinist institutions that were separate from mainstream American culture both to produce Dutch Calvinist American citizens and to protect children from the dangers of secular culture."

I suggest that we not try to dispute this point; instead, we openly acknowledge that isolation/purity is one of the reasons for having Canadian Reformed schools, and we assert that it is a defensible reason. I will immediately qualify that by adding that *it must never be a primary or stand-alone reason*, but it does

have legitimacy as a reason both in the past and today. All Christian schools have isolation/purity as their purpose to some degree. If our primary reasons for having our own schools are baptismal promises and unity between home, church, and school, then in my view it simply has to follow that isolation/purity will be a part of it. I would add that there is nothing shameful in maintaining that. Others may choose to interpret that as arrogant, but then all we can do is to live lives that do not allow this interpretation to be seen as true.

### **Conclusion – preserving the schools**

I think that our schools existence today is definitely defensible. Judy Kingma has done an able job of outlining four markers of Reformed schools (*Clarion*, Vol. 20) and I think that close attention to those four will go a long ways to keeping the schools rooted in the place they were meant to be rooted.

*Having a school working in concert with the home and church is like eating the most healthful diet possible*

Board members need to be knowledgeable about Christian education and involved in the school so they can ensure the school remains on track. They need to think carefully about who they hire which is not always easy in our tight job market as CanRC schools. Boards need to find principals who are humble, and who desire to glorify God in his holiness by serving the school community in obedience to the vision that led to the founding of CanRC schools. To assist principals in that there should be a simple and clear reference point that can be appealed to. A carefully crafted vision or mission statement is one way to do that. It gives the school community a solid point to work from should they find themselves in a position where they feel a parent, the board, the principal, a teacher, or the school community is moving in a wrong direction relative to the vision. Above all else the presence of a living, knowledgeable, and applied faith in all of the school community members is needed. Like all of life it is about obedience to God in all areas.

*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 Arthur Kingma [abkingma@kwic.com](mailto:abkingma@kwic.com).*



# Stepping Stones Bible Camp – What a blessing!

When you follow the winding road up the hillside, your mind is curious as to what you will see around each corner. Suddenly on the left a friendly little house appears, nestled like a bird on the side of the hill. You drive on slowly, until you surface on a small plateau that provides a grand view of the hills and mountains nearby (Psalm 121 comes to mind). A small barn and another friendly home appear on your left and a flag-pole proudly waves the Maple Leaf. More homes and larger buildings can be seen ahead.

Here we will stay for a week, at the Stepping Stones Bible Camp, teaching and learning from God's Word. We will spend time with God's children, asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and learning what "discipleship" is all about, and how it affects our lives. For to be a follower of Christ is: to Grow in faith, to take **ACTION!**, and to Pass it on!

How did we end up here, in this beautiful hillside-setting in Deroche, fifteen minutes east of Mission, in the Fraser River valley?

This past spring I was approached by the Head of the Chaplain Committee of Stepping Stones, and asked if I would consider being the chaplain for a week of Bible camp for eight to twelve-year-olds. When he added: "You may also do this as a couple," it did not take us long to decide that this would be an exciting path to travel. We began a journey that has turned into a wonderful experience for campers, for staff, and last but not least for ourselves. *Stepping Stones is always looking for volunteers*, for people who are willing to help in a variety of tasks, and that's where **YOU** come in! Please read on, and let your curiosity turn into excitement for this wonderful and rewarding work of service. It is certainly time well spent!

Stepping Stones is organized by Fraser Valley Canadian Reformed Church members, who are intent on training today's youth to be Christian leaders in tomorrow's world. They organize week-long Bible camps for eight to twelve-year-olds, or for teens. The campers arrive on Monday morning and leave again on



Saturday. Campers from outside the church community are warmly welcomed and get a thorough introduction on what it means to be a Christian; one who follows Christ in word and deed.

Psalm 78 shows us very clearly how to teach our children, so they will not forget what God has done. Remember "O my people, hear my teaching"? Asaph writes: "I will utter hidden things, things from of old – what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done." A little bit further he repeats this command: "to teach their children, so the next generation would know them. . . and they in turn would tell their children." In a beautiful cadence of faithfulness (his and ours!) the great deeds of our Lord pass from generation to generation; it is at once powerful and praiseworthy!

To run a Bible camp for thirty youngsters takes a lot of preparation. It also takes a lot of prayer, a lot of resources, and plenty of staff. Every group of four to six campers is guided by two counsellors, who in turn are supported by five staff, and all are spiritually guided by the chaplains. Then there are nurses, bus drivers, and kitchen staff, who prepare delicious meals every day. The Caretaker couple makes sure that all is functioning properly and looked after. *So here's your chance to volunteer! You may offer your services as a counsellor,*



as a camp staff member, a nurse, or as kitchen staff. Due to all the dedicated staff, camp runs very smoothly, with a plan B always at hand.

A Stepping Stones Bible Camp week is very intense, but it also gives immense joy, sincere encouragement and great rewards (like the young girl who taught me that JOY stands for "Jesus first, then Others, and Yourself last"). You may think at times that you're here to give, but so often you receive, and that gives you added strength to continue. God is gracious and he also works through young children as we learned from Naaman's servant girl and from Samuel.

It is certainly fitting to acknowledge all who are involved in Stepping Stones. I have been so heartfelt impressed with staff members who have dedicated four weeks of their summer to be at Stepping Stones. There are also the counsellors, whose work with the campers is sometimes a real challenge, but they persevere, and learn much about themselves in the process. It is great to see everyone grow in faith, for as the campers grow, so do the counsellors and the staff (and that includes the chaplains).

It takes many dedicated people to run each successful week at camp, but more help is needed! *We ask you to consider what you can do for Stepping Stones: prayerfully, financially, or personally.*

*Please check it out at [www.steppingstonesbiblecamp.ca](http://www.steppingstonesbiblecamp.ca) and let them know that you want to be involved; you won't regret it. That much we can say from our enriching experience. You'll end the week by saying: "Stepping Stones Bible Camp – What a blessing!"*

C

