



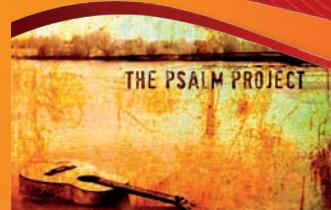
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
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Installation of Rev. C. Kleyn as Missionary



Inside this Issue

- Church: Home for Same-Sex Strugglers?
- Preserving a Family Tradition





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Church: Home for Same-Sex Strugglers?

Let's not turn our backs on any sinner

The church, it is often said, is a hospital for sinners, a place where sinful people may go for spiritual healing. In church, sinners find the message of forgiveness in the blood of Jesus and renewal in the Spirit of Jesus. This is available to everyone who accepts Christ in true faith and repentance. Is it also available to those who have same-sex attractions, to those who are enticed by the gay life but recognize it as sin and wish to give it up? Is the church a safe home for same-sex strugglers?

Strugglers within

Scripture is clear that sexual acts with persons of the same sex is sin. That hardly needs an explanation or a defense for those who take the Bible as God's Word. This also means that desiring in one's heart this kind of intimacy is also sin. There are God-fearing, Christ-believing people in this world and also within Canadian Reformed churches who know this and accept it and yet can't seem to get rid of their desires and attraction for this sin – do they find in the church community friends to open up to, and brothers and sisters to aid in the struggle? They are struggling, they wish to resist and grow in the holiness which comes from the Spirit of Christ, and yet it's brutally hard. Are we making it easier or harder for them?

Powerful desires

I realize that talk of same-sex strugglers in the church may startle or alarm some. Yet they are there. For many, there will be a recoiling at the thought because of the revulsion of the concept. Others will feel little sympathy and rather brush off the idea of such struggle, thinking, "Why don't they just give it up then? Walk away and be done with it?"

It might be very hard for us to relate to these particular desires because they are so totally foreign to our thinking and so against the way God created

things. And yet, when you reflect on what the Bible says about the human heart conceived and born in sin, is it really so strange that these desires lie deep within the heart of some? Already by Genesis 6:5, the LORD observes that "every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." By Genesis 19, we find two major cities in Canaan renowned for their sexual perversion specifically in same-sex activity. It was their reputation which gave rise to a euphemism for the behaviour known still today as "sodomy."

The truth is, as we confess in Lord's Day 2, every human heart by nature is inclined to hate God and our neighbour. We naturally want to do many, many things that do not please God and are not good for our neighbour, and we like it that way. Different people have different sinful inclinations; for the one, alcohol abuse beckons constantly but for the other it has no appeal. For one person, spreading gossip makes their day but for another it is peevish and uninteresting.

And even when God brings us to repentance, that old life-style and those old desires often keep calling. Just like a former drinker or drug abuser will often tell you that the pull is always there and they need to fight it off constantly, so a former gay or lesbian may tell you that temptation is crouching at the doorway. And it's all the more dangerous and difficult if one has to fight it off alone.

Temptation fighters

I don't see much point in debating whether one's attraction to those of the same sex is biological (and therefore natural), environmental, or choice-based. No matter the origin, there is no justification for the sin. The truth is, all sin is natural to the human heart. It feels at home there, it is deeply rooted there. Same-sex attraction may well be influenced by our circumstances and we certainly also choose to exercise (or not) those desires. Wherever such desires come from, they are sin and as Christians they must be resisted.

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What's Inside

Issue 15 begins with Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer's editorial on same-sex struggles within the Canadian Reformed church. The editorial discusses how we as church members should respond to the particular struggle of same-sex attractions within the church.

Rev. Klaas Stam writes an article entitled Announcing a Withdrawal. What is a withdrawal, and how should it be dealt with and announced in a congregation?

In a meditation from Dr. John Smith, faith and shame are explored in the context of Psalm 25. We also have an Ecumena article from Rev. George van Popta, reviewing several artists / music groups who are creating music promoting the use of the psalms.

In news from the federation we bring readers a report of Rev. Cornelis Kleyn's installation as missionary to Papua New Guinea.

Issue 15 also includes regular columns Treasures New and Old, Ray of Sunshine, and Roadside Assistance. There is also a letter to the editor, a canticle, a press release, and a book review.

Laura Veenendaal

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Our attitudes

As a communion of saints, we must realize this battle exists and make provisions to help. The first provision is to adjust our attitudes. We might be disgusted at this sin and be turned-off completely from even dealing with it. But is that right? Did the Lord turn away from us in disgust at our many sins?

It is true that same-sex acts are called by God an "abomination" (Lev 18:22, ESV) and are to be hated by God's people as they are hated by the Lord. But so is idolatry (Deut 13:13-15, ESV where the same word is used in the original)! Worshipping other gods is an abomination equally to be hated by God's people and how many of us don't struggle with putting our trust in something other than or in addition to the one true God (see LD 34, Q/A 95)? As John Calvin said, human nature is a continual "factory of idols." If God's grace can extend to idolaters then it can also extend to same-sex offenders. In that light, as God's people we must treat them in the same way God does. Anyone who in faith repents from any sin should find an open door into the church and open arms to receive them.

Our insults

Our arms are not open for such strugglers if our mouths are breathing out insults or, worse, threats. Imagine that in your high-school class was a teenager secretly fighting same-sex attraction and a few guys start making jokes about gays and lesbians. How would that person feel? What if he heard peers at youth group speak of "fags" and "queers" with total disdain, threatening to "kick their heads in" if they ever ran into any? Would that make him want to open up about his inner "demons," the great tension building within him?

Not only are such bullying tactics anti-Christian, attitudes like that drive the struggling sinner deeper underground. When a person feels completely alone with his or her feelings, when he or she thinks there is no one to talk to who would understand or be sympathetic, no one to offer support in trying to break away from the hold those feelings have, where will they go? Where will they end up? Is there not a high risk that they'll end up giving in to those sinful instincts and plunge into the only community that will embrace them and allow them to be open about their feelings? There is more than one former Canadian Reformed person living today in a gay community. They certainly remain responsible for their sinful choices but we should reflect that in such cases we may have unwittingly played a role in driving them out of the church. If so, the only way to start reversing this is by changing our attitudes.

Their fears

We can create obstacles and isolate same-sex strugglers in other ways we might not even be aware

of, without intending to at all. Imagine a group of godly young men meeting to study Scripture, pray, and also talk about their struggles as Christians. The leader starts in, "Okay guys: I'm going to own up to the fact that I wrestle with lustful thoughts when I see a pretty girl. I think every red-blooded Canadian does. I find it hard not to undress her with my eyes – do you guys know what I'm talking about?" All the other guys start nodding.

But one guy who is nodding on the outside is inwardly crying out in desperation: "I don't know what they are talking about! I see guys like this, not girls!" In an instant he feels his aloneness, how different he is among his peers – what would the group say if he dared to speak of his sexual struggle? In this scenario, a total lack of awareness of even the possibility of same-sex attraction would serve to isolate, marginalize, and add to the already great sense of loneliness.

This is what such strugglers deal with in addition to their own inner battles. Fear can be a very real problem for anyone dealing with a sin which has such a strong, negative social stigma attached to it. There is fear of being outed and the embarrassment and shame that goes with it. There is the fear of being rejected and abandoned by friends and even family. There is the fear of changing, of not knowing how to get rid of unwanted desires. And there is always the fear of failure. This is true for those struggling with pornography, alcohol, and drug abuse but even more with same-sex attraction. Fearing failure can paralyze a person from taking action in repentance.

Firm in love

The church doesn't need to give an inch (nor may it!) on the biblical truth that same-sex attraction and action is sin. Like a man lusting after a woman, so a man lusting after a man is sin in God's eyes. It is indeed completely contrary to his created order. But it's equally sin for which the Saviour has died for all those who repent and believe!

As church we must reach out to all who, like us, are conceived and born in sin – also gays and lesbians. They too must be called to repentance and faith in Christ as we have been. The church in Corinth had former gays in it (1 Cor 6:9-11), people who by God's grace repented and who were sanctified in Christ. Can the church in your town have people like that too, accepted by the congregation as children of God? Are you ready to love them as you have been loved by God?

Being sanctified does not mean the struggle against temptation is over. It most often means the struggle is just beginning. So help is needed. Let's not turn our backs on any struggling same-sex sinner but let's open our hearts and our arms to extend grace, even as grace has first been extended to us.





MATTHEW 13:52

"When I was a boy in my father's house. . . he taught me and said, 'Lay hold of my words with all your heart, keep my commands and you will live'."

(Proverbs 4:3-4)

According to the dictionary, "tradition" means "the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation." Our traditions are long-established customs or beliefs that have been passed on in this way. What should we think about "traditions"? Is "tradition" a negative concept, or is there a way we can think of tradition, and uphold tradition, in a way that honours God and his Word?

Scripture teaches that there are two kinds of tradition. First, there's human tradition, the tradition of men. That's the "accepted wisdom" that's passed on without a real understanding of its reasoning, and with no basis in God's Word.

But there's a second kind of tradition, one that we receive from God's Word. This kind of tradition plays an important role in the life of God's people. We are commanded to pass down our faith in our Creator and Saviour, from generation to generation. This is a defining characteristic of who we are as God's covenant people. Our God claims our children as his own, and commands us to bring up our children to serve him as well.

In Proverbs 4:3-4 we see how the way of wisdom must be passed on. A faithful grandfather's teaching is being passed on to a grandchild, by means of a man who speaks both as a son and as a father. The father begins by saying, "Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding"

(v. 1). But then the father goes back in time to his own childhood, to the words of his father: "When I was a boy in my father's house. . . he taught me" (vv. 3-4). What the grandfather taught the father is the same thing that the father is teaching his own son: Embrace wisdom, and you will receive a crown of splendour.

The LORD has made promises to us and to our children, and he is faithful to fulfil those promises. But he uses means to fulfil them – it doesn't happen automatically! The third question that parents answer when they present their children for baptism makes this very clear: "Do you promise, as father and mother, to instruct your child in this doctrine, as soon as he is able to understand, and to have him instructed therein to the utmost of your power?"

It's about passing on the tradition, the tradition received from God himself in his Word. It's about fathers remembering the teaching of their fathers and passing that teaching on to their own children. This is the primary means by which God cares for and grows his church. God's ordinary means of working is through the generations, through covenant succession, with the children picking up where their parents left off.

If we want to be witnesses to God's grace and goodness, the most important place where that must be done is at home: in our living rooms, around our dinner tables, in our kitchens, our bedrooms, and our

backyards. And in giving reasons for our tradition, in explaining why we do the things that we do, we fulfil our calling to perpetuate the covenant people of God from generation to generation. Passing on the tradition means continuing with a cycle that is good, so that our children can by God's grace continue to do the same.

As God's covenant children, and as covenant parents, our most important task is to train up our children in the way they should go. Let our children be able to say to their own children one day, "When I was a boy in my father's house, he taught me and said, 'Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.'"

Our God is faithful to his promises. We can trust that he will bless our efforts, with all their weakness, if we faithfully bring his Word to our children in our teaching and in our example. If we obey him and train up our children in the way they should go, when they are old they will not depart from it. So speak about God's grace and love, about his hatred of sin and his love for his people. Teach your children the way of wisdom. Lead them in paths of uprightness. Teach them to keep hold of your instruction, and never let go – to guard wisdom, for in wisdom there is life. And then trust that the Lord will set a garland of grace on their head, and present them with a crown of splendour.



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Announcing a Withdrawal

Unfortunately it happens that members withdraw from the church. Sometimes this is very sudden and unexpected. At other times you may have seen the withdrawal coming a mile away and are not surprised by it. The point is now: how must a consistory announce this withdrawal to the congregation?

Our Church Order gives no direction in this matter. This has led various consistories to formulate their own announcements. The format and content of these announcements can differ from place to place, from situation to situation.

What is a withdrawal?

We must be clear on what a withdrawal really is. A withdrawal is a unilateral and unfounded breaking with the church of which one is a member. One simply resigns, either by telling the ward elders or by writing a letter to the consistory. A church may for a while make no announcement regarding the withdrawal, but in time an announcement will be made.

The key issue here is that an act of withdrawal from Christ's church is sinful. Pretty shocking, right? Not everyone believes this anymore. But in Article 28 of the Belgic Confession we confess, "We believe since this holy assembly and congregation is the assembly of the redeemed and there is no salvation outside of it that no one ought to withdraw from it." This is based on what the Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2:3, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." Unless a church has become blatantly false we may not remove ourselves from it. I believe that this is still our confession of faith.

Note that we do not have to make the unity of the Spirit. It is Christ who makes and sustains this unity in the one faith. We must keep (maintain, preserve) this unity. In our lives we may see the fruit of God's

providence also in that we have come to belong to a Reformed church. Unity in faith is a great gift that must be joyfully preserved and not broken.

What must the consistory announce?

Okay, someone has withdrawn himself and also taken his family along (if he has one, of course). A withdrawal affects entire generations. But we will not be around to experience this. Let us say that he has entered into membership in another church. Perhaps it is a community church, an alliance church, or a Baptist church. The withdrawals that I have seen mostly meant a bee-line to liberal, charismatic, and Arminian churches.

Unity in faith is a great gift that must be joyfully preserved and not broken

Anyway, the point is how a consistory should announce this. Well, it happens sometimes that the withdrawer has the audacity to prescribe to the consistory how an announcement is to be made. People do not want it to be said that one has withdrawn from the church of Christ. No way, José. They have only gone to another department. They are still members of the church of Christ, and demand to be regarded as such. In their thinking, the withdrawal is not a matter of regret but a very positive personal move which should be properly esteemed and appreciated.

To be sure, behind this type of thinking lies a specific ecclesiology, a way of looking at the church and church membership that is alien to the Reformed confessions. The line of thinking that I am referring to is commonly called the doctrine of pluriformity.

For many years we discussed this teaching with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as one of the divergences which needed resolution. As churches we still think that this is a matter that should have our mutual attention. But we have said that it is not a matter that should keep us separated.

This doctrine of pluriformity has always been the more (generally) widespread viewpoint. In short, it holds that the church becomes evident in many different forms. The one form may be better than the other, but all are part of the great church that is, as such, invisible. We only see forms of the real thing. One could say, then, that it does not really matter much of which local church one is a member. Therefore any change in membership is an act of personal freedom that is not to be judged by others. All churches are more or less true and one would be hard pressed to find a church that fully measures up.

I do not really at this point want to get into a discussion on the matter of the doctrine of the church. What I wrote about pluriformity was only meant as reference or context. The conclusion I draw is that all this has consequences for the announcement(s) that the consistory may want to make concerning a withdrawal.

Announcing what is necessary

This brings me to my main point in connection with all of this. *The pulpit is not really the place for all kinds of announcements.* The pulpit is not a bulletin board. It is the place where the gospel must be preached. Nothing should detract from this key function.

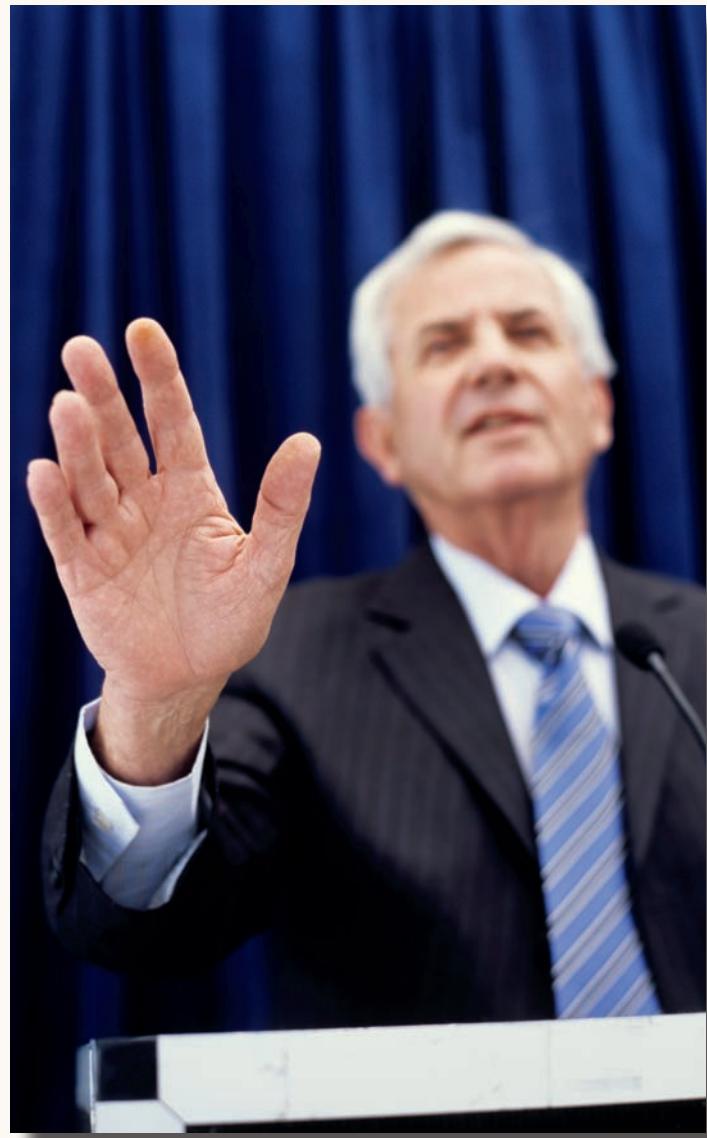
I know that some things need to be announced because we have agreed to do so in our Church Order. See e.g. Articles 3 of the Church Order re: Ordination and Installation, and Article 62 re: Attestations.

I am convinced that a consistory should announce only what is strictly necessary. Unless bound by a certain form, the consistory should refrain from making statements of regret or felicitations. Pastoral care should not be doled out in the announcements section before the worship commences.

In the case of a withdrawal a simple announcement that someone has withdrawn from the church should suffice. Keep it short and to the point. The announcement is a factual statement concerning

membership status in the existing church. It is neither a statement of approval nor an expression of judgment. It could even be left in the Short Report of the consistory meeting, where all can read about it. The announcement should say something like this, "The consistory announces that... has withdrawn from the congregation." Then the actual reality has been properly addressed, no more, no less.

C





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Faith and Shame

Is there a connection between faith and shame? We might not think to put them together, but the Bible does. In this article I'd like to explore the relationship between faith and shame by way of a brief meditation on Psalm 25.

In verse 2 the psalmist writes, "In you I trust, O my God. Do not let me put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me." What does he mean? Does he simply mean, "Rescue me from my enemies; don't let them treat me shamefully"? I think there's more to it than that.

Trust makes you vulnerable

Psychology professor Randie Timpe writes that shame may originate from "threats to trust" (*Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling*). In other words, when your trust (your faith, your belief system) is threatened or contradicted by your circumstances, you may well begin to question the adequacy of your worldview. Trust makes you vulnerable, says Dr. Timpe, because something may happen that is inconsistent with what you believe. Someone may see the incongruity and expose it. You feel like a fool because it appears that your trust was misplaced, unfounded, inadequate. You become ashamed. ("What an idiot I was to believe that!") Your vulnerability has been uncovered, and you are in no position to defend your faith because your situation suggests that it doesn't hold water.

That kind of vulnerability is found in Psalm 25, too. On the one hand the psalmist knows what he believes. Verse 5: "You are God my Saviour." Verse 7: "You are good, O Lord." Verse 8: "Good and upright is the Lord." Verse 10: "All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful." So "the man who fears the Lord [will] spend his days in prosperity" (v. 13). That's what the psalmist believes.

On the other hand his circumstances seem to belie his faith. Verse 17: "The troubles of my heart have multiplied." Verse 19: "See how my enemies have increased and how fiercely they hate me!" Does the

incongruity make the psalmist abandon his faith? No, but he does pray, "Do not let me be put to shame." Here and elsewhere in Psalms (see 22:5, 31:1, 17, 37:19, 44:8-15, 71:1-2, 119:114-116), to put someone to shame means to leave his prayer for deliverance unanswered, giving the impression that God is unwilling or unable to save, that the believer's confidence is misplaced.

There is another layer to faith and shame in this Psalm. The psalmist's *faith* says, "I trust in you," "you are God my Saviour," "my hope is in you," and "the Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them." In other words, he trusts that he's in a secure relationship with a God who saves. But again there's potential for *shame*: he also knows his sins. Verse 7: "Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways." Verse 11: "For the sake of your name, forgive my iniquity, though it is great." Verse 18: "Look upon my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins." In other words, the psalmist has jeopardized the very security of the relationship he depends upon. His faith is vulnerable. Nevertheless he does not abandon his faith, but he prays, asking God to keep the covenant relationship secure.

In short, the psalmist's answer to vulnerability is complete dependence on the very God who has put him at risk and made him vulnerable! It's a profound lesson that's well worth keeping in mind.

Wrestling with shame

In our lives there will be times when we experience the vulnerability of faith and have to wrestle with shame. We'll also have to help others who go through that experience, and it won't always be easy to reach out. Shame makes people go into hiding; they avoid help. It's not easy to build trust with vulnerable, hurting people. They won't quickly come to us with their hard questions. That's too risky. Nor are they likely to make a scene and leave church. After all, abandoning the faith also comes at a cost. There is the shame of losing

face with friends and family members. There is the fear of condemnation from church members, censure from office bearers, and judgment from a God who does not appear to care.

It's easier for hurting people simply to become disengaged, to give the right answers when the pastor asks how it's going, so that he goes away as soon as possible. It's easier simply to go through the outward motions of church attendance, with minimal involvement, and to withdraw from relationships, letting other members believe that they'd rather be on their own, and in the meantime developing alternate coping strategies to help them through life, since faith doesn't help anyway, and prayer is futile.

Restoring trust

Hurting people need us to seek them out with patient persistence. Not to do so would only confirm their sense that God has turned their faith into shame and does not answer prayer. They need us to demonstrate the loyalty and love, the willingness to

associate that Psalm 25 speaks about, so that via our willingness to reach out and relate they see evidence that love, loyalty, and covenant are still possible, still real, and that God is still loving and faithful, upright, and good. We need to be the evidence that God hears them and cares for them. Of course, if their faith were to depend on our love for them, it would have a fragile foundation, so we must point always to Christ. We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

Christ personifies the message of Psalm 25. The one who trusts in him will never be put to shame (Ps 25:3, Isa 28:16, Rom 9:33, 1 Pet 2:6). Through the storms of life, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8). He also knows what it is to have one's faith put to the test. He experienced the shame of unanswered prayer. He has paid for sin to make our relationship with God secure. He gives his Spirit to help and to heal.

In short, we must bring hurting, vulnerable Christians to the prayer of Psalm 25, because then we bring them to Christ – the answer to that prayer.

C





Ecumena

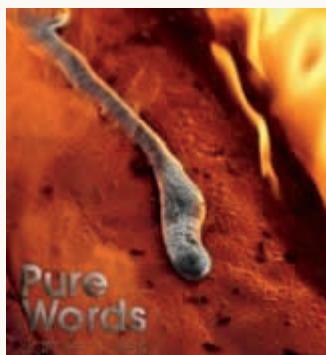
Singing the Psalms

The church catholic has been singing the psalms for about 3,000 years, ever since King David and others, inspired by the Holy Spirit, began composing them. The psalms are closely identified with the worship of the Canadian Reformed Churches since we sing from the *Book of Praise*, which contains a complete collection of all 150 Psalms. We also sing hymns, and it is proper to do so. Some of our sister churches subscribe to exclusive psalmody. We do not and never have. As Dr. Arjan de Visser wrote in this magazine, "A biblical understanding of the covenant will support and encourage the singing of hymns" ("They are Singing New Songs" (57:18, pp. 458-460).

And yet, we are primarily a psalm-singing people. In the preface to the *Book of Praise*, John Calvin is quoted who, in turn, quoted Augustine, making the point that there is nothing better to sing than the psalms, which have been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Although the psalms have been sung for millennia, there seems to be, of late, a renaissance of appreciation for the psalms. In the rest of this article I will introduce three groups of artists who are promoting the singing of psalms. What follows are not reviews of specific albums, but simply some information and words of appreciation for the work being accomplished.

Jamie Soles



Jamie Soles, of Grande Prairie, Alberta, is known in our circles. He has produced about fifteen albums, several especially for children, which are very popular with my grandchildren... and their grandparents. Jamie accompanies his songs with an acoustic guitar and is often joined by his wife

Valerie and combinations of their eight children. When he is singing words of scripture, he stays close to the

text, preferring the ESV.

Inside the album cover of *Pure Words*, songs on the first sixteen psalms, he writes some notable words:

It seems to me that the Church should be singing the Psalms, her ancient songbook. In a number of places in the New Testament the Psalms are spoken of or quoted as though they had been uttered by the Messiah. If this is the case, and I believe it is, and if the believer's task in life is to grow more into the image of Jesus, then mastering the Psalms would be a wise way to learn the mind of Christ. Do you want to be like Jesus? Well, here is a treasure trove of the way that Jesus thinks and expresses himself in song. Learn to sing them well. Jesus is pleased when his people know how he thinks.

Jamie says it well here, and, as a psalm-singing people, we can appreciate the point he makes and take it to heart.

It is difficult to classify exactly his style, but let it suffice to say that his songs are biblical, enjoyable, memorable, and singable. Jamie captures well the mood of the particular psalm, whether it is sad or joyful, instructive or a benediction. I recommend this artist and his music to the reader. CDs can be ordered from www.solmusic.ca.

Sons of Korah



Sons of Korah is an Australian based band devoted to giving a fresh voice to the biblical psalms. They use a unique acoustic, multi-ethnic sound and have given the Book of Psalms a dynamic and emotive new musical expression. In their songs, in which the words are often taken directly from

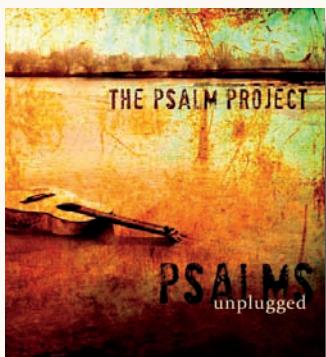
Scripture, they bring out well whether the psalm is one of lamentation, jubilant praise, battle cry, benediction,

an exclamation of awe and wonder, or a reflection of tranquility and wisdom.

The reader will recognize that the name of the band comes from the group of Levitical musicians to whom at least thirteen of the psalms are attributed. Sons of Korah is made up of seven people while Matthew Jacoby and Rod Gear co-write the music. Many string, acoustic, and other musical instruments are used in the performance of the songs.

Sons of Korah has produced five albums that range in mood from the deeply emotive and reflective to the wildly exuberant, as the Book of Psalms itself does. I also recommend this band and their albums to the reader of Clarion. Readers can go to the Sons of Korah webpage, www.sonsofkorah.com, to listen to samples of many songs before deciding whether to purchase.

The Psalm Project



This project will be of interest to Canadian Reformed people as it has taken the tunes of the Genevan Psalter, 1562, and put them to contemporary settings. This Dutch group has produced both a Dutch and an English CD. The Psalm Project is a band of six professional musicians under the leadership

of Eelco Vos, who had a vision to dress historical treasures in twenty-first century sounds. String, wind, and percussion instruments are used to accompany the songs.

Not everyone will appreciate this contemporary interpretation of Genevan tunes, but, having an eclectic taste in music, I do, and I recommend the albums to the reader. CDs can be ordered from their webpage, [www.thepsalmproject.com](http://thepsalmproject.com) where one can also preview the songs.

The songs of Jamie Soles, the Sons of Korah, and the Psalm Project can all be previewed and purchased also through iTunes. (Please note that at iTunes there is another group called the Psalm Project and one called the Psalms Project. Both look interesting, but I am not familiar with them.)

Listen, sing, enjoy, and worship!

C

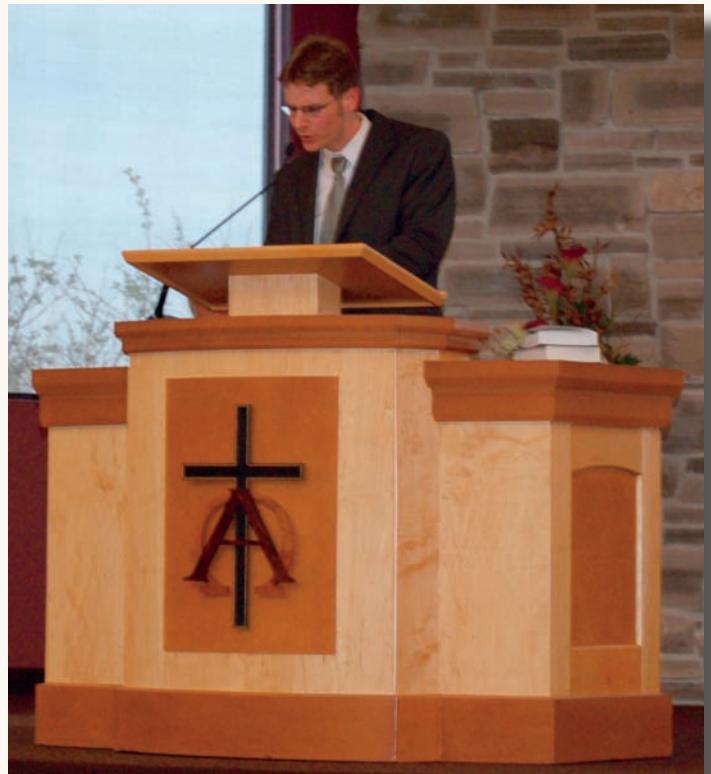


Installation of Rev. C. Kleyn as Missionary

As we were able to witness the changing of the seasons from winter to spring and see how God in his providence supplies for the needs of his people from season to season, the Toronto congregation and its supporting congregations were once again able to see how God continues to supply a new missionary to succeed our brother VanderHeide in the work of spreading the gospel in Papua New Guinea. It was with great joy and thankfulness to our Heavenly Father that we could meet for worship on April 22, 2012 to witness the installation of Rev. C. Kleyn as our new missionary.

Rev. W. den Hollander, the pastor of the Toronto congregation, led the morning worship services, focusing on the continuity of the work in PNG. In this continuation we see how Christ is gathering his church through the centuries and throughout the world. That is what makes this day so special. However, it is not only Rev. Kleyn who is called to spread the gospel to the people in PNG that should be the highlight; we too are called to work in the mission field that we have been placed in. We are living together with the nations in the GTA and we are called to bring the glad tiding of God's plan for this world to those around us. Our neighbours need to be saved by the gospel of Jesus Christ and him crucified; the Lord who arose to rule over all the nations! We must always seek God, who will fill us all with hope, joy, and peace as we trust in him and receive his Holy Spirit so that all those who have not yet received the power of the Holy Spirit by faith in Jesus, the Saviour of all nations may come to confess him. This to God's glory!

The afternoon service was led by Rev. C. Kleyn. He chose as text Jeremiah 20:9, which reads: "But if I say, 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,' his work is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding in, indeed, I cannot." We can see that God's Word will



be proclaimed in spite of the prophet's reluctance, because of the LORD's compulsion. This is true, not only for Jeremiah as he proclaimed the destruction to come on Israel by the Babylonians, but also for preachers throughout history. Indeed this is a calling that we all have. We must seek God's Kingdom in whatever calling he has placed us. Despite our reluctance and unwillingness, God's Word will go out!

Following a light dinner that was prepared by the Action Committee we once again gathered in the sanctuary for a short period of fellowship during which several representatives of the supporting churches spoke words of congratulations and encouragement. Letters that had been received from

Foreign Mission Board and the Kleyn family
Back row: Philip DeBoer, Gerald Boot, John Smid
Middle row: Hilary Veenstra, Carol Diomedi, Deny Dieleman



C

the mission field in PNG as well as letters from the supporting churches who were unable to have a representative present were read as well by Gerald Boot. We had the pleasure of being able to enjoy Psalm 42 sung by the Men's Choir as well as the Girl's Choir presenting "Every day is a gift from the Lord." Rev. Kleyn was given the opportunity to speak a few words of gratitude and appreciation. We closed the evening with the singing of Hymn 84 and Gerald Boot closed with prayer, acknowledging that God in his faithfulness provided us with a faithful servant willing to continue to spread his Word to those in PNG.



A Time for Everything

By Sharri Feenstra

Sharri Feenstra is from
Calgary, Alberta

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven."

"There is a time to be born and a time to die . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh, . . . a time to hate, a time to love" (Eccl 3). There are times of gain and there are times of loss. There are times for silence and times for speaking. Life certainly has its ups and downs from beginning to end but we all share in such a comfort that everything God does will endure forever.

Time always moves on; it can seem to go fast or slow. As time moves on we need to remember that it is a gift of God's grace. Time gives us the chance to not only realize plans but to love the LORD and our neighbour. Time is very precious and when we see it as a gift of God, we learn not only to appreciate it but also to use it properly.

Today is the time to seek the Lord. Go to the Lord in everything you do, for God is always working towards his purpose, which is redemption of life in

Jesus Christ. Life is filled with good times and bad but we all need to remember that God will make things clear to us in his time, not ours. Remember that every day is a day given by the Lord!

"My times are in your hands" (Ps 31:15). It is a part of life under the sun that we are engaged in all kinds of activities. Times change. Time moves us along from one situation to another. Colossians 4:5 says "Make the most of every opportunity." There is a time for everything. Do what you must do when the time is there. We have to make the most of every opportunity in life whether good or bad. The Lord is by our side guiding us and giving us strength no matter what the situation is. It is such a strong comfort to know that the Lord is always with us and as it says in Lord's Day 1, "That without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head." What a beautiful promise the Lord has given to us, his children!

As time progresses we are not standing still but moving forward to the glory that we have in Christ. "Trust in him at all times, O people, pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge" (Ps 62:8).

C



Ray of Sunshine

by Corinne Gelms and
Patricia Gelms



Philip Schuurman lives in Dunnville with the Draaistra family: Roger and Katie, and children Kayla, Kyle, and Angie. He's been with this family for almost nine years.

During his usual days, he attends a day program through Bethesda and a community program called Supported Employment. He is actively involved with these programs, whether it's

recreational, delivering flyers, Sears catalogues, the Dunnville Chronicle, or other odd jobs. Phil loves his work, and looks forward each month to bringing his paycheck to the bank, to watch his money grow!

Every other weekend, Phil goes to visit his family, first with a visit with his mom, and then off to a brother or sister's house to spend the weekend with them. Phil loves these weekends, and quite often will say, "I'm lucky, eh? I'm spoiled!" And yes, he is blessed to have a family that loves him, spends time with him, and cares about him.

During his free time in Dunnville, he actively participates in two Friendship clubs and Special Olympics baseball. The other times he enjoys hanging with his Family Home Providers, and is actively a fun and lively family member! He often refers to Kyle as his little brother, and the girls his little sisters. On Sundays in Dunnville, he worships with the Draaistra family in the Grace Reformed Church (URC), but is a member of the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church in Hamilton.



Phil is happy go-lucky man who loves life and lives it to the fullest. He treats everyday as a new delight and spreads his joy to all around him. His friendly and happy approach is a reminder to all, to have a positive attitude and live every day as a new day, to the glory of God.

Birthdays in August

TERENCE BERENDS

August 4, 1976
6528 1st Line, RR 3 Fergus, ON N1M 2W4

PHILIP SCHUURMAN

August 5, 1959
1156 Diltz Road, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W2

ROSE MALDA

August 9, 1957
Mt. Nemo Christian Nursing Home
4486 Guelph Line, Burlington, ON L7P 0N2

FENNY KUIK

August 18, 1952
140 Foch Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2C 5H7

JACK DIELEMAN

August 23, 1972
6528 1st Line, RR 3, Fergus, ON N1M 2W4

A hearty congratulations to you all, celebrating a new year of life. May it be blessed with much joy and happiness, as we can day by day turn to our Heavenly Father for all that we need for body and soul. We hope that your birthday celebrations may be filled with lots of family and friends.

C

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



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

Mostly Canticles

O God, O God, Come to My Aid

Spoken by David when he was contending with the lion and the wolf which took a sheep from his flock.

The musical notation consists of four lines of music in G clef, common time. The lyrics are written below each line of music:
1. O God, O God, come to my aid
and save me, for I am a - fraid.
De - liv - er me from brut- ish crea - tures,
from wolf and li - on, dead - ly prow - lers,
lest I am deep in the earth laid.
The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some sustained notes and a fermata over the last note of the third line.

2. One of my father's sheep they killed,
tore her apart, her blood they spilled.
And now they want to kill the shepherd,
they wish to bring my spirit downward.
I'll cry to you till I am stilled.
3. Have pity, LORD, please save my soul
so I am not sent to Sheol
and I may speak about your glory
to praise your name for you are worthy.
The dead cannot your name extol.
4. O, quickly Lord send from on high
someone to help before I die.
Withdraw me from the place I languish,
the gaping pit of fear and anguish,
the prison deep from where I cry.



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

The Next Story: Life and Faith After the Digital Explosion, Tim Challies, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011

Additional Information: Hardcover, 204 pages, \$21.99

This book is a must-read for those in leadership positions in our church and school communities. There does not seem to be a lot of careful thought going on about technology and how it relates to a Christian worldview. Technology is often regarded as what theologians used to call "adiaphora" – things indifferent. You say "potato," I say "potato," you use your Kindle, I read a traditional book – what's the difference? It may start affecting worship too. Does it really make a difference if a church uses a projector in the worship service instead of hard copy books? What's at stake, if anything? These are the kinds of questions that this book helps us address.

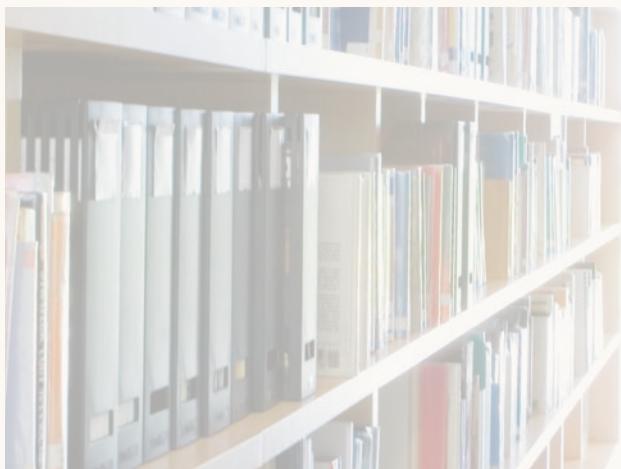
The author is a well-known Canadian author with a widely-read blog at challies.com. He brings together an interest in technology, a steady set of writing skills, and a good grasp of a Christian worldview. He's also written *The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment* (Crossway, 2007) and this newer book can be considered an extension and application of many of the biblical principles found in that earlier volume.

Let me give you a taste of what you'll find in *The Next Story*. Sometimes pastors will mention the ancient heresy of Gnosticism and its matter-spirit dualism. The Gnostics taught that physical matter is bad and

anything spiritual is good. Challies illustrates how this thought is being resurrected in the digital era with a contemporary twist. Cyberspace now "gives us a place to be apart from our bodies" (101) and this is almost universally seen as a good and desirable thing. Read the book to find out more!

Challies has helpful critiques of Wikipedia and Google in connection with the concept of truth. He notes that Wikipedia represents a model whereby truth is reached via consensus. Google, on the other hand, presents us with truth via relevance. Both present challenges to the Christian view of truth. This is all found in chapter 8 – the most important chapter in the book. We all quickly and mindlessly go to Wikipedia for answers, but we have to be aware that it is sometimes inaccurate (e.g. the article on the Canadian Reformed Churches until recently stated that the merger process with the URC has been called off), yet, more critically, it can subtly influence how we regard the very notion of what is true.

Written in an engaging way with many helpful illustrations and anecdotes, *The Next Story* ought to be on your must-read list. Most of the chapters also have questions for reflection at the end, a helpful feature for group discussions at book clubs and so on. I'm just going to make one small critical notation in this review. I don't understand why the publisher put this book out without justified margins on the right side of the page. Challies doesn't do this on his blog and I've never seen a book published by a large house like Zondervan with that feature. It not only looks unprofessional, it's also distracting. This should be fixed if there's ever a second edition.



Press Release of Classis Pacific East of May 31st and June 14th, 2012

On behalf of the convening church of Aldergrove Rev. R. Schouten welcomed the delegates and the deputies for regional synod and called the meeting to order. He requested the delegates to sing Hymn 41 and then read Ephesians 4:1-16. Prayer was offered to the Lord in which his blessing was sought over the work of Classis. The needs of the vacant church of Chilliwack were remembered, congratulations was expressed to the church of Yarrow with the anticipated arrival of Rev. R Eikelboom from Australia. The recent retirement of Rev. J. Visscher of Langley was mentioned and thankfulness to the Lord expressed for his many years of faithful service to the churches. The concern for the health of Prof. J. Geertsema who has been treated for colon cancer was remembered.

The credentials were checked by the delegates of the church of Abbotsford and found to be in good order. Rev. Swets from URC of Abbotsford was seated at the table of Classis, as fraternal observer and given opportunity to speak. Instructions were noted from the church of Abbotsford requesting the examination for Candidate J. Roukema, and from the church of Yarrow requesting a colloquium for Rev. R. Eikelboom. The officers suggested by the previous classis and the convening church were appointed with Rev. R. Schouten functioning as chairman, Rev. A. Witten as vice-chairman, and Rev. R.C. Janssen as clerk. Classis was constituted and the agenda was adopted.

The documents for the peremptory examination of Candidate J. Roukema were examined and found to be in order so Classis proceeded with the examination. After examining in all the areas of the peremptory exam, Classis found that the examination was sufficient and the delegates from Regional Synod gave concurring advice. Candidate Roukema was warmly congratulated with sustaining the examination and wished many blessings as he will take up his task in Abbotsford.

At the request of Yarrow, Classis decided to reconvene in two weeks D.V. on 14th of June at 7:30 PM at the Yarrow CanRC, for the colloquium, of Rev. R. Eikelboom.

During question period (Article 44 of the Church Order) all churches could attest that the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued and the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured and there was no matter in which the consistories needed the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of the church.

Classis decided to grant the request of the churches of Chilliwack for pulpit supply once per month.

A number of appointments were made.

1. Convening church for the next classis: Chilliwack.
2. Date for next classis: September 13, 2012; alternate date: December 6, 2012.
3. Suggested officers for the next classis: Chairman: Rev. A. Witten; Vice-chairman: Rev. R.C. Janssen; clerk: Rev. W. Wielenga.
4. Appointment of deputy for preaching arrangements in vacant churches: Rev. W. Wielenga.
5. Appointment of committee for examinations:
 - a. Committee: R.C. Janssen, R. Schouten, W. Wielenga, and A. Witten.
 - b. Coordinator: W. Wielenga.
 - c. Sermon: R.C. Janssen and R. Schouten.
 - d. OT Exegesis: W. Wielenga.
 - e. NT Exegesis: R.C. Janssen.
 - f. Knowledge of Scripture: A. Witten.
 - g. Doctrine and Creeds: R. Schouten.
 - h. Church History: A. Witten.
 - i. Ethics: W. Wielenga.
 - j. Church Polity: R.C. Janssen.
 - k. Diaconiology: R. Schouten.
6. Church visitors: R.C. Janssen (coordinator); W. Wielenga; R. Schouten.
7. Church for the archives: Abbotsford.
8. Church for inspection of the archives: Yarrow.
9. Committee for needy churches: K. Louwerse (convener), B. Vane, and R. Stiksma.
10. Counselors for vacant churches:
 - a. Yarrow: Rev. W. Wielenga.
 - b. Chilliwack: Rev. B. Berends.
11. Deputies for contact with sister churches:
 - a. RCUS: W. Wielenga.
 - b. URC: R. Schouten.

Rev. S. Swets was given an opportunity to give fraternal greetings on behalf of URC. He mentioned in particular the up and coming United Reformed Synod and expressed a desire to continue to grow in unity at this local level.

Personal Question period was held. The chairman determined that censure according to Article 34 of the Church Order was not required.

The meeting was adjourned until June 14th, 2012 with the singing of Psalm 47 and Rev. Schouten closed with prayer.

The second session of Classis, held in Yarrow, was opened by the chairman at 7:30 PM with the singing of Psalm 96:1-4. He read 2 Timothy 4 and led in opening prayer. Roll-call indicated all were present except Rev. Witten, for whom there was no alternate delegate.

Rev. Wielenga was appointed to serve this session of classis as vice-chairman. As between the two sessions of Classis Chilliwack had extended a call to Candidate Abel Pol, the chairman congratulated both with this fact.

The documents required for the colloquium with Rev. Richard Eikelboom were examined and found to be in order so Classis proceeded with the discussion. After a discussion of forty-five minutes Classis went

into closed session. The colloquium was deemed sufficient. Rev. and Mrs. Eikelboom as well as Yarrow were warmly congratulated with this result.

Classis approved the acts of both sessions as well as the press release for the first session, and made arrangements for adoption of the press release for the second session.

The meeting sang Psalm 96:5-8. The chairman then led in prayer and closed the Classis.

C

Letter to the Editor

Re: "May I have this Dance?"

After reading Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer's article titled "May I have this Dance," I felt compelled to respond. While I agree with him on many points, especially regarding dancing at clubs, I would like to respectfully disagree on two statements in his article that pertained to dancing at weddings.

With his article fresh in my mind, I attended a wedding this weekend, in which my husband was a groomsman. After the traditional "first dance" and the "father/daughter, mother/son" dance, the rest of the guests were invited onto the dance floor. I closely observed the dance throughout the evening, especially the groups of girls and slow dancing couples.

Rev. Holtvlüwer stated in his article that "groups of girls will get up and dance together but, let's be honest, it's just because a boy has not asked her yet. What everyone wants is to dance with a member of the opposite sex." I very much disagree with this statement, as both an observer and a participant in "girl group" dancing. While attracting members of the opposite sex may be the purpose of groups of girls dancing in a club, this is not the case in the wedding dances I have witnessed. When I observed the bride, her bridesmaids, and her mother dancing, there was nothing that suggested this dance had become a "scaled-down version of what can be found at clubs," and I doubt the purpose was to "to draw attention themselves" in order to attract males. Rev. Holtvlüwer seems very bold in assuming that attracting attention is the only purpose of a dancing female. Has no one else felt the "urge to dance" as an expression of the

emotions they are feeling? One only needs to observe a toddler's actions when music is played to know that moving to music is something inherent.

Rev. Holtvlüwer also sends a strongly opposed message against couple-dancing. While I agree with this when it pertains to the club scene, I am having a very difficult time viewing waltzing with my husband as something that must be banned to the bedroom (p. 276)! As sports enthusiasts, my husband and I struggled to find an activity that we could compete and participate in equally. My husband had taken several dance classes at University, and suggested we try ballroom dancing. After attending a session with another couple from our church, we found that ballroom dancing was a source of great exercise and very challenging. We have attended several "balls," and have found them extremely professional, very physically challenging, and a great way to spend time together. A far cry from the "bouncing breasts and 'come-hither' looks" that Rev. Holtvlüwer suggests is occurring on the dance floor. After observing the room during a slow dance at the wedding, it was evident that the room was filled with couples in love and enjoying the dance, rather than a room filled with lustful men and wanton ladies. Personally, I was too busy enjoying the atmosphere, the beautiful music, and the challenge of following the steps to be "consumed with lust" for my husband.



I think we can all agree that Rev. Holtvlüwer is very correct in stating that it all comes down to whom we are pleasing. However, Rev. Holtvlüwer seems to imply that *all* dancing is aimed at pleasing oneself, or the audience. I agree that "a dance which flaunts sensuality and sexuality in public simply cannot please the Lord," but is that the only type of dance that exists? I compare dancing to any other sport; one can play a game of soccer for the sole purpose of flaunting their ability. Or they could play soccer with the intent of using the talents God has given them and for the love of the game. I believe the same analogy can be applied to dancing. If it is mandated that we "back away from this bad trend before it takes root," then we are treating the symptom, not the condition. While I believe that this world has already turned too many black and white areas into grey, I have a hard time accepting that dancing, and its intentions, is as black and white as Rev. Holtvlüwer suggests it is.

Andrea Veldkamp

Response

I would like to thank Sr. Veldkamp for engaging in the dialogue, something an editorialist hopes to spark. To begin, I am glad that we agree on the main point I was trying to make, namely that "a dance which flaunts sensuality and sexuality in public simply cannot please the Lord." Sr. Veldkamp's concern seems to be that I paint with too broad a brush, colouring all forms of dance with this description. I'd like to be clear that this was not my intention and tried to indicate that by stating early in the piece that, "Our concern in this editorial is with how our young people want to dance at weddings (and elsewhere) here in our culture." Thus I did not speak about the rhythmic movement of the body to music as even "a toddler" will do nor did I go into dances which may be like a sport (for e.g., singles' ice dancing). These and certain other forms of dance which are non-sexual in nature (some folk dances, perhaps, or tap dance) may indeed be found quite agreeable with the norms of Scripture (each needs to be assessed on its own).

Sr. Veldkamp also takes issue with what I've said in a peripheral way about a) girl group dancing, b) couple dancing at weddings, and c) husband and wife waltzing in public. I maintain that at our weddings (my article's central concern), girl group dancing is not the main attraction nor the reason we hold a dance. *Couple dancing* is the focus – and not the formal ballroom-style either but the current "free-style" inherited from the clubs. I also maintain that while girls may not always be aware, their group dances do often attract the attention of the guys in a sexual way. It is not only one's intention that determines the suitability of an act for a Christian but also its effects on the neighbour – whether intended or not.

Regarding couple dancing at weddings, the history (see further in Vol. 61, No.11) shows that couple dancing has always been inherently sexual – whether slow or fast, graceful or raucous. From the start, its design was to be a public expression of personal, sensual feelings between a man and a woman. The same is true of the waltz. Think of couple dancing on a long continuum with waltzing on the one end and today's "free-dance" at the club on the opposite end. They may not look much like each other and yet the latter traces its history right back to the former. Though the waltz may seem innocent, it has the same root and is of one piece with the club's version of couple dancing.

Note also the comments which secular commentators make about the sensuality of ballroom dances and the waltz (never mind the club scene!), as quoted in my editorial. We should not fool ourselves into thinking that couple dancing is merely a sport, just another form of exercise. Even the world openly admits it: couple dancing is "an expression of sexual relations." And if that is true, then does not God's own Word call us to reserve such expressions for a married couple in private? And should we not also in our wedding receptions do everything we can to avoid "even a hint of sexual immorality or of any kind of impurity?" (Eph 5:3).

Rev. P.H. Holtvlüwer

*Letters to the Editor should be written in a brotherly fashion in order to be considered for publication.
Submissions need to be less than one page in length.*