



# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
Volume 62, No. 1 • January 11, 2013

**WE STAND IN A  
LITURGICAL TRADITION WHICH  
HAS PROVEN ITS WORTH AND VALUE**



Rev. Klaas Stam is minister emeritus of the Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton, Ontario  
[cstam@sourcecable.net](mailto:cstam@sourcecable.net)

# Don't Take Your Drums to Town, Son

---

*The musicians must put their heart and soul in the music they present just as ministers put their heart and soul in the preaching*

---

Recently I had my driver's licence renewed and at that occasion I was invited to fill out an organ donor's card so that in the event of any unexpected demise my organs could possibly benefit those whose organs have failed. However, because I have a chronic disease, any donations from my side would be refused by the medical establishment. So I did not bother to fill out the form.

One thing leads to another. At that point, sensing a break in a hectic schedule, I had some cause to reflect on the word "organ." The word simply means an instrument. In this case it means a musical instrument which is often used in churches to accompany congregational singing. My observation is that church organs are used less with each passing year. There are some reasons for this non-usage.

First of all, organ music is not heard as often anymore as in the past because other instruments are being introduced and preferred. I think of instruments as the piano, the guitar, the flute, and the trumpet. I will offer some comments on that later. But now I want to address another element: the organ is sometimes not played *because there are no organists*. I see a growing lack of organists, and the result is that the instrument itself falls silent.

This is a sad development. It is especially sad because the organ in the church came at a very great *cost*. A good church organ is not cheap. Congregations used to pride themselves on having a full and functioning organ and many monetary sacrifices were made to buy and install the organ. The organ was often easily the most expensive item in the church building. A good organ may cost more than a suitable minister, believe it or not. More than once a special fund was needed to which people could donate

so that a suitable organ could be purchased. Often the fund did not aim for less than a veritable pipe organ with all the bells and whistles.

## **Visiting organists**

It now happens more than once that organists travel from one church building to another to play the organ there. If in the past we only had visiting ministers, we now have the phenomenon of the visiting organist. We used to ask: who's preaching? Now we also ask: who's playing?

There was a time when most churches had their own organist(s). The congregation became used to a certain way of playing the organ. Some of these organists acquired a good amount of recognition. In one congregation I served it was possible to discuss the liturgy with the organist and together cooperate in making all elements of the liturgy flow better. Some perceptive members of the congregation may even have noticed a degree of fluency between the cathedra and the console.

I have no problem with travelling and visiting organists. We must be willing to share. But if your own organist is regularly absent the purpose of unifying the congregation in praise is somewhat lost.

In 1933 Prof. Dr. K. Schilder referred to a well-known organist, Jan Zwart, as a "prophet on the organ bench." He also did the same in 1947 with respect to another organist, D.W.L. Milo. He did not mean to say that the music of Zwart or Milo had some kind of a sacred character, but he simply said that a capable organist moved by the preaching can elevate congregational singing to a higher level. Every organist should keep in mind that

he is not giving a concert but is accompanying the congregation to lead them to ever joyous praise. In this way the organist complements the work of the minister. The musicians must put their heart and soul in the music they present just as ministers put their heart and soul in the preaching. Sounds pretty good, eh?

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

*Clarion's* Issue 1 of Volume 62 marks the first issue of 2013. We begin with an editorial from Rev. Klaas Stam. In it he discusses music in the worship service, focusing on lack of organists, use of other instruments, and contemporary Christian music.

Speaking of church music, Dr. Theo Lodder has written an article commenting on the report from the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* that has been prepared for the upcoming general synod. There are suggested changes not only to the music portion of the *Book of Praise*, but also the marriage form and the Catechism.

We also begin a three-part series from Rev. Reuben Bredenhof, adapted from a speech given at a Women's League Day, entitled "The ABCs of a W.O.W." Woman of Wisdom, that is – a closer look at Proverbs 31.

Issue 1 contains regular columns Treasures New and Old and Education Matters. We also bring to the readers a Letter to the Editor, a book review, and two Press Releases.

*Laura Veenendaal*

- 2 EDITORIAL**  
**Don't Take Your Drums To Town, Son**
- 5 TREASURES, NEW & OLD**  
**Un-sin Me, Lord!**
- 6 The ABCs of a W.O.W. (1)**
- 9 Of Songs, Wives, and Catechism Students:**  
**The Book of Praise at General Synod 2013**
- 12 EDUCATION MATTERS**  
**The Green Machine – Organized Environmentalism in our Classrooms**
- 16 Canadian Reformed Home Registry**
- 17 Letter to the Editor**
- 17 BOOK REVIEW**
- 18 PRESS RELEASES**  
**Regional Synod West, Regional Synod Glanbrook**

## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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

## ADDRESS FOR COPY MANAGER

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

## ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

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

**Subscriptions** clarionadmin@premierpublishing.ca  
**Advertisements** clarionads@premierpublishing.ca  
**Website** www.premierpublishing.ca

## 2013 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

			Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada			\$49.00*	\$ 82.00*
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

## Cancellation Agreement

Unless a written subscription cancellation is received we assume you wish to continue to subscribe. You will be invoiced prior to the subscription renewal date.

## 2013 ADVERTISING RATES


Advertisements: \$19.00 per column inch  
Full Colour Display Advertisements: \$21.00 per column inch. We reserve the right to refuse ads.

## PUBLISHER

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

## Copyright © Premier Printing Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part may be reproduced in any manner without permission in writing from the publisher, except brief quotations used in connection with a review in a magazine or newspaper.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada   
Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Agreement No. 40063293; ISSN 0383-0438

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

## Other instruments

It happens that other instruments are being used in the worship services. In many churches the second instrument of choice or availability is the piano. I find that the piano on its own is rather limited. This is a personal opinion: pianos are a bit frivolous. Uh-oh, there goes Klaas off the deep end again. I do love piano music and in church services I appreciate it when organ and piano are used *together*. Other instruments, such as trumpet, flute, violin, and guitar, can also be used but their musical input is less than what the organ already has of itself. We don't really need these instruments as regular features.

The only instruments that might add something which the organ does not really have of itself are those of percussion. To my shame I confess that I love the sound and effect of tympanum, drum, and cymbal. These instruments are mentioned quite prominently in Psalm 150, and perhaps their use for today could be a matter of study. What needs to be studied particularly is whether instruments of (added) rhythm and beat really add to or detract from the congregational singing. When faced with the beat, some members may become too enthusiastic. . . . The church service must remain solemn, orderly, and edifying (1 Cor 14:40), with emphasis on clear preaching. This is the biblical rule for all liturgies, "Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way." Don't take your drums to town yet.

The organ has been called the "grandest musical instrument in size and scope" and has been in use in worship since the 1400s (Wikipedia). In our ecclesiastical background the organ has played a central role, and it is a tradition that we may cherish and preserve. Within this tradition, there is room for expansion. Let us not forget about organ donation. Let us also cultivate good organists who are able and willing to be minor prophets on the organ benches.

## Contemporary music

Before I end this editorial, I want to raise a few related points. I think that the church today for the sake of catholicity should sing the great hymns that have come to us through the ages. Guests who come to our church services may recognize some of the old hymns.

Maybe I should quit while I am ahead. I remember a story about a horse that was turning the last bend down the stretch at least four lengths ahead of the next horse. Suddenly the winning horse stopped. The other horses thundered past it to the finishing line. When the horse was asked why he suddenly stopped, he said, "My mother

always told me to quit while I am ahead." It is with trepidation that I progress.

Let me give you a few examples of what hymns I mean: Abide with me, The Lord's Prayer, Amazing Grace, It is Well with my Soul, Rock of Ages, O Sacred Head, The Old Rugged Cross, and When I Survey the Wondrous Cross. These are only a few examples; there are more, but this is enough for now. Perhaps you have a hymn that you would like to present.

These hymns should be tested and acknowledged by our churches and included in the *Book of Praise*. In this case the Standing Committee should be addressed with a clear mandate from the churches through synodical guidance. No freelancing.

---

### ***What needs to be studied particularly is whether instruments of (added) rhythm and beat really add to or detract from the congregational singing***

---

This does mean that I do not favour the immediate inclusion of hymns or stylish melodies that come to us from contemporary Christian music. Before a song can be used before, during, or after the worship service, it must have gained some standing. There is first of all the test of time. Then there is the test of propriety and functionality. After all, we do stand in a liturgical tradition which has proven its worth and value. The new should be compatible with the old while the old should incorporate the new.

I notice that in other settings (like VBS, summer camps, and school assemblies) contemporary music is inexorably creeping in. Is a gap developing between what is popular during the week and what is acceptable on Sunday? I think we should do our utmost to avoid this. If contemporary songs do survive and thrive, they will in due course find a place in our accepted liturgy.

Every generation anew makes its own decisions and choices, also with respect to music and liturgy. We cherish what we have and pass it on, including donated organs. We also pass on our own emphasis in the complete Anglo-Genevan *Book of Praise*.

But we do not have to decide for the coming generations what is fitting and proper. Let them fill out their own donor forms. Give them the good and hope for the best. Until then, son, don't take your drums to town.





Rev. John van Popta is minister of the Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington, Ontario  
[j.vanpopta@gmail.com](mailto:j.vanpopta@gmail.com)

# Un-Sin Me, Lord!

**“Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”**

(Psalm 51:7)

The account of David’s sin with Bathsheba is well known to readers of the Old Testament. David’s sin started with coveting, a sin against the tenth commandment. Then he sinned against the sixth, seventh, eighth, and even the ninth commandment (by getting Uriah to carry his own death sentence). We could add the fifth – David thinking he was accountable to no one. Imagine! Adultery, murder, stealing a wife, lying, all rooted in coveting and cover-up. But then the prophet Nathan exposed the whole sordid mess.

Confronted by the prophet, David confessed, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Then he wrote Psalm 51. “I was conceived in sin; in sinfulness my mother bore me. I’m sinful from my birthday. Against you, you only, have I sinned. You see my original sin, and my actual sins. I’m a disaster! You see my guilt and my pollution. And I deserve the penalty for sin. I’ve been overcome by the power of sin. My sin is ever before me – I’m in the presence of sin!”

And then verse 7: “Cleanse me! Purge me!” Actually, “Un-sin me!” That’s the force of this word, “Un-sin me with hyssop! My life is sin, but Lord, de-sin me.” We talk about de-fanging a snake or de-clawing a cat. David prays, “De-sin me.” How? With ritual cleansing of blood, and with hyssop.

In Leviticus 14 we can learn of purity rituals for lepers, and for persons who’d had contact with the dead. All have hyssop rituals. A hyssop branch would be dipped in the blood of a sacrificed animal, and the unclean person would be sprinkled with it. Each time the ceremony rituals were completed, the declaration was to be made, “And he will be clean” (Lev 14:7-9). De-sinned with hyssop, he will be clean.

David pleads with God in Psalm 51, “I’m unclean. Leprous. Dead, even. Walking dead, with the dead, and dead in sin. But un-sin me, Lord, and make the joyous judgment, ‘He shall be clean!’ Wash me!” The leper and the person unclean because of contact with the dead had to wash their clothes, too. But in a flash, David understands. He says, “Don’t wash my woollens. Don’t launder my linen. Don’t even bathe my body. But wash me!” Not white linen, not clean skin, but a purified life, that’s what David needed. “Un-sin me. Purify my life.” Purged with hyssop, then the judgment will be – for David knows God’s Word – “He shall be clean!”

Rejoicing will result. Joy and gladness will ring out. David compares the realization of his guilt to having crushed bones. Agony! But he wants those bones to rejoice and to dance. David also pleads in this

Psalm, “Blot out my sin” (v. 9). A king would have a chronicle of the deeds in his kingdom. David pleads with his heavenly King, “Erase them from your record book. Hide your face from my sins.”

How can this be for us today? Only in Jesus. The New Testament tells us that when you turn to him in faith, his life is yours. His deeds are yours. His obedience is yours. His love is yours. His devotion is yours. Just as we are in Adam, all of Adam’s sin is yours. So in Jesus Christ all of his “un-sin” is yours. His satisfaction – his payment of the penalty of sin; his righteousness – his freedom from the power of sin; his holiness – his freedom from the presence of sin: they are all yours.

“De-sin me, Lord, and I shall be clean. Run me through your laundry with the blood of Jesus as your soap, and I will be whiter than snow. Cleanse me, not with hyssop and blood and water, but with bread and wine, the body and blood of Jesus. Un-sin me, Lord, with the hyssop of Golgotha. Sprinkle on me the blood of the new covenant in Jesus. Launder me in your spiritual laundry. Wash me in the blood of the lamb. Say of me, ‘You shall be clean. As clean as Jesus!’ Un-sin me, Lord, and I shall be clean! Wash me, and I’ll be whiter than snow! Un-sin me, Lord!”





Rev. Reuben Bredenhof is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at London, Ontario  
[reuben.bredenhof@canrc.org](mailto:reuben.bredenhof@canrc.org)

# The ABCs of a W.O.W. (Part 1)

This article is a revised presentation from the 2012 Women's League Day at London, Ontario

## **Mission: impossible?**

Maybe you've had the experience: it's Mother's Day, or maybe it's your birthday, and your husband's leading family devotions after the meal. "Hmm. . . What passage to turn to on a day like this, a day all about Mom? Yep, I guess it's Proverbs 31 again!" And there it comes in verses 10-31, that long passage all about this super-hero of a woman from ancient Israel. Buying real estate, sewing clothes, providing alms to the poor, giving the car an oil change – what is there she *cannot* do?!

This lady intimidates people because of the sheer number of her daily tasks, and the intensity with which she pursues them. Clearly this is no ordinary woman. Who can ever compare with her? And so what started as a well-meant Bible reading has fallen kind of flat. It's turned into a self-esteem deflater, maybe a guilt-trip inducer! A few books suggest the general attitude toward this chapter. There's one, *My So-Called Life as a Proverbs 31 Wife*. Or a little more hopeful, but still kind of dark, *When Perfect Isn't Enough: How I Conquered My Fear of Proverbs 31*. And then again, there's: *The Proverbs 31 Lady and Other Impossible Dreams*.

So is that it: a mission impossible, best not to be attempted? Or can you escape by just saying it's all hopelessly out-of-date and doesn't reflect modern-day reality? Surely we can do more! Because it's part of that God-inspired Scripture that the Spirit has given for us to study and to apply, "That the man (and woman) of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." So off the top, we know not to dismiss Proverbs 31, but celebrate it! Not avoid it, but embrace it!

## **Some signposts along the way**

Because it's a long passage, we might want to start our journey without delay. But we'll be helped along by giving attention to a few signposts.

### **1) It's not a list of rules**

A danger in reading or trying to explain Proverbs 31 is that it just comes across as a lot of domestic rules and commandments. That by verse 31 or the end of this article you'd conclude: "So I guess I've got to do this more. And I have to get a whole lot better at that, and work on the other thing, too." And at one level, this is what all of us want! It's when people listen most attentively to sermons, when the preacher's finally getting on to the application, telling us how to live. Because we sort of like rules. We want the "take-home" to be a formula: three easy steps to share the gospel, and five ways to beat anxiety. But if that's all you hear, then you're getting (or the preacher's preaching!) the wrong message.

So what about rules? We need direction, of course. But to put it plainly, being a Christian isn't about us and what we do. It's about the wondrous works of God and his only Son, our Saviour! That's the theme of Scripture from its beginning to its end. So we know that's also true for Proverbs 31. This isn't just a woman who excels at three-step plans to everything. She has a secret, and it's found in her relationship with God.

I don't want to give my main point away too soon, but look at verse 30, "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman *who fears the LORD* is to be praised." There's the key: a life oriented not to self (and what we do), but oriented to God and his glory. Like Proverbs 1:7 already tells us, the beginning of wisdom comes through the fear of the LORD. That is, if you want a definite course for life and want to go forward with understanding – in whatever you do – then you first have to walk closely

with God. That makes it the one worthy aspiration: to be a “woman of wisdom.” Call it the W.O.W. factor! The very best life comes from fearing God, being in fellowship with the Father through his Son and Spirit, and living for his honour in every aspect of our lives. So not rules, but relationship.

## 2) It's an old passage

Selecting flax and wool; holding the distaff and spindle; your husband sitting at the town gate – parts of this portrait may be considered old-fashioned, if not downright foreign. For it's about an ancient eastern rural community. A woman in a twenty-first century North American urban culture can be involved with a very dissimilar set of duties: taking courses at college, chauffeuring around town in the minivan, volunteering at the school, helping the kids with their phonics, doing payroll for the business, and more. Yes, a Christian woman might be busy in a multitude of different ways than what's described in Proverbs 31.

But here's what remains: this is a godly woman, adorning her life with good works. Even if you're not married, or you don't have children, or your kids are long out of the house, or even if your husband has volunteered to cook dinner every night. . . even then, the most important question is this: whether we put our whole being into working for the LORD. If you fear God, you'll be active *wherever* God has put you! So it's an old passage, but it lives.

## 3) So where are the men?

I think everyone knows those verses in Proverbs about difficult women, like 21:9, “Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.” And so sometimes people ask, “Where are the men? Why does this unwelcome spotlight in Proverbs 31 get thrust upon the ladies, while the men are let off easy?”

So far I haven't found a verse about climbing on the roof to avoid a cranky husband. But just think of everything Proverbs says about the foolish man: a man who is impulsive, proud, lazy and greedy and easily angered, and so on. Such verses hold up a mirror to any man. How do we measure up to God's standard, in our integrity, our labours, and our reverence for the LORD? No, we ought to realize that this chapter is just one part of a long book that addresses *all* of God's people: men, women, and children; rulers and servants; the wealthy and the poor.

And the interesting thing is how this passage gets introduced in verse 1, “The sayings of King Lemuel – an oracle his *mother* taught him.” The first nine verses can be called “The Wise King.” And then the rest might be called “The Excellent Wife.” Lemuel's mom wanted to teach her son these important lessons, and then he shared them with

us. It's been said that Proverbs 31 has a double audience then: men, and women, about “what wives women should make, and what wives the men should take.” Yet even if that's not your exact life situation, many others can listen in too, and hear words of wisdom.

## 4) Letting it sink in

You'd all agree Proverbs is wonderful: chock-full of wisdom. There's one “problem,” however: there's just too much in here! It's thirty-one chapters filled to the brim with holy insight, which can make it hard to read in a meaningful way. You sit down to read a piece and you love everything you hear – but two minutes later you can't remember any of it. So someone once suggested that after you read one of these verses, *pause*. Let it linger a few seconds before going on to the next verse. Let it sink in – so you can ponder the wisdom of it, and hopefully remember it. That's good, because Proverbs isn't just a collection of vanilla sayings like you find in fortune cookies or self-help books. It's about that wisdom which needs to be absorbed into every minute of our day.

## 5) Learn your ABCs!

Our passage is an elegant poem, twenty-two verses long. It's no coincidence that it's twenty-two verses, for that's how many letters are in the Hebrew alphabet. Lemuel's mother wrote this passage as an acrostic, which means each verse begins with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The first verse starts with an *aleph*, the first Hebrew letter; the next verse with a *bet*, the second Hebrew letter, and so on. You might be familiar with this structure from Psalm 119 or the book of Lamentations.

Why an acrostic, though? It might've been an aid to memory. Back then, God's people didn't have personal copies of the Scriptures, so putting things into acrostics was a way for this wisdom to be learned and to be remembered. We do the same thing today. Think of how we learn the order of operations in math: with the acrostic BEDMAS (standing for brackets, exponents, division/multiplication, addition/subtraction). Or like how we remember the lineup of the planets: “My Very Excellent Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas” (standing for Mercury, Venus, Earth, and so on). So in the Proverbs 31 acrostic, “A” stands for this quality, “B” for that characteristic, “C” for that activity, etc. We might call our passage “the ABCs” of being a godly woman. Because these are the fundamentals, the things that every woman of God should know. To learn, and to remember: the ABCs of a W.O.W!

## The portrait of a woman of wisdom

You might not have been to Paris, but you've probably all seen the Mona Lisa, Leonardo's portrait of a lady. You

can put your nose right up close and notice lots of details about her person: the crossed arms, the elegant clothing, the beguiling eyes, and so on. But you can also step back and get an overall impression. That's what the first verse of our passage gives, the overall view: "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies" (v. 10).

We can highlight that word "noble." This Hebrew term gets used about 200 times in the Bible, and in almost every instance to describe an army of warriors; it refers to things like their courage and strength. Which makes very striking the four times that this same word gets applied to a woman! Once in Ruth 3:11, when Boaz speaks of that "noble" young woman from Moab, working in his fields. It's also used in Proverbs 12 (v. 4), and then twice in this chapter (see also v. 29). This makes us think what such a woman has in common with an Israelite warrior. From the rest of the poem, I would suggest these qualities: a woman of wisdom is fully in command of her spirit, she's completely devoted to her calling, and she's ready to put her hand to the task.

---

***To live wisely is to arrange everything  
in our lives not around ourselves but  
around God and his precepts***

---

That makes her highly valued: "more than rubies!" Elsewhere in Proverbs we read how God's wisdom is like a treasure: something to be desired (3:13-15), to be searched for (2:4), even to be worn proudly (3:3). Now a woman of wisdom gets described in the same terms – as a treasure – yet far *better* than anything material. Like it says in 19:14, "Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD." For those in her life, this woman is a treasure, a true gift from God.

***"The hard-to-get woman"***

All the same, notice the text begins with that dangerous question: "A wife of noble character *who can find?*" You might say that this kind of woman is "hard to get!" Not because a virtuous wife is so rare, but because a truly noble wife isn't always desired, nor always aspired to. Already in Lemuel's time, the standards of womanhood were too often reduced to matters of physical appearance, instead of the character of one's spirit. Hear what the LORD says in Isaiah 3:16 – and keep in mind, these are the ladies of the church: "The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes,

tripping along with mincing steps, with ornaments jingling on their ankles."

Compare that to the portrait of a desirable woman in our time. We don't have to look far for the role models. There's often a reminder waiting for you at the check-out stand in the grocery store, glossy magazines featuring the "finest" of the female gender. The ideal woman is attractive. She is fashionable. She is fulfilled, but not necessarily by the mundane things of marriage or motherhood or service. No, she's fulfilled by her stellar education and exciting career, and her world travels and her latest possessions, and her "love life" (whatever that is). Such a woman knows how to get what she wants! For such a woman, self-image is everything. And this is how the Bible always characterizes worldly wisdom (true of women *and* men): it's the living for self.

All of which makes it hard, living in this society, to embrace God's design for womanhood as we find in Proverbs 31. For this particular portrait is not high culture – it's counter-culture. Today, the biblical image of a godly woman is soundly mocked. There are many voices deriding biblical womanhood, discarding it as repressive and old-fashioned and beneath any self-respecting twenty-first century woman. And maybe we don't buy the magazines or watch the TV shows, but isn't that desire still there for us to be "conformed to the pattern of this world?" Part of us still wants to win our society's approval, or at the very least to escape its ridicule. Call it the fear of man, instead of the fear of God.

So there's a good reason the Spirit says in verse 30, "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting. . . ." We have to resist the worldly ideas of beauty and worth, because these things can never honour God in themselves. Not that the LORD despises the loveliness of a woman – he made her how she is, after all. But he says that appearance and charm and success and wealth and position will only fade, while holiness will endure. To live wisely then, is to arrange everything in our lives not around ourselves but around God and his precepts. Whether single or married or widowed, that's the high calling for a woman of wisdom. She's not just another pretty face, she's a disciple of Christ. It reminds us how the Spirit pictures a Christian woman in 1 Timothy 2:9-10, "Women should dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, *but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.*"







Dr. Theo Lodder is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Cloverdale, British Columbia  
[thlodder@telus.net](mailto:thlodder@telus.net)

# Of Songs, Wives, and Catechism Students: The *Book of Praise* at General Synod 2013

Of songs? Yes, of course. But the *Book of Praise* also has to do with wives and catechism students. The upcoming general synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches will be asked to give final approval to the revised edition of the *Book of Praise* that the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) and the churches have been working on for the past several years.

The SCBP has presented a good report, which warrants the support of the churches. This article offers some comments on this report for the consideration of the churches as they review it, also for the sake of wives and catechism students.

## **Changes to the text of Hymn 18 (1.4.3)**

The report indicates that “the suggestion was made that a way be found to bring the word ‘covenant’ into the last line of st. 1. The Committee agreed.”

No grounds are provided for this alteration, and the SCBP does not demonstrate that the alteration from “has kept the oath he swore to Abraham” to “has kept the covenant he made with Abraham” constitutes an improvement.

Although the proposed alteration faithfully reflects the biblical text, so does the present version. A hymn doesn’t have to have the word “covenant” in it to be covenantal. One could argue, furthermore, that God’s oath-keeping is a particular manifestation of his covenant faithfulness that the hymn fittingly highlights, in line with the biblical text in Luke 1:73. If the biblical text highlights God’s covenant faithfulness as oath-keeping, so should the hymn.

## **Breath marks (1.5.6)**

The SCBP has made a good choice in removing the breath marks from the musical notation of the *Book of Praise*. After all, they have been “interpreted in different ways,” leading to confusion for musicians and congregations. Also, “modern North American hymnals do not have breath marks.” Churches and musicians would be well-served with an explanation in the preface of the *Book of Praise*, explaining in lay-person’s language why they have been removed.

## **Hymn 31A and/or 31B (1.5.9)**

In Hymn 31A, the churches have been offered a lively, energetic, rhythmic tune for the triumphant resurrection hymn, “Christ Has Risen! Hallelujah!”

The SCBP recommends that this melody be retained, and that the old one (31B) be removed. Some churches have indicated that they would like to retain the old one, at least as an alternate to the new one.

The old melody is still being used for Hymn 47, “He Has Come, the Holy Spirit!” If Hymn 31B is not retained as an alternate, which it could be, a footnote could at least be added to Hymn 31, indicating that this hymn can be sung to the melody of Hymn 47.

## **Hymn 48 (1.5.9)**

The SCBP is convinced that the new “Thornbury” melody for “Come, Praise the Holy Spirit!” should be retained on account of its “joyful character which fits the content of this Pentecost hymn well.” The old Dutch melody (Hymn 37 in the 1984 edition) should be dropped, it is argued, since “though beautiful in itself, it was typically a Lent melody, fitting for the time leading up to

Declined the call to Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church of Fergus, Ontario:

**Rev. P. Feenstra**

of Grand Valley, Ontario

## CHURCH NEWS

Good Friday when the church remembers the suffering and death of our Lord.”

The SCBP has noted, furthermore, that the tune of Hymn 50, “The Spirit Came, as Promised,” can serve as an alternate melody, and that there are also churches that would like to retain the old melody. The tune of Hymn 29, “All Glory, Laud, and Honour,” can also serve as an alternate melody for this hymn.

What harm could be done in retaining the 1984 edition as an alternate melody for Hymn 48, with a footnote that the tunes of Hymns 29 and 50 may also be used as alternate melodies, especially since the “Thornbury” has not caught on in many churches? Variety is a good thing.

While the old Dutch melody has typically been used for Lenten hymns, this doesn’t mean that it cannot be sung to a Pentecost hymn at a lively tempo. It is understandable that people miss this melody. Most churches were taken by surprise when it was completely dropped from the 2010 version, without any prior warning or opportunity for input. The least that might have been expected by the churches was that it be retained as an alternate melody for this hymn.

### **Harmonizations (1.8)**

For a long time already, the SCBP has seriously considered including harmonizations in the *Book of Praise*. The conclusion was again reached, however, that the practical obstacles are too daunting to make this happen.

The harmonizations provided in the *Augment* (2007) were greatly appreciated by many musicians and singers, and were greatly missed when they were removed in the 2010 edition. Surely the SCBP did not have the intention of pulling a “bait and switch.” Yet, the harmonizations are missed.

Furthermore, the electronic and technological possibilities available in our day and age should make the provision of harmonizations less of a problem, especially as time goes on. The SCBP should still be encouraged to offer such an edition with harmonizations, especially of the hymns.

There is an additional reason why a standardized set of harmonizations would be beneficial. The musically literate will have noticed the liberties that certain musicians have taken since 2010, making up their own harmonizations for the new hymns, and improvising

on the fly. Improvised harmonizations tend to be inferior, unless the musician is properly trained, and do not aid the congregations in singing the hymns with confidence.

This leads to a heartfelt appeal to the SCBP: Please give back the harmonizations that were offered in the 2007 *Augment*, and strive to provide quality harmonizations for the other hymns as well.

### **The “Difficult” Genevan Tunes (1.9)**

There is a growing number of churches who express the desire that alternate melodies be offered for the more difficult Genevan melodies, so that those psalms that are sung less frequently or never, on account of the melody, may be sung more frequently.

Now, the desire to maintain a complete Anglo-Genewan Psalter is a worthy liturgical heritage. The Canadian Reformed Churches would do well, also for the sake of other churches in the English-speaking world who use it, to maintain the complete collection of the Genevan tunes for the 150 Psalms.

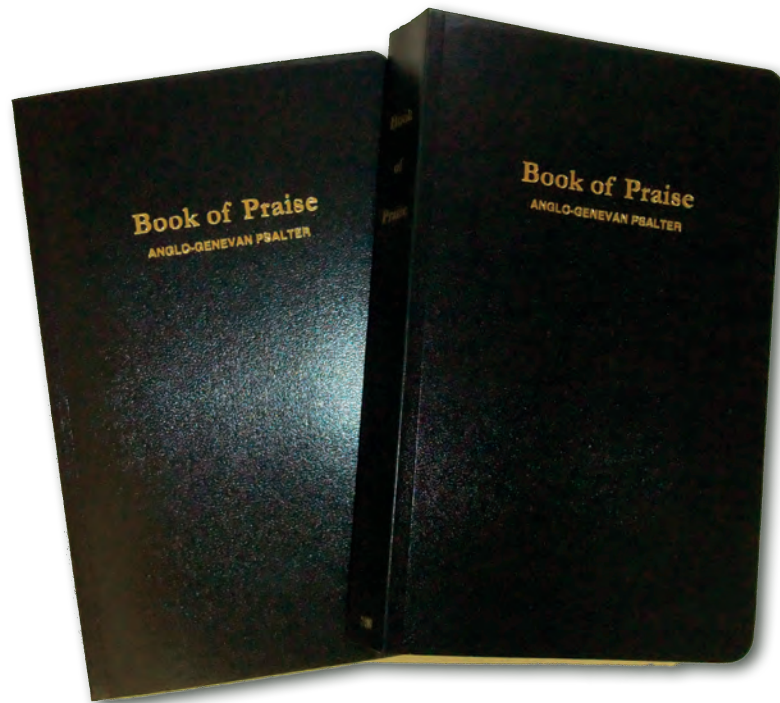
But this does not rule out the addition of alternate melodies for the Psalms. In fact, it could be argued that such a move would reflect the catholic liturgical character of the *Book of Praise*.

While it would not be prudent to hold off the approval of the *Book of Praise* as it has been presented, the time is ripe for the churches to give the SCBP the mandate to begin seeking alternate melodies and rhymings for the more difficult Genevan tunes. There is no shortage of quality alternatives.

### **Form of Subscription (9.1)**

The exact wording of the forms of subscription, until recently, has never been prescribed or codified. The only stipulation has been that they are in accordance with the church order.

If the churches have agreed to a prescribed set of forms for subscription, which some would argue is now the case, on the basis of recent synod decisions, this is not progress; especially not in a federation of churches that prides itself on being anti-hierarchical and anti-synodocratic. At the very most, a footnote should indicate that the published forms of subscription are those in common use in the churches.



### Who “maintains” his wife? (9.3)

So where do wives fit in? Well, check out the Form for Marriage in the *Book of Praise*. A change to that form is quite necessary. A Christian husband “maintains” his vehicle, not his wife. Rather, he supports, provides for, and cares for his wife. The vow of the Christian bridegroom concerning his bride ought to reflect this biblical mandate.

### Poor catechism students! (9.4.2)


Most experienced catechism teachers, and students for that matter, will likely balk at the proposed amendment to Lord’s Day 45. While our present edition of the catechism is superior to the more antiquated redactions that are still being used in other churches, the wording of certain sections of the catechism certainly needs reworking. Even the brightest catechism students have trouble memorizing such Lord’s Days (e.g. LD 9, Q/A 26, first paragraph).

From the perspective of both catechism teachers and students, the amendment proposed for Q/A 115 does

not constitute an improvement. Even grammatically, it is problematic. It goes like this: “Second, so that we may constantly apply ourselves and pray to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit to be renewed more and more after God’s image, until after this life we reach the goal of perfection.” Even if the addition of a comma may make it grammatically correct, this change would only confuse catechism students more.

The SCBP has not offered sufficient grounds for changing the wording, and has not demonstrated how it is a significant improvement. The present wording is easy to understand and memorize. The proposed revision is pedantic and confusing. The present wording of this question and answer should be retained. Please leave well enough alone.

### Conclusion

The comments here offered are not intended to take away from the excellent work of the SCBP, but only to suggest some slight improvements to a job well done! 

## CORRECTION

*The article entitled “Rev. Schouten’s Twenty-Five Years of Ministry” (published in the previous issue, Vol 61, No 25) was supposed to be an article written by Harold Ludwig of the Aldergrove congregation. Unfortunately, the incorrect document was submitted. The article that was printed was actually a copy of the speech made by Mr. Casey Vanvliet for the anniversary celebration.*

Herman Vanbarneveld  
is a science teacher at  
Guido de Brès High  
Christian High School

# The Green Machine – Organized Environmentalism in our Classrooms

“Mom! I had a little accident.”

“Camila, Camila, what did you spill *now*?” says Mom as she arrives armed with a cloth. “Oh, no. Not chocolate milk again! Camila. When are you going to learn not to spill!”

People who are concerned about the environment can identify with this kind of frustration. They are upset when oil spills continue to harm coastal waterways, when tons of plastic garbage continues to wash up on shore, when industries avoid environmental regulations and get away with it, when forested hillsides are clear cut, or when they learn that seventy percent of important fish stocks are over-harvested at sea. Understandably, they too are saying, “When are people going to learn?”

It is quite understandable, then, that grassroots environmental organizations are springing up to defend the remnants of our natural heritage and to promote sustainable use of resources. Personally, I am an active member of the Hamilton Naturalists’ Club in Hamilton, Ontario. Our ninety-two-year-old organization in the first place promotes the enjoyment of the many natural areas that Hamilton has to offer. Additionally, our aim is to protect ecologically sensitive areas and provide input about big building projects to municipal authorities.

In contrast, other environmental advocacy groups have grown into large-scale organizations that will, at times, assume unscientific positions, use questionable methods, and base their actions on principles that are at odds with biblical principles. Founded in 1971, Amsterdam-based Greenpeace is one of the largest of them with almost three million members and offices in forty countries. Other large organizations are the David Suzuki Foundation, the Green Cross, the Sierra Club, and Friends of the Earth International. Besides these, there are government organizations like Environment Canada and the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Many of these organizations are interconnected, associated with the United Nations Environment Programme. The aim of this United Nations branch is, as it claims in the 2010/2011 Formative Evaluation document, to help “. . . States (governments) cooperate to achieve agreed environmental priorities, and support efforts to develop, implement and enforce new international environmental laws and standards.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, there is a large-scale environmental movement, to no small extent orchestrated by both the UN and the Earth Charter Initiative, to drive political agendas around the world. Ideally, both organizations advocate the formation of a global government that can make laws and rulings and have the power to enforce them on a global scale. All these connected organizations form the Green Machine.

The fact that this Green Machine is taking on a religious flavour is no secret. Check out the Earth Charter Initiative online<sup>2</sup> and you will find a new morality summarized in sixteen commandments to be enforced throughout the world. These new commandments have been placed in what’s coined the Ark of Hope at the UN Headquarters in New York City.<sup>3</sup> The Ark of Hope has all the dimensions of Israel’s Ark of the Covenant, complete with poles, but it is covered with five panels representing mostly pagan and mystical elements.

After having introduced the Green Machine, a number of questions arise about these groups in relation to educational matters. First, are any of these “green” organizations affecting our curriculum? If so, why and how should they affect our curriculum? What kind of approach should Christian teachers take in regards to the environmental issues? How can they successfully be incorporated in a curriculum that’s based on the Reformed confessions? We will deal with these questions in the rest of this article.

Realistically, what students learn at school is influenced by the following four factors: the province's Ministry of Education curriculum expectations, the implementation of these expectations in textbooks, the school vision, and the views of the teachers. So in what way do these factors interplay to promote the aims of the Green Machine?

## Curriculum

Let's begin by looking at a policy framework named "*Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow*" that was adopted by the Ontario Ministry of Education. The introduction to the framework states:

The policy framework seeks to move beyond a focus on symptoms – air and water pollution, for example – to encompass the underlying causes of environmental stresses, which are rooted in personal and social values and in organizational structures. It seeks to promote changes in personal behaviour and organizational practices that will allow us to minimize our ecological footprint, while also fostering greater community engagement in meeting that goal.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, the Ministry of Education in Ontario wants to change the values and behaviour of our young people in regards to the environment. It tries to do this by injecting environmental issues like climate change, biodiversity, and recycling into every single subject area. Literally. So, for instance, in dance classes students pretend to wave their bodies like trees in the wind. In language arts, students read stories about a boy who tries to save a small woodlot from being developed. In geography, the issue of responsible use of natural resources ought to be taught. Chemistry is to alert students to the harmful effects of countless synthetic chemicals. One of the three overall goals mentioned in the Grade 9/10 Science curriculum document is that students have to learn how to relate science to technology, society, and the environment. And students are expected to encourage changes in the home as well. According to the policy framework, schools ought to "create opportunities for students to address environmental issues in their homes, in their local communities, or at the global level."

So, is the Ontario ministry influenced by the Green Machine? Absolutely. It even acknowledges that fact in the introduction of that framework. "*Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow*" was written in response to the fact that the United Nations declared the years 2005–2014 the

"United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development." The principles in this document are in line with the Earth Charter. Many governments throughout the world are implementing similar programs in their jurisdictions. In other words, the UN and its Earth Charter, the document resting in the Ark of Hope, influences what is taught in our classrooms.

Textbooks have to follow government curriculum in order to receive funding from the government, so it is no surprise that "*Investigating Science 9*" by Pearson follows the pattern. I'll give you some examples. In a unit on ecology, there are three chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the actual concepts related to ecology. In the second chapter we look at the impact of human activities on ecosystems, none of them positive. Chapter 3 is entitled, "Governments, groups, and individuals work together to promote sustainable ecosystems." (A bit of a surprise that the United Nations is not included in that title. Then again, the UN is probably included under "Governments"). In other words, only a third of the unit is actually spent on teaching Science. The rest involves sociology and solving adult problems.

In the Grade 10 Science curriculum, the Ontario Ministry of Education deemed it fit to squeeze in a whole unit on Climate Change. The Grade 10 Pearson textbook series follows a similar division as the Grade 9 textbook mentioned before. One-third is actual Science and two-thirds consists of suggested proof that humans are responsible for climate change and, here is the kicker, that local, national, and international governments exist to solve that problem. As examples of cooperation between countries, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol are referred to. For good measure there is a "Great Canadians in Science" page featuring Dr. David Suzuki, a cofounder of the David Suzuki Foundation and an environmentalist who at one time urged McGill University students to do whatever it takes to jail Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper for committing "intergenerational" climate crimes.

From both these examples you can see that these textbooks are taking it one step further than the Ontario Ministry of Education. Environmental activism is being taught in classrooms across Ontario. I don't have data about other Canadian jurisdictions, but I would imagine that environmental issues play a large role in those schools as well.

## **Implementation**

So how should a Christian teacher deal with these topics? Are there some dangers inherent in promoting the agenda of the Green Machine in a Christian school? In the first place it must be made clear that the notion of sustainable development, a pillar of the green movement, is not a new concept but is one that is perfectly in line with biblical teachings. The Sabbath year taught the people that the land they were allotted was not their own but belonged to God. All Israelites who had land were actually tenants, God being the Landlord. One year out of seven, landowners had to share their land with others, especially the poor, who could gather whatever would grow without cultivation. The land had to lie fallow. This gave the land, under God's blessing, a chance to rejuvenate and bear enough fruit and crops for the next six years. As landowners left the land untouched they thereby showed their dependence on God. Thus, instead of using their resources in a reckless and greedy manner without regard for others, they had to use their allotment in a responsible way, always keeping the well-being of others in mind.

---

### ***What kind of approach should Christian teachers take in regards to the environmental issues?***

---

These principles still apply today. Anyone who owns land today is God's tenant. God lets us use his creation. He cares for it, renewing the forests with new growth and replenishing the fish stocks year after year. Self-evidently, he wants us to care for it as he commanded Adam and Eve to take care of the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:15) and rule over the fish, birds, and living creatures (Gen 1:28). By utilizing resources faster than God renews the earth from year to year, we are not keeping the well-being of future generations in mind. Just as we take care of our bodies in order to remain in good health, avoiding substances that are poisonous, so we should take care of the earth and not poison it through greed and recklessness.

This means we can applaud the main aim of the green movement: to keep the earth livable for future generations. And there is no justification for the claim, which I've heard more than once, that we shouldn't concern ourselves too much with environmental issues on the basis of the fact that this earth will pass away and

God is going to make a new heaven and earth. After all, the exact same principle would then have to apply to our bodies: "Let's eat whatever we feel like, even if it's bad for our bodies, since God is going to give us new bodies anyways." No Christian would support that claim.

However, other aspects of the green movement are not supported by biblical teachings. As a matter of fact, the motivation, the methods, and the perspective with which we approach environmental issues are completely different.

First, let's look at the difference in motivation. Christian motivation for protecting the earth's environments is found in our cultural mandate as mentioned above. However, many advocates of the green movement find the reason for protecting the earth in creation itself. They are making an idol out of creation, rather than seeing man as the crown of God's creation. In line with evolutionary thinking, man is just one of many organisms; who are we to take the rights of other organisms away? In Spain they have gone so far as to assign human rights to apes. Last February, at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Lori Marino was one of the scientists presenting the Declaration of Rights for Cetaceans: Whales and Dolphins, which she says is "based on the principle of equal treatment of all persons and calls for a cetacean's right to life, to movement, to the protection of their natural environment and not to be subject to the disruption of their cultures."<sup>5</sup> They plan to take their declaration to the UN to give it more teeth so it can be implemented around the world. They may not succeed right away, but I have a funny feeling that in a few years it's going to end up in a textbook as an issue for students to debate.

Another objection to the Green Movement is their methods. The methods Christians use to protect the environment must be done within the context of the commandments. We must speak the truth and obey the government. However, environmental organizations are known for their regular use of poorly researched data. For instance, Greenpeace at one point in time had come up with the idea of banning Chlorine, one of the elements of the Periodic Table and essential for bodily growth. Some green activists, after they have become convinced of their position, will find whatever data they can to prove their point. And the sad thing is that scientists, who are supposed to be unbiased, are used as tools to further their cause. What may cause these scientists to abandon their rigorous approach? Some want to ensure funding for their projects. If they

tell a government funding source, “We studied shoreline erosion along the Atlantic coast and it doesn’t seem to affect the Puffin colonies there,” the funding may dry up. But if they say that shoreline erosion harms the growth rate of Puffin chicks and we need to study this further, they are more likely to get funding. So there is always a temptation on the part of scientists to find a problem. The upshot? Teachers should be skeptical of claims made by the environmental movement unless they are based on solid facts and data. Do some background reading. Don’t go by what newspapers say. Most newspapers have gone in cahoots with each other and decisions about environmental issues like global warming are made at the executive level and all reporters are expected to toe the line. As a journalist, questioning man-made global warming can get you fired.

---

***At both elementary and secondary schools we can do many practical, hands-on activities to teach students good environmental stewardship***

---

Talking about global warming, what are teachers to think of this issue? It can be hard to make up your mind as a teacher. Is it true? Is the burning of fossil fuels responsible for higher temperatures around the globe? Is global warming anthropogenic? The good news is, you don’t have to answer that yourself. Have the *students* look at the facts and have *them* decide. At Guido de Brès Christian High School, grade 10 students studied the unit on Climate Change by studying the facts (using the Internet, rather than newspapers!), taking a position, and debating the issue with students who had come to a different conclusion. We also watched both “The Inconvenient Truth” by Al Gore and “The Global Warming Swindle” by UK’s Channel 4 so students were exposed to both sides of the debate. This would be suitable at a high school level.

Naturally, at the lower elementary school levels it doesn’t make sense to have students analyze adult problems, so just stay away from controversial environmental issues. And if you as a teacher are not convinced about an issue, just leave it and move on to more factual concepts. However, at both elementary and secondary schools we can do many practical, hands-on activities to teach students good environmental stewardship. Organize park

cleanups, initiate recycling and composting programs, do investigations to assess environmental degradation, start a vegetable garden, or plant trees and you’ll be following both Ministry of Education recommendations and teach students to fulfill their cultural mandate at the same time.

### **Perspective**

There is one more aspect that sets us as Christians apart from the Green Machine: the perspective with which we approach environmental problems. At the present time the natural world is subjected to too much degradation, pollution, abuse, and greed. People can respond in three different ways: 1. ignore the problem and let the next generation deal with it; 2. desperately try to solve these problems ourselves, no matter what it takes; 3. address problems as best as we have the opportunity to, while at the same time confessing that God is in control and will renew this earth so he can again see his glory in it. What wonderful, glorious perspective. We act with real hope. This doesn’t make us passive at all. It makes us dedicated to honouring and serving the God who created this world and who will renew it again for his church.

---

<sup>1</sup> “United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – Evaluation Office.” *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – Evaluation Office*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.unep.org>>

<sup>2</sup> ECI Sec. “Sustainable Development – Earth Charter Initiative.” *Sustainable Development – Earth Charter Initiative*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/>>.

<sup>3</sup> “Welcome.” *Welcome*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.arkofhope.org/>>

<sup>4</sup> “Acting Today, Shaping Tomorrow.” *Ministry of Education / Ministère de l’Éducation*. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/enviroed/action.html>>.

<sup>5</sup> Carlson, Kathryn Blaze. “Dolphins deserve rights, scientists told | News | National Post.” *National Post | Canadian News, Financial News and Opinion*. N.p., 22 Feb. 2012. Web. 12 Mar. 2012. <<http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/02/21/dolphins-deserve-rights-scientists-told/>>.

*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 at [akingma@echs.ca](mailto:akingma@echs.ca).*



# Canadian Reformed Home Registry

The Canadian Reformed Home Registry (CRHR) was started about nineteen years ago as a resource for consistories and deacons across Canada. The Canadian Reformed Church at Elora has been taking care of the CRHR for the last number of years.

This article is meant to briefly inform the general church membership of the CRHR and its purpose, as well also possibly encourage some to consider adding their home to the registry.

The resource is used by consistories when dealing with situations where there are difficulties in a home with youth (or possibly other reasons) and they may feel it advisable that the youth be out of the home for a period of time and given an alternative place to stay.

Some example situations given where the CRHR may be considered would be:


- A young person, sixteen years of age, out of school and without a job, lives in a dysfunctional family where the parents have lost control over the other children who show no interest in church. The sixteen year old realizes the kind of life of the brothers and sisters is not right but has a difficult time finding friends and acceptance among the young people of the church. In addition, the youth is under constant pressure from the siblings and wants out of the situation. Parents agree that it would be good to move the youth out of this environment to a different location to attend school or to find work. Parents are unable to support, but the deacons would help to find a home and provide support for a time.
- A youth, youngest of four, has some reactions to a marriage break up of parents. Difficulties arise when the youth acts out physically and verbally at home and mother is unable to control the youth. No relatives live anywhere near; the consistory with the deacons and mother agree that moving to a farm setting and living in a structured family not too far away from the family home for a few months would benefit the youth. The consistory with the deacons of the youth's church will make arrangements and provide financial help and office bearers in the new location assume supervision.

- A youth has experienced physical or emotional abuse in the family setting. The youth finds it hard to live in the same home with the parent(s) that are abusing and is seeking attention. The youth contacts his/her consistory and a home is set up in a different town while the issue is being dealt with.
- An eighteen-year-old youth who has some contact with the law has expressed a willingness and desire to change. Old friends, however, put pressure on him and he is unable to find meaningful friendships inside his church as he has a reputation as a trouble maker. A new start elsewhere is determined to be the best idea by both parents/consistory and the youth agrees.

There are many other examples one could give but these represent hypothetical cases. In situations where a request is made to the CRHR by a consistory seeking a home, the Registry Committee meets to decide appropriateness and, where suitable, recommend a home.

It is important to understand that the CRHR will only respond to requests for services from a local consistory. Typically a request for service would proceed in the following manner: Consistories would identify a need in their congregation; they would contact the CRHR Committee; the Committee would help to decide an appropriate match or home; the CRHR Coordinator would relay the information back to the local appellant consistory and they would come to a decision whether or not to proceed with the placement. In this manner, the decision remains with the local consistory and the Registry only serves to assist as required.

In order for the CRHR to be a service for the federation, there is still a need for suitable homes throughout the country. If you feel that you may be able to contribute to this work of mercy, please contact your consistory for the appropriate forms.

*For The Canadian Reformed Home Registry*  
*Andy Nijenhuis - Coordinator*  
*a\_nijenhuis55@hotmail.com*  
519-846-9556 



# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

---

## **Re: Being Renewed in God's Image: The Translation of Lord's Day 44**

Remarkable! Thank you, Dr. VanVliet, for your brief history of Canadian Reformed translation attempts of L.D. 44. I suppose the readers of the VanVliet article may take comfort in the care that our translators have with respect to the doctrinal integrity of our Heidelberg Catechism. That is only one side of the coin, however.

His article begs the question: Is integrity to the original German text (from 1563!) more important than transparency and clarity of meaning in 2013? During my many years of catechism instruction I have often observed that the language of some of the questions and answers in our edition of the Heidelberg Catechism is

challenging, convoluted, and confusing for our young people; some of the topical emphases are antiquated. Have our synods and translators forgotten that the catechism is a catechism; it's not Scripture. Give our young people a break and provide them with a catechism that is faithful to Scripture, speaks to them in current English idiom, and also in this way shows its relevance to our young people. Is that possible within the Canadian Reformed confessional culture?



*Pieter Torenvliet,  
Abbotsford*

---

*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.*

## BOOK REVIEW

---

### **Earth to Glory: The Biblical Doctrine of the Human Body, Jonathan Rainbow, published by the author, 2003 (republished 2010).**

**Additional Information: Softcover, 140 pages, \$10.00**

As far as I know, this book is one of a kind: a biblical theology of our bodies. However, don't let the word "theology" scare you away – this is theology written in a readable way. The author capably leads us through all sorts of different issues related to our physical existence on this earth.

The author is not well-known. Jonathan Rainbow received a Master of Divinity degree from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. After serving for

some years as a pastor, he became a teacher at a Christian high school in California's Central Valley. He died of cancer in 2010 and, in a moving afterword, his daughter Hannah tells us of how the theology in this book was lived out in her father's life and death. Very powerful!

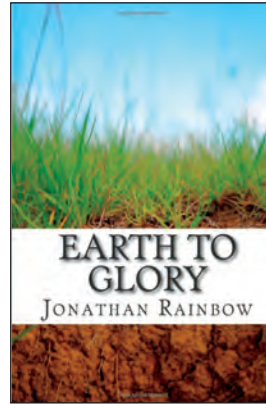
Rainbow's foremost concern in this little book is to address two different errors in thinking about the human body. One is materialism, the idea that our human bodies are all that we are and nothing more. The other is Platonism, the idea that our bodies are simply prisons for the real us, our souls. He notes that Christians have tended to the latter error. The author gives biblical teaching for processing death as a Christian. He writes about sickness, aging, the body we will have in the resurrection (and Christ's resurrected body), the appetites, and what it means to glorify God in our bodies. He addresses issues

*Wes Bredenhof*

*Dr. Wes Bredenhof is  
pastor of the Providence  
Canadian Reformed Church,  
Hamilton, Ontario  
[wbredenhof@bell.net](mailto:wbredenhof@bell.net)*


such as gluttony, cremation, retirement, and the use of illegal drugs. What he writes is both practical and biblical.

A friend had told me a number of times about this book. He knew the author personally and so recommended it – I’m glad that I finally read it. There was only one place in the book where I put some question marks and that was in chapter 3 dealing with sickness. Rainbow’s view of the covenant of works leads him to maintain a consistent direct linkage between sin and sickness in the Old Testament. So he writes, “. . .if you were a sick Israelite, you were supposed to say, ‘I’ve sinned and God is punishing me as he warned in the law’” (28-29). What about Job? Our author says that Job was an exception. Later in the chapter he writes, “Many of the Jews that Jesus healed were in fact sick of their sins” (37). What about the man born blind in John 9? He was an exception too. One passage not discussed is Psalm 73. I imagine that our author would claim Asaph as an exception as well. Soon all the exceptions make us wonder whether this is a sustainable view. He concludes that things are different for Christians: “. . .the old equation of sickness and punishment is obsolete



for those who believe in Christ. ‘I am sick, so God must be punishing me,’ is an instinctive thought, but for a Christian it is false” (39). But this is also problematic, for doesn’t Scripture say that God can use sickness to chastise or discipline Christians and isn’t this the same as what OT believers received (Heb 12:6)? Also, isn’t there some sense

in which by believing the promises, Old Testament believers were believing in Christ too? Thus, I must conclude that this part of the book is lacking.

This is a little known book and I find that regrettable. It’s well-written and not very long. But above all, the author does strive to exposit what the Bible teaches and he uses that biblical teaching to address common errors about the human body. While there are no study questions in the book, it could probably be used profitably by Bible study groups nonetheless – I imagine it would stimulate some great discussions. 

## PRESS RELEASES

### **Press Release of Regional Synod West – Langley, B.C., November 5, 2012**

On behalf of the convening church of Langley, Rev. R. DeJonge called the meeting to order. He welcomed all the delegates, read from Psalm 100 and spoke briefly about this passage. He invited the brothers to sing from Hymn 6, and he then led in opening prayer. He also noted a number of changes which have taken place with respect to the ministers among the churches.

The credentials from all four classes constituting Regional Synod West were checked by the convening church and are found to be in good order. Two alternate delegates were present. Regional Synod was declared constituted. The following brothers were elected and appointed to serve in the following positions: Rev. R. Schouten as chairman, Rev. J. Louwse as

vice- chairman, and Rev. M. Jagt as clerk. The agenda was adopted.

A proposal from the Church of Cloverdale with respect to amending the regulations of Regional Synod West was adopted after being amended.

An appeal from Rev. K. Jonker was declared inadmissible. Classis Pacific East requested Regional Synod West to overture General Synod Carman 2013 to make certain changes to the format of decisions and acts. Regional Synod agreed to pass on this overture to the General Synod 2013.

Written reports from deputies of Regional Synod with respect to the peremptory examinations of candidates Justin Roukema and Abel Pol were received. In each case the deputies report with thankfulness that they gave concurring advice to the decisions of the respective classes. A written report from the deputies with respect to

the retirement and honourable release of Rev. J. Visscher after forty years of service was also received with thankfulness.

Regional Synod received with thankfulness the report of brother J. Moedt, the treasurer of Regional Synod. Regional Synod received with thankfulness a report from two brothers from Taber, the church for auditing the books of the Treasurer of Regional Synod.

#### Appointments

- a. Br. J. Moedt of Taber was reappointed as Treasurer of Regional Synod.
- b. The church of Taber was reappointed to the task of auditing the Treasurer's books.
- c. Deputies for Regional Synod:  
Classis Alberta: Rev. R. Aasman, Rev. J. Louwerse (1st alt.), Rev. W.B. Slomp (2nd alt.)  
Classis Manitoba: Rev. A.J. Pol, Rev. J. Poppe (1st alt.), Rev. R. DenHollander (2nd alt.)  
Classis Pacific East: Rev. W.M. Wielenga, Rev. R. Schouten (1st alt.), Rev. K. Janssen (2nd alt.)  
Classis Pacific West: Rev. A. Souman, Rev. J. Slaa (1st alt.), Rev. T. Lodder (2nd alt.)
- d. The Church of Edmonton Providence was reappointed to take care of the archives.

- e. The Church of Edmonton Immanuel was reappointed to inspect the archives.
- f. The following ministers were appointed as delegates to General Synod Carman 2013: Revs. R. Eikelboom, J. Louwerse, R. Schouten, W.B. Slomp, A. Souman, W.M. Wielenga. Alternates: Revs. A.J. Pol, J. Poppe, R. Aasman, D. Poppe (in that order). The following elders were appointed as delegates to General Synod Carman 2013: R. Buist, H. deBoer, R. deHaan, C. Leyenhorst, B. VanRaalte, L. Wierenga. Alternates: S. Oostenbrug, M. VanDriel jr., C. Baarda, J. Roukema (in that order).
- g. Nominated for Board of Governors of the Theological College, Rev. A. Souman. Alternate J. Louwerse.
- h. Arrangements for the next regional synod: The church of Winnipeg-Grace was appointed to convene the next regional synod on Monday, November 4, 2013, at 7:30 PM.

Question period was held. The chairman thankfully noted that censure according to Art 34 of the CO was not required. The acts were adopted and the press release was approved. Rev. R. Schouten led in prayer and Regional Synod was closed.

*Rev. J. Louwerse,  
vice-chairman at the time*

---

## **Press Release of Regional Synod Glanbrook 2012, November 14, 2012**

At 9:30 sharp the chairman of the consistory of the convening church called the meeting to order in a Christian manner. Credentials were found to be in good order. In voting Rev. J. deGelder was elected chair, Rev. C. Bouwman became the vice chair, and Rev. P. Feenstra received the task of the clerk. Regional Synod could be constituted, and the chair passed to the elected chairman. After a few additions, the agenda as prepared by the convening church was adopted.

Two appeals took the bulk of Synod's time, with decisions in part granting and in part denying appellants' requests.

An overture from Classis Northern Ontario led to Synod adding to the Regulations for Regional Synod a stipulation that will ensure that proper nominations will be prepared at future Regional Synods for the Board of Governors of the CRTS.

Reports were received in relation to the following:

- Inspection of the Archives of Regional Synod East covering 2010 and 2011. The archives were reported to be in good order.

- The treasurer of Regional Synod for the year ending August 31, 2012. An audit of the treasurer's books was also submitted for the year ended August 31, 2012, indicating that the books were in good order. The treasurer further requested that the churches be levied an amount of \$1 per communicant member, which Synod readily granted.
- Deputies ad Art 48 CO reported on work done in relation to the retirement of Rev W. denHollander from the active ministry, as well as in relation to the dismissal of Rev W. Geurts from his office as minister in the church at Fergus North.

Appointments were made as follows:

- Regional Synod Treasurer will be br Dave vanAmerongen sr, while the church at Grassie will be responsible for auditing the treasurer's books.
- The church responsible for maintaining the Regional Synod archives will be the church at Toronto, while the church at Brampton will inspect those archives.
- Deputies ad Art 48 CO will be
  - From Classis Central Ontario: Rev. W. denHollander (alt: Rev. J. deGelder) as deputy for Classes Northern Ontario and Niagara;


- From Classis Ontario West: Rev. J. Ludwig (alt: Rev. W. Bredenhof) as deputy for Classes Northern Ontario and Niagara;
- From Classis Northern Ontario: Rev. P. Feenstra (alt: Rev. E. Kampen) as deputy for Classes Central Ontario and Ontario West;
- From Classis Niagara: Rev. J. Huijgen (alt: Rev. D. Wynia) as deputy for Classes Central Ontario and Ontario West.
- Delegates to General Synod Carman 2013 will be: Ministers Brs. C. Bouwman, R. Bredenhof, P. Holtvlüwer, J. Ludwig, J. Moesker, C. vanderVelde (with alternates Brs. E. Kampen, P. Feenstra, J. vanWoudenberg, and D. vandeBurgt – in that order); Elders Brs. P. Broekema, L. Jagt, L. Kampen, F.C. Ludwig, B. Medemblik, F. Stoffels (with alternates Brs. A. Witten, J. Post, J. vandeBurgt – in that order).
  - Loss of potential wage claims for these delegates was also established.
- Nominated for the Board of Governors of the Theological College was Rev. M.H. vanLuik, with alternate Rev. P. Holtvlüwer.
- The next Regional Synod will be convened by the

church at Lincoln, with November 13, 2013 mentioned as the preferred date.

Brief use was made of Question Period. The chair ruled that there was no need to administer censure according to Art 34, CO. He expressed his appreciation for the cooperation of the brothers in expediting the work that needed to be done. He also spoke words of appreciation to the brothers present from the church of Glanbrook for hosting and supporting the work of Synod. From and on behalf of the assembly words of appreciation were expressed to the chair for the capable manner in which he led the day's meeting (as well as several in the past), with reference to the fact that this is perhaps the last time he will chair a major assembly.

Because of the very late hour the executive received the mandate to finalize the Acts of Regional Synod and the Press Release.

The chair requested the meeting to sing Hymn 41, after which he led the meeting in closing prayer. Regional Synod was declared closed.

*C. Bouwman,*  
Vice Chair e.t. 

## ADVERTISEMENTS

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

### ENGAGEMENTS

*O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. Isaiah 25:1*

With thankfulness to our Heavenly Father, we

**DERRICK BERGSMA and ROSALYNN VANANDEL**

together with our parents

Len and Teresa Bergsma and Brian and Ina VanAnandel,  
announce our engagement December 14, 2012

P0 Box 1053, Carman, MB, R0G 0J0

### ANNIVERSARIES

#### **25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary**

1988 ~ January 23 ~ 2013

*He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD. Proverbs 18:22*

With thankfulness to the Lord for His steadfast love, we announce the 25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary of

**HENDRIK (Henry) and ALICE MEDEMBLIK (Lubbers)**  
It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless and keep them in their married life together.

With much love from all your brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews

*Best wishes may be sent to:*

230-1415 Upper Wellington Street, Hamilton, ON L9A 5E8

Advertise in

