



Clarion

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LET THE EASTER GOSPEL SHINE ITS
GUIDING LIGHT UPON US



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Catch & Keep

Many of us find it a challenge to break out of our "shell" and speak openly about our faith to people around us

Easter is always an exciting time for Christians. We remember the resurrection of our Saviour and his promise to fill us with new life, with all sin forgiven. We ponder his commission to "go and make disciples of all nations," to call others to join us in the joy of worshipping Christ in the new life he gives. That Easter occurs in spring time, a time of renewed vitality in creation around us, only adds to our zeal to "get out there" and spread the gospel.

And if my observation is accurate, this zeal among us is growing steadily. I hear more and more urging to engage in evangelism work. Churches and evangelism committees are bringing in speakers to instill passion for and teach methods of outreach. Groups are going out into public areas and engaging strangers in conversations that relate to the gospel.

This is good. Getting the Word out in the places we live is certainly part of the Great Commission. Yet, at times, alongside the call to reach out is heard much criticism for what some call our "preservationist attitude." There is a perception that our churches have had very little interest in evangelism; that we have focused almost exclusively on *preserving* what the Lord has given us. Some even report a resistance to evangelistic endeavours, even if they are Reformed in nature. Others say that we concentrate so much on training up our children in Christian schools and in weekly Catechism classes that we have neglected to train them to speak about Christ to our neighbours. We know a lot of doctrine but can't seem to share it very well.

Hindrances to outreach

Now, there is something to these complaints. Many of us (myself included) do find it a challenge to break out of our "shell" and speak openly about our faith to people

around us. We find it easier, more comfortable, and less risky to keep to ourselves. And it's true, most adults have not been trained for this. Nor is it (as far as I know) a regular part of our school or catechism curriculum to teach our youth how to reach out. This lack of "know-how" makes us feel inadequate and squeamish about opening up to others about such important matters. We don't want to appear clumsy or ignorant. More specific training in bringing up the gospel in conversation would be helpful. Perhaps our schools could introduce a unit in Bible class on evangelism and/or defending the faith.

Still, I think this hesitancy to evangelize is as much the fault of being *Canadian* as it is being *Canadian Reformed*. In Canada, unlike in the United States, there is consistent and powerful public pressure *not* to speak about your faith, especially the Christian faith. Religion in Canada is, we are told, a private matter, confined to the four walls of your home or church. All proselytizing (i.e. evangelizing, for Christians) is discouraged. For those of us who have grown up in this culture, we instinctively feel a wet blanket draped over us, with pressure just to leave people to their own beliefs. By contrast, I've often been amazed at how our older members, Dutch immigrants who came here as mature adults with English as their second language, often have more contact with their neighbours and speak more openly about their faith than people of my generation.

Overreaction

What concerns me is the overreaction that I sense is developing to what is perceived to be a "preservationist problem" in our church circles. There is a push to make evangelism our number one focus while brushing aside concern to keep what we've got. All the things which supposedly prevented us from reaching out previously should

be put on the back-burner. People are looking at the Great Commission and concluding that we have not been fulfilling our task. We need to change this, even repent some say, and devote more of our time, energy, and resources to this. It's all about outreach!

In this climate, the pressure is mounting not only on young adults or single members with time on their hands but equally on busy mothers and fathers, parents and grand-parents to be deliberate or

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

The issue in your hands celebrates Easter – Christ's resurrection from the grave. Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer's editorial speaks about using the Easter gospel to gather and preserve the Saviour's church. Our Treasures New and Old meditation from Rev. Rolf den Hollander and a Canticle from Rev. George van Popta also focus on the Easter message.

Dr. Cornelis Van Dam answers an often-asked question: Should we sing all the psalms? Are they all appropriate and applicable in today's worship services? This is the first of a two-part series.

Issue 7 also has an article on tithing, written by Bill Dehaas. In coming issues there will be more articles from Mr. Dehaas on Christians and finance.

In federational news there is a report from Chilliwack on the welcome of Rev. and Mrs. Abel Pol. This issue also includes the Education Matters column, a book review, two letters to the editor, and two press releases.

Laura Veenendaal

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“intentional” in spreading the gospel. It is our God-given duty to get “out there” and bring others to Christ. And as this new sense of duty becomes dominant, less time, energy, and resources are available for the other tasks like training our own children, volunteering in the schools, and visiting within the congregation.

The push is on to reach out with less and less attention given to keeping those who’ve already been reached. There is confusion over the proper division of our tasks and some are racked with guilt, thinking they are never doing enough. Conscientious church members who want to do the Lord’s will in all areas feel themselves pulled in opposite directions, unable to do it all. The result is a feeling of failure and discouragement, of “never doing enough.”

Easter balance

But before this goes too far, let us allow the Easter gospel to shine its guiding light upon us. For according to the risen Saviour himself, there is no opposition between “preserving” and “gathering” his church – both are commanded of us!

In John 21, Jesus makes one of his last resurrection appearances. In the first part of the account, the Lord addresses the disciples after they have fished all night but caught nothing. He directs them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat, promising that they will find some. And they do! A huge catch! This is deliberately meant to remind these disciples of a similar enormous catch of fish caught, at the command of the same Lord, near the beginning of Christ’s ministry (Luke 5). They understood the message: their Lord had called them to be fishers of men! And just as he had landed them many fish in their nets, so the Lord promised to land them many people in his church through their preaching.

So, the church indeed needs to go “fishing for men.” But that is not all! The story goes on in John 21 to focus on Jesus’ interaction with the Apostle Peter, a key leader of the church. Peter had earlier denied knowing Jesus three times. So, to restore him fully to his task of apostle, three times Christ asks Peter if he loves him, to which Peter responds each time that he does. And then three times the resurrected Lord gives a similar charge to Peter, “Feed my lambs. . . tend my sheep. . . feed my sheep.”

Now the focus isn’t on catching the fish but it’s on *keeping* the sheep! We aren’t commanded to “catch and release” but “catch and keep!” Fish become sheep, so to speak, which then need tending. Congregation members must be fed and cared for! They must be taught and visited, encouraged and exhorted. Christ gives this as much

priority as evangelism itself. We are agents of Christ in his work of gathering *and* preserving his church!

Preservation blessing

We have nothing to be ashamed of with our efforts to preserve the church over our sixty year history in Canada. This is simply obedience to the Lord’s command – to be sure, all by God’s grace. Our schools, our catechetical training, our sermons which do more than bring an evangelistic address (but should not bring less!) are not some sort of “problem” to be corrected, but a gift to be received with thankfulness! Is it not a good thing to see three (or more!) generations sitting together in church to worship the Lord? Is it not wonderful to have congregations full of both children and seniors? This doesn’t happen without constant “feeding of the sheep,” without careful and persistent instruction and visitation over the years. Do we not want new converts to experience this same blessing in their family through future years?

Outreach impulse

The record will also show that our churches have had a mission consciousness from the earliest years in Canada. Missionaries have been sent out from Toronto (since 1960), New Westminster (Surrey, since 1970), and Hamilton (since 1984) to Indonesia and Brazil. Smithers has sent a missionary to work among the native population in British Columbia since 1983. Smithville has commissioned a missionary for work in West Timor since 2003. This is in no way a form of boasting but simply a rendition of the facts so that we may see the matter at hand with clarity.

What is an average church member’s task in the Great Commission?

Where we have lacked seems to be in our domestic mission efforts, that is, a concerted effort to bring the gospel the people next door, within our own communities. The approach of some has been exclusively passive, a “church doors are open and people are free to come in” approach. This flies in the face of the Lord’s command to “go out” and make disciples. Our own Catechism identifies every church member as an anointed “prophet” with the duty to “confess Christ’s Name” (LD 12). So it is good that we are collectively coming to grips with this short-coming and are looking for ways to actively share the faith.

Yet it hasn't all been bad news – far from it! Many churches have for many years made attempts at outreach with Vacation Bible School or the Gems/Cadets program. It can also be pointed out that formal domestic mission work has been underway in down-town Hamilton since 1998 (Streetlight Ministries) and in the Greater Vancouver area since 1999. A missionary is currently being actively sought for outreach in southern Manitoba. Certainly, we have much to learn but I think it's fair to say that an evangelistic impulse lives among us and is growing too.

False guilt?

Still, what is an average church member's task in the Great Commission? Are we all to be out on the street, striking up gospel-type conversations with strangers? Are mothers and fathers obligated by the Lord to dedicate evenings and weekends to evangelism efforts and outreach?

Here we must be careful not to pile false guilt upon each other or even ourselves, as if evangelism is our primary reason for existence. As if we are disobedient if we don't go out of our way to pursue gospel discussions with strangers. Each of God's children exists first and foremost to glorify him – to live with him and for him in joy forever! Long after the last elect person is converted to the faith and all evangelistic efforts have concluded, all Christians will continue to do what we've been created to do – live to the praise of the Lord!

And how do we glorify the Lord already now? By fulfilling the daily duties of our office and calling “as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven” (LD 49). A few of us have the official calling to preach the gospel or engage in formal mission work, but most of us do not. The same God who calls the church (as a whole) to “make disciples of all nations” also calls us as individuals to make a living each day, to be a son or daughter (with obligations to parents), to be a husband or wife (with marital duties), to be a father or mother (with responsibilities to raise up children in the fear of the Lord), to be a living member of the church (to be a hand and foot to one another, carrying each other's burdens – see 1 Corinthians 12), to be kind to and helpful to our next-door neighbour, to be a productive, upstanding citizen in our communities (see Romans 13). These are some of the ordinary and necessary callings the Lord gives all of us – and we would be wrong in abandoning them in order to concentrate on “street preaching” or the like in order to obey the Great Commission.

By our love

Rather, is it not the case that our evangelistic outreach will take place as we conduct ourselves in these callings? The way we act at school, work, in our neighbourhood, among our friends, in the community is a testimony to the God we serve and people can see that. As the hymn says, “They will know we are Christians by our love,” (based on John 13:35) – that is, our love for one another shown in actions. Actions often do speak louder than words.

***Conscientious church members who want
to do the Lord's will in all areas feel
themselves pulled in opposite directions,
unable to do it all***

People will often know we are Christians long before we tell them we are, because they see it in how we do things. A faithful, honest, diligent employee, a conscientious neighbour, a concern for the good of the community, an interest in the troubles and hardships of those we meet – all are little sign-posts, giving evidence that a different Spirit lives in us than in our unbelieving neighbours, the Spirit of Christ. It's as people see our Christian lifestyle that we will have opportunity to share with them the Christian hope which drives us! The way we carry out our responsibilities each day is the primary way each Christian participates in the calling to make disciples of all nations, all while honouring God.

Don't get me wrong. I am not condemning street preaching or witnessing in the park or the mall – if you have the opportunity to do so in God-glorifying manner, go for it! It is to be commended! But God doesn't call or oblige everyone to do this. Some are given opportunity to speak up in the political realm, some in the media, some on the street to strangers. Some don't have those gifts or opportunities. Also, a certain stage of life may require energy and focus in the family circle or close to home. But all of us are God's children every moment of every day and when we concentrate on acting like Christ in all we do, when we are a salt and light everywhere we go, then we are indeed casting a net for the Kingdom of heaven! As the Easter Christ grants us opportunity, let's all strive to catch the fish *and* keep the sheep!





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Disappointment, Discovery, and Delight

"Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. . . ."

(Luke 24:31)

Disappointment. We know the feeling. The two men felt that on the road to Emmaus. We can imagine them shuffling along, shoulders stooped. Their hopes dashed. Gone is the spring in their step. Perhaps they were among the crowds that whooped it up when Jesus came at the triumphal entry. But now? No more festivities. Their faces are downcast.

When Jesus appears to these two, God blocks out their recollection. As far as they were concerned, this was just another man on the same lonely road. They appear shocked when he asks what they're so deep in conversation about. Surely everyone knows what has happened: the riots, darkness, earthquakes, the curtain torn!

So they begin to tell this man everything. Their account is loaded with disappointment. . . and irony. For we know what's going on. The very man they're grieving is standing right with them. But don't let your knowledge of the outcome distract you. Try to walk with these two men in their disappointment. What they share and experience is very real. Would we have reacted any differently? Let us stand there with them. Then our eyes can also be opened in discovery.

After listening to their report, their fellow traveller rebukes them for their lack of faith: "How slow of heart you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" (v. 25). If you listen to the prophets, you will see that this Redeemer must gain victory and glory

through suffering. And so Jesus explains to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

This is the way this group of three walk to Emmaus. There Jesus sits at the table to eat with them. And he begins this meal the same way he had done so often during his ministry. He takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it, and gives it to them.

Then their eyes are *opened* and they recognize him! Their eyes are opened. That is a picture of what faith is. It is God, who is rich in mercy, opening the eyes of the blind. That's what it is like for these two disciples. Suddenly it all begins to make sense. They ask each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (v. 32). So the story the women shared was true! Christ is risen. He is not dead as we supposed, he is alive! We've seen him with our own eyes, heard him with our own ears.

In this great discovery, the two men do not even seem to flinch when Jesus immediately disappears. No, their discovery leads to far too much delight. We can hear that in their expression to each other: their hearts were *burning* – they were lit up and now that spark makes the fire burn. "It only takes a spark to get the fire going." They are now so delighted that they must share it.

So when the door opens in Jerusalem they are ready to shout the news. But before they even get a chance,

they hear it themselves: "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon" (v. 34). So there are more witnesses! You can almost hear the babble of excitement, asking and answering questions. What a delight! What a foretaste of the unspeakable joy and glory that await.

This is the new beginning. There is light in the darkness. Life has conquered death. The Lord is risen indeed. Everything has changed. The cross, the cause of disappointment, now becomes the object of glory. The resurrection of Christ is the source of a living hope. Listen to Peter's delight: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth, into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet 1:3).

Disappointment is erased by delight in the great discovery of a resurrected Lord. He is alive and he lives! In him our life is worth living. In him we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God. The curse is removed, and we await a new heaven and a new earth. All the darkness is dispelled, and hope lives again.

May that gospel continue to fill us all with a joy and delight to live for him! May it so fill us that we cannot contain ourselves. Let the gospel burn within us so that we also burst forth in praise, "Christ has risen! Hallelujah! He is our victorious Head. Sing his praises! Hallelujah! Christ has risen from the dead!"





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Should We Sing All the Psalms? (1 of 2)

Can we sing all the psalms in public worship or at home? I am not referring to those psalms that have tunes which some find difficult. Rather, are the contents of all the psalms appropriate for us to sing today? From time to time people ask me, can we today still sing songs imploring God to judge the wicked? In this context a reference is often made to Psalm 137:8-9, “O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us – he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.” Surely this is not Christian. Does the New Testament not say “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt 5:44)?

To address this issue we must consider the unity of Scripture and the meaning of the psalms that raise such questions. In a second article we will consider whether we should sing these psalms and if so, how are we to use them.

Scripture is one

When discussing the topic of the so-called imprecatory psalms, one cannot set the New Testament up against the Old. God’s Word is a unit, inspired by one and the same Spirit (cf. 1 Peter 1:11). The Bible cannot contradict itself. It is therefore not surprising that the message to love one’s enemy is also found in the Old Testament. “If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you” (Prov 25:21, 22). Furthermore, speaking ill of one’s enemies is not only found in the Old Testament, but also in the New. The Lord Jesus who taught us to love our enemies proclaimed seven woes over the Pharisees in no uncertain terms as recorded in Matthew 23.

How do we make sense of what may seem to be contradictory statements? It should be noted that the injunctions to love one’s enemy refers to one’s personal foes. For example in Romans 12 there are several admonitions to bless your enemies and not to curse them; not to repay

evil with evil; and not to take revenge (vv. 14, 17, 19-21). But in the very next chapter, government as servant of God and as agent of his wrath must have zero tolerance and punish the evil doer (Rom 13:1-4). It is the task and office of government. When Christ denounced the Pharisees and proclaimed a complete number of seven woes over them, he did that not because they were his personal enemies, but he followed the example of the Old Testament prophets who denounced the sins of God’s people (e.g. Isa 5).

So what would justify our singing psalms which call upon God to punish the wicked? To answer that question, let us first take a closer look at Psalm 137 and 139 which are often used in discussions of this nature. They can serve as examples of the types of psalms that people sometimes object to.

Psalm 137

Psalm 137 recalls how by the rivers of Babylon the Jewish exiles sorrowfully and with tears remembered Zion and its destruction by Babylon. Although this psalm is known as an imprecatory psalm, that is, a psalm uttering curses, it should be noted that it is in the first place a song of love, love for the LORD and Zion. That devotion and affection for Jerusalem is understandable. After all, Jerusalem was the place where the temple stood. There on Mount Zion, God himself lived (Ps 74:2) and there the Most High had established the ministry of reconciliation. To destroy Jerusalem as the Babylonians and Edomites had been eager to do is to destroy God’s work on earth. How the faithful wept when Jerusalem was razed and torn down to its very foundations.

Because of his great love for the Lord and his dwelling place, the poet invokes the most horrible punishment over himself should he forget Zion. “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remem-

ber you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy” (vv. 5-6). Notice that the psalm not only contains some terrible words about Babylon, but the poet first places a self-imprecatory oath on himself. If he should forget Jerusalem, may I have a stroke with all the terrible side effects! The fact that the poet invokes terrible judgment over himself first before he speaks of Babylon is often forgotten. He is sensitive to the covenant curses and blessings. Did God not say that those who do not revere the Lord God would receive terrible illnesses (Deut 28:59-61)? He applies that truth very concretely to himself.

***Are the contents of all the psalms
appropriate for us to sing today?***

Since the poet first places a self-imprecatory oath on himself, this psalm is clearly not a personal vendetta against Babylon. No, he is thinking of God’s honour and the divine wrath for those who do not reverence him. By keeping God’s honour central, the poet speaks in accordance with God’s Word. Even those horrific lines about Babylon doomed to destruction and “happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us – he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks” are consistent with what the prophets had already said. Had Isaiah, for example, not earlier conveyed God’s message about Babylon that “their infants will be dashed to pieces before their eyes” (Isa 13:16; also see Isa 47 and Jer 50-51)? In other words, the poet is simply asking God to fulfill his own prophecies. To criticize this psalm as inappropriate leads one to criticize God and his justice over against his enemies.

Psalm 139

This psalm is often used in the ongoing battle against abortion to show that God is the giver of life in the womb. That is not an abstract truth because David, the author, recognizes that God made *him* in the womb.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not

hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be (Ps 139:13-16).

Shortly after these words, David suddenly, it seems, says: If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD, and abhor those who rise up against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies (Ps 139:19-22).

Is such sudden vehemence called for? Is this not out of place? Indeed, I have heard Psalm 139 read in its entirety, but the Reformed reader left out these words, apparently because he felt they jarred and were inappropriate in the context.

These words beseeching God to slay the wicked, however, fit within this psalm and should not be excised. In this psalm David had extolled God as the One who is present everywhere, knows all, and sees all things. David had applied all that very specifically to himself. God had made him in the secret place and knows him thoroughly, inside and out, so to speak. Then David exclaims: “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you” (Ps 139:17-18). From all this David then concludes: God, if you are such as I know you are, should you not kill the wicked who speak evil of you, hate you, and rise up against you? They are your enemies and mine also for they come after me for my blood (Ps 139:19-22). David says all this with integrity and so concludes the psalm asking the Lord to search his heart and mind and to lead him into the way everlasting (vv. 22-24). David’s cry to God that he slay the wicked shows that the entire psalm is driven by a deep love for God and a pure hatred of those who despise the Lord. These verses therefore form an integral part of the psalm and help us appreciate his profound affection for God.

But how does all of this impact us today? What do we do when we sing psalms such as Psalm 137 and 139? Should we sing them? We will consider these issues in a concluding article.



Tithing

Do you give of your first fruits or of your last fruits?

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Wikipedia: tithe (pron.: /'taɪð/; from Old English: teogopa "tenth")

There is much debate in the church today about whether the "tithe" is even a principle for today. It is only mentioned seventeen times in the Old Testament. For my article I prefer to use the words "tithe" and "giving" as synonyms.

First, let's look at the purpose of the tithe. The main principle behind tithing and giving is the fact that what we do with our money shows where our heart is. Matthew 6:21 says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." When we are able to give ten percent or more of our income instead of keeping that money for ourselves, it shows that our heart isn't tied to our money and that we love God more than our money.

The Bible mentions money over 800 times and of all of Jesus' parables, more than half of them speak about money. Why? Because this is where so many people get tripped up! When we are able to give at least ten percent of our income back to God, our money doesn't have as tight a hold on us because we realize that God is in control of our finances. Then we remember that everything we have has been given to us by him. Even though most of us probably work for the money we make each month, God still has his hand in it - he has given us the ability to do our jobs. Many who grasp what God has truly given them seem to agree that ten percent doesn't even feel like it is enough!

How we should give

The Lord gives us everything we have (Ps 24:1); through giving he is not asking for much in return - just a portion! Do you give your gift first? Or do you pay the mortgage, hydro, cable or satellite, food, and then give the Lord whatever is left?

Is your lifestyle made up of wanting certain things or wasting money on frivolous items thus preventing you from your giving responsibilities to the Lord? These are questions members of God's church must ask themselves (and answer).

The pattern of giving

Paul gives some instructions about giving in 1 Corinthians 16.

Giving should be personal. "Each one of you should. . . ." Giving is the privilege and responsibility of every Christian, young and old, rich or poor. The benefits of giving are intended for each person to enjoy.

Giving should be periodic. "On the first day of every week. . . ." The Lord understands that we need to give regularly. Giving regularly helps draw us consistently to Christ. Our local church also needs to meet its regular financial commitments; we need to be consistent in helping to meet these commitments.

Giving should be out of a private deposit. "Put aside and save. . . ." Whether you set aside a separate checking account, or a cookie jar; the most gratifying part of setting aside money is the thrill of praying that God would make us aware of needs and then enable us to respond.

Giving should be premeditated. To know the full joy and reap the blessing of giving, it must not be done carelessly. "Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7). Our giving should involve thought, planning, and prayer. The supreme example of premeditated giving was set by our Saviour, "For the joy set before him he endured the cross" (Heb 12:2).

Luke 16:10-12: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

Our integrity often meets its match in money matters. God calls on us to be honest even in those small details that we could easily rationalize away. Heavenly riches are far more valuable than earthly wealth. But if we are not trustworthy with our money here (no matter how much or little we have), we will be unfit to handle the vast riches of God's kingdom. If you refuse to let your integrity slip in small matters, it will not fail you in crucial decisions later on.

Do you give of your first fruits or of your last fruits? **C**



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Canticle

O Christians, Praise the Lamb who Suffered

1. O Chris - tians, praise the Lamb who suf - fered, through whom your
 2. The Son of God, a - lone, is sin - less. Christ is the
 3. The pow'rs of life and death con - ten - ded in mor - tal

sin - ful - ness is cov - ered. Now, of - fer him your thank - ful
 on - ly one who's blame - less. The spot - less Lamb, the Un - de -
 bat - tle, strange - ly en - ded: The Prince of life was put to

praise; a sa - cri - fice of wor - ship raise. The Lamb has
 filed, has, to his Fa - ther, re - con - ciled us, sin - ners
 death; he gave to God his fin - al breath, but then he

ran - somed us, the sheep. Our Shep - herd will us safe - ly keep.
 lost in guilt and shame. Him, him a - lone, do we ac - claim.
 rose tri - um - phant - ly to reign as king im - mor - tal - ly.

4. The women went there Sunday morning.
 Tears stung their eyes for they were weeping.
 But then they saw an awesome sight:
 An angel clothed in brilliant white.
 He showed them Jesus' burial clothes,
 the empty shroud: our Lord arose!

5. How bless'd are they who trust the gospel
 instead of lies and idle babble.
 Alleluia! Christ has been raised.
 Forevermore may he be praised.
 Have mercy on us, Victor King!
 Amen, Amen, to you we sing.

Text: based on Victimae Paschali Laudes, 11th cent.; George van Popta, 2012 ©
 Tune: Genevan Psalter, 1562

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 GENEVAN 80



Welcome to Rev. and Mrs. Pol

On October 14, 2012, the members of Chilliwack church, with thanks to God, were able to joyfully welcome our new minister and his wife. Rev. Abel Pol had successfully sustained his examination and the Lord, through the call of Chilliwack congregation, called Rev. Pol to his service as a pastor and preacher.

Ordination

In the morning service, Dr. A.J. Pol (Rev. Abel Pol's father) encouraged us with a wonderful sermon on 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. He spoke first on how it is a delightful day for us to receive a new minister and especially because this will be Rev. Pol's first congregation. As theme for his sermon he said: The message of the cross is powerful. First, we saw the rejection of this message and second, the glory of this message. Dr. Pol stressed that Paul had received a call from God to preach the true word of the gospel and that he didn't need lofty words or human wisdom to bring this message across. There was division among the Corinthian congregation as many followed a favourite preacher. The members needed to remember the centrality of the gospel of Christ crucified. If we reject the message of the truth of the gospel by looking for signs or human wisdom, or if we mix the message of the cross with the latest philosophical insights, we are not accepting the full truth that Jesus is the only way of salvation. The glory of this message is that it is based on God's wisdom. It is a simple message that must be accepted by faith and then sanctifies us. Christ changes our lives by the power of God's Spirit and Word. Dr. Pol also encouraged his son that though he may face challenges in his ministry, he should not turn to human wisdom but should let the message of the cross be the guiding force in his life and work. The "preaching" Paul speaks about is a special word that tells of a herald, speaking not his own words but God's. "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." Let us as minister and congregation focus together



on the message of Christ who is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

We were blessed as congregation and visitors also to be able to witness the laying on of hands as visible sign of the call of God to Rev. Pol.

Then in the afternoon, the newly ordained Rev. A.C. Pol preached to us on 1 Corinthians 2:2-5. As theme for his sermon, Rev. Pol preached that God works through the limitations of his messengers to bring the gospel to his people. God is proclaimed in weakness and manifested in power. In Paul's time, debating and lofty public speaking were important to the people. However, Paul says in verse two that he does not come with eloquence or lofty words. Paul did not talk like the Sophists for whom popularity was key and speaking truth was not. Paul does not say the gospel is anti-intellectual, but he gives testimony about what God has done through Jesus Christ and him crucified. Paul does not need the Corinthians to love his speaking and preaching but to listen to the central message of Christ. The name and person of Jesus Christ is very important. Jesus means



“Yahweh saves” and Christ means “Anointed,” pointing to how God reconciled himself to us. Preaching is the public proclamation of the truth that we are all sinners who can be reconciled to God through the death of Jesus Christ. Paul is acutely aware of his limitations, physically as well as in preaching as he says in chapter two verse three (“I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling”) but God was not limited by these weaknesses. The gospel is also demonstrated in Spirit’s power. “The Spirit’s power” is not speaking of signs and miracles, but points us to where the message of the cross is the gospel, the good news. The faith of the people is not from Paul’s eloquence but is proof of the power of the Spirit and of God thus the members are brothers and sisters in faith. Real wisdom comes from the Spirit who gives faith and understanding. Why does God not use people who are more eloquent? In verse five it says this is so that our faith does not rest on man’s wisdom but God’s power. This is encouraging for us because we can see that even in our weakness, God will use our words to teach our children or spread the gospel. God’s Word that goes out from his mouth will not return empty but achieve the purpose for which God sent it.

Welcome evening

That same evening, those who were able gathered together in the church sanctuary for the welcome even-

ing for our new minister. After singing Psalm 103 and reading from 1 Timothy 4 together, our congregation welcomed Rev. Abel and Rose Pol in many different ways from diverse groups and societies. Ineke Huttema, on behalf of the Senior’s Bible Study “JOY,” read us a humorous letter about a wayside chapel. The choir sang the Song of Ruth and also told a funny farm song to prepare the Pols for the farming community’s quirks and smells, and then we heard the children sing beautifully for us as well. The skit from the Men’s Society gave the Pol family insight into all the different careers within the congregation and a heads up on who to turn to for car trouble or accounting. They also gave us a lot of laughs.

Then the shoe game followed. This questionnaire put forward by Martin and Michelle Rekers gave us insight into Rev. Abel and Rose Pol’s favourite things and hobbies, but they weren’t the only ones quizzed. The C of A had six members of Council come forward and they were quizzed on Rev. Pol. This gave us all some background on where he grew up, his family (full of ministers), some of his hobbies, and favourite foods.

Stepping Stones campers, led by Ed VanWoudenberg, Richard Baartman, and Chyleen Tromp sang a couple of beautiful songs for us as welcome and then the Gems and Cadets of Chilliwack congregation also did a piece for us with their theme text and a parent to child matching game. When the Young Peoples’ came forward they sang for us and also presented Rev. and Rose with a Chilliwack survival kit including an umbrella, gumboots, and, of course, a Vancouver Canucks jersey! Another gift came in the form of a photo book of the congregation put together by Rhea Super and her daughter Dayna. In between all this entertainment there were also welcome letters, poems, and speeches.

Ike Bredenhof closed the evening with the wise advice that though there will be many new things to learn, some things remain the same and the most important is that God’s Word remains central. We were thankful that we could welcome Rev. Abel Pol and his wife Rose into our church family.

C





Mr. George Hofsink is principal of John Calvin School in Smithville, Ontario
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Why We Do What We Do – Our Schools' Mission and Vision Statements

The purpose of John Calvin School is to assist parents in the nurture of their children, to help develop in them the talents freely and graciously given by God, to the end that they may serve him in a life of responsible, Christian stewardship.

Mission Statement of
John Calvin School, Smithville

Most schools in our Canadian Reformed educational system have vision and/or mission statements. Many of the mission statements, in fact, are probably quite similar to the one quoted above from the school where I currently serve as principal. At a League Day for the League of Canadian Reformed Schools held in Ontario in October of 2011, it was noted that there is a good sense of vision in our schools; perhaps because many of them have living vision and mission statements. So, why is it that our schools have vision and mission statements, and why is it important to revisit them regularly? In this article, I will interact with these questions.

Why do schools have a school mission statement?

The school's mission statement should be a clear and concise statement about the purpose of the school. In one sentence, it needs to clearly state the how and why of the school. The mission statement needs to remind us of the reasons why we have our schools, and why our forefathers did what they did in starting up our schools within a decade of immigrating to Canada. The foundational principles from when our forefathers began our Canadian Reformed schools need to continue to be the basis of what happens in them today.

A culture of vision and mission needs to be cultivated in our communities by the boards. In order to carry

out their tasks effectively, board and committee members need to be knowledgeable about the mission and vision of the school which they serve. The work that they do on behalf of the school community must be directed by that vision. To carry this out, the board should set aside at least one board meeting per year for this exercise. Questions like, "Does this proposal fit with the mission and vision of our school?" or "Can we make changes to promote the mission and vision of our school more clearly?" should be heard at the board table. The boards need to take ownership of the mission and vision of the school, and they need to commission the principal and the teachers to assist them in carrying it out.

The foundational principles from when our forefathers began our Canadian Reformed schools need to continue to be the basis of what happens in them today

The principal is the leader in maintaining and promoting the mission and vision within the school. The principal should make a point of including the mission and vision as a regular part of his/her report to the school membership. In this way, the parents are kept informed about how the mission and vision are carried out in the day-to-day instruction in the school. The principal needs to bring the mission and vision of the school from the boardroom into the staffroom. Together with the teachers, the principal should constantly be busy with linking the mission and the vision to what is being taught in the classrooms.

The school's adopted mission statement should be written on the curriculum documents produced by the

school. Printed at the top of each page of the curriculum maps, it will guide the teachers as they develop the curriculum (be it the year plans, the units, or the daily lessons) for each subject they teach. The mission statement could also be visible in the classrooms where the teachers implement the curriculum, e.g. on a laminated wall poster. There, the teachers can bring the mission and vision of the school directly to those who matter most, the reason why we do what we do in our schools, the students. After all, for them and future generations our grandparents and parents set up our schools.

How does the mission statement work?

The vision/mission statement of a school should contain the hallmarks of Reformed education. These hallmarks are based on God's infallible Word and its explanation in the ecumenical creeds and confessions of the Reformed faith. All school society members, including teachers, must subscribe to this summary of philosophy. The hallmarks are based on the four signifiers of Reformed education as identified in the CCMC (Curriculum Coordinator Management Committee) report of 2003: the character of the Reformed school is that it is covenantal, confessional, and antithetical, and it is characterized by a unity of purpose that is shared by the home, school, and church.

The character of the Reformed school is that it is covenantal, confessional, and antithetical, and it is characterized by a unity of purpose that is shared by the home, school, and church

Now, it's all well and fine to have such a vision statement, but how does the school plan to carry out these hallmarks? Each stakeholder of Reformed education needs to be involved in the carrying out of the vision of the school. The community needs to provide an environment of love and care within which the students are nurtured. The school, as an indispensable partner with the home and church, leads the students to live according to biblical wisdom. The teachers must model the love of Christ to the children they teach. The calling of a Reformed teacher is to pass on the wisdom of the Reformed

faith to students and to help them understand and apply what is taught to contemporary society and culture and to live as responsible Christians in accordance with God's Word. The students are encouraged to develop their gifts and talents in response to God and in loving service to their fellow human beings. They are led by their parents and teachers to know God and to respond to him in every dimension of the creation and in every aspect of their lives. The curriculum of the school is to be developed and organized so that children may come to know God more deeply and richly and to live for him more faithfully. It needs to explore all dimensions of creation. God's design for creation and his will for human society and culture must be understood and obeyed. Students are taught to recognize the brokenness that sin brings to God's carefully designed world and are challenged to defend their faith and belief in God, his Word, and his works in the world in which they live.

We need to revisit the vision and mission regularly to be reminded of why we do what we do

Since the home, school, and church are the legs that support the education of the children who are sitting on the stool of Reformed education in our communities (Dr. N. Kloosterman, National Principals' Conference, 2011), we need to continue to work together to carry out the vision of the school. Brothers and sisters, moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, relatives and all the members of our church communities share in the lives of God's covenant people, so we all need to work together to make a difference in the lives of his children. As they have done in the past, our ministers can expound the necessity of maintaining a clear understanding of the biblical basis for a Reformed vision of education. Our schools and the support thereof need to be a regular part of prayer in the worship service too.

Why is it important to revisit the vision and mission regularly?

We need to revisit the vision and mission regularly to be reminded of why we do what we do. We can very easily become sidetracked and take Christian education for granted, or become complacent and apathetic towards

what our forefathers worked so hard to establish. We need to work at maintaining the mission and vision of the school. A culture of Reformed mission and vision needs to be cultivated in the community on a continuing basis.

We need to keep promoting what we're all about to our membership; in particular, educating the new generation of parents about the purpose of our schools so that they understand why they send their children to this school; that they don't send them because of tradition, i.e. my parents sent me to the Canadian Reformed school so therefore I need to send my children to the same school but that they send their children because they want to. They understand what education in a Reformed school is all about. In order to keep the mission and vision alive in the school we need to keep stressing why we do what we do.

School vision and mission statements are good things for schools to have; but in order to be effective they need to be used and not to sit on the shelf and collect dust. They need to be living and breathing documents that the entire school community interacts with on a regular basis; from the grandparents down to the children who are being prepared to enter school for the first time. As we move forward in our schools, let me leave you with a few questions to reflect upon and discuss in your homes and your schools:

1. Do you know what Reformed Education is? Do you talk about it with your children or grandchildren?
2. Do you know why our forefathers set up Canadian Reformed Schools, even when there were other Christian schools in the neighbourhood?
3. Why do you send your children to the Canadian Reformed school?
4. How well do you know your school's vision and mission?
5. How involved are you in your school?
6. Are you, parents, and the school on the same visionary page?
7. Do you share ideas and concerns to implement better practices that fit the vision and mission of your school?

May our Heavenly Father continue to bless the work being done in our schools by all the stakeholders to educate his covenant children in the fear of his Name and to his glory and honour.

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 akingma@echs.ca



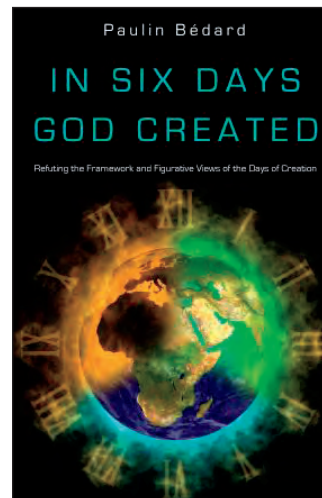
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In Six Days God Created: Refuting the Framework and Figurative Views of the Days of Creation, Paulin Bédard, Maitland: Xulon Press, 2013

In the last number of years, the Canadian Reformed Churches have been challenged by some academics proposing more open-mindedness about creation and its relationship to evolution. Prior to this development, concern was officially expressed about the openness of the United Reformed Churches to the framework hypothesis proposed by Meredith Kline and others. There's no question that the interpretation of Genesis is a living issue in our churches and others. Therefore, we can be thankful when studious and faithful pastors take up the pen to address these issues and provide sound leadership.

The name of Paulin Bédard will be familiar to many Canadian Reformed readers because so many of us support his missionary efforts in Quebec. Rev. Bédard is a minister of the Reformed Church of Quebec (L'Église Réformée du Québec) living and working in St-Georges de Beauce. He does this work with the assistance of the Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church and many other CanRCs across the country.

In this book, written in impeccable English, Bédard addresses the troublesome trend towards toleration of anything less than a plain reading of the first chapters of the Bible. In particular, he addresses the framework hypothesis. For those new to the discussion, the framework hypothesis proposes to see the first chapters of Genesis as a theological statement in a literary structure. This structure was not intended to be taken literally, although there may be some historical substance to it. It's this view that Bédard spends most of his time critiquing.




However, he also gives some attention to other figurative interpretations along the same lines as the framework hypothesis.

The author spends the first part of his book answering criticisms of the traditional, literal view of Genesis 1-2. In the second part, he demonstrates how and why the framework hypothesis is problematic. He concludes with a powerful section explaining why this newer interpretation should

be regarded as *dangerous* and not something to be tolerated.

In Six Days God Created needs to get out there into the hands of as many people as possible. This is a powerful and well-argued book on a timely subject. The author grounds his arguments strictly on the Word of God, using biblical and time-honoured methods of interpretation. It is necessary for a book of this nature to venture into the technical side of things from time to time, but I think most adult readers should be able to grasp the points the author is making. Though the book reflects careful scholarship, the main point is clear: we simply need to humbly accept what the Bible plainly and clearly teaches about origins. Such humility and clarity leads me to commend this book most highly. Get it for your home, for your school, and for your church library.

Available at www.godutch.com/store or 1-800-881-0705 or see advertisement in the last two *Clarion* issues. 



Re: Don't Take Your Drums to Town, Son (Clarion, Vol 62, No 1)

The first part of Rev. Stam's article speaks about the shortage of organists. How true and a warning to all. Singing with the piano as accompaniment is for many of us not pleasant. The organ is the utmost tool in guiding the singing in the worship service. We can hear so many different instruments in the organ that you do not hear from a piano.

The second part about instruments: Going to church does not mean that we are in a concert hall; we are there simply to hear what the Lord has to say, as Rev. Stam also stated. "Pianos tend to be more frivolous," but also harsh to listen to.

The last part of this article I find troubling and bothers me the most. There is the aspect of sentimental-based Christian hymns. My generation has stirred that pot for all of us many years ago in the 1950s, and in later years sifted out many of the well-known but not true-to-Scripture "hymns." These hymns may increasingly side line the God-given psalms.

So my advice is to sing all the hymns you like. But don't take them to church, leave them at home.



Sincerely,
B.F. Vanderbruggen
Carman, MB

Letter to the Editor

Periodically we read in *Clarion* excellent articles on infant baptism, with the most recent by Dr. J. Visscher: "Does Infant Baptism Still Matter?"

I wholeheartedly welcome these articles and believe they are necessary as there seems to be a trend against infant baptism or at the least, a diminished belief in its importance.

In his article Dr. Visscher mentions the great comfort we have in that "God-fearing parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in their infancy." Does a Baptist then not have this comfort? Apparently they do. The predominant view today is that not only are children of believers saved, but that God saves all who die before reaching a stage of moral understanding and accountability. This includes all children as well as the mentally handicapped. This is indeed comforting and who would not hope this to be true? After all, the thought of these little ones being punished in hell forever is very unsettling. But hoping and wishing for something to be true does not make it so.


Historically we saw some of the church fathers and the great theologians address this question. Ambrose believed that children of believers would go to heaven only if they were baptised. If they were not baptized they would go to hell but they would receive immunity from the pains of hell. The great theologian Augustine basically believed the same. Later in history during the Reformation, Zwingli believed all children are saved but Lutherans continued to believe that infants who were not baptized are not saved. The clear-thinking John Calvin did not believe this and found such a doctrine reprehensible. "I do not doubt that the infants whom the Lord gathers together from this life are regenerated by a secret operation of the Holy Spirit" (Amsterdam edition of Calvin's works, 8:522). "I everywhere teach that no one can be justly condemned and perish except on account of actual sin; and to say that the countless mortals taken from life while yet infants are precipitated from their mothers' arms into eternal death is a blasphemy to be universally detested" (*Institutes*, Book 4, p. 335). Herman Bavinck believed we could have no assurance, saying, "I would not wish to deny, nor am I able to affirm." Cornelius Venema concurs, saying caution is preferable

to the confident denial or affirmation of this possibility. Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield on the other hand believed all infants are saved.

So what is the predominant view today on this question? Dr. Mohler and Daniel Akin who lead The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, respectively, wrote a popular article in 2009 addressing the question of an infant's salvation. In it they say: "It is our conviction that there are good reasons biblically and theologically for believing that God saves all who die who do not reach a stage of moral understanding and accountability." They say they make their case using Scripture, rather than "emotional hopes." The Bible does not directly speak to this issue but they believe there is evidence that leads them to affirm

"on biblical grounds that God receives into heaven all who have died in infancy." For more information, go to AlbertMohler.com and search for "The Salvation of the 'Little Ones': Do Infants who Die Go to Heaven?" I find it bit ironic that Baptists, who do not believe in infant baptism because it does not say so explicitly in the Bible, do believe that all infants will be saved even though this is also not explicitly in the Bible.

I would welcome an article from one of our fine theologians on this question giving us guidance on how to response to the popular view today such as portrayed by Dr. Mohler and others.

Andrew Jans,
Dunnville, Ontario 

*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.*



Press Release for the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches (Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary) for a meeting held on January 17, 2013

The Board of Governors met at the Seminary Facilities in Hamilton, Ontario on January 17, 2013. Present at the meeting were Archie J. Bax, Hank Kampen (Treasurer), Rev. Richard Aasman (Chairman), Barry Hordyk, Dr. Andrew J. Pol (Secretary), Rev. Willem B. Slomp, Rev. Eric Kampen, Rev. John VanWoudenberg, Rev. John Ludwig, and Karl J. Veldkamp (Vice-Chairman/Corresponding Clerk). Regrets: None. The Principal, Dr. G.H. Visscher also was present. The meeting was opened by Rev. R. Aasman with the reading of John 1:1-18 and prayer.

Memorabilia

In our memorabilia we remembered: the current health situation for Prof. Geertsema, who is improving somewhat and receives his circumstances in faith; the situation and health challenges for both Dr. N. Gootjes and Dr. J de Jong; the current situation with Mrs. Faber; and the passing of the father of Rev. W. Slomp.

Minutes, agenda, and officers of the Board

The minutes of the Board meeting held on September 6, 2012 were adopted. The agenda for the meeting was settled.

Correspondence of note

- a. Press Release for September 6, 2012 Board meeting
- b. A letter to Dr. A.J. de Visser confirming approval of his sabbatical proposal, in principle. Such sabbatical to take place the second term of the 2012 – 2013 academic year.
- c. A letter was written to the churches in Western Canada requesting the churches to suggest names of qualified brothers as possible nominations for the upcoming vacancies on the Finance & Property Committee (non-ministerial governors).
- d. Letters were written to the convening churches for Regional Synod East 2012 and Regional Synod West 2012, requesting that the matter of ministerial nominations for ministerial vacancies on the Board of Governors be placed on their respective agendas.

- e. The complete CRTS self study with appendices was delivered to the Association of Theological Schools as part of the accreditation process (November, 2012).
- f. Report of the Board to Synod Carman West 2013 was distributed to all of the churches (November 1, 2012).
- g. Letter written to Rev./Dr. James Visscher in connection with retaining him as an adjunct lecturer to lead lectures during the sabbatical of Dr. A.J. de Visser.
- h. Letter received from the Ad Hoc Review Committee on the Superannuation Fund – received with thankfulness with the Finance & Property Committee mandated to review, respond, and send a delegate to the next tri annual meeting, if appropriate.

Receipt of reports-material agenda items

- a. Report on visits to the lectures completed in October of 2012 by Rev. R Aasman and Rev. W. Slomp. These reports provided cause for thankfulness for the comprehensive and thorough instruction that is being provided by our faculty.
- b. The Finance & Property Committee brought forth nominations of four brothers (two primary and two secundus) for the vacancies on the Finance & Property Committee that will arise in May of 2013 with the terms of office of Lammert Jagt and Karl Veldkamp coming to an end. These nominations were taken over and approved by the Board. Due to insufficient and late responses from the churches in western Canada, it was not possible to include any nominations from western Canada. These nominations will be submitted on a confidential basis to the upcoming General Synod 2013 scheduled for Carman, Manitoba.
- c. The Principal provided an interim report on the developments at the Seminary for the 2012-2013 academic year. It is apparent that there is a strong and dedicated group of young men studying at the Seminary. The report of the Principal of his attendance at the ATS Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents was received with gratitude.
- d. The Report of Dr. C. Van Dam for his visit to the sixty-fourth annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society was received with gratitude.
- e. Dr. G.H. Visscher provided his report on his attendance at the Technology in Theology Conference held in Arizona (this conference was led by a sub committee of the Association of Theological Schools).

- f. Accreditation – the interim report of our interim assessment coordinator was provided in person by Sister M. Vandevelde. The Board is awaiting the response of ATS to our self-study delivered in November 2012 and is preparing for the site visit of the ATS visiting team scheduled for March of 2013.
- g. The Search Committee provided its final report and recommendation to the Board for a recommended candidate for the position of a fifth professor for the new department of Ecclesiology (subject to synod approval.) The recommendation of the search committee was accepted and it was agreed that the proposal would be submitted to the upcoming General Synod 2013 scheduled to be held in Carman, Manitoba. Such submission will be on a confidential basis and on a basis consistent with the bylaws and policies of the Seminary.
- h. The Publication Committee made a recommendation to complete the translation of further writings of J. Douma, which project will be led and directed by Dr. G.H. Vischer and Dr. N.D. Kloosterman under the supervision of the Publication Committee. Independent funding for the project is being sought. With this understanding the proposal was accepted by the Board.
- i. A further response letter to the Deputies of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia was considered and discussed. The matter of distance learning was at the centre of the discussion and whilst there are advances in this area, the matter remains under review and scrutiny. As the Board continues to hold residual concerns about the impact of distance learning on the Seminary program, it was agreed that a further letter would be forwarded to the FRCA deputies to set out the reservations and issues and seek their response and comment.
- j. The Self Assessment plan was reviewed and milestones adopted. The two primary matters that will have current attention are the completion of a strategic planning exercise and a review of the statement of institutional purpose.
- k. As a new item consideration was given as to whether there should be a formal amendment to the operating bylaw that would mandate that a fixed number of non-ministerial members of the Board of Governors (and thus members of the Finance & Property Committee) be from western Canada. It was decided not to pursue such formal amendment to the bylaw – and continue to invite nominations from western Canada when nominations are required.
- l. Leave was granted to a member of the Board to explore the possibility of having the Seminary's incorporating statute formally amended so that the legal and formal name of the Seminary would be changed to "Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary."

Next meeting of the Board was tentatively scheduled for September 5, 2013, d.v.

Press Release and closing

The completion of the Press Release is delegated to the Vice Chairman in consultation with the Executive and the meeting was closed with prayer and thanksgiving.

*On behalf of the Board of Governors
of the Theological College
of the Canadian Reformed Churches,
operating as the
Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary,
Karl J. Veldkamp,
Vice Chairman/Corresponding Clerk*



Press Release of Classis Central Ontario held March 8, 2013 in Burlington

The convening church of Ottawa had requested that the Rev. Gijsbert Nederveen open the meeting on their behalf. The reason for this irregularity was that since there were only two items on the agenda, the churches at Ottawa and Toronto participated in this classis via teleconference.

The meeting was called to order and after Rev. Nederveen had ascertained that the brothers from Ottawa and Toronto were present online, he led in opening devotions. In his prayer he remembered specifically the Rev. Doug Vandeburgt who, because of health reasons, had received a leave of absence. It was noted with thankfulness to the Lord that Rev. Vandeburgt is taking up some of his ministerial duties again. Also the needs of the Rev. Cornelis Kleyn family in Papua New Guinea was remembered, as the Kleyns have struggled with some illness since moving to PNG. The needs of these brothers and their families were laid before the Lord.

In his opening remarks Rev. Nederveen welcomed in particular the Reverends Peter Feenstra and Jan Huijgen as Deputies for Regional Synod East. Their presence was required in view of the retirement of Rev. Jan DeGelder.

After the credentials were examined, Classis was constituted. Appointed as its chairman was the Rev. Gijsbert Nederveen, and as its clerk the Rev. John van Popta.

The main item on the agenda dealt with the retirement and release of the Rev. Jan DeGelder. Flamborough church requested the concurring advice of Classis, and of the deputies of Regional Synod, to release as per Article 13 CO the Reverend Jan DeGelder from the duties of the office of minister of the Word in Flamborough effective July 1, 2013. The required documents were presented and after the officers of Classis reviewed the financial arrangements and deemed them adequate, Classis concurred with the decision of Flamborough council. The deputies of Regional Synod East gave their concurring advice.

As a consequence of this, Classis decided to grant a most honourable release to the Reverend Jan DeGelder from his ministerial duties in Classis Central Ontario as of July 1, 2013, which is the date on which his retirement from active service in the Flamborough Canadian Reformed Church will take effect. Classis gave Rev. DeGelder a Certificate of Release and also provided the church at Flamborough with a copy of this certificate. Further, Classis commended the Rev. Jan DeGelder, in his retirement, to the Lord with sincere gratitude for the work which he has faithfully carried out during his fourteen years of service in this classis.

The chairman spoke some fitting words of farewell to Rev. DeGelder and some words of encouragement to the consistory members of Flamborough church as they now face a vacancy. He also expressed gratitude to the Lord for what he has given to the churches in the person and ministry of our brother. Reverend DeGelder responded with some appropriate words of farewell to the Classis and of thankfulness to God. The deputies of Regional Synod added some fitting words commending our brother to the Lord and the chairman thanked the deputies for their work.

Classis appointed the church in Burlington-Fellowship to represent Classis Central Ontario at the farewell service of Rev. DeGelder on June 9, 2013.

Other matters

Rehoboth Church at Burlington-Waterdown presented an audit of the Fund for Needy Churches.

The regular appointments for the next classis on June 14, 2013 were made. Toronto is the convening church. The suggested officers are Rev. Doug Vandeburgt as chairman, Rev. John van Popta as vice-chairman, and Rev. George van Popta as clerk.

After the standard items of Question Period, Censure According to Article 34 CO and the approval of the Acts and the Press Release were completed, the clerk closed the meeting with prayer.

For the Classis Central Ontario of March 8, 2013

G. Nederveen 