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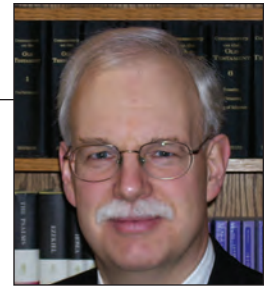
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# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
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**STOP AND PRAY**



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# Stop and Pray

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*"I have so much to do that I shall spend the first  
three hours in prayer"*

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For more than two decades, I have had the privilege of serving on committees that deal with relations with other Reformed and Presbyterian churches. In that capacity, one gets to experience what we confess each Sunday about the one holy catholic church, gathered from all tongues and tribes and nations.

In my visits to meetings of synods, presbyteries, and general assemblies of the Reformed Church in Quebec (ERQ), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), and the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), as well as meetings of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), it stands out that there is a great deal of praying during these meetings. For the casual observer, it appears as if they pray at the drop of a hat. I experienced this again while spending a few days at the General Assembly of the OPC held in Grand Rapids, MI, this past June. Prayer was offered, not simply at the beginning of each day, but at the resumption of the meeting after each recess for coffee or meals. Prayer was offered at the conclusion of the presentation of every committee report. Further, prayer was offered upon the retirement of brothers who had served in various committees for many years. Prayer was also offered after each greeting by representatives from churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. In short, the meeting repeatedly stopped to pray.

This presence of frequent prayer was also highlighted in one of the mid-day devotions based on 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3. In this passage, Paul mentions his constant prayer for the Thessalonians. The speaker mentioned how the General Assembly was a place of constant prayer as it repeatedly stopped to pray.

## Another ". . .and pray" phrase

This "stop and pray" approach brought to mind another ". . .and pray" phrase frequently heard, namely, "work and pray." At times, we even get to hear it in Latin, "*ora et labora*." It is interesting that the English translation reverses the sequence of the Latin.

It seems to me that the phrase is usually invoked to stress the "work" part rather than the "pray" part. There is, after all, the danger of emphasizing dependence upon God to the point of overshadowing our human responsibility. For example, it is one thing to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, but we must also do what we can to work faithfully for the coming of that kingdom. The saying "work and pray," then, is used to get people to work. The words "stop and pray," however, seem to do the opposite. It gets people to pray.

## Scriptural support

It is actually easier to find support in Scripture for the exhortation to "stop and pray" than to "work and pray." There is the example of the Lord Jesus himself, who would often stop to find a quiet place in order to pray to his Father. When the apostles faced a growing demand on their time to look after the widows, they instructed the congregation to find suitable men for that task so that they could continue to give attention "to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). The letters of the Apostle Paul indicate that he spent much time in prayer for the congregations that had come about through his missionary work. For example, we read in 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3, "We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in

our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith. . . .” Paul never forgot the churches he helped establish as he prayed for them.

Praying, however, is not simply an apostolic activity. We also have repeated exhortations to all the readers to pray. In 1 Thesalonians 5:17, 18 we read, “Pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” In Ephesians 6:18, just after having described all the pieces of the armour of faith, Paul writes, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

The editorial for Issue 15 is entitled “Stop and Pray.” Rev. Eric Kampen writes, “We are to begin with prayer. By prayer, we very consciously place our lives before the Lord.”

This issue begins a two-part article from Rev. William den Hollander on Biblical Womanhood. The article was originally a speech at a district meeting of women’s societies. We are also printing several submissions from readers having to do with women’s voting. In the coming weeks, there will be a few more; readers can expect one reply from Dr. Gerhard Visscher to follow.

In other news, Dr. Wes Bredenhof shares news about the Theological Assistance for the Philippines (TAP) committee that has recently been established. This issue also includes a Treasures New and Old meditation, the You Asked column, a report from the Fraser Valley Women’s League Day, and a press release.

*Laura Veenendaal*

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These exhortations to prayer are echoed in Lord's Day 45:116 of the Heidelberg Catechism. There it is confessed that "God will give his grace and the Holy Spirit only to those who constantly and with heartfelt longing ask him for these gifts and thank him for them." Note also there the use of the word "constantly."

When we think of Paul's life, it is obvious that the call to pray continually and on all occasions did not mean his readers should cease all work. If Paul had spent all his life in prayer, he would never have travelled and preached as much as he did. He also provided for his own needs by working as a tent maker. That prayer does not eliminate living a busy life is evident also in the quote attributed to Martin Luther, "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."

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*The need for unscheduled  
"prayer stops" comes out even more  
in times of temptations and conflicts*

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The call to pray constantly and on all occasions is a call to live a life where prayer is an integral part of one's daily activities. To a degree, this has been incorporated into our basic Christian habits, such as prayer before and after meals, bedtime prayers, as well as prayers at meetings and many other functions. If you think through your day, you may find that you come quite close to the Psalmist's praying seven times a day (Ps 119:164).

### **Unscheduled prayer**

The frequency of prayer in the normal course of our Christian life may make it seem unnecessary to be exhorted to stop and pray. If anything, it might seem more necessary to exhort one to "work and pray." At the same time, it is important to consider whether there is good reason to add many unscheduled prayer stops throughout the day. For example, when there is reason for thankfulness, does that have to wait? This is so both in personal situations and in meetings and assemblies. When there is need for intercession for a loved one, is it even possible to wait for the next scheduled prayer stop? One can simply lay matters before the Lord in prayer. In a public function, it is possible to offer a short and focused prayer of thanksgiving or intercession.

The need for unscheduled "prayer stops" comes out even more in times of temptations and conflicts. Think of a brother or sister who is struggling to stay away from Internet porn, or who is struggling to deal with a drug

or alcohol addiction. I highlight that they are struggling. They want to do what is right, but sin is enticing them. What if they, in that very moment of temptation, would stop and pray, putting the struggle against the particular temptation before the Lord, before the next click, before reaching for the next drink, or the next joint? Or, think of a situation where a husband and wife can sense their marriage is heading in the wrong direction and they would like to turn it around, but then they end up in an argument again. What if they would say to each other, "Let us stop and pray"? How would they look at each other after they have just directed their hearts to their Saviour and pleaded for his Spirit? Would they not realize again that they are fellow heirs? Similarly, when a loud argument develops between a teenager and his or her parents and it looks like mean words and regrettable actions are about to happen, what if someone would say, "Let us stop and pray"?

We can extend the list of situations. We can think of an office bearer, who has to make a difficult disciplinary type visit, or he has to make a visit to a brother or sister diagnosed with a terminal disease, and he does not know if he will have the right words. Again, it is a time to stop and pray. Similarly, if two brothers in the Lord get into a big argument, what if they would stop and pray, and then look at each other again? Would they not have a different perspective, seeing each other as brothers bought by Christ's blood?

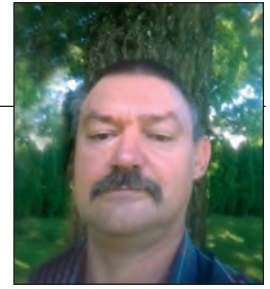
### **Stop, pray, work, stop. . .**

When we think it through, the words "stop and pray," do not contradict the familiar saying of "work and pray." They do serve as a necessary corrective, showing us where the emphasis has to be. It was pointed out that the English "work and pray" reverses the sequence of the Latin, "pray and work." We are to begin with prayer. By prayer, we very consciously place our lives before the Lord. Living our lives very consciously before the Lord will also mean that we will feel the need to stop and pray frequently for his grace and Holy Spirit in order to keep in step with the Spirit.



**AND**





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# Misplaced Guilt

***“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”***

(Proverbs 22:6)

Some of my most difficult discussions have been with parents whose children had just recently left the church. Some talked about how painful it was for them to pray together with the minister and the congregation for their children. Others told me that walking out of the church building afterwards was also a challenge: some people spoke to them as if nothing had happened; most maintained an uncomfortable silence; and just a few offered what they considered to be words of comfort.

I hasten to add that none of these parents were surprised by the reaction of their fellow church members. Instead they all remembered: “Before my children left the church, there were others. And did I know what to say to them? Did I have an idea of what they were going through?” When anybody’s children leave the church, it’s natural to think about Proverbs 22:6. But what conclusions should we draw this time, or next time?

Of course, what people think is not the most important. If people blame me when my children leave the church, that is only a human judgment. What matters more is God’s opinion, what the Bible says. But then doesn’t Proverbs 22 say that *if* parents do a decent job, *then* their children will never depart from God’s way? That seems to be a promise of the gospel, a God-given guarantee: If parents are faithful, their children will be Christians for the rest of their lives. In this way God seems to separate good parents from

bad parents. Good parents have all their children in the church, while bad parents have children who leave the church. For some parents this Word of God is even harder to take than seeing their children leave the church in the first place: God seems to blame them!

The reality is, though, that Proverbs are not promises. Instead Proverbs are wise sayings, based on what godly people see and experience and expect to happen in life. Take Proverbs 10:27 for example: “The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.” What is this proverb saying about people who die at a young age? That they were all wicked? Of course not! In fact, in times of persecution, wickedness (by denying Christ) can add length to life, but the years of those who fear the Lord can be cut short (as martyrs). But the principle is still valid: We should fear the Lord and trust him to bless us, while those who live godless and undisciplined lives can expect trouble.

And it’s the same with parenting. We should train our children in the way of the Lord, trusting him to work in their hearts. And children who grow up in ungodly households are more likely to turn their backs on the Lord. But these are only proverbs, observations of godly men, not promises of God!

One hurting mother made a comment that was particularly helpful. She told me: “After my son left the church, people tried to comfort me by

telling me that ‘I did my best.’ Those people meant well, but that comment hurt. For when I thought back over my years of parenting, I remembered many occasions when I had not done my best. When we had visitors, and I heard my children fighting, I did not always respond in the best possible way. And when my son was a teenager I gave him too much freedom.” Which parents can honestly say that they always did their best? If we comfort ourselves by insisting that we tried hard, we kid ourselves.

Instead we must believe that God is sovereign, and our children belong to him. He never promised any parents that their children would believe the gospel. He never promised any parents that their children would go to heaven. Our salvation does not depend on our own efforts, we learned from Martin Luther in the days of the Reformation, and the salvation of our children does not depend on our own efforts either.

It is important that Christian parents take their responsibility seriously. But ultimately we must believe that good parenting does not save children. Instead, as parents we depend on the electing grace of our covenant God! May he give comfort to Christian parents who already experience pain because they see their children make bad choices. And may he remove from their shoulders any extra burden of guilt which they might carry because they misunderstand Proverbs 22:6. **C**



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# Biblical Womanhood: The place of the woman in creation and recreation

*This two-part article was originally a speech delivered at the District Meeting of the Women Societies in the Niagara Peninsula on May 1, 2014.*

I consider it a great honour and privilege that I, a man, can speak to a gathering of women about “biblical womanhood.” I realize that the only way in which I can do so effectively and fruitfully (and safely, I should add!) will be by speaking to you as sisters in the Lord. We have our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in common, and we share the conviction that our view and understanding of “the woman” and “womanhood” can be determined only on the basis of the authoritative Word of God. Hence, it’s standing on this solid and common foundation that I, as a man, have the courage to address you on the topic of biblical womanhood. Of course, I am aware of the magnitude of the matter, so that I can only present to you a profile based on God’s Word.

## **The woman in creation**

We should begin our treatise of this topic in the beginning, at the moment of God’s creation of man: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; *male* and *female* he created them.” Man was special in the way God created him, and he was unique in the gifts God bestowed on him: his form, his thinking, his abilities, and his spiritual life. Hence man received a unique position in which to show himself the image of God, his representative and steward on earth, who received from the spirit of God for this unique and high function. Therefore, when we see a man, we see God’s image and likeness. God created him with special care and competence.

Of course, he’s still only a man and not God himself; yet, in his existence, his being, his body, his beauty, and

his abilities of heart and mind we see some of the glory and majesty of God our Creator. We see this in both man and woman, for both were created in God’s image: in man and his being, in man’s work and strength, we see some of the majesty and kingship of God; in woman and her care, her ability to bear children, we see some of God’s creative energies and of God’s cherishing loving arms! That’s how man is God’s image, showing each in their own gifts and potential some of the greatness and wisdom and powers of creation of the triune God!

When God created man male and female he did so upon his own observation, “It is not good that the man should be alone.” Man was not complete unto himself, and he had come to realize this. Man is incomplete and in need of the help, inspiration, warmth, and balance imparted by the woman, as his wife. God created woman to share with man his life, his plans, his hopes and dreams. Woman was created specifically to help the man. God created them, male and female, in complementary harmony! Hence, when the Bible teaches that men and women fulfil different roles in relation to each other, charging man with a unique leadership role, it bases this differentiation not on temporary cultural norms but on permanent facts of creation. Differentiated roles were created by God.

## **The woman in recreation: restored in her place by the LORD**

The Bible as the book containing the history of *salvation* evidently does not contain much information about this work of creation but rather reveals to us God’s work of *recreation* after the fall of man into sin. We also do not read much of what has *changed* through man’s fall into sin; yet, it is remarkable to hear the LORD pronounce judgment on the woman. In Genesis 3:16 we hear the LORD

mention specifically two areas of the woman's life: child-bearing and *her relationship to her husband*. It is the latter that's important to the consideration of the place of the woman in God's work of recreation. Immediately following the fall into sin, in which we see the woman take the lead and deceive her husband to share in her sin, the LORD says, "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (NIV). At this time it's impossible to share with you *all* the interpretations and explanations pertaining to these words.

A special study of these words, also and especially in comparison with a similar expression in Genesis 4:7b, justifies a *better translation* by saying, "Your desire will be for your husband, *but* he will rule over you." In Genesis 4:7b, in the story about Cain and Abel, the LORD addresses Cain, using an expression similar to the one in 3:16, saying, "Sin is crouching at the door; it desires to have you, *but* you must master it." The Hebrew conjunction *waw*, which is sometimes translated as "and," can also be translated as "but," depending on the context. The same structure and expression is found in 3:16, where the LORD says to the woman, "Your desire will be for your husband, *but* he will rule over you." In other words, as a *primary* concern the LORD alerts man and woman to the changed dynamic in their *sinful nature*, namely that it will be her *desire* to contend with him for *leadership* in their relationship! The LORD, however, by his Word of *recreation*, corrects the sinful and distorted desire and inclination for *woman's* leadership by restoring immediately the creation ordinance of the *man's* rule and headship over the woman! Hence, the LORD restores the sound and solid basis of creation in their relationship by pointing the woman to her continued position of submission as a helper meet and the man's continued calling to be her head and rule over her.

The LORD God maintains his mandate but its execution will be much more difficult: sin will corrupt man's life! The woman will experience trouble in her motherhood; in her relationship to her husband, too, there will be tension. She will want to take his place, as she did when she seduced him; she will want to rule the roost, *but he* will rule over her! The *man* also will encounter trouble in his life, in his work. It's in the midst of this troubled situation that the LORD gave the mother promise, the promise of the Saviour of life! It's to that reality that Adam responds and makes confession of his faith in life: Adam gives his wife a new name; he changes her name drastically. In the sight of pain and trouble, enmity and death according to God's judgment over them, and in response to the LORD's mother promise, Adam doesn't call her Woman again; neither does he call her "this woman" (as he as sinful husband was inclined to speak of her, "*This woman* that you gave me. . ."),

but he calls her "Eve," Mother! Adam himself steps back; he doesn't name her after himself any longer; no longer does he consider her from a human point of view, but he humbles himself before God and says, "Mother, mother of all living!"

### ***The mother promise: the Word of life and hope***

In the seed born of her there will be *life*, hope, and salvation! From her the *life-giver* will come, who will be the second Adam! With this confession Adam shows his leadership again; he shows his leadership as head of his wife and confesses, "The woman will be saved in child bearing!" (1 Tim 2:15) The LORD maintained his mandate in the way Adam will explore and develop the earth; he also repeats the blessing "be fruitful and multiply," which he reiterates to Noah after the flood as well, to Abraham after the Babylonian confusion again, for in the generations they and all nations will be blessed. Hence, it is in Psalms like 128 that we see the fulfilment of the promise and the evidence of the LORD's blessing in the way of child bearing. Indeed, central in the blessed life in the LORD is the building of a family.

### ***The place of the woman in the covenant of the LORD***

This way of life under the blessing of the LORD has been important ever since the people of the LORD came to Canaan. Just before they entered the land, Moses reiterated this significance, where he stated in the book of Deuteronomy: Israel will be blessed when living in the fear of the LORD, when going in the ways of the LORD, blessed in the city, in the field, *in the fruit of the womb*, in the defence of life against the enemy. Eventually, this blessing became focused on Jerusalem, on Zion, from where the life of salvation, reconciliation, and restoration would follow God's people to their towns and villages, yes to their family homes! Indeed, that's what we see illustrated in Psalm 128: 2, 3, in the life of the man who fears the LORD: in his work, with a wife, by a family. In the OT the perspective of family life was in the promised Messiah; in order to guarantee the true life with the LORD for evermore to all generations, there had to be a people from whom the Messiah would be born. A family with children would be present at his coming; and in the children the parents greeted him from afar!

Also in the NT dispensation it is in this particular way that the LORD blesses the God fearing family. As the *primary* way of church building is in the covenant way of family building, the blessing of the LORD still may be seen in the children he gives. The Apostle Paul says of the woman, "Yet

woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty” (1 Tim 2:15). That means that for the women in the church God’s work of salvation will be manifest in their life by the gift of children to them! Let this be an encouragement and reason for joy to the mothers among us. Becoming a mother is hard and heavy; giving birth to children is a work of trouble and pain. Yet, the richness is that also today child bearing is church building! It has to be. This is the blessing of the LORD: the work helps to bring the innumerable crowd around God’s throne to completion!

### **The place of the woman: the single and childless**

Allow me to pause here for one moment, and state explicitly that as we develop a biblical view of womanhood we are aware of the fact that there are sisters among us who are single, not married, as well as those who have no children. As you will have understood by now, in a scriptural sense we may say that such situations are the exception and their circumstances abnormal. The Lord said that it was not good for man to be alone, while His blessing to man shows in him being fruitful and multiplying. Yet, this should not lead us to consider the single incomplete or half people or the childless no family. Although from a creational point of view we could speak of a creation disorder, the work of the Holy Spirit certainly is restorative or corrective or compensatory enough to make people very fulfilled and complete in their single state.

The Bible knows many fruitful unmarried people, such as Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, Anna, Dorcas, and the Apostle Paul as well. As Isaiah prophesied in chapter 56:3, the single among the people of God are not a fruitless tree. With the Psalmist of Psalm 113 we may confess as well that the LORD “settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children.” Ultimately, the goal of our life as man and woman, as married or single, is not to be married or not but to live for God in our life which He directs. In the light of the NT charismata we may place as well the peculiar calling, opportunities, and gifts of the unmarried and childless, which makes them equal and adequate for the church of God! No, then we do not try to idealize the state of the unmarried, as we do not romanticize marriage either, but we seek the full employment of our talents and life under the providence of God the Father with the help of God the Spirit for the church and kingdom of the Son!

### **The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31**

So the question “what is a biblical woman like?” can be recognized in the one asked in Proverbs 31 as well, “A wife of noble character who can find?” This chapter is at the end of a book in which the Wisdom has looked at all of life, considering the wisdom *for life*, inviting to wisdom *in life*. In view of the entire complexity of life, the final question again must be, “A good wife who can find?” Then we must be aware of the fact, of course, that here the question is asked in a situation of brokenness, in a world fallen in sin, fallen away from the Creator. In that world, the Wisdom, which is the Word, the Son of God before his incarnation, wants to work on the recreation of life, the restoration of brokenness. In this book, the Word of Wisdom has revealed himself as the answer to such restoration; so hence, the question returns. When the Wisdom has recreated all of life, who can find a good wife for such a life in wisdom, in order? For indeed, where does the life of recreation and restoration begin? In the family! In the household of the restored people of God! There the life with the Re-creator in wisdom is lived; it’s the basic workshop of the Holy Spirit! That’s where it all started in creation too, and to that basis recreation must return! Thus, the request for the revelation is the request for the complete life in singleness of heart to the Creator!

This passage, then, is a beautiful poem, an *acrostic* (alphabetic poem), in which we see such a woman, such a wife, who gives herself with heart and soul to her work! It’s true, the circumstances described in it are unique. The woman’s situation is peculiar, not just by today’s standards, but also for the women at the time of writing. Her household is a royal estate of such proportions that it exceeds the property and household of most people. The Holy Spirit, who inspired the author however, did have a special purpose for using this situation to convey his message of wisdom. This woman is involved all the way in work that’s typical for a woman!

The situation of most house wives may differ, and so may their talents, their means, yet central in the description is: she lives for her husband from beginning to end; her husband’s honour and business is her foremost concern. In that place of submission we see her come to glory! In that position she also receives glory! Even if we may envy her somewhat, let’s not underestimate her responsibilities, her position: it’s more difficult as well to stay humble, to remain a submissive wife, and to live for her husband. Yes, greatest of all, therefore, is the testimony: she fears the LORD! She knows him, the LORD, as the God who gives to each his or her place, and who gives his blessing in that place.



The song depicts the woman's life, this here and that there. It's moving back and forth; it's not a catalogue, categorizing her life neatly, but it's moving back and forth and back to the previous point again. This way it shows in the complete and unified beauty of its structure a realistic picture of daily life. This is what a household is like. This is what life in general is like, but a household more than anything else! In offices and shops we try to streamline things efficiently by order, by routine, and in a household this should be aimed for as well. Still, in the actual daily practice it's going here and then there: the program of the washer, feeding times of the baby, the telephone, the visits, the groceries, and the chores keep the mothers hopping. She has to handle it all, stay in control, be competent in all aspects, and still be organized, orderly in all the hustle and bustle of a household from A to Z! That's how it is described!

### ***The result of recreation and restoration in the life of the virtuous woman***

"She is worth far more than rubies!" Then we see that the same words that are applied to Wisdom and Wisdom personified in chapter 3 and 8, are here applied to the good wife. This woman is the example of wisdom, a walking and working example of wisdom! It means the good wife we are speaking about is the woman who is redeemed by the Wisdom; the recreated wife! A woman who fears the LORD is to be praised, it says as a conclusion to the song. Wisdom and a good wife and a woman who fears the LORD are all worth more than rubies! That's a word for all, for the married and the unmarried, for the women with or without children, for those who have a large estate and those who have humble means! The matter is not whether Sr. A or sr. B meets the standards of this virtuous woman; the message is not "teaching the sisters in the church a lesson about the abilities of the ideal woman." No, the Scripture shows us first of all the coming of God in the Word, the recreation of God by the Wisdom of the Spirit! That's the message with its evidence in the everyday busyness of a family household! This passage shows us the grace of the Son of God in whose wisdom creation is restored. For where, I ask you, in all of society and civilization does life come together, showing a complete picture of what life is all about, but in the picture of a family, a household? In that setting we find all the joys and sorrows, the prosperity and adversity, the ups and downs, the troubles and tensions of life concentrated. The Wisdom from God restores that completeness of life!

### ***The glory of the LORD in the life of the recreated woman***

What's described in Proverbs 31 is not a series of virtues, which you either have or don't have; it's not a description first and foremost of a specially gifted housewife with whom the occasional man is blessed. On the contrary, in this song we see a woman who acts the way she does because she has found the Wisdom! She knows her Bible, her Catechism so to speak, and in the light of the Word she knows her task. This Wisdom makes the gifts needed for the task, wherever the LORD has placed you, for the task that agrees with the recreation of your calling. True wisdom teaches this place; true wisdom shows this task; the Wisdom confers the talents to her who thus shows the fear of the LORD! That's what we see: she runs her household in the fear of the LORD, with the wisdom of God. It teaches her the priorities, the order, the discipline; that's what makes her wise, frugal, prudent in all her tasks. The whole household is founded on that wisdom: the man uses it for his work of judgment, trade, and commerce in the gates, for his calling in the renewed kingdom of God. It's the restored creation portrayed: 1) the reformed *man* in his original position of leadership; 2) the renewed *woman* in her place, role, and creation-activities; and 3) the *children* sharing in the blessed peace of God's wisdom!

Let's never get used to the crux of the gospel. Let's be aware of the fact that this value of preciousness is ascribed to the *woman*, i.e., to her who of all mankind fell first, to her who deceived her husband! She, who first deceived, is changed by the wisdom so much that her value exceeds the price of rubies! At the time of the fall, she did not consider the Word of the Wisdom greater than all the gifts on earth. At that time she appreciated more the appearance of things; she went for looks, for outward attraction to things: she placed the fruit of the tree above her joy in the Wisdom. Now, however, she has received the LORD's wisdom in faith as more precious. That's regeneration; thus her life is reconciled to God. It means that in her daily life she shows that everything is good between God and her; she lives for Him!

*Thus far the revelation of biblical womanhood in the Old Testament. In the second part of this speech we will address God's revelation in the New Testament, and the place of the woman in the church today.*



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# Turning on the TAP for Reformed Believers in the Philippines



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

Social media is making the world feel much smaller. Through Facebook and other apps, we can have real-time interactions with people all over the globe. This amazing potential can and should be harnessed for the advance of the gospel. In fact, it is being harnessed and to great effect.

## **The connection**

It was through Facebook that the Providence church in Hamilton first came into contact with Rev. Glem Melo. Rev. Melo and his wife Aymi had been Pentecostal pastors in the Philippines for a number of years. However, through various providential circumstances, God led them out of Pentecostalism and to the Reformed faith. In the last stages of that journey, Rev. Melo came into contact with me, the pastor of the Providence church. We became friends on Facebook in 2010.

Rev. Melo had done a lot of self-study in Reformed theology, but he was eager for someone to teach him in a more formal way. Additionally, through his previous life as a Pentecostal pastor, Rev. Melo had contacts throughout his city of Cagayan de Oro and across the Philippines. He was eager to teach whoever would listen about the Reformed faith and he also pleaded for our help in doing this. To that end, he began corresponding with the consistory of the Providence church. We had several pleas for help from this brother. I was able to provide some theological training via Skype, but this was less than ideal. The connection between the Philippines and Canada was always tenuous and the technology not always reliable – that aside from the inherent limitations of teaching via Skype at the best of times. Could Providence do more?

Initially, the church was reluctant to get involved. After all, who was this Rev. Melo and was he for real? Con-artists and charlatans are always begging Reformed churches for “help” and it makes us naturally suspicious. Besides that, the Philippines is literally on the other side

of the world – surely there are others better positioned to help than us! Eventually, two of our seminary professors had an opportunity to meet with Rev. Melo in Australia and Singapore. They brought back favourable reports of the brother. In 2012, Rev. Melo was able to visit with our church in Hamilton. This face-to-face contact was essential in building trust. Later that same year, while en route to a speaking engagement elsewhere, I could spend a few days in the Philippines with Rev. Melo and his contacts in the city of Cagayan de Oro. I could also bring back a good report of this visit.

In the meantime, our Australian sister churches were also getting involved. Specifically, Rev. Stephen t’Hart (pastor of the Baldivis FRCA) and Rev. Carl Vermeulen (pastor of the Darling Downs FRCA) were in contact with Rev. Melo and providing theological training via Skype. Eventually, all this led to the Baldivis congregation establishing a committee that would work towards helping the brothers in the Philippines. Rev. t’Hart and Br. Hendrik de Jonge also made an exploratory visit to the Philippines in 2012.

## **Theological Assistance for the Philippines committee**

In early 2013, Rev. Melo made another plea for the help of the Providence church. The elders and deacons decided to establish an ad-hoc committee to study the matter and make a proposal. In May of 2013, a proposal was adopted to establish the Theological Assistance for the Philippines (TAP) committee.

The main mandate of TAP is to provide seminary-level theological training for Reformed or reforming believers in the Philippines. To that end, we are intent on sending qualified teaching personnel twice per year from Canada. We recognize the enormous value of face-to-face interaction and personal mentoring and this is

why we want to send people there, rather than use Skype for this teaching. A lot of Reformed church life is better caught than taught and for this reason, we want to send our people for two-week stretches to live and work among our Filipino brothers and sisters.

We are cooperating closely with the Baldivis FRCA in this project. They also hope to send personnel twice per year from Australia. We hope to coordinate our efforts so that high-level theological training will be available in the Philippines on a quarterly basis.

The first TAP teaching trip took place this past February. Two members of the TAP committee, John Langendoen and Joe Bontekoe, joined me for a two week stint. We spent a little more than a week in Cagayan de Oro (on the main southern island of Mindanao) and the rest of our time was spent in the city of Malolos (on Luzon, just to the north of Manila). It was an incredibly busy but fruitful time. In the two places mentioned, I taught a Reformation Church History course. I also preached and did some other teaching and mentoring. There were numerous hours of out-of-classroom discussions with Rev. Melo and other Reformed believers from all over the Philippines. We also had the opportunity to meet with Rev. t'Hart and Br. de Jonge and discuss our relationship with Baldivis.

In our short stay, we were struck by the real struggles that newly Reformed believers face in the Philippines. Leaving Pentecostalism or evangelicalism behind has come at a cost for many of them, especially those in positions of leadership. They've traded larger and superficially glorious churches for much smaller congregations where the faithful preaching of the gospel stands central. This brings many challenges and we're eager to come alongside them to pray for and encourage them however we can.



*Riding the traditional Filipino mode of transport – the jeepney!*



*The Providence delegation (Joe Bontekoe, John Langendoen, Wes Bredenhof) meeting with Filipino brothers Jeff Uriarte and Ernel Tacandong*

### **What's next?**

What's next for TAP? The committee is already working on organizing the next trip. One of our experienced senior ministers is slated to go to the Philippines in the fall to teach Reformed church polity. This was identified as an area of great need. Many of our contacts have little understanding of how Reformed church polity functions. They have a basic understanding of some of the principles, but they lack in understanding how these principles are implemented in Reformed church life. We're confident that our instructor will be able to help them further in their journey towards being Reformed.

It's worth noting that the TAP committee's mandate includes exploring ways that our Filipino brothers and sister can help us on our Reformed journey too. We recognize that the Holy Spirit has not only blessed us with knowledge and insights, but also them. We look forward to working with them in a mutually beneficial way as partners in Christ's catholic church.

We're eager to see what our God will do in the Philippines in the next few years. Like in Brazil and elsewhere, there are more and more people discovering the Reformed confessions. Increasingly, Filipinos are seeing the biblical riches entrusted to Reformed churches and they're eager to enjoy those riches with us. All of this is being accelerated by the Internet and social media like Facebook. At the Providence church, we're glad that we can help in a small way and we pray that the LORD will use our efforts to advance gospel truth and glorify his great Name!





*William den Hollander*  
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# Q

- a) We believe that it is every believer's duty to join the church and be part of the one body of Christ (BC, Art. 28). Do churches have the same duty to join other true churches and maintain that unity in word and deed?
- b) Can church unity-in-faith exist without unity-in-church-governance? Is church unity in doctrine without conduct not also useless?
- c) Is the present situation during the past decade molding us to get used to church plurality under the name of pluriformity, denominationalism or unity in diversity?

# A

When we confess the catholicity of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in Lord's Day 21 and Belgic Confession Article 27, we profess her "unity in the true faith" and we express this faith by saying about her that the church "is joined and united with heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith." In the local church, true believers manifest this unity in the true faith in her life as the one body of Christ, at the one table of the Lord, and in the way of its members being a hand and a foot to each other (1 Cor 12). The Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 4:3-6, also exhorts the church at Ephesus to maintain this unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The local church is obliged to exercise this unity in the body established by Christ through His Spirit and Word, and manifest it in every way it can!

This manifestation of the unity in the true faith certainly includes the unity among true churches of Christ as well. As we see Christ moving among the seven lampstands in Revelation 1, and hear him address the churches in Asia Minor (Revelation 2, 3), we see him manifest this unity in himself first of all. Hence, what applies to the members of one body also applies to the Churches of Christ in whatever country it has pleased the Lord to

establish them. Christ himself prays for this manifestation of the unity, which reflects the unity in the truth of the Trinity (John 17:11, 15); it also is a further manifestation of Christ's love for the world! Thus, there must be a desire for the expression of this unity in a federation of churches, in order that the churches may help each other, watch over each other, and doing so in an organized manner. It also shows very clearly in a will for ecumenicity, which is expressed in the pursuit of church unity with other faithful (federations of) churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our federation of Canadian Reformed Churches has recognized this unity in the true faith, and Christ's preservation in the truth, in the federation of the United Reformed Churches in North America (among others). This recognition thankfully did not stop at the acknowledgment of such unity in doctrine, in confessional standards, and in a common church polity rooted in the Church Order of Dort; it also led to the pursuit of ecclesiastical unity with an aim for complete union. We have been working hard in this pursuit and by the grace of God we may see tremendous and miraculous progress in Canada (where this pursuit is more feasible due to the closer geographic vicinity of its churches than with the URCNA in the US) in the interaction and integration of our two

federations in various ways of an ecclesiastical nature as well as in many an activity in other areas of life!

We continue to be engaged in this process toward a complete organic union by addressing those matters such as a common church order and the theological education in the training for the ministry (as well as the way we will resolve the issue of the songbook). The Lord willing, in the coming two years the two committees for church unity (CERCU of the URCNA and the CCU of the Canadian Reformed Churches) will be able to prepare a plan of union to be implemented in the years after 2016, the Lord willing and in his time. Given such an intense and serious pursuit of church unity, expressing the scriptural will for ecumenicity, we consciously wish to avert the danger of pluralism, which would open the door to an infinite individualism;

#### ACCEPTED AND DECLINED

Accepted the call to the Bethel CanRC of Toronto, ON and declined the call to the Grace CanRC of Winnipeg, MB and Grace CanRC of Kerwood, ON:

#### Candidate Gerrit Brintjes

Accepted the call to the Taber CanRC and declined the calls to the Redeemer CanRC of Winnipeg, MB (to serve as a missionary) and the Ebenezer CanRC of Burlington, ON:

#### Candidate Tyler Vandergaag

Accepted the call to the Free Reformed Church of Bunbury, Western Australia:

#### Candidate Dave Winkel

### CHURCH NEWS

we also seek to avoid the practice of pluriformity of the church which would undermine such call to unity wherever we can and may! The church, indeed, is the pillar and foundation of the truth; and this truth unites believers, congregations, and federations!



**Is there something you've been wanting to know?**

**An answer you've been looking for?**

**Ask us a question!**

**Please direct questions to Rev. W. denHollander**

**[denhollanderw@gmail.com](mailto:denhollanderw@gmail.com)**

**23 Kinsman Drive, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0**

#### Correction

In the June 20 issue the article title for *Clippings on Politics and Religion* should have read "Islamic Silence and Violence." Our apologies to Rev. Van Dam for this error.

### Dear Editors,

I am writing this letter in concern for the direction that Prof. G.H. Visscher is heading into with his article on women voting. He ends his article with the idea that certain women of the church are marginalized because they cannot vote. There are no texts in Scripture that can direct us either way, but I have concerns of the general idea that the women need the power of the vote. In Paul's instruction to Timothy about the role and position of women in 1 Timothy 2:9-15, he ends by saying, "But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint" (ESV). The women in the church have a great responsibility in the church in raising and nurturing the next generation of men. They will have the most influence on the children in those younger, formative years. Even if the Lord does not give marriage (children) to some, these members could (should) take the time to involve themselves in influencing the next generation. Do not deny the impact that daily devotions (teaching) have on young children. The world wants us to believe that women are not fulfilled unless they put their children in daycare and make the big decisions in the business world, which is a lie. We as churches need to tell the women that they play a great role in the preservation of the church.

*Marvin Vreugdenhil  
Lynden, WA*

### Dear Editors,

I'm sure that we all read with interest Dr. Visscher's three part article on the matter of "sisters voting." Many valid points were raised and I thank the brother for taking the time and expending the effort. But I do have one


concern (obviously, or I would not be writing a letter to the editor). That concern hinges on the definition given of the act of voting itself. If we look back through Acts of previous synods I think this question was raised at one of them, "What exactly is voting?" And now, with the passage of time and effort, it seems to be a matter of stating one's personal preference out of the slate that council places before the congregation.

This is where I place a big question mark. What if I simply do not have a preference of certain brothers over others? Do I then in all honesty abstain from voting? And why should personal preference be restricted to only professed members? Some of our older children might also have a preference, most would probably not. Now these are just personal scenarios and anybody could dream up "what ifs." More important is the question of where in Scripture do we find the basis for this definition?

Dr. Visscher, near the end of his article, did express the concern that we as churches do not make decisions on the basis of premises that are neither scriptural nor Reformed. We all, as readers of Clarion and as brothers and sisters in the Lord, should give this some careful thought.

*Norm Schuurman  
Lincoln, ON*

### Note:

*A response to the various letters on this topic will be written by Dr. G.H. Visscher in an upcoming issue of Clarion.* 



*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.*

# Should Sisters Vote for Officebearers? No.

## A Response to Dr. G.H. Visscher

It is with interest, but also some concern, that I have followed the three-part series by Dr. G.H. Visscher regarding “Should Sisters Vote for Officebearers?” He dealt with this issue by looking at:

- Is voting advising or governing?
- Is there such a thing as “the headship of man”?
- Is a synod to be governed by democratic principles?
- Is this really to be considered as a matter of the “churches in common”?

Allow me for now to respond to the first two points in some detail.

### **Is voting advising or governing?**

Dr. Visscher comes to an emphatic conclusion when he states, “Ultimately, any view which suggests that members of the congregation are doing more than giving advice or stating a preference to the consistory is working out of a framework which suggests that the congregation is a decision making body itself.” I find this a very strange conclusion. Let me first of all say that I totally agree with Dr. Visscher and other correspondents when they say that the ultimate authority in the congregation lies with the office bearers and that at congregational meetings the consistory is careful not to entertain motions but receive advice. However, when the consistory, in the specific situation of electing office bearers, asks the congregation to make a decision and agrees ahead of time to abide by that decision (subject to lawful objections) then they have not abrogated their rightful authority. The churches have promised to accept the decision by members of the congregation as spelled out in Article 3 of the Church Order.

This is not any different than when the consistories agree to abide by the decisions of a broader assembly (Art 31 CO). Obviously, a classis or general synod does not govern the local churches, yet these assemblies do make

decisions because a church or churches have asked them to do so. So, to state that in voting for office bearers the members of the congregation only give advice or state a preference is not correct. They make a decision.

This also becomes very clear in another provision of the accepted church order. Article 5.C., dealing with the calling of a minister of the Word, stipulates that classis is to ensure “that the congregation has given *its approval* to the call”! (Emphasis added). With the calling of a minister (also an office bearer) the consistory typically only proposes a single name. When members of the congregation vote you certainly cannot say that they express a preference; it is yes or no. Even in the “trivial” example of Dr. Visscher buying his grandchildren an ice cream he fails to recognize that his grandchildren are making a *decision*. *They decide* what flavour they want. Regardless of who initiated the offer or who pays for the offer, they ultimately decide. Not because they have authority over their grandfather, but because he has ahead of time agreed to accept their decision.

Dr. Visscher, in my opinion, is also incorrect when he introduces the examples of the sisters in the congregation being allowed to suggest names of brothers who could serve, and object to brothers who are nominated. (Incidentally, I would suggest they should object to brothers having been appointed.) He is incorrect to compare these steps in the process to be the same as voting. Suggesting names and objecting to brothers is not a matter of making a decision. It is the consistory that decides to actually place the names on the list of nominees. And it is the consistory that verifies the objections brought forward and decides whether they are valid or not.

So, is voting advising or governing? I consider this to be a false dilemma, because it is neither. The congregation decides it is either this brother or that brother; it is either a yes or a no. The consistory will not overrule that decision because they have agreed ahead of time to accept it.

Therefore there is nothing wrong for “a synod to even talk about a ‘decision of the congregation’” which Dr. Visscher finds so incredulous. This also means that if the sisters in the congregation were to participate in the voting for office bearers they would, for the above reasons, not exercise authority or be in a ruling position over the consistory. They would, however, be able to overrule or rule over the male members of the congregation.

### ***Is there such a thing as the headship of man?***

That brings us to the next issue – Is there such a thing as “the headship of man”?

Dr. Visscher agrees with Synod Carman that the texts mentioned in Consideration 3.5 (*Acts G.S Carman 2013* Art 110) prove beyond a doubt “that a married man is to be the head of his wife” (Gen 2, Eph 5:22-23, 1 Pet 3:5) and that “there can be no doubt either that throughout the Old Testament men are described as having the authority and leadership roles and that in the New Testament too women should not have positions of authority over men in the church (1 Tim 2:11-13; cf. 1 Cor 11).” However, Dr. Visscher cannot conclude from a careful reading of the above texts:

1. That voting is a matter of having authority over a man
2. That voting is a matter in which a woman must be subject to her husband
3. That every woman is subject to a man as her head.

Regarding “a” Dr. Visscher proceeds with reiterating the same points he tried to make in his previous article in *Clarion* (Vol 63, No 10), namely that voting is not a matter of governing but simply a stating of a preference. For the sake of trying to keep my response from becoming too long, I will not repeat what I have already stated above. I will only say that I agree it is not a matter of governing, but I do not agree that it is just a matter of stating a preference; it is making a decision. And, as I also pointed out above, comparing the act of voting with the “suggesting of names” and the “objecting to appointments” is not helpful; it is comparing apples with oranges.

Regarding “b” Dr. Visscher starts with the assumed position that voting is only a matter of stating a preference and then questions if a woman necessarily has to get her preference for an office bearer from her husband. Again, a false dilemma. I would suggest that in a

Christian husband/wife relationship the husband would discuss this matter with his wife and together come to a conclusion. If they cannot agree then the husband in his leadership position makes the final decision. For a wife to be able to vote and overrule her husband’s decision would indicate that she does not respect his God-given position as head of his wife. The form for marriage used in our churches still maintains this scriptural principle when it asks the bride if she promises to “love and obey him.”

Regarding “c” and the matter of the headship of man Dr. Visscher finds himself “hard-pressed to find exactly that concept in Scriptures.” He confirms that “the result of the fall is that Eve is to be further subjected to her husband who will rule over her (Gen 3:16).” He further reviews some of the texts in the New Testament: Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, Titus 2:4-5, 1 Peter 3:1-5, and cf. 1 Corinthians 14:35. He states that in five of the six times the phrase “your husband” is used, the additional word “*idioi*” (own) is used. This is very important because the word *idioi* (own) points to the fact that it is the woman’s own man (husband). So these texts more properly support the headship of husband over wife as dealt with in “b” above.

Then Dr. Visscher comes to 1 Corinthians 11 and says “similarly. . . Paul is urging wives to cover their heads; [Paul] is not saying that all women must cover their heads.” Is that so? How does Br. Visscher know this? I know I am starting to tread on dangerous grounds because my knowledge of the Greek language is less than zero. I have been told however, and have checked my trustworthy website [scripture4all.org](http://scripture4all.org)<sup>1</sup> that the Greek language does not have an equivalent for the English word “husband” or for the word “wife.” The Greek always uses the words man or woman (same as in the Dutch man and “*vrouw*”). In all of 1 Corinthians 11 the additional word *idioi* (own) is not found. Therefore it is a personal interpretation of Dr. Visscher to use the word wives here. I am aware that the ESV also uses the word wives. It is interesting to note though that most Bible translations (KJV, RKJV, ASV, and NASB) simply use the literal word woman/women. It is only the RSV and its successor the ESV that have made a judgment call and translated it with the word “wives.” From the context it is clear that chapter 11 does not deal with husband-wife relationships, but with conduct of men and women in the worship service.



As an introduction Paul writes a basic principle in verse 3. “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God” (NIV and all the other translations mentioned). This is a literal translation of the Greek. From that basic understanding he then conveys his instructions to the Corinthians and us. Reformed hermeneutics requires that we read the Scriptures as literally as we can and where it is not clear we compare Scripture with Scripture. In several verses it is very clear that Paul is speaking about men and women in general, not husbands and wives, e.g. verses 8 and 9. Dr. Visscher goes to great length to disagree with Prof. L. Selles, who indicates in his commentary on 1 Corinthians<sup>2</sup> that clearly *all* men and women are meant here, and not only husbands and wives, when Paul says “the head of *the* woman is man.” If Paul had meant to say husband and wife why did he not just add the word *idioi* (own) like he did in all the other passages? Prof. Selles continues his explanation as follows, “And the matter goes further. Christ is the son of God and as such he was and is equal with God (John 1:1) But as the promised Messiah He took upon Himself our human nature, becoming a true man as well (John 1:14). So when Paul writes, ‘and the head of Christ is God,’ he gives the extreme evidence that there is nothing shameful in the subordinate position of woman, or anyone else for that matter.” We can come up with all kinds of emotional arguments about widows or gifted single women who are then supposedly being marginalized. The Lord in his wisdom, however, has ordained certain roles for men and others for women.

In his footnote to explain his understanding of the text, Dr. Visscher relies much on what ancient historians have put forth since the year 2000. Unfortunately trying to interpret Scripture with what ancient historians may have uncovered is very dangerous. We have seen this at the Hermeneutics Conference in Ancaster earlier this year. What if ancient historians come up with something fifty years from now that contradicts the current findings? Are we then to again re-evaluate our under-

standing of Scripture? I believe that Scripture teaches a general headship principle of man over woman in the church. Many other arguments can be offered to support the headship principle, e.g. 1 Timothy 2:12 and the supporting arguments Paul gives in the following verses 13 and 14. However this response is becoming too long, it must come to an end.

Allow me to close with a few observations.

1. If the matter of women voting is so insignificant and only a matter of stating a preference, why then are the proponents of introducing this into the churches so vehement and determined to make it happen?
2. Contrary to what Dr. Visscher argues, I am convinced that leaving the matter of women voting in the freedom of the churches will only serve a further polarization of the churches. See also the recent excellent article by Br. George Helder.<sup>3</sup>
3. The author of the minority report of the deputies Male/Female in the Church of the Dutch sister churches regarding the matter of Women in Office, Mr. D.A.C. Slump wrote: “I would like to add one critical remark. In the report the interpretation and discussion of texts that deal with the relationship between men and women, limitations are imposed, implicitly or explicitly, to the effect that those texts deal exclusively with the relationships between men and women in marriage. As is well known, this limitation is disputable.”<sup>4</sup> Very telling!

I pray that also this contribution may serve in a positive way in the current discussion.

Gerard J. Nordeman,  
Smithville

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Greek\\_Index.htm](http://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Greek_Index.htm).

<sup>2</sup> L. Selles, 1 Corinthians in Twenty Outlines (ILPB, 1996) p 93-94.

<sup>3</sup> Readers Forum, Clarion (Vol 63, No 12), June 20, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gkv.nl/kerkplein/english-materials/> Report of the Deputies on Male/Female in the Church, p 41.



*From time to time Clarion will publish longer responses to articles received.  
The decision as to which responses to publish will rest with the Editor.*

# Fifty-first Annual Fraser Valley Women's League Day

On Wednesday, June 18, 130 women gathered together in the Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church for the Fifty-first Annual Fraser Valley Women's League Day. The ladies of the Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church were excited to host the big day, and many ladies volunteered their time to ensure it would be a day enjoyed by all. Friendly welcomes, hot coffee, plenty of baking, and many familiar faces greeted the ladies upon arrival. We had come together for a theme from Proverbs: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Mrs. Jenny Pruijm officially welcomed everyone, including the elderly residents of Manoah Manor who were able to join us via live feed with their study questions in hand. Mrs. Ann Bysterveld then came up to share with us a personal, humorous introduction, based on the Proverbs 31 woman, of our speaker, Mrs. Lee Bredenhof.

Although the name of the Lord is hardly ever mentioned in Proverbs, we can say that the book of Proverbs definitely has God at its centre. Early in his life, Solomon recognized a need for wisdom to rule his kingdom and asked God for it. But God's gift of wisdom didn't mean he couldn't make mistakes, as we see later in his life. We can take warning from this; not to be proud or confident in ourselves.

In Proverbs 17 we read, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..." and we read very similar words in Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." In some translations, wisdom is capitalized throughout the book of Proverbs. Instead of stating a fact or a perception in an impersonal way, the proverbs appeal directly to the listener in various forms, including prohibitions, numerical sayings, riddles, allegories, and literary poems.

There is a close relationship between the proverbs and the Ten Commandments. It says in Psalm 78, itself a proverb, that the coming generation should "set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." This can be applied to the prov-



erbs and also directs us to the first commandment. In the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 34 it says that this commandment requires trust in God. It is idolatry to put one's trust in someone or something else. The fear of the Lord includes trust in him. It is the same in the book of Proverbs; without the fear of the Lord all that this book contains will not help us. But, by taking to heart what it offers, our confidence in the Lord will be strengthened.

If we want to be wise, we must accept the Bible, the Word of God, and learn his commands (2:1). We must learn to have an "ear" for understanding and set our hearts to receive it (2:2). We must also be willing to call and cry out for wisdom (2:3) and pursue it like a great treasure (2:4). The book of Proverbs must be read and used in faith and gratitude for life's redemption through Christ and its renewal by his spirit! It is vital to accept and adopt the wisdom offered by God in his Word, and that includes the book of Proverbs. Let us, then, be taught, and be wise, unto salvation!

After taking all this in, it was time for group discussions, and the twelve groups scattered around the church were eager to delve into the two pages of discussion questions prepared by Mrs. Nora VanOene. We recon-

vened in the auditorium for lunch devotions and prayer led by Mrs. Magdalene Vanderline. We were then treated to a lovely luncheon of various salads, fresh fruit, raisin bread, buns, and hot meatballs, followed by desserts. We not only enjoyed the scrumptious food, but most importantly the fellowship, making new friends and reconnecting with old friends.

Following lunch, the afternoon started off with the singing of the traditional Women's League Day song. On behalf of the Abbotsford Ladies, Mrs. Joni Louwerse and Mrs. Sarah Meerstra led the ladies in a "Name That Tune" game for entertainment. There was even some swaying to the music happening in the pews as the ladies identified the number and first line of the tunes being played on the piano. It appeared that the majority of ladies know their Book of Praise quite well, and we had two teams score twenty-seven points out of a possible thirty.

After the fun and games, Mrs. Ann Bysterveld and Mrs. Lee Bredenhof fielded various questions based on the morning speech. After open discussion, Mrs. Jenny Pruijm thanked the presenters, the organist, Mrs. Adria Schutte, and the many volunteers for their contributions



to the day. After closing in prayer, our voices filled the auditorium as we concluded the day with the singing of Psalm 150. While saying goodbye to each other, many ladies enjoyed more baking and dessert. Another Fraser Valley Women's League Day has come and gone and we look forward to next year, June 2015 DV, hosted by the ladies of the Lynden American Reformed Church. **C**

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Press Release of Classis Alberta**

#### **June 10, 2014 held via video-conferencing**

On behalf of the convening church of Coaldale, Br. G. Van Seters called the meeting to order. He read from Psalm 46 and led in prayer.

The church of Coaldale checked if those delegated on the credentials (previously received via email) were present at the various locations. All the primi delegates were present.

Classis was then constituted. The following officers took their place: chairman: Rev. J. Louwerse; vice-chairman: Rev. M. Jagt; clerk: Rev. A.B Roukema.

In his memorabilia, the chairman gave thanks for the work of Br. Melvin Hoeksema and Gerald VanSeters in arranging the video-conference. He welcomed Rev. C. VanderLinde, present for the first time, as minister of the church of Barrhead. He also welcomed Rev. W. Oord, fraternal delegate from the Trinity United Reformed Church of Lethbridge. The chair noted that since the last classis

Rev. W.B. Slomp has now retired, although he remains active in the churches. Immanuel Church of Edmonton has called Rev. R. den Hollander and Rev. R. Vermeulen. Both calls were declined. Since the last classis, Rev. D. Poppe has also now moved to Southern River, WA. The church of Coaldale called Rev. R. Vermeulen, who declined. The chairman noted that Rev. M. Jagt has accepted the call extended to him by the church of Fergus North. Coaldale has currently extended a call to Rev. D. Wynia of Lincoln and Taber to Candidate T. Vandergaag. The chairman wished the vacant churches the Lord's blessings as they seek a minister of the Word.

The latest provisional agenda was adopted with some minor additions.

Classis received a report on the classical archives. They were in good order.

Classis received a report from Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar on the churches' contact with the provincial government. Rev. C. VanderLinde has been added to the list of marriage officiants.

Rev. A.B. Roukema submitted a report on the URCNA classis of Western Canada, 2013, held in Ponoka, AB.

In accordance with Article 44 CO, the churches reported that the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued and the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured. The churches of Coaldale and Taber requested a counselor, and along with Edmonton Immanuel, requested pulpit supply once a month.

Rev. M. Jagt requested a certificate of release from his duties in Taber. The appropriate documents were presented and the release approved. The chairman thanked Rev. Jagt for his work in Classis Alberta and wished him the Lord's blessings in Fergus North.

The church of Taber invited a representative to the farewell evening for Rev. M. Jagt on June 13. The church of Coaldale was appointed.

The church of Taber requested a counselor in its upcoming time of vacancy. Rev. H. Kalkman was appointed. The church of Coaldale also requested a new counselor: Rev. W.B. Slomp agreed to do this and was appointed by Classis.

Three churches requested pulpit supply. Rev. W.B. Slomp and Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar have expressed willingness to help with this. The church of Calgary submitted a proposal. A schedule will be drawn up.

The church of Edmonton Immanuel was appointed to convene the next classis to be held on October 14. Alternate date: December 9. The following officers were suggested: chairman: Rev. R. Aasman; vice-chairman: Rev. A.B. Roukema; clerk: Rev. J. Louwerse.

Classis made its usual appointments, taking into account the departures of Rev. D. Poppe and M. Jagt. As the next URCNA classis of Western Canada plans to meet in Smithers, B.C., the appointment of an observer was deferred to the churches of Classis Pacific West.

The following brothers were appointed to Regional Synod West 2014: Ministers: Revs. R. Aasman, A.B. Roukema (alternate: Revs. J. Louwerse, C. VanderLinde).

Elders: Br. Ralph Smeding, Lawrence Terpsma (alternate Br. Harry Voorhorst, Ite Veurink.)

Rev. W. Oord is given opportunity to address Classis on behalf of Classis Western Canada of the URCNA.

Rev. Oord had recently returned from the URCNA General Synod in Visalia, California. He spoke of a "wonderful colloquium" during Synod with the CanRc professors and ministers. It was clear that we have few, if any, theological differences as churches. Yet, he stressed, we have different practices. He asked for understanding: previous synodical abuses from a denomination many have left have made the URCNA more cautious and sensitive to synodical pressure. Rev. Oord expressed his appreciation for the fellowship that could be enjoyed between the federations.

The chairman thanked Rev. Oord for his words. He gave thanks for the good relations with the URCNA, the help that has been given to vacant CanRC congregations, and that, despite slow progress, the way to unity remains open. He gave thanks for the work of the CERCU committee and wished the URCNA the Lord's blessings.

Question period was held.

The chairman deemed that censure as per Article 34 CO was not necessary.

The Acts were read and adopted. The Press Release will be approved by the moderamen.

The chairman thanked the brothers for their good co-operation and closed in prayer.

*For Classis,*  
*M. Jagt, Vice-chairman, e.t.* 