

Clarion

A photograph of a blue mug and an open Bible on a wooden table. The Bible is open to a page with text, and the mug is to its left. The background is blurred, showing a bookshelf.

**It's time to
dig into our Bibles**

**CHURCH SNAPSHOT
CLARION KIDS
YOU ASKED**



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Falling in Love All Over Again

*Which human being has been appointed to judge
whether a particular, God-given doctrine
is a “salvation issue”?*

Sometimes a married couple falls in love all over again. For instance, after their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary husband and wife may head off on a second honeymoon, rekindle their romance, and fall in love with each other all over again.

Perhaps it is not quite the same, but on other occasions we also rediscover the true value of things that have always been close at hand. For example, a family owns a coffee table made from Brazilian rosewood (*Dalbergia nigra*). Actually the table has been passed down through two generations now. The family knows it's a solid table but for the rest they don't think much about it. Then one day a friend, who happens to be a wood connoisseur, stops by for a coffee. “Do you realize how valuable this table is?” he asks. He then proceeds to explain all the excellent qualities of Brazilian rosewood. Guess what? New knowledge turns into renewed appreciation and the family falls in love all over again with that table.

The last example comes close to the topic of this editorial. Do we have ecclesiastical furniture that is familiar but under-appreciated, at least until someone else comes along and helps us rediscover the treasures we have?

An unsettling irony

Over the years I have had the privilege of serving fellow Christians not only within the CanRC but also beyond our federation and beyond the borders of Canada. If I pause to reflect on these contacts, there is one consistent theme: many of them are positively excited about the Reformed faith and practice, also as we have come to enjoy it within the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. They cherish our continental

Reformed theology. They soak up sermons and other publications from our ministers. They are enthusiastic about our liturgy and the songs we use in worship. In short, they long for many things that the Lord has given us through the years.

As a professor I also have the privilege of preaching in a number of different congregations, mostly in Ontario but also beyond. Interacting with fellow saints I notice one common concern. Although there is still appreciation for our Reformed heritage, the enthusiasm for it has waned and some people are even looking for something different – theologically and liturgically.

Do you sense the irony? Those beyond our federation have fallen in love with the very same things that we are becoming lukewarm about. That's a bit odd, maybe even unsettling.

Theology

Increasingly members in our churches are running into those who are of Reformed Baptist persuasion. A sizeable swath of Christian cyberspace is positive about the Reformed faith in general but also hesitant concerning, if not opposed to, infant baptism. As a result it is not uncommon to hear members in our churches ask whether baptism is a “salvation issue.”

This terminology is problematic from the start. Which human being has been appointed to judge whether a particular, God-given doctrine is a “salvation issue”? By whom has he been appointed? Where exactly will he draw the line between salvation and non-salvation doctrines? What standard will he use to make his decision? You see the problem(s).

Rather we need to turn the whole matter around. We're not called to seek out the lowest common doctrinal denominator by which someone can still get into heaven. We can safely leave that in the hands of God, the Judge of all mankind (Gen 18:25). Instead it's our task to aim for the maximum, embracing the whole counsel of God as he reveals it in Scripture. Infant baptism is part of that

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

In this issue we are thankful to have a guest editorial from Dr. Jason Van Vliet. He asks if perhaps we have lost enthusiasm for certain aspects of Reformed faith and practices in his article, "Falling In Love All Over Again."

Over the next few issues we will be publishing a series of articles by Rev. David Robertson, Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland. The first is titled, "Is Socialism Satanic?"

There is a report from the Ottawa Women's Conference, as well as a Church Snapshot from Taber Canadian Reformed Church. Issue 15 contains the following columns: Treasures New and Old, Clippings on Politics and Religion, Education Matters, Ray of Sunshine, *Clarion Kids*, and You Asked. Finally, there is a press release.

Laura Veenendaal

- 402 GUEST EDITORIAL**
Falling in Love All Over Again
- 406 TREASURES, NEW & OLD**
Just say the Word!
- 407 Is Socialism Satanic?**
- 410 CLIPPINGS ON POLITICS AND RELIGION**
- 411 CHURCH SNAPSHOT**
- 413 Ottawa Women's Conference**
- 414 EDUCATION MATTERS**
- 417 RAY OF SUNSHINE**
- 418 CLARION KIDS**
- 419 YOU ASKED**
- 422 PRESS RELEASE**

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revelation. To mention only one example, since “Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses” (Heb 3:3), how could it ever be that infants were included in the baptism into Moses (1 Cor 10:2) but are now excluded from baptism into the Messiah, Jesus Christ? Scripturally speaking, that does not make any sense.¹

At the same time here is the irony. Sitting on a white plastic lawn chair, in a run-down neighbourhood in Recife, I once spoke to a Brazilian brother who originally came from baptistic and charismatic circles. He was so enthusiastic about covenant theology in general and infant baptism in particular that tears of joy welled up in his eyes. I’m paraphrasing one of his comments but he said something like this: “Do you know how wonderful it is to fall asleep and wake up knowing that the LORD has a sovereign, wise, loving, and grace-filled claim on your very own children instead of walking around every day wondering whether they even belong to God or not?”

Maybe it’s time to learn a lesson from a brother in Brazil. Maybe it’s time to dig into our Bibles, open up a few solid books on covenant theology, and fall in love with the doctrine of infant baptism all over again.

Liturgy

For a number of generations our federation has been singing from the *Book of Praise: Anglo Genevan Psalter*. Over the years the number of hymns has increased and the lyrics of the psalms have been updated into contemporary English. However, one thing has remained the same: the Genevan tunes. Some people really like them, even cherish them. Who can deny that singing the Genevan version of Psalm 150 with a congregation full of heartfelt singers is a special and soul-uplifting experience? Other people are not so fond of the Genevan tunes, especially some of them. To mention but one, the Genevan rendition of Psalm 59 is not on too many people’s favourite-song-to-sing list.

Often you hear the comment that at least some Genevan tunes are just plain difficult to sing. But is it a matter of difficulty or familiarity? I’ve led enough worship services in United Reformed congregations to know that congregational singing can fall flat (no pun intended) with non-Genevan tunes just like it can with Genevan melodies. As a guest preacher I don’t always know the tunes that a particular URC congregation knows well. Sometimes I inadvertently pick an unfamiliar one. Then the congregational singing sounds about the same as

when I pick the Genevan version of Psalm 59 in a CanRC congregation. In this regard we’re both rowing in the same liturgical boat. Singing unfamiliar songs results in less than heartfelt singing. That’s not a Genevan problem; it’s a practice problem.

We do not have a monopoly on how to set up a good ecclesiastical house – both doctrinally and liturgically

Yet here is the irony. I’d had the privilege of singing Genevan psalms with brothers and sisters in Brazil on a number of occasions. Brazil is where I fell in love with singing Psalm 2. The Brazilians sing that Genevan tune with such vigour and passion that you get swept up in the moment of praising the Lord and his Anointed King and Son, Jesus Christ, who will certainly crush all the arrogant foes who rage against our God. Clearly the Genevan tunes have the capacity to transcend culture and stir souls around the world, even if they have never eaten a peppermint in their life.

The beauty and power of the Genevan psalter has even captured the attention of a world-renowned, multi-award-winning Japanese musician, Masaaki Suzuki, the founder and director of the Bach Collegium Japan. In fact, he fell in love with them so deeply that he went through the hard work of producing a professional CD called “Psalms from Geneva.” You’ll find samples on YouTube, and Suzuki himself even has a Wikipedia page. I encourage you to check it out.

Maybe it’s time to take our cue from Brazil or Japan and learn some more about this Genevan psalter that hails from Switzerland and originally appeared in the French language. Why did the Reformers emphasize psalm-singing? There was a lot of other praise and worship (in the historic sense) music at that time but they focussed on the psalms instead. They had solid reasons for doing so.

Also, the Genevan tunes were composed with a specific goal in mind: shaping the music to dovetail with the words of the psalm and to promote good congregational singing. What qualities of these tunes are particularly conducive for congregational singing? If we are to cherish the Genevan psalter, we and our children and our grandchildren need to explore these questions and share

the answers with each other. One place to start is Ken Hanko's fascinating and helpful article, "The music of the Genevan psalter."²

Please do not misunderstand

By now someone might be thinking, "So what you're really saying is that other churches should just become clones of the CanRC and all will be well." No, that is most certainly *not* the point of this editorial. Our theology, also concerning the covenant and baptism, is not perfect. We, too, have things to learn from others. Moreover, the sum total of all solid, singable, scriptural psalms and hymns is not found within the covers of the *Book of Praise: Anglo Genevan Psalter* (2014). There are other metrical psalms and hymns out there that are also solid, singable, and scriptural.

Simply put, we do not have a monopoly on how to set up a good ecclesiastical house – both doctrinally and liturgically. What is more, if we would think that we have such a monopoly, the Lord himself has a blunt word for us: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov 16:18). That truth applies to church federations as much as it does to individual Christians.

Having said that, the proper response to grace is always gratitude. The fitting response to abundant grace is always an exuberant (not reluctant) kind of gratitude. As a federation and through the generations, the LORD has blessed us in ways that are nothing short of humbling. We did not deserve even one of those blessings.

An emphasis on the covenant and infant baptism is certainly not exclusive to the CanRC – far, far from it. Still it is a beautiful, durable, and valuable blessing that we have received from the Father of lights and it is part of our heritage. *Heartfelt* gratitude is the proper response toward our God.

An emphasis on psalm-singing is certainly not unique to the CanRC – far, far from it. But the Genevan psalter is a beautiful, durable, and valuable blessing that we have received from the God of all grace. *Enthusiastic* gratitude is the proper response toward our God.

So how will we respond? With a yawn of boredom? With a contempt bred from familiarity? With a pride that goes before the fall? May it never be any of these. Grace deserves gratitude.

So where to from here?

There is a big celebration on the horizon. The 500th anniversary of the Reformation (1517-2017) occurs next year. What a great opportunity to dig into our own heritage and learn to appreciate it more. What kind of resources can we develop? What initiatives will our local congregations pursue? What creative ideas will our youth come up with? What engaging assignments or assemblies will our teachers design? Next year is an excellent occasion to reinvigorate our gratitude-filled love for the blessings God has given to us. Let's make the most of it.

¹ For more detail on this point see J. Van Vliet, "Infant baptism: should we agree to disagree?" *Clarion* 60.17 (August 12, 2011): 402-5.

² *Clarion* 60.1 (Jan 1, 2011): 6-8.





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Just say the Word!

Luke 7:1-10

How powerful is the word of Christ? Powerful enough, says Genesis 1, to make bring something from nothing. Powerful enough, says Psalm 29, to shatter the cedars of Lebanon. Powerful like a hammer that smashes a rock to pieces, says Jeremiah 23:29. Powerful to raise Lazarus from the dead, as we read in John 11.

Long ago, there was a Roman centurion who truly believed that the Word of Christ had a lot of power. This man had a servant whom he loved very much who was desperately sick. No one could do anything for him. No human remedy was effective. He was close to death.

However, the centurion heard that Jesus had come to town again. He knew what Jesus was capable of doing. He'd heard about his mighty works and his authoritative message about the breaking-in of the Kingdom of God. The centurion knew what to do. He sent some Jewish friends to ask Jesus to come and heal his servant.

However, when he heard that Jesus had agreed to come, he sent some other friends to meet him. The message for Jesus was: "I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. *Just say the word* and my servant will be healed." This centurion knew about the power of words. When he ordered one of the soldiers under him to do something, it got done. His words had power to bring about significant changes in his environment.

How much more, then, reasoned this pagan man, would not the words of Jesus of Nazareth have power to change the world? Jesus had already performed other mighty works. He had a reputation as a prophet mighty in word and deed. If Jesus spoke, even from a long ways away, things could happen. Time and space would be no barrier to the living, active words of this prophet of God.

Jesus was amazed by the faith of this pagan centurion. He was not of the people of Israel to whom the oracles of God had been entrusted. He

was not a recipient of covenant promises and privileges. He didn't have a long history with God. But he knew what he knew. He knew the word of Jesus could do amazing things.

To us also has come the word of the living Christ. We know him better than the centurion in his time and situation could know him. We know him as the Son of God in the flesh, the Savior of the world, the conqueror of sin and death and the Lord of the cosmos. We also know him as one who speaks. He has spoken his life-giving word to us. We have received the good news of his Kingdom.

So the only question is: does his word meet with faith in the hearer? Do we believe that the ultimate and complete healing of our lives is in the Word of Jesus Christ? No matter how great our sin, no matter how entrenched our bad habits, no matter how grim the prognosis, when Jesus speaks the Word and we believe, there is healing for now and forever. Let us, therefore, take heed that we hear.

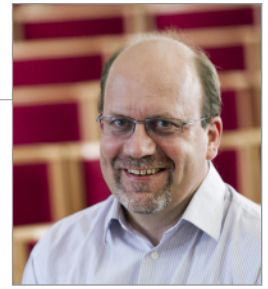
For Further Study

1. Why did the centurion feel unworthy to have Jesus in his house?
2. Why was Christ amazed by the faith of the centurion?
3. What hope does this passage create for you?



Is Socialism Satanic?

Why has the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals gone all Political?



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This article was originally published on Rev. Robertson's blog, The Wee Flea, in February 2016. It is reprinted with permission.

It was to say the least, an interesting prayer meeting. The former missionary from Northern Ireland stood up and prayed fervently that the Lord would deliver us from the evils of homosexuality, abortion, nationalism, and socialism. Afterwards when I was speaking to him, I called over three of my elders. "Donald, what's your politics?" "Oh, I'm a true blue Tory." My missionary friend nodded approvingly. "What about you Angus?" "I can't stand the Tories, I'm a nationalist through and through." "And you Ross?" "I'm a socialist." The look on my friend's face was priceless. . . . "But, but. . . these are good and godly men." "Indeed they are," I told him, "And you will never pray in this prayer meeting again using political criteria rather than biblical."

A couple of years later I was sitting at a conference in the US when I was approached by another minister who turned to me and said, "They hate you, you know." Somewhat taken aback, I asked, "Who?" "The theonomists." (For those who don't know, theonomists are those who believe that the civil punishments of the Mosaic civil code should be enacted by the State today. The Free Church banned its office-bearers from being theonomists because, whilst we have a high regard for the Mosaic law, we regarded it as both unconfessional and unbiblical to ask for rebellious teenagers and homosexuals to be executed by the State!). "I used to be one of them. . . . I know. . . they hate you," my new found friend continued, "They can't work out if you are a Satanist or a Socialist." What struck me was the implication that the two were synonymous!

Fast forward to today and an American friend who sent me a link from the Reformation21 site.

At first I smiled ruefully. I have seen plenty of this kind of stuff from the US before, usually from those who wear t-shirts saying, "You'll get my gun when you take it

from my cold, dead fingers," as they head to the hills to check on their stock of tinned baked beans awaiting the coming apocalypse. And then I did a double take. This was from *Reformation 21. . . the blog site of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals*!

My first thought was "Is this a spoof?" My second, "Whatever happened to Carl Trueman?" My third, "It's no wonder that the US could end up with Donald Trump as President if this is the kind of nonsense that even sound, biblical evangelicals come up with." I stopped having thoughts after this because they were rapidly becoming unprintable!

The author, Rick Phillips, has a very simple case. Socialism is inherently evil, on a par with government sponsored torture and racism. Biblically speaking, socialism is evil because it is:

1. a system based on stealing,
2. an anti-work system, and
3. concentrates the power to do evil.

Apparently this is meant to be a serious comment and not a spoof, so I suppose we have to take it seriously, although I note in passing that despite claiming to be "biblically speaking" there is little bible speak in the ensuing article.

It's always helpful when discussing things to actually define and know what we are talking about. Socialism is a word that some evangelicals are far too quick to use when it comes to something that doesn't agree with their particular political viewpoint (much the same can be said of the sloppy use of the term "Capitalism" as though it were the obvious evil). Let's just go with the normal definition just now:

Socialism [noun] "A political and economic theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole."



And then let's deal with each of Mr. Phillips' points.

1. Socialism is not stealing

Unless you are prepared to say that all forms of taxation are stealing. If so, then you are of course going against Christ who said, "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

So what Mr. Phillips is really saying is that if you do not like what the government is using your money for, then you just call it stealing. This strikes me as a somewhat illogical and cavalier way to use the Scripture as some kind of justification for your politics. We may disagree about what precisely the role of government is, but that does not give us the right to claim that only our view is scriptural and all other views are evil. Defence, protecting the weak, punishing evil doers, etc. are accepted by all but the most extremist libertarians. However, there has been a long Reformed tradition that argued that the role of government extends beyond that.

"Calvin saw civil government as an opportunity for good. Schools and roads could be provided to benefit both the rich and the poor. New hospitals and prisons were also a part of the social reforms he encouraged."

Gary Z Cole

– John Calvin on Civil Government

Imagine that. Calvin was for "Socialised Medicine."

Besides which there is a far stronger case to argue that unfettered market capitalism, with its reliance on high interest rates (which always harm the poor most), is far more unbiblical.

2. Socialism is not an anti-work system

To claim otherwise is just demonstrably false. Speaking of being biblical, doesn't the Bible say something about bearing false witness? If you are going to argue against a system then at least get your facts right. In fact socialism, like capitalism, could not work unless there were people who worked hard. Let me tell you about one of my wealthier Dutch friends – who pays about sixty percent in tax and is glad to do so. Why? It's because he not only gets excellent health care, a good pension, and excellent public facilities, he also knows that his hard earned money is going to provide the same things for those less fortunate than himself: the sick, disabled, unemployed, refugees, etc.

Of course the system can be, and is often, abused, but the simplistic notions of Mr. Phillips reveal only his own fears and prejudices and have nothing to do with the Bible. I can think of many godly men I know who worked

hard and were socialists, as I can think of many who were not. The simplistic equation just does not work.

Mr. Phillips seems to have a very low view of his own nature. Whilst his humility is commendable, can I suggest that the question, "Why would I put myself through the ordeal of discipline, sacrifice, and sweat, much less risk-taking business endeavours, if I can have a wonderful life without working for it?" is not one worthy of him? Perhaps you might work hard because you are a God fearing Christian who knows that he is working for the Lord, not just for his own reward? Maybe you might just want to help the community and provide for others in need? Mr. Phillips' attitude panders to the lowest common sinful denominator in human beings and thus strikes me as being profoundly unbiblical.

3. Socialism does not concentrate the power to do evil

The argument used here is economically, politically, and biblically illiterate.

Firstly, in the socialist system the idea is meant to be common ownership, not a handful of people controlling or owning it all. (The fact that this does not often happen is a testimony to human sinfulness, not the inherent evil of the system).

Secondly, Capitalism is not primarily about individuals working hard to produce wealth. They work within systems. Sometimes those systems can be corrupt; bribery, greed, exploitation (refusing to pay the workers their due reward cf. James), and corruption are as endemic within the capitalist system, as they are within any socialist system.

Thirdly, it is unfettered free market Capitalism, not Socialism, which is concentrating the power to do evil in the hands of a few. It is the big corporations, headed up by a very few wealthy individuals who are pushing the LGBT agenda in the US and elsewhere. It is they who are seeking to negotiate trade agreements that take them out of democratic control and leave them free to regulate their own affairs and control their massive wealth.

But this does not stop Mr. Phillips' hyperbole. In Socialism everyone is impoverished, everyone is in slavery, and a culture of corruption is always produced. I don't know whether to laugh or cry at the crass ignorance and grotesque cultural pride on display here. When I first went to the US I couldn't believe what I saw with my own eyes in some American cities, in the richest country in the world. There was a level of third world poverty and degradation that should have been a shame to any civilised society – but no, some (rich) American evangelicals saw the evils of socialist Sweden, rather than the sick of St. Louis.

But Mr. Phillips is not yet done. He uses the platform given him by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals to urge all Christians not to support or praise any socialist candidates, although they are precious few in the US. He states, “To students of such arcane history as the 20th Century, the prospect of socialism is chilling.” Well, I am a student of twentieth century history, but what I find “chilling” and depressing is this kind of article masquerading as biblical teaching. Even more chilling is the notion of an unfettered market capitalism in a Godless America! To paraphrase the Scotsman who invented modern Capitalism (Adam Smith – the Wealth of Nations), Capitalism without Christianity would be hell.

The article goes on to state, “There is a reason why some Americans want to erect a wall to keep illegal immigrants out, whereas socialist countries have built their walls to keep people in.” I am not aware of a single socialist country that has built a wall to keep its citizens in. I am aware of communist countries that have done so but, as any serious student of twentieth century history would tell you, comparing communist Russia with socialist Sweden is as valid as comparing fascist Italy with capitalist America.

Mr. Phillips speaks of the nightmare of living in a socialist country for those who have experienced it. Well I have. In his terms Scotland is very socialist. I like living in a country where everyone has access to clean water, good roads, and good medical care – irrespective of their ability to pay.

Let me tell you what the real nightmare is – having your son being taken into hospital in the US after an accident and being told by the ambulance driver that you can’t go to the hospital first with your son, you have to go home and get your insurance documents.

Or having a friend being told that his mentally ill son cannot get insurance because he has “a pre-existing condition,” and therefore has no access to the proper treatment.

Or having another friend (as right wing as you can get) telling me that in his job he has to effectively bribe doctors to stay and work in his area because they can make far more money going off to California and becoming plastic surgeons for the rich.

On the other hand, whilst our NHS has many problems, it nonetheless caters for every citizen, and does so at half the cost to the economy that the US system does. I don’t know about you, but I find profiteering at the expense of the sick, a somewhat “unbiblical” concept. I could go on, but I won’t. And here’s why.

I am not here to defend socialism

I am not a socialist. And I am not a capitalist. I am a Christian. I don’t trust any system. And I think that socialism without Christ is as bad as capitalism without Christ. I am here to challenge ignorance and to plead with my American brothers and sisters to stop identifying Christianity with your own politics/culture/economics. *You are causing the rest of the church a great deal of harm.*

This is my real problem.

I think that this Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals blog indicates something that is deeply wrong within the US church, especially the evangelical world, but apparently also the Reformed world. *It is far too wedded to the politics of the prevailing culture and as such has weakened the impact of the gospel, by allowing itself to be identified with one particular political, cultural and economic system.*

And this gets played out in the church as well. In fact as I have been thinking about this I am going to write a Part 2 ASAP as a follow up. Meanwhile I have a simple question for the Alliance. *Do you believe in total depravity, or is it only socialism that is depraved?*

As you have apparently decided to get involved in politics, can we look forward to future blogs on the evils of gambling on the stock market? The corruption on Wall Street? The evil of supporting a billionaire show business personality who makes his money out of gambling? And the sins of a political system where commercial companies can pay billions to politicians in order to ensure that the most favourable conditions are in place for their particular means of creating wealth for themselves? Or is it the case that you are just simply going to present one side?

As someone who loves and supports the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, and who listens to and admires many of its speakers, I cannot describe how much I am disappointed in this political propaganda appearing on their website. It’s the kind of thing that puts many people off Christianity – and to be honest that includes an increasing number of Americans. You are not going to win your country back by identifying the gospel with one political/economic point of view. This kind of abuse of theology will only lead to disaster. If I dare say it – “You’ve been Trumped.”

PS. My deepest apologies to The Gospel Coalition – in the first draft of this I got them confused with the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals (there are just too many organizations and I was writing this on a train!). I would simply say to the Alliance – is “Socialism is evil” part of your confession?





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The BDS Movement and a Palestinian State

The BDS movement (the letters stand for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) tries to lobby governments, universities, companies, and others to break their ties with Israel. This global campaign, coordinated by a Palestinian committee, aims to force Israel to end its occupation of land it had taken as a result of the 1967 six-day war. The BDS campaign has been controversial. It has been called anti-Semitic and its ultimate goal has been seen as questioning the right of Israel to exist.

Interestingly, Fred Maroun, a left-leaning Canadian of Arab origin who lived in the Middle East from 1961 to 1984 has written on the Gatestone Institute website that the BDS movement is actually destroying any hope for a future Palestinian State. So, far from helping the Arab cause, this movement is actually hurting it, and hurting it significantly.

First he recounts a bit of history. During the 1948 War of Independence, the Arabs made sure that not a single Jew was left on Arab territory, but Jews allowed Arabs to remain on the Israeli side. Today they constitute twenty percent of Israel's population and can send their own representatives to the Knesset, the national legislature of Israel. After the 1967 war, Israel offered to give land back to the Arabs in exchange for recognition and peace. The Arab response was: no peace with Israel, no recognition, and no negotiations – the famous three no's of the 1967 Khartoum Conference.

According to Maroun, the leaders of the BDS movement do not want to recognize Israel. "They are counting on the assumption that sooner or later, Israel will be forced to annex the West Bank and give Israeli citizenship to all its residents. After this, the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state would be just a matter of time." However, Maroun notes that if Israel has to choose between giving up the Jewish state and lowering its human rights standards for Palestinians, they will go for the

second choice. There are growing indications to that end. A proposed law would deport out of Israel the families of terrorists. Another proposed law would expel members of the Knesset who openly support terrorists. Although Israel values human rights, the only Middle East country that is serious about such rights, the Jews will not willingly commit suicide. A one-state solution with equal rights for all would be fatal to Israel and most Jews will never go for it.

"American human rights lawyer Alan Dershowitz has repeatedly warned that the BDS movement is destroying the prospect for a negotiated twostate solution, by making Palestinian leaders believe that they do not need to make any compromises. Dershowitz has not ventured what would happen if the BDS movement continues on its current track. He has just made the general and obvious prediction that it would lead to 'more wars, more death and more suffering.'"

Maroun makes the point that the Arabs cannot keep on assuming that Israel will continue to be scrupulously careful for the human rights of Arabs, both within and outside of Israel. He concludes his article by writing that "whereas throughout history those who lose wars – especially wars they themselves started – are forced to live by the rules of the winner, the Arabs have refused to live by Israel's rules and they even consistently rejected middleoftheroad twostate solutions that would have been reasonable for both sides. One can only hope that they, like Egypt and Jordan, will soon decide to live in peace with a neighbor which turned out to be far better in the way it treats Palestinians than the Palestinians' own 'Arab brothers' – not all that bad, after all. One can only hope that Palestinian leaders will start promoting a culture of peace rather than a culture of hate."

The struggle between the descendants of Jacob and Esau show no signs of letting up.



Taber Canadian Reformed Church, Alberta

Hello there! Welcome to Taber Canadian Reformed Church! So glad you found our little pink building tucked away in the south east corner of town. We do not have a formal greeter, but you were probably already greeted by the Tams family patriarch at the door. He is personally responsible for about ten households in our congregation. He and Mrs. Tams are also the adopted Opa and Oma of all Taber church children without local grandparents! There will be more people talking to you shortly. In a congregation of only about fifty households, you won't sneak in unnoticed!

That distinctive sweet smell in the air is the wintery aroma of sugar beets cooking. Taber is aptly known as "Sugar town." I'm sure you also viewed Taber's supersized cornstalk as you drove in on the Crowsnest Hwy. We are

a congregation that makes food. You may even have seen Kevin, hauling a load of beets to the Rogers plant, or one of the Bareman boys bringing a tandem load of potatoes off to be processed into french fries. If you start snooping around the country side, you will also find three of our own chicken farmers, five dairy farmers (who also produce a disproportionate amount of daughters!). . . and a baker! Of course making food requires many trades. We probably have a guy for every main trade you can think of. . . from Trevor the plumber to Cam the heavy-duty mechanic. Between the farms, trades, and professional occupations, about twenty-five men are business owners.

What about the women? Well, our church is a very safe place to be. Let me introduce to you Ann, one of our four nurses. And here is Ashley, who takes blood by profession!





About fifty percent of all the ladies are primarily stay at home moms, including Felicia, the lone homeschooler. Yes, almost all our children are richly blessed by the presence of a full-time mother, faithfully training them in the way they should go! Our ladies are also very busy volunteering in schools and community, doing diligent Bible Study and serving in our children's outreach program also known as "Sonshine Bible Time." Jessica, the "mother" of this program, would love to tell you how they have brought the seed of the gospel to almost 200 children in our local community!

I must introduce you to a few more people. Here is Rose. Like most people with Down's syndrome she is a very friendly, happy presence. And there is Mason, who will always be remembered as the toddler who "helped" Darcie play the piano during our Christmas concert! Mrs. Zuidhof, with her limitless supply of candies is known as the "sweetest lady in church". . . and every child mysteriously knows how to find her! Rev. Vandergaag, his wife Keri, and their three little ones have only been among us a good year and a half, but they seem to be adjusting to prairie life quite nicely. In fact, they are expecting their own native-born Taberite shortly!

Taber Canadian Reformed Church was birthed in 1991 by Coaldale Canadian Reformed. So this year we spent a celebratory evening rejoicing in the Lord's faithfulness to her for twenty-five years since institution. We

discovered that we are a surprisingly diverse bunch. A very large proportion of our membership was born overseas. Maybe Ewoud and Arnette, our latest transplants, can explain to you why Taber is the destination of choice to new immigrants. A number of members have joined us from the surrounding community, and many wives were imported from other locales by marriage. Speaking of imported wives, I should also introduce you to the Bouma boys, all three of whom brought in new brides in the last year!

In spite of differing perspectives and background influences, this is a congregation with a lot of love. We are truly a family that will fight as siblings do, but when adversity comes there is no doubt that the tie that binds us together in Christian love is graciously present. Many can testify to this, but this is how I know: In a native prairie grass field, some distance out of town, lie three certain graves. They represent three of the only four funerals Taber Canadian Reformed Church has held. One was a baby. Another, an old man. The last: a singing, selfless sixty-one-year-old woman. They all belong to one family: mine. But every time, a much larger family wrapped loving arms around us. They embody here on earth the heavenly joy our loved ones have in full.

I hope you enjoy your stay in this crop-circled land we call home. Now the only choice you must make is which invitation for lunch you are going to take! C



Ottawa Women's Conference



*Sarah Vandergugten,
our speaker*

For the first time ever, the women of Jubilee Canadian Reformed Church in Ottawa banded together with the Ottawa Reformed Presbyterian Church to put on a Women's Conference. On May 6 and 7, fifty women from several Reformed churches in the Ottawa area came together to sing, listen, learn, discuss, and fellowship with one another. These two days spent together were a blessing to all who attended and the fellowship strengthened the bonds between sisters and churches.

Our speaker was Sarah Vandergugten, from the Canadian Reformed Church of Cloverdale. The theme of the conference was "Living Together in Community with Kindness and Compassion."

On Friday evening, Sarah Vandergugten spoke on Titus 2:1, 3-5. This text speaks about the older women being mentors to the younger woman in the congregation so that the Lord is praised. We were encouraged to seek relationships with women from all circles in our congregations, relationships that will nourish our love for our Lord, for one another, and for our families.

On Saturday, we came together again to spend the day learning about God's kindness and compassion. Our

first speech of the day was a word study of kindness and compassion. Sarah led us through the Bible, as she defined kindness and compassion and looked at what the Bible says about each word. She focussed on Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." In our discussions, we were challenged to see the need for compassion and kindness in our daily lives. Sarah encouraged us to find moments to share affirmation with those around us, in our families and our church families.

Our second speech was focussed on kindness in the church. Sarah showed us that kindness needs to be evident in all our relationships, since it gives evidence to the work of the Holy Spirit working among us and enhances the reputation of our Saviour and brings glory to God. She also encouraged us to think big about our local congregations!

As the women of Ottawa, we were greatly blessed by the weekend we spent together at this conference. We thank the Lord for the relationships we built and for the work of the Holy Spirit within us. We hope that this conference will become an annual event!

C





Mindset: How Do You Perceive Circumstances?

Len Lodder
Vice Principal at Dufferin
Christian School in Carman, MB
viceprincipal@dufferinchristian.ca

The question

Why do we have so many students who do not seem to want to put in a good effort in their school work? This is a question that has followed me in my twenty plus years as a teacher. I have seen it in high school and in elementary. What is it that motivates some students to be very diligent in their efforts while others don't seem to get the fact that effort would make a huge difference in their enjoyment of school and in their success as a student? Further to that, I noticed that some students were putting in a great effort even though they didn't seem to have innate talent in that particular subject, while some students well-endowed with abilities were not motivated to put in any special effort. What is that all about? I wondered about it, sometimes out loud. Answers varied, but as Reformed believers we are very quick to blame original sin and believe that what such students need is good discipline.

But. . . has anyone else noticed that discipline (i.e. punishments, taking away privileges, etc.) doesn't work all that well in most cases about effort? Oh to be sure, such discipline motivates for the moment so that the student may avoid the discipline, but then it is soon forgotten and more "motivation" is needed. Let me be clear here that I'm not against these discipline measures when clearly sin is the problem. What I'm thinking about in this article is when effort seems to be lacking even after we have clearly taught that effort, not high grades, is the goal. Have you not said to your students, to your children: "I don't expect an A but I do expect you to do your best!"? All to an exasperating no avail?

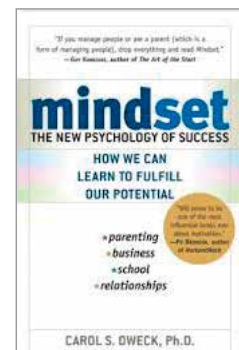
In my experience even positive external motivators like stickers, candy, and extra privileges do not solve the problem well either. If the student doesn't have the inter-

nal motivation to work hard no external push will have lasting effect. Why? I had the question but I wasn't satisfied with the easy answer of total depravity even though I do believe there is a connection to this doctrine. Too often we use that doctrine to do nothing to help students actually struggling to be motivated in their work.

A decent read

Then I read Carol Dweck's book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. I admit that I often visit a Chapters or Indigo book store just to browse around. I pick up a book off the shelf and read a few pages. I have discovered some very interesting books this way. Dweck's book is certainly one of them. This book is not obviously Christian and certainly does not mention or acknowledge God's sovereign work of redemption or the need for it because of original sin. However, the discoveries Dweck puts forward in this book are fascinatingly revealing about human character traits that could prove to be very helpful for teachers, including how and when to motivate good effort and when and how to apply proper discipline.

Even though Dweck is a "world-renowned Stanford University psychologist," she has written this book in a very popular and easy style. She admits in the introduction that she loves grammar but hasn't always used grammar rules in this book. The reason, she says, is "for informality and immediacy." It is an easy read, almost to the point of putting it aside as simplistic and irrelevant. I'm glad I didn't.



The two mindsets

The book describes two mindsets: a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

Simply described, a fixed mindset means that you believe that you are either good or bad at something. It's fixed. No amount of effort should be required. No amount of effort can make a difference.

Students with this mindset believes that the need for effort reflects poorly on them. If they have to put effort into a certain task it means that they are not really all that smart. Fixed minded students think you've either got it or you don't. Other students are fixed-minded with the belief that no amount of effort will make a difference. They think, "Why bother?"

In order to maintain a sense of security, when fixed mindset students fail, they brag about the lack of effort they've put into it. They didn't study or they didn't pay attention. Blaming failure on the lack of effort helps maintain the belief that they are naturally smart. This seems counter-intuitive, but it helps them to save face and maintain a self-identity that is important to them.

On the other hand, students with a growth mindset will accept the fact that effort is a very necessary ingredient in any endeavour, even very difficult ones. Not only that, but they relish it. As a matter of fact it goes even deeper than that: growth mindset people look for opportunities to learn and grow. And if they fail or are not successful (true growth mindset people believe that failures are simply stepping stones to success), they will seek to learn something from the experience that will propel them to success in the next endeavour.

Everyone has one or the other mindset

Everyone has one or the other mindset. In some areas people can have a growth mindset, while in another area the same person could display a fixed mindset. For instance, I have students who seem to have a natural flair for music or art. Those art and music people have a growth mindset in these areas and will try out new things without the least embarrassment about the lack of success. Meanwhile they struggle in Math or Language Arts and seemingly hold back effort in these areas because of their not believing they could do well at it or because they are trying to act as if they don't really care how they do in this area of study.

Who is more realistic?

You might think that the growth mindset group would have the most unrealistic view of their abilities, thinking they are better than they really are. After all, they are willing to try anything even if they don't really have the innate talent for it. This however, is not true. Growth minded students are very cognizant of their abilities and their weaknesses. This realistic view makes them very good students even when they cannot get an A in a subject. As well as learning more than their counterparts they also learn about the value of tenacity in their endeavours. They want to learn from their experiences.

How is this helpful to the Christian/Reformed teacher?

It is the fixed minded who hold their abilities to be "super-powers" rather than abilities that could grow with effort and experience. This unrealistic view of one's abilities leads to all types of problems like procrastination or even cheating. Not only that, but they cannot sustain a long study of any subject especially if it is a bit challenging to them. A challenging subject challenges their perception of themselves and their abilities. How did they come to this attitude? I heard once that a man should never say to his wife, "I love you because you are the most beautiful of women." What will happen when the beauty begins to fade? Will you still love her? Or will she have to prop up her beauty with all kinds of tricks? Likewise, when a student does well in a certain subject, especially through innate ability, we should be careful not to be too impressed with their success and make comments on that. What will happen when the student struggles with the material next year? Will they have to save face and prop up their smartness by cheating or by simply excusing their lack of effort?

Worldview

What really interests me is the fact that Dweck calls these mindsets "beliefs:" beliefs about oneself. In her attempt to keep it simple, she doesn't dive deep into the ideas of worldviews as such. Her belief is that one small change in mindset can set the course toward success. Of course that success is measured by your wants and desires. As mentioned earlier, I do believe that there is a connection with the doctrine of total depravity. There is a need for

redemption, but it's not only for the fixed mindset. What Dweck describes in her book are two mindsets that are largely focussed on the self. The fixed mindset wants to save face and act as if help isn't needed, while the growth mindset tries to cover their needs by working hard. What both mindsets need is to "set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed it cannot" (Rom 8:5-7).

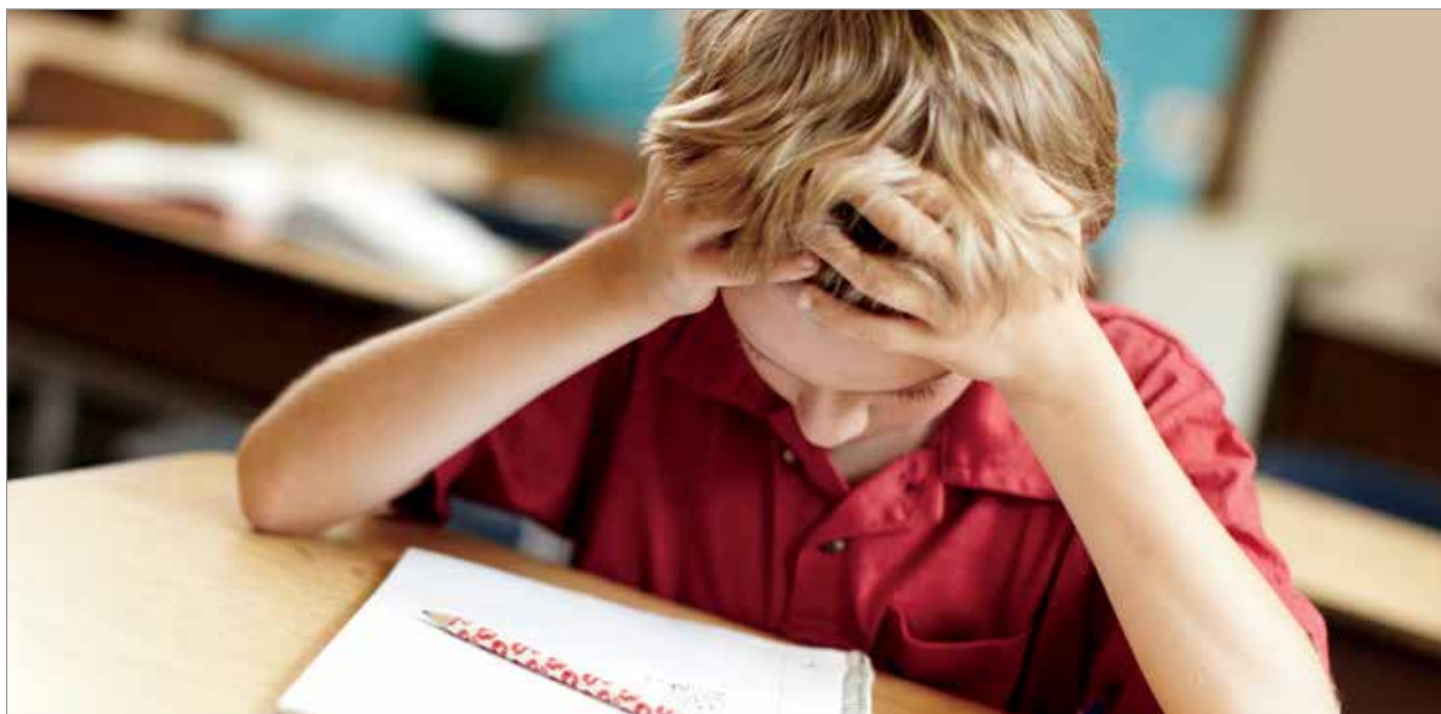
Helpful

A legitimate question might now be, So what? How is this helpful to the Christian/Reformed teacher? The helpfulness comes in the form of understanding that a student who seems to be sabotaging his or her own learning might be doing so to save face because of a fixed mindset. This will open opportunities to speak to students about God's grace in relation to failure or unsuccessful attempts at assigned tasks. It will also make the teacher very careful about praising a student who tries very hard without first discerning whether this effort is an attempt to not need God's grace for failure. Neither mindset has to go at it alone. Teaching the students about

the mindsets and the need to "be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2), will lead to a more balanced approach for both. Balanced and God-honouring rather than unbalanced and self-honouring.

The final question

The final way that this is practical for teachers (and parents) is to reflect on their own mindset. How do you perceive your circumstances? Are you self-absorbed, either not allowing yourself to see your weaknesses or constantly and impulsively trying to one-up yourself? Do you have your eyes and thus your mind, firmly "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of [y]our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12:2)? Relying on God's grace for yourself will help you to pass that on to your students. You will not overly self-flagellate nor overly self-congratulate but neither will you overly other-flagellate nor overly other-congratulate. Pointing to the new creation your students are in Jesus Christ, you may also encourage them to develop the talents and abilities he has given them. C



Kristi Oosterhoff

Kristi moved to Harbour Home in Hamilton in January 2016. I asked Kristi some general questions about her life, and here are her answers.



Kristi (far left) with Lisa and Jason from Harbour Home

Tell me some background history about you

I grew up in Wellandport. I always have enjoyed swimming and jumping on my mini trampoline in the summer there. I have three older brothers who teased me but I learned how to tease them back. They love me lots and we were always playing together.

How do you feel you have settled into Harbour Home?

Good. The staff are nice and funny. I like my room – my mom is the best decorator. I like the people I live with. I am excited to drive with them to Anchor Camp.

What job(s) do you have?

I am the new Golden Girl at Golden Fish and Chips on Upper Gage. I wipe tables, fill the ketchups and vinegars, and do the dishes. At home I clean my room, help with the outside windows, fold towels, dishes, vacuum and mop – I can do everything. I like learning how to cook and help prepare most meals.

What do you like to do for fun? What hobbies do you have?

I like to watch movies, go for walks, and jump on my trampoline. I also like to scare Linda – or any staff by sneaking up on them. I colour and swim. I like playing tag with Julie. I also joined baseball this year and I like it.

What church do you go to? How are you involved in your church?

I go to Rehoboth URC. I go to Women's Society. I enjoy Friendship Group every other Friday. I love talking about the Lord.

Tell me about your family

I visit whenever it works out. They are all very nice and loving. We like to spend time with each other and go out for dinner. I have six nieces and nephews who I love lots. I play with them and like making them laugh.

What do you enjoy doing with you co-residents at Harbour Home?

I like to play games with them – UNO, Sorry, Skipbo. I like meal time when everyone is together having fun. I like our visits to the park. I also like visits to the mall with Lisa and going for walks with just her.

How has the Lord provided for you in your life?

He let me live in a place like Harbour Home. He provided me with a Christian family. He gives me my daily needs.

Birthdays in August

4 TERENCE BERENDS will be 40

c/o Lighthouse
6528 1st Line, RR 3, Fergus, ON N1M 2W4

5 PHILIP SCHUURMAN will be 57

1156 Diltz Road, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W2

9 ROSE MALDA will be 59

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

18 FENNY KUIK will be 64

103 - 545 Peguis Street, Winnipeg, MB R3W 0G8

23 JACK DIELEMAN will be 44

c/o Harbour Home
42 Spadara Drive, Hamilton, ON L9B 2K3

31 KRISTI OOSTERHOFF will be 26

c/o Harbour Home
42 Spadara Drive, Hamilton, ON L9B 2K3

Congratulations to everyone celebrating a birthday in August. We wish you the Lord's blessing in the year ahead and a wonderful day with family and friends.

A NOTE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

If there are any address or other changes that I need to be aware of please let me know as soon as possible.

Rachel Vis

731 Lincoln Street, Wellandport, Ontario L0R 2J0
tom.rachelvis@gmail.com • 905-329-9476



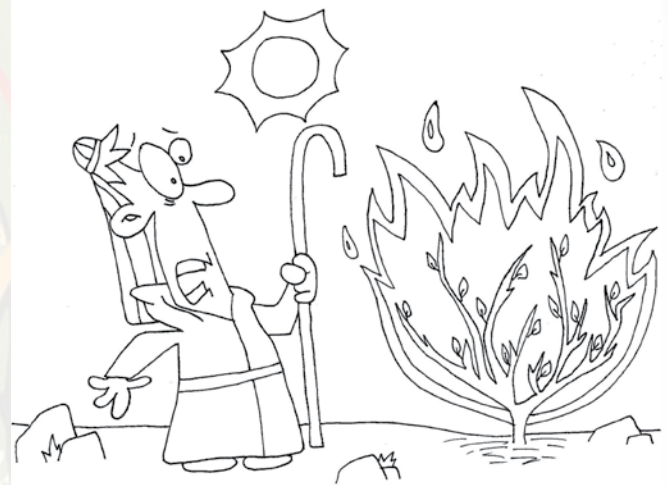
Clarion Kids

Moses and the Burning Bush

Exodus 3 & 4

One day, Moses was out in the desert taking care of the sheep. God appeared and spoke to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses was very scared. God told him to take off his sandals, because he was standing on holy ground. God told Moses that he had been chosen to lead God's people, the Israelites, out of Egypt. Moses did not want to go, and was afraid no one would listen to him. God told him that he would be with Moses and the people would listen to him. Moses was still afraid to go, but God performed miracles for him and sent his brother Aaron to help him talk to Pharaoh and the Israelites.

Go to www.clarionmagazine.ca to print and colour this picture!



Wordsearch: Find the words listed below!

I	Y	E	K	H	N	W	M	M	D
I	S	B	M	O	S	E	S	I	D
S	Z	R	R	L	M	U	P	R	I
L	L	A	A	Y	U	H	F	A	A
E	A	A	J	E	A	L	W	C	R
D	G	J	D	R	L	M	V	L	F
H	D	Y	A	N	W	I	X	E	A
U	U	O	P	N	A	F	T	S	Y
E	H	H	P	T	H	S	B	E	C
G	N	I	N	R	U	B	C	I	S

Aaron	Holy	Moses	Egypt
Afraid	Israelites	Pharaoh	Sandals
Burning	Miracles		

Double Puzzle

Unscramble the words. Then use the numbered letters to solve the mystery word.

HUBS

1	2		

SEMSO

--	--	--	--	--

IDRAFA

		3		5	

RAANO

				4

OGD

		6

1	2	3	4	5	6

by Emily Nijenhuis



William den Hollander
Minister emeritus of the
Bethel Canadian Reformed
Church of Toronto, Ontario
denhollanderw@gmail.com

Q I have a nephew in Holland who is living common law with his girlfriend. They promised each other they would stay true to each other in this relationship, and consider this promise just as binding as one made in a wedding ceremony. According to them, nowhere in the Bible does it say we have to go through a civil ceremony in order to be considered married before the Lord. A lot of sister churches also do not exercise discipline in these cases. Can you comment on this?

A This is indeed one of the areas of life in which the society has changed over the past decades, not only in The Netherlands also here in Canada. It also is one of the symptoms of deformation in our sister churches which shows that the influence of the world is not curbed or stopped in the way of clear instruction and consistent use of discipline. In the society such a living together in common law has become common, normal, and acceptable; also the government has accepted these and other relationships (e.g. same sex) as alternative forms of living together. There may be a variety of arrangements such as a common law *contract* made up by a notary public, or a *registered* partnership, yet just as the *promissory* agreement without any official document they're all *private* agreements without any official involvement of others, family, church, or government. The reasons for choosing for such an alternative arrangement may differ as well; they're mostly pragmatic, economical, or a personal approach to marriage preparation. What it shows is a generation that's full of personal feelings and reasons and showing little regard for public, civil, official, or legal institutions. Scriptural principles, norms, values, and rules concerning institutions from God have much less authority than before.

As far as the churches are concerned, there has been little consistency in the way of dealing with these developments. Some apply the steps of discipline while other consistories condone it as a trend and tolerate it as something that cannot be stopped. As a result couples hold up these inconsistencies to the stricter office bearers, parents don't know how to deal with it because their elders won't back them up, and if all else fails the couple will join a more lenient congregation that accepts a semi-legal registration or promissory contract as equivalent to a legal marriage. Thus a process of adjustment, acceptance, and silent approval has taken place, because, as the young people observe, "different consistories interpret Scripture differently, so who are we that we can decide what God's will is." All in all it's one of those situations in which an Eli-attitude is shown: Eli, who told his sons that what they were doing was no good and sinning against God, but he did not discipline them. Then the LORD came to the conclusion: "Why do you honour your sons more than me?" (1 Sam 2:23-29)

It's not so, however, that the instruction and principles of God's Word are no longer known or in use; rather the official Form for the Solemnization of Marriage still presents and proclaims marriage as an institution from God (Gen 2:24), which is not just a private matter but a public, civil, and legal affair as well! It is a public bond,

ALLED

Called by the Jubilee Canadian Reformed Church of Ottawa, ON:

Candidate Dr. William den Hollander

Called by the Elora Canadian Reformed Church in Ontario:

Candidate Jonathan Chase

CHURCH NEWS

a covenant before God (Prov 2:17; Mal 2:14), which must be maintained for the protection of God's gift of sexuality, since believers are temples of the Holy Spirit. In Old and New Testament the marriage of husband and wife is revealed in its three aspects: a man will leave his father and mother (1), be united to his wife (2), and the two will become one flesh (3). The second step is the legal aspect: be united to his wife ("be yoked" to his wife), which already in the OT was a legal union that was established publicly and with witnesses (e.g. Ruth 4:7), and which was subject to legal stipulations (Exod 22:16; Deut 22:13f.). The third step could only be consummated following this legal union!

This legal aspect may have been shown in different ways, such as Abraham bringing Isaac to Rebecca's tent, or a formal ceremony in the gate (Boaz and Ruth), or in the way of a civil ceremony by church and/or state,

yet the vows of love and faithfulness for life had to be exchanged publicly, before family, friends, and the congregation of the Lord! This, too, is for the purpose of the protection of marriage as a divine institution and for the protection of the couple in case of difficulties: by mutual encouragement, admonition, and discipline the holiness of marriage must be promoted among God's people! The sexual union also belonged within this marriage relationship (1 Cor 6:12; 7:9; cf. Luke 1:34). Finally, marriage is for life, and the promises must be vowed before God and men, while one of the overtones of living common law is the notion of a private, personal, and temporary relationship for as long as it lasts. This last aspect, however, can not possibly be accepted in the light of Ephesians 5 where marriage is shown to be a reflection of the relationship between Christ and the church!

Q

Are churches who are members of NAPARC considered "sister churches"?

A

The short answer to this question could be "No, they are not." The question, however, does merit a somewhat more extensive reply. Especially since General Synod Smithers 2007, when the decision was made to apply for membership of NAPARC (North

American Presbyterian and Reformed Council), this question has been raised in submissions of churches to subsequent general synods. At GS 2010 the concern was raised whether the NAPARC agreements interfere with the independence of the CanRC in regard to establish-

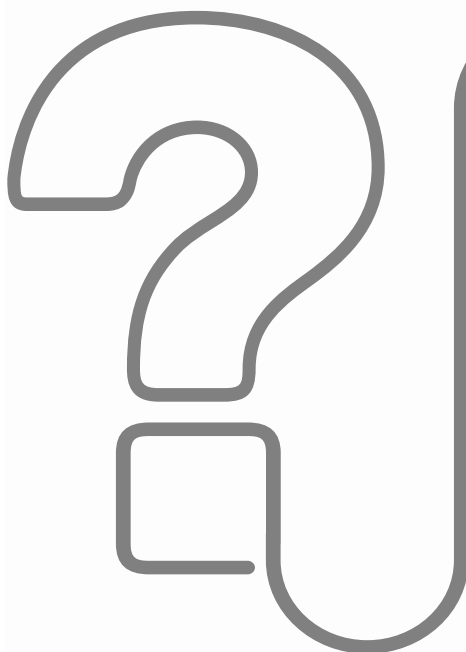
ing relationships of Ecclesiastical Fellowship with other federations. Our committee (Committee for Contact with Churches in North America, CCCNA), entrusted with the mandate to participate in the meetings and activities of NAPARC, has reminded the churches that "it should be recognized that our participation in NAPARC does not mean that we have recognized all its member churches as being true and faithful; rather, we have agreed to meet with them on the basis of an established constitution and bylaws" (GS 2013, Art. 77, 2.9).

The question as raised in this column was dealt with explicitly by the Review Committee of NAPARC

that was mandated to consider the position and obligations of Member Churches (and review some of the Bylaws). This was done in response to the questions and concerns raised at our general synods and passed on by our CCCNA. In its report to GS Dunnville 2016, the CCCNA includes the answer they received from the Review Committee of NAPARC: “Member Churches remain free in their own affairs, also in determining whether other churches (even NAPARC Member Churches) are indeed true churches. . . . It cannot bind the Member Church in their bilateral relations among themselves. . . . The Council is not a legislative body: it has no power to make pronouncements on any issue that would bind a Member Church in its own affairs.” In their explanation they assure us that even if a church federation is admitted to the Council upon a majority vote, then the issue of whether that new member church maintains the marks

of the true church for purposes of the bilateral relations between the two member churches has not been settled by the decision of the Council. In other words, we have to pursue our own investigation and communication with this new member church to determine whether it does maintain the marks of the true church.

Hence, the matter of establishing “sister church” relationships – i.e. of “Ecclesiastical Fellowship” (EF) as this now is the formal designation – remains within the jurisdiction and decision-making process of our own federation of churches. That said, our churches’ participation in the proceedings, activities, and meetings of NAPARC has been conducive for this process, namely as a forum and practical setting for pursuing contacts with potential federations of churches with which to come to such a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. C



**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**

23 Kinsman Drive, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0

Press Release of Classis Niagara June 15, AD 2016

Opening of Classis

On behalf of the church at Attercliffe, Rev. J. Huijgen opened the meeting in a Christian manner. An examination of the credentials revealed that one church was found to be without. After promising to submit credentials to the church for the archives at a later date, the brothers were welcomed along with the delegates from all the other churches. Classis was declared constituted.

The following brothers formed the moderamen as per the suggestion of the previous classis: chairman – Rev. D. Wynia; vice-chairman – Rev. P.H. Holtvlüwer; clerk: Rev. J. VanWoudenberg. Some memorabilia was mentioned as follows: Rev. Huijgen's immanent departure to serve in the church at Coaldale and the pending vacancy in Attercliffe church; Candidate G. Veurink's recent decline of the call from the church in Smithville and their continuing need for a second pastor; the examination of several students for candidacy in a neighbouring classis; the recent health concerns of Dr. G.H. Visscher and his continuing recovery; the recent premature birth of son to Rev. R.J. Kampen and his wife and the resulting health concerns.

With some slight adjustments, the agenda was adopted as proposed.

Question period ad Article 44, C.O.

All the churches are continuing the ministry of the office-bearers as well as honouring the decisions of the broader assemblies. The church in Attercliffe requested and received supply for one service to administer the Lord's Supper. Rev. Holtvlüwer, as unofficial exchange coordinator, was asked to work this out with Attercliffe consistory. One church sought and received the concurring advice of classis in two situations of discipline.

Proposals

The church at Dunnville had submitted a proposal but unfortunately, due to an oversight, it had not yet been discussed by a number of local churches. Dunnville, as the convening church for the next classis, was instructed to send the proposal out to the churches for that time.

Correspondence

The church at Attercliffe requested and received the honourable release of their pastor Rev. J. Huijgen from all his classical duties.

Appointments

The church at Dunnville was appointed to convene the next classis on September 14, 2016 or, if cancelled, then December 14, 2016. Suggested officers for the next classis are Rev. C. Bouwman (chair); Rev. J. VanWoudenberg (vice-chair); Rev. D. Wynia (clerk).

Closing of Classis

During personal question period some reflective comments were made. The chairman declared that censure according to Article 34 CO was, thankfully, not necessary. The Acts and the Press Release were each read and approved by the assembly. Rev. Wynia, as chairman, expressed appreciation for the work of Rev. Huijgen among the area churches and wished him the blessing of the Lord in his new church in Coaldale. At the same time he wished the Lord's care and blessing over the church in Attercliffe. After leading in thanksgiving prayer, Classis was declared closed.

*For Classis Niagara
June 15, 2016*

*Rev. P.H. Holtvlüwer
(clerk at that time)* 