

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

V 66 N 13 JUNE 30 2017

How healthy is my church?

THE READING HABIT
CLARION KIDS
YOU ASKED



James Visscher
Minister emeritus of the
Canadian Reformed Church
at Langley, British Columbia
jvisscher@telus.net

What Does a Healthy Reformed Church Look Like?

A healthy church places a premium on worship

Come with me

I would like you, the reader, to come with me and consider this question, “What does a healthy church look like?” You will notice that I am not asking, “What does a true church look like?” or “What does an active church look like?” Of course, the question of truth in relation to the church is important. In no way would I want to bypass or undermine the fact that traditionally a true church of our Lord has been defined in terms of the faithful preaching of the Word, the right administration of the sacraments, and the proper exercise of church discipline. Article 29 of the Belgic Confession applies as much as ever.

Only this time I want to come at the biblical teaching about the church from a different angle. I want to explore it from the perspective of church health. In particular, I want to consider what kind of elements or aspects make for a healthy, vibrant, and fully functioning Reformed church.

So, please, think along with me. Mull over this question carefully. In due time try to come up with some of your own answers as well. As you do so, here are some of my thoughts on the matter.

Some answers

Now, some people will try to answer the question of church health by giving some of the following responses, “A healthy church is a missional or witnessing church,” or “A healthy church is a church filled with uplifting worship,” or “A healthy church is a church that cares deeply about its members and their well-being.”

There is a new movement afoot called the Surge Network that would tend to lean to the first response. There are Christian radio stations that would be inclined to back the

second response. There are Christian counselling organizations that would side with the third response. You see, each response has its backers and proponents.

Each also has “right” on its side. Witness and outreach are important. Without them your church will become an ingrown church, majoring in minors and minoring in majors. Also, worship is fundamental. If the preaching flounders and fades, if the praise is dull and lifeless, if the prayers are mechanical and detached, and if the offerings are like paying union dues, then your worship is on life support. Finally, fellowship is vital. If your church ignores the lonely, the struggling, the confused, the sick, and the physically, mentally and socially challenged, it probably has more in common with a golf club than a church.

Not satisfied

Still, I am not satisfied with these answers. Why not, because they are in danger of creating false dilemmas and distinctions. A healthy church is more than mission, more than worship, more than fellowship.

So what is it? A healthy church is all three! A healthy church is a church that functions in three different directions all at one and the same time. It does not play the one aspect off against the other. No, it does its best to work on all three – continuously and simultaneously.

You can put it this way: A healthy Reformed church is a church that directs itself *upward*, *inward*, and *outward*. More even, a healthy Reformed church directs itself upward in *worship*, inward in *fellowship*, and outward in *witness*. Let us look a little deeper at each of these direction/activities in turn.

Upward in worship

I have put this first because that is what it is. Worship is first and foremost when it comes to being church. Of course, I know that some would disagree with me and insist that either fellowship or outreach should be first. But that, I think, exposes a serious flaw in their thinking. For what is first in the Christian faith as a whole? What should always be front and centre in our life, church life or otherwise? Actually, it is not a matter of "what" but of "who." So *who* should be first? Surely it is God! It is the Creator of heaven and earth. It is the Lord who rules and reigns overall. It is our Father in Christ. He deserves pri-

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Is your church healthy? How do you know? What makes a church healthy? These are the questions asked in this issue's editorial, by Dr. James Visscher.

For the past number of issues we have been printing a series by Rev. Rob Schouten, "Sermons: A Listening Guide." The final part can be found on these pages, focusing on how we move forward after we have listened to a sermon; if we truly heard the message, it will multiply!

Recently Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer wrote an editorial on reading. Today he follows up with a short article on *how* to make reading a habit. We hope you put it into practice!

There is a report from Manitoba's recent Women's League Day. We have regular columns Treasures New and Old, Clippings on Politics and Religion, *Clarion* Kids, and Ray of Sunshine. There is also a You Asked question and a Canticle.

Laura Veenendaal

- 370 EDITORIAL**
- 374 TREASURES, NEW & OLD**
Born Again
- 375 Sermons: A Listening Guide (6)**
- 376 The Reading Habit**
- 378 CLIPPINGS ON POLITICS AND RELIGION**
- 379 Manitoba League Day 2017**
- 380 CLARION KIDS**
- 381 YOU ASKED**
- 382 RAY OF SUNSHINE**
- 383 CANTICLE**

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Editor: J. Visscher; Copy Manager: Laura Veenendaal
Coeditors: P.H. Holtvlüwer, E. Kampen, C. Van Dam, M. VanLuik

ADDRESS FOR MAGAZINE CONTENT



Clarion
8 Inverness Crescent, St. Albert, AB T8N 5J5
Email: editor@clarionmagazine.ca

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

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

Subscriptions subscriptions@clarionmagazine.ca
Advertisements ads@clarionmagazine.ca
Website www.clarionmagazine.ca

2017 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

			Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada			\$49.00*	\$ 82.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds			\$69.00	\$102.00
International			\$98.00	\$171.00

*Applicable GST, HST, PRT taxes are extra.
GST/HST no. 890967359RT

Cancellation Agreement

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

2017 ADVERTISING RATES

Advertisements: \$20.00 per column inch
Full Colour Display Advertisements: \$21.00 per column inch.
We reserve the right to refuse ads.

PUBLISHER

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Copyright © Premier Printing Ltd.

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

We acknowledge the financial support
of the Government of Canada.



Agreement No. 40063293; ISSN 0383-0438

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

macy of place. And along with that comes something else of supreme importance, namely whether or not we believe in him, love him, serve him, honour him, and adore him.

To see this clearly, we need only examine Book 4 of the Book of Psalms (Psalms 90 – 106). It is filled to overflowing with what believers need to know about God, about what to think of him, about how to respond to him, and about how to live with him on a daily basis. He is “our dwelling place” (90:1) and “our shelter” (91:1). He is full of great works and deep thoughts (92:5). He reigns (93). He executes justice (94). He alone is worthy of worship and homage (95). He deserves a new song (96). And so the list goes on and on. The Psalmist uses all sorts of language and imagery to remind

us that God is number one. He is to be first and foremost in our lives, and therefore he should be first and foremost in our worship too.

So what stands out about a healthy church? It places a premium on worship. Of course, I realize that many things can be put under the heading of

worship. As well, there are different kinds of worship. But what I am dealing with here is corporate worship or the coming together of God’s people on the first day of the week to exalt his holy Name. The members that make up a healthy church realize that what happens together on the first day of the week shapes and moulds all the days of the week. They are convinced that worshipping God together has priority over sleeping in, relaxing, playing sports, going on an excursion, or whatever else people can and do dream up.

Inward in fellowship

If worship then is first, what comes next? I would say that the next important thing has to do with fellowship. A healthy Reformed church looks inward in terms of fellowship or communion. Again, some may balk at this and insist that here fellowship is being given too much importance. Mission should come after worship.

A closer look at what happens immediately after Pentecost presents us with a different picture and model. For what did the believers do? It says that “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Quite simply, the first things that had their attention were wor-

ship and fellowship. They busied themselves with teaching and with making both 120 old saints (Acts 1:15) and 3000 new saints (Acts 2:41) feel at home. They even went out of their way, if need be, to help them economically by selling their possessions and distributing the proceeds to the poor among them (Acts 2:45).

Of course this is not the only thing that makes us rank fellowship as a priority in the church. One has only to consider the second part of most of Paul’s letters. Much of what you find in the last parts of his letters to the churches at Rome, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, and elsewhere has to do with instructions about how to behave as brothers and sisters belonging to the same household of faith. They are full of the need to love, forgive, help, encourage, comfort, and assist one another. In short, the church of Jesus Christ is to live and function as a family and fellowship. Because they together “share in” the things of God, they must also be busy “sharing out” to one another.

Outward in witness

For the third direction of the church I have chosen to use the word “witness” but I could just as well have opted for the word “evangelism,” “mission,” or “outreach.” In the end, it is not so much the terminology that we need to get right as it is the activity or the calling. And let there be no doubt about it, the church or people of God have a calling to reach out to others. Earlier I mentioned the Psalms 90 – 106 and in this regard there is one psalm in particular that stands out. It is Psalm 96, a psalm that has sometimes been called “the national anthem of the church.” And what is the main thrust of that anthem? It is this, “Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous works among all the peoples” (v. 3). Take note of the verb “declare” and what is to be declared, namely God’s “glory” and his “marvellous works;” as well, look at the target audience, which is “the nations” and “all the peoples.” Clearly, Israel of old had a calling with regard to letting the nations know about their God.

And such is still the calling of the Israel of God today. The Lord Jesus says forcefully to his followers, “You are the salt of the earth. . . . You are the light of the world” (Matt 5:13, 14). Believers are supposed to be both public salt shakers and civic lampstands. Our business with respect

***A healthy church
is more than
mission, more
than worship,
more than
fellowship***

***The church has
a duty to impact
the world with
the gospel***

CALLED

Called by the Canadian Reformed Church at Yarrow, BC:

Rev. R. Vermeulen

of the Trinity Canadian Reformed Church in
Glanbrook, Ontario

CHURCH NEWS

to the world has to do with preserving and exposing. We preserve the good and we expose the evil. We warn and we testify. Quite simply, we are not to be silent bystanders on the world stage. Together with the Thessalonians, our faith is to sound forth everywhere (1 Thess 1:8). As well, we are to proclaim far and wide the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Pet 2:9).

Suffice it to say, more texts can be cited. But is that really necessary? No honest Bible reader can deny that to the best of its ability the church has a duty to impact the world with the gospel. The third and crowning activity of the church is outward.

What's next?

Now, it may be nice to know all of this but what should be done with it? For starters, why not have a good, hard, loving look at your own local church and ask yourself, "Just how healthy is my church? How does it measure up?" After doing that, do an analysis. Ask yourself and ask others for their input as well, "Where are the weak spots? Is our

worship alive or in need of revitalization? Is our congregational life flourishing or lacking in care and concern? Is our witness going out into the community or is it almost non-existent?" Celebrate the strong points and address the weak spots.

In conclusion, do not settle on being part of a sick or limping church. Do not be satisfied with doing one or two directions well. Aim for all three! It's worth it. Even more that, our God who has adopted us is worth it, his Son who has died for us is worth it and the Spirit who works holiness in us is worth it. Honour the Triune God and your church will thrive!

PS: Readers of this magazine from the Free Reformed Church at Baldivis, Western Australia, will recognize the contents of this article as it formed one of my presentations at our "Tuesday Night Tune-ups."



Born Again

Rick Vanderhorst
Minister of the
Grace Canadian Reformed Church
at Winnipeg, MB
rick_vanderhorst@hotmail.com



"You have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable seed, through the living and abiding word of God; for all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you." 1 Peter 1:23-25

What's the difference between the most accomplished Olympic athlete and a frail senior member of the church who can barely complete everyday tasks? The frail believer has far more glory than the gold medal athlete. How can this be? This text from 1 Peter 1 shows us the way.

The world seeks glory in any number of ways, such as attaining power, money, and fame. The world elevates these values as supreme. It's all about human achievement.

At times, human glory appears to be something really special. Think only of the fastest man alive, Usain Bolt. He has also won the triple-triple at the Olympic Games. This means Bolt has won gold in the 100m, 200m, and the 4X100m relay at three straight Olympics. This amazing achievement will likely not be repeated.

Many people commit their lives to seeking this kind of glory for themselves because this glory appears to last. We create monuments of people who attained such glory to make their legacy continue through many generations. Pictures and videos of their accomplishments give us the impression that the glory continues. It allows us to relive the moments again and again.

However, even though this glory appears to last the reality is much different. 1 Peter 1:24 reminds us that

all flesh is like grass and its glory like the flower of grass. Grass is here today and cut down tomorrow. Wild flowers bloom magnificently in a field for a time, but soon they waste away. It's the same thing with human glory.

Human glory is first of all precarious; it can be taken away in an instant. In fact, Usain Bolt's triple-triple was ruined earlier this year when one of his relay teammates was found to have taken a banned substance.

Human glory also fades away and eventually ends. The beautiful movie star becomes old, grey, and virtually unrecognizable. Ultimately, every human, no matter how strong or beautiful, ends up in the grave. The people who are still alive can try to make their glory live on by reliving their best moments on earth with videos and tributes, but it's all an illusion. While the tribute is played, the people themselves are six feet under the ground returning to dust or have already turned into a pile of ash through cremation. Never are we shown the inside of their coffins where death has them in its grip.

Contrast this fading glory with something that lasts. 1 Peter 1:23 says that believers have been born again of imperishable seed through the living and abiding Word of God. To be born again means to receive

new spiritual life from God by the power of the Holy Spirit, whereby we are given a new nature. This new birth means that believers have something of eternal life within them already. As the Lord Jesus says in John 11:26, "Everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."

The glory of the new birth is brought about by the preaching of the gospel, which is *imperishable* seed. Because of this the new birth does not fade away like human glory based on human achievement. Instead, believers are being transformed by the Spirit into the image of Christ from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor 3:18). The glory for the believer only increases! This means that the feeblest believer who can no longer perform simply tasks has far more glory than an unbelieving Olympic champion. However, it takes the eyes of faith to see this.

While things like beauty, money, and athletic achievement are not sinful in themselves, believers do not need to be lured into the chase for human glory by making these things supreme values. We have something far more lasting and glorious in the Word of God and the gospel preached to us each Sunday. We have the Word of God that gives us eternal life.



Sermons: A Listening Guide (6)

Rob Schouten
Minister of the
Canadian Reformed Church
at Aldergrove, British Columbia
schouten61@gmail.com



In this last installment of this series, we will focus on what happens after the sermon is over. Some time ago, a pastor told me that he dreads the time after the worship service. For a whole week he has worked on a sermon. He has prayed and studied and laboured over the Word of God. He has poured his heart into presenting the message with conviction and all sincerity. Now he leaves the pulpit, stands in the church hall and all about him, he hears chatter about the banalities of life. People are discussing their vacations, their sports events, their fishing trips, their plans to buy a hot tub, and so forth. This man of the Word finds it very hard to transition so rapidly from the living preaching of the gospel to this singularly uninspiring conversational environment. Do you feel for him? What about you? How do you make the transition?

Multiplying the sermon

One of my seminary professors, the late Rev. Gijsbertus VanDooren, was renowned for his immensely edifying preaching. He was also greatly concerned about what happens to the Word of God after it was preached. To communicate this concern, he came up with the expression, “Multiply the sermon.”

We multiply the sermons in two ways. In the first place, we expand the influence of the Word of God upon our lives when we talk about it with each other. Perhaps we should all really work hard at resisting the “small talk” that seems to prevail after the worship service. Why not intentionally open a discussion about the sermon with some well-formulated comment. You could say, for instance, “I was really struck by the point the pastor made when he said. . . .” Or: “I felt really challenged by what was brought up toward the end of the sermon.” Or: “I felt really encouraged by this message because it made me realize all over again that Jesus really did *everything* necessary to save me.” Or: “I never thought of it like that before. This was something new and fresh for me.”

If you have negative thoughts about the sermon you heard, you should probably keep them to yourself lest you

deprive someone else of the joy of the Word that has been preached. Why ruin a good experience for a brother or sister in Christ with your own impatient criticism? Another way to increase the impact of a sermon is to hold a discussion about it at some point during the week. If you live alone, you can hold that discussion all by yourself. Review the text and the theme and the points. If you took some notes, look them over again. Take time to ponder what the message is saying to you about your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. If you get into the habit of doing this at a set time every week, the benefits for you will be quite incredible.

In your follow-up reflection, keep in mind the intriguing warning given by God through Ezekiel: “My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to hear my words, but they do not put them into practice. . . . Indeed, to them, you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice” (Ezek 33:31-32). If we hear many sermons and review them faithfully but have no resolve to actually do what the Word of God says, then our hearing has been in vain. In fact, we haven’t really heard a thing.

In the second place, we can multiply the sermon by communicating it to those who don’t yet know it. If we hear the Word with a view to passing on the good news to others, our listening will be transformed. When we hear the gospel in faith, it lights a flame in our hearts which can’t be extinguished. Throughout the week, we will be longing for a God-given opportunity to pass on what God has given to us. In short, we don’t hear the Word of God simply for ourselves, to strengthen our faith and so forth. Instead, we hear it for the sake of the world which is in need of salvation.

Books about listening

Books about preaching are extremely abundant. Books about hearing sermons are much rarer. I was only able to find five of them and so I will end by giving a mentioning these authors. This whole series of articles owes much to all of them.

1. Adam, Peter, *"Hearing God's Word. Exploring Biblical Spirituality"* (InterVarsity Press, 2004). This is by far the most complete and scholarly overview of the topic of hearing God's Word. I would say that it is a bit of a dry read but the overall impact of the 237 pages of this book is very beneficial. Dr. Adam's burden is to ensure that our Christian spirituality does not veer off into mystical or neo-pagan directions but is thoroughly grounded in hearing the Word of God. Suitable for those accustomed to more academic reading.
2. Adams, Jay, *"Be Careful How You Listen. How to Get the Most out of a Sermon"* (Solid Ground Christian Books, 2007; originally published in 1991). This is oldest of the books in this list. It is written in the typical no-nonsense style of Dr. Adams. There's lots to like in this volume but the book has a bit of a scattered and incomplete feel to it. It feels like it was dashed off in a hurry. Suitable for all Christian readers.
3. Ash, Christopher, *"Listen Up! A practical guide to Listening to sermons"* (The Good Book Company, 2009). This is a short 32-page booklet which churches could buy in bulk and make available for members and visitors. Ash is a fine writer who packs a lot of wisdom into a small space. Suitable for young people and all interested Christians.
4. Bergmeier, Thadeus L., *"Helping Johnny Listen. Taking Full Advantage of the Sermons we Hear"* (Wipf & Stock, 2010). This book has a lot in common with the next one in this list. Very readable and stimulating for all mature Christian readers.
5. Ramey, Ken, *"Expository Listening. A Handbook for Hearing and Doing God's Word"* (Kress Biblical Resources, 2010). In my view, this is the best-rounded book in this category. Ramey is himself a preacher and the book has a sermonic flavour. His writing is clear and bold. He does not hesitate to expose unhealthy tendencies in North American Christianity. Suitable for mature Christian readers. Excellent for church libraries.



The Reading Habit

Peter H. Holtvluwer
Minister of Spring Creek
Canadian Reformed Church
at Tintern, Ontario
holtvluwer@bell.net



Connect with him on Facebook or Twitter
where he is currently tweeting on
Christ in the Psalms.

I recently wrote about the need for all of us to *choose* to read – the Bible (to start with) but also books (including novels) which help us understand both the truths of God's Word and the realities of the world we live in. But how do you go from hardly ever reading to actually getting through an article or book? How do you bring meditation and reflection into your life? It comes down to this: make it a habit. Like eating meals, going to bed or attending church, make reading something you do like clock-work. Consider it a

necessity, not an option. Other things may fall away or be postponed, but at the time you've set aside, be determined that reading is going to happen! I have three suggestions to make this your new normal.

Short but consistent

Reading does not have to be a hardship or take up tons of time. My first suggestion is to set aside a short block of time for reading on a daily basis, say fifteen minutes.

Whether this is for your personal devotions (Bible reading and prayer) or a novel or a study book of some kind is up to you, but look at your schedule and set aside a window of time for reading. It could be in the morning, afternoon, or evening, whatever slot will make the most sense for your life – pick a time and then stick to it!

You might be surprised at how you will come to like this and even look forward to these quiet times. Recently I made a new plan to read something before bedtime (to catch up on those magazines piling up!). I'm normally tired by then and wasn't sure if I could concentrate enough to get much out of it. I decided to try it with a "no pressure" attitude, to just see if good came from it. To my pleasant surprise, I found the reading both relaxing and edifying. Those fifteen minutes help me wind down and leave me with helpful, up-building thoughts about the Christian life.

Sunday reading

The short blocks during the week can be added to by somewhat longer sessions on the Lord's Day. Sunday is a fine time to make reading a priority, since the special focus of the whole day is to worship and rest. The physical rest is meant in part to help us concentrate on the spiritual rest we have in Christ, so reading to strengthen our faith fits right in with that. I would encourage you to make it a point to stay off the screens. Find a comfortable spot between or after the services and use your energy to read a devotional or a Christian magazine.

Here's a suggestion for parents of young men and women (highschoolers and up) – select an article for them to read and after they've digested it, use your Sunday fellowship time to discuss it. *Reformed Perspective*, *Clarion*, *Creation*, or *World* magazines are helpful resources. Ask them things like: What was it about? What do you think of the point made? Any practical or helpful things to take away? Engaging your sons and daughters this way will not only strengthen the faith of all but it will help bond you together as a family of believers.

Reading club

My final suggestion is to join or start a local reading club in your church. Many of us will acknowledge that we should read much more than we do but then fail to actually make any progress. Joining a club adds the necessary ingredient of accountability. If you meet once a month, you know that you need to be reading in between meetings in order to be ready for the discussion. It puts a little positive pressure on you and soon you'll be reading regularly (you can start with that fifteen minute block a day mentioned above ☺).

Starting up a group doesn't need to be hard or complicated. Put an ad in your local church bulletin and invite people to a kick-off meeting where you will decide on the book you'll read first. Make it a small group of say eight - ten people and meet in each other's homes (start a second group if more people show up). Keep it cozy and fun and choose books that will be stimulating for all. Alternate the kinds of books you choose and take on an open-faced attitude: what can be learned from this work? It may not be your first choice or a style of literature that naturally attracts you but ask: what wisdom can be gained by reading this? The book club will not only help increase your knowledge and faith but it will bless your camaraderie with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Success

You can do this! Developing the reading habit is not out of reach – start with prayer and add in dedication and perseverance in the Lord's strength and six months from now you will be amazed at how much you've read! I've spoken to young married couples who once described themselves as "not readers," who've since joined a club and found reading to be a good thing. They were surprised both at how the reading got them thinking and talking and how enjoyable it is.

So go ahead, give it a go – you won't regret it!



Why Would a Western Muslim Want to Join Islamic State?

Cornelis Van Dam
Professor emeritus of Old Testament
at the Canadian Reformed
Theological Seminary
in Hamilton, Ontario
cvandam@canrc.org



The typical answer to that question from the political left is that young people who aspire to be jihadists and fight for the Islamic State are prompted to do so due to poverty, political grievances, feelings of marginalization, or lack of integration. In other words, there are all kinds of social and environmental factors that spur them on to become an extremist.

Many studies have shown that this is not the case. Islamic ideology is the problem. A new study by the Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society confirms that religion plays a key role.

The executive summary of this report (pp. 1-2) notes that data for this study comes from interviews “conducted with 130 people: 40 foreign fighters, 60 family members, friends and associates, and 30 online fans, recruiters, and potential fighters. These interviews were largely face-to-face. But those with fighters in Syria and Iraq took the form of extended social media dialogues.” The sample of the foreign fighters “runs the gamut from troubled youth with personal problems to accomplished young men and women from stable backgrounds. In the 20 interviews analyzed here, however, none indicate, directly or indirectly, that forms of socio-economic marginalization played a significant role in their motivations to become a foreign fighter.”

What then caused these people to leave the comforts of Canada to go to Middle East battle fields to face hardships and possible death? The study concluded that “religiosity (i.e., a sincere religious commitment, no matter how ill-informed or unorthodox) is a primary motivator for their actions. Religion provides the dominant frame these foreign fighters use to interpret almost every aspect of their lives, and this reality should be given due interpretive weight.” This is a positive factor for going abroad. There is the “the pursuit of greater purpose, meaning, identity and belonging” to explain “why some individuals radicalize to violence and/or become foreign fighters.” The report concluded that more attention should be paid

to “understanding the ‘pull’ factors involved – to the influence of ideology/religion and deeper existential issues in their decision to become foreign fighters.”

The study acknowledges that “In most cases we would say the help and encouragement of some other outside mentors is required to complete the process of radicalization, to turn wannabe terrorists into deployable agents or independent martyrs for the cause. The process of self-radicalization needs to be legitimated to be complete. . . but it is the positive investment in an alternate world-saving role that matters most, no matter how strange it may appear to outsiders.”

If religion is a prime motivator to fight the holy war for Islam, then the West has a huge problem on their hands. Raheem Kassam therefore asked the question whether young Muslims in the West are a ticking time bomb. If Islam is to dominate and this is part of their key credo, then young idealist Muslims will pick up the challenge and many of those who don’t go abroad nevertheless sympathize with them. Kassam showed how poll after poll has shown that a sizeable minority of Muslims in the West sympathize with the jihadists and think that terror attacks are justified. Those who are most devoted to Islam, and, for example, eighty-six percent of British Muslims are, will be the first to sympathize. There is nothing to suggest that the statistics would be much different in Canada. The report *Lovers of Death?* (2016) shows that many Canadian mosques and Islamic schools and institutions are putting young people at risk by espousing – or at least not condemning – extremist teachings. More about that next time.

Sources: Lorne L. Dawson, Amarnath Amarasingam and Alexandra Bain, *Talking to Foreign Fighters: Socio-Economic Push versus Existential Pull Factors*. TSAS Working Paper Series, No. 16-14, July 2016; Raheem Kassam, “Young Muslims in the West: A Ticking Time Bomb?” March 22, 2016 on the Middle East Forum website.



Manitoba League Day 2017

"Contented in Christ"



On a beautiful, sunny prairie morning in Carman, MB, eighty women gathered in the Carman East church building for League Day. It was Wednesday, May 3 and the topic was "Contented in Christ." Those attending were greeted by friendly faces, beautiful decorations, and the smells of deliciousness coming from the kitchen.

After opening and announcements, we settled in to listen to Rev. Anjema (from the Providence URC in Winnipeg) and his opening speech entitled, "Contented in Christ: Learning Contentment." All present were encouraged and edified by his biblical and thought-provoking speech. One of the big things we learned was the definition of contentment. Is contentment only happiness? Or only possible when things go well? Is contentment stoicism or complacency? No, contentment is to rest in and find peace in the

Lord no matter the circumstances or situation we find ourselves in.

After discussion time and question period we were treated to a rousing game of jeopardy and then an intriguing piece written by Richard Wurmbbrand that fit in beautifully with the theme of contentment. It was a letter written by Dr. Wurmbbrand, from prison, telling of his contentment even in the midst of torture and horrible circumstances.

We were then treated to a delicious lunch prepared and served by a very willing and capable group of Carman East ladies. Soup, salad, and buns were on the menu, and we all agreed it was utterly scrumptious.

The afternoon session was led by Mrs. Cher Anjema, who titled her

speech, "You look great, have you lost weight?" Mrs. Anjema kept us riveted as she spoke to us further on the topic of contentment. She spoke of a revelation from a friend who encouraged her to realize the value of who she is in God's eyes now, not later when. . . (you've lost weight, you've got that job, you get married or have that child. . .). She encouraged us to rest in God's grace today. Does this mean we shouldn't strive to be better? No, we can strive to change, but knowing that God already loves us now.

After another question period we wrapped up the day and thanked the Anjemas for giving us so much of their time and energy. We all went home refreshed and edified. It was truly a beautiful day!



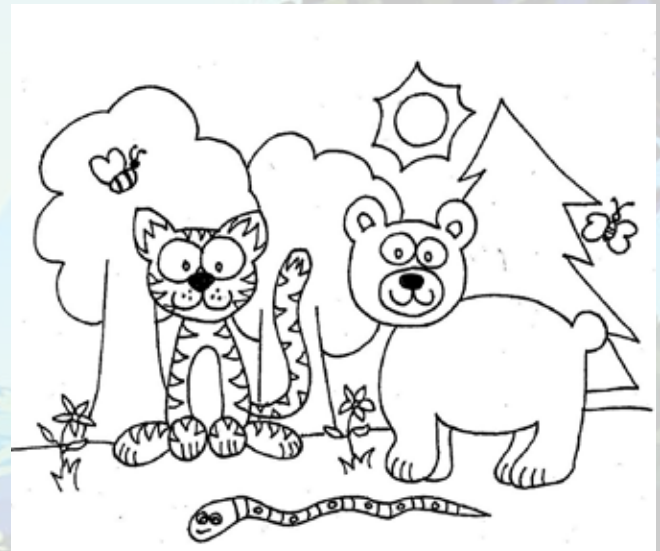
How Majestic is Your Name

Psalm 8

"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?"

When we look at God's creation we can see all the amazing things he has made. He made so many beautiful things, and He allows us to enjoy them all even though we are sinful. God shows his majesty through the things he has made. Just think about how many different animals and plants he created! How majestic is his name in all the earth!

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



Crossword Puzzle

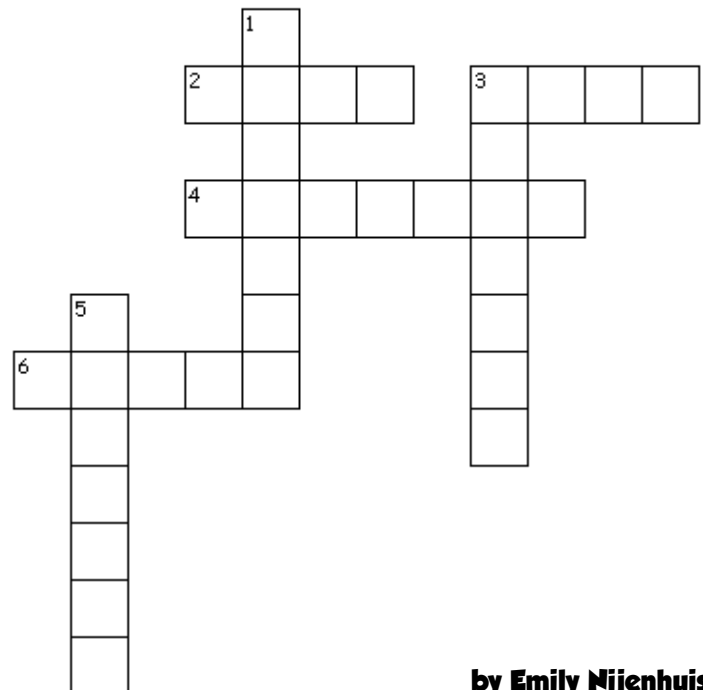
Solve the clues to fill in the puzzle.

Across

2. The son of man that you ____ for him?
3. God created the ____ and stars.
4. When I look at your _____ . . .
6. We are allowed to _____ God's creation.

Down

1. God shows his _____ through creation.
3. What is man that you are _____ of him?
5. God created many different _____ .



by Emily Nijenhuis

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



Q

What's the origin of our liturgical forms and what does the "breaking of the bread" in the Lord's Supper represent?

1. *What is the origin of the forms we read before the sacraments of Baptism and Lord's Supper?*
2. *Why does the minister say, "the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken" as he breaks the bread during the Lord's Supper, while Scripture says, "not one of his bones will be broken" (John 19:36; Ps 34:20). Also, the Passover lamb's bones were not to be broken (Exod 12:46; Num 9:12)*

A

The history of the liturgical forms goes back to the time after the Great Reformation. The forms as we have them were more or less finalized and completed at the National Synod of Dort (1618-1619), after they had been composed and amended by the Dutch minister Petrus Datheen. He worked on them while staying as a refugee in the Paltz (1550-1560), together with another pastor, Caspar van der Heyden, and used a variety of sources, e.g. Calvin's, a Lasco's, and Olevianus'. In fact, the Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper was written mostly by Olevianus (co-author of the Heidelberg Catechism), assigned by Frederick III, for which he also consulted with John Calvin and used his Genevan Form. The ultimate result of the Form for Baptism, however, is mostly the work of Datheen, who did the translation work and compiled parts of other forms in his composition of the forms approved and authenticated by the National Synod of Dort. In 1897, the Reformed professors Rutgers, Bavinck, and Kuyper prepared and published the version that we still have today, be it in the English translation (although since that time also in the English translations cosmetic changes have been made).

The breaking of the bread, to which reference is made in all four accounts, must be considered as belonging to the very essence of the sacrament. Christ is represented and symbolized by the "broken bread." Even in the account of Acts 2 the celebration of the Lord's Supper was characterized as "the breaking of the bread." The breaking of the bread was a traditional way of distributing the bread (cf. Matt 14:19, the feed-

ing of the five thousand). Jewish fathers followed the same ritual at a meal or at a Passover feast. Near the conclusion of the Passover celebration, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper when he took the bread, with a reference to his own body that was about to be subjected to suffering and death, and broke it ("broken," not as a reference to his bones but to the violent death he would suffer).

He said, "This is my body, which is given for you" (Luke 22:19), indicating that he would die in their place. When the Apostle Paul quotes this institution in 1 Corinthians 11:24 he does not include this word "given," yet many very good manuscripts do have here the word "broken." Hence it's very important that this expression of the breaking of the bread is maintained, which is directly related to the expression "the body of the Lord Jesus Christ was broken," denoting the violent death he died! The "breaking" of his body, therefore, is not in conflict with the other aspect, namely that the Scripture was fulfilled that "not one of his bones will be broken." At the meal of the *unbroken* body of a lamb and on the eve of his own bodily death, Jesus offers his body for those who are his. They have to eat his body in remembrance of him and his death!

*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. den Hollander
denhollanderw@gmail.com
23 Kinsman Drive, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0



Happy Birthday to everyone celebrating a birthday in July!

On July 1 we also celebrate Canada Day! On July 1, 1867 the Constitution Act was enacted, which is known as the constitution of Canada. The provinces British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and the “Canada Country” were all joined into one country which is known as Canada. The “Canada Country” later split to be Ontario and Quebec and many other provinces also joined Canada.

This year Canada has reached the milestone of 150 years since being constituted! There will be many different celebrations all around Canada this year celebrating this milestone. I am sure many of you will also be with family or friends enjoying the day with maybe a parade, fireworks, or BBQ. As we are celebrating we must remember our great and Heavenly Father who has provided us with this free country. He has governed everything that has happened from the constitution, to each prime minister, to each minister in our congregations. Let us all celebrate July 1st always knowing that it is our Lord who has brought Canada to where it is now.



July birthdays

4 JAMES BUIKEMA will be 56
c/o Beacon Home
653 Broad Street West, Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8

14 SARAH VANDERGUGTEN will be 22
23 Jane Street, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

20 CHARLIE BEINTEMA will be 42
29 Wilson Avenue, Chatham, ON N7L 1K8

20 DERRICK VANDERHORST will be 30
c/o Twin Oaks
3217 Twin Oaks Crescent
Burlington, ON L7M 3A8
Email: derrickvanderhorst@gmail.com

25 JOEL SLOMP will be 32
316 Church Road, Apartment 102
Spruce Grove, AB T7X 0G2
Email: joelrslomp@gmail.com

25 JULIE OSTERMEIER will be 29
c/o Harbour Home
42 Spadara Drive, Hamilton, ON L9B 2K3

29 JANINE KAMSTRA will be 32
6 Tyler Bay, Oakbank, MB R0E 1J1

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



The Last Words of David

George van Popta
Minister emeritus of the
Jubilee Canadian Reformed
Church at Ottawa, Ontario
gvanpopta@gmail.com



*Now these are the last words of David:
The oracle of David the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob,
the sweet psalmist of Israel*

1. The Spir - it of the Lord spoke through his serv - ant king. His
2. "When one rules right - eous - ly and in the fear of God, he's
3. Am I not right with God, my house with Is - rael's Lord? Has
4. But e - vil men will all be cast a - side like thorns. They'll

word was on my lips and tongue. He taught me what to sing. The
like the light of ear - ly dawn, like sun - shine spread a - broad. As
he not made a cov - e - nant bound by his stead - fast word? The
all be burned up in the fire with no one them to moun. O

God of Is - rael spoke, his word he did re - veal, the Rock of Is - rael
bright - ness af - ter rain that makes the grass to grow, thus is the king who
Lord will ful - ly save and grant me my de - sire. His ev - er - last - ing
come, my God, O come from heav - ens ho - ly height! O come, you Judge of

said to me: "My word I won't con - ceal:
gov - erns well. Be - fore him all will bow."
faith - ful - ness is all that I re - quire.
all the earth, and set all things a - right.

Text: George van Popta © 2017; 2 Samuel 23:1-7
Tune: George Walter Martin, 1862

6686 D
LEOMINSTER

