


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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**Has the #metoo
pendulum
swung too far?**

**THEY DID NOT BREAK HIS LEGS
CANRC AT ICRC**

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

After a sabbatical, Rev. Peter Holtvliwer is back to his work as editor. He begins with an editorial on the #metoo movement that has been trending over the past few months. This movement has shed light on the tragic problem of sexual abuse; how do we as Christians approach abuse with justice, mercy, truth, and reconciliation?

Dr. Arjan de Visser finishes up his series with Part 4 of "Redemptive Historical Preaching Today."

Both Treasures New and Old and a Canticle from Rev. George van Popta are prepared especially with Good Friday in mind.

Issue 5 includes reports from the ICRC and MERF, as well as articles for Education Matters, *Clarion Kids*, *You Asked*, and a letter to the editor.

Laura Veenendaal

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 he is currently tweeting on
 Christ in the Psalms.

#Metoo?

*We just “can’t believe it”
 and so the accused is given the benefit of the doubt
 and little to no action is taken*

Sexual abuse of any kind is abhorrent. God hates it and Christians ought to hate it just as much. It is a sin in so many ways and at so many levels – and it thrives on secrecy. Abusers prey on the vulnerable, on those who are weak, on those they know can be compelled to keep silent and thus cover up the abuse. In that respect, the #metoo movement of the last months is a welcome shedding of light on a horrific problem that exists not just in our society at large but also – sadly and miserably – within the church. Also with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Speaking out

Although the #metoo concept has been around for quite a while, starting in October 2017 it took off on social media after the Harvey Weinstein scandal broke open. Allegations were made by various actresses against Weinstein, a powerful executive movie producer. Their stories ranged from sexual misconduct to assault and rape. Once the first lady spoke up, it was like a dam had burst. Numerous others came forward in the coming days, one after the other, to allege sexual harassment against this same man. One actress told her twitter followers to write “me too” if they had been sexually harassed or assaulted and thus was born the #metoo campaign.

It attracted millions of reactions and retweets in the following days and as I write this in mid-February 2018, #metoo is still trending strongly. Many women felt emboldened to speak up about some abuse in their past. In fact, in the weeks following a lot of other women came forward to make public accusations against other men in positions of power. Influential Hollywood figures like Kevin Spacey and Woody Allen were called out. Soon the movement moved over to the political realm, where allegations dogged US

Senator Al Franken and Senate nominee Roy Moore, ruining their careers. In Canada, as a result of allegations, Patrick Brown resigned as leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservatives in dramatic fashion, though he denied the accusations. Similarly, journalist Matt Lauer resigned his job as network anchor and comedian Louis C.K.’s reputation took a huge hit. Even celebrity chefs are facing claims of sexual misconduct.

Courage

Who can deny that it takes courage to stand up publicly and tell the world what foul things were done to you in secret? We instinctively feel for victims of this or any crime. They are the underdog, the weak, the vulnerable, and often the young who, for many years, were pushed down. And when it comes to being on the receiving end of some predator’s sexual sin, there is, regrettably, a misplaced sense of shame and guilt *that the victim feels*. While the perpetrator often feels no shame or remorse, it’s as if the victim feels doubly ashamed, though logically there is no reason to feel for that.

This makes it incredibly hard for them to step forward and tell others what was done to them. By coming forward, they often must relive the awful experiences of the past. In this way they are, in a very real sense, re-victimized. The wounded have to fight the instinct to just bury the whole thing, memories and all. So, whenever we encounter a true victim of sexual abuse speaking up, we need to applaud their bravery in coming forward, stand with them, and encourage them to speak the truth in love in the pursuit of justice and, as much as feasible, reconciliation.

Under the carpet

It's precisely here where there's often been a lack of understanding and sympathy in the world, also in the church. There's a tendency in most of us not to want to believe bad things about the "good" people we know, and so a victim's story is frequently received with suspicion. We just "can't believe it" and so the accused is given the benefit of the doubt and little to no action is taken. For people who have suffered abuse, not being believed comes across as another blow, another form of put-down. More than that, at times when the truth of the accusations has been verified, and sexual crimes have been committed, arrangements have been made to essentially sweep the matter under the carpet.

In the world this has meant settling such cases out of court (usually with cash to buy the victim's silence). In the church it has meant some behind-the-scenes "slap on the wrist" for the perpetrator while in the meantime no meaningful confession of sin is offered, or discipline applied. Our federation has known repeat offenders in large part because they were not dealt with appropriately the first time. Too often the long, hard work of bringing about true justice and genuine reconciliation and healing through confession, repentance, and a new way of living have not been pursued in favour of a quick and quiet settling of the matter so that life can "get back to normal." But there is no "normal" or at least no healthy, good normal for the victims unless the truth comes out fully and the perpetrator is dealt with justly.

We must also admit that as elders and consistories we have at times been complicit in stymieing justice by discouraging the reporting of sexual crimes to the authorities. God has given governments and police forces to maintain law and order in the land. The church should not work against that but in every way support it, even if it means public embarrassment. Sticking up for God's way, for truth and justice, often comes at a cost and we should not back away from it.

Power reversal

Now, however, this trend toward cover-up seems to be reversing with the #metoo movement. But, has the pendulum swung too far the other way? What is noticeable on social media is that the vast majority of the public believes the allegations without question. And if there is any hint of questioning the alleged victim or, worse, actual *criticism* of her, it is pounced on and that person is publicly shamed.

Remember, these are *allegations*, unproven assertions about the conduct of another. Aside from giving a general report of the abusive behaviour, the accusers have generally not put forward in public the evidence for their claims. And yet most people online simply jump on the bandwagon and vocally support the women who have spoken up while often fiercely condemning the men being accused. Yet these men have not been heard. Their side of the story is untold. To most, this does not seem to matter. To even raise the question of proof raises hackles and invites a backlash. It has become the forbidden topic, the elephant in the room.

It appears to me that we are witnessing a turning of the tables. Where unscrupulous employers, politicians, celebrities, and others in powerful positions once used their influence to oppress and shame their victims for their own pleasure, the victims are now using public pressure and the mere suggestion of wrong-doing to put their oppressors in a corner and shame them

True justice is to hold everyone to the standard of God's law

in return. To date, four months after the Harvey Weinstein allegations were first made public, there still has been no arrest. This is true for all of the above-named persons. Careers have been ruined and reputations permanently altered in a negative way, but does anyone (aside from the persons directly involved) actually know if they are guilty? Isn't it possible that *false* accusations could have been raised? Does anyone care that innocent men may have been trashed in the public eye?

Again, let me repeat that sexual abuse is horrific and should be stood up to and stamped out as much as possible. But is it good and right, is it godly, that people are accused, tried, and convicted in the court of public opinion without a fair hearing? The automatic, knee-jerk shaming of the #metoo movement is another form of vigilante justice, where the apparent victim whips up a crowd into frenzy and together they proceed to hang the one they believe guilty. No one waits for the evidence. No trial, let alone a *fair* trial, is even contemplated. An accusation by someone believed to be a victim is enough and the crowd demands the perpetrator's lynching.

Justice

Vigilante justice is not justice. It's just another form of personal revenge. It's an instinct at home in our sinful hearts and in a world that does not honour Christ, but

it should not be or become our inclination as Christians. True justice is to hold *everyone* to the standard of God's law. Sexual abusers show hatred to their helpless neighbours by damaging their bodies and souls purely for their perverted pleasure. On the other hand, liars and slanderers also show hatred to their helpless neighbours by damaging their reputations purely for their perverted sense of justice. All such persons need to be held to account by both the law of the land (as enforced by the courts) and, for Christians, the law of God (as the elders enforce it in the church).

Going public with accusations before any authority has verified the claims is not the way to go either in the world or in the church. That's just another weapon, another tool of oppression with which to beat up an enemy. There have been cases both in the world and in the church where allegations of sexual misconduct are made against a male *even though they were completely false*. It is not beyond anyone, even a younger female, to concoct a story for some kind of perceived personal gain, with little regard for how that story affects the man involved. A guy's reputation can be ruined in an instant and even if, years later, his name is legally cleared in the courts and the lie is finally exposed, in the minds of so many that man's name will never be the same. And that, too, is wrong in the Lord's eyes.

Truth

True victims must be protected, encouraged, and supported all the way. But before any action against the accused

is taken by the authorities, the truth of the situation must be clarified with facts. Evidence and/or witnesses need to be consulted and a fair-minded judgment made as to guilt.

There is a fine balance here and I recognize it may not be that cut and dried in many situations. What if there is no witness? What if there is no evidence? And yet a woman (or child) comes forward in all earnestness to make allegations of sexual abuse? It seems to me that when there is any question of a woman's (person's) safety or health, a precautionary step must be taken to secure her safety. That might mean bringing her elsewhere to live or it might mean removing the alleged perpetrator from the home. Accusations must be taken seriously, but once the person is in a safe place, then let a careful, discreet investigation begin and the truth come out.

Sin – whether it's sexual abuse or lies and slander – is what our Lord Jesus Christ came to die for. True justice was meted out to him on Good Friday so that we Christians might receive mercy and be forgiven all our sins. In this respect, the liar is no different than the abuser. But when we repent of our sin and drink in the grace of God and know peace with him, then we'll be looking for ways to help our neighbours experience the same thing. Christian justice can never be about us getting pay-back, for we know God has not paid us back for our sin. Justice and mercy, truth, and reconciliation – these are what our Saviour died for. For his honour let us now live for them.





They Did Not Break His Legs

"...that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken.'"
(John 19:36)

In the gospel according to John, we read a detail about Jesus' body after he died, which we do not read in any of the other gospels. John tells us that Jesus' legs were not broken. At first glance, this might just seem to be trivial, but in fact it is a significant detail and is a fulfillment of Scripture. We read in John 19:36, "For these things happened so that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken.'"

One of the Old Testament Scripture passages referred to here is found in Psalm 34. There we read, "A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken" (Ps 34:19-20). In this psalm, as in many psalms, there is a contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Because a man is righteous, he will receive certain blessings and promises from the Lord. The righteous man may experience troubles, but he will also receive deliverance from them and ultimately he will be protected from any real harm because the Lord is with him.

When the Roman soldiers left Jesus' legs unbroken, this was a fulfillment of God's promise to the righteous. Jesus Christ is the righteous one, the innocent one in the deepest meaning of that term. He has never committed any sin and lived a life of perfect holiness and righteousness. It was God's will that he should become sin, that he should take upon himself all of our sin in order that he might pay for it and suffer the wrath of God against our sin.

And now that suffering is over. Upon his death, Jesus Christ no longer suffers under the wrath of God. His time of being under the full weight of God's punishment is now over for, as he proclaimed just before his death, "*It is finished.*" He has accomplished and fulfilled all righteousness and therefore does not need to suffer even more by having his bones broken as well. He is a righteous man who will not need to undergo that humiliation. His legs were not broken because he was already dead and had already accomplished all righteousness.

His unbroken legs also point to the wholeness of his body and the preservation of his body for the day of resurrection. There was a future for Jesus' body, a future which Jesus himself had also predicted to his disciples. God ensured that his legs would not be broken as a hint of the coming resurrection. It is certainly true that Jesus' legs could have been healed again if they had been broken, but the fact is that they were not broken.

God the Father worked all events surrounding the suffering and death of his Son so that we might be encouraged in our faith and so that we might see the glory of his work on our behalf. Christ's sacrifice was sufficient and complete. He was regarded by God once again as the righteous one and therefore God showed his mercy and goodness to him again. The breaking of his legs was prevented so that Scripture might be fulfilled, and all might see that God has received him as the righteous one.

For Further Study

1. Which two other Old Testament passages can be said to be fulfilled in Jesus' bones not being broken? What aspect of Christ's work can be gleaned from those passages?
2. What do we learn about the extent of Jesus' suffering from the fact that his legs did not need to be broken (i.e. that he had already died in contrast to those crucified beside him)?
3. Discuss other ways in which Jesus Christ fulfilled Psalm 34 (e.g. verse 8a).



Redemptive-Historical Preaching Today (Part 4)

In three previous articles we have discussed the development of redemptive-historical preaching in The Netherlands and in North America. In this final article we round things off with some concluding observations.

Let's start with the enduring dividends, the good things we have learned from redemptive-historical preaching. Much could be mentioned, but let me summarize the positives in two main points. First, the redemptive-historical approach helps the preacher and the listener to have a good understanding of the history of salvation. It helps us understand that there is an age-old struggle in this world between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15). We understand that this struggle climaxed in and around the person of Jesus Christ and that, in fact, it is not finished. As God's people we still experience hatred and resistance from the side of the world, so we are looking forward to the last day, when Jesus Christ will return to judge the living and the dead. This perspective helps us understand that while we are not contemporaries of Abraham and David and Paul, we are nevertheless part of the same story. Even though there is a historical distance between us and them, our situation is in many ways similar to theirs. Just like them, we are beneficiaries of God's plan of redemption by faith in God's promises, as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This is part of the reason why biblical narratives can have such a powerful effect on us. In so many ways, we can immediately identify with the struggles and joys of believers who walked on this earth thousands of years ago. The God who worked savingly and lovingly in their lives is the God who still does the same in our lives today.

A second positive of the redemptive-historical approach is that it focusses on what God has done and is doing still for our *redemption*. It is a liberating message about forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God. Redemptive-historical sermons, if done well, are *theocentric* and *Christological* (focusing on God's work as it culminates in the person and work of Jesus Christ). It is mightily encouraging to hear how God was at work in the lives of his people in the old and the new covenant, and then to realize that he is still the same God for us today! Instead of saddling the hearers with a legalistic message ("work hard to please God and you will be saved")

or a moralistic message ("be good and you will be fine"), the redemptive-historical preacher sends people home with the good news: "This is your God! This is your Saviour Jesus Christ! See what he's done in the past? He is still the same today! Believe in him and follow him all the days of life and you will find eternal joy in him!"

Pitfalls

Yet, none of these wonderful effects happen automatically. Just because a preacher claims to follow the redemptive-historical approach, it does not necessarily follow that his preaching will be effective or that it will warm the hearts of the listeners. It is important, therefore, that we should take note of the pitfalls which Dr. C. Trimp identified in his evaluation of redemptive-historical preaching (see the second article in this series). To list the two most important pitfalls again: First, redemptive-historical preachers have been too reluctant to use examples taken from the lives of biblical figures. As a result, their sermons have often been filled with good substance and instruction, but they did not always succeed in helping the people in the pew see where the message connected to their own, personal lives.

Second, redemptive-historical preaching can lead to an overemphasis on the progress in the history of salvation, while forgetting that God was at the same time also working in the hearts and lives of his people. The congregation would hear much about how God was making progress with his plan of redemption through a particular episode in the life of Abraham or Jacob or some other biblical figure. But redemptive-historical preachers were often too reluctant to talk about the personal experiences of those fellow believers, whether it be David's grief, Elijah's despair, or Thomas's doubts.

Despite the many good aspects, redemptive-historical preaching has sometimes suffered from a kind of overreaction against perceived dangers such as man-centred preaching, moralistic application, and so forth. These dangers are real, but it does not help to overreact. In my estimation, some redemptive-historical preachers are still too reluctant to use examples and illustrations in their sermons. And they are still reluctant to address faith experience in their sermons.

As a result, what we have often heard from redemptive-historical preachers is the kind of sermon that is expository and works its way through the text passage faithfully, but somehow does not impact the life of the hearers. Listeners may be impressed by the content of such a sermon, but it does not warm their hearts.

Other factors

I should add that if a sermon does not impact the life of the hearers, it is not always the redemptive-historical approach that is to be blamed. It may not even be the preacher's fault. Sometimes, the people in the pew are not as receptive as they should be. Listening to sermons is hard work! But even if the sermon is somehow deficient, it is not always because there is something wrong with the redemptive-historical approach. After all, sermons are never "just" redemptive-historical. They may also be covenantal, or experiential, or missional, or pastoral, or something else. Preparing and delivering sermons is an incredibly complex work in which a host of factors play a role.

At an even deeper level, the preacher's own faith will have a decisive impact on the quality of his preaching as well. It is really important that the preacher himself should have a good understanding of the gospel and that he should be personally united to Christ in true faith. In this connection, Sinclair B. Ferguson has commented that while it is important to teach theological students methods of exegesis and sermon preparation, it is even more important that preachers should have an instinct for the gospel and a passion for Jesus Christ himself. Quote: "Of course we need to work with general principles as we develop as preachers; but it is a far greater desideratum that we develop an instinctive mindset and, corresponding to that, such a passion for Jesus Christ himself, that we will find our way to him in a natural and realistic way rather than a merely formulaic way."¹

Suggestions

Let me close with three suggestions. First, I suggest that there is no less need for redemptive-historical preaching today than there was eighty years ago when pioneers like Schilder and Holwerda started to promote this approach to preaching. It is interesting to note that Eric B. Watkins in his dissertation *The Drama of Preaching* (2016) argues that redemptive-historical preaching is a helpful antidote against postmodernism.² Postmodernists, at least the radical ones among them, do not believe that there is an ultimate purpose to history. The moderate ones among them believe that history is what we make of it. Whatever the case may be, many people in our Western world believe that we cannot know where this world comes from or where it is going. It is the duty and the privilege of faithful preachers of the gospel to proclaim that there is a plan: that God has been at work in this world and that he is bringing his plan of redemption to

completion! Christ is not just our prophet, priest, and king. He is also the Lord of (redemptive) history, and he is gathering his church out of the whole human race (HC, LD 21). We can trust him to complete his mandate because "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever" (Hebr 13:8).

Second, I suggest that the redemptive-historical approach can help to avoid shallow and one-sided forms of Christ-centredness. *Shallow*: It is not difficult to preach a message that may sound Christ-centred (because his name is mentioned) but that in reality is legalistic or moralistic or merely sentimental. *One-sided*: The history of preaching shows that there is a danger that Christ-centred preaching can deteriorate into Christo-monism ("Christ-only-ism"), which means that Christ is being preached in isolation from God. Faithful preaching has a *Trinitarian-Christological* character. As much as it is Christ-centred, it should also highlight the work of the Father and the Spirit. Greidanus summarized it well: "Christ-centered preaching is to be God-centered."³

Third, redemptive-historical preachers should remember that there is not just a forward moving aspect to the history of salvation but also an experiential side. God's purpose is not just to bring his plan of salvation to completion but also to gather a people for himself, dwell among them, and even dwell in their hearts. I am aware that the term "experiential" might raise a red flag here or there, and I understand why. Just to be clear, then: I'm not talking about "experiential" in the subjectivistic sense of believers trying to find assurance of salvation in their own faith experience. What I have in mind is simply the fact that true faith means knowing, trusting and loving God, and this is something that is experienced by the mind, the heart and the will. In his prayer in John 17 the Lord said: "And this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (v. 3). John Calvin emphasized the importance of the believer's "mystical union" with Christ, "that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts."⁴ This union with Christ implies a deep, intimate kind of knowledge. It energizes the mind, it touches the conscience, it warms the heart. In other words, we should be looking to develop a kind of redemptive-historical preaching that helps the listener in the pew to experience the great truths of the gospel in a personal union with Christ.

Enough reason, therefore, to continue to hold on to the good things of the redemptive-historical preaching tradition, try to avoid its pitfalls, and preach Christ in all his riches, from all the Scriptures!

¹ Sinclair B. Ferguson, "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament." Proclamation Trust Media Paper 2, 2002. <http://www.proctrust.org.uk/>

² Eric B. Watkins, *The Drama of Preaching: Participating with God in the History of Redemption*. Wipf & Stock, 2016.

³ Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1999), 178.

⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, II.16.19

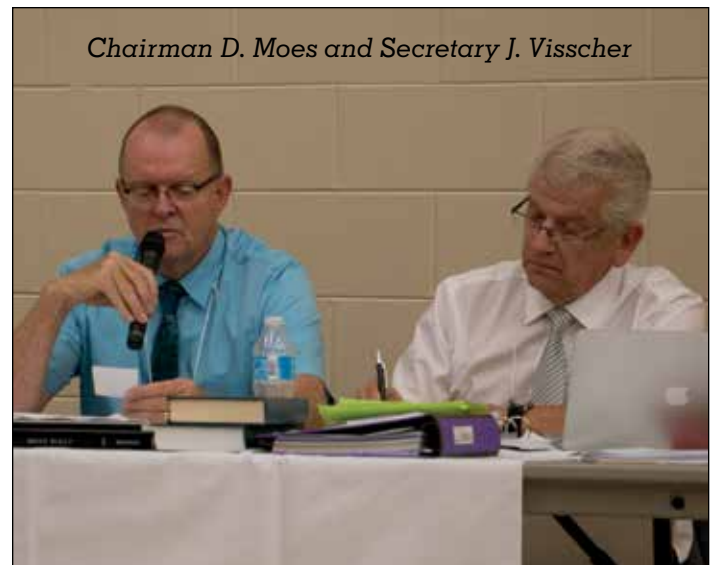


CanRC at ICRC

One of the down-sides to interchurch relations is all the acronyms, so let us begin there. CanRC is of course, ourselves, the Canadian (and American) Reformed Churches. The ICRC is the International Conference of Reformed Churches. One could go on. To avoid clutter, you'll find the acronyms explained in a sidebar.

The Songs of Ascent sing of joy as saints come together, as brothers dwell in unity. Such joy abounds when once every four years churches of Reformed confession from around the world meet come together in a conference. This past summer such a conference took place in Jordan, Ontario. Our close sister churches, the URCNA, were the caring hosts, capably assisted by volunteers drawn not just from the local URCNA, but also from the CanRC, the FRCNA, and the HRC.

At an ICRC, representatives from Reformed and Presbyterian churches gather together for both formal and less formal business. The formal business pertains to the operations of the ICRC, as well as to hearing lectures and participating in panel discussions on topics relevant to churches around the globe. The less formal business involves oppor-



tunities for church representatives to network with one another. Such networking takes place informally during breaks and meal times or during more formal bi-lateral and multi-lateral meetings.

Representation

We as CanRC were represented formally by four delegates – the maximum recognized at an ICRC. GS Dunnville 2016 had mandated a delegation that would consist of members of our various interchurch relations committees. Thus, our delegation consisted of Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen (CRCA), Rev. S.C. VanDam (CRCA), Dr. Jeff Temple (CCCNA), and Rev. Jack Moesker (CRCA-SRN). As Rev. Moesker was unable to attend the ICRC at a critical moment, for one session his seat was filled by Rev. Dr. C. VanDam (CRCA-SRN).

In hindsight, this manner of delegation proved very profitable indeed.

Networking

The ICRC is a very cost-effective way for interchurch relations committees to meet multi-laterally.

Acronym

Expanded

CanRC	Canadian Reformed Churches
CCCNA	Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (CanRC)
CRCA	Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (CanRC)
CRCA-SRN	CRCA - Subcommittee Reformed in the Netherlands
CRCAus	Christian Reformed Churches of Australia
EF	Ecclesiastical Fellowship (= sister church relationship)
FCS	Free Church of Scotland
FRCA	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCNA	Free Reformed Churches of North America
GGRC	Calvinist Reformed Churches [Indonesia]
GGRI	Reformed Churches in Indonesia
GGRI-(NTT)	GGRI in the province Nusa Tenggara Timor
GKv	Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated)
GS	General Synod
HRC	Heritage Reformed Congregations [North America]
ICRC	International Conference of Reformed Churches
IRE	Reformed Churches in Spain
NAPARC	North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
RCNZ	Reformed Churches of New Zealand
RPCCEE	Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe
SRC	Sudanese Reformed Churches
UPC	Uganda Presbyterian Church
URCNA	United Reformed Churches in North America

Indonesia

For example, for us as CanRC, relations with Reformed churches in Indonesia is a complex and rather sensitive matter. The CanRC has EF with the GGRI-(NTT) and has been exploring EF with the GGRC for some fifteen years. The Smithville CanRC has a mission project in Timor that has spawned a number of local churches now federated. Our northern sisters, the URCNA and the GKv, have EF with both the GGRC and the GGRI. Our southern sisters,

the FRCA, have EF with the GGRI only. That means a total of seven parties: GGRI, GGRC, CanRC, URCNA, GKv, FRCA, and Timor Mission. Of these, five were present at the ICRC. Add Smithville as a sixth, it is but a short drive from Jordan. The seventh, the FRCA, were willing to attend our meeting even though it meant a conference call for them in the wee hours of the morning.

With ever-changing ICRC meeting times, it proved a challenge to have the meeting happen. However, we did

CALL DECLINED

Declined the call extended to him by the Canadian Reformed Church of Smithville:

Rev. R. Vermeulen

of the Trinity Canadian Reformed Church in Glanbrook, Ontario

CHURCH NEWS

manage to find a ninety-minute time slot where all parties explained their position in the situation of Reformed churches in Indonesia and their view on it. Our prayer is that now that we understand each other well, harmony and unity can be furthered.

FRCNA

During the last day of the conference the four FRCNA delegates approached the CanRC delegates with the question why the FRCNA and CanRC were no longer talking. It led to the eight of us having lunch together and agreeing more formal effort should be put into connecting with one another. Had there only been CRCA members at the ICRC, this would have been awkward, as the CRCA only deals with interchurch relations outside Canada and the US. Thankfully we had a CCCNA member among us: it has the mandate to interact with NAPARC members. The plan is for the FRCNA and the CanRC to begin communicating formally again.

Others

Less formal were chats held by some of the CanRC representatives with representatives of the RCNZ (New Zealand), IRE (Spain), IRCK (Korea), FCS (Scotland), SRC (South Sudan), and RPCCEE (Hungary).

Membership

There is much joy among ICRC members when new churches are admitted as members. This conference the CRCAus (Australia), a sister of the RCNZ, and the UPC (Uganda), well-known to the OPC, were received as members.

The joy was tempered by the fact that the ICRC suspended the membership of one of the founding members, the GKv. The GKv, a month or two before the ICRC, had decided to allow women to serve as office bearers. This placed the GKv at odds with the constitution of the ICRC.¹

The motion to suspend the GKv was duly presented to the ICRC by the OPC. For us as CanRC, GS Burlington 2010 had determined that in the light of Scripture and our church order the special offices are not open to women. In the light of our synod decisions, the CRCA had determined that we as CanRC would second the motion. We felt that would also be appropriate, given our close ties to the GKv.

The motion of the OPC consumed much meeting time over several days, and much more emotional energy. In the end it was adopted. It means the GKv's voting rights within the ICRC have been suspended. A next ICRC will have to determine whether the GKv can continue as a member.



OPC and RCN in discussion



Panel discussion on Theological Education

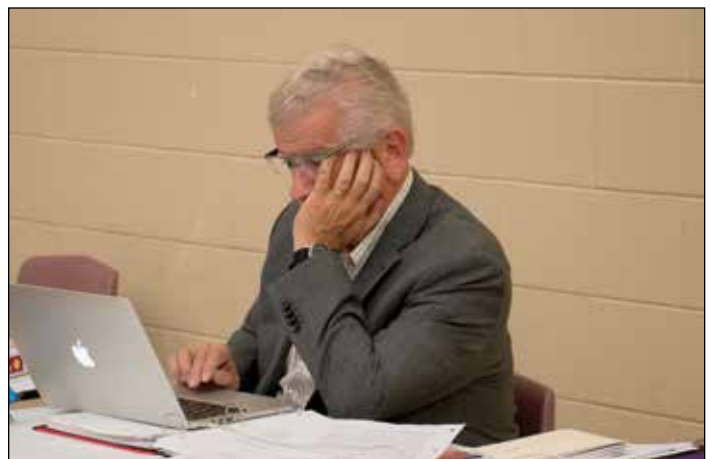
ICRC in session

The evening sessions were held in a church building to allow for a larger presence of the general public. The first evening, technically prior to the opening of the conference, was a worship service in which various ministers participated. The sermon was by Rev. R. Sikkema of the URCNA, a veteran in inter-church relations. The other four evenings were dedicated to church introductions and lectures.

There was not sufficient time for all the churches to introduce themselves, so a selection was made. Some introductions concerned churches already members of the ICRC, others had observer status and may well pursue membership in the future. One of the churches which introduced itself was the RPCCEE in Hungary and surrounding nations. The RPCCEE is looking to build closer ties with the London CanRC, as several former RPCCEE members are now members there.



A table shot with a CanRC delegate (Rev. S.C. VanDam)



The pensive Corresponding Secretary

Most of each evening session was spent hearing a lecture on a specific topic. Rev. Solanki and Rev. Dr. Ebenezer spoke on the history and current situation of the Reformed faith and mission in India. Rev. Dr. Beeke spoke on Reformed piety: covenantal and experiential. With a view to the 500th anniversary of the Great Reformation, Rev. Dr. Thomas spoke on Calvin's preaching on Job.

The panel discussions during the ICRC focussed on the core business of the ICRC: facilitating activities by churches in missional endeavours, theological education, and diaconal assistance, as well as the future of the ICRC as organization.

Looking ahead

Regarding that future, the ICRC was asked by the GKv to take over *Lux Mundi*, an English language quarterly of the GKv published for the benefit of the Reformed community worldwide. The ICRC gladly did so, expanding its website committee into a Publications Committee. *Lux Mundi* is published without cost to those who subscribe to its digital version. See www.icrconline.com for more details.

The CanRC has always been closely involved in the operations of the ICRC. Both the corresponding secretary and the treasurer have always been CanRC members, and there are CanRC members on the Missions Committee and the Publications Committee. The Lord has blessed us with much to give for the benefit and well being of other churches.

There's also a lot to receive. We confirm each other in our commonly held convictions, we share each other's joys and burdens. Reciprocity is an important reality in inter church relations: one gives and one receives.

The bond of peace

Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless the ICRC as a forum for the confession of the Reformed faith. May we as CanRC continue to receive for and give of ourselves in this context, to the furtherance of God's Kingdom.

For in this way churches around the world strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

¹ For more on this see the article of the CRCA-SRN in the *Clarion* of November 3, 2017.





www.merf.org

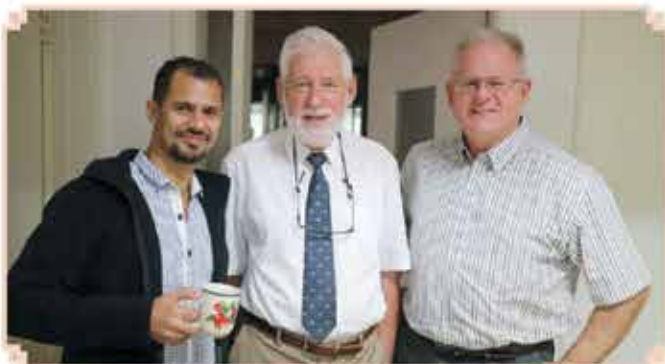
MERF News

Middle East Reformed Fellowship—"Declaring the Whole Counsel of God"

December 2017



Shining the Light



BY PASTOR JAN
DEGELDER

November 6 and 7, MERF field and support committee representatives gathered for the annual International Council (IC)—a wonderful opportunity to share what the Lord has been doing over the past year through MERF's ministries. We could thank and praise Him for the many blessings evident in encouraging field reports.

Biblical Training

Biblical Training is the backbone of MERF's ministries. Indigenous spiritual leaders in countries dominated by Islam are in most need of thorough, practical training in the Scripture and sound, basic Christian doctrines. In the past, most training took place in Cyprus, but now it has multiplied to various regions:

In **Indonesia**, courses and seminars are given to pas-

tors, elders, deacons, evangelists, and Sunday school teachers. Topics equip and encourage God's people to share the gospel with their Muslim neighbors. Biblical training took place in Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and Java.

At **Lokichoggio (Loki)**, in NW **Kenya**, MERF's Biblical Training Center operates in partnership with South Sudan churches. This year 65 pastors, evangelists, and elders received about 12 weeks of intensive training in three groups. Most

were South Sudanese, but some came from Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Kenya.

Training in God's Word equips them to be stronger Christian leaders; they in turn are able to train many others. The IC noted with thankfulness that since the Loki Center opened in 2003, about 900 people have been trained.

In **Ethiopia**, on a smaller scale, biblical training is given to pastors and evangelists, quite a number of whom have a Muslim background. These men are being encouraged and trained to reach out in their

Through conferences and seminars in countries like **Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan**, and the **Gulf States**, Muslim converts are disciplined, Christian believers are encouraged, and more church leaders are equipped for their task. In **Cyprus** conferences were held for Arab elders, youth leaders from Lebanon and Jordan, as well as MERF's Arabic broadcasting and Internet ministry teams.

Radio Broadcasting

We still call it "broadcasting." And yes, radio is still the means by which many



communities. By God's grace, MERF is able to provide Bible-based evangelism training to reach Muslims, at the request of growing numbers of church leaders.

people in remote areas of the Middle East, Africa, and SE Asia can be reached with the good news. In **Indonesia** daily radio programs are produced in local languages such as *Bugis, Toraja, Makassarese, Javanese, and Sundanese*, in addition to the national language *Bahasa Indonesian*. From **Loki, Kenya** God's Word is broadcasted daily in



Top left: Pastor Jan DeGelder with Isaac Ibrahim of Egypt and Pastor David George of the UK. **Above right:** Pastor DeGelder greets the Lokichoggio congregation after worship. **Left:** 2017 MERF International Council with staff.

Nuer, the language of one of the largest tribes in nearby South Sudan. In Ethiopia the message can be heard on the radio in three major languages—Oromo, Amharic, and Somali.

Media Ministries

Today the Internet and social media have opened up a wide variety of possibilities for proclaiming Christ to millions. It is truly inspiring to see and hear how in Cairo and Beirut dedicated young Arab teams are working hard to make the most of these technologies in service to the Lord.

MERF's **Arabic Media Ministries** are constantly redesigning and updating their indirect website **dardasha7.com** ('chat7'). This very interactive tool is reaching hundreds of thousands of young Muslims with online radio, an online magazine, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and a free mobile app. Many encouraging responses are received daily from seeking Muslims from Yemen to Morocco, all across North Africa and the Middle East.

MERF-Canada

Thank you for your faithful support! Please make cheques payable to MERF-Canada and send them to the address at the bottom of the page.

Online donations can be made to Middle East Reformed Fellowship (Canada) Inc. through www.canadahelps.org



Staff and volunteers answer questions and chat via SMS, WhatsApp, or Skype. God allows us to be present at the right time with the right message. The number of Muslims more and more disenchanted with Islam is rapidly growing. Digital devices and social media give millions of young Arabs access to the gospel.

A second Arabic website, **Issa-almasih.com**, directly offers the Arabic Scriptures and solid literature. In the past, smuggling Bibles into some Muslim countries was a risky venture. Now God's Word can be freely downloaded online. This website also offers more than 30 books for free download. Celebrating 500 years of the Reformation availed many printed copies to be distributed throughout the Middle East.

Also, the **Farsi Media Ministry** operates similarly with two websites, online radio, YouTube videos, and a podcast reaching Iranians, Afghans, and others.

Church Extension

Through local field committees, MERF continues to support pastors, evangelists, and church plants, assist-

ing indigenous churches in **Indonesia, Pakistan, Lebanon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan**. The goal is to strengthen churches, helping them reach out in their communities. Specific new projects are sponsored and needy local workers are supported.

Diaconal Aid

MERF is not a relief organization. Focus is on the ministry of the Word. Where there is poverty or hunger, diaconal aid is given through volunteers, always in conjunction with the gospel. In the past year MERF again helped provide for basic needs of displaced **Syrians** and other refugees in Lebanon and Jordan. In the drought-stricken **Horn of Africa**, local fellowships distribute food to hundreds of starving families in Ethiopia and Somalia.

South Sudan continues to be deeply troubled by a violent civil war. People are often forced to run for their lives, losing all with no place to hide and facing an uncertain future. Most are displaced in other parts of the country. Through local churches in remote safer areas, MERF is able to fly in food, blankets, plastic shelters, and mosquito nets to prevent malaria.

Praise and Prayer

Firsthand field reports at the IC inspire much praise to the Lord for MERF's faithful, fruitful, and cost-effective ministries. We give thanks also for the generous support of faithful believers and churches around the world. Growing lev-

Oh, send out Your light and Your truth!—Psalm 43:3

els of local support within the fields is very encouraging. Under God's sovereign power more and more doors in the Islamic world are opening for the gospel. Praise be to the Lord!

Prayer Requests

Please uphold in your prayers:

Our General Director, Pastor Victor Atallah, his wife Lisa, and staff and volunteers in MERF's growing fields.

Local pastors and evangelists and MERF's training programs.

That MERF will remain committed to the faithful proclamation of the whole counsel of God, to the glory of Christ's name in Muslim lands.



Top left: Indonesian evangelist training at MERF's center in Makassar.
Bottom right: In Lahore Pakistan, Calvin school girls receive Bibles.



It is fulfilled!

Lyrics: George van Popta

Tenor and Alto parts: Gertim

BWV 458. Schemelli Gesangbuch

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)/Schemelli

S
A

1. It is ful - filled! Do not for - get this word, my heart, that Je - sus
 2. It is ful - filled! It was fore - told by faith - ful proph - ets from of
 3. It is ful - filled! All sat - is - fied: the Fa - ther lays His wrath a -
 4. It is ful - filled! What must I do to add to what was done by
 5. It is ful - filled! I am set free. I praise my Lord so joy - ful -
 6. It is ful - filled! Do not for - get this word, my heart, that Je - sus

T
B

5

said. My soul, re - call it was for you He died. For you He
 old. Find so - lace in the wounds of Je - sus Christ, who, for the
 side. Our peace is won and God's de - mands were met. Our Sa - viour
 You? No work, no deed, for what You did for me has earned my
 ly. All sin and death are by Your pow'r re - moved and I am
 said and let it serve you now and all your life. Hold on to

9

suf - fered and was cru - ci - fied. Re - mem - ber Him who our sal -
 sin of man, was sa - cri - ficed. What God Most High in ag - es
 Christ has paid our ev' - ry debt. We should not fear for His own
 life with You e - ter - nal - ly. My dai - ly com - fort is that
 by the Ho - ly Ghost re - newed. E'en though this life should to de -
 Christ through - out the bit - ter strife. He has to you his love and

13

va - tion sealed, who cried a - loud: It is ful - filled!
 past had willed, our Lord has done. It is ful - filled!
 blood was spilled on Cal - var - y. It is ful - filled!
 I'm God's child. I am re - born. It is ful - filled!
 struc - tion yield, yet this I know: It is ful - filled!
 grace re - vealed, He who once said: It is ful - filled!



Review of the CRTA Convention – Oct 26 and 27, 2017

Why would teachers in Ontario meet together annually? To encourage each other; to share ideas for teaching; to share successes of teaching; to talk in one faith (which one cannot do in other professional workshops and conferences); to focus on why we teach what we are teaching. It is an expression of unity among all the schools. It is to improve teachers in their teaching of covenant children. Ultimately, it is help teachers in word and deed: “And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col 3:17), the theme text of the convention.

The first day of the conference had more workshops geared to kindergarten and special needs teachers; the second day had more workshops that could benefit high school teachers. Over the two days, the convention offered teachers a motivational speech, a keynote address, and forty-eight workshops!

The John Calvin School (Smithville) staff sported black T-shirts with the five solas written on them. They had decorated the school beautifully. And the singing was wonderful: 170 teachers filled the gym with joyful singing to the Lord.

Mark Wanders, a dad of six, an elder, and a strong supporter of Christian education, enthusiastically shared his motivational speech on the convention’s theme taken from Colossians 3:17. He divided his speech into three parts (good Reformed guy): What, So what, and Now what.

What: He reminded us that we, together with our students, have our identity in Christ. Knowing that, he urged us to live in Christ – setting hearts on things above. For each Christian teacher, what is the source of teaching? Mark shares it simply: Knowing Christ.

So what: In this part, Mark shared that we don’t need to add rules to be in Christ. We, nor our students need to do works, or need to meet a certain criteria of goodness to be in Christ. We do not have levels of social status in Christ either.



Now what: We simply must be clothed in Christ, modeling the fruit of the Spirit for ourselves and our students. Our students are fellow image-bearers. Mark then asked us to do two things: firstly, create space in our lives for personal devotions – pray and read. Pray for ourselves and for our students, even by name. Secondly, he told us to remind each other of who we are in Christ. Students together with teachers are the *now* in God’s kingdom.

The conclusion of Mark’s speech was touching:

Your students will be influenced by how you love them and by how you teach them in the name of Jesus. God is gathering, defending, and preserving a church (that we are part of!) for himself as we speak, and he has chosen you, his beloved, in the process with the high calling of teaching. He goes with you and is in you, strengthening you so that he will indeed complete a good work in you.

Go. Be bold. Pray. Believe. Be in the Word. Thank. Sing. Teach and admonish. Remember that God made you *alive* in Christ. Proclaim the good news. Do it all in the name of our Lord Jesus. And as Paul closes his letter, “See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord. . . Grace be with you.”

About 160 teachers began the Friday’s session by singing praises to God. Mr. George Hofsink, principal of John Calvin School, Smithville, led us in devotions. Rev. W. den Hollander then shared with us his keynote speech entitled “The Great Reformation and Education: School in the Time of the Reformation.” According to Rev. den Hollander, the schools of the 1500s were not doing much more than preparing students for a trade. The schools, affected by the dichotomy between nature and grace taught in the Roman Catholic tradition, did not teach the whole child, and did not see value of instructing the mind and the soul of the common folk. The Roman Catholic Church did not see the

need to educate all the children of the church. Universal education was an unknown entity.

Luther reacted to the educational system of the day. He realized that one of the biggest sins of parents is to not educate and nurture the children. In Christ and through Christ there is no distinction between nature and grace. The body and the mind, along with the soul, are to be trained and directed to serving God. He sought to reform education by stating that it should not be under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church, but should fall under the responsibility of the state. Town councils, princes, and lords, should take care of education. The city’s best welfare, Luther said, is to have able, learned, wise, and well-educated citizens. He strongly suggested that universal compulsory education should be provided so that everyone can read the Bible in their own language. The curriculum should include catechism, music, languages, and art, and education should involve pleasure and play.



Luther's view of education was radically different from the Roman Catholic view of his day.

Rev. den Hollander then focussed on Calvin's view of education. Calvin was influenced by the Lutheran reformer Martin Bucer and by the classicism of his day. He did not agree with Luther that the education should be the state's responsibility, but argued that it should be under the care of the church. The church was called, according to Romans 12:1 to teach the children in godliness. He also, in reference to Titus 2: 11 and 12, highlighted the parental responsibility to educate the children at home. Education should better prepare man "to serve his creator;" thus, mind and heart must be educated. The child must be made conscious of his covenant position, and the school should assist in the child's experiential growing relationship with the Lord. How should the school do this? Calvin agreed with Martin Bucer's "seven methods," which were the methods that Christ himself employed as he taught. John Calvin added that not only boys, but girls too should receive proper education for their future tasks of service to man and God.

The reformers, Rev. den Hollander summarized, highlighted the biblical imperative for all parents to train the child, not just for a job, but for a life of service to God. Education was put back into the context it should always remain. The reformers also emphasized the role of the parents in nurturing the faith of the child as part of the education, whether that education happens at home or away from the home under the care of teachers. Although God's Word and the child's response must remain central in the education of the child, the inculcation of knowledge and truth, found in God's general revelation, is undoubtedly necessary for the child to live a life of service to his Creator. Grace and nature are thus restored in service to God.

After this keynote address, teachers could quickly grab some refreshments and hustle to their morning workshops. My workshop, titled "Encouraging Youth to Run the Race" dovetailed wonderfully with the keynote address. Rev. Jagersma neatly combined the "Tour de France" with Hebrews 12. He encouraged us be the eight *domestique* support riders for the one competitor who is cycling the race. We need to constantly highlight the prize (the goal) and provide a model of our Christian life by cycling with the competitor. They need to see our sincerity, authenticity, passion, and sacrifice for following Jesus. We also need to teach defensive cycling: we may busy ourselves with reducing distraction



(idols of self-image, peer pressure, sexuality, apathy, social media, etc), but more importantly, we should teach them how to deal with these distractions. Satan loves to use anything to take our eyes off the goal, to hurl something on our path so we go down. Satan also knows that if one goes down, others go down with him. Rev. Jagersma ended with emphasizing the need for team spirit. As the competitor who lost time in the race (because of a flat tire, a broken bike part, or a slip off the pedal) needs the encouragement of the team to make up time, so each student needs the encouragement of the team. We have the advantage of a unity between church, home, and school. The church, home, and school need to remain a team. In our short discussion after the presentation, teachers emphasized the need to openly talk about the distractions, and the need to intentionally and repeatedly develop resiliency to them.

I would like to end this review by encouraging parents, board members, and teachers to never let go of the wonderful tradition of having CRTA conventions. True, teachers have plenty of opportunities for professional development through on-line courses or through attending other workshops. Teachers can also work together on staff development projects that are also very rewarding. The CRTA conventions, however, are positive and motivational expressions of the unity that we have as Reformed teachers across Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta. These conventions encourage us to fulfill our tasks humbly in Christ. C

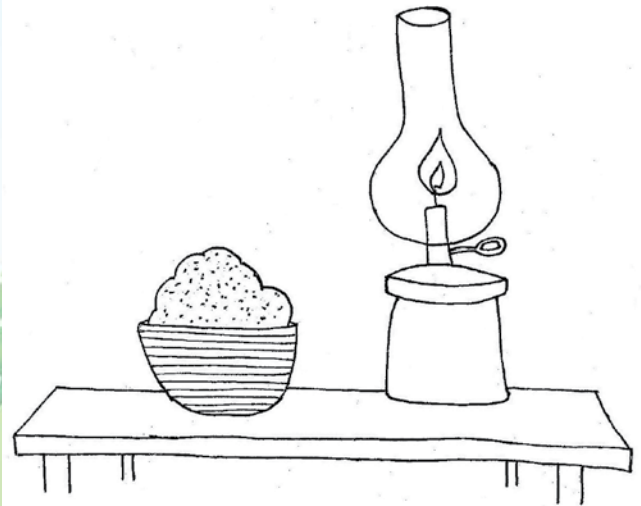
Clarion Kids

The Sermon on the Mount - Salt & Light

Matthew 5:13-16

The sermon on the mount is one of Jesus's most famous teachings. One of the things he teaches is that we are to be the salt of the earth, and a light to the whole world. This means that we have to show by how we talk and act that we are God's children. If we love God, we will be kind, honest, reliable, and loving to all those around us. We will want to tell other people about God so that they can be his children too. Everyone should be able to tell by our words and actions that we love God and want to serve him. This is how we can be salt and light in the world.

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



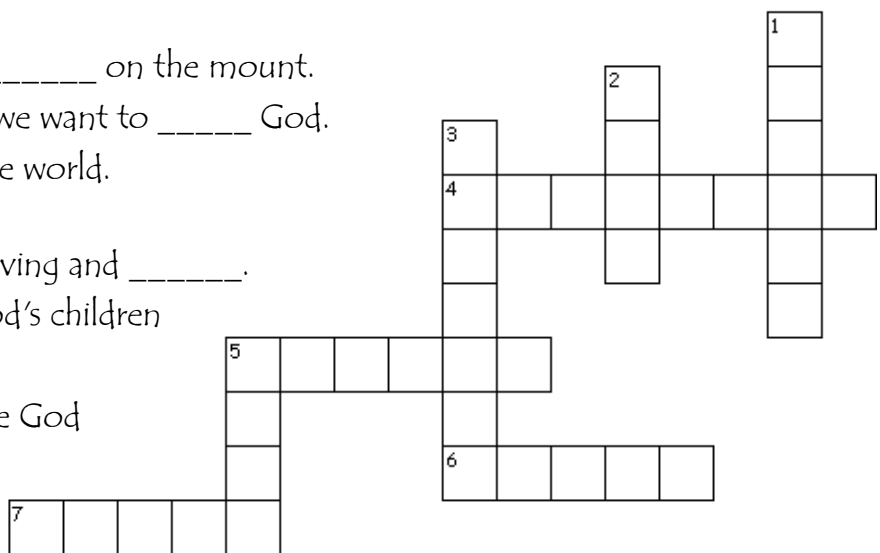
Crossword Puzzle: Solve the clues to fill in the puzzle!

Across

4. We should tell people about God so that they can be his _____ too.
5. Jesus taught people in the _____ on the mount.
6. Our lives should show that we want to _____ God.
7. We are to be a _____ to the world.

Down

1. If we love God we will be loving and _____.
2. We have to show we are God's children by how we _____.
3. People should know we love God by our _____.
5. We are to be the _____ of the earth.



by Emily Nijenhuis

Church Planting Overseas. . . and Here. . . ?

For some time I have been wondering about our task to plant churches. The Bible is quite clear that we are to spread the Word and reach others for Christ. We are to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). God gathers his church “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev 5:9). “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16), and “I have other sheep. . . I must bring them also” (John 10:16). “It is the calling of the Church. . . to move people to believe in Christ crucified” (Form for the Ordination of Missionaries, *Book of Praise*). “And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?” (Rom 10:14). “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us” (2 Cor 5:20a).

We are to be a light in the community, and to spread the gospel – the good news of salvation. Remember the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, the imperative being: “Go” (not: “Stay”).

When we meet with missionaries from e.g. South America or Asia, our calling seems to be clearly understood and we send them off in prayer that God will bless their efforts, that the gospel may be preached, and that new believers may worship him *in newly planted churches*. We rejoice when this happens, and rightly so.

How do we look at this same calling in Canada? It seems that – when a church is “getting filled” – we seem to consider either expanding the church, or we plan on calling a second minister to the growing congregation. We may also look into having double services. When a church literally bursts out of its seams, we start talking about “splitting up” the church.

Someone may say: “Could you perhaps be a bit more positive?” Okay then; let’s look at the positive side: We have Streetlight Christian Church in Hamilton, ON, and the

full-time ministry in Prince George, BC, and perhaps others. And so we are reaching out, and this is great! It seems though, that with all our churches, more can be considered.

Among most Canadian Reformed churches there seems to be little consideration, eagerness, or even plans to plant a new church in the neighbourhood, to add a light elsewhere and so draw others to the gospel. Is this not incongruous with our active church-planting-practice abroad, and what could be the reason for this?

Have we perhaps settled too much in the rich blessings God has given us? Most congregations have a finished church building (and a school), and are quite content with both. Aside from the regular maintenance, there seems to be no urgent need for anything else. Our regular contributions cover the costs, and what else is there to do? However, we still have the calling!

Do we have a desire to plant churches in Canada? And is there a strategy in every existing church to see where, when and how this can be accomplished? I like to think that the answer will be a resounding yes! Such a strategy will bring us in line with what we practice abroad (i.e. our mission to plant churches), and will answer God’s call to spread the Word, to be a light in this dark world, as ambassadors for Christ.

Many Canadians have left the Lord behind, many walk around with unanswered questions, and the presence of a church in their neighbourhood will be the saving grace for some, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and by God’s grace.

Let us look at our calling and consider how it can be implemented in Canada. Let us plant churches here, not because we *have to*, but *because we want to*!

Bram Vegter

Quotes are from NIV Bible translation

*Letters to the Editor should be written in a brotherly fashion in order to be considered for publication.
Submissions need to be less than one page in length.*





Q Why do we only know the Heidelberg Catechism?

For as long as I can remember I have been under only one part of the Three Forms of Unity. Why do we only know the Heidelberg Catechism or better why are we taught only this confession and when we make profession of faith we may be lying when we say “I do” to agreeing with everything the church teaches us, yet we know next to nothing about the Belgic Confession and Canons of Dort?

A This question most likely is coming from someone of the “older” generation, since the description in the question doesn’t seem to be the present reality among our churches. First of all, it is true indeed that in our churches the Heidelberg Catechism is used faithfully as per Article 52 of the Church Order: “The consistory shall ensure that, as a rule, once every Sunday the doctrine of God’s Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism is proclaimed.” In my own experience as well as by my knowledge of colleagues in other congregations, in these instructional services the other two Forms of Unity are used regularly or frequently. Although the Church Order articulates the Heidelberg Catechism specifically, I also know that some consistories have agreed that a series on the Belgic Confession or the Canons of Dort may also be used for the proclamation of the doctrine of God’s Word (articulated in the Proposed Joint Church Order with the URCNA as well!). In other words, more than in the past perhaps, in the afternoon’s instructional services all Three Forms of Unity receive due attention.

Again, contrary to what has been the practice many years ago, presently all Three Forms of Unity are being taught, discussed, and studied during the years the youth of

the church receive catechetical instruction. During the first few years, indeed, the Heidelberg Catechism is followed closely and intensely, taught and memorized faithfully. In subsequent years the Belgic Confession and Canons of Dort are the confessions of study (together with or side by side of the Heidelberg Catechism, the memorization of which is enforced as well). Finally, during the senior year(s) (or what in most churches still is the Pre-Confession Class) all Three Forms of Unity are reviewed and consolidated in the hearts and minds of the catechism students. Hence, by and large, and true for most if not all congregations, those who make public profession of faith can say their “I do” to the first question knowledgeably and (hopefully) wholeheartedly: “Do you wholeheartedly believe the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the *confessions* and *taught here* in this Christian church?”

The question is an important one indeed, as it highlights the significance of a thorough knowledge of the doctrine of the church as summarized in the confessions. It is of great importance that communicant members of the church are well rooted and grounded in the confessions. Hence, as is the practice in some churches, a so-called “crash course” of a few months for those who were not raised in one of our churches but who wish to join a congregation later on in life, is not sufficient. In

their case it will be true indeed that they can hardly be said to “agree with everything the church teaches” or will be able to answer that first question truthfully, since it won’t be possible to study, teach, and know adequately “the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian church.” It would be to their benefit if and when they receive a thorough instruction over a longer period of time in order to acquaint themselves with the teachings included in *all* Three Forms of Unity! It would also do justice to

what we favour highly in our Reformed churches, namely a confessional membership!

*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



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

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



1968 ~ March 22 ~ 2018

*I lift up my eyes to the hills –
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.*

Psalms 121:1, 2



With thankfulness to the Lord,
we celebrate the 50th Wedding Anniversary of

ANDY and HELEN LEFFERS (nee de Haas)

Love and prayers from your children:

Coaldale, AB: Pete and Angela Hulst

Bryan and Denise Meyer

Edmonton, AB: Dwayne and Trixie Leffers

Ken and Shelley Leffers

Coaldale, AB: Pete and Melanie Harthoorn

as well as your 23 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren!

OBITUARIES

July 10, 1934 – February 7, 2018

God is our refuge and strength. Psalm 46

Our Heavenly Father in his wisdom and at his time, called home to Himself his covenant child, our dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather

GERRIT (Gerry) VANMIDDELKOOP

Beloved husband of Brenda VanMiddelkoop for 60 years.

Dear father of: John and Sita VanMiddelkoop

MaryAnn and Brian Kalte

Teresa and Art Schulenberg

Wilma and Ralph Schutten

Margaret and Nathan Lee

Also lovingly remembered by 20 grandchildren with their spouses and 31 great-grandchildren.

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