

# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## Understanding headship



**ORTHODUSTY?**

**WHY DO WE CALL MINISTERS?**

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Issue 12 begins with an article from Rev. Eric Kampen, who has chosen the topic of "Headship" for his editorial. He writes about the scriptural message of headship, and the reflection that husbands and fathers need to make regarding their responsibility.

In a recent issue, *Clarion* printed an article by Rev. Christopher Gordon entitled "The Burning of the Wooden Shoes." The article focussed on a trend of churches moving away from Reformed traditions. We are now thankful to have permission from Rev. Paul Murphy, also a minister of the URCNA, to publish his article, "Orthodoxy." Here the focus shifts to the difference between traditions and traditionalism.

This issue brings readers regular columns Treasures New & Old, Clippings on Politics & Religion, Education Matters, You Asked, and *Clarion Kids*. There is also a canticle, a letter to the editor, and a short report.

Laura Veenendaal

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# Headship

*The first word that should come to mind when thinking of being the head of one's wife is love!*

This issue of *Clarion* will be in your hands at the same time of the year as Father's Day. While we can try to ignore it as just another day when people are pressured to buy a card and a gift, it is hard not to notice it. We may as well take the opportunity to have some scriptural reflections on fatherhood. In this editorial, we will focus on the way a father is the head of the family. In short, we will focus on headship.

What prompted me to write on headship was not only the way it was my turn to write an editorial that would appear around Father's Day, but also recently having had the privilege of listening to a sermon by a younger colleague dealing with the seventh commandment. In the sermon, he made the remark that, while he was aware many sisters discussed and read books on how to be submissive to their husbands, he was not aware of men discussing or reading books on how to exercise headship. Afterward, I expressed my appreciation for the sermon and the way he had given me a seed thought for a future editorial.

## Discussion not missing altogether

While there does not seem to be much discussion on exercising headship within the marriage relationship, it is not so that conversation on headship has been lacking altogether. One who has followed issues dealt with at general synods over the past decade will be aware that there has been much talk about headship. The focus was not on exercising headship in the family, but it had to do with the question as to whether the sisters in the congregation should be involved in voting for office bearers. Headship was brought into the discussion as it was seen by some that voting is an exercising of authority. The argument then followed that if voting is an exercise of authority, the sisters should not participate in voting, for that would give sisters authority over men. As the discussions progressed over the years, the conclusion was that voting is not an exercise of authority and, as such, sisters should be able to participate in voting for new office bearers.

The intention in mentioning this is not to stir up the question of the involvement of sisters in choosing new office bearers. The intent is to show how the thought that tends to arise when one hears the word "headship" is "authority" and, let's face it, that has a bad ring to it. Whether we like it or not, "authority" evokes thoughts of authoritarianism, of heavy-handedness, of calling the shots. There is the danger that a husband may let this authority get to his head and think it is the obligation of his wife to be submissive to him since he is the head. Husbands, however, should not spend time thinking what their wives are called to do. They should spend time thinking about what they are called to do in their position as head. This is best done by avoiding thinking of the headship *principle* and instead thinking about the headship *passage*.

## Headship passage

Every husband should know where to find the headship passage, namely, Ephesians 5:25-33, and he should know the content. It is in the part of the letter to the Ephesians where Paul is calling his readers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. . ." (4:1). It is in a way which is different from the way of the unbelievers, still darkened in their understanding (4:17). It is the way in which we are to be imitators of Christ and walking in love (5:1). Beginning in chapter 5:22, Paul works out what that looks like in the various relationships of life. Wives are addressed first, and husbands are called their heads, but they are addressed in only three verses, while husbands are addressed in nine. It is in those nine verses that husbands learn what headship is all about by the way Paul points to their role model, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

To understand headship, you must understand the relationship of Christ and his church. When you understand that, you will soon begin to wonder if the term "authority" is really a helpful term in understanding headship. We see this when we note how Paul's first instruction to husbands

## EXAMINATION TO SPEAK AN EDIFYING WORD SUSTAINED

Examined by Classis Ontario West, May 23, 2018, and  
granted permission to speak an edifying word:

**brs. Chauncey Knegt, Eric Onderwater,  
Jeremy Segstro, and Mark ten Haaf**

## CHURCH NEWS

is to “love your wives.” I highlight that “love.” Any thought that headship means making sure one’s wife is submissive and does what she is told without questioning is banished. The first word that should come to mind when thinking of being the head of one’s wife is love!

Paul goes on to explain what love is by pointing to what Christ did for his church, namely, give his life for his church. Love is focussed on the other. Love is self-denying, sacrificial. As Christ gave his life to make the church beautiful to himself, that is, without sin, a husband must act in a similar way toward his wife. Paul brings this out further by elaborating on the relationship of the head and the body. The husband should see his wife as his own body. As he will look after his own body, he should look after his wife. It is the marvel of marriage, after all, that husband and wife in effect become one flesh, though they are two people.

The headship passage, therefore, brings out that the husband does not say, “What should my wife do for me,” but, “What am I called to do for my wife?” Christian men should realize that when they marry, they become responsible in part for the sanctification of their wives. They may have married a beautiful, godly woman, but as the marriage progresses, she should become a more beautiful, godly woman. He cannot simply leave that to her own efforts by having her read self-help books and discuss submission with her woman friends.

### The marriage form

Now the question that will arise is how a husband is to do this. We have some excellent directions in that most compact marriage manual, the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage. This is something every Reformed husband should be familiar with. Most likely, a minister will have gone through this form in some premarital talks with a couple. Most certainly it has been heard numerous times, at one’s own wedding and when attending weddings of family and friends.

Husbands get direction in the section on the *Duties of Marriage*. Right after mentioning that the husband is the head of his wife and shall love her as his own body, it spells out three key responsibilities: namely, to guide, protect, and comfort her. These are spiritual responsibilities. The common denominator for these activities is the Word of God. A husband must conscientiously lead his family in the way of the Lord, be ready to point out spiritual dangers, and give comfort and encouragement. A husband should be just as well versed in the Scriptures, if not better, than his wife, in order to fulfill this important task. My observation is that the wives often spend far more time studying God’s Word than the husbands do. To address this is not to have wives study less, but to have husbands study more. It is essential if they are going to be a true head in the marriage relationship.

In addition, the form states that a husband should “live with her wisely and honour her, because she is an heir to eternal life together with you; then your prayers will not be hindered.” Living wisely with one’s wife requires awareness that a woman is different from a man. God made the woman to be a helper to the man, to supplement what he lacked. Together, a husband and a wife make a whole. They complement each other’s weaknesses and strengths. There is also the need to realize that one’s wife is one’s sister in Christ and should be respected and valued as such. Husband and wife together stand as sinners in need of Christ. Failure to realize and respect this will lead to hindered prayers (see 1 Peter 3:7). Hindered prayers suggest the inability for husband and wife to pray together because of tension, as well as conflicting prayers going up the Father.

### Man talk

At this point, it is necessary to make it clear that what has been written is not because, as writer, I claim a high level of achievement in this department. As we confess in Lord’s Day 44, we only make a small beginning in the new obedience to which we are called. These words have been written as a reminder of what all husbands have promised in their marriage vows. Further, as it was said earlier husbands should not be busy seeing if their wives are submissive enough, but the sisters need to reflect on God’s will for them, so wives should not be busy seeing if their husbands are exercising headship properly. It is the responsibility of every husband to reflect on how he is doing in fulfilling his calling as head of the family, whether he loves his wife and seeks to be a blessing to her. Not only should this stir up reflection, but it should also stir up some man talk, just as the women have woman talk about their calling. In such man talk, brothers might ask each other to share thoughts on how to fulfill the task of being a head in the family, and to evaluate each other and challenge each other to be godly husbands and fathers.

It is nice to bask in the love and attention of Father’s Day. It is not enough to bask in that glow of that day and let it get to one’s head, but in humble faith it is necessary each day of the year to seek to grow in being a head in the family. This comes down to growing each day in love for one’s wife and children.





# Remember Not the Sins of My Youth

*"Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions. . . ." (Psalm 25:7a)*

In the previous meditation, we heard David pray, "Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old." Now having asked the LORD to remember his mercy and love, he asks the LORD *not* to remember the sins of his youth or his transgressions. Do you see the order of things here? First he spoke of God's tenderness and love which have been from of old, for as long as God has had a people, which goes all the way back to our first parents.

God has always been a forgiving God. He had Moses set up a whole system of sacrifices and offerings, festivals and holy days, by which the children of Israel could approach the Lord, not with fear like the heathen, but with joy and celebration, knowing that their God was a forgiving God. After having established God's longstanding history of tender mercy he now asks that he may participate in that mercy and love by having his own sins and transgressions forgiven.

Dear reader, you can pray that too. "LORD, may I experience your ten-

der and forgiving love and mercy, for they have been from of old." It's there, available for us all. God will never say, "Oh, sorry. All of my mercy and love have been used up. The bank is empty." No, his love and mercy are limitless and know no boundaries. God's treasure chest of mercy is never depleted. Pray for the LORD to forgive you your sins. He will.

King David speaks here specifically about the sins of youth. These are the sins of a young man. Even covenant youth commit terrible sins. If I think back to my own youth, when I was a young man, I can only blush with shame as I seek the Lord. But the Lord forgives also those sins. Young people, the Lord forgives the foolish sins you commit.

This is not to put you on easy street so that you will say, "Well, I can do what I want and sin to my heart's content because the Lord will forgive me." No, that is presuming upon the love and mercy of God, and presuming upon the LORD is a dangerous thing to do. Be rather like the sinful woman who anointed the head of Jesus with

oil (Luke 7). When some people questioned what she was doing, then Jesus explained to them that the woman loved much because she had been forgiven much.

Go to Jesus, young people and old people. He will forgive your sins. Then off your knees and serve the Lord with love for him and in obedience!

The sins of youth can haunt us. Once, many years ago, I was visiting a man in the hospital who was over ninety years old. He knew he was dying and through his tears he began telling me about all manner of sins he had done. I thought, how can that be, he is such an old man; but then it dawned on me that he was speaking of things he had done seventy-five and eighty years earlier. Well, what could we do but read this Psalm: "O LORD, sins of youth remember not."

Dear reader, don't be haunted by your sins. Rather, ask God to forgive them: sins of youth, sins of middle age, sins of old age. Plead upon the tender mercy and the steadfast love of the Lord. He will forgive you.

## For further study

1. How do the sins of youth differ from those of an old person?
2. Have you asked God to forgive you?



# Orthodusty?

"Tradition. Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as. . . as a fiddler on the roof." So said Tevye, the father of five daughters, in the 1964 musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, about his attempts to maintain his Jewish religious and cultural traditions as outside influences encroach upon the family's lives.

What is orthodusty? It is when the vitality of the faith, the people, and the church becomes fossilized. Jaroslav Pelikan, scholar of church history at Yale University, put it well when he said, "Tradition is the living faith of the dead. Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living." Hence, orthodoxy can shift over time into orthodusty.

I am not saying that we as Reformed Christians are not spiritually minded or faithful. I believe the piety of our people, especially the older generation, is deep and exemplary. Nor do I mean that the URCNA is becoming liberal, as in having forsaken the faith. Our commitment to the confessions is strong. Furthermore, I do not mean that we should dispense with or denigrate our traditions. Tradition is indispensable and unavoidable. Even contemporary groups and spontaneous churches have traditions. Their traditions are contemporary and spontaneous, but they are traditions nonetheless.

Rather, I maintain that in far too many cases our orthodoxy is in our forms. As long as it's "the way we've always done it," then all is good; everything looks right. Danger ahead! Christianity is a religion of faith, not forms.

Thom Rainer, in *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*,<sup>1</sup> lists symptoms of orthodusty. One symptoms chapter is titled, "The Past As Hero." In this chapter Rainer says, "The most pervasive and common thread of our autopsies was that the deceased churches lived for a long time with the past as hero . . . they were fighting for the past. The good old days. The way it used to be. The way we want it today." In my estimation, far too many suffer from this symptom.

While this evidence is anecdotal, it is no less true.

I recall once during a song service in one of our most conservative churches enjoying the youth group singing

psalms from the Blue Psalter but with guitars. You could've heard a pin drop (not a commendation) until one of the more conservative members blurted out, "There goes the church!" I wonder what his reaction would've been upon hearing Psalm 150 in Israel's worship, "Praise him with trumpet, lute, harp, tambourine and dance [Oops! Happy feet. After all, we don't dance.], strings, pipe, loud clashing cymbals." I wonder what the reaction would've been to us here in New York City when we began. We had no organist or pianist. We used an amplified acoustic guitar, or often times only a flute or violin to accompany, and we transposed the Psalter tunes each week. With no previous exposure to the Psalter, the congregation nevertheless sang with enthusiasm, and it was beautiful.

Or another anecdote is the way people revere two services on the Lord's day as if it was the sole barometer of orthodoxy crying the all too familiar complaint, "Once-ers become none-ers." I think two services have served the church well over centuries. It has been a central means of preserving the faith from one generation to the next. But when it becomes the *sine qua non* of orthodoxy, then we have fossilized. As pastor of a fledgling church plant, I travelled the country seeking support and often the first question I was asked was, "Do you have two services?" My response? "I'm trying to get people to come to one!"

A few synods ago, a church seeking entry into the URCNA struggled with some of our church order requirements, one of which was two services on the Lord's day. Not only as new believers were they unused to two set services, but also, they would have to rent two different locations at additional expense to them. In trying to comply, they found it difficult in many ways. Although they were trying, nothing was "good enough." Sensing orthodusty in the air, they waved good-bye to the URCNA.

Must every church be a carbon copy? Is there no room for honest attempts which show progress, albeit slowly, or are only clones allowed into the URCNA? In order to be considered orthodox we all must look alike in practice. Why?

Because that's the way to do it right. This attitude is neither charitable nor missional.

The way to do it right is having the ability and capacity to meet people where they are and lead them to the place Christ wants them to be. This takes infinite patience and wisdom. But if we cannot do it, then we are destined to orthodoxy. I believe we can and will do better. To that end I write, hope, pray, and labour.

Another chapter in Rainer's book is "The Church Refused to Look Like the Community." In the good old days, the church was a part of the community. Then the community began to change and the members moved to another part of town. "They were willing to drive into the community where they once lived because it was after all, their church. . . there was almost never any effort to go into the community. And no one ever mentioned the possibility of a willingness to turn over the leadership of the church to the residents of the community. . . . After all, it was their church." I have seen this *onze kerk* (our church) mindset too often and in too many communities where our churches are located. Rainer continues, "Vibrant and living churches look after the interests of others. They are concerned for their communities. . . but dying churches are concerned with self-preservation. They are concerned with a certain way of doing church [read, "we've always done it this way"]. They are all about self." Let him who has ears to hear, listen.

In the chapter titled "The Great Commission Becomes the Great Omission," Rainer states, "Members of the dying church weren't willing to go into the community to reach and minister to people. They weren't willing to invite their unchurched friends and relatives ... they just wanted it to happen. Without prayer. Without sacrifice. Without hard work." (And, I might add, without the messiness that new converts make in the church. I believe that is a major reason why we do not evangelize. It is messy.)

I recall doing an evangelism seminar at one of our churches and then being asked back to do another the next year. When I asked what had been done since the previous visit the silence was deafening. Not one thing had been done. When residents in the immediate vicinity of this church were surveyed and asked, "What do you know about that church, the one located right over there?" the answers were uniform: people knew nothing about their neighbourhood local church.

Rainer correctly assesses the damage: "Members of the dying churches really didn't want growth unless that growth met their preferences and allowed them to remain comfortable." This is when the church becomes "a religious

cushion," according to C. John Miller. Miller, in *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*,<sup>2</sup> observes, "Among conservatives and evangelicals, its primary mission all too often is to function as a preaching station where Christians gather to hear the gospel. . . to be reassured that liberals are mistaken about God and Hell, and to renew one's sense of well being." In my two-week intensive course on evangelism taught to seminarians, I have made this book required reading. Almost all of them relate how this book describes the churches they know.

Richard DeRidder (one of our own, by the way) comments on such a cushioned church: "The church becomes only the place where certain things are done [he is referring to the Belgic XXIX on how the confession defines the church] and it is not looked upon as a group called into existence to do something. . . a commissioned church with a responsibility to bring in the harvest of non-Christians from the field of the world."<sup>3</sup> While wanting to be confessionally Reformed churches, we must never lose sight of the reason for our existence. We have not been called out of darkness into the light for the sake of ourselves. Called to worship God, we are called to bring others along to worship him also.

Change must begin in our pulpits, the steering rudder of any church. Yet here too, orthodoxy can be found. I recall talking to Reverend Peter DeJong, former editor of this publication, about a funeral he attended some years ago. "How did the service go, sir?" I inquired. "Well, you wouldn't disagree with a word the man said. But you wouldn't know he believed a word of it." A funeral sermon intended to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted lacked heart and passion – orthodoxy once more. This is the reputation we have gained among many. A good friend was recently asked, "What comes to mind when describing Reformed/Presbyterian preaching?" His reply:

I'm being clear and I'm not joking. It's terrible! When I go to the average, run-of-the-mill Presbyterian/Reformed/Dutch churches (pick from the alphabet soup of conservative denominations: OPC, PCA, CRE, ARP,

***The way to do it right is having the ability and capacity to meet people where they are and lead them to the place Christ wants them to be***

URC, CRC, Free Reformed, Heritage Reformed, etc.), you get a lecture with an academic-type exposition of the Word and usually, if one was honest, you find yourself hard pressed not to fall asleep. Usually the lecture is devoid of real-world metaphors/imagery/example, no less a coherent theme or thought that is etched across the lecture (it's hard to call it a sermon). It is generally uncontextualized so as to galvanize the conscience into action that is consistent with biblical obedience. As such, it doesn't create a connection between the twenty-first-century listener and the writer of the text (whatever it may be), and the thrust of what is being communicated from the Word. In this sense it's hard to be edified. My experience is that men have a difficult time crafting a simple and compelling introduction to a sermon/lecture, and often times they present incongruent musings that in reality reflect the ramblings of one wandering in the theological wilderness ranging from Dan to Beersheba.

Ouch.

What is the cure for our orthodoxy? Spiritual problems call for spiritual solutions. I suggest the following:

Serious, prayerful self-examination. Just as this needs to be done prior to communion, so it should be done periodically as a church, especially the leaders. I suggest regular review of the church's mission, purpose, and how its ministries are or are not serving those ends.

### ***Spiritual problems call for spiritual solutions***

Pray for the Head of the church to lead, feed, and guide you to his intended purposes.

Repent of any and all forms of traditionalism that impede your mission. Confess them to the Lord, who is ready to forgive us all our sins.

Seek counsel. Proverbs tells us this is wise. I suggest reading Rainer, Miller, and others. As Bereans, search yourselves in light of the Scriptures they reference.

Be willing to change, radically if necessary, and reform according to the Scriptures. Practice *semper reformanda*.

Allow change to lead to action and a new upward and outward focus.

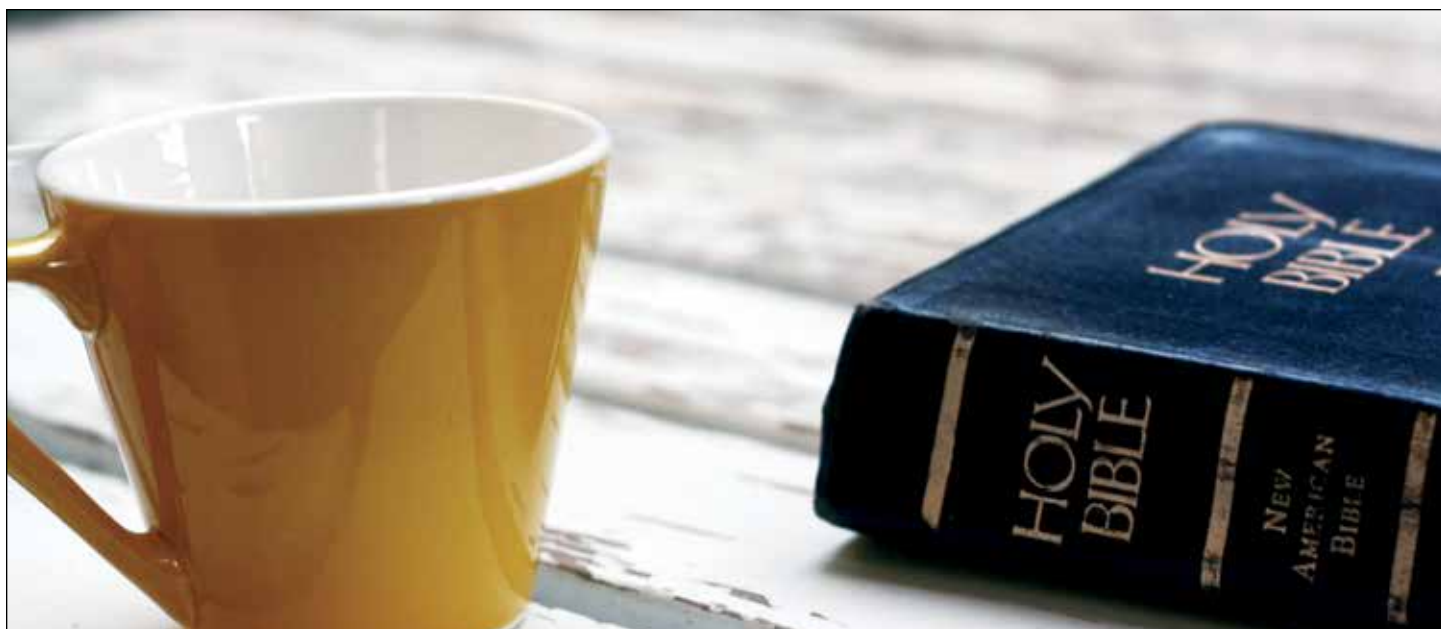
When these steps are followed you will have become a new, truly orthodox church.

<sup>1</sup> Thom Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* (Nashville, TN: B & H, 2014). This book is the result of analyzing fourteen churches that closed their doors.

<sup>2</sup> C. John Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 20.

<sup>3</sup> Richard DeRidder, *Discipling the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971), 213.

*This article was originally published at [www.reformedfellowship.net](http://www.reformedfellowship.net). It is reprinted with permission.*





# Supreme Court of Canada Upholds Church Authority

Last November, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) began hearings into a case concerning Randy Wall, a member of a Jehovah's Witnesses congregation who was expelled from that body. He consequently asked the Alberta Court of the Queen's Bench to review the decision because his real estate business suffered, and he felt that his rights were violated. This case, which was covered in *Clarion* (Oct 20, 2017), raised the question whether a secular court has the legal power to do a judicial review of a decision of a congregation, in this case, the decision to excommunicate someone. The Association for Reformed Political Action (ARPA) and other interveners rejoiced when on May 31, 2018, the Supreme Court clearly said: no. The court does not have this power and so Wall cannot take this problem to the civil courts.

There was some suspense about this case because, as the ARPA news release (May 31, 2018) pointed out, a lower court judge, Justice Wilson, and a majority at the Alberta Court of Appeal, had ruled that a secular court has this power. "However, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) unanimously reversed the lower courts' decisions."

"The SCC reversed the lower courts for three reasons: 1) judicial review applies to public decision makers, which the Congregation is not, 2) there is no freestanding right to be treated fairly absent an underlying legal right, and 3) the ecclesiastical issues involved in this case are not justiciable that is, they involve subject matter that is not appropriate for a court to decide."

The ARPA news release went on to say that it "applauds the Supreme Court for clearly articulating the proper scope and limits of judicial review and the jurisdictional limits of civil courts. This case will stand as a clear precedent protecting the independence of religious bodies. It will also stand as a reminder to all judges of the virtue of judicial humility."

We can be grateful for ARPA's contribution in their fifth appearance as an intervener before the Supreme

Court. ARPA Canada distinguished itself by "arguing that the Court did not need to apply section 2(a) of the Charter (religious freedom) or section 2(d) (freedom of association) to resolve the case, but could and should simply rely on longstanding principles that limit the jurisdiction of civil courts. The Supreme Court of Canada agreed."

The SCC "was unanimous in reaffirming that judicial review applies to state actors, not religious bodies or other nonstate actors. Judicial review allows courts to surveil 'lower tribunals' in order to ensure that those tribunals respect the rule of law ... but religious bodies are not lower tribunals vis-à-vis the courts, but outside their jurisdiction."

In its oral arguments, ARPA Canada framed the main issue this way. "Does the judiciary have the authority to decide who gets to become or remain a church member? Does the judiciary have authority to dictate how church discipline ought to be done or to supervise it? *Are these matters of civil or spiritual jurisdiction?*" ARPA answered: "We submit that both the civil government and churches have limited and distinct jurisdictions or spheres of authority. This basic distinction between civil and spiritual jurisdiction is a source of freedom and religious pluralism and a guard against civic totalitarianism. We submit that Church discipline is a spiritual matter falling within spiritual jurisdiction, not a legal matter falling within courts' civil jurisdiction." ARPA also introduced confessional documents to underscore their argument.

The SCC decision is of great significance. As one legal authority put it: "The fundamental assumptions on which the law relating to religious institutions has, for reasons of history, been based, remain Christian understandings of the relationship of civil and spiritual authority."

Sources used: Cornelis Van Dam, "Church and State at the Supreme Court of Canada" *Clarion* 66 (2018) 594; quotations are from "ARPA Canada Applauds Supreme Court for Recognizing Limits of Judicial Authority" May 31, 2018.





# I love the Lord with all my heart

(Original: 'Hört Jesus ruft: kommt alle her!')

Arrangement: Gertim

Lyrics: George van Popta (2018)

Tune: Ernst Heinrich Gebhardt (1832-1899)

**Prelude**

1 C 2 G B Em Am 3 B Em 4 Am D7 5 G

6 D 7 G Em D 8 G Em 9 Am D7 10 G

11 D 12 G Em D 13 G Em 14 Am D7 15 G

16 (G) 17 D 18 19 G 20 G G7

1. I love the Lord with all my heart, my soul, my strength, my mind.  
 2. My sin I will confess to God, to Him, my loving Lord.  
 3. I praise the Name of God my King, my Savior and my Lord.

He heard my voice when I called out to Him, so good and kind.  
 For He forgives all who repent, as He said in his Word.  
 With heart and soul I call to Him in song and dance and word.

The snares of death surrounded me. I suffered hard adversity.  
 Turn to the Lord and find your rest. Seek Him and be forever blest.  
 I will confess His Name to all and all His mighty deeds recall.

21 C 22 G B Em Am 23 B<sup>x</sup> Em 24 Am D7 25 G

He showed to me His pre - cious grace and turned to me His face.  
 Re - leased from sin's cruel sla - ve - ry I am e - ter - n'lly free.  
 I'll pay my vows to God most high. On Him I will re - ly.

26 *Refr.:* G D 27 G Em 28 Am D 29 G 30 D Em 31 B<sup>x</sup> Em

Come, join in the cho - rus, prais - ing, sing - ing! Come, join in ex - alt - ing the

32 Am D7 33 G 34 D 35 36 G D 37 G G7 C

Lamb who for us died, but rose a - gain in victo - ry and made the dev - il from us flee. I'll

38 G B Em Am 39 B<sup>x</sup> Em 40 Am D7 41 G

sing with joy all of my days. To Him my hands I raise.



# Edusketch Spring 2018

Well this is an exciting moment for me. I'm finally sitting down to write for *Clarion*. I know it's not a full-blown article, but more of a digest – still, it's something. I used to just associate *Clarion* with my Dad reading and smoking his pipe on Sundays but now I get to be a part of it. And all because I misheard the Education Matters committee when they asked me if I would be responsible for the next *Edusketch*. My first thought was that it had been a while since I had worked an Etch-a-Sketch, but that in my day I had been pretty skillful with the little yellow knobs and it was time to see if I still had a few blocky pictures left in the old fingers. Imagine my surprise when I found out it was really about writing a summary of the assorted publications of Canadian Reformed schools. But by then I was committed and so here I am, ready to give you the low-down on what has been going in Canadian Reformed school community.

## Performances

One notable feature in Canadian Reformed schools since the last *Edusketch* was published in December is a series of performances and concerts. Credo Christian High's *Beauty and the Beast*, Parkland Immanuel Christian's *Many Moons*, and Emmanuel Christian High's *The Mousetrap* are just a few examples of the dramatic performances produced for the entertainment of audiences, and as an opportunity to celebrate the dramatic gifts God has given these students. And it's not just the high school students sharing their dramatic gifts. In Credo Elementary in Langley one could take in *A Hairy Tale*, in Dufferin Area Christian School students delighted the audience with *Robin and the Sherwood Hoodies*, while at Ambassadors in Ottawa they put on a rendition of *Aesop's Fables* and *The Elephant Child*. Similarly, musical talents and praise to God have been on display at Canadian Reformed schools across the country in a variety of Spring and Easter programs like the *Easter Alleluia Celebration* at Cornerstone Christian School in Guelph. Here, as Mrs. L. Agema relates, the students "presented the

history of our Lord's suffering, death, but also his resurrection. They announced his power to save, how He stretched out his hand of healing and ultimately, how He snatched us from the grave." Additionally, students had the opportunity to share some of their individual musical gifts. It's truly awe-inspiring to think of how many young voices are praising God across the country at events such as these and even more so when one considers the songs of praise sung on a regular day at school; and the chorus is growing.

## Challenges with growth

Many schools are talking about growth and the challenges that come with it. As school populations rise, so does the need for classrooms, teachers, computers, etc. . . . Even a new school like Bellstone in Glancaster, ON, is experiencing growing pains. As Chris de Boer mentions in his Education Committee report, Bellstone faces "a large increase, about 20%, in our student enrollment, and we are now over 120! Particularly in our grade 3/4 age level, we have growth to the point where combining the classes are no longer feasible. Currently the grade 3 and 4 classes sit together at a combined number of 30 students."

I can also speak for my own school Parkland Christian's growth pressures. We're exceeding our projected enrollments and planning for a future building expansion. John Calvin School in Yarrow, BC, is also fundraising for a building project and there are other schools with similar ambitions. All this is definitely a challenge for these schools but as is often said, too much growth is a good problem to have. Isn't it pure evidence of God's love and faithfulness?

***It's not an  
 accident that  
 budgets are  
 met. It is the  
 Lord's hand  
 at work***

## Staffing

Another common element in school publications is the ongoing search for staff members. Some schools could celebrate their success in securing staffing for next year while others continue to seek qualified staff members for next

fall. For example, in the April 2018 volume of the Maranatha Christian School's *Link* magazine, Wayne Breukelman on behalf of the Education Committee gives thanks that "with the 3 new full-time teachers [hired] we have filled all our full-time teaching positions for the coming year. But we still have other positions to fill." Similarly, Carrie Vanderveen, the board chair at Ambassadors Christian School in Ottawa, even while speaking of continuing efforts to recruit teachers shows her appreciation for the staff she has: "When we think of the ways in which God has blessed us, we must thank Him for blessing us with an excellent principal and a superb team of teachers.

They are working very hard to provide an excellent education to our students and to assist the parents in training their children to be prophets, priests and kings in God's kingdom." This sentiment is expressed to varying degrees

***As students are preparing to graduate and enter post-secondary institutions, I would encourage them to consider whether God is calling them to a career in education***

in nearly every school publication. In some ways, this isn't surprising given the vital importance of having the best possible staff members to any educational institution, but it also indicates the need for qualified teachers. As students are preparing to graduate and enter post-secondary institutions, I would encourage them to consider whether God is calling them to a career in education.

## Budgets

Each spring there is also usually a series of membership meeting where budgets are presented and the broader school societies are kept informed of the work of school boards and of plans for the future. A quick glance at the published budgets shows that while there are always challenges and efficiencies to be sought, in general schools receive what they need. This too is a matter for thanksgiving. It's not an accident that budgets are met. It is the Lord's hand at work.

Finally, as Otto Bouwman of Credo Christian Elementary states in his April 27 Principal's report:

Please continue in prayer not only for the continued educational program that we can offer at CCES, but also for Christian education generally. Familiarize yourself with the increasing challenges that are being faced by Christian schools across the country. For example, a recent press release from the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms has the headline: "Coalition of Alberta parents and schools file court challenge over Bill 24's threat to vulnerable children." Pray for continued freedom to operate our Christian schools. Pray that young people seek to join the teaching profession. Pray that CCES continue to be a blessing to the children in our care. Pray for the return of our Savior. Pray for continued faithfulness as we await his return.

**C**



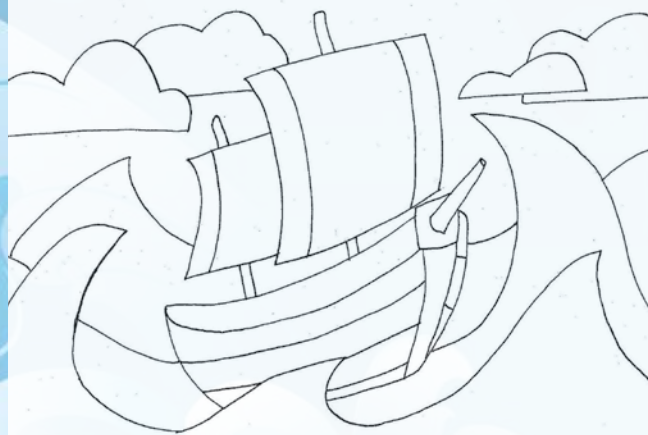
# Clarion Kids

## Jesus Calms a Storm

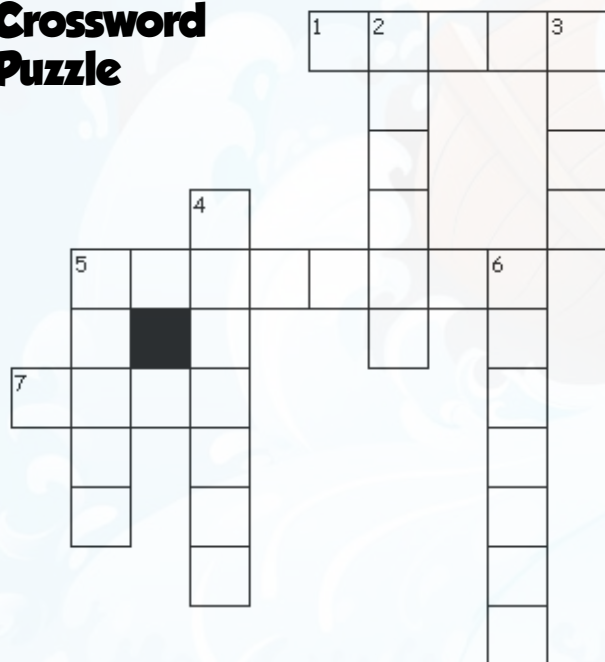
**Mark 4:35-41**

After a long day of teaching and preaching, Jesus told his disciples that they were going to take a boat across the Sea of Galilee. While they were on the boat a big storm blew in. Water started coming into the boat and the disciples were afraid. They found Jesus sleeping and woke him up. They thought Jesus didn't care if the boat sank. Jesus got up and told the wind and waves to stop, and the storm stopped. The disciples were amazed that even wind and waves listened to Jesus. They listened because Jesus is God. We can always be comforted to know God is in control of everything, even the weather!

Go to [www.clarionmagazine.ca](http://www.clarionmagazine.ca) to print and colour this picture!



### Crossword Puzzle



### Across

1. The disciples were amazed that they listened to Jesus.
5. What the disciples found Jesus doing.
7. What Jesus told his disciples to take across the sea.

### Down

2. What the disciples felt during the storm.
3. What Jesus told the wind and waves to do.
4. God is in control of the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. What Jesus calmed.
6. The sea the disciples were crossing.

**by Emily Nijenhuis**



## Q Where does the practice of calling come from, as opposed to sending a minister?

*I was wondering where the practice of calling a minister comes from, specifically as opposed to sending a minister to a congregation. It struck me when reading 1 Corinthians 4, that Paul was sending Timothy to the church at Corinth. There seems to be a number of instances of men being sent to various churches throughout the New Testament. Is this due to missional versus established churches? I tried to find the origin of this practice and seem to be coming up short.*

A The observation is indeed correct that we find a number of situations and references in which the apostle Paul mentions having sent one of his fellow-servants. At this stage of apostles and prophets and evangelists there is no formal process yet of a church federation, organized church order, or protocols for the ministry and offices in the churches. The apostle Paul is giving directions on a variety of matters and issues that play a role in the churches, while he also lays down the criteria and requirements for the calling to office in the respective churches. Thus the apostles during their presence and ministry as well as through their epistles assist the congregations with counsel and advice. Since they can be at one place at the time, however, they also send evangelists as their substitutes to take care of the churches. As we can read in 1 Corinthians 3:6, Paul has planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. This growth then also entailed the calling to office of elders and deacons according to the standards of 1 Timothy 3.

Then, as far as the calling to office is concerned, and specifically the calling of ministers to a congregation, this is in accordance with the way of the Lord as revealed and manifested throughout his Word in Old and New Testament. “Calling” lies at the heart of the service to God, as we can see in the calling of Moses and Aaron to office, as well as of the prophets in the OT (Isa 6:8; Jer 1:4; Hos 1:1). In the NT as well, we see the Lord Jesus call his disciples (Luke 6:13), whom he sent out as his apostles, calling them to go and make disciples of all nations (John 20:21; Gal 1:1). There is no preaching without sending (Rom 10:15). No one, however, may assume this honour but those who are called by God (John 10:1, 2; Hebr 5:4). No one has the right to perform as ambassador unless called and appointed and installed in this high position.

In the OT it did happen that men assumed the office of prophet, but the LORD pronounced his “woe” over them through Jeremiah (Jer 14:14, 15; 23:21; 29:31). In the NT, as well, there were intruders, people who assumed leadership in the congregations (pseudo-apostles as in 2 Corinthians) without being called to this position. The special calling that

apostles and prophets received was extended by the Lord in normal times to his servants through those already in office. The Lord uses the office bearers in the congregation as leaders in the process and protocol toward this calling to the special offices. The Scriptures are very clear in this: Acts 1:23; 6:2-6; 2 Corinthians 8:19. The congregation chooses under the leadership of those who already are in office (Acts 1:15; 6:2; 14:23; Titus 1:5). This process is bound to the conditions and requirements which Christ gave to the church through his apostles: Acts 1:21; 6:3; 1 Timothy 3.

Regarding those who aspire to serve the Lord in the special office of minister of the Word, these same principles and scriptural inferences apply. It shows in the way men who aspire for this special office prepare themselves, to ensure they have the necessary gifts and talents, receive the required training for the ministry in order to be able to work fruitfully in the church of Christ (1 Tim 3:10; 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim 2:2). The actual calling to the office of minister, however, proceeds in the same way: they need to be declared eligible for call (which is no guarantee for receiving a call), be called lawfully by a congregation (according to the process and protocol of every

calling to office in the congregation), be examined as to their competence for office, and being ordained (installed) in the congregation that calls them. Thus, they may be assured that in this medial and providential way they are called by God (Acts 1:23; 6:2-6; 2 Cor 8:19)!

Finally, the same principle of “calling” must be adhered to pertaining to the calling of a minister from one congregation to another. In the churches there is no “sending” authority but only the presiding authority in the congregation; the office bearers who rule on behalf of Christ. After they have done due diligence in preparing a call to be proposed to the congregation (perhaps with the use of a calling committee), they follow the same steps for calling to an office in the church with the involvement of the congregation. If and when such a call transpires, it will be the task of the minister who is called to consider this call prayerfully and seriously and practically, comparing the existing call in his present congregation with the reasons and needs for the call from the calling congregation. Then, too, in the event he accepts this call he needs to be assured that this new “calling” is from God, called as he is by the congregation in the name of Christ!



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

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

**Ask us a question!**

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

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

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

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Dear Editor,

I'm writing in response to the article, *The Burning of the Wooden Shoes*, published on May 4, 2018 in the hopes that we won't use that critique as an excuse to avoid some much-needed denominational self-examination.

On the one hand, much of what the author says strikes a chord because we can see a general shift and drift in the CRC over time. The fallout of accommodation has brought an identity crisis and the battle continues to rage within. I too agree with him that the church's mission should remain, above all, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and making more disciples. Full stop. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. The world needs that gospel, more than anything else from the church.

On the other hand, the author points out, "They were concerned by the charge that they were too Dutch and only focussed on their own people ... there was a sincere desire to be more welcoming to all peoples.... They didn't want to be considered clannish or sectarian." Doesn't that make us squirm even a little?

Finding security in our "rich Dutch heritage" or the Reformed confessions – both blessings – can also be a case of misplaced identity. We *should* be concerned about being clannish and sectarian. I cringe thinking that this warning sounds an alarm for us to circle the wagons even more, retreat further into our own brand of 1950s Dutch immigrant Christian culture and tell ourselves we've got the only playbook on "how to stay Reformed." Though I understand the author has seen churches torn apart and is truly concerned, it bothers me that this article takes a denomination to task for trying something important, yet offers no better way. The solution would seem to be "don't do this," as if we'll be fine if we stay exactly the same and completely ignore the realities of the world around us.

We need reformation. I believe that as we try so hard to resist the forces of our secular culture on the one hand, and the North American evangelical Christian culture on the other, that we are blind to our own brand of cultural Christianity. And if that Christianity is preventing our

neighbours from seeing Jesus in us and through us, then we've got a big problem. The fact that after seventy years the CanRC is still almost completely ethnically Dutch tells me we are in danger – not from outside, but from within. We can't see it, but we too have an identity problem.

I've heard it said that if preaching and teaching the gospel message remains the mission of the church, then evangelism and care for our neighbours will happen naturally as people are compelled to share what bubbles up inside them through the spirit. As the author quoted Martyn Lloyd Jones: "When the Church performs her primary task these other things [i.e. matters of social justice] invariably result from it."

Do we see that happening in Canadian Reformed churches? I'm not sure I do. Sure, many churches have a program or two and a budget line to support missions elsewhere, but most get few if any visitors at all. Why not? If we have the rich truth rediscovered in the reformation, why are we stagnant across the country?

I wonder if we even want it to change. If we did, we'd be thinking about how to create a culture of evangelism that shifts our eyes from ourselves to our neighbour and asks how we can hold tightly to the gospel *and* build bridges into our community. How do we tackle the same problem the CRC saw, while maintaining our Reformed heritage and contextualizing it for twenty-first century Canadian culture?

These are the questions and discussions I wish we were wrestling with and writing about, because we can't do nothing. A culture that is even nominally Christian is rapidly disappearing and the harder we hang on to non-essential preferences to preserve outward uniformity across the federation, the harder we'll fall. My hope is that we'll spend less time in the safe seats on the sideline pointing and feeling proud, and instead start asking, "What does it look like to our surrounding community when we are truly transformed by the gospel and find our identities in Christ alone?"

Josh Sieders

Trinity Canadian Reformed Church  
Glanbrook, ON

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



## PRESS RELEASE

### Short Report of Regional Synod East May 16, 2018, in Smithville, Ontario

On behalf of the convening church of Smithville, Brian VanAndel opened the meeting of the delegates in a Christian manner. The meeting elected Rev. Matthew VanLuik as chairman, Rev. John VanWoudenberg as vice-chairman, and Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer as clerk.

Synod dealt with submissions by the churches of Orangeville and Guelph-Emmanuel questioning some aspects of how this synod was convened and how its agenda was prepared. Synod decided to receive this for information.

Synod dealt with the request of Classis Ontario West to proceed with a preparatory examination of Dr. Jeffrey Temple for admission to the ministry as per C.O. 8. After

reviewing the documents provided, synod interviewed Jeffrey Temple (as per. Synod Edmonton 1965 Article 22 (English translation). Synod thereafter granted approval to Classis Ontario West examining br. Temple in a preparatory examination as per C.O. 8.

In closed restricted session Synod dealt with a request for a revision from the church of Lincoln and an appeal from an individual.

Synod appointed Burlington-Ebenezer as the convening church for the next regional synod, to be held on November 14, 2018.

After adoption of the Acts, mandating the executive to finalize the Press Release, and closing devotions, Regional Synod was closed.

*John VanWoudenberg, vice-chairman at that time*

### NOTICE OF CONVOCAATION

General Synod 2019 is slated to be convened by the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton on May 14, 2019. A prayer service will be held on Monday, May 13, 2019, at 7:30 PM at the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church building. Synod Edmonton 2019 will commence on Tuesday, May 14, 2019, D.V.

All material for Synod should be send to the attention of the Synod Organizing Committee at the address of the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton:  
21112 35 Avenue NW, Edmonton, AB T6M 2P6  
email: [clerk@synod.edmontonimmanuel.ca](mailto:clerk@synod.edmontonimmanuel.ca)



*According to the GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL SYNOD all material for Synod should be received by the convening church (in digital format, and five paper copies) no later than six weeks prior to the convocation date of General Synod. Material received after this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.*