

# Clarion

A CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE: TO ENCOURAGE, EDUCATE, ENGAGE, AND UNITE

## Ordination of Rev. Cody Swaving



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***SPIRITUAL RESUSCITATION***  
***THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNSELLING***

# Clarion

**Clarion: a trustworthy  
and engaging magazine,  
widely spread and read  
in Canadian Reformed  
households and beyond.**

To equip God's people for his  
glory, in faithfulness to Scripture,  
as summarized in the Reformed  
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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Our second last issue of the year leads with an article from  
Rev. Eric Kampen, "Mouth to Mouth Resuscitation." From our  
editor in chief, Dr. James Visscher, there is a follow up to an  
article written earlier this year; this one is entitled "More Biblical  
Counselling and the Church."

There is a second half of Dr. John Smith's "Cities of Refuge"  
article, which was originally a mini lecture given at the CRTS  
fiftieth anniversary open house. Issue 24 also covers the  
ordination of a CRTS graduate, Rev. Cody Swaving.

In addition, we bring readers a Treasures, New & Old  
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Laura Veenendaal

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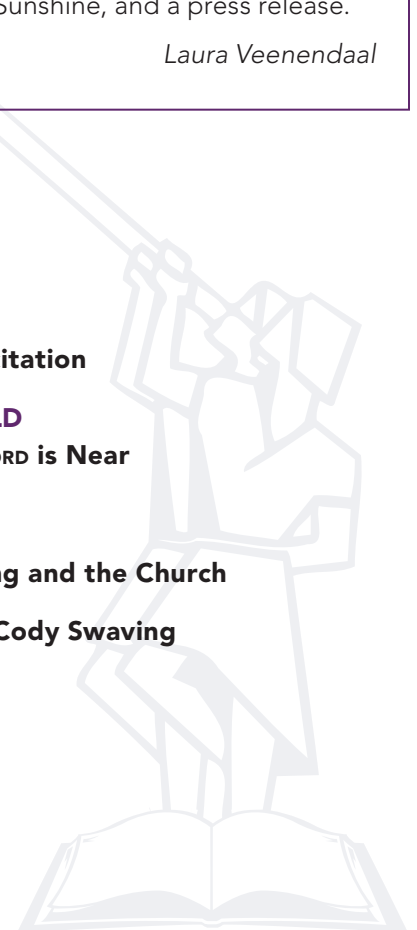
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# Mouth to Mouth Resuscitation

*We live in an age with many things  
that cry out for attention*

For many years, one of the things taught in First Aid courses was mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, where a person applying first aid would press their lips against these of a person no longer breathing and blow air into their lungs. Apparently, it is not promoted as much as in the past, due to health concerns for the person applying it and questions about its effectiveness. Still, it is in the repertoire of First Aid techniques to get a person's heart going again. As the term "resuscitate" indicates, here is an attempt to bring life back to a person who appears dead, as the heart has stopped.

When we think of the very personal nature of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, it is a most noble effort to save someone's life. The very technique also reminds us of how man was created in the first place. We read in Genesis 2:7 how "the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." It is not quite mouth to mouth, but it is close to it!

## Spiritual resuscitation

As God used a form of "mouth-to-mouth resuscitation" when he created man, he also uses a form of it in our re-creation. We can say this considering Peter's words about being "born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." That word, he adds, "is the good news that was preached to you" (1 Pet 1:23-25). James says something similar when he writes, "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth" (James 1:18). Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:16 bring out that this Word is the resuscitating breath of God when he writes, "All Scripture is breathed out by God. . . ." If God breathes

it out, we are to breathe it in. Its resuscitating power also comes out in the way he continues by stating how the Scriptures are "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness."

One might argue that it is a jump from speaking about the Word of God to the Scriptures, which in 1 Timothy 3 refers only to what we call the Old Testament. In the end, though, we should not make a distinction between the Scriptures and the Word of God, or the Scriptures and the gospel. The Scriptures are the written record of the Word of God. They were written by men carried along by the Holy Spirit so that they are not the words of man but of God (2 Pet 1:21). The bottom line is that God's Word, the Scriptures, or however you want to express it, is God's life-giving breath, to resuscitate dead sinners. It is God's power unto salvation. If God breathed life into man via his nostrils, so that he became a living creature, in the fallen creation, God breathes life into man via his Word and brings about regeneration.

## Air deprivation

By this point, it should be clear in our minds that the breath of God, as it comes to us in his Word, is as vital for spiritual life as air is for physical life. We know we are in serious trouble if our air supply is cut off. The problem with air deprivation is that those exposed to it may not necessarily notice it, for it happens gradually as the air in a room is not circulated or perhaps some dangerous substances get mixed in with the air. The same is true when it comes to the air we need for spiritual life, that is, the Word of God. It can happen slowly, imperceptibly, that we are cut off. It happens because we live in an age with many things that

## CALLS

### Rev. C. Vanderlinde called by Nooksack Valley

The American Reformed Church at Nooksack Valley has called Rev. Calvin Vanderlinde, pastor of Barrhead Canadian Reformed Church.

## CHURCH NEWS

cry out for attention. There is the regular busyness of life, filled with work and family responsibilities. Church and school related activities demand much time and energy. Social media places constant demands on our time. In all this busyness of life, it is easy to forget to breathe in what God has breathed out. I suspect that for many, the last text they see in a day is a message on their phone, and not a passage from God's Word. Sundays may be just about the only day that we sit down and listen to God's Word as families, although that day too can be just as rushed as the rest of the days, as there is an effort to squeeze as much social interaction into the day as possible. The rest of the week can easily become a blur. Perhaps, at the best, we take a few breaths when the Bible is read at the table after dinner, but that too is a rush job, because the evening is filled with activities,

### *To rightly know God calls for careful study of his Word*

and there is never any time for personally sitting down and reading God's Word. The sad thing about this is that all this is self-inflicted. The refreshing air of the Word of God is available to us, but we fail to breathe it in. The result can be that that we may wake up one day and have the sense that spiritual life has left us.

### **Pray and obey to give room for God's life-renewing breath**

It requires concentrated effort to breathe in God's Word. At the centre is weekly worship, where God's Word is read and proclaimed. It cannot stop there. Weekly worship should stir up the desire for daily hearing God speak to us through his Word. Interest in his Word should also stir us up to learn more about his Word using the abundance of resources available. We do, after all, live in a time of spiritual wealth in the abundance of study resources. This is not really an option. It is a command. It is also a matter of prayer.

As for command, daily giving room for God's life-renewing breath falls under the first commandment. When the Catechism elaborates on this commandment, after mentioning things we should avoid and flee, it states that God requires "that I rightly come to know the only true

God." There is only one way to do that, namely, by listening to his Word. Without diligent engagement with God's Word, our knowledge will only remain superficial. We will also be prone to wrong ideas about God taught by others or arising from our own sinful imagination. To rightly know God calls for careful study of his Word. Just like a human relationship requires communication, where both sides listen to each other, so does our relationship with God. If that effort is not made, the relationship will grow cold.

It is also a matter of prayer. While in the Catechism prayer is mentioned after the commandments, if we know ourselves, we will be aware that hearing the command drives us to pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit to do what God calls us to do. It is not surprising, then, that when the Catechism elaborates on the first petition, "Hallowed be your name," it states, "Grant us first of all that we may rightly know you. . . ." We will not be able to direct our whole life, our thoughts, words, and actions to God's glory, if we don't know how we are to live in thankfulness for his gift of salvation. In effect, in the first petition we ask for strength to keep the first commandment.

### **Implementation**

When explaining the first commandment, the Catechism starts by saying that we must obey "for the sake of my very salvation." As we know God through his Word, and his Word is God's life-giving breath, failing to be busy with that Word as much as we can is as dangerous as failing to breathe. While Sunday worship is at the heart of taking in God's life-giving breath, knowing how God works through his Word gives renewed appreciation for reading the Bible at mealtimes and for personal devotions. This is a time of getting much needed fresh air in our lives.

All this does lead to an important question. God has sent forth his life-giving breath in his Word. Are we breathing it in every opportunity we get? If not, and we are lamenting about the lack of living in the joy of our only comfort, about just not feeling it, turn to God's Word, so that through it, God may resuscitate you. If so, we will daily experience his resuscitating breath and receive what we need for life.







# The Great Day of the Lord is Near

*"The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast..." (Zephaniah 1:14a)*

The prophecies of Zephaniah are considered to be some of the darkest passages in Scripture. Right from the very beginning, it is clear that a message of judgment is being proclaimed to Judah. The reason for judgment is clear from the early verses of chapter 1.

There the LORD says through Zephaniah that the people were bowing down to the host of the heavens, they were worshipping Baal and they were swearing by Milcom, or Molech. At the same time, they were worshipping the LORD. While God had demanded that he alone was to be worshipped, the people had integrated other gods. This sin began very early in Israel's history in the Promised Land, and it continued until they were taken into exile.

And now, because of their idolatry and their worship of other gods, the great day of the LORD's judgment was coming quickly. When God tells his people that he is going to punish them for their sin, he is not talking about an event that is far off in the future. He is speaking about a day that was close at hand.

However, not only was it close, it was hastening fast. God was in a hurry to bring it about, there was nothing

holding him back. Still, most people didn't think it would happen. They thought life would continue uninterrupted (Zeph 1:12). But in spite of what people thought, the great day of the LORD was coming quickly. It would be a terrible day on which his righteous judgment would be poured out.

Now, when the Bible speaks about the day of the LORD, it refers to the day on which the LORD intervenes in a powerful way in this world. But he did not only act on that one day, when Judah was taken into exile. The day of the LORD is also a day that we read about in the New Testament.

It was the day when God's wrath against the sin of the whole human race was poured out on his own Son, Jesus Christ. Zephaniah described the day of the Lord in verse 15 as a day filled with anger and wrath and darkness and distress. Certainly, that is what Christ experienced there on Golgotha, where he bore that anger of God in our place.

Yet, that is not the last time Scripture speaks of the day of the LORD. We also read about it in 2 Peter 3. Here, it refers to the great day on which our Lord and Saviour returns. There we

read that this day will come like a thief (v. 10). And also this day, the LORD is busy working towards. God is not slow in fulfilling his promise (2 Pet 3:9). This day is near and hastening fast. Perhaps not quickly from the perspective of man, but perfectly in line with God's divine calendar. The Lord Jesus Christ has promised that he will return and there should be no doubt that it will happen.

Reading Zephaniah's description concerning the day of the LORD might make us hesitant about the coming of this day. The day sounds so terrifying. Inwardly we might feel as though it would be quite fine if God would continue to hold it back. However, because of the sacrifice of Christ, this day has been transformed from a day of wrath to the day when we will experience the fullness of our salvation! Christ has transformed this day from a day of darkness to a day of light (Amos 5:18)!

Apart from him, yes it would be terrifying. But by believing in him, all the terror of God's anger is removed, and it is replaced with an eager longing for the glory that awaits. It is a desire expressed in the prayer, "Come Lord Jesus, Maranatha!"



## For further study

1. Do you often pray for the return of Jesus Christ? If not, why not?
2. How does eagerly waiting for the day of the Lord shape the way we live? (Read 2 Peter 3:11-12 in connection with this).



# The Cities of Refuge

## (Part 2 of 2)

*This article is the second half of an expanded version of a mini lecture given at the Fiftieth Anniversary Open House of CRTS on September 7, 2019.*

Last time we paid attention to the location and function of the cities of refuge. One more detail needs our attention. The law required that the manslayer “must stay in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; only after the death of the high priest may he return to his own property” (Num 35:28, cf. Josh 20:6). What are we to make of this? Why is the release of the manslayer connected to the death of the high priest? Different explanations have been given. Perhaps it has something to do with the first place of refuge, the horns of the altar. That place brings manslayer and high priest together: the high priest smears blood of atonement on the same horns which the murderer grasps. The problem with this explanation is that the death of the high priest is not mentioned in connection with the horns of the altar (Exod 21) but in connection with the cities of refuge (Num 35). Some scholars think that this high priest is the local head priest of a city of refuge,<sup>1</sup> but this is unlikely: the expression “high priest” in the Old Testament always refers to the great priest in Aaron’s line in charge of the tabernacle and temple service.

### An atoning death?

Some have suggested that the death of the high priest paid for the sin of the manslayer. Numbers 35:32 says: “Do not accept a ransom for anyone who has fled to a city of refuge.” Therefore, says one explainer, “the priest’s death stood in lieu of such a ransom – it propitiated for the offense. Ultimately, the proper avenger was God himself (Gen 9:5-7). So, God the judge and avenger accepted the death of the high priest as a propitiation for such crimes. It can hardly be denied that in this the priesthood constituted a type of Christ.”<sup>2</sup> But here Prof. Ohmann disagreed: The Old Testament high priest did not offer his life as a sacrifice

when he died; in fact he could not offer himself. His death was simply a natural death with no power to atone for sin.<sup>3</sup>

Ohmann gave a different explanation for the meaning of the high priest’s death. As a virtual prisoner in a city of refuge, the manslayer could never go to the tabernacle or the temple. The high priest was helpless to make atonement for him, because there was no sacrifice to atone for murder. The manslayer had to stay in a town full of Levites, surrounded by a system that could keep him alive but could not atone for his sin. The high priest could do him no good. So, the death of the high priest is the death of a priest who could not help. His death then symbolized release from that hopeless situation. There is a more somber message: in the death of the high priest who could not atone for the sin of murder, we have a cry for the coming of a greater high priest, who could!

In that context, is it not it remarkable what the Lord Jesus did for the man crucified beside him? Like Barabbas, that criminal was guilty of a capital offense (Luke 23:41). And yet Jesus said to him, “Today you will be with me in Paradise.” Christ could do what other high priests could never do – offer his life to atone for the sins of a murderer and open the gates of the heavenly temple for him to enter in. Yes, the man still had to die as a consequence for his crimes, but he did not have to fear the judgment of God anymore. Through Christ’s blood, he could take his place in a heavenly inheritance.

I agree with Prof. Ohmann that the death of the high priest did not pay for the sin of a manslayer. And yet the death of the high priest did give him release. So, I think there is also a more positive message. Put yourself in the shoes of that manslayer sitting there in the city of refuge, far away from wife and children. Would you say, “I can’t wait for the high priest to die”? Not in front of all those Levites you wouldn’t, because *they served* under the high priest when they went on duty in the tabernacle. You would keep your mouth shut because in that levitical town you would

realize how important that high priest's life was – much more important than your own! A very humbling realization! And when the high priest did die, you could go home, yes, but you would probably not give a big celebration, because you knew what your freedom cost. There would be a somber mood because someone else had to die. One death put you into the city of refuge, and it took another death to get you out again.

## Sanctification

So, what is the more positive message? The cities of refuge were cities of the Levites, the tribe set aside for holy service to the LORD. In fact, one of the cities of refuge, the city of Hebron, was given to the descendants of Aaron the high priest (Josh 21:11-13). So, in the city of refuge, the manslayer entered a sphere of holiness; he had communion with people who were consecrated for service to the LORD; he lived within the circle of the anointed ones. And in that sphere, he had to stay until the high priest of the time died. One would almost say that it was a period of sanctification, purification, quarantine (cf. Ps 105:19b). Yes, he had to bear the consequences of his actions, but living with those consequences was not a waste of time; it was a time of sanctification, a time of waiting, of longing to be restored to one's inheritance in the Promised Land. It was time well spent.

What lessons can we then draw from the cities of refuge for the Christian life today? Doubtless there are many, but three come to mind. The first is this: Just like the Israelite of old, so too the Christian today lives in a world where mistakes are made, and sometimes these mistakes have disastrous consequences. A lapse of attention at the steering wheel or a slip of the tool at work, and suddenly there is an injury, perhaps a death, and a family's future is irreversibly altered. The law of the city of refuge teaches that actions have consequences, but it also teaches that the Lord provides a way of escape and a place of refuge, of protection from human vengeance. In today's society, some protection can be given through legal means, with the help of the police, the courts, and social agencies. But if the time of refuge is to be a time of *sanctification*, then

the church must also play a role, offering healing for its members and reaching out to hurting wrongdoers who need somewhere to go with their guilt and their regrets. I think, for instance, of prison ministry. After all, sanctification did not only happen at the tabernacle; it happened in the city of refuge too.

Secondly, we learn that our God is not an inflexible legalist who demands the death of a murderer no matter what the circumstances. The remarkable words of that wise woman of Tekoa are still worth pondering: "God does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him" (2 Sam 14:14). These words speak of the long reach of God's grace – a creative grace that works in surprising ways – and they find their ultimate truth in the wisdom of the cross. As people under the cross, we learn to have an eye for the good that God can bring from even the most miserable of circumstances and to see them as times of spiritual growth: God is devising a way.

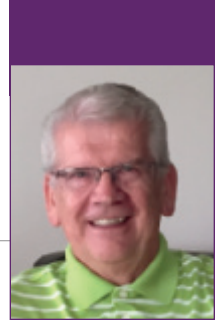
Thirdly and finally, the picture of a manslayer in the city of refuge, waiting for the day when he could go home to his inheritance, offers a picture of the church in the end times. The manslayer was waiting for the day when the high priest would die, a day with mixed emotions of relief and sadness. The church is waiting for a better day, a day of unadulterated joy: our ascended High Priest will never die again but will return as King and Judge to usher us into an eternal and perfect inheritance. In the meantime, we pray: "How long, O Lord? Come, Lord Jesus! Come soon!"

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g. Kathryn Imray, "Posthumous Interest in the [go'el haddam] Legal Tradition," JSOT 43.4 (June 2019): 513.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard J. Coppes, in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (ed. R.L. Harris, et al.; Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:800 (entry 2026).

<sup>3</sup> H.M. Ohmann, "Blood Vengeance, City of Refuge, and the Death of the High Priest," *Canadian Reformed Magazine* 20 (1971), issues 23 and 24.





# More Biblical Counselling and the Church

In the previous article, we spent quite some time dealing with the role of the Bible in counselling, as well as on what an effective counsellor looks like. Now it is time to consider the overall importance of counselling, deep-seated problems in counselling, and past and present trends in counselling.

## The importance of counselling

If one spends time reading some of the current material on counselling, as well as on the material that has been produced over the last thirty years in Christian circles in North America, the impression that one is often left with is that counselling is the most important task of ministry. We are being told that every minister of the Word must be ready to counsel, able to counsel, make time to counsel, and be effectively trained in counseling. Failure to meet these demands and expectations means that one is not really measuring up to what is required of a true minister of the gospel.

Is that true? Indeed, is the present heavy-duty stress on counselling in ministry a warranted and healthy one?

To answer that, let us put matters into biblical perspective. Without downplaying the importance of counselling, we do need to remember that the first tasks of ministry relate to preaching and teaching.

All of the biblical data indicates that the primary duty of a minister of the gospel is to preach the Word (2 Tim 4:2). He has to feed God's people with the gospel. He has to do this week after week, and sometimes even twice every Lord's Day or once on the Lord's Day and once every Wednesday evening at a mid-week service. This already requires a great deal of time. It also consumes a great amount of energy – mental and physical.

In addition to preaching, a minister also needs to teach Bible, Christian doctrine, ethics, church history, and lifestyle. He needs to be ready to do so for both the youth and adults in the church. This too is no light load. It requires a considerable amount of preparation time. It also comes at the cost of a fair amount of mental effort.

Added to the above, there is also the necessary work of visitation, whether in hospitals, institutions, or homes. This

too consumes time and energy.

So, where does this leave us? With not nearly as much time for counselling as many modern Christian voices suggest. Of course, some of the visitation work that is done also includes counselling, or aspects of it. But still, to suggest that a minister should spend twenty or more hours a week counselling means that there is little time for the others tasks of ministry, let alone for being married and raising a family.

As a result, we do need to back away from what so many modern voices are telling us. To remain sane and effective, ministers need to set priorities. And then I will go on a limb and say that the priorities of ministry are preaching, teaching, visitation, and counselling in that order.

In my forty plus years in ministry, this is how I learned to work. I would spend about thirty hours every week preparing two sermons. Prepping for and teaching catechism classes usually consumed another ten hours. Visitation work took about six hours. Thereafter, I would set aside another six to eight for counselling. This in turn would be followed by other tasks: preparing, chairing, and attending meetings (four hours), administrative work (four hours), writing articles (four hours), and so forth. Added to this there are often funerals and weddings. If you have aims to enter into the ministry, do so with your eyes wide open. It all takes time, and a sixty- to seventy-hour work week is not uncommon.

Now, of course, many would say that spending six to eight hours a week on counselling is simply inadequate. It requires much more time than that.

Again, I would dissent. If you feel that you need to spend a lot more time counselling, then something else will have to give. Indeed, for many it will mean foregoing a preaching ministry and exchanging it for a counselling ministry.

But there is another thing that needs to be considered. It is the fact that counseling is tremendously taxing both physically and mentally. Over the years I have gotten to know a good number of counsellors and they all acknowledge that there is no way that anyone can counsel full-time, non-stop almost, and retain a sense of sanity. It is just too exhausting, too tiring, and too sleep-depriving. For myself I rarely had



more than two or three cases on the go at the same time. That was about as much as I could handle.

So, by all means, counsel as a pastor but set your priorities straight and then pace yourself.

## Deep-seated problems

When I entered the ministry back in 1972, I entered it as a fairly confident young man. I was convinced that I had had a thorough seminary training and that I could deal with almost any and all problems that might come my way. Wrong! What I soon discovered was that while any number of problems were easy and straight forward, others were more difficult and challenging, and some were way over my head.

To be concrete, if a young man came to me with career issues, I could usually sit down with him and give him some fairly sound advice and meaningful direction. If a married couple came to me and they were having marriage problems, I could often help them to identify their issues, come up with biblically directed remedies, and guide them on the right way.

But then some other issues or disorders crossed my path. I am thinking here of abuse, addiction, anxiety, depression, paranoia, obsessive-compulsive, bipolar, schizophrenia, and other serious mental health disorders. When confronted with them, I would read and read, try to get a grip on the disorder and look for a solution. But I soon came to the conclusion that I did not have the training, the time, nor the therapeutic skills to deal with these problems.

I also came to another conclusion, namely that much of the Christian counselling material was inadequate in the face of these serious mental and behavioural challenges. Indeed, often the really hard cases were not even mentioned. And when they were, the so-called Christian approach proved to be a misuse of the Bible. Texts were taken out of context. Inferences were drawn without support. Approaches were recommended that were lacking in both biblical foundations and in plain common sense or wisdom.

Where then does this leave us when it comes to serious mental disorders? It leaves us with the need to look at outside help. Over the years, doctors, nurses, counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatrists have been of great assistance to me and to my parishioners. I have known addiction counsellors who provided crucial support to alcoholics and drug addicts. I have met abuse counsellors who rendered valuable service to victims and perpetrators alike. I have encountered psychiatrists who prescribed medications that effectively countered deep-seated depression and serious bipolar disorders.

Of course, I have also experienced failure. At times I would have to steer a parishioner to a different psychiatrist or counsellor because the one they had was utterly secular and ungodly in his or her approach. I have also come across

disorders that did not respond to either counselling or medication. I have had parishioners too who were uncooperative and who continued to be their own worst enemies.

All in all, it may be said that the field of mental health is and remains one of the most difficult and challenging fields of all. Progress is being made in some areas but a lot more work needs to be done and new treatments need to be developed and employed.

## Past and present trends in counselling

But then if there are deep-seated problems that still need much work, there are also trends that need to be monitored.

### The early church

In the early Christian church, the stress in counselling or pastoral care was very much on the need for repentance and confession. Since during much of this time the church was also the target of persecution, there was also a heavy emphasis on comfort and consolation.

As well, the minister or pastor was often seen as a physician of souls. He would go out of his way to comfort the sick, to support the poor, to assist the orphans, to strengthen the persecuted, and even to confront the immoral. Over time, penance became a common response of the church in situations of sin and disobedience. It also became a kind of pastoral system, full of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

### The medieval church

In the medieval church, penance received even more attention. It changed from being a public thing to a private matter. It became more formalized as believers were expected to move through the steps of contrition, confession, satisfaction, and absolution. It also came to be seen as a sacrament.

It should be noted too that pastoral care or counselling were more and more centred around the confessional booth in the Roman Catholic Church and was far removed from the homes of the believers. It also tended to be carried out by one man who was unmarried and thus often disconnected from real life. Meanwhile, the office of elders in the church was abandoned.

Over time, the Franciscan monks became the real pastoral workers and counsellors in the Roman church. Although often viewed negatively today, they did do a lot of good work.

### The Reformation church

Martin Luther moved the church away from penance as a means of grace and stressed that repentance from sins was really a lifelong process. Luther also taught that salvation is by the grace of God and not by the works of men. This took the pressure off of a lot of believers and brought much joy

back into the Christian life. Meanwhile, he did continue to urge parishioners to make confession of sin to their ministers. He also made some questionable concessions allowing ministers to grant absolution and to pronounce “I forgive your sins.”

Another reformer by the name of Martin Bucer (1491–1551) wrote a book called *Concerning the True Care of Souls*. In it he gives lots of pastoral and counselling advice. He also moved the church away from a minister or priest-only centred approach and stressed the gifts of the elders, the work of the deacons, and the talents in the congregation. Bucer believed in a whole church approach to counselling.

A key passage for him was Ezekiel 34:16, “I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.” He taught that there are five main tasks in pastoral care: (1) to lead people to Christ; (2) to restore those who have strayed away; (3) to assist in reforming the fallen; (4) to strengthen the weak and sick; (5) to protect the flock.

It may be said that Bucer’s contributions relate especially to two things: (1) to restoring the offices of elder and deacon in the church and (2) to developing a broader and deeper approach to pastoral care or counselling.

A third reformer, John Calvin, learned much from Bucer and moved pastoral care another step forward. He did so by (1) encouraging private but voluntary confession of sins; (2) stressing that church discipline is a form of pastoral care; (3) instituting the regular home visit as a way of promoting holiness and protecting the Lord’s Supper from abuse; (4) emphasizing the need to visit the sick and the imprisoned.

## The post-Reformation church

After the Reformation, the Lutherans continued to encourage the practice of voluntary confession. At the same time, many ministers devoted themselves to visiting the sick, to helping families, and to recommending devotional books. They also stressed the role of the members in the church to dispense guidance and to spiritually stimulate one another. It has to be admitted too that the Pietists (Philipp Jakob Spener and others) were a major influence here.

In England, the Puritans did much to advance the cause of pastoral care. Such men as Richard Baxter, William Perkins, and others did much to stimulate pastors in their work of exhorting, comforting, and catechizing. Baxter, for example, says that he spent two days a week visiting, and that he tried to visit at least fourteen families every week. In these visits he would catechize, counsel, inquire about spiritual health, deal with fears and illnesses, and promote holy living.

Thus, it can be said that, in both the Reformation church and post-Reformation church, the Word of God was central to counselling and pastoral care. It was very much

the application of the Word to the individual lives of the sheep of Christ’s flock. Also, in and through the preaching, a lot of counselling was done. As well, church discipline was seen as a part of pastoral care, for it was often used not to drive away but to restore the fallen and wayward.

## The modern church

All of this changed as the church moved into the modern era (from 1800 onward) and came under the influence of the Enlightenment. As a result, the place, role, and authority of the Word was challenged and undermined. Sin was discounted. Divine wrath was rejected. Judgment was dismissed. Salvation was redefined. Reason took the place of revelation.

The repercussions of this radical shift in thinking were enormous. They not only impacted society in general, but also the church, and counselling or pastoral care, in particular. Broadly speaking and as a result of this, four different systems or approaches arose.

### Behaviourism

The “discoveries” of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and the impact of his writings led to a different view of human beings as higher primates and not as made in the image of God. Human behaviour was said to be determined more by evolutionary selective factors than by sin or human rebellion. Psychological behaviours were a matter of reflexes and conditioned responses. The way to cure people was by conditioning them to reject negative or unproductive behaviour. Prominent names associated with this approach are Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936) and B. F. Skinner (1904-1990).

### Psychoanalysis

Unlike the former approach, which looks a lot at external factors, psychoanalysis investigates a person’s inner life. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), for example, stressed that personality is based on biological drives, most of which are sexual in nature. He would spend a great deal of time talking to people and exploring their dreams. The aim was to get down to a person’s deeper, unconscious level.

### Personalism

This approach is based on a very optimistic view of human nature. Man is fundamentally good, and he has within himself the resources to create change. Forget about a person’s past (Freudianism) and provide a safe environment, as well as lots of empathy, in order that the person can find his “real self.” In this way, a person’s self-esteem will grow, and his autonomy will grow. Over time he will function better in society. Carl Rogers (1902-1987) is often linked to this approach.

### Transpersonalism

This is a fairly new approach and it works a lot with emotions and behaviours. At the same time, it does not ignore

the spiritual dimension but talks a great deal about the higher Self, the Cosmos, and the divine. It has a mystical aspect to it and stresses meditation and deep breathing.

This approach has been heavily influenced by eastern religions and even by Christian monasticism. Abraham Maslow (1908–1970) was a leader in this approach with his hierarchy of human needs and his stress on the self-actualization of the highest need.

## Christian approaches

As a result of these mostly unchristian approaches counselling, there has been a reaction in Christian circles.

### Hiltner's approach

An American Presbyterian minister and pastoral theologian called Seward Hiltner (1909–1984) decided to develop his own approach to counselling. He defines it as follows, "Pastoral counseling is the attempt by a pastor to help a parishioner help himself, granted that certain conditions are present." In many ways, the approach of Hiltner is the same as that of Rogers, except that Hiltner uses "religious resources" such as prayer, the Bible, religious literature, sacraments, and rituals. He also sees counselling as a matter of "healing, sustaining, and guiding."

On the whole, this approach of Hiltner is not very biblically-based. It does not see sin in the biblical way. It sees human nature as fundamentally good. It is devoid of the call to repent and believe. It is very non-directive, very optimistic, and too much focussed on the individual.

### Collins' approach

Another approach to counselling from a Christian perspective is that of Canadian Gary Collins (b.1934). It is called "the integration approach." What this means is on the whole he respects the findings of modern psychology and is prepared to work with them. At times he will also be critical. But, by and large, his aim is to integrate the findings of psychology and theology.

The main criticism against this approach is that it pays too much lip service and acceptance to the findings of psychology. In other words, theology ends up being subjected to and dominated by psychology.

### Allender's approach

There are a number of names that identify themselves with what is called "the Christian psychology approach." These include Dan Allender (b.1952), Robert C. Roberts, Larry Crabb, and Edward T. Welch. What these men stress is the need to go back to square one and develop a different kind of psychology, one that is based on biblical evidence and the Christian tradition. It is not opposed to interacting with "establishment psychology," but still seeks to produce its own distinctive Christian theories, research programs, and soul-care practices.

The main criticism here is that this approach promises more than it can deliver. Still, the effort is to be applauded. At least some Christian scholars are making a serious and concerted attempt to chart their own way in this field and are not content to merely piggyback on what are mostly secular findings.

### Adam's approach

This approach is also called the "nouthetic" approach and is identified most often with the name of its founder, Jay W. Adams (b. 1929). The word "nouthetic" comes from a Greek NT word which means "to admonish." This already sets the tone for this approach, which is very much about confronting people with their sin and then, hopefully, restoring them. It is thus very directive.

At the same time, it is very much against the findings, theories, and approaches of modern psychology. Adams is trying to build a thoroughly biblical approach to counselling, and that is something to be applauded.

Nevertheless, there have been criticisms. His view of human nature (dichotomist), his use of Scripture (biblicistic), his examples (simplistic), his approach (behaviouralist), have all been challenged.

The result is that those who have come after Adams, men such as Paul Tripp, David Tripp, David Powlison, John Bettler, have modified his approach. It is now better balanced, less abrasive, and more moderate. The results can be seen in their publications and in going to the website of their organization, "The Christian Counselling and Educations Foundation" (CCEF), located in Philadelphia, PA.

## Conclusion

Of course, there are more approaches to Christian counselling and pastoral care that could have been mentioned; however, what you have above is a sampling of the main ones. For much more on this subject, read Eric L. Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal* (IVP Academic), 2007.

Suffice it to say, there is no consensus today in the Christian community when it comes to counselling. Sincere believers take a variety of different approaches to this subject. At the same time, there are also Christians who are suspicious of every type of counselling. They condemn anything and everything connected to psychology. They consider the latter to be anti-Christian and ungodly.

Such is not the view taken here. The position here is that as a Christian we need to take the Word of God and use it as our guide, standard, and microscope as we examine the findings of psychology. What conflicts with the Word needs to be jettisoned. What agrees with it may be used. What neither conflicts nor agrees with it may be used with caution. In all things, let the Word of God be our teacher.





# "Preach the Word"

## The Ordination of Rev. Cody Swaving

For the past several years, the consistory of Smithville Canadian Reformed Church has been actively seeking a second minister to assist Rev. Bouwman in the work of preaching and teaching our large congregation of 600+ members. Cody Swaving graduated from CRTS in the spring of 2018 and expressed the desire to do a year-long internship before taking his preparatory exam to be declared eligible for call. Upon invitation from the consistory, Cody decided to take his internship among us with Rev. Bouwman. He began his work in May 2018 and took over some of the catechism teaching each week beginning in the fall, as well as attending consistory and council meetings, making visits, and involving himself in the work among the federation. Each week he met with Rev. Bouwman for sermon evaluation, as well as to discuss the work that was being shared. On March 6, 2019, Cody sustained his preparatory exam and officially received a call from Smithville Canadian Reformed Church. He accepted this call and sustained his preparatory exam on September 19, 2019.

### Ordination

On Sunday, October 6, 2019, Candidate Cody Swaving was ordained as minister of the Word. Rev. Bouwman chose as text 2 Timothy 2:1 "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Timothy had worked side by side with Paul, seeing first-hand the trials Paul had to endure as preacher of the gospel, and yet, despite his youth, weaknesses, and insecurities, he is to know his strength in this grace of Christ. Christ used timid Timothy to further his church gathering work, and today also uses the tools of his choice to accomplish what he has promised, providing them strength in the face of discouragement, persecution, suffering, and distraction as they keep their eye on him.

As we read in the form for ordination, "The exalted Christ gathers his church through his Word and Spirit, and in his grace uses the ministry of man." Our brother Swaving "shall call the whole congregation to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." We were all witness to the laying on of hands by one of Cody's seminary professors, two serving elders, two pastors from surrounding churches, Rev. Bouwman, and Cody's own father as elder of Fergus North congregation. As congregation we stood to receive the charge to "receive Rev. Swaving with all joy" and to "take heed to receive the Word of God which we shall hear from him." We could end our worship with the joyful, exuberant singing of Hymn 84: "Then let us adore, and give him his right, all glory and power, and wisdom and might, all honour and blessing, with angels above, and thanks never ceasing for infinite love."

After the worship service, we received greetings from the neighboring congregations, Grassie, Attercliffe, Dunville, Lincoln, and Tintern. We were reminded that just as God touched the mouth of Jeremiah and put his words in his mouth, that it would be the seed which falls on fertile soil, so also as congregation we continue to receive the imperishable seed which bears much fruit (1 Pet 1). Our brother Swaving was encouraged that just as God equipped







Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and so many others, assuring them that he is with them, so we may be confident that he equips all those whom he calls.

### Introductory sermon

As we gathered together again in the afternoon, it was a special moment when Rev. Swaving could raise his arms to give us the greeting of our God! He chose as text for his introductory sermon 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Peter, formerly a brash fisherman, transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit to be an eloquent apostle and preacher, teaches us that "Our God raises us in Christ to an incredible outcome." This letter, written to elect, dispersed exiles who were changed, born again to a living hope, is also written to us

who also have a new life according to God's great mercy and covenant faithfulness. We have the same inheritance promised to Abraham, prophesied by Isaiah and Daniel, and now proclaimed to us, the gift of an eternal God who desires to have eternal fellowship with his people, on earth, in heaven, and on the new earth. Rev. Swaving encouraged us with the Word, that our knowledge of the past gives us confidence for the future, knowing the outcome has already been revealed and is being prepared and kept in heaven for us.

### Celebration

After the worship service we gathered together in the school gym next door for a time of fellowship and celebration as we enjoyed a dessert social. The chairman of consistory addressed Rev. Swaving, giving thanks that the Lord had so guided Rev. Swaving on his path to the ministry that we could benefit from his work for a year already, and that despite some setbacks and disappointments ultimately we could see the wisdom and providence of God. He encouraged both Rev. Bouwman and Rev. Swaving to continue to proclaim the gospel faithfully to our congregation. The children of our congregation sang some lively songs for Rev. Swaving. He was also presented with the gift of a (large!) bbq, so that since he had already enjoyed so many meals at our homes this past year, he could now begin to return the favour!

We thank and praise God that he blessed Rev. Swaving's internship among us; we may now look forward to a fruitful time together as we continue to pray and work to the glory of our faithful God!



# Clarion Kids

## Taming the Tongue

### James 3:1-12

Your tongue is only one small part of your body, but it is extremely powerful! It is the hardest body part for us to control. Just like a small bit controls a huge horse, and a tiny rudder steers a big ship, so our tongue controls the direction of our whole body. James points out that while we worship God with our tongue by singing praises to him and praying, we also are quick to say mean things about other people with the same tongue. And these are people who are made in the image of God! We must be very careful to tame our tongues every moment of every day, or they can do a lot of damage.

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



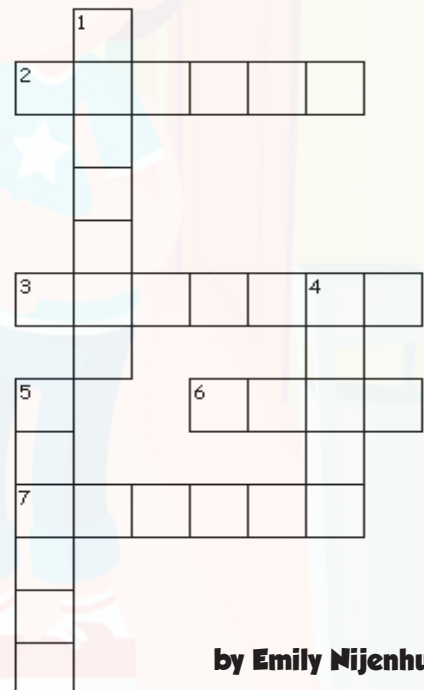
**Crossword Puzzle:** Solve the clues to fill in the puzzle.

#### Across

2. This passage is about taming our \_\_\_\_\_.
3. One good way to use our tongue is to \_\_\_\_\_ God.
6. A bad way to use your tongue is to be \_\_\_\_\_ to other people.
7. Tongues are small but they can do a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Down

1. The tongue is the hardest body part for us to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. All people are created in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
5. James compares our tongue to a \_\_\_\_\_ steering a ship.



by Emily Nijenhuis

## December Birthdays

**10 James Kamminga will be 34**

c/o Cornerstone Christian Care  
Box 367, Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0

**15 Julie Kamminga will be 30**

c/o Cornerstone Christian Care  
Box 367, Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0

**17 Ava Pierotti will be 12**

7761 Regional Road 20  
Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0

Happy Birthday to the three of you celebrating a birthday in December! We wish you all the Lord's blessing in the coming year and a wonderful day with family and friends.

I would like to send a special warm welcome to Ava Pierotti, as it is her first year here with *Ray of Sunshine*. This year it just didn't work out to have her introduced, but hopefully next year we can get to know sweet, fun, spunky, Ava a little better!



## A NOTE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

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

**Rachel Vis**

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





### Press Release Classis Central Ontario held on September 13, 2019 and October 10, 2019

On September 13, 2019, Classis Central Ontario was convened by Bethel Canadian Reformed Church at the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church. On behalf of the convening church, Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes welcomed the delegates and opened the meeting. He read James 3:13-18 and provided a meditation on this passage, then led in prayer. He invited the delegates to sing Hymn 47 stanzas 2, 4, and 5.

The credentials of all of the delegates were found to be in order, and Classis was constituted. The executive, consisting of Rev. Winston Bosch as Chairman, Br. Gerald Boot as Vice Chairman, and Rev. Hilmer Jagersma as Clerk took their respective seats.

The agenda for Classis was adopted, with minor changes. The chairman noted with thankfulness that the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary celebrated fifty years as the seminary of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The vacancy of Fellowship is remembered along with Sr. E. Mulder, the widow of Rev. J. Mulder, who had a fall and broke her pelvis.

All churches made use of the opportunity to report on their missional activities, both locally and abroad. Thanksgiving and intercessory prayer was made after each church presented her report.

Classis reviewed the following annual reports; Report on Archives; Financial Report from the Treasurer for Classis Central Ontario; Report on the audit of the books of the treasurer; Report on Needy Churches; Report on the audit of the books of the Fund for Needy Churches. These reports were all received with thanksgiving. The classical assessment fee for each communicant member has been set at \$3.00 per communicant member. The Regional Synod assessment for 2020 is \$2.00.

According to the questions stated in the Church Order, Article 44, each church was able to answer that the ministry of the gospel is being maintained and that the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured. A church sought and received advice in closed session on a matter of discipline, which was then brought to the Lord in prayer. Bethel church sought and received advice from Classis on a matter regarding pulpit exchange with a local Heritage Reformed Church.

According to Classis Central Ontario Regulation Article 8, the following appointments were made: Rev. Clarence VanderVelde and Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong were appointed to the committee of Examiners; Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong, Rev. Anthony Roukema, and Rev. Clarence VanderVelde (convener) were appointed as church visitors, with Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes as alternate; Ebenezer church was appointed to take care of the archives; Fellowship church was appointed to inspect the archives; Rehoboth church was appointed to audit the books of the treasurer and to audit the books of the Fund for the Needy Churches; br. Jack Spithoff was appointed as treasurer; br. Kent Baartman, br. Ed Jans and br. Fred Lodder were appointed to the Committee for the Needy Churches; br. Rick Ludwig, br. Andre Schutten, and Rev. Jan deGelder (convener) were appointed to the Committee of Appeals, with Rev. Gijsbert Nederveen, Rev. John van Popta, and br. Leo Kampen as alternates (in that order).

For the upcoming Regional Synod East to be held on November 13, 2019 at the Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church of Guelph, the following were chosen as delegates: As primary minister delegates Rev. Dr. Bill deJong and Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes, with Rev. Tony Roukema as first alternate minister and Rev. Clarence VanderVelde as second alternate minister delegate; as primary elder delegates br. Barry Hordyk and br. Rick Ludwig, with br. Gerald Boot as first alternate elder and br. Brad Alkema as second alternate elder.

A proposal from Burlington-Rehoboth requesting Classis to make a judgement against a practice at Hamilton-Blessings and Ottawa-Jubilee to allow ministers from non-sister churches to preach on their pulpit is discussed. After a few rounds of discussion, a committee was appointed to report back to Classis when it reconvenes on October 10.

An appeal from a brother regarding Burlington-Ebenezer's decision to deny his request to have Burlington-Ebenezer overture Classis Central Ontario regarding the Lord's Supper practice of Burlington-Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church is discussed. After a few rounds of discussion, a committee was appointed to report back to Classis when it reconvenes on October 10.

A letter from the Canadian Reformed Church at Orangeville regarding certain practices at Blessings Christian Church and the position of Classis Central Ontario regarding these practices. A draft response was discussed and will be further discussed when Classis is reconvened on October 10.



Question period was held and made use of. The Acts were read and approved until this point.

Classis was adjourned until October 10, 2019 after prayer of thanksgiving by the chairman, Rev. Winston Bosch.

Classis was reconvened on October 10, 2019 with the reading of 1 Samuel 12:14-15 by Rev. Winston Bosch, a meditation on that passage, singing of Psalm 2:1 and 4, and prayer was offered by the chairman. The credentials were checked, and it was noted that three churches sent alternate delegates.

The committee dealing with the Burlington-Rehoboth request presented its advisory report. After a number of rounds of discussion, the advisory committee met to revise its report and then presented its revised report which was adopted. Classis decided not to make a judgement against the practice of Hamilton-Blessings and Ottawa-Jubilee to allow ministers from non-sister churches to preach on their pulpit.

The committee report regarding the appeal from a brother regarding Burlington-Ebenezer's decision to deny

his request to have Burlington-Ebenezer overture Classis Central Ontario regarding the Lord's Supper practice of Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church was adopted. Classis decided that the matter was not finished at the minor assembly.

The draft reply to the church at Orangeville was discussed. The adopted letter will be sent.

Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church will convene the December 13, 2019 classis (alternate date is March 13, 2020).

The following officers are suggested: Rev. H. Jagersma as Chairman, the elder from Ebenezer as Vice-Chairman, and Rev. J. Torenvliet as Clerk.

Personal question period was held. Censure according to Art 34 (C.O.) was not deemed necessary. The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved. The Vice-chairman, Gerald Boot, closed Classis with thanksgiving prayer after the singing of Hymn 8.

*Gerald Boot*  
*Vice-chairman at that time* 