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What's Inside

In our Ascension Day issue our lead article and our meditation concentrate on the Ascension of Jesus Christ. Rev. Matthew Van Luik links his article to the current COVID-19 crisis. We also have an article from Ed Hoogerdyk of ARPA, "The Real TP in Times of the COVID Crisis: Trust and Perspective."

Each year around this time we print a student profile of the graduating class at CRTS. On these pages you will find profiles and photos for Kelvin Dekker, Aidan Plug, and Daniel Shin. We wish them the Lord's blessings in the coming months as graduation approaches!

Issue 10 includes the regular columns Clippings on Politics & Religion and Ray of Sunshine. There is also a Canticle, the annual WSA newsletter, and a short report.

Laura Veenendaal

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The Ascension of Jesus Christ and COVID-19

As I am reflecting on the ascension of our Lord Jesus, my attention is being distracted by the news of the coronavirus spreading over the globe. A little virus that first rose up in Wuhan, China quickly spread from there to almost every nation on earth. While the vast majority of those who contract the virus survive, a sizable group of vulnerable are perishing. Drastic action is being taken by governments to stem the spread as people are instructed to wash their hands often, not to touch their faces, to practice social distancing, and those who have travelled abroad are to self-quarantine. Economies are being shut down, many non-essential businesses are being closed, people are told to stay home, schools are closed, universities and colleges are giving instruction online. People without work are not getting a paycheck to pay their bills, the stock markets are plummeting and affecting the retirement plans of millions. For a long time, the world has not seen the terrible effects of a pandemic ravishing the world. As you read this, either things are improving or there may still be much uncertainty.

Sometimes it is better to just turn off the news since we are being fed horror stories and worst-case scenarios that raise the anxiety of society. During this time, our hearts and minds are easily focussed on earthly things, we worry about our future, and how we will manage. The reality is that our earthly lives are going to be impacted; in particular we will be impacted materially while also being concerned for our health. We are being tested by the Lord in a way that this generation has not seen before. Many of the older generation still remember the hardships they faced in their youth during the second

world war and many remember the struggles in the early years of immigration to Canada or the United States, but the younger generation have only seen times of increasing prosperity and relatively peaceful times. There have been terrorist attacks and the war on terror, but for most, these things have happened at arm's length.

As our lives are being set upside down, the Lord is testing the Christian church. In the midst of trouble and calamity, the Lord tests our faith and directs our heart to him in heaven. We have gotten so used to putting our hope and trust in our earthly



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and material possessions in the western world, and now we are being called by the Lord to renew our hope and trust in him as the Almighty God. The ascension of the Lord Jesus causes us to turn our focus towards heaven. Christ's ascension relates our earthly existence to heaven.

Christ ascends as the cosmic ruler

Our earthly life is closely connected to the life of Jesus Christ in heaven, and we will see this in four areas. First, Christ ascended into heaven as the cosmic ruler who is given complete control of the universe. When the crowds in Jerusalem on Pentecost wondered about what they saw and heard (the tongues of fire and the sound of a mighty wind, Acts 2:33), Peter tells the people that the Lord Jesus, who has been raised to life and is exalted to the right hand of God, has done "what you now see and hear." He adds that David already spoke about this long ago in Psalm 110 when he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." David portrays his great Son as the one who will rule over all the kingdoms of the earth.

In Revelation 5, the apostle John sees a vision in which the Lord Jesus is elevated to a position of great glory and power over the universe. He sees in the right hand of God a scroll that was sealed, and no one could open it, and he also sees a Lamb, looking as if it has been slain, standing at the centre of the throne where God is seated. The Lamb is the Lord Jesus, who has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven. He

goes and takes the scroll from the right hand of God, for he alone has received authority to open the scroll.

The scroll contains God's plan for the history of this world. It reveals all the things that must take place before the history of this world comes to an end. It is critical that someone is found worthy to open the scroll, not only so God's plans can be revealed to us, but that he may receive authority to execute all the plans of God. Jesus, as the ascended Lord, receives full authority to rule over the universe. Everything in the history of the universe rests in his hands. That is critical information for the church of Christ. In this vision, God's people receive the assurance that our Lord and Saviour now rules over all things from the right hand of God the Father.

That is what gives us our confidence during this time, when the whole world is brought to its knees by the COVID-19 virus. Who is in control? Who determines what will happen to the earth? The environmental movement today claims that we only have a dozen years or so before the world comes to an end, if we do not act to save the world today. In the face of that doomsday scenario, the great ruler on high sends the world into a panic with a virus. We don't know when the world will end, but we do know that the world rests in the hands of our Saviour. The course of history has already been determined, it is laid out in the scroll and Jesus Christ is executing that plan as he directs the history of the world to its end. Therefore, while we may have reason to be concerned about the effects of the virus on the world, we are not in a panic. As God commands us in Psalm 46,

"Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The Almighty is with us, our Lord and Saviour reigns from heaven.

Christ ascends as our High Priest

Our earthly life is very closely related to the life of our ascended Lord. How does this knowledge of our ascended Lord give us so much comfort when we face troubles in this world? Our comfort is determined by our relationship with him. Hebrews 4:14 tells us that "we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God." Then Hebrews 9:23ff adds that Jesus appeared in heaven with his own blood so that he might do away with our sin through his one sacrifice on the cross. Through his one sacrifice, the Lord Jesus has opened the way for us into the heavenly dwelling place of God. Therefore, we can now approach "God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (4:16).

We live in a time of great need. You may be concerned about your own health, especially if you belong to those who are deemed to be vulnerable to the virus in our society. You may be concerned about your economic well-being as jobs are being lost, as business suddenly dries up. You may be concerned about what the future will look like. These worries and anxieties can have an impact on our mental health. During this time of need and concern we do not only have a Lord who is in control of the whole earth, but he is also my Lord and my Saviour. What a comfort to know that I have a Saviour who has bought me with his blood, and who intercedes for me with the Father in heaven. He cares deeply for his people and will care for us, for he bought us with his own blood and will give us the glorious life everlasting. Our life is eternally secure in the hands of our ascended Lord.

Christ ascended to send the Holy Spirit

We have this confidence because at his ascension Jesus Christ sent his Holy Spirit to us. Jesus Christ is not just passively watching over the world from heaven, but he is active in this world.


On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the Lord kept his promise to send the Holy Spirit on his church and 3000 souls were added to the church that day. Christ continues to be active as he gathers his church through the power of his Word and Spirit from the ends of the earth. Therefore, we need to keep in mind that the spread of this virus and the panic it has caused in the world is not just some random act. Christ is in control, and he will also use this to cause mankind to pause and reflect on the meaning of their lives. He gives us as his people the opportunity to witness to his power at work in our hearts and to witness to the glorious truths of the gospel. These events bring uncertainty, but through his Spirit the Lord gives us a view of the world that is comforting. Calamities occur, but they remind us that Christ is in control and the end is approaching.

The ascended Lord returns

At the time of his ascension, as the disciples were gazing into heaven, looking to where they had last seen their Lord two angels suddenly appeared to them and told them "he will come

back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Today we live with the expectation that the end is coming. By faith we eagerly anticipate the return of our Lord from heaven. When he comes, he will deliver us from the suffering and pain of this life and bring us into "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1).

For all those who do not know Christ today, these are uncertain times. The old expectation that things will go on as usual and that the world will only get better are suddenly shattered. Uncertainty leads to anxiety and fear and panic. The day is coming when

God's judgement will come on the earth and mankind will flee in panic and call on the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev 6:16). That will be a dreadful day. For all those who belong to the Lamb, Jesus Christ, it will be a glorious day full of joy and rejoicing. Our ascended Lord will return in glory and he will take us together with all his people in the eternal kingdom of God. Then we will finally enjoy the great marriage feast of the Lamb. Today we are comforted, for we know that our life is safe and secure in the hands of our ascended Lord. 

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heaven

The Ascended Christ Fulfilled the Temple Service

"And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven." (Luke 24:50-51)

The gospel of Luke begins and ends with the wonderful blessings of the priesthood. It first tells us about the childless priest Zechariah who, as he was serving in the temple, was told by an angel of the Lord that he and his wife Elizabeth will bear a son in their old age. This was great news. They felt especially privileged to belong to the priestly class and they mourned the fact that they would not be able to produce any offspring that would continue to be able to serve in the temple.

It was a great blessing to be a priest. In spite of sin which denied mankind access to God, a priest had the privileged position to once again be near to God in the temple. A priest could make sacrifices on behalf of the people for the forgiveness of sins and even pronounce God's Aaronic blessing on the people. What a great joy!

But now in the end of Luke we see that the Lord Jesus Christ pronounces his blessing just before his ascension. He does not belong to the priestly class. Neither one of his parents had priestly blood flowing through their veins. No, he is of the royal line of David. A king was not allowed to assume priestly functions. Those who did so were punished, as happened for example to Uzziah (2 Chron 26:18).


And he did not pronounce his blessing in the temple either. He did so from Bethany, about a day's journey from Jerusalem. This was unholy ground, as was any place on earth outside the temple. Oh sure, certain priestly functions could be done outside the temple, but not the real thing. That is why God's people waited outside the temple as the priest ministered in the holy place. Anyone who dared to enter the temple would receive instead of a blessing, a curse.

Everything in the temple was done in an orderly way and at a specific time. There were many restrictions. All things had to be done by the right person, at the right place and at the right

time. But Jesus is not encumbered by any of those restrictions. No, he does it all in his own wonderful way.

He had earned that right! For he made the perfect sacrifice. He is the right person at the right place and at the right time. Because of his total obedience, God the Father gave him all authority in heaven and on earth.

And now, as Jesus rose into heaven, he stretched out his arms and lifted up his hands and pronounced his blessing upon the disciples. He kept them outstretched as he was carried up into heaven. His blessing, therefore, must be seen as a permanent blessing. It does not cease.

How wonderful to know that Jesus is now in heaven with outstretched arms and uplifted hands to bless us each day. He blesses our lives, our provisions, and our activities into eternity. Without his blessings we are nothing and we have nothing. Now those who believe have everything, including eternal life, so that we can praise and glorify his name into eternity. 

For further study

1. **Why was it such a great blessing to be a priest? Could anyone function as a priest?**
2. **Why could the Lord Jesus take upon himself priestly functions?**
3. **What is the significance of Christ's blessing as he rose into heaven?**



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Trust and Perspective:

The Real TP during the COVID Crisis

Toilet paper (TP) has become a hot commodity. It's hard to find. Just mention Charmin and it evokes a wide range of emotions: frustration, greed, and anger just to name a few. So much for enhancing our soft side.

All the TP in the world won't give us comfort. Perhaps some physical comfort, but that's about it. What we need is real comfort. Spiritual comfort. A better TP. We need trust and perspective.

Satan hurls a lot of flaming darts at us. One of those darts is doubt. He loves it when we doubt God's Word. "You surely won't die," he said to Eve. "If you are the Son of God," he taunted, as he tempted Jesus. And he sows seeds of doubt in us when we don't seem to have the right answers in the midst of calamity and suffering. We're vulnerable. So, he tells us lies. He's good at that. He's the greatest at that. He's the great deceiver.


The psalms remind God's people of the need to put their trust in him and his Name. "Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you" (Ps 9:8, 10). "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" (Ps 20:6-7). "In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name" (Ps 33:20-21).

In this COVID crisis, believers may and should put their trust in the Lord. We can trust him to do that which is good. We can trust him to turn all things for our good. Trust in God is key to Christian living: "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and find safe pasture" (Ps 37:3).

We need this biblical perspective. Life is full of blessings, action, work, charity, faith, and relationships. Life is full of hopes,

dreams, changes, and experiences. Life can be full of sorrow and regrets. Life can be full of confusion, disappointment, discouragement, and questions. The Word of God brings us to our knees and gives us the proper perspective and reminds us what life really is. It reminds us of *who* life really is. In moments of despair, grief, fear, and sensationalism, God's Word comes alive. Jesus said, "I am the way the truth and the life." Jesus is life!

In this time of the COVID crisis, we need to re-cultivate an eternal perspective in our thinking. Stocking up the shelves for the long term won't cut it. Let alone loading up on TP. From a Christian's perspective, there is sickness and death in this world. God has overcome that. He comforts us in times of trouble. He is still watching us 24-7 in all our comings and goings.

As people of God, we have a clear perspective. A hopeful perspective. Life is about opportunity. Opportunity to love God. Opportunity to love people. Opportunity to serve God. Opportunity to serve people. And we do so because Jesus is our life. He is our only comfort in life and in death. And it's this perspective that we need to present to our communities and to our civil authorities. We've got the real TP that our society needs to load up on! Trust and perspective. 

"Trust in the Lord
and do good;
dwell in the
land and find
safe pasture."

(Ps 37:3)



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The CRTS Graduating Class of 2020

It goes without saying that the end of the 2019-20 academic year at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary was unlike any other that our seminary has experienced so far in its fifty-year history. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, in the week of March 16 we needed to switch from teaching all our courses in person to teaching everything online. In a rather hasty fashion, we “reconstructed” seminary life, at least as much as we could, in the virtual realm. Soon enough our experiences made clear that it’s not the same as learning in a face-to-face context. Nevertheless, we remain very thankful to our sovereign and gracious Lord that the education for our students could continue uninterrupted.

Not only was it good, for professors and students alike, to complete the school year, but it also now gives us the opportunity to present three graduating students who are presenting themselves to classis in order to become eligible for call among the churches. As is our annual custom, then, on the following pages we include profiles written by these students themselves: Kelvin Dekker, Aidan Plug, and Daniel Shin. As you will discover, there is a distinctly international character to the class of 2020. May the Lord bless each one of them as he directs their lives for the service of his people and glory of his Name.





Kelvin Dekker

Greetings, my name is Kelvin Dekker, husband to Amy (nee Houweling), father to Abigail (3), Nathaniel (2), and Theodore (6 weeks), and student at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. We're one of the Aussie families who have "infiltrated" the seminary and learned the Canadian way of life, among many other wonderful things.

Our roots go back to the land down under where, for more than twenty years of our lives, the Lord shaped and moulded us. Our parents had the largest influence over our lives, holding steadfast to their baptismal vows in nurturing our hearts in the fear of the LORD and training our minds with a Christian education. In love they nurtured us, patiently pointing out our weaknesses and calling us to respond to the wonderful promises God made to us. In addition to our parents, the Lord has blessed us with many siblings, a variety of work experiences, tertiary education, a loving church community, and friends.

My journey on the path of ministry preparation began in 2011. I was working in Diagnostic Pathology after completing a bachelor's degree in medical science at university. Although my pastor and my peers had suggested in the past that I consider the ministry, I thought it was for "those" kind of people, not me. However, in July of that year, I was driving home after a night shift, listening to a sermon. The conviction that overcame me in that moment drove me to be honest with myself and my Maker about the direction of my life. That drive home turned me from a path of resistance about ministry to one of pursuing it.

I resigned from the laboratory that year and took up part-time construction work with my father while studying Greek, Hebrew, Latin, ancient history, and philosophy. The following year, I was

introduced to the love of my life and best friend, Amy, who was a preschool teacher at the time. We were married in April 2015.

Since moving to Canada, Amy and I have grown closer to the Lord and to each other. Leaving family and loved ones behind and moving to a new country as newlyweds strengthened our dependence on the Lord and each other and impressed on us a heavenly perspective for this earthly life.

Amy and I left Australia as a family of two, but under God's blessing we have now grown into a family of five. Abigail (3) is the energy in our house who keeps us running and laughing. Nathaniel is the "law and order," making sure everything is in good order and in its proper place. At just six weeks old, Theodore still keeps us up at night but also melts our hearts. Raising all of them has taught us to be thankful and to depend on our God, his wisdom, his patience, his love, and his gentleness.

Our other life experiences include our orientation, mission, and summer pastoral training practicums. In 2017, we had an orientation internship under Rev. Rodney Vermeulen's mentorship in Glanbrook. This was a wonderful opportunity to "get out there" and do some hands-on work with the theory we soaked up in the freshman year. The Lord used this experience to confirm for us that the ministry is where we desire to serve. In 2018, Amy and I spent two weeks with Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church in St. Augustine, Florida, where we received a taste for church planting and evangelism. In 2019, Amy and I spent ten weeks in the Free Reformed Church of Albany under the guidance of Rev. Hendrik Alkema and the Albany consistory. This opened our eyes to the wonderful and challenging work of ministry and confirmed for us once again that this is where we desire to serve.

Seminary has also had a large influence in our growth. The study into God's living and active Word transformed me in many ways and under God's blessing has enabled me to serve and guide our young family.

Yes, these experiences carried with them challenges and afflictions, but along the way we have learned many things about ourselves and our covenant God. The Lord has been with us and we have tasted and seen most clearly that he is good. He works for our benefit through the challenges and afflictions in order to conform us to the glorious image of his Son (Rom 8:29). It is our hope and prayer he will continue to do this for us and use me as an instrument to do this for others through pastoral ministry.

Aidan Plug

Here I am, sitting in the senior classroom at CRTS (don't worry, class isn't on). Around me are scattered piles of books – papers are due soon. It's crazy to think that this will be the final wave of papers to swamp me here! It felt like just yesterday that, with great trepidation, I took a seat in one of these chairs, nervous about whether I could hold up under the pressures of seminary life. In hindsight, it turns out I should have been more trepidatious about the chairs themselves ... I've broken three of them in my time here.

My name is Aidan Plug, and in the photo, you'll see my beautiful wife Claire and our two boys, Austin (3) and Pierre (1). Claire and I both grew up in Western Australia and started dating during our undergrad years (Claire studied secondary teaching). Shortly after we were married, we packed our bags so that I could study in the hallowed halls of CRTS.

I can still remember the first time we set foot in those halls. Two doors down from the seminary we had found a house to rent, but it needed some painting. Thankfully, Claire's family had come along to chauffeur us to Hamilton and everyone pitched in. I'm not sure how the professors got to know that one of their future students was causing a hullabaloo down the street, but they did, and invited us over. So, we had coffee together, the Aussies covered in paint and the professors in their suits and ties.

Over the past four years we've come to know the people behind those ties – wonderful, godly men who have been a great blessing to us, not only academically but also spiritually. In fact, these years have really been a time of growth for us. Growth as people – moving to the other side of the world when you're just married does that to you! Growth in knowledge. Growth in faith.

We have also been blessed with growth as a family. Our oldest boy was born during our first winter here. He's Austin, our little thinker. There's always something going through his mind, while his body struggles to keep up. Two winters later we were blessed with our second little man, Pierre. He's our smiley one who had a rough start to life, but he's remarkably happy. Pretty much all the time ... unless you're wearing a beard.

What else is there to know about us? My road to CRTS started in Grade 12, when my pastor sat me down and strongly suggested that I study for the ministry. Though he could be quite a fiery preacher, he was not as bold as Farel, for there were no curses invoked on my studies if I stayed in Australia. Also, unlike Calvin, I did not have to make my mind up on the spot. However,

after praying it over and thinking it through, I decided to give languages a go and see where God would lead. Well, the fact that you are reading this right now gives you an indication of where things have gone. Over the last eight years, God has filled me with a desire to serve as a pastor in his churches.

So here I am, sitting and staring at a room full of empty chairs. I am going to miss the guys that usually fill these chairs, as well as the friendships we've formed. If you'll indulge me one more trip down memory lane, I can remember being a freshman at my first Thanksgiving dinner with the seminary crowd, listening to everyone debating covenant theology, throwing names like Berkhof, Berkouwer, and Bavinck around as if they were football players. I almost took the next plane home. However, somewhere over the course of the past four years I have been turned into one of those men.

As Calvin would say, seminary is the place where wood is sharpened into arrows. Over the last four years our God has been whittling away, sharpening this one into an arrow for his purposes. Though a lifetime of further sharpening awaits, we are excited for our next phase of life, trusting that he will provide us with grace and strength to serve wherever he places us in his kingdom.






Daniel Shin

Hi, I'm Daniel Shin, a fourth-year student at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. You might have already noticed that the seminary has a good number of international students and I am one of them. I am from Busan, South Korea. But that doesn't do justice to my personal history, because the Lord has blessed me with a diverse international upbringing. For instance, this is already my tenth year in Canada! I came to Canada when I was seventeen to enroll in Credo Christian High School in BC for grade 11. After two years at Credo, I moved to Toronto (GTA) for university studies. I lived there for four years. Then I moved to Hamilton, where I have been for another four years so that adds up to ten years. On top of that, I lived in Jackson, Mississippi, for a year, Potchefstroom, South Africa, for two years, as well as serving in the South Korean army for two years. Furthermore, just in case you didn't notice from my picture, I am somewhat Dutch because, of course, I was born in Kampen while my father was studying at the Theological Seminary there. Since I'll be twenty-nine soon, I have lived about half of my life in South Korea and the other half elsewhere. Maybe it's easiest if I made a chart.

So, what am I like after experiencing all that? When I am not busy with work, I find spending time with family and friends meaningful. I love learning, so I listen to podcasts and read

Year	Age	Location
1991-1993	1-2	Kampen, Netherlands
1993-1995	2-5	Busan, South Korea
1995-1997	5-7	Potchefstroom, South Africa
1997-2005	7-13	Busan, South Korea
2005-2006	13-14	Jackson, Mississippi
2006-2008	14-17	Busan, South Korea
2008-2010	17-19	Langley, BC (gr. 11-12)
2010-2011	19-21	Toronto (1 st year Uni.)
2011-2013	21-22	S. Korean Mountain Ranges (Army)
2013-2016	21-24	Toronto (2nd-4th year Uni.)
2016- Present	24-29	Hamilton

books. I love practicing and playing basketball. I also enjoy playing piano.

It's hard to believe that I am almost done Seminary! I am sincerely grateful for the education which I received here. The internships were invaluable too. I had the privilege of being mentored by Rev. C. VanderVelde (first year), by Pastor R. Bultje (second year), and by Pastor W. den Hollander Jr (third year). These past four years have been an immense blessing: being encouraged by godly brothers, forming intimate friendships, being pushed toward excellence, and most importantly, knowing God more and more as we were immersed in his Word. I remember coming to the Seminary simply because I wanted to know more about God's Word. But the Lord gradually worked in me a desire to serve in the ministry of the Word. As I am leading worship in the churches, the Holy Spirit is strengthening within me the desire to dedicate my life to whatever the Lord calls me. Lord willing, I hope it is the ministry of the gospel! Since the Lord has so lavishly blessed me this far, I look forward to what he has planned for me in the future. 



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Intersectionality

Dr. Rosaria Butterfield is well known to many Reformed Christians. In the 1990s she was a tenured professor of English and Women's Studies at a prominent American university; she was in a lesbian relationship and was championing LGB issues in the university. God converted her to Christ through contact with a genuine Christian pastor and her own reading of Scripture. She relates this in her book *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert: An English Professor's Journey into Christian Faith*. In time she married a Reformed Presbyterian pastor and now is an active member of a psalm-singing RPCNA church. Two further books have appeared from her pen lately. She has become one of the living authorities on how Christians should reach out to the LGBTQ communities and on the philosophies that underlie the movement. Recently *Tabletalk*, a magazine of Ligonier Ministries, published an article she wrote, entitled, "Intersectionality and the Church."¹

What is intersectionality? Butterfield explains that it was introduced to universities in the 1990s in the social sciences and humanities departments. Its big story is about "oppression," as she explains,

[Intersectionality] maintains that the world is made up of power struggles, and that white male heterosexual patriarchy must be destroyed in order to liberate those who are oppressed by it. It understands the biblical complementarity of husbands and wives as perverted and "weaponized." It believes that if we can expose the myriad ways in which people suffer down to the smallest detail and then rearrange the power-oppressions, we have the ability to reemploy a person's history (of oppression) and destiny (of liberation). Suffering in this worldview includes both material and perceived suffering . . . includ[ing] harm to one's dignity and identity. Thus any perceived rejection of personal identity based in LGBTQ+ affirmation causes harm. Harm, then, is both material and psychological, both real and perceived.

The point of the word "intersectionality" is that we all live at the "intersections" or crossroads of various patterns of power or oppression. Those who have lived at multiple intersections

of oppression should be given greater power and those who have lived at multiple intersections of power may have their power removed and may even suffer degrees of oppression. And this will be truly just.

Butterfield explains, "It works like this: when we allow those with a hefty load of intersections (perhaps a transgender woman of colour who is deaf and poor and incarcerated) to have a larger voice in culture and simultaneously require those who have white male heterosexual 'privilege' to remain silent, we supposedly tear down walls of material violence."

The concern of Butterfield is that a number of churches and Christian organizations have begun to use intersectionality as an idea that can help them preach the gospel. It could help the church reach "sexual minorities." Butterfield is not convinced of this at all. She responds that intersectionality is contrary to the gospel because it fosters an "unbiblical view of human identity" and brings about "social fragmentation."

Indeed, people's innate sense of justice is rightly provoked when positions of power and authority are awarded to persons who have not given evidence that they have the track record and ability to carry them out faithfully. The likely result will be greater suffering of those under such authority, not less suffering. And if power is given to someone who doesn't know what to do with it, the responsibility may well overwhelm them.

Butterfield's conclusion is clear, that intersectionality is not a model that serves the gospel. It "confuses justice," contradicts the "creation ordinance," and "violates both love of neighbour and common sense." While the church must oppose injustice of every kind, the measure of injustice must be determined by the whole instruction of God's Word in law and gospel, not by what proponents of intersectionality teach us. **C**



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¹See <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/posts/intersectionality-and-the-church-2020-02>. Accessed 11 March 2020.



“And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!”
Revelation 5:13

Last fall, we encouraged our WSA church representatives to help us meet a fundraising goal of \$50,000 for the fiftieth anniversary celebration of our Seminary. They rose to the challenge and collectively raised \$51,569.84! This amount surpassed our highest annual donation to date by approximately \$10,000. The WSA committee was thrilled and humbled by this outcome, especially considering that over the last five years our donations had “flat-lined” and our surplus was running low.

And then there was more. Late last spring, we were approached by a generous donor who offered to match all donations received to a maximum of \$50,000! Due to the timing of this generous offer and the fact that most of our reps had already done their collecting, we couldn’t even use this wonderful piece of information as encouraging incentive. However, it obviously wasn’t necessary. Our dedicated reps worked hard so that without even knowing it they raised the maximum amount that our donor was willing to match. And so, it is with great thankfulness that we could present at the fiftieth anniversary celebration evening a gift of \$100,000 to the Theological Seminary Library for the 2019/2020 academic year. All blessing and honour and glory to God alone!

So, what about our name?

It is true that there seems to be some confusion around the word “Women’s” (suggesting that perhaps only women are donating to our cause) and the spelling of “Savings” (as opposed to Saving’s.) Further, we have to admit that our name, the Women’s Savings Action, doesn’t tie into the library theme very well, or the Seminary for that matter, and in fact have some wondering just what, exactly, are we “saving.” In saying all that, we’ve decided to keep our name.

We want to remain sensitive and cognizant of our history, and after consulting with our reps, our church community, families, and looking into what the legal implications of changing our name would be, we felt that it made more sense to add a tagline instead. Therefore, we would like to introduce to you the new

wording of our logo: “*Women’s Savings Action – Funding the Seminary Library.*” We think it has a nice ring and it keeps us connected with our history of fifty years past while adding clarity to our mandate. A special thank-you to Hannele Dejong for adding the new tag line to our beautiful logo that she created for us.


Staying connected

As we mentioned in our newsletter last year, there are fifty-four churches that support our library, and so we really do rely on our reps to communicate with their respective congregation. The names and contact information of each rep can be found in the annual Church Yearbook under the “Seminary” section. It really is an impressive list! If you have any questions, suggestions, or would like to make a four-year commitment and become a rep one day yourself, please let your local rep know! They would love to hear from you and are always grateful to have willing individuals to work with, or hand over their responsibilities to, once their term is completed.

This past year we created a fiftieth anniversary video that was featured at the Seminary’s convocation last September. It is only six minutes long, but it gives a comprehensive peek into the work of the Women’s Savings Action, past and present. Just type “WSA 50th Anniversary Video” in your search engine and enjoy! Perhaps it’s a piece that you can view at your next congregational meeting?

New this year!

You asked – we delivered! We are very excited to share with you that there is now the option to donate to the *Women’s Savings Action – Funding the Seminary Library* via email money transfer to wsa@crtsc.ca. We want to be sure that we are staying current with the times and hope this makes things a little easier for our supporters. If you have any other ideas, we’d love to hear from you.

We thank God for his continued blessings and guidance as we continue to work together for the benefit of educating and equipping the men that are called to our Seminary. 

Deb Alkema Secretary
Karen Schuurman Treasurer
Janet VanVliet President

Greetings from Lighthouse

Lighthouse is one of the five homes of Anchor Association in Ontario. Our home that opened in May 2008 is in the country just outside of Fergus, very close to a beautiful walking trail. Eight residents, ranging in age from twenty-four to fifty-four live at Lighthouse, four ladies and four men (including two sisters and two brothers). We have a very spacious home, and we each have our own room, which our families have nicely decorated. We also have a very large yard with lots of grass, and a big vegetable garden as well as a nice chicken coop. Since staff and residents take care of the whole property, you can imagine we keep busy. But it's rewarding when the property looks beautiful and the freezer gets full. Our manager, Jeannette Bouwman, says our caregivers are amazing, but so are we.

Though we are all so very different in talents and abilities, we have a wonderful family atmosphere in our home. Each of us goes out in the community, some working more, and some less. Many of us volunteer or have a program here and there, and so we keep busy day by day. However, due to the coronavirus, none of us can go to out nowadays, not even visiting, and sadly you may not visit us either - but you may fill our mailbox! "I like going to work, but since we can't, I don't mind staying at home." "It feels like a long holiday." "Sometimes it is good to slow down so we can think about lots of nice things that the Lord has given us." "We notice the spring flowers more and listen to the birds that sing."

Yes, we are so thankful that it is spring, and we have had nice weather. We have been so busy in the yard doing yard cleanup - picking up sticks, raking the stones off the lawn, trimming back the old grasses, cutting back bushes, cleaning out the flower beds. "I like doing my landscaping maintenance." It's been so fun working together though some of us are the supervisors, and encouragers. Thankfully, we also are still able to go for our walks every day. Some of us go for long walks (maybe a few a day), and some of us get our exercise on the church parking lot. Fresh air is so good for us, and we like to stay healthy. One day a week we are still able to deliver our weekly newspapers, and we are so happy we can still do that. It was sad to hear that Anchor Camp was cancelled, but not all of us mind. "It's so busy." "A change is good." We are hoping to do some other fun day trips when we can again.

June Birthdays

Happy Birthday to the four of you celebrating a birthday in June!
We wish you the Lord's blessing in the coming year.

17 Joan Koerselman will be **63**

2113-16 Ave.
Coaldale, AB
T1M 1J8

20 Lars Huijgen will be **29**

2629 Aspen Drive
Coaldale, AB
T1M 0A2

26 Devon Niezen will be **20**

7000 2nd line
Arthur, ON
N0G 1A0

30 Beverly Breukelman will be **58**

19th Street
Coaldale, AB
T1M 1G4





Thank you to the Lighthouse for giving us a glimpse into their lives, especially during this different time of the coronavirus. May we all see the positive during this difficult time and always turn to our heavenly father. We can all be thankful for the communion of saints we have been given, and may we all be there for one another.

Our mailbox loves to be filled! Our address is:

Lighthouse
6528 First Line, R.R.#3
Fergus, ON
N1M 2W4

Bryce Berends
Terence Berends
Cameron Dantuma
Lindsay Kottelenberg
Shaelyn Kottelenberg
Marsha Moesker
Katherine Nijenhuis
Dave VanVeen

We have been doing a lot of extra crafts, too. Our Anchor bookkeeper gave us a spring challenge to decorate her office, and that has been very motivational. Many of us made a hand craft and wrote different messages on our hands: "Wash, wash, your hands, keep them nice and clean." "Keep your hands away from your face all day." "Make it your ambition to work with your hands" (1 Thess 4:11). "Clap your hands and shout, let your praise ring out" (Ps 47). We also make thank you cards and birthday cards. Using tissue paper, we also made a beautiful stain glass window together. It is hanging on our living room window and reminds us that "the LORD is my light and my salvation."

We are busy painting some rocks, which we plan to add to the rock pile by our hospital to encourage our doctors and nurses. We even went outside one night to cheer for them, since they are very busy helping the sick people. We hope we don't get sick, because "it's not nice being sick." However, we know that the Lord is in control. "Man makes plans, but the Lord directs his steps." "We do not have to worry, because we are God's children and he looks after us even more than the birds and the flowers." We are always in the Lord's hands. God is with us; he is our Emmanuel. That's the name of our highschool, and we love the text they have on their signboard for everyone to read: "God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps 46).

Even though we can't visit our families now, we are so glad we can phone them and even video chat or zoom with them. Then we can even see them. "We still love them, and they still love us too!" "I like being in contact with my siblings." We pray for them, and you, that you are as healthy as we are.

On Sundays we can't go to church either, even though the church is right next door. But we still put on our Sunday clothes, and have a regular Sunday. We live stream our services in the living room, and sing along, and even have collections for our deacons to give to the poor. Our minister came over one day and did devotions with us outside. We really liked that, also singing together. We also listen to some nice meditations from our ministers and we like that we can see them too. "We have time to rely and trust on the LORD more." We often sing: "This is the day that the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it!" May you also rejoice in the LORD always, and pray with us, "Come Lord Jesus, Maranatha!"

I Am the Way, the Truth, the Life

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." (John 14:1-7)

1. I am the way to Fa - ther's house, the place with man - y rooms.
 2. I am the truth a - midst the lies that man - y peo - ple tell.
 3. I am the life, come fol - low me, come all and eve - ry one.

6

En - trust your - self in - to my care when fear and trou - bles loom.
 Be - lieve the word I speak to you and know that you'll be well.
 There is no way to Fa - ther's house ex - cept through me the Son.

Text: Based on John 14:1-7; vers. George van Popta, 2019
 Tune: Alexander R. Rienagle (1799-1877)

CM
 ST. PETER

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

Short Report of Classis Niagara March 11, 2020

Rev. John VanWoudenberg, minister of the convening church of Dunnville, opened the meeting of the delegates in a Christian manner. He welcomed all the delegates as well as observers.

As items of memorabilia since the previous classis in September 2019, he noted that Rev. Cody Swaving was ordained as minister of the Word in Smithville after sustaining his peremptory examination at the previous classis, that Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer had accepted a call to the Canadian Reformed Church at Ancaster, and that Rev. Rolf DenHollander had accepted a call to the Free Reformed Church of Legana, Tasmania. He also noted that this classis has on its agenda the joyful matter of an institution of another Canadian Reformed church in this area. He finally mentioned that Rev. Rodney Vermeulen could not be at this classis since his father-in-law in Australia was called home to the Lord.

Noting the suggestion of the previous classis as well as noting how Rev. Dick Wynia was away on an Edu Deo Mission trip, the meeting of the delegates chose Rev. Clarence Bouwman as chairman, Rev. Rolf DenHollander as clerk, and Rev. John VanWoudenberg as vice-chairman.

When the chairman took his position, he first mentioned that Professor Jakob Geertsema, who recently resided in our area, has moved to Toronto and continues to struggle with his health. He also specially welcomed Rev. Jonathan Hunt and Elder Jonathan Bergmann from the PCA in Armor, New York, which has contact with the Spring Creek Canadian Reformed Church.

After the agenda was adopted, the classis subscription form was read by the chairman and signed by Rev. Cody Swaving.

The chairman then asked each of the churches if the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued, and if the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured. Each church

answered in the affirmative. No church needed the advice of Classis for proceeding with discipline.

Classis adopted a proposal to amend the regulations with respect to some matters of examination of students and some other housekeeping matters.


With gratitude Classis also gave concurring advice (C.O. 40) to a proposal to establish a new church in South Niagara. The Lord willing this institution will take place in May 2020.

Given the call from the Canadian Reformed Church of Ancaster, and given that the documentation was all in order, Classis honourably released Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer from his duties in Classis Niagara as of August 16, 2020. The chairman spoke appropriate words of appreciation for all the work he did in this area. Upon the request of Spring Creek, Rev. Dick Wynia was appointed as its counsellor effective August 16, 2020.

Church visitation reports were received regarding the churches of Attercliffe, Dunnville, Grassie, Lincoln, Smithville, and Tintern.

Classis appointed the church of Grassie as the convening church for the next classis to be held on June 17, 2020 @ 9:00 AM (alternate September 16, 2020 @ 9:00 AM).

After personal question period, Classis gave the observers from the Armor PCA an opportunity to speak. They expressed appreciation for the contact that it has with Spring Creek Canadian Reformed Church and thereby also with Classis Niagara. They requested further prayer for their church and federation.

After the Acts were adopted and the short report was approved, and after closing devotions, Classis was closed. 

John VanWoudenberg, *clerk e.t.*

