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Volume 36, #13, JUNE 15, 2018
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“Deliver Us from Evil”

We Need His Help; We Can't Help Ourselves

by GERRY WISZ

“DELIVER US FROM EVIL” IS A CONTINUATION OR the flip side of “Lead us not into temptation.” It’s a not-this-but-that request. Temptation, remember, can mean trial here, but it can also mean a flirtatious entry, even if only a toe-dipping, into a portal that leads to the foot, the leg, and before we know it, going where we know we shouldn’t have. We ask God to help us stay away from this witch’s mirror, as we also ask God, on the flip side, to actively intervene in removing us from the vicinity of its power and influence.

Insofar as temptation here also means trial, we are asking God to deliver us, to protect us, from evil, the kind that would break us, whether from calamity, sickness, or as David asks, from the violence of men. And yet, calamity, sickness and violence occur anyway, even if we ask for this protection. Why is that? Our asking to be delivered from evil in this case, which is also explained in other parts of Scripture, notably 1 Cor. 10, is about asking God to prevent trials under which we’d buckle.

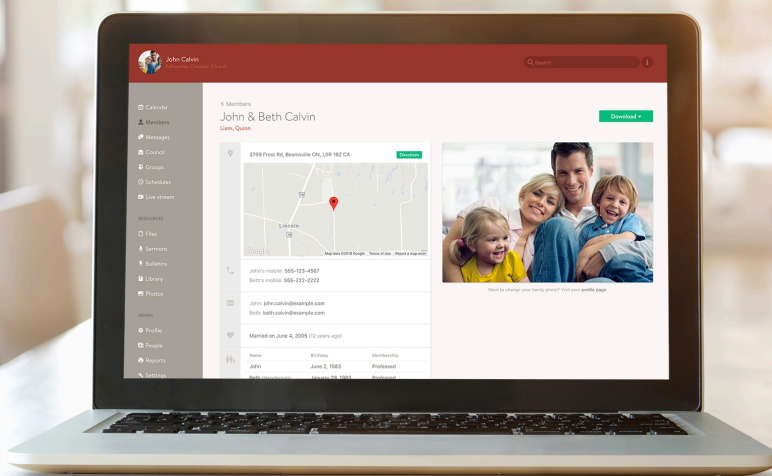
David, it seemed, had insurmountable trials. He was rejected by Israel’s king, and thus also by the people who mattered. He was targeted for extermination, and for years lived entirely on the run. Why didn’t God deliver him from evil? Well, He did – time and again – until at the right time David was prepared to ascend Israel’s throne, and also at the right time when God’s judgment was ripened for the previous kingship to expire. God knew that these trials, though seemingly insurmountable, were not the kind under which David would buckle.

THE OTHER KIND

Entry into the kind of temptation that’s not a trial, but a flirtation with sin, is not directly God’s doing, but ours, as James makes clear (Jas. 1:13-15). But the deliverance from evil is God’s doing, which is why we are to ask Him for it. We are not self-deliverers; we can’t save ourselves from sin and its most dire consequence, death. It’s only in cartoons that one sees a character lift himself up by his own collar to pull himself out of a pit or an

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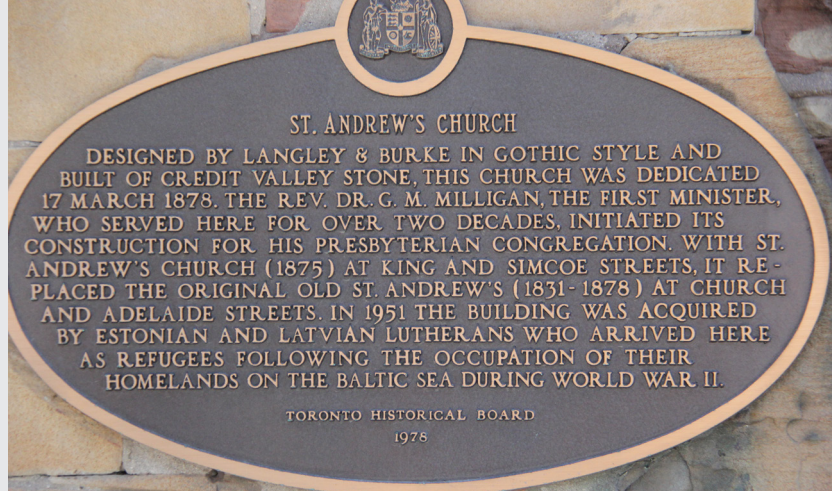
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PHOTO ABOVE:

Readers are invited to submit photos for this public square
to jvandyk@aol.com.



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(Photo Credit: Ruth Van Dyk)

Protecting the vulnerable; recognizing predators; time well spent

EVEN AS WE ALREADY HEAD INTO SUMMER, A taste of spring still plays in my mind.

A sure sign of the season in our neck of the woods is the construction of bird nests in the trees and bushes.

The removal of a large chestnut tree next to our driveway last autumn meant that birds who had used its tall branches as a safe haven for their springtime nests had to find a new place to raise their young.

Consequently our family witnessed up close the birth of some baby robins, just outside our front door. (See picture above.) A small tree by the front steps became home to a robin's nest, and four blue eggs were waiting to hatch. Problem with the location was its distance or lack thereof from the ground. Unlike the large chestnut tree, this location was vulnerable. Still both mother and father robin did their best, for days on end taking turns squatting on the eggs, keeping them warm until the time was right for the babies to arrive. At least three of the four eggs, perhaps all four, hatched, and tiny heads popped up out of the nest awaiting food, which both parents supplied. One day recently our daughter made her daily inspection of the nest as the tree with new growth and yellow flowers made it less and less visible. What she found was a destroyed nest with some feathers lying under the tree. Mother and father robin were nowhere in sight.

It was a sad end to so much careful nurturing and safeguarding, first the eggs, and then the chicks. Their time in this life was short and it ended without the ability to protect themselves by being able to fly away when

danger was near. So much for life and death in the animal kingdom.

So much more is expected of us humans, made in God's image, with a moral compass and conscience that recognizes the need to protect the vulnerable. Yet for convenience, and other reasons, the protection of the vulnerable in our society has been removed, as both mother and government have forfeited their God-given roles to protect and defend life, from beginning to end.

OUR COVER PHOTO REPRESENTS A SIGHT MANY of us might see regularly in our homes if we have children who play video games. The player is so entranced by the action on the screen that he is oblivious to all else. As the title of Neal Postman's popular book states so well, we are "Amusing Ourselves to Death." The question is, what is all this sensory stimulation doing to our brains and hearts, particularly when so many of these games glorify violence? Is there a correlation between the mass shootings at schools by young people in America and the hours and hours of gaming kids spend their time on with little to no censorship or restraint? Norm Bomer shares his thoughts on page 24.

From games to real life, a Protestant pastor in Poland is featured on page 6. Read how he spends his time in Kingdom service, "buzzing about" for the glory of God both in Church and in Kingdom work.

May our homes and families safeguard our children from the predators that lurk around us, recognizing together that the time we have is short. ♦



Touching a Nerve

Thank you for publishing Rev. Benjamins' article (*How Can We Reform the Reformed Community?* CR, May 25, 2018). I think this ties in well with Rev. Nick Smith's articles on idolatry in our day. This is very much related to what is going on in our churches and in our own lives. We have heard preaching that calls for us to fight against the sins in our lives, and to examine ourselves, so let's not point the finger and blame others. It is one thing to read the 10 commandments; it is another thing to see how we measure up to them with our own

lifestyles. Worldliness is very real in our churches, and in our hearts. Prosperity has made us soft. While there is so much good material published to meditate on and inspire us, maybe we need to go back to reading what was going on in the books of Samuel, Kings and Judges. People were doing what was right in their own eyes.

Thanks again and hope you get more feedback on this important subject.

RALPH SCHUURMAN
Rockton, Ontario



90 years on earth can lead to a large family tree for productive people. In the case of the editor's mother, Mary Van Dyk sitting in a chair, surrounded by her family, the tally is: seven children, 47 grandchildren and 158 great-grandchildren. Not all could make the birthday reunion in May, but most were on hand. If you have a reunion celebration photo you want to share, send it to jvandyk@aol.com.

<< continued from page 2 >>

oncoming river of lava. In real life, we know we need help, and that's where the LORD comes in.

The Bible is a history of God's deliverance of His people. Not only David, but all of Israel, was delivered again and again. Under Moses, they were delivered from bondage in Egypt under God's mighty hand. There are many incidents showing how God's people, although severely outnumbered, not only prevailed, but routed their enemies, demonstrating God's deliverance. There are incidents of severe illness, famine, starvation, where we see God extending His delivering hand. What are the LORD Jesus' miracles if not a serial reality drama of deliverances, both spiritual and physical. We shouldn't expect less from God as His people today if we pray, "Deliver us from evil."

What is this evil from which we ask that God deliver us? I already mentioned the trial under which He knows we'd buckle, but insofar as we're referring to sin, the Bible is replete with examples and even descriptions. In summary, however, we can say we're asking Him to deliver us from the world, the flesh and the devil (Eph. 2:1-3).

OUR REAL ENEMIES

The world here is not the wide world in which we live as such, but rebellion against God that's collaborative and systematized. Our challenge is always to be in the world but not of it, and so we're asking God to help us stick with Him instead of to become overcome by the world.

The flesh is not our bodies, which were created by God (and "God don't make junk!"), but the natural man or that part of us that's resistant to the Holy Spirit and rebellious against God, wanting its way instead of His. Let's not pretend it's not real or that we never feel its tug; that will only make us more susceptible. The good news is that we can become free of its dominance as we are in Christ.

Last is – you know who – the devil. He's wily, an expert deceiver, and on a mission to do as much damage as he possibly can to you and all of God's people while he still can, because his time is short. He wants to take us out, whether actually or through working on our perceptions to sour and discourage us. But greater is He Who is in you than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4). From these, oh, LORD, deliver us. ♦





Profile of a Polish Reformer

From the 21st, not the 16th Century

By GERRY WISZ

Pastor Pawel Bartosik was busy in the weeks leading up to Saturday, May 26, the day the Polish city of Gdansk was scheduled to host a LGBTQ parade.

HE BROUGHT A PUBLIC LECTURE: “Equality According to LGBTQ vs. Equality According to the Bible” and wrote and posted on his blog “12 Reasons Why” people shouldn’t attend the event, quoting Scripture for good measure. He also wrote a letter to the mayor of Gdansk and posted it on his Facebook page. “He replied he received it,” the pastor said. That was about it. “He’s up for re-election and doesn’t want to upset anything, but he needs to know he upsets many if he stands for this.”

An estimated 5,000 people attended the parade, with people gathering for the event days before,

“not only from Gdansk, but from around Poland, and from Europe, mainly Germany,” Bartosik said. On the other side of the country, the Lutheran church in Krakow, the most auspicious if not largest Lutheran congregation in the nation, planned to hold a joint worship service with the LGBTQ community, but after Bartosik’s “12 Reasons” went up online, decided to down-size it to a prayer vigil.

Bartosik, pastor of the Evangelical Reformed Church (ERC) in Gdansk since 2005, is a gadfly, gentle and courteous, but nonetheless buzzing about, and often landing. His blog, website, YouTube presentations, and Facebook posts regularly have thousands of visitors a month from around the country. He’s appeared on local television and radio, and people have moved to Gdansk from other parts of Poland and Ukraine to be a part of his congregation. Pawel reminds me of my old friend Steve Schlissel: his activity and influence outstrip the size of the church he pastors by quite a few

multiples.

By far, the Internet has become the venue of choice for Bartosik, although he also remains active on the ground in this historic Baltic city with a half-million people. In addition to public lectures, he’s spoken in local high schools and middle schools, public and private, on the Reformation, its history and its doctrine. He regularly conducts street evangelism, has run Bible study coffee houses, and played with a Christian band in local pubs where he engaged the audience in worldview conversation in between songs. Reading one of his semi-annual newsletters is like reading a monthly shopping list.

ON THE MOVE

What is he doing now? “Now, we’re putting a book together with other local pastors,” he said. “This will be about what our churches believe, who we are, why we’re here.” Genevan in his outlook, he’s also organized a group of mostly local, faithful pastors to draft



a Christian declaration on public issues and basic Christian doctrine that he'll present to the mayor and city council and that, no doubt, he'll also put up online. "We have more influence with more of us, when we work together," he said.

Poland is 95% Roman Catholic, whether nominal or practicing, although evangelical Protestantism has been making inroads in the country. Bartosik said that by far the fastest growing churches are Pentecostal or independent charismatic congregations. "These are the largest, but the Lutheran Church is still big." Baptists are also numerous and growing. The two other Evangelical Reformed Churches in Poland, South of Gdansk (Wroclaw and Poznan), are pastored by former Baptist ministers. "I was one, too," Bartosik said. A faithful Presbyterian church plant has begun in Warsaw, but "it's not PCA or OPC. They're from the U.S., but I don't know the denomination."

There's a Methodist Church and an historic Reformed Church in Poland, but these are mainly liberal. "The Reformed Church has four, maybe five churches," he said. "Some pastors are more conservative than

others." The same is true for the Polish Lutheran Church, which Bartosik says is a mixed bag. "There are good men in that church, but the seminary, what they teach there....," he sighs, before noting the Krakow Lutheran church's attempted appeasement of LGBTQ activists as an example of compromise.

With only 5% of the country ostensibly interested in the Bible and what it has to say, and much of that reading it in completely different ways from how Bartosik does, working with other evangelical churches is seen as a necessity. The Evangelical Reformed Church regularly participates in an annual summer Christian conference, which brings together almost 10,000 people from different evangelical church backgrounds. Bartosik's growing popularity online has also introduced him to many believers, but also inquirers, with questions about Christian doctrine, God and government, and other topics. Christian groups from all over Poland, some considerably outside his doctrinal tradition, have asked him to speak, and he regularly works with or co-sponsors speakers from the UK or the U.S. on topics like creation and science, the family,

and aspects of the Christian worldview.

SHEPHERD & SHEEP

If you were to read one of Bartosik's newsletters, however, you'd find that the enthusiastic Reformer is also a caring pastor, with specific updates on congregants, prayer requests, and the latest news on how families are faring and what they're doing. Wiktoria and Damian from Ukraine, apparently inspired by their pastor's Internet prowess, have started a blog, "Young and Reformed," aimed at millennials. There are ERC family camps and Christian Scout outings, music recitals, and the church's Friday night gatherings in addition to Sunday worship. Four families take turns sponsoring a Friday night dinner, Psalm or hymn sing with musical accompaniment by congregants, and a study and prayer time. On the docket these days every Friday is the Belgic Confession. The church is small, with a little over two dozen people (the churches in Wroclaw and Poznan are only slightly larger) but gets regular visitors.

Jola, Bartosik's wife, teaches English and one day, asking her young adult students what they like to do



in their spare time, was surprised to hear several of them say, “Read the Bible.” Twelve of Jola’s students had moved to Gdansk from an outlying small town, where they were associated with a Toronto Blessing-type charismatic church. “They left. Something happened,” he said, not elaborating. Since then several of Jola’s students have begun attending both the Friday night gatherings and Sunday worship services. Bartosik has set aside time to meet with them on several occasions to answer questions and provide spiritual guidance. “They are not ready for us – not yet. But we pray they keep coming to the church,” he said.

Prayer is stock and trade for the Evangelical Reformed Church in Gdansk, both for its own people and for the city for which Bartosik and his congregation have a vision. This is also evident in his newsletters. Another matter for prayer is a nascent publishing ministry. Bartosik has numerous works online in Polish that he’d like to expand and put into print as handy material for inquirers. But he’d like also to introduce his congregation and Gdansk, including other pastors, to other Reformed materials. On

the docket is a Polish translation of Doug Wilson’s book on apologetics, *Persuasions*, and Van Til’s short, incisive work, *Why I Believe in God*. “There are others we want to translate and publish, on apologetics, the Church, the family, and being a Christian in the public sphere,” he said. “But we have to start somewhere – with these two.”

Poland is still a relatively conservative nation, as the election of its current conservative government has shown, “though they are not conservative economically,” Bartosik says. It has among the strictest abortion laws in the European Union, permitting abortion only for the sake of the mother’s life and if the baby is severely handicapped. Homosexual marriage is outlawed as is open immigration. This has caused other EU nations to cast a jaundiced eye and even launch a propaganda campaign in Poland’s direction, accusing it of resisting the EU’s “progressive” agenda.

BAD PRESS

From time to time, media outlets like the *New York Times* or *The Economist* will take Poland to task, accusing it of xenophobia or back-

wardness. Most recently, the government wanted to dismiss Federal judges that had been previously appointed and appoint new ones. The backlash from the rest of the West has been unrelenting, so it’s been put on hold for now. “I think they should be let go,” Bartosik said, noting that the liberal judges are holdovers from the previous communist era. “If they were appointed, they could be disappointed.”

The full story about Poland’s immigration policy is rarely explained in the media. Bartosik said immigration is legal, so long as it’s sought through legal channels and the emigres agree to abide by the nation’s laws. “The issue is not immigration, but open borders,” Bartosik explained; “people just coming into the country with no barriers, no checking. The EU wants Poland to take large numbers of migrants and has the policy of any immigrant being able to move with no or little documentation from one EU country to the other. Poland said no to that.”

Gdansk is somewhat different from the rest of Poland, Bartosik says. It’s more pluralistic, with influences from Germany and



Scandinavia – a true mission field – even though it was once a Protestant stronghold. “I don’t know if they would be able to organize a LGBTQ parade in another Polish city besides Gdansk,” he said. Hence his public ministry in addition to his pastoral one. This is hardly what he’d expected to be doing as a young man. Brought up in a Roman Catholic family, he attended a Catholic university in Warsaw, where he met American missionaries under whose influence he converted to Christ.

Finishing his university studies, Bartosik attended next a Baptist seminary, also in Warsaw, and ended up in Gdansk as an assistant pastor in a Baptist church. Spiritual curiosity, a more than adequate knowledge of English and a love for words drove him to reading theology, through which he came to understand and embrace Calvinism. “I found some men, ministers and elders, I started emailing,” he said. “I had many questions.” These were about predestination, covenant, paedobaptism, the nature of the Church, to name a few. “I came to be Reformed,” he said.

NEW BEGINNING

Bartosik left the Baptist church almost 15 years ago, although he maintains warm relationships with the current pastor and the congregation. Through referral in the U.S., he found the two Evangelical Reformed churches in Wroclaw and Poznan, which at the time had just recently affiliated with the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC) and had become mission churches in Poland of that church group.

I had the pleasure of meeting Pawel Bartosik twice when he visited the U.S. The last time I saw him, some years ago, he was staying with members of a sister church in Brooklyn, NY. I picked him up for dinner with Betty, and we then dropped him off. On our way back, driving through a congested part of my New Jersey community, where I crawled from one traffic light to the next, he looked around, held out his hand and waved it at all the cars, stores, and the people moving in and out of them. “All these people,” he said. “Here is where the Kingdom should come. What are you doing, you and your church, about these people?” To this day, I remember that ques-

tion, or was it a rebuke?

There had been a Reformation in Poland. Though it got off to a good start, in the end, under the pressures of the Counter-Reformation, it turned out to be short-lived, nearly entirely truncated by the 17th-century. Protestantism wouldn’t be tolerated again in the country until the nation was partitioned among Prussia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia in the 18th-century. But that was then, and this is now. Could the little Gdansk Evangelical Reformed Church with its big online megaphone and its sister congregations be the beginnings, however humble, of a new Reformation in a land long lost to one?

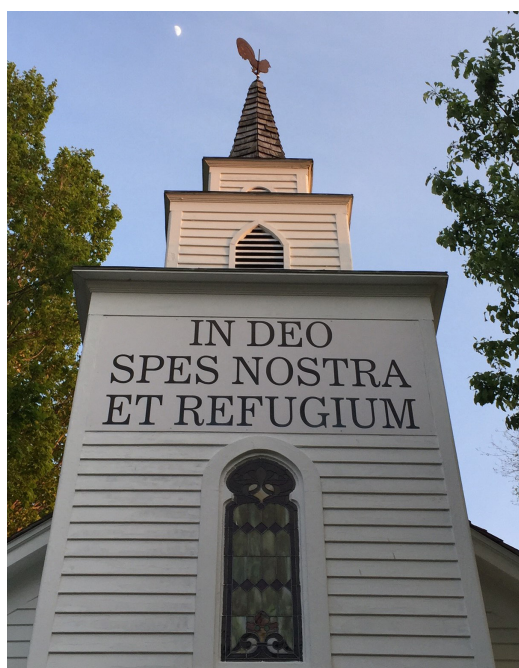
Some of the Gdansk church’s posts and other information will soon be up on an English version of its website, though it’s currently under construction: <http://gdansk.reformacja.pl/english/>. Pastor Bartosik’s semi-annual newsletter is available in English as a PDF via email to anyone who asks. Email him at Bartosik7@gmail.com. ♦



by GLENDA MATHES

A FEW DECADES AGO, organizers for the annual Tulip Time in Pella, IA, saw the value of concluding festivities with a community worship service on Sunday morning. An outdoor service was initially held on the square, with attendees sitting on the still-set-up bleachers, but changing the location to inside the Vermeer Global Pavilion in recent years was a good move, given Iowa's unpredictable weather. And that venue more easily accommodates the usual crowd of a thousand or more people.

The Latin inscription on the building says, "In God is our hope and refuge."



Rev. Doug Barnes, Covenant Reformed Church in Pella, has served on the Tulip Time Worship Committee three years and chaired it for 2018. The Committee consists of three ministers, three non-clergy people from the community, and one member of the Tulip Time Steering Committee. He said, "Together we represent seven different congregations that include churches in the URC, CRC, RCA, and ELCA. We also, in recent years, have had committee members who were Baptist and Methodist."

Finding common ground regarding worship can be difficult, and Rev. Barnes admits it is challenging to organize a service that won't unnecessarily offend someone. "In fact, it's pretty much guaranteed that some folks will be offended – or at least annoyed – by various details. But we've tried to keep the focus on the gospel and our mutual faith in Christ. As long as we keep our focus there, the service is a blessing," he said. "I find it to be a wonderful opportunity for the Christians of our community to come together on the basis of what really matters. The preceding week is hectic and stressful for many in Pella, as we welcome tens of thousands of visitors to our town. It's such a blessing to conclude that time by resting together in the Lord."

The 2018 service began with the praise team from Liberty Evangelical Free Church leading in singing "Amazing Grace," as well as "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" and "How Great Thou Art." The Pella Middle School Eighth Grade Choir, under the direction of Joe Tangen, sang Bonsa Aba, which was translated as "All that Sing Have the Right to Be Called the Children of God" and "Down by the Riverside."

Rev. Barnes gave the call to worship, offered the prayer for the day, and made some introductions. Tulip Queen Julianna Van Gorp read the sermon text, which was Ruth 4. Rev. Mark Vander Hart, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, expounded on that text under the theme "Building True Community."

He spoke about how considering the book of Ruth primarily as an example of friendship or as a love story leads to a humanistic view that focuses too much on the people. He said, "God must remain central."

After noting that one author has called the book of Ruth the "gospel of Pentecost," he highlighted important aspects of its first three chapters, and placed these events in their context during the time of the Judges (when there was no king in Israel and people did what was right in their own eyes).

He pointed out how Ruth 4:13 brings us to something of the book's high point. It illustrates three large threads woven into the storyline: law, love, and life. The Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Pentecost) wrote the law upon Ruth's heart, leading her to leave her home in order to love and serve God within the covenant family. "Individualism attacks community," he said. Boaz provided for Ruth (and Naomi) beyond the law's requirements about caring for the poor. His behavior evidenced his love for God and others. Rev. Vander Hart observed, "The Spirit gives us eyes to see the marginalized." God blessed Boaz and Ruth (and Naomi) with a son, the gift of life. Naomi, who returned home empty, is now filled. Boaz has a worthy wife, and Ruth has an honorable husband. The baby, Obed, became a father in the line of David, into which Jesus was born.

"God builds and rebuilds lives," Rev. Vander Hart concluded. He encouraged listeners to build true community, guided by God's law and driven by the Spirit, which all rests upon the work of Jesus Christ. Only with this gospel basis can we hope to build true community by loving the Lord and making disciples of all nations. "That's the gospel of Pentecost."

The Combined High School Choir sang "With a Voice of Singing" and "It Is Well with My Soul" under the direction of Tim Van Voorst (Pella Christian) and Michelle Chaplin (Pella Community).

Rev. Piet Van Waarde, Grace Fellowship (CRC), offered a prayer for the city and the world, the offertory prayer, and the benediction.

"I've received many sentiments of appreciation by folks who have attended the service and were encouraged by the reminder of how many brothers and sisters in the Lord we have in this town," Rev. Barnes said. "Surely that should encourage us to love one another and seek to build bridges with our neighbors throughout the year!" ♦

Tulip Time: A unique celebration in Pella

by GLENDA MATHES

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF Henry Peter Scholte, 800 Dutch people fled financial hardship and religious persecution to settle in Iowa in 1847. They established a town they called Pella, the City of Refuge.

In 1936, Pella began celebrating its Dutch heritage with an annual festival. The initial celebration was planned in only two weeks, on the heels of the community high school's successful operatic production, "Tulip Time in Pella."

A local carpenter crafted 125 four-foot-tall wooden tulips, which stood around the town's square, while plans were made to plant 85,000 tulip bulbs that fall. The day-long program included a Town Crier and Burgemeester, Dutch songs and psalms, and speeches, concluding with the operetta in the evening. The first Tulip Queen was Lenora Gaass, Scholte's great-granddaughter.

While the celebration grew the first few years, it was somber during World War II. Organizers dropped many elements to facilitate the purchase of war bonds. The 1945 festival took place in Ottumwa for the benefit of 2,500 Navy personnel stationed there. No queen was chosen that year or in 1946, when the festival was replaced by an auction that raised \$100,000 for people in the Netherlands. Pella's centennial year of 1947 marked a return to regular festivities.

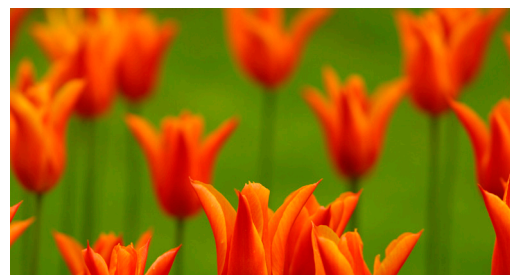
Today's Tulip Time is held over three days (Thursday-Saturday) featuring afternoon and evening parades, Dutch dancing, street scrubbing, as well as flower and quilt shows. Other attractions include the Vermeer Windmill (tallest working



windmill in North America), the Historical Village complex, the Klokkenspel with animated figures, the Molengracht canal and drawbridge, and the homes of Wyatt Earp and Scholte. Local organizations set up dozens of food stands, and vendor tents populate West Market Park. Over 100,000 tulips are planted each fall, and over 150,000 people visit Pella during the festival.

All this would not be possible without thousands of local people expending hours of effort and dedication. Many people trace their family roots to Holland or their faith roots to early churches, but many more have brought new depth and diversity into the community. People of different perspectives and backgrounds work together each year to make Pella's Tulip Time happen. ♦

Glenda and Dave Mathes at the Pella Tulip Festival.



Two PCA Congregations and their Unique Stories

by JOHN VAN DYK

Spring is the season for planting. It's also a good time to reflect on church planting, as the weather brings people out of their homes and into their yards, streets and neighbourhoods, providing opportunity for contact and conversation.

Christian Renewal connected with two churches in the PCA (Presbyterian Church in America). One began as a church plant in Toronto, and is now established. The other is near Hilton Head, South Carolina, to get a sense of developments in these locations.

The Bluffton, South Carolina Gospel Plant

PCA Pastor Ron Gleason, a seasoned pastor, has served both established churches, and lately, over the last number of years, two church plants, the first was in California, the second, his present charge in South Carolina. *Christian Renewal* sent Pastor Gleason a series of questions. His answers follow below.

What's your approach to church planting? I believe that each worship service should make use of the "ordinary means of grace" or "the Regulative Principle." By that I mean that we should read the Bible, teach the Bible, pray the Bible, sing the Bible, and preach the Bible. I also believe that the initial emphasis should be placed on spiritual growth rather than getting our knickers in a knot about numerical growth. To that end, I spend a lot of time teaching about covenant and what it means to be a covenant family.

What qualities should a church planter ideally possess? Obviously, I think having life and practical experience in the pastoral ministry is of the utmost importance. Being an experienced pastor is an advantage because a church plant is not for the faint of heart. It is also not

for those overly concerned about numbers and about people coming and going. Typically, a church plant will see some significant turnover and the eventual "core group" will not be comprised of the initial "core group." In addition, some, who have a definite "agenda" for the pastor and the plant will begin to attend. Once they discover the agenda is not being met, they will depart. Therefore, the planter needs a great deal of patience, a godly, committed wife to support him, and a mature trust in God.

How did you come to choose this particular location? The location found us. We were contemplating moving from the Left Coast to the East Coast and a group of people contacted us and inquired whether I would be willing to serve as the pastor for this plant.

What makes it ripe for church planting? That is a very good question. The key to being where we are is the need for a solid biblical church. There are numerous mega-churches in our area, but there is no ordinary means of grace congregation. For many in this exploding retirement community life is about golf, fun, church programs for the children and grandchildren, and the music. We are the only congregation with two services, that preaches expository rather than topical sermons,

that sings only hymns from the Trinity Hymnal and psalms from the Trinity Psalter. I am the only pastor that visits his members in their home, that emphasizes catechetical instruction for the youth, and that actually has the time to meet with his members. In addition, many younger families are moving to the area because Hilton Head Island, which is just across the Intercoastal Waterway, has no more room and it has become quite expensive. Younger families find Bluffton, SC more affordable and the traffic is substantially less than on the island, especially during peak seasons.

What did you start with in terms of help, when did you begin, and what kind of growth has there been thus far? I began with zero help and have progressed to no help. That is meant in a jocular vein. I did begin with no help, but I am currently working with 2-3 teaching them the essentials of church leadership. They are eager to learn and they are men of prayer, which is an enormous plus – indeed, it is indispensable. We began holding two worship services a Lord's Day about a year ago. Within a couple of months, we experienced a "Scottish Revival." For those living in Rio Linda, that means that people left. The realization that church planting entails getting your hands dirty, that there isn't a committee to do



everything that needs to get done, and that one's friends are usually not there is often incentive to lose heart and return to one's comfort zone. Following the Scottish Revival, the Lord has sent us more families. Our low point was nine members, while today a typical Sunday is around 30. Our growth from God has not been exponential, but it is now becoming increasingly steady. As the word gets out, more and more people are coming to see what we are all about. As church plants go, some stay and thrive, while others move on.

How did you first approach the work? The most important "approach" was to remain a student of the Word of God and to be a man on his knees before the Lord. 1 Timothy 4:6-10 has been a kind of paradigm for my entire ministry. In those verses, Paul explains to his young friend and fellow-Christian, Timothy, what constitutes a good servant of Christ Jesus. It is noteworthy, I think, that Paul does not speak of a great servant of Christ Jesus, but rather a good one. As he proceeds through the text Paul designates 1) good preaching/teaching (4:6), 2) training ourselves in godliness (4:7-9), & 3) toiling and striving for the living God (4:10) as indispensable elements for a good servant. That has been my approach. Approximately ten years ago I was convinced that reading through the

Bible once a year and prayer needed to be "upgraded" in my life. I began reading it through three times a year and praying more. That is how I approached this congregation.

What have you learned from your church planting experiences in California? Are you doing anything differently?

I was the founding pastor in CA and we eventually planted three more ordinary means of grace congregations from our congregation. I gathered a wealth of experience not only from being the founding pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Yorba Linda, CA. I observed how the Lord moved us from a dusty auditorium stage in a junior college, to another facility in an industrial park, and then to our church building. I learned patience and trust in God. Man will always disappoint, but Christ never will. I learned that planting takes time. I learned that fallen people living in a fallen world are messy. We are all messy and that is why we so desperately need God's grace every moment of every day. We had many members come to us from Calvary Chapel and Roman Catholic backgrounds. They had a lot of questions and being accessible for them was paramount. I also learned that no matter what you do or how you say things, some will take offense. As a pastor you will be accused of not caring, of not being

loving enough, of not preaching like you should, of not holding to the particular view of the Bible some of the members hold near and dear. I learned that people will say hurtful things to you, at times intentionally. I learned that some will form opinions about you very quickly and they will never let you get out from under those opinions. Am I doing anything differently in the current church plant? Yes and no. I am dealing with many retirees, but I do not consider that a disadvantage. It is what it is. When I began at Grace I preached only 25-30 minutes. Now I preach 30 minutes. Liturgically and otherwise, I do not feel that I need to reinvent the proverbial wheel. Every element of our liturgy is taken from the history of liturgy dating from the Patristic Era as well as from the Reformation, especially as that Reformation was led by John Calvin, Martin Bucer, Heinrich Bullinger and others. Of course, I have introduced the congregation to Dr. Herman Bavinck's works! It is gratifying to see the positive response from many as they discover this great Dutch theologian.

What kind of training is available for church planters in the PCA? There is an "assessment center" with the Mission to North America committee in the PCA. We sent our first planter to the center and were very

disappointed with the results. It was very expensive, the expectations were more “progressive” than we appreciated, and our planter came back only provisionally approved. We knew the man we designated to be our planter and we found him to be an excellent Presbyterian/Reformed brother. Therefore, we chose to have our Session train, equip, and oversee our subsequent church planters. In the course of time, my CA Presbytery voted not to require our church planters to attend the assessment center. Some did; ours did not.

In what way do church plant services need to be different from regular services in established churches? Generally speaking, they tend to be less formal. It is usually a smaller group. When I say “less formal” I do not mean “anything goes.” I began by preaching in a robe in the morning service and a coat and tie in the evening. I usually take time to explain what we are doing and why we are doing it for the prospec-



A fellowship meal with Bavinck on the wall.

tive members. Initially, having an accompanist can be difficult. In the past, our planters have used CDs to accompany the singing, while others have resorted to guitars or other instruments. There have been times when our pianist will shout something for clarification and I will smile and respond. It is the nature of the beast.

How long do you plan to continue in ministry? This is where I probably need to write, “Lol!” I don’t know. Currently, I am 73 and am in good health. I realize that could change in a heartbeat (no pun intended. Well, maybe a little one.) I love to preach and teach and I dearly love to be in the company of God’s people, especially when they are excited and enthusiastic about learning from Scripture. If the Lord will put up with me until I am 75, I will reassess, but for the present I love what I do and I am thankful that our gracious Lord allows me to be his servant. Whatever the case, I will always seek some way to serve in the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

What would Herman Bavinck say about church planting? I am fully convinced that he would fully approve! Bavinck loved God’s church and God’s people, as I explain in the

biography of him that I wrote. We have a picture of Bavinck hanging in the fellowship hall of the church and there is a photo of him in his study on my study desk. His gaze fixes on me and seems to say, “Why aren’t you reading my *Reformed Dogmatics*?” I then hold up the volume I’m reading and he nods approvingly. Seriously, Bavinck would approve of the propagation of the gospel. If he were alive, he would, no doubt, attend Bluffton Presbyterian Mission Church!

BLUFFTON PRESBYTERIAN MISSION Church meets for Sunday School for all ages at 9:30 am. Morning worship: 11:00 am; Evening worship: 5:30 pm. Women’s Bible Study with Sally Gleason leading at the Gleason home is every other Tuesday. Men’s Bible Study: Mondays at 10:00 am at The Three Stooges Restaurant (no joke). Services are at 17 Sherington Dr., Suite A, Bluffton, SC 29910. Contact Pastor Gleason at 714-318-6843. Website: www.blufftonpresbyterian.com and Facebook page: Bluffton Presbyterian Mission Church. Pastor Ron’s sermons are accessible via the church website and www.sermonaudio.com (Search for Bluffton Presbyterian Mission Church). ♦

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PCA Church in Toronto becomes a solid shoot in an urban jungle

by JOHN VAN DYK

IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, THE prolific and popular Canadian journalist and history writer, the late Pierre Berton, takes a few paragraphs to describe the “town” once known in history as “Toronto the Good.” The current thriving metropolis, arguably the engine of commerce in Canada, was once a city of churches, known for its many towering steeples at so many street corners. Toronto’s urban centre was considered to be prim and puritanical in what Berton would consider the worst way, with the sidewalks rolled up on Saturday evenings and Sunday traffic largely that of church goers. Nothing was open, and there was not much to do – except go to church. It was not an activity Berton, the author of dozens of books including *The Comfortable Pew*, would necessarily commend.

Well, we’ve come a long way, from the staid and sanitized Toronto of yesteryear to the cosmopolitan, urbane city-that-almost-never-sleeps. Many of the church buildings are still there, but a lot of them have been re-purposed, or converted, not to the cause of Christ, but to the cause of commerce. The spired brick and block buildings now house art galleries, shops, and apartment buildings. The temples of worship have become a denizen of dealers in denim and other detritus. A victory for secularism? Perhaps.

Yet in spite of the changing tide away from worship, there are still congregations in the downtown that are not ready to give up all ground to the materialists. They instead desire to bring them into the fold.

The Presbyterian Church in America has been north of the U.S. border for some time already, but it is just

now beginning to gain a foothold. Still just a handful of churches in various areas including the Golden Horseshoe – Toronto, Hamilton and St. Catharines – these locations in the cities represent an effort to reverse the trend of an otherwise shrinking faith presence in the city.

PASTOR TIM KELLER, a PCA church leader whose church planting in New York City is known far and wide, is the inspiration tutor for the work across the northern border.

Grace Toronto is a PCA congregation, relatively young in age, and the congregation reflects that youthfulness. Led by lead senior pastor Dan MacDonald, a former lawyer, former Catholic, former agnostic, the church seems to have caught on big time, with a sanctuary that fills each Sunday morning. The location is excellent – on the corner of two major streets – Carleton and Jarvis – near the old Maple Leaf Gardens (now part grocery store, part university campus sports facility) and backing onto Allan Gardens near the Cabagetown neighbourhood district. It seems an ideal location for urbanites and others from more distant locales who make the drive or ride the transit system for worship.

How the church was able to purchase the building it currently worships in, after a year or more of renovations and fund raising, is a story on its own.

Pastor MacDonald offers a brief explanation of the church’s history,



Grace Toronto.

See a plaque describing the building's history on page 3.

which goes back to 1992 and the original planting under the leadership of Stephen Beck.

“It grew, by all accounts, to around 200 people in the 90’s and then levelled off, went through some leadership struggles and began to decline a little,” MacDonald told CR via email. “When Stephen decided to leave it and raise funds to be a missionary to Germany (in the early 2000’s) the church declined more rapidly. We were asked to consider revitalization in 2004; by then I would guess it had shrunk to about 60-80.

“When we decided to come and re-plant it, Grace Toronto was about 20-25 people in the spring of 2005. We disbanded services and all formal activities, and told everyone to find their own churches.

“So in summer 2005, after raising support from a home church in Florida, we came back to Toronto and started with one couple, and maybe a few singles. We started small groups, prayer meetings,



The re-furbished interior.

(Photo from Grace Toronto web site.)

evangelistic activities, and then a Christmas service. In the spring of 2006, just before Easter, we started services with 22 people in attendance.

"In fall of 2006, with about 40 people, by a series of miracles, we bought a building. The owner of the building donated \$775,000 to the purchase of his own building, and became our mortgage company as well. It turned out he was a Christian, whom we had never met," MacDonald explained.

"The building was renovated and opened in May 2007. It seated 140. By October we had 60, by the following October we started two services. By 2010 we had outgrown it and were at Jarvis Collegiate (an area high school). We kept growing, moved to Rosedale School of the Arts (2011), sent a planter to plant in Ottawa (Resurrection Ottawa) in 2013, had another intern plant in Toronto (Trinity Grace Toronto) in 2014, and in 2015, with about 440 adults, we started a second site and we purchased our present building."

Grace Toronto member Justin De-Haan fills in some additional details including how an increase in rent for public school buildings forced the church to look elsewhere for

their own worship location.

"The incredible increases that the TDSB (Toronto District School Board) had levied across the entire city for many organizations who rented school facilities," which he said was later readjusted, "gave us the courage to push forward in pursuit of a different home." Other important steps followed in succession, which De Haan listed in order.

"The appreciation in value of our 'original building' which became our church offices at the time when we worshiped in schools, and was rented out to other start-up congregations for their Sunday services.

"The existing congregations of 383 Jarvis Street (Old St. Andrews) which were Latvian and Estonian Lutheran congregations in whom God moved and gave incredible patience as we waited for a purchaser of our original building and financing.

"The tremendous spiritual growth our congregation went through as we all spent a number of weeks together studying the book of Nehemiah. Specifically we focused on the re-building of the wall, including the various trials that Israel experienced during that process, the attacks from outside the community, from within, and ultimately the

dedication and people's commitment to shining God's light in Jerusalem and beyond – this was the backdrop we put our thoughts against when praying and considering what lay ahead in terms of raising funds towards the building, and what 'owning' the building was ultimately about – spreading the Gospel joy.

"An exhaustive down to the wire selling process landed us with a starting point, along with some amazing bridge financing from a Mennonite organization called C2C network www.c2cnetwork.ca."

Pastor MacDonald adds, "We found the church we felt called to own in 2007 and confirmed again in 2012; built a relationship with the existing owners over several years, and then asked them to consider selling. They took a year to decide, then we took a year to sell our original building so we could buy it. The whole process took at least four years from starting the relationship to inhabiting the renovated building.

Given the condition of the old church building there was work to do. Said MacDonald, "Retooling: all it takes is vision and money! We had to almost gut it to get it up to code and to make it usable

for a modern context. We spent \$5 million in renovating it. It took two years. We had an amazing team running it. All I had to do, really, was sweat the fund-raising. Which I did, considerably,” he added with a smile. “The rest of the team aged a little...” The dedication service for the congregation’s new, old home was in November of 2017.

For Justin and his wife Doralee, both working downtown, the building is a definite God-send.

Said Justin, “In entering this building faithfully on Sunday, and throughout the week, God has provided us, like Jerusalem, a city on a hill. We are at an intersection of multiple communities in Toronto – Arts, university students, social/community/group housing, proximity to the gay community downtown, even the taxi drivers that pick us up from Bible study ask about it from time to time.



Senior Pastor Dan MacDonald

“And now, we continue to see a steady stream of weekly visitors – churchied, unchurched, skeptics – on Sunday who drop in, simply because they saw the church that has become visible through change and restoration, with people going in and out.”

MACDONALD WASTES NO WORDS in explaining his approach to ministry in Toronto: “We rip off everything Redeemer Presbyterian (in Manhattan) did in NYC and

contextualize it to Toronto.” See Tim Keller’s book, *Center Church*, for more detail.

Judging by the attendance on a recent Sunday in late winter/early Spring, the formula appears to work. The old church building at a busy Toronto intersection, newly renovated, appears filled, both ground floor seating and large wrap-around balcony. As the service progresses, people continue to come in as ushers scramble for pew space. The building holds 720 for worship. In terms of accommodating even more, MacDonald points to multiple services as a way to satisfy additional growth.

Of course there are challenges to ministry in an urban setting, and while MacDonald says there are too many to list, he does offer a few:

- transience; everyone is here for a time. Average 3-6 years. Therefore, leadership development, relational evangelism, etc., is harder and more condensed. Best get at it ASAP.
- intense secularity; very intimidating for congregants to witness, very strange for skeptics to even be interested. It’s a day of spiritual indifference and contempt.
- magnified cultural pressure to conform: 50%-75% higher than suburbs IMO. Discipleship is THE issue of our time.
- money: everything costs massive dollars.
- Time: nobody has any. So models of ministry are very staff-dependent. And paying staff properly in a global city is costly.

The church has three pastors and a staff of 12 others.

“Toronto,” he explains, “is its own eco-system culturally, and is utterly unlike the rest of Canada – the caricatures apply. So, importing leaders/pastors from other contexts is much harder than I expected.”

Asians represent the majority of Christians in Toronto, and particularly in the downtown core, Mac-

Donald said, so it was not surprising to see so many young adult Asians worshipping at Grace. Two I met included a newly coined medical doctor, a young woman who had plans to move to northern Canada to serve the medical needs of indigenous people, and a computer programmer, both in their upper 20s.

Picking up on the need to train leadership quickly, the church has a wealth of teaching programs, either after the morning service, which includes lunch – an added incentive to stick around – or during the week nights, along with opportunities for fellowship through pick-up volleyball, arts outings or discussion groups at a local pub.

Along with Dan MacDonald, the church’s other pastors are Kiernan Stringer and Lyndon Jost.

During my visit on a Sunday morning I talked with some who once attended either CRC or URC congregations. They love the church and the preaching and were willing to drive further than they might ordinarily, to get there each Sunday.

What would the late Pierre Berton think of Grace Toronto? Would there be enough of a spark to lighten his journalistic cynicism? That of course would take a work of the Holy Spirit. Too late for that, but not for others who walk the streets and see the flurry of activity in a revitalized church building, first dedicated in 1878.

Justin De Haan sees the sequence of events that have resulted in possession of this unique location through the eyes of faith: “This is God’s story – as He wrote it in the hearts, minds and lives of our congregation in Toronto.”

May this church and many others be for the glory of God; for the renewal of hearts; for the reformation of a neighbourhood, a community, a city, and as Acts 1 records, “to the ends of the earth.” ♦

URC Church plant in Waterdown closes

by JOHN VAN DYK

LIVING HOPE, ONE OF TWO church plants, born out of Living Water URC in Brantford, Ontario, is no longer an entity. The mother church made the decision to end the church plant experiment in the community of Waterdown, near Burlington, Ontario. The final service for the Living Hope group was June 3, 2018.

The decision to end the church plant in Waterdown came from the mother church consistory. The church plant group was informed a few weeks ago via a letter from the consistory of Living Water. The mother church is pastored by Rev. Greg Bylsma. Living Hope in Waterdown was under the pastorship of Rev. Daniel Ventura, called by Living Water to serve the Waterdown

church plant. Rev. Ventura will take up duties as a second pastor for Living Water, in the community of Brantford. A second church plant or daughter church will continue to worship, also in the community of Brantford. The daughter church in Brantford is called Redeeming Grace. The church is currently looking for its first pastor.

The Waterdown church plant launched its first service on September 14, 2014. Planning had already begun a year earlier when several families out of Living Water came together to study Scripture and talk about the possibility of Living Hope.

According to Pastor Daniel Ventura, “Living Water particularly found it unsustainable for Living Hope to be a Reformed presence in the Waterdown community given the size of the congregation and the

situations of many families having to travel a long distance to church. This does not allow for the kind of witness in the Waterdown community which was the original vision of the church’s work.” Another reason was “the growing awareness of other vibrant and faithful NAPARC churches in the Waterdown area, especially Canadian Reformed churches, which made it clear that the gospel would not leave Waterdown if Living Hope closed.”

Rev. Ventura’s last sermon for the church plant was on Matthew 16:13-20 titled, “I Will Build My Church.” He explained, “We will think about how Christ has built us up in the years past, and in his promise to continue to build his church in the days ahead.”

Fourteen families were members of the church plant. ♦

Freire honored by Acton Institute

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., May 23, 2018—A former writer for *Christian Renewal* will be receiving an award from the Acton Institute. Lucas G. Freire will receive the 2018 Novak

Award for outstanding research into the fields of philosophy, religion and economics in the ancient Near East.

Freire is an assistant professor at Mackenzie Presbyterian University in São Paulo, Brazil, and a fellow at the university’s new Center for Economic Freedom. He is also a postdoctoral fellow at North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa. He received his PhD in politics from the University of Exeter. Previously, he also served as a research associate with the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics in Cambridge, UK. Professor Freire has commented on political and economic issues drawing on Christian thinking in the Reformed



tradition. He has published on political theory and philosophy in journals such as *Philosophia Reformata* and *Acta Academica*. His current research focuses on the connection between religion, politics and economics in the ancient Near East and the biblical world. He lives in São Paulo with his wife and two children.

The Novak Award includes a \$15,000 cash prize. The Acton Institute is in Grand Rapids, MI. ♦

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Ezra Institute Opens New Home and Centre for Reformational Culture

by MICHAEL ZWIEP

MODELLED AFTER L'ABRI, THE Swiss theological retreat centre of Dr. Francis and Edith Schaeffer, the Toronto-based Ezra Institute for Contemporary Christianity hosted an open house, Saturday, May 26, of a new ministry campus on the Niagara Escarpment in Grimsby, Ontario.

Housed on a Southern-style 23.5 acre country estate in the heart of wine country, with vistas of Lake Ontario and the Toronto skyline, the Centre for Reformational Culture is a bucolic, multi-use facility designed to provide emerging leaders and visiting scholars with a picturesque environment to deepen their knowledge of a Reformational worldview approach to faith and life.

Violinists provided musical accompaniment as guests assembled in the lecture theatre and concert hall annex of the new campus. Randall Currie, Chair of the Board of the Ezra Institute, welcomed visitors and introduced key members of the ministry team, including apologist and author, Dr. Joseph Boot, founder of the Ezra Institute and founding Pastor of Westminster Chapel in Toronto, Steven Martins, Director of Ministry Development and Advancement at the Ezra Institute; Ryan Eras, Director of Content and Publishing; administrative support, Anita Benedict, and board member, Suzie Van Seters.

The board chair highlighted a number of features of the facility, in-

cluding the 16,000 square foot main house of the former Shosholozza Country Estate, with a 10,000 volume wood-panelled library, student accommodations and classrooms; garden terraces, tennis courts, campground, forested trails, lecture theatre and concert hall annex with fully-equipped kitchen.

Dr. Boot documented the vision and mission of the Ezra Institute and Centre for Reformational Culture. Established in 2009, the Ezra Institute is a confessional, evangelical, Christian organization engaged in a comprehensive vision to encourage and support a Reformational worldview approach to Kingdom citizenship to inspire and promote the reformation of culture and Lordship of Christ over all things.

Acknowledging the support of local entrepreneur and publisher, John Hultink, Dr. Boot stressed the need for a deepening understanding of the redirecting power, restorative nature, comprehensive scope and formative character of the Gospel.

"Through a distinctly Christian philosophy, cultural apologetics, writing, research, and Biblical world view teaching, we are working to bring all human thought and action under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and his Word, reforming a comprehensive faith that applies to all of life, recovering and exploring the scriptural framework of a Christian mind and social order," Dr. Boot explained.

"Culture is properly understood

as the public manifestation of the worship of a people. As religion externalized it is the concrete out-working of what any society believes is the ultimate origin, purpose and meaning of life."

In the context of growing moral relativism and the decay of Western culture, Dr. Boot called for a reformation of public life, rooted in the proclamation and witness of the Kingdom of Christ. He stressed the need to reach a new generation with the Gospel mandate of spiritual and cultural renewal.

While the Ezra Institute has been actively engaged in promoting a Reformational worldview online and in print through the journal, *Jubilee*, as well as book publishing enterprises of Ezra Press and Paideia Press and a speaking ministry of the senior fellows of the institute, Dr. Boot noted how a strategically located teaching campus would enable the institute to engage emerging leaders and visiting scholars in an intimate setting, providing intensive training in Christian apologetics and Reformational worldview through residential and short term programs. Dr. Boot highlighted a number of planned programs, including regularly scheduled training academies, graduate courses, seminars, teaching and lecture series and spiritual retreats.

"The Centre for Reformational Culture will serve as the ministry

<< continued on page 20 >>



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Mr. John Hultink and Dr. Joe Boot.

home of all the activities and programs of the Ezra Institute,” Dr. Boot noted, stressing the need for a prophetic witness of the new wine of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in a parched cultural landscape.

Guests were asked to support the vision, mission and ministry of the new campus by promoting the work of the centre, volunteering in the grounds maintenance and physical improvements of the new campus, and via prayer and financial support.

Dr. Boot concluded by citing 16th-century reformer, John Calvin: “And let us not despair at the slightness of our success; for even though attainment may not correspond to desire, when today outstrips yesterday the effort is not lost.”

The centre is scheduled to host a leadership roundtable discussion on worldview and sexuality, Wednesday, June 13, featuring theologian and author, Dr. Peter Jones, Executive Director of truthXchange. Following the roundtable, the centre plans to host the inaugural address of the Escarpment Lecture Series, Friday, June 15, featuring a keynote address by Dr. Peter Jones addressing the theme, “Carl Jung, Psychology and Jordan Peterson.”

Details of events and programs at the Centre can be found on the website: www.ezrainstitute.ca. ♦



Joy comes in the morning

by MARIAN VAN TIL

IT WAS A LONG WINTER; QUITE LITERALLY. THE cold, snow and gray skies refused to retreat and usurped our spring. Winter seemed especially long to me in other ways as well, as I was ill more often than not during those months. But.... With God, after adversity, there is always “but....” He doesn’t leave us alone, or in unending despair. And as the Apostle Paul reassures us, nothing – “not death, nor life, nor angels, nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation” – will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38-39).

So – but! – that interminable winter is now past, and in fact we’re on the cusp of what is shaping up as a wonderful summer. God graciously answered my own ongoing prayers for health, and the many prayers on my behalf. I’m feeling restored, renewed. This helps: as I write, the sun is brilliantly shining, there’s a pleasant breeze: the leaves on the trees all around are undulating and our neighbor’s American flag is fluttering. (I envision it happily fluttering.) Through the open windows next to me I hear various birds chirping and calling. “Joy comes in the morning.” That phrase has been frequently coming to mind over the last few weeks and seems wonderfully apt.

The phrase has been used in the titles of novels, songs, sermons, films, Bible studies and poetry, but it originated in Psalm 30 (some translations say, “Joy comes with the morning”). Psalm 30 is a psalm of David, a song for the dedication of the temple, its biblical introduction tells us. David exalts the LORD for lifting him “out of the depths,” for healing him, for bringing him up from the grave and turning his mourning into dancing. So he urges Israel – “you saints of his,” meaning us too – to “praise his holy name.” Why? “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but joy comes in [with] the morning” (v.4-5).

REJOYCE!

That makes me consider the nature of joy. It’s a truism that joy is not mere happiness, or even elation. It is not a feeling that can flit away as circumstances change. Instead, it is fundamental to our being as Christians. In the Old Testament, joy is often associated with true worship of the true God. In the New Testament we learn that joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, one of the fruits of the Spirit. Paul speaks of it often, and the verb that grows out of it: “Rejoice!” It’s interesting, perhaps even

helpful, to note that the old English spelling of “rejoice” – now sadly obsolete! – was “rejoyce.” That makes as clear as can be the relation between the state of joy and the act of rejoicing which comes out of that state.

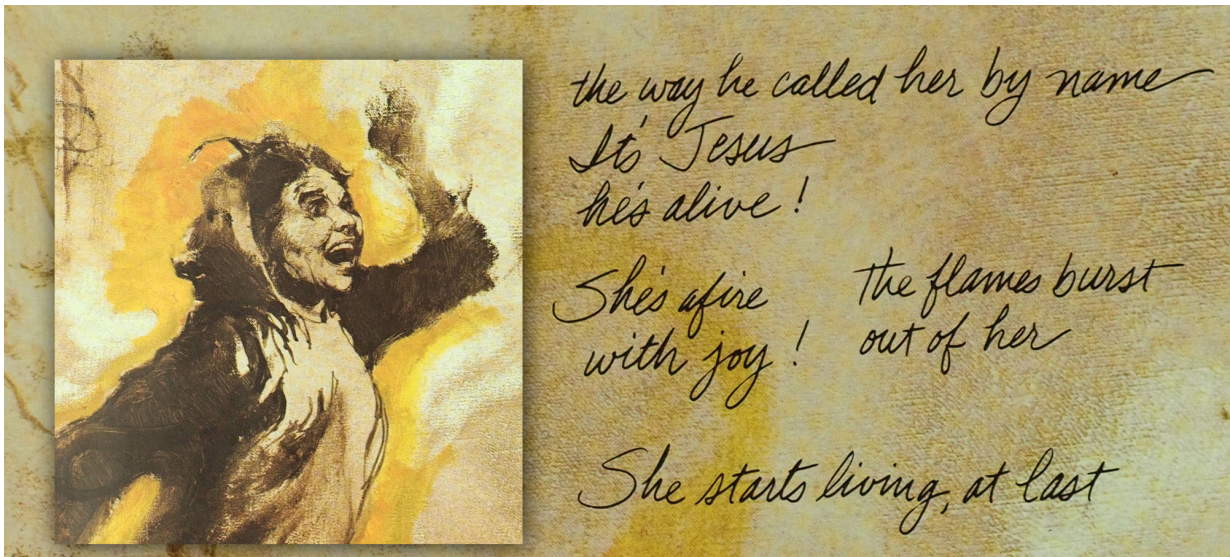
I started by talking about the long winter, then the current cheer-inducing weather. Good weather – likewise a host of other good things God gives us – is indeed pleasant, and may make us more aware of our fundamental joy. But our joy isn’t determined by such things, nor by any changing circumstances or situations. Picnic and gardening weather is fleeting; our favorite seasons pass; even our entire climate may change over time (whether we cause it or not).

Paul makes clear that, whatever our circumstances, rejoicing is not optional. The verb “rejoice” is imperative: it connotes a necessity; it’s an entreaty that cannot be ignored, an exhortation, even a command. A command to rejoice? Has that ever struck you as odd? Paul

contentment regardless of what is happening, was also written to the Philippians, and comes just seven verses after the exhortation to rejoice.) When we have learned that joyous contentment, we will be able also, as Paul tells the Roman Christians (Rom. 12:11, 14) to “be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” And we will be enabled to “rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn,” knowing that joy comes in the morning!

*I worship you, O LORD, for you have raised me up;
I cried to you for help, and you restored my life.
You brought me back from death and saved me from the grave.*

*Sing praises to the LORD, all those who know his name;
for while his wrath is brief, his favor knows no end.
Though tears flow for a night, the morning brings new joy.*



Dutch artist Rien Poortvliet did a brilliant job in this simple drawing of capturing resurrection joy as Mary runs to tell the disciples that the Lord is risen.

tells the Philippian Christians to rejoice, then repeats the exhortation for good measure: “Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, ‘Rejoice!’” (4:4). Perhaps Paul’s imperative – let’s call it a command – would be strange if joy and happiness were synonymous. But as I already noted, they are not. One cannot “turn on” happiness or elated high spirits. But when we have confessed Christ as Savior and Lord and our hearts – the core of our being – know the joy that Christ and his Spirit imbue us with, then in good times and bad, in festivities or tragedies, we can call up that joy. It’s already deep within us; calling it up consciously brings it to mind so that it specifically affects our outlook and behavior. Like Paul, we can then also learn to say – and to rejoice while saying it: “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.” (It’s not surprising that that conclusion of Paul’s, knowing

*I said, “I am so strong, I never shall be moved”;
but you, LORD, shook my life – my heart was in distress.
I cried out for your help and pleaded for your grace.*

*“What good am I when dead, while lying in the grave?
Can dust recount your love, the grave proclaim your praise?
O hear me, gracious LORD, in mercy be my aid!”*

*My mourning you have turned to dancing and to joy;
my sadness you dispelled as gladness filled my soul.
And so I’ll sing your praise, my God, through all my days.*

Psalm 30: James Seddon, v. 1-3, 5; Calvin Seerveld, v. 4.



Prisoners as an Unreached People Group

by NATHAN BRUMMEL

THE ISOLATION OF CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS has implications for the mission of the church. The community of people behind bars is a separate community. Inmates are an unreached people group that need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

We need to reach the poor, foolish, and despised of this earth, and that would definitely include those behind bars. They are poor – having only enough possessions to fit in a small box. They are the foolish of this world – many have dropped out of inner city public schools. They are the despised of this world – viewed as subhuman felons for whom the door should be locked and the key thrown away. And those who commit sex crimes are considered the lowest of the low. Christians have a calling to show mercy to men and women who are suffering in the misery of incarceration: we can tell them about our only comfort in life and in death. Even though inmates are sometimes treated as subhuman, they are still made in the image of God in the wider sense.

There are also people behind bars who are God's prisoners – they are born again – our brothers and sisters. They need encouragement and support. They desire fellowship. They yearn for visits. They wish that they could be members of a church on the outside. They desire to show spiritual leadership.

Since prison communities have their own unique cultures that are shaped by their residents, Christians should desire that these communities would also be shaped by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ANGOLA'S EXAMPLE

Gangs once controlled Angola Prison, the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Today gang leaders are now Christian pastors, elders, and deacons. Angola Prison is an alternate community where more than 5,500 men live out life sentences. The prison is the size of Manhattan Island. The prison culture is now shaped by seminary graduates who are leaders within self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-theologizing churches. Inmate pastors have a good reputation within this enclosed society. They are recognized as men who can speak the Word of God with integrity. Graduates are also leaders in prison industries and in educational programs where first-time offenders are mentored. The vast change within the prison culture makes it possible for first-time offenders to live in a maximum-security prison and be taught how to live godly lives by men serving

life sentences.

In Angola Prison, the Christian inmates have taken ownership of their community. They want it to be the best kind of community that it can be behind bars. The support of the warden for Christian activities and the residents' involvement in them shapes the life and mores of the institution. There is the possibility of Christians in prison communities forming and creating a gospel-shaped community of faith, love, and hope.

BIBLE COLLEGES ON THE INSIDE

One approach to meeting the challenge of evangelizing prisoners in correctional institutions in the United States is the development of Bible colleges behind bars. This began in Angola Prison in Louisiana. The goal is to empower Christian prisoners to evangelize their peers. Just as missionaries in the 19th century recognized that the Chinese could best evangelize China, Indians could best evangelize India, and Africans could best evangelize Africa, the New Orleans Baptist Seminary recognized that the prisoners themselves could best evangelize their fellow prisoners.

While warden of Angola Prison, Burl Cain used the language of moral rehabilitation to talk about the change that was needed in prisoners. In pungent language, Cain stated that men who are morally rehabilitated do not kill, steal, lie, or rape. Departments of Corrections are recognizing how faith-based programs play a key role in moral rehabilitation. I prefer the language of moral transformation. "Rehabilitation" has Pelagian connotations about people having naturally good natures that merely need to be rehabilitated. The reality is that we are all conceived and born in sin. By nature, we as sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, are slaves to sin. Moral transformation is needed; to be remade as new creatures in Jesus Christ.

Christians believe that God sanctifies His people through the truth. Jesus prayed in His high priestly prayer, recorded in John 17:17: "Sanctify them by Your





truth. Your word is truth.” God uses theological education, the teaching of the truth, to effect moral transformation in students. The goal of the Bible college or seminary in Angola was not just to produce smart students, but graduates who are transformed by the grace of God.

REVOLUTION FOR GOOD

A revolution in prison ministry within the last 20 years is the formation of evangelical Christian seminaries behind bars. It started at Angola Prison when the state of Louisiana cut off funding for the inmates wanting to take college courses. The New Orleans Baptist Seminary volunteered to open a campus at the prison. Over 200 men have graduated from the seminary and have had an impact within the prison and beyond, to other prisons in the state.

Dr. Byron Johnson, professor at Baylor University and the author of *More God, Less Crime*, has begun research on Angola Prison. He documents the effect of faith-based programs on recidivism rates in New York jails.

Another campus recently began at an Atlanta prison. The Southwestern Baptist Seminary started a campus at Darrington Prison in Texas. Prison Fellowship has begun the TUMI Program (The Urban Ministry Institute of World Impact) at the prison in Muskegon, Michigan as well as in multiple locations in California, including the L.A. County Jail. This program uses 16 modules to move men from being prisoners to being pastors in prison.

Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary is the first Reformed seminary to organize behind bars. Classes began in the spring of 2012. I was the first member of the faculty. This Bible college provides a theological education to equip Christian men to be godly husbands, fathers, members of their churches, and men who seek first the

kingdom of God in their vocation and communities. Men are being prepared to deliver Sunday morning chapel messages, teach Sunday School, be peer educators, and lead Bible studies. The students and graduates are mentoring other prisoners on how to be godly dads. Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary has campuses or study centers within the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City, Indiana, the Westville Correctional Center in Westville, Indiana, the Rockville Women’s Prison in Rockville, Indiana, the Danville Correctional Center in Danville, Illinois, and the Stateville Prison in Joliet, Illinois.

Both Calvin College and Calvin Seminary have begun a program in a state prison in Ionia, Michigan. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School is launching a Bible College in Wisconsin. And it all started with Angola. ♦



Redemption
Prison Ministry

Letters from Prison

Hi to everyone at RPM and my instructor!

So I have moved to a minimum security "Camp" here in Ontario. Thank the Lord it is almost like being free! No bars or concrete or steel. No lockdowns or even locked in your room at night. I thank the Lord for this blessing. It was almost a little overwhelming at first here, with so much freedom but God blessed me with an awesome Christian brother here.

I ask for prayers that my family will give their lives to the Lord and for strength for me in all the loss I am experiencing in my life. I need a double portion of blessing of the Holy Spirit!

God bless you bro!
Matt



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Games People Play

by NORM BOMER

Those of you who have read my column in the past know just how level-headed I am. We don't need to go into the details of what you know. That level-headedness has again been tested in my hearing of a particular AM radio advertisement every time I tune in for other things. The ad is itself so tuned in with contemporary North American culture that it is at a new level of outrageous.

I AM REFERRING TO A VERY RECENT PROMOTIONAL campaign for a video gaming site called Iplay. I will give you a sickening bit of description in a bit. But let's first check a few reminders of the horrid video gaming culture that has developed over the past 20+ years. If you have had children or grandchildren playing such games, you know to what I'm referring. Which means every one of you knows.

The most successful video games for both kids and adults have been the violent ones, the ones with themes of battles, shoot-'em-ups, bloody killing sprees. We've had to wipe lots of blood from our TV screens. Commentaries on recent school murder sprees usually make reference to the influence that such video games had on the killers.

Here's a recent quote from *USA Today*:

In the wake of last week's shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., critics again pointed to violent video games as an instigator of real-life violence.

President Trump on Thursday joined the chorus, warning about children's exposure to violence in video games, movies and on the Internet. "We have to do something about maybe what they're seeing and how they're seeing it. ... We may have to talk about that also," he said in a meeting with state lawmakers on school security.

A neighbor of accused shooter Nikolas Cruz told the Miami Herald that Cruz "escaped his misery" by playing video games for as much as 15 hours a day. "It was kill, kill, kill, blow up something, and kill some more, all day," he said.

Such connections between bloody video games and real blood, I admit, are realistic, but they are no excuse for Satanic murderers. The reason those games come to mind is because they are nothing like the innocent earliest video games such as Pong. And today's video



play entertainment is far, far from the actual, physical entertainment that many of us enjoyed as children – staying outside, catching bugs and lizards, climbing trees, playing cops and robbers (without the splattering of blood).

Before I get to covering those current annoying radio ads, let me hit once more on the bloody ones. Student massacres aren't their only violence connections. Take a glance at just one of many gaming brands, the Sony PlayStation series, the most successful of all. Since their introduction back in the early 90s, they have sold more than 512 million systems. Even their existence has sparked violence.

Let's cruise back to a Best Buy store in Fresno, California, when the PlayStation 3 video game console was released in 2006. The debut was so stunning that the police had to use stun guns to control rioting customers. Some shoppers were actually trampled as hundreds stormed the store trying to snatch up the first few consoles offered for sale. Two people were arrested.

That wasn't just a Fresno freak show. It was a national one, common across the country. Outside many stores people held their places in line for days so they could buy the PS3 the minute it was officially released. A mob of would-be buyers at a Wal-Mart in Palmdale, California, became so unruly that managers closed the store and called police.

And things got worse. In Manchester, Connecticut, five robbers beat a man and stole the PlayStation he had just purchased. In Englewood, Ohio, two masked men held up a video game store and made off with five PS3





consoles. At a game store in Elk Grove, California, armed robbers made off with four consoles.

Why all the violence? For one thing, some gamers are so avid that they'll do almost anything to get the latest system. Another thing is money. Many buyers immediately resold their PlayStations for big profits. Retail prices for the two versions of PlayStation 3 were, at the time, \$499 and \$599 – not cheap. However, the first shipments from Japan to the United States totaled only 200,000 units. They were scarce enough that some people were reselling them for from \$1500 to \$5000 each.

It was far cheaper and far safer the way I did things when I was a kid. I left the TV set in the house and took my .22 rifle outside and shot it all afternoon – but not at other people. Now, however, the most popular video games – regardless of the manufacturer – are wrapped in violence. It's not all innocent fun. So, does violence among video game buyers have any relation to the games they play?

Daring to question the content of video games can be a little risky, I know. Video gamers from kids to adults can become emotional and defensive about the games they love. And in some cases, "love" isn't exactly the right word. "Addicted" is more like it. Don't get me wrong.

I'm not saying all video gamers are wacko killers. Plenty of gamers, including my own friends and family members, love to play and yet remain well-behaved and kind. Sometimes I don't know how they do that, but they do.

For Christians, it's a matter of knowing God's grace and seeing things – including games – from a proper world view. In other words, Christians can use wisdom as they enjoy things in our culture. The important thing is that they are wise in choosing which things.

People of the world – unbelievers, that is – do not have the right world view. God's word says they do not have wisdom – even if they're smart. Their wisdom, the Bible says, is "foolish." So it is no surprise that a steady diet of

video game mayhem is an effective educator. It can easily teach people – especially unwise people – to think wrongly and to act wrongly.

Again, that does not mean that all video gamers – or all non-Christian ones – are wacko killers. But they do act like them when they're blowing people away with their joysticks and controller buttons hour after hour. Video games also commonly flood players' minds with more than violence. Some contain blatant immorality. Add it all up, and the gaming experience

hammers away at many people's brains and hearts with less than pure hammers.

Some video games do provide good clean fun. But the biggest sales and the biggest addictions are for the blam-blam-blow-'em-away games. When the PlayStation riots played out in 2006, even a Christian producer played out a new video game series called *Left Behind*, named after the *Left Behind* series of Christian novels. Its *Eternal Forces* game relied on the same formula, though advertised as a Christian alternative to worldly video games. Its producers qualified the game's violence and killing as just good clean fun, since there was no blood and the bad guys were blown away by Christians mostly in self-defense.

"There's no blood or gore; people just fall over," said Troy Lyndon, head of *Left Behind Games*. Oh, fine. But where does God's Romans 16:19 charge to "be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil" fit in?

The old saying "actions speak louder than words" contains much wisdom. Think about how loud the actions of video games speak to millions of people. Think about how far some people will go just to get their hands on the latest ones. A steady diet of violence – even when you

call it Christian – has a different effect from a steady diet of compassion.

I have always found all this quite troubling. But now back to the games I mentioned at the beginning of this article. Although they aren't centered on pools of blood, I think we're facing a new and dark depth in video playing. We certainly see here no "steady diet of compassion." In fact, we see the exact opposite of the biblical mandate to "clothe yourselves with compassion" (Colossians 3:12).

That radio ad begins with an upbeat musical ditty, and then turns to the sound of rambunctious children's voices. Now enter Mommy's voice: "At this point, I kinda wanna smash the TV. But instead, I went (sic) to Iplay.com and downloaded the app, and play new and

classic games on my computer – for free. No sign-up and no credit card required. Nothing like a good mystery to take me away. But I don't have time for a movie or a novel. So instead I'm into the latest Iplay games... I get my mystery fix and come away thinking more clearly... With the free Iplay app, I can play my games offline, and tune out..." Here those children's voices reappear, those voices Mommy wants to tune out.

Then she continues, "I'm so glad I went to Iplay.com and downloaded the app. It's like

daily sanity restoration. Iplay – every day!" Then the ad's musical ditty wraps things up, again declaring over and over, "You can download and play – every day."

This latest disturbing descent in the video game industry is not primarily about game content but about gamer content. It doesn't simply encourage the listener to buy a product, however good or bad that product may be. Instead, it encourages the listener to worship false gods, to abandon her God-given responsibilities, to escape the annoyance of her own children, to "take me away." Instead of letting her smash her TV set in her rage, just have her slam the door on her family and head for the soothing temple of isolation and self pleasure – and to do it "every day."

Christ's followers generally know where to draw the line when it comes to having fun. But amidst Satan's constant advertising campaigns in this sinful world, we must constantly be reminded to "be wise, and keep your heart on the right path" (Proverbs 23:19). ♦

Public Christian and Politician *The Attitude and Disposition of America's Vice President*

by HERMINA DYKXHOORN

TWO DAYS AFTER THE NOVEMBER 2016 US Presidential election, Vice President elect, Mike Pence decided to take his wife, Karen, to the wildly successful Broadway political musical "Hamilton." The two had been on the road campaigning for the Trump/Pence Republican Presidential ticket non-stop for six months, and, after their victory, Pence obviously craved an evening of relaxation and fun, an evening where he would be entertained and would be safe from the incessant criticism and partisanship he had been experiencing without a break since he had been chosen as Donald Trump's Presidential running-mate at the Republican Convention on July 21st, almost six months earlier.

No sooner had he, his family and friends entered the theatre than some in the audience, catching a glimpse of their elected Vice President, started booing. Happily, there was some welcoming applause in support, as well. But, at the end of the play, as the entire cast took their final bows, Brandon Victor Dickson, the actor playing Vice President Aaron Burr in the play, proceeded to publicly lecture Vice President Pence on their "alarm and anxiety that your administration will not protect

At the same time as the President is excoriated for being too bad and unworthy of his office because of past sins, the Vice-President is savaged for being too good, too narrow and too rigid.

us, our planet and our opportunities...and that you will not uphold our inalienable rights, Sir. We truly hope that this show has inspired you to uphold our American values and to work on behalf of ALL of us; men and women, of different creeds, colours and sexual orientations." Pence was not allowed a moment's peace, but had to undergo a disrespectful, public finger-wagging at an evening that should have been a respite from politics and partisanship.

Soon after the unmasking of Hollywood mogul, Harvey Weinstein, and his sexual shenanigans, when the





“Me Too!” movement was at its pinnacle, Vice-President Pence off-handedly mentioned that he avoided even a hint of sexual impropriety by never being in the company of a woman alone, or, without his wife present. This, rather sensible plan was greeted with howls of laughter and derision. What a prude! What an unsophisticated lout! The late-night comedians had a field day at his expense. Did he not trust women or was it himself he couldn’t trust?

Then, at the Annual Washington Press Corps dinner in late April, the hardly humorous “comedienne” Michelle Wolf made an insulting and lurid reference about the Vice-President’s stance on abortion. “He thinks abortion is murder,” Wolfe cackled. “Which, first of all, don’t knock it ‘til you try it – and when you do try it, really knock it. You know you’ve really got to get that baby outta’ there.” In response to groans from her audience, Wolf continued, “Yeah sure, you can groan all you want. I know a lot of you are very anti-abortion, you know, unless it’s the one you got for your secret mistress.”

David Brody, CBN News reporter, later asked Pence about the incident. “I’m pro-life and I don’t apologize for it,” he answered. “It comes with the territory.” Quoting James 1:2, he added, “I count it all joy when I endure trials or criticisms.”

At the same time as the President is excoriated for being too bad and unworthy of his office because of past sins, the Vice-President is savaged for being too good, too narrow and too rigid.

Is there a man in America today that could be a more appropriate and believable foil for President Donald Trump than his Vice-President, Mike Pence? He supports and encourages his boss in what’s good and, at least publicly, holds his peace on the bad.

But even that stance is damning for some of the vocal “Never Trumpers” within the establishment Republican, conservative movement in the US. George Will, venerable senior columnist for the *Washington Post*, in an article titled “Trump is no longer the worst person in government,” attacks Pence as “America’s most repulsive public figure” writing, “The oleaginous Mike Pence, with his tal-

ent for toadyism and appetite for obsequiousness could become America’s most repulsive public figure.” Why exactly? Well, because Pence is doing his duty, the job he was assigned. A Vice President isn’t the President. He is in the position as a support for the President, ready to take on the office should that, in an emergency, become necessary, not as his usurper. Is Pence a “toady” as Will suggests? None of us, including George Will, can know the answer to that question. None of us can know what the Vice-President has said or suggested to President Trump in private.

Mike Pence was born into a large, practising Catholic, Democratic family but, as a young man he had a journey that led him into evangelical Protestantism, a move that was accompanied by a more conservative Republican stance.

This quiet, intelligent, convicted Christian man has been mocked and ridiculed for his faith and for the lifestyle that accompanies that faith. He doesn’t return in kind. He smiles, keeps his cool under fire and he “counts it all joy.” And in the current political culture, that attitude and disposition is remarkable! ♦





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Grounding Parental Rights in Biology

by MICHAEL WAGNER

Parents have an intense desire to protect and promote the well-being of their children. As a result, political issues that involve parental rights to raise and educate children are often of greater concern to them than many other issues.

SINCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC education system in the 19th century, the state has been the main provider of education in North America. Occasionally this has led to conflicts between parents and the state over the nature and content of education. Such disputes often revolve around the question of parental rights. Today, with governments in the United States and Canada having adopted the “progressive” perspective on sexuality, sex education in schools is often an issue where parents have particular concerns.

Universities in North America are generally dominated by left-wing perspectives, so there is little academic support for parental rights. This makes one recent book all the more significant. In 2017, Cambridge University Press published *To Whom Do Children Belong? Parental Rights, Civic Education, and Children’s Autonomy* by Melissa Moschella, Assistant Professor of Medical Ethics at the Columbia University Medical Center in New York. Professor Moschella presents a strong natural law defence of parental rights which is worth considering.

BIOLOGICAL BASIS OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

From her perspective, parental rights are fundamentally grounded in biology. A child’s very existence is caused by the combination of reproductive cells from his mother and father. The child’s identity is determined by the identity of his mother and father. As Moschella puts it, “The child is who he is because of who his parents are; to be begotten by other parents is, simply, to be someone else. Thus biological (i.e. genetic) parents are, and always will be, unique and irreplaceable to their children even if they have no further interactions with those children beyond conception” (pp. 35-36).

The biological relationship between the parents and child is permanent and cannot be changed by circum-



stances. This relationship creates special obligations for the parents to care for their child. When a child is born, he is completely dependent on others for care, and since the parents have caused the child to exist, they must provide that care. As the child matures, the parents’ obligations to provide care evolve to match the child’s changing needs.

As Moschella puts it, “the fact that children’s initial and prolonged state of neediness (together with their existence) flows precisely out of their personal relationship with their biological parents, implies that children are not just needy and dependent in general, but personally dependent on their biological parents for the ideal fulfillment of their developmental needs. This means that biological parents cannot fulfill their special obligations to their children without raising those children themselves, which implies exercising decision-making authority over them” (p. 38).

Children cannot care for themselves or make decisions for themselves. Someone else is going to care for them and make their decisions. Moschella emphasizes the conclusion she draws from this: “the fact that parents have the strongest and most direct obligation to raise their children to maturity implies that they are the ones with primary paternalistic authority over them” (p. 44).

Of course, adoptive parents do not have the same biological connection to their children as the birth parents. However, this does not leave them out of the parental rights equation. In the case of adoptive parents, their parental rights and obligations are grounded in their commitment to take on the parenting role. Parenthood requires permanent obligations to one’s children, and adoptive parents take up those permanent obligations by choice.



PARENTAL SOVEREIGNTY

The well-being of children is maximized when they are raised by their own parents. The well-being of parents is maximized when they raise their own children. Everyone involved, therefore, benefits from this situation and thus the common good of society is also enhanced. In this sense, recognizing that parents have primary childrearing authority benefits the entire community.

Furthermore, in order to fulfill their obligations, parents must have the right to raise their children as they think best. As Moschella explains, “parents have a sphere of sovereignty within

which they have the authority to make controversial child-care decisions” (p. 62).

STATE INTERVENTION

Of course, parents cannot legitimately act in ways that result in harm to their child because doing so is beyond their authority. Parental rights are grounded in parental obligations to care for their child and are correspondingly limited by those obligations. It can never be an obligation to harm a child.

Although they should never harm or neglect their child, parents must be given wide latitude to determine what is best for him. Coercive state intervention into family life creates its own inevitable harms which may be even worse than the harms of tolerating flawed parenting. Such intervention must therefore be a last resort.

Moschella explains this point by noting that overzealous state intrusion “harms children by breaking up the family unnecessarily, undermining parental authority and family intimacy, preventing parents from achieving their own good *qua* parents, and tearing children away from caregivers (however imperfect) to whom they have formed attachments that are important for their psychological well-being” (p. 69).

When in doubt, we should err on the side of parental rights to safeguard the family’s autonomy over its internal affairs. As she puts it, “If there are no sufficiently compelling state interests at stake, and if parents’ educational decisions do not constitute abuse or neglect, then coercive state interference is simply outside the bounds of state authority” (p. 121).

MORAL EDUCATION AND CONSCIENCE RIGHTS

Among the most important responsibilities of parents is

the moral education of their children. Christian parents, for example, want to develop good character in their children.

When the state wants to instruct children in a moral code different from that desired by the parents, it interferes in an important parental responsibility. Since Christian parents have a moral and religious obligation to instill in their children a Christian perspective on these matters, interference by the state violates the religious freedom and conscience rights of the parents.

Moschella explains it this way: “To prevent parents from educating their children as they think best, particularly with respect to moral and religious values, is to prevent them from performing a serious moral obligation, which in many instances is viewed as a religious obligation as well. Likewise, using the coercive force of the state to compel parents to teach (or to send their children to a school where they will be taught) certain values which they believe are wrong, effectively prevents parents from fulfilling their obligation to care for their children’s moral formation, and thus also from achieving the great personal good that comes from fulfilling one’s parental responsibilities” (p. 59).

CONCLUSION

In North America today, conflict between parents (especially Christian parents) and the state is going to continue and perhaps even escalate. Parental rights will likely be challenged like never before. Professor Moschella has produced an important explanation and defence of the concept of parental rights from a natural law perspective. There are other credible defences of parental rights as well, but this is a welcome and valuable contribution to that body of scholarship.

Moschella’s main conclusion is summarized as follows: “Parents are the ones with the authority to make controversial decisions about what type of education is in the best interests of their children. That means that the state needs to honor parents’ decisions in this regard even when it disagrees with the parents’ judgment, excluding cases of abuse and neglect, and within the limits set by the requirements of public order” (pp. 158-159).

Of course, this perspective has significant ramifications for public policy: “Strong protections for parental rights are a central component of any just political order whose laws and institutions aim to foster the well-being of its members in both present and future generations” (p. 180). An erosion of parental rights will undermine the long-term well-being of children, parents and society generally. Policies informed by a robust concept of parental rights are a much better alternative for everyone. ♦



And as for your birth, on the day you were born your navel string was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor swathed with bands. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you; but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. And when I passed by you, and saw you weltering in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live, and grow up like a plant of the field.' And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full maidenhood; your breasts were formed, and your hair had grown; yet you were naked and bare. When I passed by you again and looked upon you, behold, you were at the age for love; and I spread my skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yea, I plighted my troth to you and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord God,

And You Became Mine – *On Marriage*

(Ezekiel 16:4-8)

by CHRISTINE FARENHORST

MY HUSBAND AND I WILL BE MARRIED, GOD willing, for 49 years this coming December. It was a cold month that winter of 1969, with snow piled high on the hedge between our house and the church. I almost got stuck in that hedge as I waded through the white in my billowing wedding gown, with the bridesmaids pushing me through. The wind blew my veil askance and the path was icy. It was so icy that my nephew slipped on the church stairs and suffered a concussion just prior to the service. This accident postponed the nuptials for about 20 minutes while the poor groom waited in front of the church. My father, who conducted the service, preached on I John 4:7 - *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God."* We sang Psalm 95, "Now with Joyful Exultation," and as we came to the third stanza, "To the Lord, such might revealing, Let us come with reverence meet, And, before our Maker kneeling, Let us worship at His feet," we knelt together. We were committing ourselves, not only to one another, but also to our God. And He has so richly blessed us.

August 18th, according to statistics, will be one of the most popular wedding dates this year. The months of September and October likewise seem to hold an attraction for those planning to tie the knot. British Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, a divorcee, exchanged vows on Saturday, May 19, at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle. They were joined by 600 guests and thousands of onlookers as they pledged their "I dos." The newlyweds continued their celebration during a luncheon hosted by Queen Elizabeth II. Many people around the world watched the ceremony via TV. Prince Harry and Meghan were now seemingly committed to one another. How tight was their knot?

Can one person totally commit to another without a total commitment to Christ? Meghan Markle was adamant that she did not want to promise to obey Prince Harry and made this public. She has been very vocal in her push for gender equality, and is an outspoken feminist. Although people were attracted to the

glitter and glamour of the royal wedding and the "famous" people attending, it should be remembered that the primary difference between a Christian wedding and non-Christian wedding is Christ – He should be the focal point. Although married in a church, we should pray that the eyes of the hearts of Prince Harry and Meghan are open to see Christ, the eternal Savior. Sadly, it was not obvious that their wedding ceremony was a reflection of the couple's personal dedication to the glory of Christ; rather it seemed a reflection of an adulation to human beauty, majesty and values.

It is worthwhile considering that a Christian wedding ceremony involves the establishing of a covenant. This covenant is made in front of the church, usually in front of a host of witnesses, as well as before the face of God. It is not a private matter. This covenant is not just a vow between a man and a woman, but a vow between the couple and God Himself. A very serious matter.

The truth is that about 50% of marriages fail. The divorce rate for second marriages is 67%, and for third marriages it is a abysmal 74%. With such odds, perhaps it is better not to marry! Marriage seems like a dangerous situation in which to place ourselves – a place in which disappointment, frustration, pain and humiliation lurk around every corner of our selfish existence. Yet, because we are souls, we cannot help but be in a relationship with God – a marriage relationship. And this relationship is either broken or whole. We can opt, by the grace of God, to accept this marriage relationship and to live accordingly – or we can deny that relationship. And that would be a shame because this relationship can be the most beautiful thing in our lives.

In his very worthwhile book, *Last Light*, (NavPress



2002), pastor Harold Burchett describes how he cared for his wife during the last years of her life as she struggled with the devastating effects of Alzheimer's disease.

"A cry in the night both awakened and informed me. The worst had happened. I rushed around to Jane's side of the bed and urged her toward the bathroom, trying to minimize the trail of urine across the carpet. The balance of the discharge

pooled at our feet on the bathroom floor and mat. Quite naturally at that moment, I pleaded and coerced with all my energies to get her to be seated on the stool. She stayed standing.

"My energies were next directed to holding her in place while I removed the soaked nightie and protected uninvolved areas. The moment of truth for me came while I was on my knees attempting to cleanse and remove Jane from the havoc. Her blows were landing on my unprotected head. My silent outcry was, 'For this I get that!'"

Right then heaven suddenly opened over my deep well. I could see and hear – not with my eyes and ears but with my heart – the Lord Jesus saying, 'Now you know some of what I suffered for, and from, you. And what you did, you did with healthy brains!' It is clearer now that 'God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. 5:8). Jesus'

death was indeed for 'God's enemies' (verse 10).

"This same insight was underscored for me one morning while I was still serving as senior pastor. My secretary interrupted my studies to tell me that the volunteer caregiver at home was calling because of an emergency. Jane was refusing to finish dressing, so they could not go out to lunch as planned. 'Get her topcoat on, and bring her to me,' I suggested.

"The plan fell apart at the church door. Slipping off the covering cloak, Jane strode into the hallway of the office wing dressed as she was at home: little nightie with two skirts and a pair of slacks underneath. I stepped from my office at the opposite end of the passage. What a pitiful sight she was, standing there at the far end of the hall, alone, unprotected, exposed! All the church's administrative and pastoral offices were open on that busy hallway. It seemed a mile long as I rushed to meet her.

"Being so intent on gathering Jane into my arms and shielding her from view, I was not conscious of those around. I drew her directly into my office. There in safety and seclusion, I held her until she understood that all was well.

"My understanding also opened. I saw it clearly. The Lord

Jesus had rushed to my aid and, bearing my shame and sin, He now shields me from all accusation. He shows more love to His Bride than I could ever show mine."

Puritan writer and preacher, John Bunyan, rightly said: We esteem things according to the price paid for them. The soul has been purchased by a price that the Son and wisdom of God thought appropriate to pay for its redemption. What a thing, then, must be the soul! You must confess that it is of great value. Suppose a prince should descend from his throne, to pick up and put in his bosom, something that he had seen lying trampled under the feet of men. Do you think that he would do this for an old horseshoe, or a trivial thing such as a pin or broken shoelace? Would you not conclude that the thing for which that prince should make such an effort must be a thing of very great worth? Why, this is the case with Christ and the soul! Christ is the Prince, and, as he sat there on the throne of heaven, He looked at the souls of men trampled under the foot of the law and under the penalty of death. What did He do? He came down from His throne, stooped down to earth, and there He laid down His life and blood for them. Would He have done this for inconsiderable things? No, nor would He for the souls of sinners either, if He had not valued them higher than He valued heaven and earth besides.

The Soul and the Lamb
One precious entity within
The body of this discipline,
God's breath, the gift of soul.
Inferior my body is,
Yet this the strange hypothesis,
I value more the role
Of body's ways and body's plays,
Than this eternal soul.

Ten words of law, there are but ten
Commandments given unto men,
And I can keep not one.
Law tramples into dirt. Each word
Has stamp of hell administered
On all I have begun.
Encrusted with the monolith
Of law, I am undone.

Yet soul was bought - and at what price
My soul was bought - a sacrifice,
God's Son, He pitied me.
He saw my end, so stooped to earth,
Laid down His life, gave second birth,
Wed me to purity.
Once profligate, my married state
Brought me infinity. ♦



Christine Farenhorst

Celebrating the TPH: Hymns for a New Century

by BRIAN LEE

In two recent columns I celebrated the joint URCNA / OPC publication of the Trinity Psalter Hymnal (TPH). First, I looked at how significant this cooperative effort is from missional, ecumenical, and confessional standpoints. Then in the subsequent column I dug deeper into the Psalm collection in particular, seeing how the new psalter reflected a broader swath of the Reformed psalm-singing tradition.

IN THIS COLUMN I WANT TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY at the hymn collection, and then offer some practical suggestions about how we might harvest the fruit of this project. The caveat from my last column remains in force: I'm no musicologist, and my analysis is based on a very cursory exam, mostly based on the tables of contents of the two collections. *Caveat lector.*

HYMN COLLECTION BY THE NUMBERS

The first thing to grasp about the hymn section of the TPH is that it is much larger than what many URC members may be accustomed to in the Blue Psalter Hymnal (BPH). The BPH contained 183 hymn settings in addition to 310 psalm settings, for a total of 493 songs. The TPH, in contrast, has 428 hymn settings to go along with 279 psalm settings, for a grand total – and I mean grand – of 707 songs. Put differently, the TPH has over twice as many hymns as the BPH, and 43% more songs in total.

Parenthetically, this expanded song section – and the great space it occupied – was one reason why it was necessary to publish a separate book for the URC-specific liturgical forms that comprise the back section of the BPH. While all of our confessional documents are included in the TPH (Ecumenical Creeds, Westminster Standards, and Three Forms of Unity), a separate volume of liturgical forms and prayers is being published for URCNA churches. This volume will also contain the Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions.

The good news for those who may be apprehensive about adopting a new songbook is that a healthy majority of the BPH hymn collection has found its way into the TPH. My cursory examination suggests that of the 183 BPH hymn settings, at least 132 (or 72%) are in

the TPH. The actual number may be a bit higher, as some songs come over with slightly different titles.

What are we to say of the 51 or so hymns from the BPH we are leaving behind when we adapt the new hymnal? No doubt, some of my readers might have a favorite song or two on that list. And that is precisely why I am grateful for the labors of the Psalter-Hymnal committee, wrestling for years with the worship practices of our church, providing for an open selection process, and welcoming feedback. They are to be commended for this decades long effort.

However, in any collection of 183 songs, there are songs that don't rise to the top. We wouldn't expect every single song to be retained in a new collection – whether their musical beauty doesn't prove to be timeless, or their lyrics speak to the concerns of an earlier age. Furthermore, it seems as though the songs that were cut were not frequently sung in our churches; many of their names are relatively unfamiliar.

On a typical Sunday at Christ Reformed in Washington, we sing one or two hymns. Most of those hymns we sing at least twice a year. So on average we sing 50 different hymns a year. Even if we committed to singing our way through the hymn collection in the TPH, it would take six to eight years to do so. If we only sang hymns, it would still take over two years to sing them all even if we only sang each one once.

DO WE NEED THIS MANY HYMNS?

Probably not. A school of thought says that it is better for a congregation to master the singing of about 100 songs – more, if you include psalms – rather than singing 200-300 less-familiar songs infrequently. There is a lot of truth to that thought.

Arguably, we have gotten by with only 183 hymn settings in the URCNA in part because of our prioritization of singing Psalms. We frankly don't need 428 hymns, given the role of Psalms in our worship. A collection this large is probably more reflective of a tradition where singing a majority of psalms is not the norm.

The advantage, however, of the size of this collection is that it serves to bridge and unify diverse worship traditions. I am more than willing to embrace a larger song collection for the sake of drawing Presbyterian and Reformed churches into closer relation. Members move





between Presbyterian and Reformed churches more frequently in our day, and there is a real benefit to making us feel more at home in a new sister church.

One benefit of a larger collection is that there is a greater likelihood of finding songs our whole church is familiar with. Take, for example, Christmas songs related to the Advent and Birth of Christ. A Christmas “Lessons and Carols” service has become a favorite tradition in our young church. While the BPH had approximately 15 songs in this category – many of which were less common – the TPH has 33. A partial list of those found in our new hymnal and missing from our old includes: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence; Angels We Have Heard on High; As With Gladness Men of Old; God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen; Good Christian Men, Rejoice; Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming; O Little Town of Bethlehem; Once in Royal David’s City; Savior of the Nations, Come; and What Child is This?

There are some profound and beautiful Christmas songs in this list. While we couldn’t have sung our Lessons and Carols from the BPH, we can easily do it from this new collection. The expansion of this section alone will enrich our congregational singing at this season of the year.

HOW SHOULD WE CELEBRATE THE TPH?

God has given the OPC and the URCNA a great gift in the TPH. However, like all of God’s good gifts, it is necessary for us to make the proper use of it. Here are a few practical suggestions to help ensure that we take advantage of the gift that we have been given.

First, let’s sing together. I would encourage URC and OPC churches who adopt the TPH to seek out neighboring congregations for ecumenical hymn sings. This is a very simple suggestion, but it could take some effort and sacrifice to execute well. Let’s find a way to make it work, if not in our churches, then on a smaller scale in our homes.

Second, our churches should strive to adopt the book. This is not a mandate, but it may well be a matter of gospel wisdom. Granted, investing in new hymnals may not make sense for every congregation,

financially or otherwise. Perhaps our Presbyteries and Classes could remove financial obstacles to adoption by offering subsidies for congregations that want to adopt it but can’t afford to do so.

Third, I believe we should work hard to produce a state of the art electronic version of the TPH. Here I’m openly advocating for a position that is pending before our 2018 Synod. However, I think it is undeniable that we can drastically extend the reach of this publishing effort by making them available in a format that is readily accessible both in our homes and on mission fields. We should have these hymns – along with musical accompaniment – in the pockets of as many members of our churches as possible. Also, many churches no longer interested in print hymnals would be able to benefit and use electronic resources, so it broadens the potential impact of the TPH outside the URC and OPC. Electronic publishing or mobile app development may require us to invest in web technology and development in a way that we haven’t done before, perhaps even creating subscription or sale sites. However, this is well worth the investment.

Finally, let’s give thanks to God for this gift he has given the church, and for the many hours of faithful labor that have been invested in this project. I can’t wait to get to Synod in Wheaton and sing with our OPC brothers and sisters, especially songs of thanksgiving, to sing of his many glorious works. Praise God. ♦

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A Most Elegant Book: Creation, Reality, and the Doctrine of God

Review of God Is by Mark Jones (Part 1)

by NICK SMITH

WHO IS GOD? IN HIS RECENT BOOK *GOD IS: A Devotional Guide to the Attributes of God*, Mark Jones argues that this is a neglected question. As he notes in the introduction, while much is published on personal salvation and Christian living over the last generation or so, very little has been published on the doctrine of God in particular.

God Is was written as part of a revival of interest in the doctrine of God, especially the categories and methods of what is commonly called classical theism. As Jones argues throughout the book, this revival of interest in classical theism is no mere academic concern, but has rich and fruitful implications for the Christian life and the witness of the church today.

THINKING ABOUT REALITY

One of the key traits of classical theism is its conviction that there are things that can be known about God by way of deep, clear thinking about the nature of reality itself. While contemporary evangelical theology can be tempted by a sort of proof-texting biblicism, classical theism draws on a long tradition of thinking about the ways in which the created world around us points to God. In the language of Psalm 19, classical theism delights intellectually in the ways in which “the heavens declare the glory of God.”

The Reformed tradition, especially in its confessional statements, has consistently affirmed the main outline of classical theism. Article 1 of the Belgic Confession says:

“We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good.”

One of the first indicators of this article’s rootedness in classical theism is the affirmation of God’s simplicity and his eternity. Both of these attributes of God are difficult to understand, easily abused or misunderstood, and therefore often neglected in Christian thinking about God.

Most Christians, if asked whether or not God is simple, would answer with a resounding “of course not!” As for God’s eternity, it is often understood as meaning



Mark Jones

that God has existed and will exist for a very long time – indeed, forever; but that is to miss the real point, that God is not bound by time and does not go through the sort of change involved in experiencing a succession of events as we do. All of that is to say: these ideas are important, and they’re in our Confessions, but we often get them wrong in fairly deep ways.

“AS A MOST ELEGANT BOOK”

Part of the challenge is that many of the classical, orthodox ways of talking about these attributes are derived not only from Scripture, but also from wise reflection on the nature of reality itself. While this way of thinking about God is often neglected in Reformed circles (for fear of “autonomous human reason,” among other things), the Belgic Confession clearly affirms this method in Article 2:

“We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to see clearly the invisible things of God, even his everlasting power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says (Romans 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince men and leave them without excuse. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation.”

God is “more clearly and fully known” via Scripture, to be sure. But he is also revealed through creation “as a most elegant book,” and we would do well to recover this Reformed emphasis.

WHERE TO START?

For those interested in taking part in this recovery –



and in doing so in a way that highlights its value for the church today – there is no better place to start than *God Is*. As I'll describe in more detail in a subsequent article, the book is valuable for a whole host of reasons. For now, I'll settle for highlighting its focus on describing each attribute of God in a way that is both orthodox and challenging, all in a fresh and fruitful way. Jones makes difficult concepts clear, and at the same time challenges us to think more clearly and biblically about concepts that we thought we already understood.

For those who wish to go deeper, I recommend a sequence of books that I'll be reviewing in a series over the next few months. First, *All That Is In God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* by James Dolezal argues for the need to recover an understanding of, and delight in, the doctrine of God's simplicity. Second, *Five Proofs of the Existence of God* revives an interest in some of the ways throughout history that deep, clear thinkers about reality have seen God's glory around us "as a most elegant book." Third, and finally, *God of our Fathers: Classical Theism for the Contemporary Church* offers a wide range of academic articles defending this way of speaking of God found in the Reformed confessions.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

This may all sound like a daunting task, so I'll conclude by answering the "why" question: why do the specific words of the Belgic Confession matter, as strange as they sound – "We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God" – especially that word "simple"? And why does it matter that God's invisible attributes are revealed in the creation around us?

1: LOVING GOD WITH OUR MINDS

As Jones notes in the introduction to *God Is*, we are called to love God with our minds. Thinking clearly about God is a way of loving him and enjoying fellowship with him. Jesus says that knowing God is eternal life (John 17:3). It is not too much to say that as we seek to know God more, as we do the hard work of learning more about him, we experience more deeply that for which we were made – the joy of fellowship with him.

2. REALITY PROCLAIMS THE CREATOR

These things matter for our witness in an increasingly

secular culture. As western culture grows more secular, we are tempted to defend Christian faith by what some scholars have called "the retreat to commitment," to say that this is just our view of reality, our personal faith, our particular community's commitment to a way of life. While this may have some defensive value for a time – our culture likes to acknowledge the validity of everyone's personal view of reality, faith, and community – it has the effect of ceding reality itself to secularism.

What we confess as the Christian church is not just our personal view of things, but the nature of reality itself. We believe in God, not just because "the Bible says so" but because he is the Creator, and because reality itself points to him and declares his glory. In the face of a hostile culture, the Belgic Confession reminds us not to retreat to a defense of personal commitment or choice, but to say that reality itself declares the glory of the Creator "as a most elegant book."

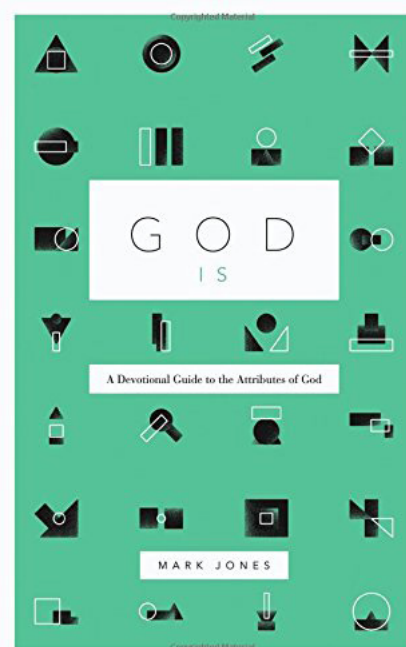
3. LOVING JESUS MORE

One of the things classical theism does is emphasize God's transcendent otherness, the ways in which he is different from us. This is clear in the Belgic Confession: God is "eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good." In all of those ways, it is clear that we are not God.

The more this is emphasized, the more God can at times start to seem far away. One of the reasons we create idols, whether physical idols or idols of the heart and mind, is to force God to seem closer and more manageable than he would otherwise

be. But if we know we should not resort to idolatry, and if our growing knowledge of God points to his otherness, his seeming distance from us, are driven to despair? Is he simply the unknowable?

The answer is Jesus. In him "the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Colossians 1:19). He is the one who has made the Father known to us most clearly (John 14:9). In these last days, God has spoken through his Son, who is the radiance of the glory of God (Hebrews 1:1-3). This is the beauty and wonder and glory of the incarnation: in Jesus, the transcendent Creator of the universe has made himself known. Growing in our knowledge of these things, then, directs us to Jesus with growing love and affection. ♦



Diligence

by D. ALLAN STARES

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING THINGS ABOUT teaching a thousand kids or so over 25 years is that you get to meet a lot of different types of kids. Luckily, they seem to fit neatly into three categories.

There are, of course, those kids who slide through school with a pocket full of stickers, effortlessly applying the natural gifts they have to anything that crosses their path. They are a pleasure to teach, probably because they soak up everything you can think of to teach them and make their teachers look competent. A few will put in a solid effort and shine up the stars that you show them, crack apart the concepts that dangle just beyond the comprehension of most, and make their teachers look magnificent. I admire the blessings that they have been given, but I was not that kind of student and can't quite escape the idea that I may be, to them at least, more decorative than functional.

The vast majority of kids, in my experience anyway, will work as hard as they must to keep the teachers and their parents at bay. The exact level of their achievement is a function of their interest in the subject being addressed, the plans they have for the future, whether or not they like the teacher, and how many hours they spend at their part time jobs. They can do quite well when the stars align; they can do quite badly when they don't, or the sun is out, or gas prices go up, or it is demanded that they give their work their full attention. This is not a particularly Christian understanding of how this education thing is supposed to work, but I recognize it because I had an understanding very similar to this when I was a student. Perhaps it is this recognition that causes me to have so little patience for it in my students.

I have less patience for the opportunity lost as a result of this attitude. I know that most, if not all, of these students will eventually find something they feel called to do and will take it up with every intention of giving the effort necessary to be successful. I also know that there will be holes in their understanding of the world, how it works, and their place in it as those called to live before the face of God, which will be very difficult to fill when they are discovered and a huge handicap until they are. A child might rightly be baffled by the need to learn certain subjects, but that does not mean that there is no need; it might just mean that he is a child.

Every time I think of the next group of students, I think of this little metaphor from Proverbs 12: The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is man's precious possession. This simple image comes toward the end of a discussion of what wisdom



looks like in the activity of a righteous man, what folly looks like in the life of a fool, and the understanding of the world that leads to either of these positions. For a long time, I thought of laziness as a general reluctance to do anything. This is not the kind of laziness that is highlighted in this text.

The hunter has done all of the hard work. He has done the tracking or the trapping and the trucking and the butchering and then he stops. He will not follow the task through to its logical end. He is not willing to take that last step and roast his meat. Perhaps he is too tired. Perhaps he does not think that roasting is his responsibility. Perhaps he sees no need for the caramelization of the crackling fire. For whatever the reason, the image that is left to me is of a man feeding bloody hunks of flesh into his mouth. Can you get by with a face full of bloody meat? Yes, you can, but it is not a pretty image. It is not supposed to be.

I most often come across this Scripture when I am doing devotions with my first period Math class. This class is often a collection of my favourite type of students. These are the students that do not find school a walk in the park, or a buffet of different options from which to choose those that which will be given effort. These students are often those who have to try, really try, to be successful in any area of school. For them, every day is a hard slog, every day is filled with potential disappointment, every test must be studied for, and no result ever seems to top out the marks in the class. They work and try and stumble and get back up again. As frustrating as we can be to each other, I think I love teaching them the most.

It is my firm belief that diligence arises from the individual's solid understanding of who they are, with their skills and limitations, and how they are called to work these things out for the service of God. I also firmly believe that a child who has learned diligence, has learned to resist the urge to excuse the inclinations of our sinful nature, to run the race until the very end no matter the obstacles, has acquired the most valuable skill he will ever need. This is a point that I try to reinforce in my discussions with my students and my children. It is a point I make often to myself.

What is the Christian life, after all, if not diligence? ♦





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CANADIAN REFORMED

ONTARIO

Emmanuel Can. Ref. Church at Guelph
SERVICES: 10:00 am and 3:00 pm
LOCATION: 8037 Hwy. 7, Guelph, ON N1H 6H8
MAIL P.O. Box 1636 Guelph, ON N1H 6R7
PASTOR: Rev. P. G. Feenstra
email minister@emmanuel.guelph.canrc.org
CHURCH PHONE: (519) 836-2270
Website: ChristIsKing.ca

Redemption Can. Ref. Church of Flamborough

LOCATION: Grace Christian School,
497 Millgrove Side Road, Millgrove, ON
SERVICES: 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
PASTOR: Rev. Jake Torenvliet
CONTACT: info@flamboroughcanrc.org
CALL or TEXT: 905-921-2106

Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church

P.O. Box 304, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P5
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 2:30 pm
Corner of Grey Road 18 and Concession 5
PASTOR: Rev. David Pol
CLERK: John Hutten
clerk@oschurch.ca 519-376-0033

MANITOBA

Canadian Reformed Church of Carman East

SERVICES: 9:30 am and 2:30 pm
ADDRESS: 112 4 Ave SE, Carman, MB.
PASTOR: Rev. Steve Vandevelde
steveandcc@gmail.com
http://www.carmaneastreformed.com/
MAIL: PO Box 164, Carmen, MB

FREE REFORMED

ALBERTA

Free Reformed Church of Calgary

SERVICES: 9:30 AM & 4:00 PM
LOCATION: 2419 54th Ave.,
Calgary, AB T3E 1M2
PASTOR: Pastor Hans Overduin 403-771-8980
Web: http://www.frcna.org
Radio Program: AM1140 @ 9:00 AM - Sunday's

ONTARIO

Nipissing Region, Hope Free Reformed Church

LOCATION: Powassan
(south of North Bay off Hwy. 11)
SERVICES 11:00 AM & 2:30 PM with fellowship
lunch in between at the Powassan Sportsplex,
433 Main Street, Powassan.
www.nipissingfrc.com or contact
Pastor VanDoodewaard 705-724-5070.

INDEPENDENT REFORMED

West River Road Reformed Church (Ontario)

LOCATION: 1410 West River Rd.
SERVICES: 10:00 a.m & 2:00 p.m.
PASTOR: Rev. Curt Van Dyken
519-623-0092

office@wrrrc.org Website: www.wrrrc.org

Grace Reformed Church of Lethbridge

ADDRESS: 1402 8th Ave North, Lethbridge, AB
MAILING Address: P.O. Box 1054
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

PASTOR: Rev. Oord
CLERK: Peter Wynalda
PHONE: 403-553-2223
Email: peterwynalda1@gmail.com

PCA

CALIFORNIA

Providence Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Palm Desert, CA
SERVICES: 9:30 Sunday mornings
LOCATION: 42-620 Caroline Ct.,
Palm Desert, CA
PASTOR: Clayton Willis
760-289-5413 clayton@pcapalmdesert.org
web: www.pcapalmdesert.org
email: office@pcapalmdesert.org

PROTESTANT REFORMED

PRC of Wingham, ON

LOCATION/MAILING: 292 Edward St,
P.O. Box 570 Wingham, ON N0G 2W0
SERVICES: 10:30 am & 1 pm
PASTOR: Rev. M. Vanderwal
519-357-9674 Fax: 519-526-7417
CLERK: Jim Sierstema 519-526-7417

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

ONTARIO

Russell Ref. Presbyterian Church

LOCATION: Ecole St. Joseph, 1008 North
Russell Rd., Russell, Ontario
PASTOR: Rev. Matthew Kingswood
SERVICES: 10:00 AM & 6:00 PM
PHONE: (613) 445-1937

New Creation Ref. Presbyterian Church

SERVICES: 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
Location: Scholars Hall, 888 Trillium,
Kitchener Pastor: Rev. Scott Wilkinson
154 Martinglen Cres.,
Kitchener, ON N2E 2A2
ph. 1-519-578-7588
snewilkinson@gmail.com
Web site www.newcreationrpc.org

UNITED REFORMED CHURCHES

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

United Reformed Church of PEI

SERVICES: 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: 70 Royalty Junction Rd, Winsloe
PASTOR: Vacant
CLERK: Ben Vanderzwaag
vanderzwaagfarms@gmail.com
902-629-1755 www.peiurc.org

ONTARIO

Bethel URC, Brockville

LOCATION: 3938 County Road 26, Brockville
SERVICES: 10:00 a.m. & 11:45 a.m.
PASTOR: Rev. Pete Van't Hoff
CLERK: Henk Cazemier, 613-989-2743.
brockvilleurc@gmail.com

Wellandport United Reformed Church

SERVICES: 9:30 am & 2:30 pm
PASTOR: Rev. Joel Dykstra
ADDRESS: 74082 Wellandport Road RR#1,
Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0;
PHONE: (905) 386-0737
CLERK: Terry Baarda 905-957-0876
clerk@wellandporturc@gmail.com

Trinity URC St. Catharines

99 Scott St., St. Catharines, ON L2N 1G8
PASTOR: Vacant
CHURCH (905) 935-8322;
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 4:30 pm
CLERKS: Mark Koopman (council)
council.clerk@trinityorc.org
Andre Langendoen (consistory)
consistory.clerk@trinityorc.org

Immanuel URC, Jordan

SERVICES: 9:30 am & 4:30 pm
LOCATION: 2900 Fourth Ave., Jordan
905-562-8221 (phone & fax)
PASTOR: Vacant
(c) 905-562-8223
CLERK: Martin Fennema, 905-562-6747
martinfennema@hotmail.ca
Website: Immanuelurc.com
E-mail: www.iurc.jordan@gmail.com

Adoration URC, Vineland

SERVICES: 8:30 AM & 4:30 PM
LOCATION: Vineland United Mennonite Church
3327 Menno Street, Vineland, ON L0R 2C0
PASTOR: Vacant
CLERK: clerk@adorationurc.ca 905-321-0083
WEBSITE: www.adorationurc.ca
Hope Congregation [the Hope Centre]
30 Carrier Dr., Unit 203, Etobicoke, ON, M9W 5T7
SERVICES: Sunday 11:00AM & 1:30 PM
PASTOR: Rev. Tony Zekveld
416-740-0543 [S] 416-740-0172 [H]
Email: tzekveld@primus.ca

Covenant Ref. Church of Toronto

265 Albion Rd., Rexdale
SERVICES: 10:00 a.m. & 4:30 p.m.
PASTOR: Rev. Albert Bezuyen
(416) 689-7311 www.reformedtoronto.org
MAIL 259 Albion Rd, Rexdale, ON M9W 3P1

Hope Reformed Church, Brampton

LOCATION: Williams Parkway Senior Public School
1285 Williams Parkway, Brampton, ON L6S 3J8
SERVICES: 10:00 am & 4:30 pm
PASTOR: Rev. John Bouwers
MAIL: Box 36029, Brampton, ON L6S 6A3
CONTACT: 905-872-6072
www.hopereformedchurch.ca
"Eternal Life Mission"

Salem United Reformed Church

LOCATION: Conc. Rd 4, Bowmanville, ON
(Liberty St., North of town, then
1/2 km west on Conc. 4) www.salemurc.org
SERVICES: Nov. to March: 10 am & 3 PM
April to Oct.: 10 am & 7 PM

PASTOR: Rev. Han-Gil Lee

MAIL: Box 321, Bowmanville L1C 3L1

Immanuel, Nobleton, ON

SERVICES: 9:00 am & 4:00 pm
LOCATION: Nobleton United Church,
6076 King Road, Nobleton

PASTOR: Rev. M. Luimes

CLERK: A. Van Dyken (905) 936-3832

clerkimmanuelnobleton@gmail.com

MAIL: Box 219, Nobleton, ON LOG 1N0

Rehoboth URC of Hamilton

SERVICES: 10:00 am & 4:00 pm
LOCATION: 77 Glancaster Rd, RR #1,
Ancaster, ON L9G 3K9
MINISTER: Rev. Steve Swets 905-574-5527
CLERK: Andrew Van Olst
correspondingclerk@gmail.com

New Horizon URC Mission

2300 Bridletowne Circle, Agincourt, Toronto
(Bridletowne Community Church building)
SERVICES: Sunday 1:00 P.M & 2:30 PM
PASTOR: Rev. Mitchell Persaud
416-335-0958 Cell 647-389-2729
mapersaud2@rogers.com newhorizonchurch.ca
MAIL: 4 Littleborough Crt., Scarborough, ON
M1C 4S6 www.sermonaudio.com/nhurc

Grace Reformed Church, Dunnville

LOCATION: 514 George St.
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 2:30 pm
PHONE: (905) 774-6877.
MAIL: P.O. Box 85, Dunnville N1A 2X1
PASTOR: Rev. Henry Van Olst
dunnvillegrcbulletin@hotmail.com

Living Water Reformed Church

1569 Colborne St., Brantford, ON N3T 5L4
Services: 10:00 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.
Pastor: Rev. Greg Bylsma
Associate Pastor: Rev. Daniel Ventura
Clerk: Ralph De Boer
Email: clerk@livingwaterreformedchurch.com
http://livingwater.sermonaudio.ca

Redeeming Grace Reformed Church

(Daughter Church of Living Water)
Meeting at Immanuel Baptist Church
66 Port Street, Brantford, ON, N3S 1Y4.
Services: 9:00 a.m. & 4:00 p.m.
Redeeminggracereformedchurch@gmail.com

Zion URC of Sheffield

1238 Old Hwy #8, Sheffield, ON L0R 1Z0
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 6:30 pm
PASTOR:

CHURCH: 519-624-9416 zionadmin@zurch.ca

Bethel URC of Woodstock

862 Alice St. Woodstock, ON, N4S 2J6
www.bethelurcwoodstock.com
SERVICES: 9:30 AM & 3:00 PM
PASTOR: Rev. James Sinke 519-290-1394
CLERK: Klaas-Jan Buist 519-425-0618
clerk@bethelurcwoodstock.com

Cornerstone URC, London, ON

180 Waterloo St. London ON N6B 2M9
www.cornerstoneurc.ca
SERVICES 10:00 & 4:00
PASTOR Rev. Steve Williamson 226-700-8633
CLERK Eric Luth clerk@cornerstoneurc.ca

Church Directory

ONTARIO CONTINUED

Covenant Christian Church, Wyoming

3 1/2 km W. of Reeves Corners, on County Rd. 22 across from Peoples Church
SERVICES: 10 a.m. & 3 p.m.
PASTOR: Rev. M. Vogel 519-849-5610
mvogel@brktel.on.ca

CLERK: Calvin Batterink, 519-849-6754,
cccclerk@slicc.ca

Mail: Box 774, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0
Grace URC (Simcoe County)

LOCATION: Hwy 11 north from Barrie, exit at Oro-Medonte Line 7, over Hwy 11 overpass, turn right on Oro Line 7, right on Sideroad 15/16
PASTOR: Rev. Martin Overgaauw 905-449-7258
SERVICES: 10:30 am & 3:00 pm
CONTACT: Chairman Tony Steels 705-689-6410

Bethel URC, Aylmer

49823 Talbot Line (Hwy. # 3 East) Aylmer
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 3:00 pm
MAIL: Box 244, Springfield, ON N0L 2J0
PASTOR: Rev. Jeremy Veldman 519-765-1500
CLERK: James Van Gorp – 519-269-9659
Email: clerk@bethelurcaylmer.com

Providence URC of Strathroy

447 Second Street Strathroy, ON N7G 3H8
(519) 245-3600 www.strathroyurc.net
PASTOR: Rev. Harry Zekveld 519-246-1261
Email: hzekveld@gmail.com
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 3 pm
CLERK: George Wiegers gwiegers@gmail.com

Immanuel URC of Listowel

SERVICES: 9:30 A.M. & 2:30 P.M.*
PASTOR: Rev. Fred Folkerts 519-291-1956
LOCATION: 750 Davidson Ave. N., Listowel
MAIL: PO Box 55, Listowel, ON, N4W 3H2
CHURCH PHONE: 519-291-6286
CLERK: Justin Versteeg, 519-417-1025
Email: justin@huronconstruction.ca

URC of Thunder Bay

www.thunderbayurc.com
AT: #23, Hwy 130 just south of Arthur Street
SERVICES: 10 AM & 2:30 PM
MAIL: Box 32012, Thunder Bay, ON P7E 0A1
PASTOR: Rev. Ancil Merwin
CLERK: Kenneth Knight 807-627-2904

MANITOBA

Providence Reformed Church, Winnipeg

LOCATION: 2615 Henderson Hwy
MAIL TO: P.O. Box 28014 R.P.O.
North Kildonan, Winnipeg R2G 4E9
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 4:00 pm
PASTOR: Rev. Richard Anjema

SASKATCHEWAN

Redeemer Reformation Church

(under the oversight of Providence URC, Winnipeg)
3717 Hill Avenue, Regina SK S4S 0X4
SERVICES: 11:00 AM & 4:30 PM
PASTOR: Rev. Brian Cochran (306) 581-9833
EMAIL: briancochran@gmail.com
WEBSITE: www.redeemerchurch.ca

ALBERTA

Bethel United Reformed Church

AT: 730-101 St. SW, Calgary T3H 3Z5
(403) 249-9971 Fax: (403) 249-9721
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 5:00 pm
PASTOR: Rev. Keith Davis
email: ask@bethelurc.org www.bethelurc.org
CLERK: Daniel Dykxhoorn
clerk@bethelurc.org

Trinity Reformed Church, Lethbridge

1100 - 40th Ave. North T1H 6B7
SERVICES: 10:00 am & 6:00 pm
PASTORS: Rev. John van Eyk &
Rev. Thomas Albaugh
COUNCIL CHAIR: Duane Konyonenbelt
(403-330-8237)
(403) 320-7548 www.trinityurc.ca
Minister Emeritus: Rev. J. Tuininga
CLERK: Sean Alaric (403-715-1902)
trinityclerk@gmail.com

Cornerstone URC of Edmonton

SERVICES: 10:00 am & 5:00 pm
LOCATION: 11610-95A St.
Edmonton, Alberta T5G 1P8
PASTOR: Rev. William Pols
(780) 487-7189 www.orcure.org

Emmanuel Ref. Church Neerlandia

LOCATION: 5102 60TH Street, Barrhead, AB
SERVICES: 12 noon & 2:00 pm
MAIL: 5021 49 St, Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0
PHONE: 780-674-3552
www.EmmanuelURC.org (with sermons)

Covenant Reformed Church of Grande Prairie

LOCATION: 10803-94 St. Grande Prairie, AB
SERVICES: 10:30 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.
MAIL: 10803-94th St. Grande Prairie, AB T8V 1Y8
PHONE: 780-978-5467
PASTOR: Rev. William Vander Woerd

Parkland Reformed Church, Ponoka

SERVICES: 10:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
4 1/2 miles south of Ponoka on Hwy 2A,
1/4 west on Spruce Rd.
MAIL: Box 4066, Ponoka, AB T4J 1R5
PASTOR: Rev. Mitch Ramkissoon
(403) 783-1888

Redeemer URC, Lacombe

LOCATION: 4519 46 Ave.,
Lacombe, AB T4A 1W3
SERVICES: 10:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
PASTOR: Vacant
pastor@redeemer-urc.org
www.redeemer-urc.org

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Bethel Ref. Church, Smithers

SERVICES: 10:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.
3115 Gould Place, Box 3847, Smithers, BC
MAIL: Box 3847, Smithers V0J 2N0
CHURCH PHONE: 250-847-5100
PASTOR: Rev. Simon Lievaart

Immanuel Covenant Abbotsford, B.C.

SERVICES: 10:00 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.
LOCATION: 35063 Page Rd, Abbotsford, BC
MAIL: Box 344, Abbotsford V2T 6Z6
PASTOR: Rev. Lou Slagter 604-826-8854
www.abbotsfordurc.org

Surrey Covenant Reformed, B.C.

AT: 17400 60th Ave, Surrey, BC, V3S 1T8
SERVICES: 10:00 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.
PASTOR: Rev. Jason Vander Horst (604)574-1929
Email: jason.vanderhorst@yahoo.ca
www.surreycovenantreformed.com

Grace Reformed Church in Kelowna

LOCATION: 380 Leathead Road, V1X 2H8
MAIL: #101-2293 Leckie Rd., Kelowna V1X 6Y5
SERVICES: 10 a.m. & 12 noon
PASTOR: Rev. James Roosma (250) 762-3998
New Westminster United Reformed Church, B.C.
701 6th St. New Westminster, BC V3L 3C6
SERVICES: 9:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.
PASTOR: Rev. Gary Zekveld (604) 515-7555
garyzekveld@gmail.com

NEW YORK

Hudson Valley United Reformed Church

SERVICES: 9:30AM & 7:00PM
LOCATION: 1043 County Route 12,
New Hampton, NY 10958
PASTOR: Rev. Kevin Hossink
PHONE: (845) 355-2556
hossink@frontiernet.net www.hvurc.org

VERMONT

New Haven United Ref. Church

SERVICES: 10:00 am & 7:00 pm
LOCATION: 1660 Ethan Allen
(U.S. Route 7), New Haven, VT
PHONE: 802-388-1345
PASTOR: Rev. Andrew Knott www.nhurc.org

NORTH CAROLINA

Covenant URC, Pantego

SERVICES: 9:30 am & 5:30 pm
LOCATION: 24599 Hwy 264, Pantego
MAIL: P.O.Box 9, Pantego, NC 27860
PASTOR: Rev. Calvin J. Tuininga
(252) 927-5670 (H) (252) 943-4445 (cell)
E-Mail: caltuin@gmail.com
CLERK: Bernie VanEssendelft 252-927-3367

MICHIGAN

Dutton United Reformed Church

SERVICES: 9:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
Adult Sunday School: 11:00 a.m.
6950 Hanna Lake Ave, Caledonia, MI 49316
PASTOR: Rev. Brian G. Najapfour
CHURCH PHONE: 616-698-6850

Covenant URC, Kalamazoo, MI

3724 Lovers Lane, Kalamazoo, MI 49001
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 5:30 pm
PHONE: 269-345-3355
www.covenant-urc.org
MINISTER: Vacant

ILLINOIS

Lynwood United Reformed

SERVICES: 9:30 am & 5:00 pm
PASTOR: Rev. Nick Alons
1990 East Glenwood-Dyer Rd., Lynwood, IL;
MAIL TO: P.O. Box 685, Lansing, IL 60438
(708) 474-4100 www.lynwoodurc.org

INDIANA

Community URC

LOCATION/MAIL: 8405 Alexander Street,
Schererville, IN 46375 (219) 365-9260
SERVICES: 9:30 am & 5:00 pm
PASTOR: Rev. James Oord

IOWA

Covenant Reformed Church, Pella

SERVICES: 9:30 am & 6:30 pm
PASTOR: Rev. Doug Barnes 641-780-3821
rev.doug.barnes@gmail.com
LOCATION: 2805 Fifield Road (S. of Exit 40 off
Hwy. 163) PHONE: 641-620-1777

IDAHO

Boise, Idaho. Cloverdale URC

3580 N Cloverdale Rd., Boise, Id. 83713
www.cloverdaleurc.org 1-208-375-4219
WORSHIP TIMES: 9:30 AM and 6:00 PM
PASTOR: Rev. Russ Herman

OREGON

Immanuel's Reformed Church

4653 Sunnyview Road, NE, Salem, OR 97305
SERVICES: 11:00 AM & 6:00 PM
Education Hour: 9:45 AM
PASTOR: Rev. Ed Marcusse 503-581-6764
irc.clerkimmanuelsreformed.org
www.immanuelsreformed.org

ARIZONA

Phoenix United Reformed Church

www.phoenixurc.org Pastor@PhoenixURC.org
LOCATION: 2002 East Missouri Ave.,
Phoenix, AZ 85016
PASTOR: Rev. Phil Grotenhuis 602-955-1643
Pastor@PhoenixURC.org
Clerk@PhoenixURC.org
Treasurer@PhoenixURC.org (602) 324-7190

CALIFORNIA

Escondido United Ref. Church

LOCATION: 1864 North Broadway, Escondido
PASTOR: Rev. Chris Gordon
SERVICES: 9:30 AM and 6:00 PM.
PHONE: (760) 745-1679

First United Reformed Church (Chino)

6159 Riverside Drive, Chino, CA 91710
SERVICES at 10:00am and 6:00pm
PASTOR: Rev. Bradd L. Nymeyer
909-591-9111
office@chinourc.org www.chinourc.org

WASHINGTON**United Reformed Church of Lynden**

SERVICES: 10:00 am & 6:00 pm
 Location: 8650 Benson Road, PO Box 593
 Lynden, WA 98264 www.lyndenurc.org
 PASTOR: Rev. Mark Stromberg
 PHONE: (360) 318-0429

Burlington URC, WA


LOCATION: 778 North Burlington Blvd.,
 Burlington, WA 98233 (exit 231 off I-5)
 PASTOR: Rev. Mark Stewart
 SERVICES: 10 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
 PHONE: (360) 757-4620
<http://www.burlingtonurc.org>

Bellingham United Reformed Church

SERVICES: 10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
 LOCATION: 4454 Pacific Highway, Bellingham, WA 98226
 WEBSITE: www.bellinghamurc.com
 PASTOR: Rev. Benjamin Davenport
 CHURCH PHONE: 360.224.7344

SOLUTION FOR CROSSWORD B 177 (May 25, 2018)

1N	2E	W	3S		4H	5I	6N	7D	8S	9I	10G	11H	12T	
13O	R		14G	15R	A	M	C	R	A	C	K	E	R	S
16N	O	17B	L	E	S	T		18S	U	I	T	C	A	
19E	M	U		D		20H	21B		C			22T	G	23A
W		24N	G		25W	E	L	26L	Y	27E	28S		29I	M
30S	31I	C		32D	E	W	E	Y		33P	U	34C	C	I
35I	D	O			36M	I	S	S	A	C	A	R		N
37S	I	N	38C	39E	R	E	S	T		40A	V	E	41N	U
42G	O	T	I	N		43N	I	R	44S		45E	D	I	T
46O	M	R	I		47S	E	N	A	T	48E		49O	C	E
O		O		50F	O	R	G		51A	L	52A		53K	S
54D	55E	L	L	A	C			56A	L	I	N	57N	E	T
	58S	L			59C	60R	61O	O	K	O	D	I	L	E
	62P	A	63Y	64M	E	N	T		65E	T	N		66S	A
67L	A	W	Y	E	R		68H	A	D		69O	N		K



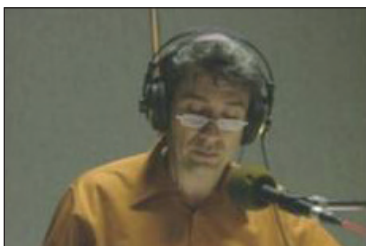
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Reformed Faith & Life

Reformed Faith and Life - Canada was established almost twenty years ago. Our purpose is to raise funds to extend the reach of the gospel, across great distances, behind closed doors, into the lives of people in places as far away as West Timor, Armenia, parts of Africa, and France, and as close by as Quebec City. We've recently begun helping to support a ministry based in the Niagara area that's reaching out to Muslims with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the funds provided by RFL-Canada, they are hearing the gospel and being instructed in the truth by means of radio broadcasts, the publication of sound Biblical teaching materials, and through social media.

You can get the full story on Reformed Faith and Life - Canada, the ministries we support, and how you can help, at our website.

This ministry is committed to bringing the Word of God to old and new Christians alike from around the world, using broadcast and print media to preach salvation in Christ from a Reformed Biblical perspective.

Please prayerfully consider supporting this important and effectual work by sending a donation to the following address:

Reformed Faith & Life – Canada

PO Box 27021 - Highland PO
 75 Dundas Street, Cambridge, ON N1R 8H1

Or donate on our website:
www.reformedfaithandlife.ca

Email:
reformedfaithandlifecanada@yahoo.ca

Coaldale Christian School
Invites immediate applications for:
Elementary Teachers for the
2018/2019 and 2019/2020 school year.

Our School

- Sunny Coaldale, AB is considered the "Gem of the West." Only minutes to Lethbridge, 1 hour from the Rocky Mountains and 1 hour from the US border.
- Student body has increased to close to 200 students, offering K - 12.
- Dedicated and supportive Board and membership.
- Currently 15 committed full time staff as well as EA's and numerous volunteers.
- Recently renovated and expanded school building.
- We anticipate significant growth in the future resulting in an increased number of elementary classes.

Qualifications

- Bachelor of Education degree
- Ability to teach a variety of subjects and/or grade levels
- Positive, enthusiastic, and dedicated individual who wants to share their gifts by teaching God's covenant children in a Reformed School setting.

Contact Us

- Submit a resume, a statement of your philosophy of education, a statement of faith, and references to one of the following:
- Mr. Stuart Boeve, Board Chairman – 1-403-223-4916 email: sdboeve@gmail.com
- Mr. Joop Harthoorn, Principal – 1-403-345-4055 email: office@coaldalecs.com
- Coaldale Christian School, 2008 - 8 Street, Coaldale, Alberta, T1M 1L1 email: office@coaldalecs.com Website: www.coaldalechristianschool.com

HOPE REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

provides Christian education at the elementary and secondary levels near St. George, Ontario.

We are looking for qualified applicants to fill the teaching positions for the 2018-2019 school year specifically:

Primary Teacher - Full-time or Half-time
Secondary Teacher - Full-time – (Humanities would be an asset but all areas welcome to apply)
Vice-Principal - 25% administration along with teaching

Together with the covenant community of church and home, we are committed to providing a Christ-centered, Reformed education to children from Kindergarten through to Grade 12 that will nurture and develop their God given gifts, character and Biblical faith for His glory and God's kingdom.

We are looking for qualified applicants who seek to serve Jesus Christ in the area of Christian education, and who submit to Biblical truth as summarized in the Ecumenical Creeds and the Reformed Confessions.

Please submit a resume with a statement of your philosophy of education, a statement of faith, and references, including one from your current pastor.

Please forward inquiries and/or applications to:

Mr. J. Kikkert, Principal
Hope Reformed Christian School
331 German School Road
Paris, ON N3L 3N1

Via email: principal@hopercs.ca
Phone: 519-448-9913
Website: www.hopercs.ca

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

invites applications for the following positions for the 2018/2019 academic year:

FULL TIME SECONDARY SCIENCE/MATH TEACHER
PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS



HCS

- a student body of 665 students from K to 12
- a dedicated and supportive Reformed Christian community
- a cohesive, professional faculty and staff of 60+ persons
- beautiful, modern facilities, recently expanded and renovated

We seek

- Qualified applicants who seek to serve Jesus Christ in the area of Christian education and who submit to Holy Scripture as confessed in the Reformed creeds
- Committed professionals who positively lead students to a life of dedicated service to our Lord
- Enthusiastic, dedicated rookies or seasoned veterans looking for a positive change

How to join us

- Submit a résumé, with a statement of your philosophy of education, a statement of faith, and references, including one from your current pastor

Please forward inquiries and/or applications to:

Heritage Christian School (Attn: Admin)

2850 Fourth Avenue, Box 400, Jordan Station, Ontario, Canada L0R 1S0

Phone (905) 562-7303 Fax (905) 562-0020 Email: heritage@hcsjordan.ca Website: www.hcsjordan.ca

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord." Ps. 127:3



Heritage Christian School Jordan, Ontario

The Board of Directors of the
Niagara Reformed Christian
Education Association,
which operates Heritage Christian School,
is pleased to invite applications for the position of:

PRINCIPAL & EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Heritage Christian School is seeking a leader with a deep commitment to Reformed Christian education. The successful candidate will be expected to lead the school by supporting our vision and mission with conviction.

Our vision is to glorify God, promoting and furthering His kingdom, by assisting parents in the educational instruction of covenant youth to be disciples of Christ. The mission of the NRCEA is, as a Reformed covenant community, to establish and maintain a school for the daily instruction of our children, providing a Christian education based on the Word of God as interpreted by the Reformed creeds and confessions as promoted by the supporting churches of the Association.

The Principal will oversee all aspects of the K-12 operation of HCS. Given the scope and responsibility of this position, you must be a leader who can fully utilize, work closely and collaboratively with your leadership team, support staff, and the Board of Directors. The principal's leadership team consists of three experienced Vice-Principals (one in high school and two in grade school), and a dedicated administrative support staff.

Heritage Christian School, in the heart of the beautiful Niagara Peninsula, serves a K-12 student body of 665 students, with a faculty and staff of 60+ persons. We serve a Reformed community and are blessed by a strong covenantal commitment. We are blessed with a passionate and professional faculty / staff and a beautiful campus in Jordan, Ontario.

Qualified applicants, who seek to serve Jesus Christ in the area of Christian education, and who submit to Holy Scripture as interpreted by the Reformed confessions, are encouraged to apply. Please submit:

- Résumé
- Your Philosophy of education
- Your Statement of faith
- References, professional & personal,
including one from your current pastor/consistory

All applications will be received in confidence.

Please forward your application and supporting documents before October 31st, 2018 to:

Mr. Rob Langendoen
Chair, Board of Directors
Rob@hcsboard.org



EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
Located in Fergus, ON
invites applications for

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

Preferences will be given to applicants with qualifications in the following areas
(although other areas will be considered):
French/Computers/Math/English/Girls' PhysEd

for the 2018/19 school year and beyond.

Emmanuel has a student body of 188 students in grades 9 through 12. We are enjoying a wonderful, brand new, facility since September 2016, located in a picturesque southern Ontario town. Our school has excellent working relationships with board, staff, principal and society.

Qualified individuals who seek to serve in the field of Reformed Education, and who submit themselves to Scripture as summarized in the Reformed Confessions, are heartily encouraged to submit an application, including a philosophy of education and references.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting the principal:

Mr. Henk Nobel, principal
h Nobel@echs.ca
226-383-7300(work); 519-843-1790 (home)

Applications to be addressed to:
Emmanuel Christian High School
c/o Education Committee
680 Tower St. S.
Fergus, ON N1M 0B1

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Hope Centre and Hope Academy are in need of an investor to purchase a suitable building in the Brampton area, for both church and school usage. If an investor would purchase a building whereby both of our organizations could rent the space, we would be much more likely to be able to afford a move and expand the mission.

We have been seeking to move to Brampton for five years, but with prices, zoning and the time it takes looking, we have not yet met with success.

If you are willing to discuss supporting us in this Christian mission, please contact:

Hope Academy
(georgebork@brktel.on.ca) or
Hope Centre Mission Committee
(oscarvdaconfidential@gmail.com)
(hopecentre@primus.ca)



Planning a summer vacation? Come visit Smithers, BC!

The Board of Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School (ECRS) is thankful for the applications for the 2018-2019 school year. Now due to expansion and retirement, we invite applications for the 2019-2020 school year for:

- A full-time high school position
- Two full-time elementary positions



Applicants need to be professing members in good standing of a Canadian Reformed Church, United Reformed Church or sister church. They must have or be able to obtain a BC teaching certificate. We can help with that process.

If you are qualified but not sure about teaching in Smithers, contact us to discuss arranging a complimentary flight from anywhere in Canada. Or come and spend your summer holiday here and check out life in the valley.

If you have questions please call or email the principal, Derek Stoffels, at work: 250-847-3492; principal@ebenezerschool.com
To apply please email your application to the principal.

Check <http://www.smithers.ca> or <http://www.tourismsmithers.com> for info on the community.

"Assisting parents in equipping our children... to function as prophets, priests and kings in this world."

Oosterhof
Concrete Forming Ltd.

We specialize in agricultural, residential, and commercial concrete forming and finishing. We are located in Wellandport, Ontario.

We are looking to hire full time construction labourers.

Applicants should be physically fit, and able to lift heavy objects, work in all weather conditions, and carry a valid license. Experience is not required, we are willing to train individuals that would like to learn.

If interested, please send your resume to moosterhof@sympatico.ca



THE GARDENS
BY MARANATHA
Carefree living in the Heart of Burlington!

The Board of Directors for Maranatha Gardens Residence
Is seeking an accomplished leader to serve as

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Maranatha Gardens Residence & Senior Care is a not-for-profit Christian aging in place community located in the heart of Burlington, Ontario that aims to provide a variety of affordable and interconnected housing options for seniors.

The successful candidate will have an appropriate combination of vision, leadership, interpersonal skills and experience. These qualities and experiences will enable the Executive Director to carry out the day to day duties and responsibilities of the position and advise the Board of Directors on best practices for an aging in place community.

The Executive Director will assist in ensuring that the Maranatha organization is operated in the most effective, efficient and safe manner. An enabling style and people orientation will assist the Executive Director in creating an environment that results in Maranatha being recognized as a location of choice for seniors.

More information about the position can be found in the Job Description document posted at www.MaranathaGardens.ca/ExecutiveDirectorSearch. Nominations for the position should address the candidate's suitability. Applications for the position are to include a letter of interest and curriculum vitae.

Kindly direct nominations and applications in confidence to:

Maranatha Gardens Search
Mrs. Rosanne van der Woerd, Administrative Assistant to the Board of Directors
C/O Unit 109 – 3260 New Street
Burlington, ON, L7N-3L4
ExecutiveDirectorSearch@MaranathaGardens.ca

Other questions and inquiries may be directed to:

Mr. Brian Verheul
647-808-7355
verheulandassociates@cogeco.ca

Your Reformed voice in Ottawa

ARNOLD VIERSEN MP

PEACE RIVER—WESTLOCK

1.800.667.8450
780.305.0340

arnold.viersen@parl.gc.ca
www.mparnold.ca

[mparnoldviersen](https://www.facebook.com/mparnoldviersen)
[arnoldviersen](https://twitter.com/arnoldviersen)

Planning a trip to Ottawa? Stop in for a visit.

OBITUARY

WINIFRED SCHURINGA, age 88, of Wyoming, Michigan and formerly of DeMotte, IN and Oak Lawn, IL, went home to be with the Lord on Saturday, May 12, 2018. She was preceded in death by her husband of 64 years, Henry Schuringa, and her great grandson, Jacob Schuringa. She will be lovingly remembered by her children, H. David (Mary) Schuringa, Ruth (Marc) Leestma, Mary (Michael) Wolff, and Mark (Pamela) Schuringa; 14 grandchildren, Gregory (Sarah) Schuringa, Lisa (Joel) Bosma, Rebecca (Jeff) Helmus, Timothy (Elizabeth) Schuringa, Ryan Leestma, Aaron (Susan) Leestma, Isaac (Jennifer) Leestma, Sasha (Greg) Stevens, Silas (Christy) Wolff, Heidi (Joel) Weaver, Renae (Rob) Van Dyke, Karla (Brandon) Kane, Mark (Sherri) Schuringa, Jason (Kristen) Schuringa; and 39 living great grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by Dr. Greg Schuringa (and his father) with deep thankfulness to our gracious Covenant God and continuing unwavering commitment to our precious Reformed Faith.



PIETER VAN DER LEI
4/11/33 - 5/15/18

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:25-26).

Pieter Van Der Lei was born April 11, 1933, in Anjum, the Netherlands, the third of six children born to Douwe and Aaltje Van Der Lei. He emigrated to Kitchener, Ontario, in 1951 and worked as a construction laborer and farmer. He met his sweetheart, Sylvia Poort, in 1956 and they were married in 1958. They were blessed with 2 sons, David in 1960, and Bill in 1965. They farmed in Harriston with his parents for many years, and later moved to Atwood where he was a pig farmer. After retirement, they moved to Wingham for a time until settling in Abbotsford, BC, in 1999 to be closer to family.

He leaves behind Sylvia, his beloved wife of 60 years;
son David; son Bill and his wife Lucy;

Grandchildren and great-grandchildren:

Brandy and Albert Sikkens (Taryn and Baby),

Peter and Michelle VanderLei,

Jeremy and Lindsey VanderLei, (Tracen, Julianne, and Levi)

Abigail and Jesse Rinas (William, Cora, and Emlen)

Jason VanderLei,

Devon VanderLei,

and Hannah VanderLei;

sisters Dorothy DeGraaf, Diane and Henry Teune, and Hilda and Jack Seitz; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by his parents, sister Sandra Tacoma, and brother Clarence Van Der Lei.

"Pake Piggy" was a wonderful example of Christian faith to all who knew him, and he will be sorely missed.

Address: Sylvia Vander Lei
32025 Tims Ave. #112, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2H3

BIRTH



With joyful hearts full of thankfulness to God
Ian & Hanna Korvemaker announce the birth of their son

THOMAS ALLEN

born on April 26, 2018.

Welcomed by big sister Damaris and grandparents
Al & Cathi Korvemaker and An & Helen Luong.

FOR RENT: Private 5 bedroom, 2 bath winterized cottage with laundry facilities on Brady Lake near Minden, Haliburton. Large sandy beach, 85 bush acres with hiking trails. Access to canoe, row boat; dock your own boat. Sleeps 10-12. \$1400/wk; \$1050 off season. Contact bdbonvanie@gmail.com



YEAR-ROUND LAKEHOUSE FOR RENT that sleeps 14 on a private, lake-front property. Fall, winter & spring \$1200/week. Summer \$2100/week. 3 day getaway available. Located on beautiful Charleston Lake (Ontario). Comes with 2 canoes, 2 kayaks & paddleboat. Email: johnnicolettegroen@gmail.com or phone 519-209-2411 for more information.

FOR RENT: Year round Vacation Home, located between Owen Sound and Wiarton in Ontario. 4 bedroom, 2 bathroom, fully equipped kitchen. AC, fireplace, TV, DVD, Wifi, washer/dryer, linens supplied, BBQ, fire pit. Call or email for more information and photos. 519-371-5616, ljjvangils@me.com

Are you eligible to work as a Personal Support Worker?

SHALOM MANOR is a Dutch, Christian long-term-care home providing loving, holistic care to our Residents.



- *Interested in joining our team, located in Grimsby, Ontario?*
- *We currently have part-time, temporary, casual and summer fill-in lines available for PSWs.*
- *New applicants only and only successful candidates will be contacted.*

Please see the career section at www.shalommanor.ca for details about our new PSW incentive.

Submit your resume TODAY to:
Lauren Gibson at payroll@shalommanor.ca

We can't wait for you to join our team!!!

It is with thanksgiving and praise to our faithful LORD and Saviour, that we:

PARKLAND REFORMED CHURCH in Ponoka, Alberta will be celebrating 25 YEARS of God's faithfulness.

We would love for you to join us in celebration on June 29, 2018. With an Open house at 6:00-7:30, Program at 7:30 with cake and coffee to follow. As we reflect on Gods faithfulness throughout the years and in the years to come.

To God Be the Glory!

Psalm 100:5 *For the LORD is good and his love endures forever: his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

Bethel United Reformed Church of Calgary

is celebrating 25 years of Gods faithfulness to them as a congregation on June 29-30 and July 1, 2018.

Former members and friends of Bethel are invited to join us for a program of reflection at 7:30 pm on Friday, June 29 followed by a stand-up reception; a church picnic from 1:00-6:00 pm on Saturday, June 30 with events for all ages; worship services at 9:30 am and 5:00 pm on Sunday, July 1 with participation by former pastors. If you plan on attending the picnic, please e-mail us at picnic@bethelurc.org so we can plan meals accordingly.



**1764 South Service Rd.
St.Catharines ON L2R 6P7**

LANGENDOEN MECHANICAL INC. is primarily an installer of hot water and low pressure steam heating systems in the greenhouse industry. We are located in St.Catharines Ontario. Most of our work takes place in the Niagara Peninsula, on occasion at various locations across Southern Ontario. We are looking to hire a:

Foreman/Supervisor plus experienced pipe fitter/welders

Applicant for foreman/supervisor job should have:

- Knowledge and work experience with hot water heating & low pressure steam systems in the greenhouse industry.
- Steamfitter or Gasfitter licence an asset. Should be willing to apprentice for steamfitter
- Pipe welding experience an asset
- Valid driver's licence a must.
- Full-time position

Applicant for pipe fitter/welder positions should:

- Have field experience as a fitter/welder
- Be experienced in mig, tig and stick welding
- Be experienced in the use of pipe threaders and all applicable hand tools.

Send resumes to info@langendoenmechanical.com
Or contact us at 905-984-8711



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Jonathan Brouwer
Consultant



210 Martindale Road, Suite 100, St. Catharines, ON L2S 0B2
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Fax (905) 682-9443 Cell (905) 328-4275
jonathan.brouwer@investorsgroup.com



DAVE BUIST (davesauto@gmail.com)

Dave's Auto Sales and Service

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905.774.3111 (www.davesauto.ca)

Crossword B 178

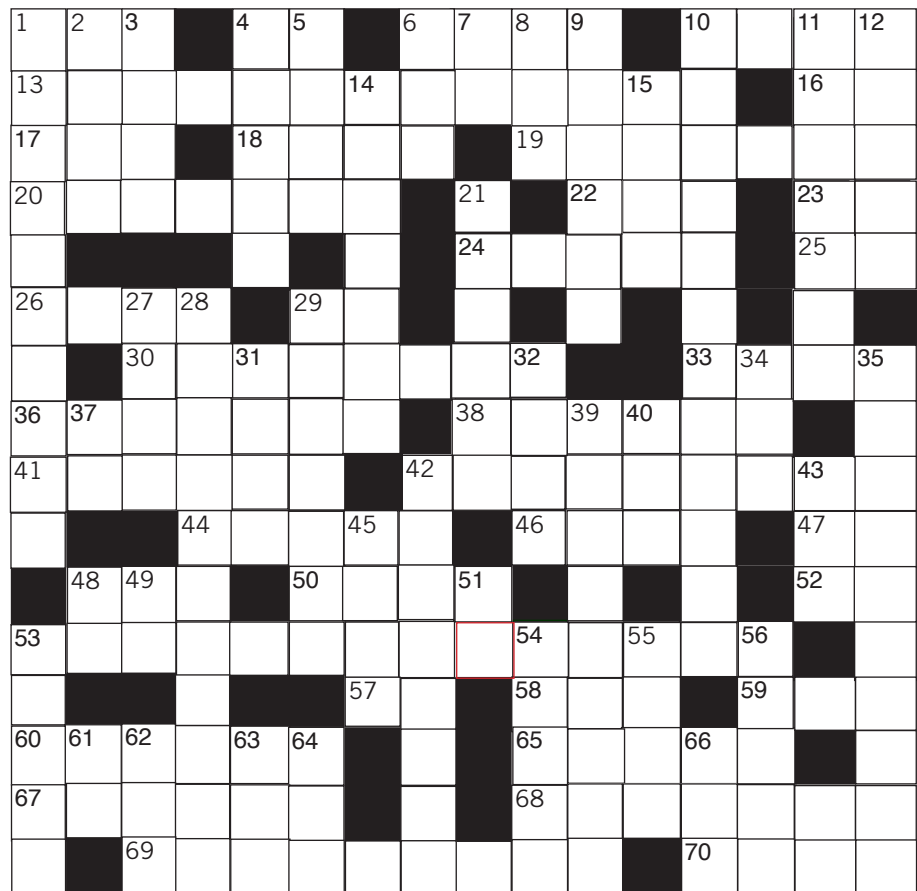
by CHRISTINE FARENHORST

ACROSS

1. Not well
4. Musical note
6. Can be followed by 'ache', 'strong' and 'line'
10. Talk in a friendly, informal way
13. I'll never date another apostrophe. The last one was way _____ (2 wds.)
16. Thank you
17. Work Unit Assignment (abbr.)
18. Nothing (Fr.)
19. Great admirers
20. Clothing you put on a house?
22. Small cube used in many games
23. Old Testament (abbr.)
24. First name of the 4th P.M. of Israel
25. Can be followed by 'ace', 'rfect' and 'tty'
26. You'd think a pirate's favorite letter would be R but it be _____
29. Artificial Intelligence (abbr.)
30. _____le, brand of toilet paper produced by Kimberly-Clark
33. You play them or insert them
36. Mr. Tumnus or Prince Caspian
38. Region where planes might collide
41. Cup's partner
42. Liquid refined to produce fuels
44. Rem_____, intended to correct something that is wrong
46. Roman history Llvly out of sorts?
47. Direction
48. Have
50. Title for a married German woman
52. Precedes en
53. I don't mean to brag, but I put together a puzzle in one day and the box said _____ (4 wds.)
57. Water Sports (abbr.)
58. Racing Throttle Response (abbr.)
59. Intellectual and Developmental Disability (abbr.)
60. See 9 down
65. See 39 down
67. Indelible mark fixed on the body by insertion of pigment under the skin
68. Lanolin ointment rubbing the wrong way?
69. Corduroy pillows make _____
70. See 35 down

DOWN

1. The past, the present and the future walked in a store. _____ (3 wds.)
2. Forte
3. Bulky thing being carried
4. Mushroom
5. Egyptian pagan goddess



6. Chicken
7. Can be followed by 'say', 'tate' and 'pionage'
8. Old Testament king
9. Together with 60 across, exercise for lazy people? (2 wds.)
10. I just stepped on a cornflake. Now I'm officially a _____ (2 wds.)
11. Prize for someone who hasn't moved a muscle for a year? (2 wds.)
12. The difference between an oral and a rectal thermometer?
14. The sitting of a court, council or the like, for business
15. Not valid or legally binding
21. Emerge up?
27. Light beige color
28. I had a job in an orange juice factory. But I got canned because I couldn't _____
29. Tax, duty, toll (2 wds.)
31. Can be followed by 'up', 'down' and 'the knot'
32. See 42 down
34. Before
35. Together with 70 across, what Winnie the Pooh and Eric the Red have in common? (3 wds.)
37. Alcoholics Anonymous (abbr.)
39. Together with 65 across, Two goldfish are in a tank. The one looks at the

- other and says "Do you know how to _____? (3 wds.)"
40. Average Order Value (abbr.)
42. Together with 32 down, the quality of seeming reasonable or probable
43. Take, deploy
45. Pretty maids all in _____ (2 wds.) Mother Goose
49. Can be followed by 'rse', 'rk' and 'rship'
51. Abraham's birthplace
53. Exams
54. Entry the wrong way?
55. Extra seed covering
56. When someone's wants your John Henry, he wants your _____ture
61. Quality Assurance (abbr.)
62. Can be preceded by 'so', 'mo' and 'sle'
63. _____dstool, mushroom
64. Cover with turf
66. Can be followed by 'descript', 'renewable' and 'chalant'

Look for puzzle solutions on our web site at www.crmag.com or in the next issue.



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*A grad
gift for
life-long
learning*



CHRISTIAN
renewal

crmag.com/store.html

Think you can change the world by listening?

We do.

CHANGE can be big, like eradicating poverty big. Or it can be small, like sharing a cup of coffee small. It's about what you choose to do on the one hand, and who you are on the other. We are more than our jobs, and God has a calling for each of us, wherever we go.

That changes everything.

Starting with you.

redeemer.ca



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