

*Appeals*

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*Sawed in Two*

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*Roadside  
Assistance*

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*Streetlight  
Ministries Joyfully  
Receives Pastor  
Paul Aasman*

*“Judges have reinterpreted the Constitution”*



Cl. Stam

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# Appeals

*The church is not a political arena*

Throughout thirty-two years of active ministry, I have never personally lodged any appeal at a major assembly. In the same period of time I have seen only one appeal granted and this was on a minor point (in my opinion). Most appeals go nowhere and are doomed from the start.

In the past years I have noticed an increasing uneasiness or uncertainty about the way of appeal. We have to go through this elaborate and time-consuming process of hitting all the minor assemblies before we are allowed to approach General Synod. Usually the appeal dies on the operating table long before it gets to synod. It's often a waste of time. It's almost like the baseball parody, "Who's on first? No, he's on second."

## The right of appeal

Every member of the church has the right to make an appeal to a major assembly. This is stated in Article 31 of the Church Order. This right is specified so that no member is bound to human decisions but only to what is shown from Scripture and the confessions. This is a *crucial* article in our Church Order.

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## *We should not fall into ecclesiastical obstructionism*

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Article 31 is not interpreted in the same way by everyone. It has been said that one may appeal according to Article 31 only when one is *personally* wronged. In other words, we may not appeal on behalf of someone else. We may help someone to formulate his appeal, I suppose, but we cannot ourselves become appellants in the matter of another. We are to mind our own business.

I fully understand this. It can easily happen that the major assemblies are flooded with appeals from people who have nothing to do with the original case. Everyone should plead his own cause and not become involved in the affairs of others. At all times we must avoid having pressure groups. The church is not a political arena where lobbying is common.

Nevertheless, Article 31 of the Church Order does not make that distinction. It says, "If anyone complains that he has been wronged by a decision of a minor assembly. . . ." I agree that the emphasis here is on being personally wronged. Still, more must be said. The point is: when am I wronged? Is this only when I myself have been affected? Or is there the possibility that I may appeal because I feel wronged by what has been done to a brother or sister?

The Apostle Paul explains that the church is a *body* and that we are each a part of it (1 Corinthians 12:27). This also means that we should have equal concern for each other. He writes also, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it." Hence I feel it would not be wrong for one brother to appeal a decision made with respect to another brother. I do not say he has to do so, but I am convinced he *may* do so if the situation requires it. The right to appeal is sometimes the duty to appeal.

## The ecclesiastical way

When it comes to appeals, there is also Article 30 which speaks about ecclesiastical matters. We learn here that major assemblies are only to deal with ecclesiastical matters and that in an ecclesiastical manner.

The task and place of a major assembly is limited. Only church matters are to be placed on its agenda. And then also the rule exists that new matters may not be placed on the agenda of a major assembly



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unless they meet specific criteria: a) the minor assembly must be finished with it, or b) the matter belongs to its churches in common. The point is that we cannot simply put everything we may want on the agenda of a major assembly.

Therefore also the stipulation was added that a new matter must first be dealt with by a minor assembly. In other words, if a local consistory, a classis, or a regional synod does not with agreement pass on a matter to the next assembly, it becomes inadmissible. If a matter "dies" at Classis, it will never reach General Synod. This is the ecclesiastical way. No single person or church may dominate the agenda of the major assembly, for the churches together determine what must be placed there. This is a good and important rule.

**Ecclesiastical obstruction**

The ecclesiastical way can also be abused. We can declare many things *inadmissible* because a certain way was not followed or all the criteria were not met. I have sat at ecclesiastical assemblies where the admissibility of a matter was debated at length and hotly contested. What was good and necessary in itself (a discussion on admissibility) became long and tedious and some matters were expunged from the agenda.

A while back a member, who again wanted the matter of women's voting rights to be looked at again by a major assembly, was required to start at the consistory level and find prior approval of all the minor assemblies. The feeling is that we cannot *directly* go to a general synod, for then the matter will be declared inadmissible.

But in this case, the matter belonged to the churches *in common*. Major assemblies had dealt with it before. It was not really a new matter. One Synod even stated that the matter of voting for office bearers was not to be seen only as a local matter. It would be regrettable if the churches did not maintain consistency on this point. It is a matter of the churches in common.

We should carefully watch over the agenda of every ecclesiastical assembly. But we should not fall into ecclesiastical obstructionism. If the major assemblies do not speak clearly on matters lawfully presented, the churches will make their own (local) decisions. Then we fall into division and disarray.



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## Sawed in Two



**MATTHEW 13:52**

*“They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated.”*

*Hebrews 11:37*

Many Christians love Hebrews 11. This is the well-known “By Faith” chapter, a memorial to those in the past through whom God accomplished great things. The writer guides us through the history of salvation, and we think back on all the saints who make an appearance.

But as the writer continues, it’s as if he realizes the task is too big. There are just too many saints – too many testimonies to God’s power! In verse 32 he writes, “And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson. . . .” Having reached the period of the judges, he picks up the pace. Yet he still wants to point out how the marvelous pattern was continued. Even if he won’t name names, he’ll show what God has always done in and through his people.

Some of these unnamed believers are alluded to in verse 37: “They were stoned, they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword.” We think back: who was stoned to death? Zechariah, son of Jehoiada the priest, comes to mind (2 Chron 24:20-21). Who was killed with a sword? The prophet Uriah is a possibility (Jer 26:20-23). But who was sawed in two? Here the Bible doesn’t provide us with any names, search as we might. There’s an “unknown soldier” inscribed on this memorial.

Yet we could try to dig a little deeper. Some writings not included in the Scriptures give additional histories of God’s people. One such

work is *The Lives of the Prophets*, from the first century A.D. According to this writing and others, Isaiah was killed by Manasseh, king of Judah. It is said that Manasseh, furious with Isaiah for prophesying Jerusalem’s destruction, ordered his arrest. When he heard of this order, Isaiah fled to the countryside and hid in the hollow trunk of a cedar tree. There he was discovered, at which Manasseh ruthlessly ordered the tree be cut down, Isaiah still inside. Thus, “sawed in two.”

It’s an interesting possibility. That old account of the prophet’s demise seems to accord with the short phrase in Hebrews 11:37. Yet we can’t be certain it’s Isaiah, because the writer doesn’t tell us whom he’s thinking of. And actually, the exact identity of the person(s) “sawed in two” isn’t as important as the chapter’s overarching theme.

The key theme of Hebrews 11 is not so much human faith, but God’s faithfulness. Also to those who suffered for their faith, to those who even went to death for this testimony – God was faithful. It was God who gave the ability to hold on to the good confession. It was God who gave the bravery to face death. And it was God who ensured their lives were not wasted, even if they ended in a gruesome way.

This was good for the readers of the letter to the Hebrews to know. They themselves had previously suffered for being Christians: “Sometimes you were

publicly exposed to insult and persecution. . . .” (10:33). These believers needed to know they weren’t alone in this suffering; they weren’t the first to go through pain for God’s sake.

And even if they weren’t being persecuted anymore, it wasn’t time to coast. Rather, they’re encouraged to keep following the example of other saints, past and present: “We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised” (6:12). The writer calls them to consider “the cloud of witnesses,” to imitate those believers who suffered for God and who received his reward.

The same call goes out to us. Though we aren’t in danger of being sawed in two for our faith, we must not become lazy. Rather, we need to realize that suffering for the faith is sure to come, just as it has come in the past, for, “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim 3:12). Let us pray for strength to speak God’s Word, even if that Word offends. Through God’s Spirit let us build the spiritual fortitude for standing fast, even if we’re assaulted.

And we too ought to consider the example of those witnesses who have gone before us. As our countless – even nameless – brothers and sisters did in the past, by the power of God we can endure any suffering for the sake of Christ. By faith in God, we can live; and by faith in Him, we can die.



# Igniting our Culture through Legal Challenge and Defence: the Mandate and Objective of the ECP Centre and Other Thoughts (Part 2 of 2)

*This article was originally a speech delivered at the Second Annual ECP Centre Conference in Burlington, Ontario on November 12, 2005*

Let us turn to some comments about constitutional interpretation of religious rights and freedoms in Canada. These are generalizations in some cases, but reflect my interpretation, broadly speaking, of some of the things that have happened in this country.

## **Pre Charter cases**

Even prior to the passage of the Charter of Rights of Freedoms in the 1980s, courts generally regarded religious freedom as a constitutional principle already. Note that we did have a Bill of Rights before the Charter and, before that, general laws giving rights to citizens.

To illustrate, one commentator has stated,

All religions stood on an equal footing, with all free to affirm and propagate religious belief, either individually or through institutions. . . courts were

prepared to shield religious liberty from laws which sought to limit the professions and dissemination of religious faith or to interfere with religious worship. Laws which worked a less direct effect on religious practices were not viewed as jeopardizing religious freedom.

As an example of court intervention to protect religious freedom, one can look at the protection of Jehovah's Witnesses in Quebec especially, but also in the rest of Canada. The Jehovah's Witnesses criticized many activities of the Roman Catholic Church, especially in Quebec. Many laws were passed against the Jehovah's Witnesses and/or their conduct and they were even convicted of seditious libel. In 1940 the Canadian government passed under the War Measures Act, a law declaring Jehovah's Witnesses to be an illegal organization (an amazing finding, considering, for example, it was only in 2004 that a judge in Quebec found the Hell's Angels to be an illegal organization – the parallels are not very clear!).

In a variety of cases, the Supreme Court of Canada stood up for the religious rights of such groups. For example, in the Saumer case, a Quebec City by-law prohibiting the distribution of pamphlets was struck down – public religious observance was found to be a necessary aspect of religious freedom. In the Chaput decision, it was held that Jehovah's Witnesses could recover damages from members of the Quebec police for breaking up a religious meeting in a home. In the Rosetanni case, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the validity of a Sunday closing law.

## **Post Charter – the Preamble**

I outlined the preamble to the Charter of Rights in the first part of this article. The words sound good. However, to put it bluntly, the recognition of the supremacy of God in the preamble of the Charter has been ignored – I would say effectively read out of meaningful existence.

Professor Peter Hogg, a constitutional expert, has stated the supremacy of God goes against

the “freedom of conscience” described in s. 2(a) of the Charter, also discussed in the first part of this article, noting that many conscientiously reject the existence of God, or a Christian God at least. This seems odd, that the Charter would be drafted in such a way as to require a finding of internal inconsistency, just a short time after being written, but Hogg’s view has found support amongst judges.

In the *Morgentaler* case, a name recognizable to Christians, Justice Wilson basically stated that the principles of God and democracy stand opposed to each other! To paraphrase her, while Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God, she is also mindful that the values entrenched in the Charter are those which characterize a free and democratic society. Just why are they so opposed, one might ask? Is it likely that the framers of the Constitution, reflecting a charter of “rights and freedoms” would insert key clauses opposed to democracy?

The BC Court of Appeal has stated, in the *Sharpe* case, that the words of the Preamble had “become a dead letter.” And it appears to have indeed been the case. Judges have effectively, over a relatively short period, reinterpreted the Constitution by excluding a phrase that they did not find appealing.

### **Post Charter – the early cases on freedom of religion**

Early decisions after the passage of the Charter held certain promise that religious rights would be protected and public religious activities permissible, much as in the pre Charter decisions.

In the *Big M Drug Mart* case, the SCC held the Lord’s Day Act to be

unconstitutional because it compelled religious observance. While a Christian may not like the decision, the following statement sounds like something that would garner broad support:

A truly free society is one which can accommodate a wide variety of beliefs. . . the essence of the concept of freedom of religion is the right to entertain such religious beliefs as a person chooses, the right to declare religious beliefs openly and without fear of hindrance or reprisal, and the right to manifest belief by worship and practice thereof by teaching and dissemination. (Chief Justice Dickson)

Teaching and dissemination are religious rights. The declaration of religious belief openly, which reading plain English means “in the public square,” is a right. As we will see, we have come a long way from that position.

### **The “freedom for” cases – areas in which freedom of religion has been protected or expanded**

I want to state that there have been “victories” in the freedom of religion arena, victories that were gained or preserved through the legal process. Litigation can work, and has worked, to protect freedom of religion in this country. Many of these are in the “freedom for” area, which means, roughly, that I personally have the freedom to express my belief or to practice it. Some examples of cases can illustrate the point:

- Cases in which institutions had to consider accommodation of religious individuals who held certain religious beliefs. For example, in the *O’Malley* case, it was held that a Seventh Day

Adventist could not be forced to work on the Sabbath and Sears had to accommodate her beliefs;

- Cases in which the state is forced to accommodate religious institutions. This is true particularly where religious schools are involved. For example, the right of a Catholic school to fire a teacher who married a divorced man has been recognized. In the *Trinity Western* case, it was held that the school’s code of moral conduct, to which all students had to agree to adhere, could not be used as a reason to prevent graduates from receiving teacher’s certificates by the certifying regulator in British Columbia;
- Cases in which religious beliefs within a family would be recognized. For example, courts have often tried to recognize this in making determinations of child support, access etc. There are, however, limits – for example, to protect the life of a child whose parents were Jehovah’s Witnesses, a blood transfusion could be ordered notwithstanding the religious beliefs of the family.

So, what do these “freedom for” cases do? Speaking personally, they give me protections to have a belief and to practice it on a personal and individual basis. Note that this is a blessing for us and a protection of our society that is not guaranteed and which is not available to all our Christian brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. For this, we can and we must be thankful. But vigilant also, because recent trends make us very nervous about our freedom to express personal religious beliefs. I believe that rights and

protections gained in the “freedom from” area are eroding.

### The “freedom from” cases

Briefly stated, the courts have routinely pushed religion out of public institutions, and that’s why the term the “freedom from” cases. There is a very humanistic, and thus certainly anti-Christian, perspective that there is no place, let alone little place, in the public square for religious principles to be put into practice. People have a right to “freedom from” religion. Some examples can again be used to illustrate the point:

- Religion in public schools cases, where it has been held that religion must virtually be absent. In essence, “freedom of religion” becomes “freedom from religion.” (And yet we can argue that the imposition of secularization on religious students in public schools, e.g., who do not believe in same sex marriage as part of the grade 4 curriculum, is contrary to our freedom of religion.) One court has stated the following: “The public school system is now secular. Its goal is to educate, not indoctrinate. . . secularism is not coercive, it is neutral. No one religion is favoured. Fundamental to the educational system is teaching without religious indoctrination.” It seems that the response for religious parents who wish their children to have an environment for their children that is hospitable to their religious beliefs must do so through independent or separate schools, not the public system. And, as noted above, at least this right has been recognized by the courts;
- Religion in virtually every other government-related institution

is given short shrift; as stated by the Federal Court in the Reed case, “Canada is a secular state.” It is not a theocracy.

- Recently, there are a number of cases which are proscribing Christian challenges to homosexual behaviour, or making decisions which make it improper under human rights legislation or the Charter to publicly oppose homosexual lifestyles, which I will talk about in a moment.

In sum, courts have basically come to the conclusion that the Constitution *mandates* a secular society. This has limited religious expression, and acting out of religious belief, in the public square. We have come a long way from the traditional approaches.

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### *The recognition of the supremacy of God in the preamble of the Charter has been ignored*

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There is a recent article published in the Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law, a US law school in Georgia, entitled “The Privilege of speech in a pleasantly authoritarian country – how Canada’s judiciary allowed laws proscribing discourse of homosexuality to trump free speech and religious liberty.” That is how far we have come. There has been a judicially sanctioned favouritism of the faith of secular humanism over the traditional religious faiths of our country.

Why such a change? In my view, people making decisions have changed. I suspect, without investigation, the typical SCC judge fifty years ago was a church

goer, familiar with religious perspectives and argument, with a view that religious expression was part of the public square, of politics etc., and that people had the right to express religious views publicly, even, as we have seen, for Jehovah’s Witnesses to publicly criticize the government and the Roman Catholic Church.

Today, the typical judges are not religious. They have been educated in schools which teach secularization and relativism. They are often legal academics who tend to espouse secular humanistic principles, where there are no absolutes. As was often stated in the time of the judges, everyone did what was right in his own eyes. And the state supported it, both through its politicians and its judges. As an observation, we know that politicians are accountable to the people – they at least have to face the voting public once in a while. Judges are not elected, which has its strengths and benefits, but they are not accountable to the public. Having said that, they certainly do seem to reflect public attitudes to secular humanism; it is not surprising to me that in a secular humanistic society, judges reflect the social trends of the day.

All of which leads me back to my opening statement about constitutions and their interpretation of the rights granted thereunder. Judges interpret the law. Rights under the law are more subjective than wonderful phrases like the “rule of law” would seem to suggest.

### **Another constitution – that of the ECP Centre**

The ECP Centre is a not-for-profit corporation. It is not a charity. To be a charity, the state can take away charitable status

for speaking what we believe to be true.

The ECP's objects are "to establish an organization for the purpose of encouraging Christian advocacy in all aspects of public life by educating, motivating and mobilizing Christian participation and leadership in the public square and by defending, initiating or supporting legal or other challenges." You are seeing many aspects of these objects in practice here today.

Fighting the Lord's battles in the public square involves many things, including seminars like this one, the topics you have heard today, and much public and political involvement. But, in order to attain our objects, there is a legal involvement element as well. As it says, we will defend, initiate, and support legal or other challenges.

In attaining our objects, we state in our letters patent, among other things, the following objectives:

- To promote the exercise of freedom of conscience, expression, and religion in society, public life, and commercial enterprise;
- To make available legal or other services to members of the public whose freedom of expression in respect of religious beliefs is threatened;
- To act as intervenors or friends of the court or lend support in regards to legal disputes affecting freedom of conscience and religion or freedom of expression.

In other words, we are going to fight for our faith and support those who do so. We will align ourselves with those who need us. We will work with other organizations if need be. We may sue people or help people who are being sued or prosecuted. We will support legal

challenges. We will talk, but we will do more than talk. We are just getting started and we need your help. We will need your prayers and help going forward as well and we will need financial support to fight the battles.

I want to state that we are not alone. Others are taking up the torch. We also have friends and examples in the United States who are taking up the torch, with success.

### **The ECP in action – first case: Chris Kempling**

Most of you have heard already about some recent cases. Scott Brockie, the printer who was taken to task by the Ontario Human Rights Commission for refusing to print a brochure advocating a gay conference because of his religious beliefs is fairly well known in our circles and has stirred up a great deal of unbelief and outrage. Chris Kempling, a BC teacher in the public school system, has been suspended for statements against homosexual lifestyles made, not in the school, but in the local newspaper. His suspension has been upheld by the BC Human Rights Commission and the BC Supreme Court.

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### *Judges have been educated in schools which teach secularization and relativism*

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I won't get into the Kempling case in detail, but I will state that this is the first case in which the ECP Centre is directly involved. We are assisting Chris by helping to fund the litigation directly and to promote his cause in the court and generally. The ECP Centre, in addition to its prayers, has held an

awareness dinner in June to promote the case and has raised significant funds for both the litigation itself and to deal with Chris's cause – over \$50,000 in total. We have also helped him get the best representation possible for his appeal to the SCC. Chris's cause is our cause and his win will be our win.

### **Final thoughts: what can we do with legal challenges?**

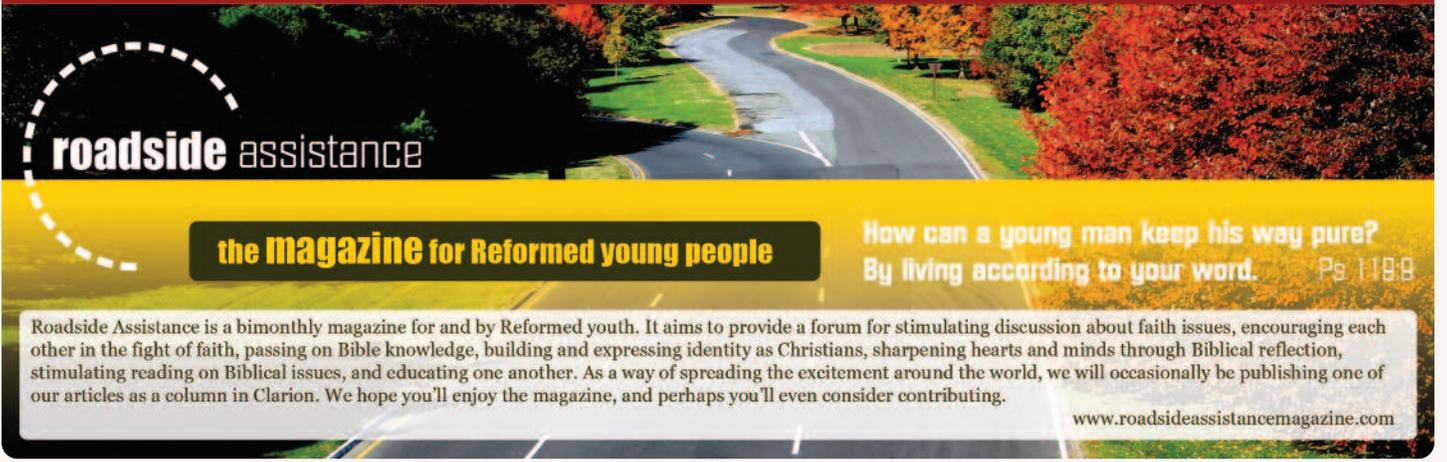
I have already outlined the objectives of the ECP Centre. I cannot say at this time all the cases and legal challenges we will be involved in. We will be restricted by time, funding, and personnel. But we will be, I think, busy.

The initial legal steering committee includes Tim Bloedow, Herman Faber, Tristan Emmanuel, and me – and we hope to get many lawyers involved over time.

Through legal challenges, victories, and even losses, we can try to ignite our society to change the direction of society. We may do that through a win and hopefully the Kempling case is a winner. Sometimes we change society also through a loss, by creating public awareness of an issue and unlocking a movement. Bill C-38 was passed despite much opposition from Christians and people of other faiths. The particular battle at least. But did we really lose the war, or did we start a revolution? I saw, and know, many people who got politically involved for the first time.

I want to finish with a reference to Rosa Parks, a courageous lady. Rosa Parks died a few weeks ago. Rosa Parks ignited a movement when she said "No. I will not move out of my seat for a white man. I am not going to take it any more." Neither should we.





# roadside assistance

**the magazine for Reformed young people**

How can a young man keep his way pure?  
By living according to your word. Ps 119:9

Roadside Assistance is a bimonthly magazine for and by Reformed youth. It aims to provide a forum for stimulating discussion about faith issues, encouraging each other in the fight of faith, passing on Bible knowledge, building and expressing identity as Christians, sharpening hearts and minds through Biblical reflection, stimulating reading on Biblical issues, and educating one another. As a way of spreading the excitement around the world, we will occasionally be publishing one of our articles as a column in Clarion. We hope you'll enjoy the magazine, and perhaps you'll even consider contributing.

[www.roadsideassistancemagazine.com](http://www.roadsideassistancemagazine.com)

## Tim Sikkema

Another semester was over. Two weeks of all-nighters studying for exams were now a thing of the past. Yesterday Janet had celebrated the end of the term with a group of friends from school, this morning she had packed her bags, and now she was on her way back home for the holidays. Her radio was cranked up and she was singing along with her favourite band, *Fresh Leaves*. That, and the thought of her mom's homemade apple crisp that she could almost smell already, would easily keep her going for the long drive. There was a bit of snow here and there, so she drove a little slower than usual, but wasn't too worried. After all, she'd driven through rough weather before and knew how to handle it. So she just kept on singing along with the music. Janet was in the best of moods.

But all of a sudden, completely out of the blue, the driver of the SUV in front of her stepped on the brakes. Janet tried to ease into the next lane to avoid the SUV, but then her tires caught a piece of ice. When she started to slip, it threw her off guard, she started steering back and then over-steering and before she knew it. . . she was off the road. Her red Neon slid over the

snow-covered grass like a majestic sled in a magical dream scene. It was odd, but she actually enjoyed those few seconds. But when she came to a stop in the wide ditch, her heart was pounding. She pinched herself to make sure it was actually real. It was.

### A road

In the Bible, we often read about our way of life as a road, a path on which we walk. Proverbs 4 repeatedly contrasts the path of the righteous with the way of the wicked. Take a look at verses 13-19

*We all struggle with some roadblock issue or another and should support each other within the body of Christ*

and 26-27. Here we are taught to walk in the way of instruction and to avoid the path of evil. God promises to keep us safe in his care on this road (Ps 121:7-8).

Let's take a look at a few of the many ways in which a road is an image that makes a lot of sense for

the journey of our lives. Whenever we go somewhere, we plan a starting point and a destination. In the same way, God has a plan for the life of each one of us, from when our lives begin until they are complete in our new life with Him. But God's plan is one that will not get sidetracked by bad weather. No, He *will* carry it out!

A good road has signs showing us what our options are for getting to different places. God gives us his Word as the road sign: He gives us everything we need to know about how we can reach our destination. Sometimes signs can be hard to see because of snow or because of vandals defacing public property, but that does not mean they are not there. We may sometimes not know exactly what God's Word is telling us, but that does not mean it has no meaning. No, that's a time to start asking for directions – from friends, parents, ministers, and other people who have had other experiences along that same road, and especially from the Word itself.

Another great thing about a road is that we have many fellow-travellers. Sure, there can be times when we want to go for a quiet walk alone on a small forest path,

but both on the highway and on the road of life, we are surrounded by other people. Some are sitting right beside us, encouraging us every day, while others pass in and out of our lives from time to time. Some cut us off and show us how not to travel on the road, but others are friendly and motivated out of sincere love and help us learn how we should go.

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*God's plan is one that will not get sidetracked by bad weather*

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Travel down a road is not often exactly the way we want it to be, whether it's the freeway or the road of a faith-driven life. Even when things are going well, there can be potholes, construction, flat tires, and traffic jams. Sometimes it's our own fault for not being alert enough. Sometimes we get distracted by our fellow-travellers, or a bright and shiny billboard around the corner catches our eye and we don't get to our destination on time. Sometimes a snowstorm or something else beyond our control will throw us off and we might not even want to try reach our destination anymore.

### **Roadside assistance**

That brings us back to the story of Janet, as well as the purpose of this column. Janet was moving along very nicely on her way home until she ended up in the ditch. Although there wasn't much damage to her car, and things could have been much worse, she realized she certainly could not get

out of that situation by herself. She would need some roadside assistance. Within minutes, a businessman she didn't know had already stopped and was walking over to her car to see if she was okay. He offered her his cell phone to call CAA and even waited until the tow truck had pulled her back onto the road and she was safely on her way.

Now, a tow truck operator isn't exactly a worker of miracles (and neither is a businessman), but it was exactly what Janet needed in that circumstance to get her back on the road.

### **Roadside reading**

With this column, we want to provide the opportunity for spiritual roadside assistance for our fellow young people along the path God calls us to walk on. We all struggle with some roadblock issue or another and should support each other within the body of Christ. God has given different gifts to each one of us (yes, that includes you!) and we hope this will be a place where we can all share something of what He has given us. We hope to explore answers to pressing issues, to dig deeper into God's Word, to share, to encourage and be encouraged, to glorify God.

For this to really work, we need input from you, young people across the country. Maybe there are questions you're trying to answer and feel should be discussed. Perhaps you have found answers to questions you have dealt with in the past. Or you could write a reflection on a Bible passage. You might want to talk about an experience that could

help build others up. Some of you might have a gift for poetry that you would like to share. Others will want to explore how we as young people show ourselves as Christians in the world. These are but a few things we think should be looked at closely. YPS free topic evenings could also get and give food for thought in *Roadside Assistance*. It's a column for and by young people and so it has got to stay as real as possible.

If you want to contribute, but are stuck for ideas, drop us a line and we'll be happy to offer some suggestions!

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*We need input from you, young people across the country*

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As far as practical matters are concerned, *Roadside Assistance* will be published in every other issue of *Clarion*, D.V. At the same time, we are also publishing these columns (plus a few more) in a separate print magazine. This is now limited to a trial phase in Ontario, but we would like to expand that as soon as possible. Please contact us at [roadsideassistance@gmail.com](mailto:roadsideassistance@gmail.com) or visit [www.roadsideassistance.com](http://www.roadsideassistance.com) for more information.

Finally, we'd like to keep our minds on our theme text, Psalm 119:9-10: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands."



# Streetlight Ministries Joyfully Receives Pastor Paul Aasman

Psalm 145:3, 17, and 18: "Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom. . . . The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all He has made. The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth."

## Installation

In his greatness, righteousness, and loving kindness, the Lord provides for the needs of his people. To Streetlight Ministries, He has given a missionary to work among the people of downtown Hamilton: Pastor Paul Aasman. On Friday evening, October 6, Pastor Paul Aasman was installed as urban missionary for Streetlight Ministries. Rev. G. van Popta led the service, where the congregation began by praising the Lord for his goodness in thankful song and praying for continued growth and blessing over the mission in downtown Hamilton. In the Form for the Installation of Missionaries, Pastor Aasman was mandated to first of all preach the Word of God to those who are without Christ, bringing hope to those who have no hope. He was also mandated to baptize believers and their children and prepare the table of the Lord among them. And finally, the missionary was mandated to ordain overseers and deacons among the flock. After promising to faithfully discharge the duties of

his office, we could thankfully and prayerfully sing "O let Thy servant speak the truthful Word" (Psalm 119:17), focusing on the importance of preaching the Word of God in its truth and purity.

## Inaugural address

Pastor Aasman then gave his inaugural address. He chose as text Galatians 3:1-5, where the Apostle Paul emphatically reminds the Galatians that their faith and salvation are in Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. He warns the Galatians, and all of us today, against being "bewitched," pointing out how faith begins, how fellowship with God begins, and how fellowship with God is perfected.

In his preaching the Apostle Paul had portrayed Jesus Christ as crucified. It was as if his listeners were there, on that very day, when

Jesus Christ died on the cross. For the Galatians (and us), it is even better! We may see Jesus Christ crucified through faith rather than sight! It should stir us even more deeply, comfort us more greatly, than if we were eye witnesses to Christ's death. The portrayal of Christ crucified, through the preaching of the gospel, is foundational for our faith and the beginning of fellowship with God. The bond and fellowship we had with God was destroyed with the fall into sin and the only way to renew that fellowship is to completely depend on God's grace and to receive the gift of Jesus Christ through the Spirit. False teachers may try to convince us that we need to do something to attain our salvation, but we are to simply seek the gospel where it is preached in its truth, to believe it, and to submit to it.





## Congratulations

After the official part of the worship service, several speakers were given the opportunity to bring words of congratulations to the Aasman family and to Streetlight Ministries. With the words of Matthew 9:37: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few," Case DeJonge, chairman of the Streetlight Mission Board, encouraged us all to keep Pastor Paul and the ongoing work at Streetlight close in our prayers. Words were also spoken on behalf of several local councils and Classis Ontario West. The Aasmans received several gifts to help them get reacquainted with the city of Hamilton: several books about the city and some Tim Horton's gift certificates to enjoy along the tour! The joyous evening concluded with refreshments and fellowship.

## At the Centre

On Saturday, November 4, at 2:00 in the afternoon, the Streetlight Christian Centre on Ferguson Avenue was filled with people who had gathered to welcome the Aasman family.

A stranger looking in would have noticed a great variety and diversity of people. There were ministers in attendance, Streetlight staff and board members, regular Streetlight volunteers, and of course the individuals who regularly visit the Streetlight Christian Centre. Some arrived in

their own vehicles, some walked, some came on the Streetlight bus, and yet another, in a wheel chair, received a personal pick-up. But despite the many differences among those in attendance, one could feel the mutual excitement and anticipation of welcoming the first missionary called and appointed to work among this fellowship at Streetlight.

Case DeJonge opened with the Word of God and expressed thankfulness for God's answer to many prayers for a missionary. He handed the floor to Tom Zietsma, the Master of Ceremonies, who introduced the Aasman family: Pastor Paul, his wife Evelyn, and children Josh, Mark, Amber, Leah, and Reuben. Amber and Leah were able to share their musical gifts by playing the piano and singing for those in attendance. Their musical song of praise was a delightful beginning to the afternoon.

The next hour or so was filled with words of welcome, music, and games. The Bible study groups at Streetlight sang to the enjoyment of all. Their enthusiasm was contagious, sparking participation by the entire audience.

A slide presentation introduced the Aasmans to many of the faces and activities at Streetlight. The Streetlight visitors thoroughly enjoyed seeing their faces projected onto the front wall; their smiles and laughter were completed with a cheer when the show ended with

pictures of their new pastor on one of his trips to Campfire!

The Aasmans were given a poetic history of Streetlight Ministries and were asked to identify some landmarks in Hamilton. This was a task easily accomplished, since both pastor and wife have roots in this area. Using picture clues to identify the names of some Streetlight regulars proved to be a little more difficult! Pastor Bosch (who was represented by his very capable wife!), Richard Bultje, and Pastor Paul raced to solve clues and find people among the audience. Mrs. Bosch proved to be a fierce, unbeatable competitor, but our biased judges found a way to award the coveted first prize ribbon to Pastor Paul.

The ribbon was not the only accessory that our new missionary got to wear that afternoon! Pastor Paul was presented with a variety of gifts to help him feel welcome at the various Streetlight programs. Among them included a crest with the Cadet motto, a name tag for Kids' Klub, and a tiara from Girls' Club! The staff, board, and volunteers also presented an album of photos to the Aasmans, to help them acquaint themselves with the faces of Streetlight.

At the conclusion of the afternoon, all who were present declared the Lord's faithfulness with the words of the well-known hymn:

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning, new mercies I see.

All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided.

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

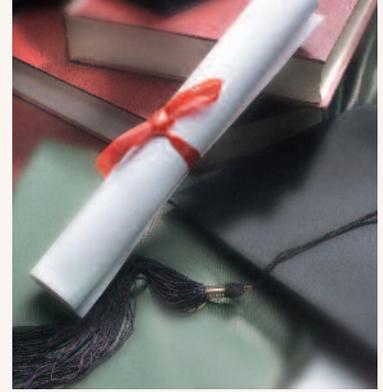
The Lord's faithfulness is indeed a reason for praise! Together we pray for and have confidence that morning by morning, the Lord will provide new mercies. He will continue to be faithful as He has promised. "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love endures forever" (Ps 118:1).



Keith Sikkema

# Peregrine Survey

Mr. Keith Sikkema is principal of Dufferin Area Christian School in Orangeville, Ontario  
[ksikkema@istop.com](mailto:ksikkema@istop.com)



Even though the new year may have started with the best of intentions, we know that human nature will not be perfect until Christ returns. One aspect that frequently enters agendas of staffs, education committees, and boards is that of bullying. Dufferin Area Christian School (Orangeville) recently resolved to develop an anti-bullying policy after the topic was addressed at a PTA meeting. John Calvin School (Smithville) and Emmanuel Christian High (Fergus) are also working on a policy, while others, including Covenant Christian School (Millgrove) and Maranatha Christian School (Fergus) already have one in place. At the recent introduction of Maranatha's policy, the chairman of Maranatha's Education Committee wrote:

We desire to see an end to the appalling practice of bullying, but more than all this, we pray as committee that our children will also appropriate for themselves the gifts of the Spirit, and not live out of policy. The policy results then from an attitude which may be summarized thus: "Kids will be kids," or, "Is it really that bad?" We don't want our teachers and students living in a sterile environment which is *defined* by policy, but rather that the parent and teacher model for the children a loving and Christian attitude to her

neighbour, and that our children live out of this love at the school. But children are occasionally tempted by Satan to beat on other students or injure them or their character in some other way. To deal with this we are implementing a policy which will take very seriously the matter of bullying. We will keep you tuned to future developments. We will also proceed with a view to enforcing existing policy on abuse. Meanwhile, the darkness is passing and true light is already shining: "Whoever loves his brother lives in the light. . ." (1 John 2:10).

Schools use various approaches for disciplining students in general. Sometimes it is necessary to detain children to help them learn behaviour expectations – usually during recesses or lunch-hours. On occasion, students may even get an in-school or out-of-school suspension. The staff at Cornerstone Christian School in Lynden has implemented "an after-school detention policy related to improper behaviour or infractions of school rules." For any discipline to reach to the heart of the matter and the student, it will be necessary that we wish our students to learn to walk in the Lord's ways and that we communicate this to them. Recently, Dufferin Christian School (Carman) organized a meeting with

the society to watch Ron Morrish's video, *The Secrets of Discipline*. Mr. Morrish previously presented at Canadian Reformed teachers conventions and the National Principals' Conference. His common-sense approach is not explicitly Christian, but does contain many useful insights.

Dufferin Christian School has also been working on an admission policy for students who are not members of a Canadian Reformed church or one of its sister churches. With input from the community on this matter, it sought a meaningful and constructive discussion. There are differing opinions; the issue is not laid to rest yet. DCS is also entering an agreement with the Manitoba Summer Games committee to allow the school to be used for these games when they are held in Carman in 2008. In another item, the principal reflects on the educational process:

This process is truly incredible. Textbooks are important – the curriculum is important – spelling tests are important – distinguishing between nouns and verbs is important; but, all of this becomes secondary to the importance of nurturing that covenantal relationship God has with His people. Education is tightly bound up in the myriad of relationships among people – teachers and students, students and parents, teachers

## Church News

Called by the church of  
Winnipeg-Redeemer, Manitoba:

**Rev. J. Poppe**

of West Albany, Australia

Declined the call to Willoughby  
Heights, British Columbia:

**Rev. W.M. Wielenga**

of Lynden, Washington, USA.

Declined the call to Attercliffe,  
Ontario:

**Rev. J. Huijgen**

of Burlington-Waterdown,  
Ontario.

and parents, students and students. What ties all this together in a Reformed school is that overarching relationship God has with His people. It is what makes the educational process at DCS so incredible.

The Canadian Reformed Teachers Association (CRTA) is a professional organization of teachers in our schools.

Traditionally, there has been an Eastern (Ontario) and a Western (Prairies) CRTA. Today, CRTAs are best known for their involvement in organizing teachers' conventions. In the past, they undertook other things to promote Canadian Reformed professional teacherhood, and the joint CRTAs also published a magazine. The Education Matters column came about in part as a response to the death of the *CRTA Magazine*. In the East as well as in the West, efforts are underway to inject new life and enthusiasm in the role of the CRTA. The executive of CRTA (East) is working hard to get input from its members, from the Ontario Principals' Association, and from various relevant committees of the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies to redefine its role as a professional organization. CRTA West has appointed a committee with two representatives from each school. It will study the issue and present a proposal sometime in 2007. Great things are happening among teachers!

To improve the school, Parkland Immanuel Christian School (Edmonton) now has an administrative team consisting of the Principal and two Divisional or

Educational Leaders (one for the elementary and one for the high school). Educational Leaders receive five forty-minute blocks of time per week to see to their new roles in promoting the professional development of the teachers within their division. Collaboration and dialogue is key to the success of this model of school leadership and the blessings are obvious.

Writes the president, "A teamwork approach and a lot of brainstorming are happening at PICS among staff. . . there is a real movement to sharing best practices and looking together for breakthrough solutions. This will have a wonderful impact on the quality of education our covenant children receive at PICS." The school also has a Vision Team consisting of two teachers, a member without children, two members without children in school, two board members, and a parent with children in school. It has drafted a Vision Statement and was last reported to receive society feedback.

Covenant Canadian Reformed School (Neerlandia) expects its population to go up to around 200 in about five years (from a current 157 or so) and is planning to expand the building. It also considered selling its "teacherage." Ebenezer Christian School in Smithers expects its enrolment to go to 150 by 2010, up from a current 130 or so, which has implications for classroom sizes. Maranatha in Fergus is also looking at the implications of a growing student body and realizes that additional portables are not allowed under the current building

code. Hooking up to the town sewer may bring relief in that regard. In addition, a group in the Guelph area is looking at options for establishing its own school. In Lynden, Washington, construction is in full swing for a gym and two new classrooms, with a scheduled completion date of May.

Reformed education is a never-completed and always dynamic enterprise. This will also be keenly felt at this time of the year, as teachers consider their plans for the 2007-2008 school year and boards and committees eye the picture of facilities, student numbers, and staffing to responsibly prepare for next year. May the Lord bless these efforts as well as the plans and planning, even as we go about them with humble prayer for and in anticipation of Christ's return.

*The Education Matters column is sponsored by the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association East. Anyone wishing to respond to an article written or willing to write an article is kindly asked to send materials to Clarion or to Otto Bouwman [obouwman@cornerstoneschool.us](mailto:obouwman@cornerstoneschool.us)*

**Press Review of Classis Pacific East, December 7, 2006, Abbotsford, BC**

The chairman of the convening church of Abbotsford, Rev. R. Schouten, called the meeting to order. The assembly was opened in the Christian manner and Rev. Schouten remembered the church of Chilliwack as they await the arrival of their minister elect from The Netherlands. He also extended congratulations to the church of Aldergrove for being receiving a new minister, DV, in the new year and he wished the church of Abbotsford the Lord's blessing and care during their vacancy. He also mentioned with regret that some members have separated from the Lynden congregation and started meeting on their own.

The Yarrow delegates reported that the credentials were in order and that no further proposals or instructions were received from any of the churches. The moderamen proposed by the previous classis took their places. Rev. Schouten was chairman, Rev. J. Moesker was vice chairman, and Rev. W. Wielenga was clerk. The agenda was adopted.

The church of Aldergrove requested the approbation of their call to Rev. Schouten. The documents required for this approval by Classis were found to be in good order. Classis decided to approve the call to Rev. Schouten as per Article 5 of the Church Order. The church at Lynden will represent this classis at the installation of Rev. Schouten in Aldergrove on January 7, 2007.

The church of Abbotsford requested that Rev. W. Wielenga be appointed counsellor for that congregation as of January 7, 2007. This request was approved. The church of Abbotsford also requested classical pulpit supply for one Sunday per month during

its impending vacancy. This request was also approved.

As per Article 44 of the Church Order, the chairman asked the delegates of the churches whether the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued and the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured and all churches responded positively. No churches requested the help of Classis for the government of their respective churches.

The church of Aldergrove was appointed the convening church for the next classis, which will be convened DV on March 8, 2007 or on June 14, 2007. The following officers were appointed for that assembly: as chairman Rev. Moesker, as vice chairman Rev. Wielenga, and as clerk Rev. C. Bouwman.

Personal question period was not made use of and the chairman concluded with thankfulness that censure as per Article 34 of the Church Order was not required. The acts of Classis were adopted and the press review approved for publication. The delegates sang Hymn 15 and after thanksgiving the chairman closed the assembly.

*J. Moesker,  
vice chairman at the time*

**Press Release Classis Central Ontario, held December 8, 2006 in the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church building**

On behalf of the convening church Rev. J. van Popta calls the meeting to order and reads from Matthew 23:23b and Matthew 1:1-6, 17. A few meditative words are offered concerning mercy, justice, and faithfulness, after which he leads in prayer. The delegates then sing Hymn 14:2, 4.

We are welcomed. Rev. R. Lankheet of the URC in Etobicoke is present and welcomed.

The credentials are examined by the delegates of the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church and found to be in good order.

Classis is then constituted with the following officers. Rev. M. Jagt, chairman, Rev. J. Huijgen, vice-chairman, and Rev. W. Den Hollander, clerk.

The agenda is adopted as per provisional agenda.

In the memorabilia it is observed that generally speaking the churches are doing well under the blessing of the Lord. Rev. Bosch is remembered as he is struggling with health concerns.

In the question period for the churches the appropriate questions of Article 44 CO are read and answered.

The Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church seeks the judgement of Classis re: a decision to allow sisters to vote. It is considered unwise to proceed with the decision already made. Classis advises the Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church to rethink its approach and follow the way of Article 31 CO, appealing the decisions made by major assemblies and interacting with them.

There are no proposals or instructions of the churches.

Rev. Lankheet, pastor of the Etobicoke URC in the classis of Southern Ontario is given the floor as fraternal delegate for the URC. He brings personal greetings. He reflects on his learning curve getting to know the Canadian Reformed churches and heritage. As member on the committee for the common song book, he has experienced unity in origin and purpose in Jesus Christ, while identifying "cultural" difference and diversity. The Chairman responds

in kind, observing the grace of God and wishing the blessing of God. We sing together Psalm 133:1, expressing the unity which we experienced.

An appeal from a brother in one of the churches is dealt with in closed session. After the midday meal the chairman invites all to sing Psalm 133:2. Classis continues to deal with the appeal and adopts a response.

The following appointments are made. The convening church for the next classis is Burlington-Waterdown, for a classis on March 09, 2007, D.V. Place of meeting will be: Ebenezer Church. The following officers are suggested: Rev. G. Nederveen, chairman, Rev. Jagt, vice-chairman, Rev. Huijgen, clerk.

The question period is not made use of.

Censure according to Article 34. CO is not deemed necessary.

The acts are read and adopted. The press release is approved for publication.

In closing the chairman offers words of thanks, we sing of Psalm 135:2, 6. The meeting is closed with prayer.

Rev. J. Huijgen,  
vice-chair eo tempore



## Book Review

Reviewed by W.L. Bredenhof

### ***Jesus Loves the Little Children: Why We Baptize Children, Daniel R. Hyde. (Grandville: Reformed Fellowship Inc., 2006).***

Additional Information: Paperback, 104 pages, \$9.50 USD (from amazon.com)

Books defending infant baptism are plentiful. Over the years, many authors have tackled this subject and offered many solid defenses. But this book by United Reformed pastor (in Oceanside, CA) Daniel Hyde is different and the differences make this book worth recommending.

First of all, Pastor Hyde has offered a compilation of the best biblical arguments for the baptism of the infant children of believers. The arguments are offered

concisely but with footnotes and references for those who wish to dig deeper. The skeleton is here, so to speak, but those who wish to see more meat on the bones will not have far to look.

Second, the book presents the biblical arguments with a sense of church-historical consciousness. Hyde is especially sensitive to the practices and beliefs of the first sixteen centuries of the Christian church. With his references to Reformed liturgies and creeds, he clearly shows that infant baptism has nothing to do with "popery" and everything to do with the apostolic church.

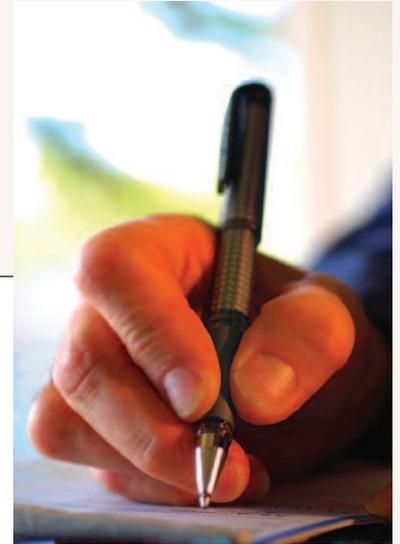
Finally, so far as I know, this is the only book on the subject that deals with the practice of dedication found in some evangelical circles. Pastor Hyde points out that many of the proof-

texts used to support dedication are the same texts used to argue for infant baptism. He calls for consistency, but also points out the far greater richness of baptism – a sacrament that speaks of the sovereign grace of a covenant-making God.

This book could profitably be used in situations (i.e. church planting) where God is bringing in people not (yet) convinced of the infant baptism position. It could also be used for those who, having grown up Reformed, have had doubts planted in their minds. If I would make one small suggestion for an improvement it would be the inclusion of the Bible texts with the "Reformed Confessions on Baptism" in Appendix 1. Aside from that small matter, this is an excellent explanation of "why we baptize children."



## Letter to the Editor



### Dear Editor,

Volume 56, No.2, presents a review of *The Genevan Psalms in Harmony* by Goudimel. The reviewer notes several valuable aspects, such as the inclusion of the text and two settings for each Psalm harmonization, as well as the presentation of different pitches for some Psalms. Although Goudimel is famous for his treatment of the Genevan melodies in motet form, I only found one of them on page 179 and at a higher pitch on page 285. Regrettably, the first setting shows an incorrect but popular key signature, because the music is Mixolydian and not in a major key (compare Psalm 116 in the *Book of Praise*).

On the other hand, the reviewer does not address an aspect that, in my opinion, is most important, because it promotes either reform or decay. Even though it is not pleasant, but rather difficult to expose negative aspects, my silence would be irresponsible. The publisher uses the foreword to justify his personal preferences for altering the melodies. This edition shows a different notation than the *Book of Praise*, which had been historically verified by qualified professionals since the 1930s. It is also shown in *150 Psalmen* by G. Stam and in *J. Worp-Psalmen*, revised edition, 1953, as well as in other four-voice harmonizations. Apparently also Goudimel used this notation.

Raising an occasional note (accidentals) increases musical tension and it alters the character of the melody. Therefore, it changes the musical reflection of the psalm. (It is like a piece, written in a major key, but played partly in a minor key). The publisher likes to call these accidentals "moulds." (Is a mould not a sign of

decay?) These alterations in the melodies crept in over centuries and people got used to them. However, in the twentieth century a reform took place, which is evident from the above mentioned editions. It now seems that these improvements are of no more value and that personal familiarity and preferences are decisive, rather than the original compositions. It is significant that in this edition only the so-called favourite psalms are altered by the re-introduction of those "moulds" (e.g. Psalms 27, 36/68, 130, 139, and 150). Less familiar tunes were left untouched (Psalms 5, 7, 10, 11, 28, 50, 80, etc.). Hopefully we have learned them in the original way. Musicians will do well in making necessary corrections in accordance with the notation of the *Book of Praise*.

The Genevan psalm melodies, established under John Calvin's direction, were composed from elements and styles that date back as far as biblical times (see *Fulfill your Ministry* by Dr. K. Deddens, pages 101-111). Subjecting this musical treasure again to deforming blemishes that eroded their unique character in the seventeenth and eighteenth century is not commendable but regrettable. Should personal preferences, familiarity and mindless traditions be honoured over and above reformatory progress? Should also reviewers not be expected to present a real and complete picture, rather than only the "sunny side"?

Dennis Teitsma,  
Winnipeg, MB

*Letters to the Editor should be written in a brotherly fashion in order to be considered for publication.*

*Submissions need to be less than one page in length.*