Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
Volume 61, No. 23 • November 9, 2012

Thirty-Eighth Convocation of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary

Inside this Issue

- *Light About the Church in China*
- *Lovely Bones*

Light About the Church in China

Controversy and danger continues to dog the church in China

A most insightful book

The last number of years has seen the appearance of many books on China in general and on the Christian church in China in particular. Of all of the works in the latter category one of the best has been written by an Englishman named Tony Lambert and it is called *China's Christian Millions* (Monarch Books, 2006).

Lambert works as the Director of China Research for OMF International, an organization founded by Hudson Taylor in 1865 as the China Inland Mission. He has had forty years of involvement on the China front, learning Mandarin, and something really unique for a Westerner, he has also learned to read the language.

In his book Lambert gives one a good overview of the spectacular growth that the Chinese church has experienced over the last number of decades. He sketches the background to this growth. From personal experience he recounts how he has seen great numbers of people being baptized and how he has witnessed the increase of the church first-hand.

Three-self churches

Particular attention is directed at the three-self, government recognized churches and how renewal is taking place among them. He conservatively estimates that there have been half a million baptisms on a yearly basis since the 1980s in these churches alone. In spite of varying degrees of government control, these churches have managed to thrive and appear to be populated by many devote believers. At the same time he reveals that all sorts of challenges remain in the areas of seminary training, manpower, literature, and political interference.

House churches

Lambert also comments on that other group of churches that has decided not to seek government recognition and are often called "house churches" or "family churches," or in the West at least, "underground churches." Just as there is a certain degree of diversity among the three-self churches, so the same, and more, can be said of the house churches.

While admitting that there is a strong charismatic or Pentecostal wing in these churches, he is convinced that they do not represent the majority. He also makes the point that "the clear-cut divisions and denominational boundaries which we are used to in the West do not apply in China" (p. 58-59). To illustrate this he refers to a certain Pastor Lamb who is strongly evangelical and premillennial in his theology, yet practices exorcism, prays for the sick to be healed, but does not allow speaking in tongues or prophecy.

Seeing that these churches avoid government recognition and registration, they often experience political repression of one kind or another. Indeed, whenever the government decides that it is time again for a crackdown on corruption, criminal elements, and extreme cults, these churches often come under attack as well. This in turn has led the leaders of ten major house church groupings to call on the Chinese government to cease persecuting them.

A confession of faith

In a further attempt to prove their legitimacy, four of these leaders issued a confession of faith in 1998. A close examination of this confession reveals that as a whole it is remarkably orthodox and in step with the teachings of the historic Christian church. The areas of contention relate to the doctrines on the Holy Spirit and on the last things. With respect to the former, the confession makes clear that they do not believe in "the cessation of signs and miracles." As well, "we do not forbid speaking in tongues and we do not impose on people to speak in tongues; nor do we insist that speaking in tongues is the evidence of being saved." With respect to last things, the confession is premillennial, insists on a literal thousand year reign and allows for different views on the Tribulation.

Why do these churches not seek government recognition? The following are some of the reasons that are often cited : (a) the State's ordinances and demands are contrary to the principles of Scripture,

(b) the State policy does not allow the gospel to be preached to those under the age of 18 years, (c) the State policy does not permit believers to pray for the sick, to heal them, or to exorcise demons, (d) the State policy does not allow fellow believers from afar to be received, (f) the State policy does not allow for communication with churches overseas.

In spite of these efforts to approach the government and to prove their legitimacy, the house churches continue to be repressed. Beatings, arrests, torture, fines, and imprisonment are still being meted out to pastors and members in various parts of the country.

Lambert also pays special attention to how these churches have fared in the provinces of Henan, Anhui, and Yunnan, as well as among the Lisu, Miao, Yi, and Jingpo tribes.

Wonders

The author is also candid enough to admit that controversy and danger continues to dog the church in China. On the matter of wonders, he admits that there are any number of wild stories circulating in the West about healings and miracles. In that regard he comments,

> We should be cautious in accepting every story of miraculous healing which emanates from China. However, the opposite danger of rejecting every such report on a priori grounds that miracles no longer happen is also very real for many Western Christians whose thought-processes have been more moulded by a narrow scientism than they would care to admit (p. 122-123).

A little later on he adds,

> In China even the authorities have openly admitted that many people have become Christians after claiming to have been healed in answer to prayer. The phenomenon is so widespread, that even

What's Inside

In your hands is our special issue reporting on the annual anniversary meeting and convocation of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. 2012 marks the forty-third anniversary and thirty-eighth convocation of CRTS. Our congratulations to the three graduating students, Tim Schouten, David Winkel, and Rob Van Middelkoop. In this issue you will find a Convocation Report from the chairman of the Board of Governors, Rev. Richard Aasman, and the Principal's Report from Dr. Gerry Visscher. You can also read the keynote speech from the convocation evening, this year from Dr. John Smith. We also include the Women's Savings Action presentation.

Additionally, Issue 23 contains an editorial about the church in China, the Treasures New and Old meditation, and a press release.

Laura Veenendaal

Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.,Winnipeg, MB

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:
Editor: J. Visscher; Copy Manager: Laura Veenendaal
Coeditors: P. Holtvlüwer, E. Kampen, K. Stam, C. Van Dam

ADDRESS FOR COPY MANAGER:
Clarion, 57 Oakridge Drive South, St. Albert, AB T8N 7H2
E-Mail: veenendaal@telus.net

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:
CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202
Subscriptions: clarionadmin@premierpublishing.ca
Advertisements: clarionads@premierpublishing.ca
Website: www.premierpublishing.ca

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO:
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5

Subscription Rates for 2012

	Regular Mail	*Air Mail*
Canada	$49.00*	$ 84.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds	$69.00	$ 92.00
International	$98.00	$149.00

***Applicable GST, HST, PRT taxes are extra**. GST/HST – No. 890967359RT
Advertisements: $18.00 per column inch
Full Colour Display Advertisements: $21.00 per column inch
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

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Agreement No. 40063293; ISSN 0383-0438

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In This Issue

Editorial – Light About the Church in China
— *Barnabas*.....566

Treasures, New and Old – Lovely Bones
— *R. Bredenhof*.....569

Report of the Forty-Third Anniversary Meeting and Thirty-Eighth Convocation of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS), September 7, 2012
— *R. Aasman*.....570

A Doorkeeper in the House of My God — *J. Smith*.....572

Principal's Report — *G.H. Visscher*.....578

Presentation of the Women's Savings Action
— *C. Nienhuis, J. Van Dam, J. Van Vliet*.....581

Press Release – Board of Governors of the CRTS.....583

allowing for exaggeration and syncretism, there is plenty of evidence that an unusual work of the Holy Spirit has been taking place (p. 124).

To all of this Lambert later adds this personal reflection,

> The present writer is very uncomfortable with the orchestrated healing meetings which have become common in the West. What is usually different about the Chinese accounts is that they record remarkable answers to prayer by individuals for themselves or their families when faced with real-life crises rather than in a hyped artificial atmosphere of "healings meetings" (p. 130).

Wolves

If there are wonders, however, there are also wolves. And there are many of them. Special mention is made of the "Lightning from the East" movement, an aggressive cult that promises new revelations and makes use of blackmail, false miracles, kidnapping, and beatings.

Another cult is called the "Shouters." It is an offshoot of "Little Flock" movement founded by Watchman Nee in the 1930s. Its views on the Trinity are suspect and it is very hostile to both the three-self church and the government.

Then there is also the "Established King" cult in which a peasant by the name of Wu Yangming claimed to be the Messiah. Special hymns of adoration about him and to him were written and his followers had to memorize them by heart. At the same time they attacked the Communist Party and denounced it as "the Great Dragon." Elements from Chinese folk-religion were woven into the mix.

China is thus a breeding ground for strange cults. Often some poor peasant leaves the farm, steps forward, claims to be the Messiah, has a gift for preaching, and attracts a following.

All of this has led Christians in the West to assume that the churches in China are hotbeds of heresy, but Lambert disputes that. He writes,

> My own experience, having met with godly house church leaders in many provinces, is very different. The heart of the house church movement (or movements, as many different streams are involved) is led by dedicated men and women whose knowledge and practice of the Scriptures puts most Westerners to shame (p. 137).

The author also mentions that the Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, and Mormons have been active in various parts of the country. But then he adds, "In general, the traditional Western cults have made few inroads into China. Much more dangerous have been new, indigenous cults which have sprung up over the last twenty years" (p. 136).

The picture that emerges from all of this is a church under attack from sects and cults. At the same time, however, things need to be kept in perspective as Lambert believes that no more than five percent of those who claim to be believers are involved with pseudo-Christian sects.

Children, party members, and intellectuals

It is not commonly known, but the Communist Party has decreed that no child under eighteen may be baptized or become a member of a church. They are not allowed to be instructed in the faith. At the same time the school system is saturated with Marxist ideology and it is not unusual for school children to chant for fifteen minutes a day that they love the Communist Party.

Still, all is not hopeless. In many places Sunday schools, youth work, and young people's camps are organized. Those organizing these efforts often go out of their way to fly under the radar screen of the Party. In other instances they operate in the open and challenge the government to close them down.

All the while it should be kept in mind that Sunday school material, teaching curriculum, and textbooks are in short supply. The cry goes out for systematic teaching to students and systematic training for teachers.

Another group that Lambert deals with are Communist Party members who come to Christ. No one knows precisely how many Party members are also Christians, although it is generally thought that they number in the millions. What is known is that any Party member who turns to Christ and is found out, or makes it known, will immediately be removed from the Party and will lose the privileges that come along with such membership. Such members are said to have caught the *Christianity Fever*. Indeed, regular attempts are made to purge the Party of all those members who hold to religious beliefs. Still, there is no evidence that these purges are effective in stopping the defection.

Intellectuals too have been coming to the Christian faith in ever increasing numbers. Whereas for a time many of them, along with a majority of students, looked to Mao and worshipped him, the Cultural Revolution came along and disillusioned the vast majority of them.

In closing

Towards the end of his book Lambert gives us another of his personal reflections on the state of the church in China that is worth noting. He says,

> It is my conviction after some 20 years' first-hand contact with the house churches that the heart of the movement is thoroughly biblical, evangelical and led by the Spirit of God, It is a constant joy to meet Chinese believers – often farmers and working people – who share the same faith that I have. They accept the full authority of Scripture as the infallible Word of God, the atonement of Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation from sin and all the evangelical certainties of the historic Christian faith. It is nothing short of miraculous that this faith has re-emerged triumphant after thirty years of the worst persecution the church has ever experienced (p. 180-181).

May his conviction prove to be the correct one!

At some later date we will pay attention to some of the lessons that the church in the West can learn from the church in the East.

Reuben Bredenhof

Lovely Bones

Rev. Reuben Bredenhof is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at London, Ontario
reuben.bredenhof@canrc.org

MATTHEW 13:52

"When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet" (2 Kings 13:21)

Imagine being a pall-bearer, then walking home with the one you were about to bury! This is what happens in 2 Kings 13. We're first told that "Elisha died and was buried" (v. 20), the last you'd expect to hear of him. But God is about to do something marvelous.

The author says that "Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring" (v. 20). And today they interrupt a sombre occasion, the funeral of some anonymous Israelite. Keep in mind that graves weren't usually pits dug into the ground, but caves in the side of a rocky hill, closed up by a large stone. The men had already pried open the tomb when they see an approaching band of raiders. In a panic, the pall-bearers want to be free of their burden as soon as possible, so they throw the man's body into Elisha's tomb.

But through their haste something amazing happens: "When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet" (v. 21). In that time corpses weren't carried to the grave in wooden coffins, but wrapped in cloth. So it is that the dead man is able to stand, walk out of the tomb, and rejoin his friends.

Nowhere else in Scripture do we find this: that the bones of the dead seem to possess a power. To some, this event has the flavour of pagan superstition. Or it makes one think of the relics kept in some churches – a toenail or skull of some saint – relics allegedly able to heal the sick. So what are we to do with the mystery of Elisha's life-restoring bones?

When he was alive, Elisha had to bring God's Word. But we know little of what Elisha *said*, and much more of what he *did*. He worked miracles: healing Jericho's waters, increasing the widow's oil, raising the Shunamite's son, purifying a pot of poisoned stew, feeding 100 men from a sack of grain, and so on. And now another miracle, "performed" after his death.

For all of Elisha's miracles, God was speaking through his prophet – speaking in a way words could never express. And what was God saying? That God is Almighty. That God is merciful. He is a saving God who gives deliverance to his people. For many years, Elisha was a walking billboard for the grace of God.

Why is it significant that his bones brought revival? In Scripture, bones aren't just those pieces of internal structure visible by X-ray. The Bible speaks of bones as the essence of an individual. Think of how Adam described Eve as "bone of his bones," one fundamentally similar to him. And as the last part of the body to decay, bones were to be treated with respect. It's true, touching bones would make a person unclean; this is why the outsides of graves were painted white: to keep away the living. Yet today Elisha's old bones don't have a contaminating effect – they have a resurrecting power!

So at one level, those bones were just bones, remnants of a corpse. Yet they were also the remnants of God's wonder-working prophet. And the LORD decided it was time for one last sermon, a message from the grave. And it'd be the same gospel as ever, now amplified: that God is Almighty and merciful. That he's the God of life.

This was a needed message. Israel had fallen to a low state in those days. But by this miracle God says, "The words of my prophet are still certain. He might be silent now, but I've not taken back my promises. I'm still the LORD, who does great things for my people."

And doesn't that message point us to our greatest prophet, Jesus Christ? Like Elisha, he was a worker of wonders. And like Elisha, he'd lain in the grave. Even before that, Jesus had hung on the cross in seeming defeat. But through it, God brings abundant life! Recall what happened at the very moment of Jesus dying: "The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life" (Matt 27:52).

That's a dramatic picture of the gospel in action: dead people made alive through the death of Jesus! We once were on a funeral march, ready to be put away forever because of our sin. But when it looked like all was lost, he gave the victory over sin and death. We've been raised from our graves, and with Christ we can go on our way rejoicing. C

Richard Aasman

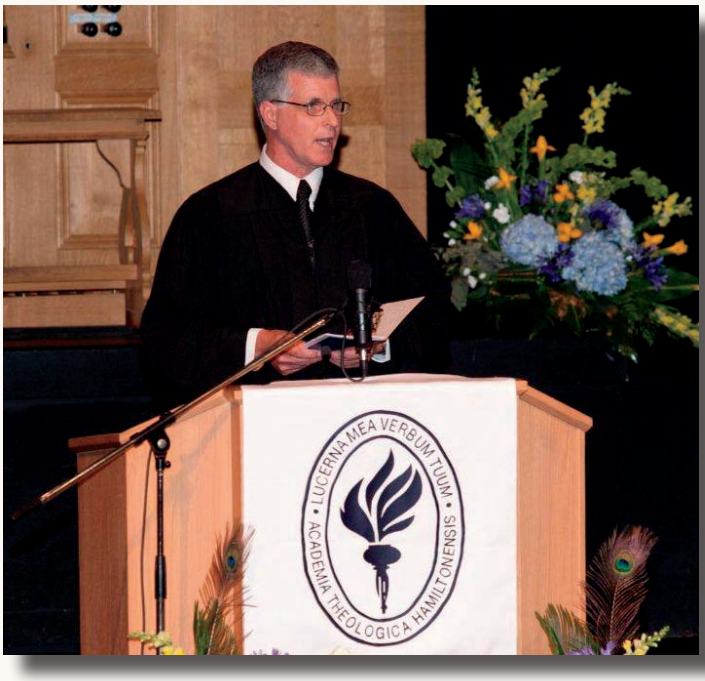
Rev. Richard Aasman is minister of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton, Alberta
raasman@telusplanet.net

Report of the Forty-Third Anniversary Meeting and Thirty-Eighth Convocation of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS), September 7, 2012

On a beautiful summer's evening, the cars started to roll into the Redeemer University College parking lot and people made their way to the auditorium that has become a familiar venue for the CRTS convocations. It was good to see so many brothers and sisters in the Lord who come every year to witness the graduations of students from the seminary. Some of us are getting a little older, but the enthusiasm and joy still sparkles. Of particular note was spotting Prof. J. Geertsema, who has been wrestling with cancer and a recent surgery. We are thankful that the Lord has allowed our brother sufficient health to be present this evening. Before the commencement of the convocation, the senate, graduating students, and governors all gathered in an upstairs hallway for a photo shoot. We have come to know Ewout DeGelder as a regular photographer around seminary events. We are most grateful that Ewout is able to make us look our best. Some of his photos can be found on the CRTS website. Also, Harpert Vanderwel is our videographer who records the evening's events. This too can be found on the website. This technology makes it possible for brothers and sisters all over the world to connect with our Theological Seminary.

Our organist for the evening was Gerard Woudenberg. He clearly felt at home on the tracker pipe organ which is beautifully "voiced" for the psalm singing. Music and singing is definitely one of the highlights of the evening. The evening was opened by the chairman of the Board, Rev. Richard Aasman, who read 1 Chronicles 9:1b-2, 17-29 and led in prayer. The prayer remembered the special needs of the widow of the late Dr. K. Deddens, Dr. J. DeJong and his wife Margaret, Prof. J. Geerstema, Dr. N.H. Gootjes and his wife Dinie, and Sr. W. Faber, widow of the late Dr. J. Faber. Appreciation was also expressed for the fact that Dr. C. van Dam, our emeritus professor of Old Testament, remains very active. Letters from the Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott and the Deputies for Training for the Ministry in Australia were read. It is heart-warming to see that our sister churches in Australia have a deep love for the Seminary and support it in many ways.

Dr. G.H. Visscher, Principal, academic dean



Rev. R. Aasman, chairman of the Board of Directors

The principal of the seminary, Dr. Gerhard H. Visscher, presented his principal's report. You can read the entire report elsewhere in this issue of *Clarion*. Dr. Visscher mentioned that we have three graduating students this evening: Tim Schouten, David Winkel, and Rob Van Middelkoop. In addition, we have the largest freshman class ever for the M.Div. program: eight new students. It is deeply gratifying to witness the Lord working in the hearts of so many young men, leading them to train for the ministry of the Word.

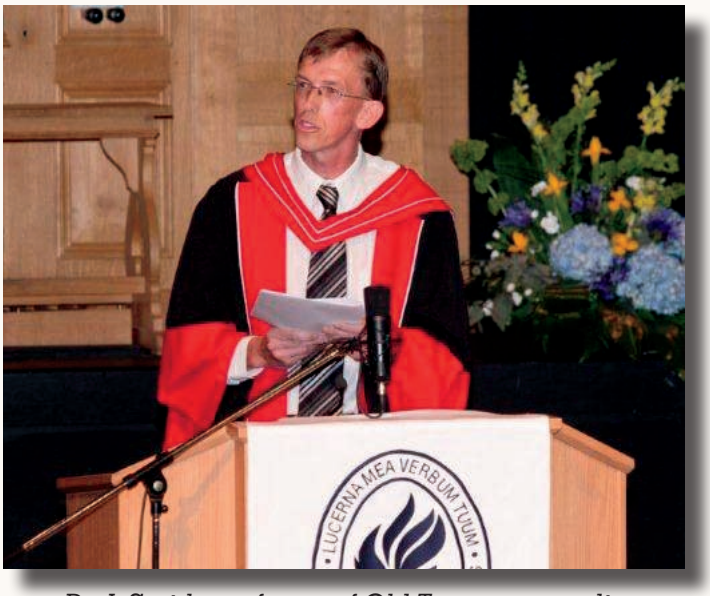
The keynote speaker for the evening was Dr. Jannes Smith, professor of Old Testament. His address was entitled, "A Doorkeeper in the House of My God." The Scripture reading earlier in the evening from 1 Chronicles 9 was integral to the address. The entire speech can found elsewhere in this issue of *Clarion*.

The climax of the evening was the graduation of three students. We witnessed the conferring of the degree of Master of Divinity on Timothy W. Schouten and David G. Winkel, and the degree of Bachelor of Theology on Robert G. Van Middelkoop. A word of thanks was expressed by David Winkel on behalf of the graduating class. Our brother did so in his typical lively manner. The assembly responded with a rousing singing of Psalm 134:1 and 3.

The Women's Savings Action, represented by Chris Nienhuis, Joanne Van Dam, and Janet Van Vliet, presented a pledge for $40,000.00 for the coming year. The presentation was stylized in the form of an interview led by Janet Van Vliet. The point was well made that the money of the WSA is much needed by the Seminary. The message is: keep collecting, ladies, and keep giving, brothers and sisters.

The collection was for the 2013 CRTS conference "Your Only Comfort: 450 Years of the Heidelberg Catechism." This conference will take place, the Lord willing, at our Seminary next January. No doubt you have already heard about this conference and the plan to involve all the churches in the conference via video conferencing. It sounds like this will be a real blessing to the Seminary and to the churches. For more information, please check the following website: www.canadianreformedseminary.ca/general/2013_conference.html

Rev. Eric Kampen led in closing prayer. As is customary, the assembly concluded with the singing of "O Canada." The program was completed at an early hour which gave everyone ample opportunity to congratulate the graduates afterwards. It was also a time of good fellowship, and of renewing friendships and acquaintances. You are welcome to view a video version of the College evening at www.canadianreformedseminary.ca. C



Dr. J. Smith, professor of Old Testament studies

John Smith

A Doorkeeper in the House of My God

Dr. John Smith is Professor of Old Testament Studies at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Ontario
jsmith@crts.ca

Speech given at the 2011 Convocation of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.

Mr. Chairman, Governors, Colleagues, Graduates, Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked." You probably recognize those words from Psalm 84. "One day in the Lord's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere." I'd rather be a doorkeeper. What is a doorkeeper, and does it even matter? Some would say, "No." Not much has been written on the topic. According to John Wesley Wright, the gatekeepers of the tabernacle "have not proven an area deemed worthy of scholarly energies."[1] And if it barely hits the radar for Old Testament scholars, should it matter to any of us? I hope to persuade you this evening that it does.

The gatekeepers were Levites stationed at the gates of God's house. It was their task to open the temple gates in the morning and to close them again at night. They stood ready to receive the tithes and gifts that the Israelites brought. They stood watch over the storerooms and treasuries to make sure that nothing was stolen. They stood on guard to make sure that no unclean person would enter God's house. They *stood* – for hours on end, day and night. Not a glamorous job, but as the poet John Milton reminds us, "They also serve who only stand and wait."[2] And the psalmist tells us that there's no place he'd rather be.

If the goal of Old Testament studies, of theology, and of our lives as Christians, is to know God better, to be close to him, what better place to go than to the threshold of the temple where the doorkeeper stood on guard, at the very entrance into God's presence? So this evening let's consider the office of God's doorkeepers. We'll trace their history through the Old Testament, and we'll outline their significance for us as Christians in the New Testament age.

Origins

Gatekeepers were not unique to Israel. Other nations too had temples for their gods, complete with temple personnel. It stands to reason that they also had temple guards to restrict access and to protect treasures. There is no evidence in Scripture, however, that Israel's gatekeeping institution derived from surrounding cultures. Rather it is rooted in the redemptive history of God's people.

Standing guard at the entrance to God's house, the doorkeeper was a reminder that communion with God is a privilege not to be taken lightly in a sinful world. The Garden of Eden did not need gatekeepers, until Adam and Eve became unrighteous and unholy; then God "drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen 3:24).[3] Yet in his grace God continued to call people into fellowship with him. Any such fellowship, however, had to respect his holiness. Moses could come only so close to the burning bush, because he was standing on holy ground (Exod 3:5). Though God spoke face to face with Moses as a man speaks with his friend (Exod 33:11; Num 12:7; Deut 34:10), even Moses could not see God's face and live (Exod 33:20). At Sinai God told Moses to put limits around the mountain. Whoever would even touch it would be put to death (Exod 19:12).

For God to dwell with his people in a tabernacle was a miracle of grace, only possible with a myriad of regulations that included a covenant framework, ongoing sacrifices to atone for sins, detailed instructions for building the tabernacle, an orderly arrangement of the tribes around it, and a detailed division of duties within it, all spelled out by God himself. After the glory of the Lord had entered the tabernacle at the end of Exodus, we read in Numbers 3 that the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to help the priests. One of their duties was to keep watch over the

temple furnishings. The books of Moses do not mention gatekeepers per se. In 1 Chronicles 9, however, we read that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was in charge of the gatekeepers, so there must have been gatekeepers at that time already. Verse 19 says that they guarded the entrance to the dwelling of the Lord. In the Hebrew it says that they were "over the camp of the Lord, guarding the entrance."

Gatekeepers protected the holiness of the tabernacle

In that context we can understand the actions of Phinehas in Numbers 25. Do you remember what he did when the Israelites sinned at Beth Peor and an Israelite man took a Midianite woman into the camp? The people stood weeping at the entrance, but Phinehas took a spear, went into the tent, and thrust it into the two of them, and so he turned away God's wrath. Some explainers suggest that the tent where Phinehas stabbed them to death was actually the tabernacle, that this was an act of cultic prostitution committed in the house of the Lord.[4] But the word that's used for tent there is unique, not otherwise used of the Tent of Meeting. It is enough to know that Phinehas, as priest in charge of the gatekeepers, protected the holiness of the camp of the Lord. As Numbers 25:13 puts it, "He was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites." So his work as chief gatekeeper had atoning value.

Samuel and David

After God's people conquered the Promised Land, the Levites settled in their towns. Then came a period of apostasy. We know very little about the gatekeepers during that time, but again 1 Chronicles 9 gives a clue. It says in verse 22 that Samuel the seer assigned gatekeepers to their position of trust. Samuel himself had done the work of a gatekeeper as a little boy. In 1 Samuel 3 we read that he opened the doors of the house of the Lord in the morning (v.15; cf. 1 Chron 9:27). Samuel grew up in the days of Eli. He would have known how the temple doors became a place of sin: Hophni and Phinehas slept with the women who were serving there (1 Sam 2:22). Samuel would have seen how those wicked priests were responsible for losing the ark. It's understandable then that Samuel later appointed gatekeepers to protect the holiness of the tabernacle.

The ark never came back to the tabernacle again. David brought it from the house of Obed-Edom to Jerusalem. He put it in a new tent which he had pitched for it. In 1 Chronicles 15 we read that he appointed two gatekeepers for the ark, Berekiah and Elkanah (v. 23). But that was a temporary measure. David wanted to build a house for God's name. He spent much of his reign not only gathering building materials but also organizing the Levites so that they would be ready to serve once the temple was built. Four thousand Levites were to become gatekeepers, and another four thousand were to praise the Lord with musical instruments (1 Chron 23:5). This was temple service on a grand scale!

Sons of Korah

There was especially one family that David appointed to become gatekeepers as well as musicians, namely the sons of Korah. That brings us full circle to Psalm 84. The title of this Psalm tells us that it was a Psalm of the sons of Korah. It was they who sang, "I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God." Now the Hebrew there does not have a noun, "doorkeeper," but a verb. It says, "I'd rather be stationed at the threshold in the house of my God." Some explainers understand it to refer not to a gatekeeper but to a beggar asking for alms.[5] But that's less likely. Psalm 84 is sung by sons of Korah stationed at the doors of the temple, and there's no place they'd rather be.

There's a delicious irony in this Psalm. Who are the sons of Korah? They're a true-blue Aussie Christian music band, you say. True enough, but who are they in the Bible? They're descendants of *that* Korah, the one who rebelled against Moses and Aaron in Numbers 16. Korah argued that the priests should not be the only ones allowed to offer incense. The whole congregation is holy, he said, so anyone should be able to offer incense before the Lord, anyone should be able to be a priest. You know what happened. The earth opened and swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num 26:10), and fire from the Lord destroyed the 250 men who followed them. But Korah's children survived (Num 26:11), and here is the irony: Korah wanted to open up the tabernacle service so that anyone could enter and offer incense, but God appoints Korah's sons to be gatekeepers, to guard the entrance to make sure that not just anyone could enter. They have to make it their life's work to prevent the sin of their father from happening again. Korah says, anyone can enter, but the sons of Korah learn to sing, "I'd rather be a doorkeeper than dwell in the tents of the wicked."

I'm not sure why David chose this family to become gatekeepers, but here is an interesting detail: Samuel was also a descendant of Korah – we know that from his genealogy in 1 Chronicles 6 – so it may well have been Samuel who singled out this family for the task (1 Chron 9:22). Another descendant of Korah was Obed-Edom, the man who had the ark in his house before David took it to Jerusalem. The Lord had blessed the house of Obed-Edom richly for the three months that the ark was there. In contrast to Uzzah, who had touched the ark, Obed-Edom had shown himself to be a trustworthy man. Perhaps that was another reason for choosing this family of Levites for the task.

The king's gate

When Solomon finished building the temple, he assigned the gatekeepers to their posts (2 Chron 8:14). They were stationed on all four sides, east, west, north, and south. Lots were cast to decide who went where, so this too was the Lord's decision (1 Chron 26:13; Prov 16:33). The most important gate was the east gate; that was the king's gate. The gatekeepers worked in shifts of seven days each (1 Chron 9:25); both they and the musicians worked day and night. As we sing with Psalm 134, "Come, bless the Lord with one accord, you faithful servants of the Lord, who praise him in his house by night and serve him there with all your might."[6]

"I'd rather be a doorkeeper than dwell in the tents of the wicked."

Did they do their work faithfully? Sometimes they did, especially when the kings were also faithful to the Lord. During the reign of Joash, the high priest Jehoiada "stationed doorkeepers at the gates of the LORD's temple so that no one who was in any way unclean might enter" (2 Chron 23:19). During the reign of Hezekiah, too, the gatekeepers were busy. The people faithfully brought their tithes and firstfruits to the storerooms of the temple, and 2 Chronicles 31 tells us that the keeper of the East Gate, together with six helpers, went out to the towns of the priests to distribute the gifts to them (2 Chron 31:11-15). In the time of Josiah, the gatekeepers collected money from the people to repair the temple (2 Chron 34:9). Those were good times.

Often, however, the kings were unfaithful, and then things went wrong at the king's gate. Uzziah became proud and entered the temple to offer incense there. Eighty-one priests confronted him, but he raged against them and stopped only after the Lord struck him with leprosy (2 Chron 26:16-20). Ahaz packed away the temple furnishings and replaced the altar of the Lord with a Syrian altar. He took away the royal entrance to the temple out of deference to the king of Assyria, and finally he shut the doors of the temple all together (2 Kings 16; 2 Chron 28). Manasseh filled the temple with foreign idols. Mere gatekeepers were powerless against these royal shenanigans.

Those who are ready for him will enjoy table fellowship with him and will enter a city with gates that are always open

In Ezekiel 8 we read that the prophet was transported in a vision to the temple in Jerusalem, and what did he see? At the entrance to the north gate there stood an idol that provokes to jealousy; unclean animals and idols were pictured on the walls, and seventy elders were burning incense to them. At the same gate women were worshiping the Babylonian fertility god Tammuz. At the entrance to the inner court Ezekiel saw about twenty-five men who had turned their backs toward the temple and were bowing toward the sun in the east. One scholar has suggested that these twenty-five men were gatekeepers, but it doesn't say that.[7] No wonder, though, that two chapters later Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord leaving the temple, through the east gate, the king's gate. When the city was finally destroyed we read in Jeremiah 52:24 that the Babylonian commander captured the high priest, the second priest, and also the three doorkeepers.

The exile and beyond

Fourteen years later, Ezekiel saw visions of a new temple (Ezek 40:1). He had to describe it in full detail to the exiles so that they might be ashamed of what they had done (Ezek 43:11). Especially the Levites were put in their place: they were still allowed to serve at the gates, but because they had burned incense in the midst of idols, they would not be allowed to do priest's work ever again (Ezek 44:10-13). Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord come back through the east gate (Ezek 43:5), but then the gate was shut. The Lord said to him, "This gate is to remain shut. It must not be opened; no one may enter through it. It is to remain shut because the LORD, the

God of Israel, has entered through it. The prince himself is the only one who may sit inside the gateway to eat in the presence of the LORD" (Ezek 44:2-3).

The doorkeeper families did not die out in exile. 1 Chronicles 9 tells us that among the first to return were 212 gatekeepers (v. 22). Ezra gives a smaller number, 139 (2:42), Nehemiah says 138 (7:45), and according to Josephus only 110 doorkeepers returned with Zerubbabel.[8] Whatever the exact number, it was a far cry from the 4000 that David had appointed. More gatekeepers came back with the second return under Ezra (Ezra 7:7), how many exactly, we do not know. We do know that they were restored to service. In Nehemiah 10 we read that the people promised to bring their firstfruits and their tithes into the temple storerooms where the gatekeepers and the singers were staying (v. 39). But there was trouble too. The book of Ezra ends with a list of men found guilty of marrying foreign women. Three of them were gatekeepers (Ezra 10:24). Before Nehemiah went back to the king of Persia, all the Israelites gave daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers (Neh 12:47), but while he was gone, the priest Eliashib emptied out one of the storerooms of the temple and gave it to Nehemiah's nemesis Tobiah. The people stopped giving, and the Levites went home to their fields (Neh 13:4-10). When he returned, Nehemiah was very upset; he threw Tobiah's goods out of the temple and called the Levites back to their posts.

Fulfilled in Christ

So ends the Old Testament history of the gatekeepers. Psalm 24 describes their task well: "Who shall ascend the hill of God, stand in his holy place, and laud the Lord who lives and reigns forever? He who withstands the wicked's lure, whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure, who keeps his oaths and does not waver."[9] It was the task of the gatekeeper to ensure that only such people entered the temple, and all too often they failed. Yet their task was not without hope. They were waiting for the true king of Israel to come to the temple. Psalm 24 speaks of that too: "Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in." This psalm was fulfilled in the New Testament when the Lord Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, sitting on a donkey while the crowds spread clothes and palm branches on the road (Matt 21). When he had entered the city, Jesus went to the temple, and he drove out the merchants and the moneychangers. Filled with zeal for the Lord, he fulfilled the office of the gatekeeper by cleansing the temple.

It was not for lack of gatekeepers that Christ did so. Several times in the gospels we read of a temple guard, so they were there! But how were they used? In John 7, the Pharisees sent them to arrest Jesus while he preached in the temple courts, but they came back empty-handed, saying, "No one ever spoke the way this man does" (John 7:46). In Luke 22 Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and to the officers of the temple guard to discuss how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. The officers of the temple guard were among the crowd that arrested our Saviour in Gethsemane (Luke 22:4, 5, 52). Temple guards sat with Peter at the fire while Jesus was on trial (John 18:18), accused of endangering the temple – he, the one man who withstood the wicked's lure, whose hands were clean, whose heart was pure.

May Canada be a place where God is given his due as the covenant LORD of Israel

The King of Glory who had come to his temple had to suffer outside the gate, excluded from the camp of the Lord (Heb 13:12, 13). But in doing so he showed himself to be a better priest than Phinehas. Phinehas, the first chief of the gatekeepers, made atonement by killing the Israelite man and his Midianite partner, but that was not enough. The Lord Jesus saved his people by offering his own life and bearing the wrath of God in their place. And it is here that we begin to see the significance of the gatekeeper for our lives as Christians today. Let me mention five areas of significance.

Significance

1. When we think of gatekeepers we tend to think of guards with locks and keys, shutting doors to keep people out. It's true that they had to stand guard around the house of God, especially at night. But they had charge of the key to *open* it in the morning (1 Chron 9:27). The Lord appointed gatekeepers because he wants a house with open gates so that his people can eagerly enter his presence with praise and thanksgiving. Think of Psalm 118: "Open for me the gates of righteousness: I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter" (v. 19-20). For us these words take on a new

Church News

Called by the Barrhead Canadian Reformed Church:

Rev. R.J. den Hollander

of Grace Canadian Reformed Church,
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Declined the call to Langley, BC Canadian Reformed Church:

Rev. M. Jagt

of Taber, Alberta

significance. Christ has fulfilled the tabernacle ministry and opened the way to God by his blood poured out on the cross. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph 3:12). We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19). Instead of gatekeepers who keep the unclean and the foreigners out, there are heralds of the gospel who go into the world with the message that through Christ both Jews and Gentiles have access to the Father by one Spirit (Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18). The message is urgent because Christ wants the communion that we have with God to become more perfect than it is now. In Mark 13 he warns his disciples to stay awake like a doorkeeper waiting for his master to come home, not knowing when he will arrive (Mark 13:32-37). Those who are ready for him will enjoy table fellowship with him. They'll enter a city with gates that are always open (Rev 21:25). No gatekeeper will ever be able to bar them from communion with the Lord. But Christ also warned about the door that closes to those who were not ready for his coming. He said, "Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.' But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from'" (Luke 13:25). Once Christ has shut the door, no gatekeeper will ever be able to pry it open again.

2. The task of the gatekeeper is instructive for the office of elder, on several counts. The gatekeepers had to learn from the sin of their father Korah not to intrude into the office of another but to be content with the position that God had given them, however lowly it might be. Still today, intrusion upon the office of another is a serious sin, worthy of suspension or deposition from office, and it is the elder's task "to prevent anyone from serving in the church without having been lawfully called."
   On the other hand, the elders should not attempt to do everything on their own. If in the old covenant the priests had Levites to perform all kinds of menial tasks, including standing at the gates, how much more in the new covenant, when we are all priests to God, should not the elders make good use of the gifts and talents of everyone in the congregation!
3. There is also a lesson for deacons. The gatekeepers held a trusted office. They had to know what was in the tabernacle and to make sure that none of it went missing. In the New Testament deacons, too, hold a position of trust. Much money passes through their hands, and it does not belong to them. Therefore we read in 1 Timothy 3 that deacons must not be greedy for money, and they must be tested first (vv. 8, 10). But we should not jump too quickly from the office of gatekeeper to the office of deacon; otherwise we miss the heart of the matter. The office of gatekeeper was not simply a matter of guarding the wealth of God's house. The gatekeeper had to open the doors of the temple so that the people could come in with their gifts. The gatekeeper saw those who gave generously, and those who gave sparingly. Now, the gatekeeper could see the size of the gift, but he could not see the heart of the giver, and here we learn a great lesson from our Saviour. In Luke 21 he stood by the temple treasury and watched as the people put in their gifts. He saw how the rich put in large amounts, but he also saw a poor widow who put in two very small copper coins. He did not despise the smallness of her gift, for behind the gift he saw the heart of one who gave all that she had. And there is the lesson for the deacon today: a deacon is not just concerned with the size of the gift, but with the heart of the giver.
4. In the New Testament age, believers are called temples of the Holy Spirit, and as such they need to be gatekeepers of their hearts and lives, fighting against the sins that threaten them, keeping unholy influences away, and giving the Spirit room to do his work, and from that perspective the whole congregation can sing Psalm 84: I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. In the Old Testament the gatekeepers and the singers worked together, day and night. Gatekeeping and singing still go together for Christians who live by the Spirit (Eph 5:18, 19; Col 3:16).
5. Finally, if I may, there's something quintessentially Canadian about the gatekeeper. And no, I'm not just referring to our self-deprecating humour, our tendency to think small of ourselves. I'm thinking of the last words we'll sing before leaving this

auditorium tonight: "O Canada, we stand on guard for thee." Now, I'm quite certain that the authors of our national anthem did not have 1 Chronicles 9 on the brain when they penned those words. Quite frankly, I'm not sure what they meant by them. What concerns me more tonight is what we mean by them when we sing them as Christian citizens. Perhaps, at the very least, we mean that Canada be a place where God is not merely an impersonal deity invoked for the sake of tradition, but a place where God is given his due as the covenant LORD of Israel who wants communion with Canadians too, the Father of Jesus Christ who reigns from sea to sea. If that's what we mean, then we have work to do.

Closing

Let me close with a few words of thanks. First of all I'd like to thank my wife Darlene for her support and for all the sacrifices that she made as we left Albany, settled back in Canada, and adjusted to a completely different life. Together we thank the Lord for his care for us as family over the past couple of years. I'd also like to thank the Board of Governors for the trust that they've placed in me by appointing me as professor of Old Testament. I pray that God will grant all that is necessary for me to bring out the wonderful gospel of the Old Testament for the students, for the wellbeing of the churches and for his glory. I thank my colleagues, as well as the staff of the Seminary, for their kindness and support, and also my predecessor Dr. Van Dam for his help and encouragement. And finally, to the students: thank you for your patience with me, for your encouraging feedback, your stimulating questions. I look forward to exploring the rich treasures of the Old Testament with you.

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[1] J.W. Wright, "Guarding the Gates: 1 Chronicles 26.1-19 and the Roles of Gatekeepers in Chronicles," *JSOT* 48 (1990): 69.
[2] John Milton, "On His Blindness."
[3] Some have suggested that man had to *guard* the Garden of Eden (e.g. to keep Satan out), because the verb translated "to guard" in Genesis 3:24 is also used in Genesis 2:15. In the context of Genesis 2:15, however, it more likely means "to tend."
[4] E.g. John Sturdy, *Numbers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 184-185.
[5] See, e.g., L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition* (tr. M.E.J. Richardson; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:765. See also Acts 3:2.
[6] *Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter* (Winnipeg: Premier, 2010).
[7] Dan Olson, "What Got the Gatekeepers into Trouble?" *JSOT* 30.2 (2005): 223-242, esp. 237. This comment forms part of an intriguing but poorly substantiated argument that the gatekeepers fell into disgrace for engaging in "solar Yahwism."
[8] Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities,* 11.70.
[9] *Book of Praise.*
[10] Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons, *Book of Praise*, 612; Church Order, Article 72.

Dr. J. Smith, Dr. A. de Visser, Dr. G.H. Visscher, Dr J.P. Van Vliet, Dr. C. Van Dam

Gerhard H. Visscher

Principal's Report 2011 – 2012

Dr. Gerhard H. Visscher is professor of New Testament and principal of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary

So how exactly does a Seminary manage to produce students who will be godly men who are gifted speakers, able academics, wonderful pastors, great leaders, and so much more? This is the challenge before us at the beginning of another academic year. And the challenge is more daunting now than in years gone by. Preachers are speaking to listeners who come with clickers in their heads, who decide in twenty seconds whether to turn off or turn on; they are speaking to persons who with less effort than it takes to get to church Sunday morning can listen to half a dozen preachers of all kinds of doctrinal stripes; they are trying to speak to young people who, with all kinds of electronic gadgetry and social media are quite in control of whether or not they let anyone into their environment. So how exactly do we do this? Of course, ultimately, only through the power of the Word of God and his Spirit; he has burst through greater obstacles than this throughout history. But that does not negate the fact that young men have to be the best possible conduit for the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here is a perfect example of how a process we have been busy with is very helpful. 2011 – 2012 will be known as the year wherein CRTS was very occupied with the matter of accreditation through the Association of Theological Schools. Board, staff, and faculty were divided into committees, examined a hundred questions, dozens of policies, and came up with a very significant Self-Study in which CRTS is compared at length with the standards of ATS. But precisely on this point, we see the benefit of the whole process because, without forcing us to compromise on anything, ATS has taught us – just to refer to one example – to think about theological education in a more focused way.

What I mean is this: there will have been many a theological student entering the hallowed halls of seminary who had the impression that the goal of the whole exercise was simply to be the recipient of this colossal amount of knowledge transferred to him, and that if he actually managed to retain all that, and learn a few skills in exegesis and homiletics, he would be a good pastor. Sure, we have long realized that seminary education is much more than that and have therefore, for example, added the Pastoral Training Program to our M. Div. program. But ATS would have us think a little harder and longer on the whole question of what are the necessary components of seminary education. ATS says, for example, that "M. Div. education has a complex goal: the personal, vocational, spiritual, and academic formation of the student."

Four components

Seminary education involves four major components according to ATS.

Religious Heritage is first. Pastors, above all, need to be competent in the core subjects of Scripture, doctrine, history, and the various academic departments within the study of theology.

Cultural Context is second. How will a pastor be able to speak to people who are creatures of the culture in which they live? Only if he understands that culture, and understands in depth what Scripture says about the context in which people live. Sermons become treatises about how things once were in another time and another culture unless present and future pastors are aware of contemporary cultural and social issues and the degree to which they impact the people to whom they minister.

Personal and spiritual formation is another component. Seminary education may not remain simply academic, but must "provide opportunities through which the student may grow in personal faith, emotional maturity, moral integrity, and public witness." The person of the preacher is critically important. Ministries fail for many reasons, no doubt, but one can suspect that this is chief among them and that ministries will flourish when these aspects too are in place.

(l to r): Tim Schouten, Rob Van Middelkoop, David Winkel

Capacity for ministerial and public leadership. We want pastors also to be leaders who lovingly give direction to the people God has put in their charge. This is why we have some time ago also added the Pastoral Training Program to the M. Div. curriculum.

It's not that we have been unaware of these points or never done any of this, but ATS would have us be more intentional and focused on these four components and we intend to develop more consciously in these respects. And we ask you to pray for us that we may be blessed therein, for we are but "jars of clay" attempting to mould other younger jars in such a way that God may be glorified through you (2 Cor 4:7)

This is but one example of the many policies and procedures that have been and are being examined at length because of the accreditation process. So where are we in the process? The Self-Study is nearing completion and will be submitted to ATS this November, we can expect an ATS team to visit us sometime in the new year, and we hope to be fully accredited by Spring 2013.

Students

At the previous convocation, the degree of Master of Divinity was conferred on Abel Pol, Justin Roukema, Steve Vandevelde, and Ted Van Spronsen; while Abel Pol has accepted the call to Chilliwack, BC, the others are serving the churches at Abbotsford, BC, Carman, MB, and Busselton, Australia respectively.

Tonight we may present you with three more students: Tim Schouten, David Winkel, and Rob Van Middelkoop. Tim Schouten has since accepted a teaching position in London, ON, David Winkel will be helping the Guelph Emmanuel church for a number of months before seeking ordination, and Rob van Middelkoop has opted for the Bachelor of Theology degree rather than continuing towards the regular ministry and the Master of Divinity degree.

Tonight we are also happy to welcome the largest Freshman class ever, all for the M. Div. program. Iwan Borst from Carman, MB, Jonathan Chase from Lynden, WA, Jeremy DeHaan from Abbotsford, BC, William den Hollander from Toronto, ON, Hilmer Jagersma from Chilliwack, BC, David Pol from Carman, MB, and Jake Torenvliet from Aldergrove, BC. We are also pleased to welcome HanGil Lee who has come to us all the way from South Korea. While each of our new students is unique and appreciated, we would be remiss not to single out one of them as he actually comes to us with a Ph.D. in a field very relevant to the study of theology. We congratulate Dr. William den Hollander II who recently defended a dissertation on Josephus in Rome and received a doctorate from York University in Toronto. It was a unique moment when the NT professor traveled to Toronto to witness a student's doctoral defense before the student came to Hamilton for admission to seminary! We are overjoyed, Dr. den Hollander, that after a very long period of study, you are willing to add many more years to your study. We are overjoyed with the fact that this year we have a total of nineteen able, energetic, and gifted students. May the Lord bless all of them as they seek not their own glory but the glory of he who gave his whole life to serve the church!

Travels

While throughout the year members of the faculty are found labouring in the seminary, their labours also taken them far beyond both for the purpose of gaining and imparting knowledge. Here's our annual list of "where in the world we've been:"

Dr. A.J. De Visser

- Travelled to San Francisco in November 2011 to attend the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society where he also delivered a paper entitled "Honoured but Eclipsed: Beliefs about Christ in an African Church."
- Travelled to churches in Neerlandia, Winnipeg, Carman, and Denver on various occasions for the purposes of preaching and teaching.

Dr. J. Smith

- Travelled to San Francisco in November 2011 for the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature,

especially the Septuagint seminars.
- Travelled to B.C. for teaching and preaching purposes.

Dr. J. Van Vliet

- Travelled to Grand Rapids in October 2011 to attend the Bavinck Conference.
- Travelled to Montreal a number of times in the fall of 2011 to teach a course at Farel Seminary.

Dr. G.H. Visscher

- Travelled to San Francisco in November 2011 to attend the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society.
- Travelled to Florida in January 2012 to attend a meeting of the Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents, an organization within ATS.
- Travelled to Minneapolis in June 2012 to attend the Biennial Meeting of the Association of Theological Schools and the meeting of the Chief Academic Officers Society.

Dr. C. Van Dam, emeritus professor

- Travelled to Brazil in December 2011 to lecture at the Aldeia Training Centre in Recife.
- Travelled to Korea in February 2012 to lecture at the Theological Academy of the Independent Reformed Church in Anyang, and at the Korea Theological Seminary in Cheonan.
- Travelled to Ottawa in March 2012 to speak to Members of Parliament and Senators at an event sponsored by ARPA and three MPs.

Staff

For almost three years now the faculty of the Seminary has been assisted by the services of Mrs. Rose Pol. Now that her husband, Abel Pol, has accepted the call to Chilliwack, BC, Rose too needs to leave us. We thank her for her faithful work, her attention to detail, her servant heart, and for just making CRTS a great place to work. We wish her and Abel the Lord's blessing as they serve a church and raise a family to God's praise! And at the same time, this evening we want to welcome a new staff member – Mrs. Leanne Kuizenga, who takes Rose's place as our Faculty Administrative Assistant.

While on the subject of staff, we need to acknowledge this evening also the faithful services of one member in particular. When the whole process of accreditation is finished, no one will be more relieved than Ms. Margaret Vandervelde, who along with the task of Librarian has diligently served as our Coordinator of Accreditation. We thank her for her diligence, persistence, and the very able way in which she has overseen this whole process so far.

We end this report this time with thankfulness to the Lord for the wonderful co-operation we enjoy as a seminary community. Staff, faculty, and Board have had to work together throughout the year, asking many hard questions, looking at many issues from diverse sides. We were not afraid to challenge each other, as we sought to press the seminary on to new levels of excellence. We could do all that only because of a unity that undergirds all of us, and a common purpose to which we all strive: the best possible seminary education for our students so that we might have the best possible ministers for the churches that so wonderfully support us.
We thank you for your continued financial and prayerful support of this cause. May God be praised and thanked!

Board of Governors and Faculty of CRTS:
Back row (l to r): B. Hordyk, L. Jagt, Rev. J. Ludwig, Dr. A.J. Pol, K.J. Veldkamp, Rev. R. Aasman, H. Kampen, A. Bax, Rev. W. Slomp
Front row (l to r): Rev. E. Kampen, Dr. C. Van Dam, Dr. A.J. de Visser, Dr. G.H. Visscher, Dr. J.P. Van Vliet, Dr. J. Smith, Rev. J. Van Woudenberg

Chris Nienhuis,
Joanne Van Dam, and
Janet Van Vliet

Presentation of the Women's Savings Action At Convocation 2012

The presentation this year was modeled after a radio style interview.

Janet: Good evening and welcome to Reformed Radio Live. Tonight we have in our studio some special guests from the Women's Savings Action of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, Mrs. Joanne Van Dam and Mrs. Chris Nienhuis. Welcome Joanne and Chris.

Joanne: Thank you.

Chris: It is our pleasure to be here.

Janet: Just for our listeners who have never heard of the Women's Savings Action, could you explain who you are and what you do?

Joanne: Sure. Very simply, we are a group of ladies who collect money for the library of the Seminary. In each congregation a representative of the Women's Savings Action organizes a collection once or twice a year in her church and then sends the money to us. We in turn pass the money on to the Seminary.

Janet: Does each representative collect using the same methods in each congregation?

Chris: Many years ago when the Women's Savings Action started, ladies gave each member or family in their congregation a tin with a special Theological College label pasted on the side. Everyone's pennies would clink into this tin. In April or May the ladies would visit each family to pick up the tin or they would phone and arrange to have the pennies delivered at a Bible Study meeting or at church. Some women borrowed the change rolling machine from the deacons and together with a team of helpers bundled up the pennies into fifty cent rolls. Now, of course, things are a little different. Many people still collect change, but we also receive dollar bills and cheques now.

L to R: Mrs. C. Nienhuis, Mrs. J. Van Dam, Mrs. J. Van Vliet

Janet: Excellent. Do ladies still visit or call?

Joanne: Many still do. Certainly email has taken over a fair bit. Calling or emailing sure helps to collect effectively!

Janet: That's true. What are you going to do now that the penny is about to become extinct in Canada?

Chris: Yes, well the penny will still be around for a while, but you're right, it will be slowly phased out. Sisters may certainly still collect loose change for the library. Don't worry, we are still counting on rolling coins. Cheques, of course, are welcome as well. Many people donate this way too.

Janet: You said, "Many years ago." How many years has the Women's Savings Action helped the Seminary?

Joanne: Since the Seminary opened in 1969. The League of Women's Societies got the Women's Savings Action in motion.

Janet: Wow. Would you say that a Women's Savings Action is a common feature of a seminary?

Chris: No. As a matter of fact, we are the envy of many seminaries in North America. As you may have heard, the seminary has undergone an external review. When our set up was explained the gentlemen were sincerely impressed. Many seminaries would love to have the kind of support we can give. Also, our librarian has gone to a conference of Christian librarians. There too, the other librarians were very impressed with our set up.

Janet: Very good. You are able to give a large amount each year. In the last number of years you have given $35,000. Is that right?

Joanne: Yes.

Janet: Is it really necessary to give each year? Does the library use up that amount every time?

Joanne: Certainly. The books that the library must purchase are much more expensive than your average book at Coles. The books are highly specialized. Many of the books can cost into the hundreds of dollars. Rising inflation and ever higher costs diminish the purchasing power as well.

Janet: Since you have collected for so many years now, doesn't the library have sufficient resources?

Chris: It is important that the library stay current.

Janet: For sure. Who can use the library? Could I just go and take out a book?

Joanne: Oh, yes. Besides the professors and students, the library is available for the brothers and sisters in all the churches as well as students from other institutions.

Janet: Wonderful. Have you ever received comments on the quality of the library?

Chris: Some students enrolled at McMaster Divinity College have used our library and commented that they find our library so much easier to use and we have almost all of the resources they need.

Janet: So on the night of the convocation, will you be able to give $35,000 again this year?

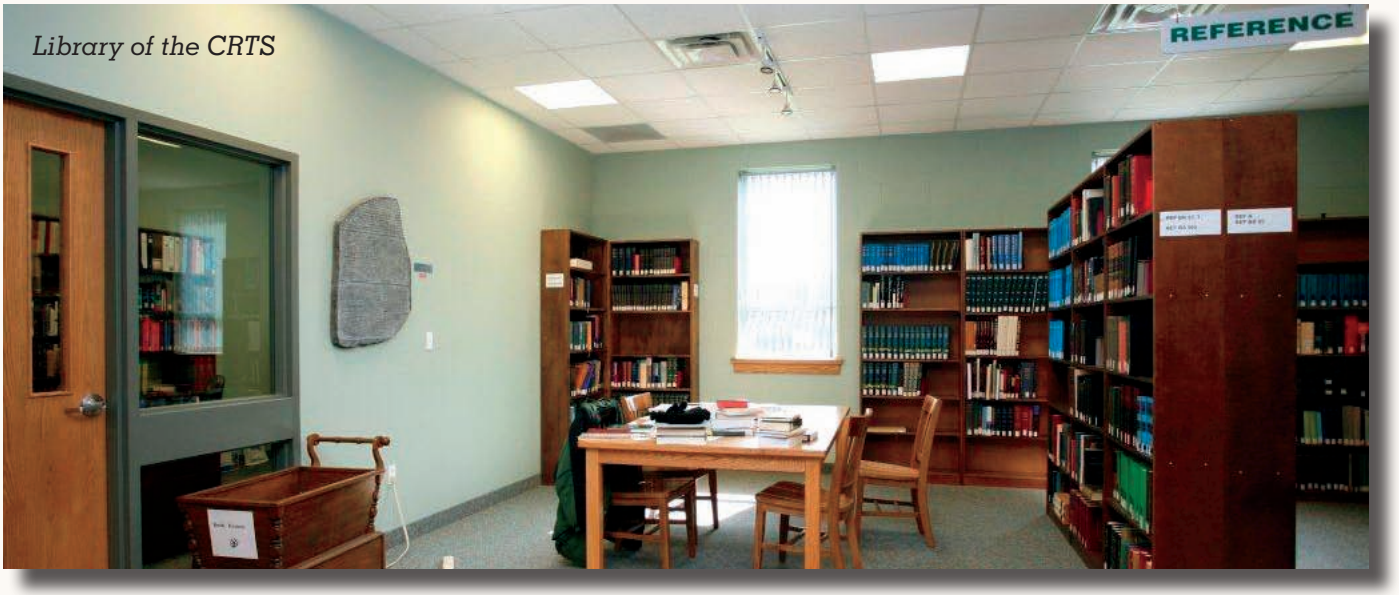
Joanne: With thanks to our Heavenly Father, we are able to give even more this year. This past year just over $40,000 was collected and hence we would like to give $40,000 for the library this year.

Janet: That is wonderful news. Thank you both for coming in today, and we wish you God's blessings in the future. May he grant the work to continue for the furtherance of his kingdom.

Joanne: Thank you so much.

Janet: That was Chris Nienhuis and Joanne Van Dam with me today, talking about the Women's Savings Action for the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. We hoped you enjoyed our program today, and be sure to join us again at this time tomorrow for more great interviews and music. Stay tuned.

Chris: It is with great gratitude to the Lord that we may announce that $40,256.82 was collected. A heartfelt thank you to all of you for your generous donations and your hours spent collecting and counting. Mr. Principal, it gives us great pleasure to present you with a pledge for $40,000 for the coming year. C



Library of the CRTS

Press Release for the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches [Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary] for a meeting held on September 6, 2012

The Board of Governors met at the Seminary Facilities in Hamilton, Ontario on September 6, 2012. Present at the meeting were Archie J. Bax, Hank Kampen (Treasurer), Lammert Jagt, Rev. Richard Aasman (Chairman), Barry Hordyk, Dr. Andrew J. Pol (Secretary), Rev. Willem B. Slomp, Rev. Eric Kampen, Rev. John VanWoudenberg, Rev. John Ludwig, and Karl J. Veldkamp (Vice-Chairman/Corresponding Clerk). The Principal, Dr. G. H. Visscher also was present. The meeting was opened by Rev R. Aasman with the reading of Philippians 3:7-21 and prayer.

Memorabilia

In our memorabilia we remembered: the illness of Prof. Geertsema; the sixty-third birthday of Dr. J. DeJong; the situation and health challenges for Dr. N. Gootjes; the current situation with Mrs. Faber; the upcoming peremptory examination for Br. Abel Pol, scheduled for the week of September 10, 2012, D.V.; and the challenges of health for the parents of Rev. Slomp.

Minutes, agenda and Officers of the Board

The minutes of the Board meeting held on March 1, 2012 were adopted. The agenda for the meeting was settled.

Correspondence of note

a. Press Release for March 1, 2012 Board meeting
b. A letter to Dr. A. J. de Visser confirming in principle approval of his sabbatical proposal. Such sabbatical to take place the second term of the 2012 – 2013 academic year.
c. A letter was written to Mr. J. Walker confirming the terms of his appointment as an adjunct lecturer to teach first year Greek for the 2012-2013 academic year.
c. A further letter sent to the Deputies for Training for the Ministry (appointed by Synod 2009 of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia) regarding their inquiries and desire for comprehensive consideration of some form of distance education for the freshmen year.
d. Letter received from the Senate setting out a proposal for guidelines around admission standards for new students – setting out a minimum grade point average. This is approved.
e. A letter from Dr. A. J. de Visser setting out a detailed summary of his sabbatical plans and intentions, focused on writing a book on Mission Studies. Received with gratitude.
f. A letter from the Senate proposing the appointment of a principal on three year renewable terms to a maximum of three consecutive terms – which was approved. Dr. G. H. Visscher was appointed as Principal for the period 2014 to 2017, subject to approval by the next synod.
g. Proposal from the Senate for the curriculum and program scheduled for the interim semester of two weeks in January 2013, with a focus on Catechism teaching and preaching. Approved with gratitude.

Receipt of reports-material agenda items:

a. **Exit surveys** – Following a meeting between two members of the Academic Committee and the Senate it was agreed that elements of the process for soliciting exit surveys requires further analysis and reflection and this was taken on by the Academic Committee.
b. **Catechism satellite conferences** – a proposal from the organizers of the Heidelberg Catechism conference for January 2013 to conduct satellite conferences was received and approved.
c. **Visits to the lectures** – The Revs. R. Aasman and W. Slomp provided their report on the visits to the lectures completed in the spring of 2012. The reports are comprehensive and very positive. Such reports were presented and received with gratitude.
d. **Finance and Property Committee matters** – The following elements were dealt with:
    i. all Finance and Property Committee minutes have been circulated. It is further confirmed that the minutes of this committee are being circulated to the Deputies of the FRCA on a confidential basis as well;
    ii. the audited financial statements for the fiscal period ending December 31, 2011 were received;
    iii. the proposed budget for the fiscal period ending December 31, 2013 was reviewed and approved.

iv. The annual report of the committee was received by the Board. The continued faithful support of the church community was noted with gratitude. The facilities of the Seminary continue to serve the Seminary well. As part of the report the committee suggests an increase in annual tuition to $2300.00, which was approved.

e. **Senate matters** – In connection with the Senate the following reports were received: Registrar, Librarian, Lecture Schedule, Convocation Committee, Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund, Website of CRTS, and Calendar for 2012-2013 Academic Year. All reports were comprehensive and were received with gratitude and acknowledgment of the ongoing diligence and work at the Seminary.

f. **Speaking tour for Manitoba and Denver** – the report of Dr. A.J. de Visser on speaking tours he completed to Manitoba and Denver in June and August respectively was received. Support for these tours is evident.

g. **Governance Committee** – It was confirmed that all compliance documentation required from the Board and Faculty have been signed. New Orientation Policies for new board members, new faculty, and new staff were approved for the College Handbook. An amended version of the operating bylaw number 12 which incorporated the necessary amendments to reflect the role of adjunct professors and adjunct lecturers was approved for submission for approval by the next synod.

h. **Conference attendances** – The report of Dr. G.H. Visscher relating to his attendance at a meeting of the Chief Academic Officers Society of the Association of Theological Schools and the Biennial meeting of the Association of Theological Schools held in Minneapolis, MN in June of 2012 was received. The Librarian, M. Vandervelde (who is also the ATS self study coordinator) also attended the Biennial Meeting and contributed to the report.

i. **Assessment** – The Board received and approved in principle the Assessment Plan as prepared by the Senate. The Assessment Plan is intended as a comprehensive framework with directs and prompts continuous review and consideration of the functioning and activities of the Seminary to ensure its ongoing faithfulness and adherence to his statement of institutional purpose. M. Vandervelde, Librarian was appointed as the interim assessment coordinator with the direction to provide an interim report at the next meeting of the Board.

j. **Accreditation** – The current draft of the Self Study report (a document of eighty-five pages which addresses ten standards developed by ATS by which the Seminary is measured and considered) and its recommendations were reviewed, commented upon, and approved for finalization. The deadline to submit the self study report to ATS for formal review and approval of accreditation is November 1, 2012.

k. **Fifth professor proposal and Search Committee** – The matter of the proposal to synod for a permanent fifth professor for the Department of Ecclesiology was confirmed with the understanding that the substance of such proposal will be contained in the report of the Board to the next synod. In connection with such proposal the interim report of the search committee for a possible candidates for such position, if such position is indeed approved by the next synod (which is not assumed, nor presumed), was received. Such interim report set out the activities of the search committee to a current date. Approval was given to proceed with interviewing the candidates, with the expectation that a report with a recommendation would be provided to the Board at its meeting scheduled for January of 2013.

l. **Lecture visitors** – the following schedule was adopted:
   i. For Semester I of the 2012-2013 academic year: the Revs. R. Aasman and W. B. Slomp.
   ii. For Semester II of the 2012-2013 academic year: the Revs. E. Kampen and J. Ludwig.

m. **Report of the Board to Synod Carman West** – 2013 – to be convened – The draft report was received and discussed with outstanding items duly noted. The finalization of the report was tasked to Dr. G. H. Visscher and K. Veldkamp (corresponding clerk) – with review and input from the Board as needed.

n. **Nominations for new members of the Board** – For the terms of the ministerial members of the Board coming to an end in 2013, it is expected that the appropriate Regional Synods will nominate same. For the nomination of new non-ministerial members of the Board who would be part of the Finance and Property Committee, it was agreed that the Board would request the upcoming General Synod to change the traditional nomination procedure, allowing for two nominations (a primary and an alternate) from Western Canada for the Finance and Property Committee. Grounds for this change in practice were confirmed as follows:

i. neither the bylaws nor the incorporating act prescribe that finance and property committee members be only from Ontario. Such practice has arisen by policy and tradition;

ii. the function of non ministers on the finance and property committee should not be viewed as limited to the committee work as such board members also function as full members of the board and have the attendant supervisory roles and responsibilities;

iii. fully one half of the membership of the federation are outside of Ontario and having non-ministerial representation from Western Canada would provide for presence, inclusiveness, knowledge, and a "voice at the table" for the churches in Western Canada from a non-ministerial perspective; and

iv. the additional travel costs are relatively nominal and would be commensurate to the current expenditures now made for regular travel by ministers for Board activities for Board meetings, lecture visits, and the like.

Next meeting of the Board was tentatively scheduled for January 17, 2013, d.v.

Press Release and closing

The completion of the Press Release was delegated to the Vice Chairman in consultation with the Executive and the meeting was closed with prayer and thanksgiving.

On behalf of the Board of Governors
of the Theological College of the
Canadian Reformed Churches, Karl J. Veldkamp,
Vice Chairman/Corresponding Clerk C

Board of Governors

Clarion Advertisements

ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE:
Announcements of Weddings, Anniversaries (especially those with an Open House) should be submitted six weeks in advance.

Births

Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Psalm 103:1

With thankfulness to God for making all things well, we announce the birth of our son who was born 5 1/2 weeks early weighing 4 lbs 12 oz

ASHER TREVOR DEN HOLLANDER

Born: July 19, 2012
Thankful parents: **Paul and Krystle den Hollander**
Proud big sister: *Mackenzie*
3rd grandchild for Andrew & Yvonne Kampen
35th grandchild for Rev. Willem & Gertie den Hollander
109 Woodroof Crescent, Aurora, ON L4G 7H3
Email: pkdenhollander@bell.net

Anniversaries

Pastor Visscher celebrates 40 years in the Ministry

On October 15, 2012 Pastor James Visscher celebrated his 40th Ministry Anniversary.

As congregation we thankfully reflect and praise our Lord and Saviour for guiding, leading, sustaining, encouraging and equipping him to joyfully proclaim the gospel message at home and abroad.

The words of 2 Timothy 4:2 and Romans 10:15 come to mind.

Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. 2 Timothy 4:2-3

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!" Romans 10:15

The Congregation of Langley, British Columbia, Canada

Wedding Anniversaries

1987 ~ November 6 ~ 2012

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Romans 12:12

MARK and ARLENE LUDWIG (nee JANSEMA)

Giving thanks to our heavenly Father for the many blessings He has bestowed on them, we announce the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents.
We pray that the Lord may continue to bless them with many more years in health and happiness.

Love,

Dunnville, ON:	Sharon and Jonathan Kingma
	Avaiya, Javan
Binbrook, ON:	Jessica and Jacob De Jong
	Lynden, Kara
Dunnville, ON:	Jonathan
	Alaina Ludwig and Brian Schutten
	Kristen Ludwig and Kyle Boverhof
	Mark
	Lisa

Mailing Address: 7110 Canboro Road, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1

60th Wedding Anniversary

1952 ~ December 19 ~ 2012

May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life... Psalm 128:5

With thankfulness to our Heavenly Father who has kept them in His care, we are happy to announce the 60th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents

JIM and JOANNE STIENSTRA (nee DeWitt)

We pray that the Lord will continue to be near to them.

With love, your children

Tara, ON:	Hilda and Rudi Wildeboer
Neerlandia, AB:	Tolliena and Gerry VanGrootheest
Arthur, ON:	Christina and Hein Penninga
Carman, MB:	Brenda and Len Lodder
Fergus, ON:	Jim and Sandi Stienstra
	Grandparents of 20 grandchildren and 42 great-grandchildren

An Open House will be held, D.V., on December 22, 2012 in the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church in Fergus, Ontario

572 Walker Street, Fergus, ON N1M 3J2

Obituaries

January 14, 1922 – October 1, 2012

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7-8

After only a short stay in hospital, the Lord took unto Himself our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, at the age of 90 years. We give thanks to our heavenly Father for her example of faith and love, of patient endurance through her time of infirmities and her hope in the Saviour.

JANKA HUTTEN (nee VanKeulen)

Predeceased by her husband Gerrit Hutten, March 2000, and son Harry, 1949

Cayuga, ON: Grace and Peter Smid
- *Janet and Jason VanVliet*
  - Curtis, Hannah, Ruth, Abigail, Philip, Joelle
- *John and Laura Smid*
  - Bethany, Grace, Kara, Johanna
- *Gary and Jackie Smid*
  - James, Leah, Maria, Timothy
- *Deanna Smid*
- *Caleb and Joanna Smid*
  - Luke

Owen Sound, ON: John and Wilma Hutten
- *Gerald and Sarah Hutten*
  - Megan, Katelyn, Emily
- *James Hutten*
- *Matthew and Meaghan Hutten*
  - Kenzie
- *Mark and Lindsay Hutten*
  - Anya, Sydney
- *Ken and Natasha Hutten*
  - Gavin, Tanner
- *Anne Hutten*

Wyoming, ON: Bill and Linda Dokter
- *Julia and Jens Korndoerfer*
- *William and Christina Dokter*
  - Elyse, Marieke, Emily, Sophia, Seth, Anna
- *Alisha and Mike Boeringa*
  - Jonathan
- *Rachel and Yotam Baum*

Elora, ON: Jerry and Claire Hutten
- *Janina Hutten*
- *Daniel and Cobie Hutten*
  - Melanie, Liam
- *Lydia and Ken Dokter*
  - David, Sean, Amy
- *Hanna and John Brunink*
  - Esther, Luke, James, Nathan
- *David Hutten (†)*
- *Andrew and Heidi Hutten*
  - Cadence
- *John Hutten and Sarah Korevaar*
- *Kevin Hutten and Kathryn Nobel*

Mount Hope, ON: Teresa and Claude Boisvert
- *Samuel Boisvert*
- *Jacqueline Boisvert*

York, ON: Tim and Elly Hutten
- *Christina Hutten*
- *Geoffrey and Marisa Hutten*
  - Everett
- *Michael Hutten*
- *Janelle Hutten*
- *Esther Hutten*
- *Nathan Hutten*
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Invites applications for the **2013-2014** school year for the position of

PRINCIPAL/TEACHER

Eben-Ezer Christian School offers grades JK-8 with an enrolment of approximately 40 students, and five teachers. Eben-Ezer is a close-knit school community, with great relations between staff, board and membership.

Chatham has much to offer the prospective applicant, being a smaller community, but within an hour's commute to larger centers. The cost of living is significantly lower than many Canadian cities.

Chatham has a vibrant congregation of approximately 300 members and has just installed its new pastor, Rev. DeBoer. We are excited about the coming years as we get to know Rev. DeBoer and his family better and we rejoice in having a shepherd.

If you would like further information about school operations and opportunities, please contact
Janice Bultje, Ed. Com. Chair
at janb@ciaccess.com
519-352-6542
8753 Pioneer Line, Chatham, Ontario N7M 5J7

EMMANUEL CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
Located in Fergus, ON
invites applications for the following position:

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Preferences will be given to applicants with qualifications in the following areas (although other areas will be considered):

Math/Science

for the 2nd semester of the 2012/13 school year (Feb to June). Full and part-time applicants will be given consideration. Emmanuel has a student body of 187 students in grades 9 through 12. It is 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**
(519) 843-3029 (work); (519) 843-1790 (home)

Applications to be addressed to:
Emmanuel Christian High School
c/o Education Committee
RR 3, Garafraxa Street, Fergus, ON

Teaching Positions

The Board of the **Owen Sound Canadian Reformed School** invites applications for

TEACHING PRINCIPAL

Owen Sound Canadian Reformed School currently offers grades 1-8, with an enrollment of approximately 40 students. If you love to teach, have good interpersonal skills and desire to support our community in its mandate to raise all our covenant children in the fear of the Lord, please send us your resume, statement of faith and a list of references.

To submit an application or for further information about the opportunities, school operations or about the surrounding area of Owen Sound please contact:
Mr. Alex Sikkema, Board Chair
519-934-3763, owensoundboard@gmail.com or
Mr. Tim Degelder, Education Committee
519-794-2168, tim@aqualineirrigation.ca

The board of
Tyndale Christian School
of Calgary, Alberta, Canada
invites applications for the
2012/2013 school year for the possible positions of

PRIMARY and SECONDARY GRADES TEACHERS

Tyndale Christian School currently offers grades K-12, with an enrollment of approximately 75 students, and 6 full-time staff.

If you would like further information about the opportunities, school operations, or living in the beautiful Calgary area; please contact the board chairman:
Mr. Eric Veenendaal
Home: (403) 698-1858; eric.veenendaal@gmail.com
Or the principal: **Mr. Ed Hoogerdyk**
Home: (403) 285-4680; ed.hoogerdyk@gmail.com

Applications can be sent to:
Debbie Chin, Secretary of the Board
5851 22 Avenue NE, Calgary, AB T1Y 2C1
debbiechin@telus.net

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"Canada Needs Federal Abortion Legislation!"

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1) ARPA Canada is grounded: based on God's Word, also as it is faithfully summarized in the Reformed confessions.

2) ARPA Canada is established: Formed in 2007, we have a national board of directors, three full-time and experienced staff, 20 local groups, and a strong network of support both in government and churches.

3) ARPA Canada is experienced:

i. Executive Director, Mark Penninga: Master of Arts in Political Science, interned in Parliament, former Research Analyst for Focus on the Family, author.

ii. Legal Counsel and Ontario Director André Schutten: Certified and practicing lawyer, drafted Supreme Court of Canada submissions, previously worked for the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, based in Ottawa.

iii. WeNeedaLAW.ca Campaign Director Mike Schouten: heads up a new campaign that has already made huge strides with government officials, media, and grassroots Canadians.

4) ARPA Canada is effective: Now regarded as one of the most active and effective Christian political organizations in Canada.

a. MISSION 1: Equipping Reformed Christians for political action

i. Resources reach 30,000+ visitors per month, providing news and action items

ii. Well over 100 presentations to Reformed churches and schools

iii. Custom-made EasyMail technology: Resulted in tens of thousands of letters to Parliament and Legislatures

iv. 20 ARPA groups organized, coordinated, and active: building relationships with government officials, and being a voice for truth in their communities

v. Quality printed and electronic publications

b. MISSION 2: Bringing a Biblical perspective to civil government

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iv. Publish a biannual policy report that is sent to all MPs and Senators

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a. Current annual budget of only $325,000

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ii. www.HumanRightsCommissions.ca – protecting our fundamental freedoms from Canada's human rights commissions

iii. www.theTRUTHis.ca – abortion memorials located throughout Canada

b. Articles published in National Post, Toronto Star, Sun News chain, etc

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I may revoke my authorization at any time, subject to providing notice of 30 days. I can obtain a sample cancellation form, or further information on my right to cancel a PAD Agreement, at my financial institution or by visiting www.cdnpay.ca.

Please **mail form** with void cheque to:

ARPA CANADA 734 – 13St N, Lethbridge AB, T1H 2T1.

Email: john@arpacanada.ca | Phone: 403.315.2617

I have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. For example, I have the right to receive reimbursement for any debit that is not authorized or is not consistent with this PAD Agreement. To obtain more information on my recourse rights, I may contact my financial institution or visit www.cdnpay.ca.

PREMIER PRINTING LTD.

Premier Printing Ltd., a progressive full-service sheetfed print operation with mailing, wide-format, dye sublimation and other auxiliary services,
is seeking applications to fill the full-time position of

ESTIMATOR / PLANNER

The successful candidate should have the following:

- proficiency in typing and basic computing
- proficiency in math, calculation, and analysis
- attention to detail
- ability to work in a fast-paced environment

Though not a pre-requisite, familiarity with printing operations will be considered an asset.

Please supply applications in writing by November 16, 2012 to:

William Gortemaker
Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5
or email to:
wjgortemaker@premierprinting.ca

Only applicants of interest will be interviewed.

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