

*The Skeleton of the
Heidelberg Catechism*

PAGE 570

*The Origins of the
Heidelberg Catechism*

PAGE 574

*A Cherished Catechism
Meets Today's Technology*

PAGE 576

Clarion



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
Volume 62, No. 24 • November 29, 2013

450TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
HEIDELBERG CATECHISM



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The Skeleton of the Heidelberg Catechism

Why is the Heidelberg Catechism so strong and lasting?

This editorial was not written around the time of Halloween. Those are not the kind of skeletons I mean. Some perhaps have skeletons in their closet. I do not mean those, either. We will leave them bones undisturbed. This is actually a festive edition of *Clarion* in which we remember the 450th anniversary of the first publication of the Heidelberg Catechism (1563).

We all have a skeleton. We are made of skin *and* bones. Add some muscles, sinews, and some fat, and presto, you have a functioning body. At least, if no bones are broken, for then the body does not function anymore. When bones are broken, they need to be set, casted, and healed. It takes time, at least six weeks' worth of time.

So how can someone write an editorial about the skeleton of the Heidelberg Catechism? Because that's the point of this exercise; we will dig beneath the skin to find out if the Catechism has anything solid inside it. We're going deep. Roger and out.

Under the surface

When we look at how the Heidelberg Catechism was built, we notice that it contains an impressive bone structure. Let us identify these bones, for without them the body really cannot function.

The structures which we find are the following: the *Articles* of the Christian faith (The Apostles' Creed), the *Sacraments* (holy supper and baptism), The Ten *Commandments*, and The Lord's *Prayer*. To be sure, if you really want to get technical about it, in each of these structures we see another bones system apparent, but for the sake of brevity, we'll control ourselves.

At this point I would like you to carefully identify these sets of bones in the realization that if you lose even one of them, the whole thing collapses. As a matter of fact, did you ever wonder how the Heidelberg Catechism could last so long and withstand the onslaught of the ages? Yep, it's in the bones.

Why is the Heidelberg Catechism so strong and lasting? At a time when many sing the praise of the superstructure, I'd like to say something about the infrastructure. This catechism has quite the skeleton.

The Apostles' Creed

You see, the Heidelberg Catechism is not a completely new creed that did not exist before 1563. The main component and basic structure of this catechism is that it elaborates on an existing creed, called the Apostles' Creed. This creed is one of the ecumenical creeds, so it has an ancient appeal and a global significance.

These bones are made of solid stock. The Apostles' Creed is based on a creed that was used in Rome and goes back to 200 A.D. If antiquity adds any significance (which it doesn't, Belgic Confession, Article 7) then certainly the Heidelberg Catechism can boast of its antecedents.

It is called the Apostles' Creed not because it was written by the apostles but because it contains a brief summary of their teachings. In the *Book of Praise* we find this remarkable commendation of the Apostles' Creed: that it was written "in sublime simplicity, in unsurpassable brevity, in beautiful order, and with liturgical solemnity" (p. 437). Wow, that is quite the description. Notice the

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Dear Readers, we are happy to bring you a special issue of *Clarion*. This issue contains a collection of articles commemorating the 450th anniversary of the first publication of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Issue 24 is almost entirely devoted to our topic. You will find articles about the origins of the Heidelberg Catechism, its structure, as well as the usefulness and relevance of the Catechism. There is information about the new website sponsored by CRTS, www.heidelberg-catechism.com. We include a list of resources available on the Heidelberg Catechism. You can also read a report from the Reformed congregation that exists in the city of Heidelberg today.

Our thanks to Dr. Jason Van Vliet for taking so much time to compile the material for this special issue. We hope you enjoy your reading.

Laura Veenendaal

- 570 EDITORIAL**
The Skeleton of the Heidelberg Catechism
- 573 TREASURES, NEW & OLD**
Never Doubt God's Power and Willingness to Provide
- 574 The Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism**
- 576 A Cherished Catechism Meets Today's Technology**
- 579 From Heidelberg, Germany**
- 581 New to the Catechism. . . and deeply grateful for it**
- 583 Resources on the Heidelberg Catechism**
- 585 EDUCATION MATTERS**
International Conference of Reformed Educators IV
- 588 Retirement of Rev. J. DeGelder**
- 589 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Cover Photo: Church of the Holy Spirit, Heidelberg, Germany

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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.clarionmagazine.ca

2014 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

			Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada			\$49.00*	\$ 82.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds			\$69.00	\$ 92.00
International			\$98.00	\$154.00

*Applicable GST, HST, PRT taxes are extra.
GST/HST no. 890967359RT

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PUBLISHER

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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We acknowledge the financial support of the 
Government of Canada through the Canada
Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Agreement No. 40063293; ISSN 0383-0438

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adjectives: sublime, unsurpassable, beautiful, and solemn. I did not invent them, but I wish I did.

At bottom the Apostles' Creed can be described in this way only because is supremely Trinitarian, "I believe in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." You'll find that also in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 8.

Word and sacraments

We know how important it is to have the solid preaching of the Word. But the Heidelberg Catechism immediately adds that the Word comes in union with the holy *sacraments*.

The Heidelberg Catechism has faithfully instructed believers in the way that they should walk as God's children

The matter of the sacraments is not of secondary importance because "both the Word and the sacraments are intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation" (LD 25).

The Heidelberg Catechism is Christological because the Apostles' Creed directs us to Christ and him alone as Saviour and Lord. I love this sentence, "Our entire salvation rests on Christ's one sacrifice for us on the cross." Those are solid bones!

The western church had somehow lost the connection between the Word and the sacraments, and therefore lost sight of being saved out of grace alone, by faith. The Heidelberg said: back to the original connections if you want to get this train rolling again.

The Ten Commandments

The Heidelberg Catechism also restored the law of God to its glory and importance. Faith leads us to conversion and repentance, to sanctification as a lifelong process. Therefore we need to esteem the Ten Commandments properly and understand them as rule of gratitude and guide to holiness.

There are not many creeds that include an extensive and precise explanation of the Ten Commandments. Yet

the Heidelberg Catechism has faithfully instructed believers in the way that they should walk as God's children.

Nowadays many churches of Reformed background no longer read the Ten Commandments as part of the Sunday liturgy. Some will say triumphantly: we're past that stage. We are *free* Reformed. Hardly! In a time such as this the Heidelberg Catechism is sublimely refreshing.

We cannot keep these commandments perfectly. But we are obliged to try, and to grow in obedience. When we strive to do this, we'll discover another set of bones.

The Lord's Prayer

The mighty catechism leaves us with both knees on the floor. We will find that we need to pray for God's grace and the Holy Spirit. The Catechism tells us in very simple and compelling terms that prayer is "the most important part of the thankfulness which God requires of us" (LD 45).


It is not always easy to pray. I understand that. But if I do not take it to the Lord in prayer, I'll never get anywhere. The Lord says: *talk to me*. Tell me everything. Ask me, for all I have promised you. I'll give it.

The Heidelberg Catechism leads us quietly through the busyness of life to the simple solitude of prayer

Somebody said: teach me to pray. Then he taught them to pray: Our Father, who is in heaven. It is the simplest and most sublime prayer. The Christian life is dysfunctional without daily prayer. And the Heidelberg Catechism leads us quietly through the busyness of life to the simple solitude of prayer which I may share on Sundays in the communion of saints. One prayer, together.

The next 450 years

Well, I'm not a prophet, but I dare to say that the Old Heidelberg is healthy and well, and can last another 450 years. I'm thankful that it was used in my lifetime as a teaching creed.

You see, like I said, it all comes down to the bones. Somewhere beneath all those bones beats my heart. 



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Never Doubt God's Power and Willingness to Provide

"They spoke against God, saying, 'Can God spread a table in the desert? When he struck the rock, water gushed out, and streams flowed abundantly. But can he also give us food? Can he supply meat for his people?'" (Psalm 78:19-20)

When it comes to a relationship like marriage, doubt is destructive. But why does something recognized as destructive in human relationships get elevated to virtuous when it comes to God? The problem is that many think of spiritual matters as if they were discussing something impersonal. However, God is a someone to whom you relate. When you doubt in spiritual matters, you are putting a question mark behind someone.

This is why the Bible never describes doubt as a virtue. Unfortunately, there is a long history of doubting amongst God's people. Take Psalm 78, which was written for God's people to instruct and teach their children. There were lessons to be learned from the Exodus out of Egypt. There were ups and downs in the covenant relationship. The downs were because the people were fickle. Throughout this Psalm, there's a constant refrain of human rebellion.

This is the context for the doubts expressed in verses 19 and 20. The people of Israel had been set free from slavery, for God had heard their cries to him. The people witnessed how God destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. He had been faithful towards them. And when they were in need of water, he provided from the rock. God never let his people down.

That makes verse 19 shocking. They spoke against God. This is personal; the language here reflects the stance of someone who's become an adversary.

This is relational language, but it's not friendly relational language.

The questions being asked here are not genuine questions. Rather, the people were discontented, and that's reflected in the tone. The Israelites looked back on Egypt and its food in endless variety. Egypt was like a buffet. Now they'd gone from the buffet to the bare minimum and they weren't happy about it. They blamed God, and they said, "Can God give us the variety of tasty foods that we enjoyed in Egypt? We're sick of what's here!" They acknowledged that he'd given them water. But could he give them the meat they really wanted?

Notice the one word that pops up three times in verses 19 and 20. It's the word "can." Can God spread a table? Can he also give us food? Can he supply meat? That word is one of doubt. Is God able to do these things? That's in question by his people here.

It's little wonder that God reacted with anger. He disciplined them for slapping him in the face. These questions and doubts did not go unnoticed in heaven. God heard them and was not pleased.

Yet God remained faithful. That's the other theme that runs through this entire psalm. There's human rebellion, but despite that, there is divine faithfulness. There is grace and mercy. God still provided food for them. He rained down manna from heaven. He

sent quails to fill their stomachs. God always provided for his people.

The point Asaph makes here is that God has always been faithful—always is, and always will be. However, God's people doubt. They should not, but they do. Still, God never lets go. The take-away is that God's people should never doubt his power and willingness to provide.

The food and drink he provided in the wilderness pointed ahead to the spiritual food and drink he would provide in the Saviour. In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul speaks of the Israelites eating and drinking the same spiritual food and drink as we do. This all relates to God's grace in Christ. If God can and will provide food and drink for our physical needs, then he can and will provide for our spiritual needs also. We ought never to doubt God.

God has given us certain things so that we do not doubt. One of those things is his Word. His Word comes to us regularly, testifying of his power and ability to take care of us in every way. We need to hear, read, and believe that Word. We need to ask for the continued grace of the Holy Spirit, so that we would never doubt anything that our Father says.

The Word of God is powerful to dispel our doubts. It firms up our faith in a gracious God. Listen to that Word and never doubt God's power and willingness to provide for all we need. He is truly faithful always!





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The Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism

Most readers and confessors of the Heidelberg Catechism recognize that a concern for God's glory pervades it. Moreover, they are immediately impressed precisely with its personal and experiential nature. This catechism drives biblical truth home not only to the mind, but also to the heart and will. Its theme, structure, and content are all scriptural and its appeal is holistic. For good reason the Catechism is often heard at pastoral readings alongside hospital beds and open graves. This is true not only of the first question and answer with its classic opening lines ("What is your only comfort in life and death?"), but also of many others.

How did this amazing Catechism come about? The Heidelberg Catechism has the unique quality of being a Reformed confession out of Germany – a region typically associated with Lutheranism. Somehow the Reformed faith as confessed by men like Calvin and Farel carved out a niche in a German territory known as the Palatinate. Behind all this was an influential ruler named Frederick III.

Frederick III

Frederick had been born and raised as a Roman Catholic in the Duchy of Simmern. He was the son of Duke Johann II. By 1548 he was a Protestant, having come to Lutheran convictions through his marriage in 1537 to Maria of Brandenburg. When Otto Henry died in 1559, Frederick became elector of the Palatinate. His predecessor had already exhibited tolerance for people with Reformed convictions, but it was really under Frederick that Reformed theology was not merely tolerated, but promoted and yes, even required.

When Frederick took the title of Elector Palatine, he was still a Lutheran. However, a debate erupted in the church at Heidelberg regarding the Lord's Supper. Tilemann Hesshus was the general superintendent of the church and he held to a strict Lutheran view of the sacrament. Opposing him was deacon Wilhelm Klebitz, a

staunch defender of the Reformed position. The details of this debate need not detain us. What is important is that the debate forced Frederick to make a careful theological study of the matters at hand. The more he studied, the more he began drifting towards the Reformed stance. A debate was held in Heidelberg in 1560 on this question and it was this debate that definitively pushed Frederick to the Reformed confession.¹

Frederick's shift to Reformed convictions meant changes not only in the churches of the Palatinate, but also in the theological faculty at the university in Heidelberg. The elector became eager to attract Reformed pastors and theological professors. This brought two notable young men to Heidelberg. Caspar Olevianus arrived in 1560 – he was a mere twenty-three years old. Zacharias Ursinus came a year later, in 1561, and he was only twenty-seven.

Ursinus and Olevianus

Olevianus was born in 1536 in Trier. As a young teenager he went off to study in France and it was there that he became a Protestant. After completing his university studies in law, Olevianus went on to Switzerland to study with Reformers such as Calvin. He returned to Trier in 1559 to teach logic and philosophy, but eventually his Protestant convictions put him in conflict with the Roman Catholic majority in the city. This brought him to Heidelberg in 1560. While he started off as an instructor of pastors, eventually he himself became a pastor.

Born in 1534, Ursinus hailed from Breslau, a city in present-day Poland. He was born into a Lutheran family – the Reformation had been introduced in Breslau already in the 1520s. In 1550, Ursinus began studies under Philip Melanchthon at the university in Wittenberg. After completing his studies in 1557, the young man toured Europe and along the way made the acquaintance of other Reformers. In 1558, at twenty-four years old, he took up a job teaching classical languages and Christian

doctrine at the St. Elizabeth School in his hometown of Breslau. However, like his future colleague Olevianus, Ursinus soon ran into difficulties back home, though not with the Roman Catholics, but with strict Lutherans who would not tolerate his view of the Lord's Supper. This led him to spend a year in Zurich studying under Peter Martyr Vermigli. In 1561, having heard high praise of the man, Frederick III invited Ursinus to come and teach in Heidelberg. Ursinus accepted and before long he was teaching dogmatics to future pastors.

Ursinus and Olevianus have often been identified as the main authors of the Catechism – indeed, the editions used by most Reformed churches today still identify them as such. The impression has sometimes also been given that it was a joint effort of these two men with Ursinus contributing theological acumen and Olevianus pastoral warmth. This impression has been called into question in the last century. The latest research by Lyle Bierma argues that the Catechism was a committee job. The lion's work on this committee was done by Ursinus – he probably had primary responsibility for the final draft, he organized the elements of the catechism, and provided proper connections between each question and answer (Lyle Bierma, “The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism,” in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*, p. 74). Yet the evidence also suggests that “Olevianus played a more significant role in the composition of the HC than most recent scholarship has recognized” (p. 66-67).

The purpose of the Catechism

The purpose of the catechism has been far less controversial. Elector Frederick III composed a preface to the Heidelberg Catechism which clearly indicates why he commissioned it.²

It was written to regulate the religious instruction of the youth of the Palatinate. Pastors and schoolmasters were often doing their own thing and there was no consistency or guarantee of theological faithfulness. Frederick presented them with this request in the preface:

We ask that you diligently and faithfully represent and explain the Catechism according to its true meaning to the youth in our schools and churches, and also from the pulpit to common people you teach. We ask that you act and live in accordance with it. Have the assured hope that if our youth are early on instructed earnestly in the Word of God, it will please the Almighty also to grant reformation of public and private morals, and temporal and eternal welfare (p. 153).

While the focus was on the youth of the churches, the intent was also there that this catechism be used to instruct older people. One might be tempted to think that the catechism was thus designed with an inward-looking orientation. However, one should also note Frederick's concern for reformation within his realm, a reformation which included the eternal welfare of his subjects.

It did not take long for the Heidelberg Catechism to be recognized as a first-class work. In the same year it was first published, it was translated into Latin and Dutch. An English translation appeared already in 1572. Over the years, the Catechism has been translated into numerous other tongues and adopted by hundreds of Reformed churches around the world. Its pastoral character carries a universal appeal. For this reason it is loved and used, not only in established Reformed churches, but also on mission fields around the world.

¹ Wim Verboom, “The Completion of the Heidelberg Catechism,” in *The Church's Book of Comfort*, ed. Willem Van't Spijker (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009), 36. For more on the Lord's Supper controversy in Heidelberg see Charles D. Gunnoe Jr., “The Reformation of the Palatinate and the Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism, 1500-1562” in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology*, ed. Lyle D. Bierma (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 37-42.

² This preface can be found in English as an appendix in *We Believe: The Creeds and Confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches*, ed. Wes Bredenhof (Hamilton: Providence Press, 2010), 151-153.



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A Cherished Catechism Meets Today's Technology

On January 18, 2013, almost 450 years to the day after Frederick III penned his original preface for the Heidelberg Catechism, a new website was launched in Burlington, ON. It's called www.heidelberg-catechism.com, and it's sponsored by the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. If you have not checked it out yet, please do. Many people around the world are using it regularly. At the moment it's available in three languages: English, Portuguese, and French. More languages are in process. In this article we take you behind the scenes and interview the two web developers, Jamie Harsevoort (JH) and Bernie Harvsevoort (BH), as well as two translators, Rev. Paulin Bédard (PB) and Rev. Ken Wieske (KW).

The developers

Both of you are involved in developing websites, but you each focus on different areas. Can you briefly explain your area of specialty?

JH: I am a software developer and specialize in developing web applications (the software and database systems that run a website).

BH: My role in our website projects, generally speaking, is first, to consult with the client to understand their needs, second, to create the website plan which determines how the website will be structured, and third, to take the lead on the design of the website.

When the initial idea of a catechism website was under discussion, you were excited to use your technical skills in a project that directly impacts Christ's church gathering work. Please elaborate.

JH: Technology has had a huge impact on how people interact with each other around the world. This opens

up new opportunities for Christians, and we wanted to be active in using technology for church gathering work.

The idea of a website that promoted the Heidelberg Catechism was also attractive because the question and answer format of the Catechism is ideal for people searching for information. If I look through the analytics to see where the website traffic is coming from, I can see examples where people have used Google to search for information on "what is sin?" or "what is salvation?" and ended up on this website. The questions in the Catechism are real questions that people need answers to, and this is one way that we can assist the work being done by many local churches and mission workers.

BH: Our daily work provides businesses with tools to acquire customers, which, while it has its rewards, cannot compare to working for Christ to "acquire" and impact Christians worldwide.

When people first see the new website they often remark that it has a fresh, vibrant, and appealing look. Can you give our readers some more insight into why you designed the website the way you did?

BH: To many, the Heidelberg Catechism may seem like an old document and thus an outdated document, especially for young people. We wanted the website to provide a bright, vibrant feel that is attractive, especially for the younger generation, and provides a "modern" cover to a document that, while old, is still perfectly relevant today.

It's one thing for a website to look nice; it's another thing for it to provide people with the resources they are looking

for. Without losing us in tech talk, can you provide some insight into what's going on underneath the hood of this website?

JH: I looked underneath the hood and it's just a bunch of 0s and 1s in there☺. What it represents though is essentially a library of content about the catechism. Each piece of information – articles, audio, and videos – is categorized in many different ways, such as by Lord's Day, topic, and author, and that data makes the content easy to find and navigate through.

Since our goal was to have content available anywhere in the world, we didn't want to host any content where it could easily be blocked – for example, if we hosted the videos on YouTube then our brothers and sisters in countries such as China would not have access to them. Instead, we built a custom backend to the website that allows us to serve the content directly from there.

Lastly, the front end of the website is built to support both desktop and mobile devices so that the content is as widely available as possible.

The new website is multi-lingual. Did that make it significantly more difficult and why did you want to go through that extra effort?

JH: There were a number of factors that contributed to the decision to do this: we wanted the resources on the site to be as widely available as possible, especially to people who are not as familiar with the Catechism; we hoped that the 450th anniversary of the Catechism would provide an opportunity to build some momentum behind a site like this; and we heard feedback via Dr. Van Vliet from missionaries who encouraged us to do this and indicated that they would be able to make use of these efforts.

From a technical perspective, building the website with multi-lingual support was not too difficult. We had to build some tools for the translation work, but most of the workload here was done by ministers and missionaries who translated content and contributed resources in various languages, with more languages to come soon!

Looking back, this decision has been blessed well beyond our expectations. The website has already been viewed by people from 118 countries around the world, and there is work underway for additional languages to be added soon.

Looking to the future, what is your hope for where the website goes from here?

JH: We anticipated that once the conferences and other activities surrounding the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism were over that traffic to the website would then start to drop. However, it has so far remained steady and continues to average well over 100 users a day. So first of all, we hope that continues. Secondly, we would like to see more languages added to the website to enable more people around the world to benefit from the resources available.

BH: My hope is that the website, through the leadership of Dr. Van Vliet and the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, continues to grow both in resources and the languages. It is being made available to serve as many people worldwide as possible. The website is already the top ranked website in Google for “Heidelberg Catechism” searches and is drawing a substantial amount of traffic. The more we can provide by way of resources to this traffic, the better we will serve them.

The translators

Although some of our readers may already know who you are, can you briefly introduce yourselves?

PB: Born and raised in a Roman Catholic family, the Lord graciously led me to a true and saving faith in Christ when I was a young adult. After studying at the Reformed Seminary in Aix-en-Provence, France, I was called and ordained as a Reformed minister in 1989 in the Église Réformée du Québec. Part of my work is to produce, translate, or gather different Reformed materials in French and make them available to our churches in Quebec and to other French speaking people in the world.

KW: I'm Rev. Ken Wieske, missionary of the Canadian Reformed Church at Aldergrove, B.C. Since the year 2000, I've been working as a church planter in Brazil. I'm based in the northeastern city of Recife, Pernambuco.

Bringing www.heidelberg-catechism.com into another language involves work in two areas: 1) translating the actual text of the website and 2) gathering Catechism resources (e.g., sermons, teaching outlines) to be included on the website. Why did you make the commitment?

PB: When I was asked to participate in this project, I felt it was right in line with one of my regular tasks and I was very excited at the idea that the Heidelberg Catechism and resources explaining its history and its content could be made available in French. There is almost nothing available in French on the Catechism. I thought that this beautiful website would fill a gap and be a precious tool for proclaiming and explaining to French people around the world what is our only comfort in life and death.

KW: Brazil is ripe for the reformation. In the last ten or twenty years, there has been an explosion of Reformed literature. As the Internet makes the world smaller, much material is being translated willy-nilly. The Brazilians, who are consuming this material, do not always have an appreciation for the cultural, historical, and theological context from which it comes. There is an urgent need for a strong emphasis on biblical, Reformed confessionality to help guide the Brazilian church forward. The Heidelberg Catechism is a great help.

Please describe the process by which the website was brought over into your own language. Were other people involved?

PB: I translated the different parts of the English website in French, including the important sections on "History" and "New to the Catechism?" My wife carefully proofread the translated text. I also prepared a new format of the French version of the Catechism, so that the reading of the text would be easier and the proof texts easier to locate.

KW: We're blessed to have a network of Godly, faithful, and capable translators and editors. This made the process fairly smooth and efficient.


What has been the reaction to the website so far as you know?

PB: I have received words of encouragements, congratulations, and appreciations from ministers, elders, and members of our churches here in Quebec, as well as from some professors of theology and other church leaders living in Europe and Africa. Some positive comments have also been expressed on the Facebook page linked to the website.

KW: The website has been very well received. One challenge for us has been to keep adding new resources in Portuguese. In order to broaden the site's appeal, we need to add new content regularly. Since we're short on manpower, this is a matter for prayer.

Looking to the future, what is your hope for where the website goes from here, in particular, the section devoted to your own language?

PB: Since there are very few articles available in French on the Heidelberg Catechism and since very few French speaking Reformed pastors are currently producing materials based on the Catechism, it will be a big challenge to find resources to be added to this website. The development of the website will depend partly on the translation of articles from English and partly on a growing use of the Catechism by French teachers and ministers of the Word. But the wheel has to start somewhere! It is my prayer that, by God's grace, this will indeed happen for the advancement of his Kingdom.

KW: I'm hoping that this website becomes a focal point on the Internet for those who are seeking to promote the reformation of the church in Brazil and other Portuguese-speaking countries. For many, being Reformed is embracing the five points of Calvinism. The Heidelberg Catechism, in contrast, lays out the whole glorious story of creation, fall, and redemption. It is an indispensable tool for the Brazilian church to promote the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which impacts every aspect of our being, and every facet of our life. 

From Heidelberg, Germany

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in Heidelberg, Germany
www.serk-heidelberg.de

In 1963, Karlheinz Schoener, superintendent in the Palatinate church at that time, delivered a lecture in Heidelberg at the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the Catechism. In it, he investigated the relationship between the Heidelberg Catechism and the Heidelbergers (the people living in Heidelberg in his time). He concluded his lecture by saying:

It remains an astonishing fact that many Protestant Heidelbergers do not want anything to do with the Heidelberg Catechism. We need to look this strange and remarkable fact straight in the eye: There is this small 400-year-old book which carried the name “Heidelberg” into the wide world. Many know it and many profess its content. How many have drawn

strength for their lives, distinctness for their faith, and comfort in dying only eternity will reveal. But the inhabitants of the city whence the Catechism came – the Heidelbergers – hardly know it, and usually only from hearsay.

Of course, this statement bears even more truth today. From where I sit, I can see the Church of the Holy Spirit in which stands the very pulpit from which the Heidelberg Catechism was first powerfully expounded. This church and all the other Protestant churches in the city have long forgotten or rejected not only the Reformed faith but even the very basics of the gospel.

However, we believe that God always has a church, even in dark, post-Christian Germany. We believe “that the Son of God, out of the whole human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, defends, and preserves for himself, by his Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a church chosen to everlasting life. . .” (LD 21).

In God’s unquestionable providence, by which he grows and protects his church, he has caused a small light to shine forth in this present darkness. In the year 2010, a group of believers started regular Bible studies in Heidelberg, which eventually lead to a call for me, a German national myself, to come and be the organizing pastor of a church planting work. This small group has grown and turned into a Reformed church in the very birth place of that Catechism.

Isn’t that exactly the blessed reality that our Catechism describes? The Heidelberg Catechism is not an artefact for us, but a living creed, a vital summary of what we in fact militantly believe. New members are catechized with the help of the Heidelberg Catechism, before they are received into communion. The youth are taught it. We preach on it on a regular basis. And we use it as part of our constitution (along with the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordt and the Church Order of Dordt) in figuring out how to relate to other churches



world-wide. This year we dedicated our fourth annual Heidelberg Conference on Reformed Theology (www.heidelbergconference.info) to celebrating the heritage and the spiritual vitality of the Heidelberg Catechism. We were glad to have Dr. Jason Van Vliet of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary participate in this conference.

We are hoping that the Lord would use these and similar endeavours to make sure the Heidelbergers don't know the Catechism only from hearsay, but are once again confronted with the gospel through the 129 brief questions and answers.

Challenges

As you can imagine, there are many and great challenges to being a small, possibly the only truly confessional Reformed church in what was once the land of the Reformation. There is opposition *from the outside*. The Protestant state churches do not like our presence, as it challenges their claim to being "the true Protestant church," even though they have long become liberal. They ridicule us because we still cling to an old catechism and the faith of a by-gone era, as they put it. And they do their best to make sure we gain no footing among the recognized churches.

There are challenges from being a single congregation. It is not a healthy situation and not one that any church is likely to endure for very long. We lack the connectedness with the wider church, particularly to a church body or federation with the same faith and order. We often feel isolated.

There are challenges from *within*. It is often hard to convince visitors to our church of the benefit of be-

ing a confessing church before they leave to go to some evangelical church without much of a confession at all. Church growth is slow, outreach is very hard work. Currently, after three years, we are just below thirty members. Funds are usually tight.

But, in all this, we daily experience the truth of our beloved Catechism, that the Son of God "gathers, defends, and preserves for himself, by his Spirit and Word, in the unity of the true faith, a church," even in our very midst. We have seen children being baptized, adults making profession of faith and being joined to the church. We receive a constant stream of visitors from Reformed churches the world over, from South Africa to China, from England to Korea, from Hungary to the United States of America.

We desire to be in closer contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches as it seems to us to be the federation closest to us in faith, practice, and order.

Blessings

May the Lord bless the Reformed churches confessing the Heidelberg Catechism which we celebrate this year. After 450 years it still answers the most pertinent questions human beings everywhere are asking – or should be asking. As a shepherd of Christ's church in Heidelberg, I can only confirm the wisdom of said superintendent from Heidelberg fifty years ago who claimed: "The Heidelberg knows the Heidelberger better, it seems, than the Heidelberger know the Heidelberg." Because it does, and because it is and remains a wonderful summary of God's truth and the faith once and for all delivered to the saints, we will by God's grace cling to it, teach it, and confess it to the very end.

C



Congregation in Heidelberg



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New to the Catechism... and deeply grateful for it

Some of us have grown up with the Heidelberg Catechism. Already as little boys and girls, when we outgrew the church babysit and joined everyone else for worship in the auditorium, we started to listen to sermons based on the summary of God's Word in the Catechism. Time sped ahead, as it always does, and soon enough we attended Catechism classes with other teenagers in church. In a real way, the Catechism has been part of our spiritual identity for as long as we can remember. At least, that's true for some of us, but not all of us. In God's providence, others have been introduced to the Catechism at some later point in their life. In this article we interview two such fellow believers, Koren Nichol (KN) from Hamilton, ON, and Guy Bisaillon (GB) from Ottawa, ON. Perhaps their enthusiasm can refuel the flame of gratitude for the Catechism in all of us.

Please take a moment to briefly introduce yourselves to our readers.

KN: My name is Koren Nichol. I'm a twenty-eight year old woman and am trained as a librarian but am currently working in records management. Raised a Catholic, I found myself losing interest in God and religion in high school. I met my now sister-in-law shortly after I finished high school and she introduced me to the Canadian Reformed Churches. It wasn't until a few years later that I attended a service.

GB: My name is Guy Bisaillon. I'm a forty-five year old French Canadian man who grew up in Sudbury, ON and studied architecture in Ottawa where I currently live. I was raised in a Roman Catholic background but drifted away from a life of faith. Having maintained contact with the Wildeboer family, friends from my school days, a visit to see them in Ottawa three years ago unexpectedly became an opportunity for a change in employment and relocation. (Only recently am I starting to understand why this drastic change came to be.)

Upon moving to Ottawa I started attending a French Roman Catholic Church once again, giving religion a chance in my life, but then I began alternating worship at Sunday the Jubilee Canadian Reformed Church upon invitations. Before long I recognized the value the Reformed church offered in studying Scripture and I was now hearing the proclamation of the gospel in such a deep and meaningful way.

Like a typically well-trained skeptic, I admit feeling suspicious at first about the genuine kindness and openness of the Jubilee community, but understood those were my personal comfort issues getting in the way. I soon needed to know what made this church so special and why my personal relationship with God began to grow in meaning and intensity. Less than a year from my relocation to Ottawa, I was attending catechism classes and finding a new peace in living for the Lord.

Before you began attending a Canadian Reformed Church, had you ever used, or heard of, any catechism before? If so, what was your understanding of what catechism meant, and how has your understanding changed?

KN: Having been raised a Catholic, I was aware of the Catholic Church's catechism and that it was a set of rules. Now, in the Canadian Reformed Church, I understand the catechism is something that should be actively consulted and used as a guide to understanding the church.

GB: To be honest, I never realized that there were different approaches to catechism in the Christian faith. For me, catechism had simply meant the study of the Law of God (Ten Commandments) and works of Jesus Christ as I learned it in primary school. In-depth analysis of other books in the Bible was not something I recall learning in school or church as a youth. I now

appreciate how studying the Heidelberg Catechism helps in discovering the continuity of specific teachings throughout the Bible, the consistent message they carry and why they are still very relevant today.

Once you came to know the Heidelberg Catechism, what was your impression?

KN: My first impression of the Heidelberg Catechism was surprise – I was initially surprised at the question-answer format of the doctrine. It seemed too simple for a church doctrine. However, I now believe this contributes to one of the Catechism's strengths: its accessibility. It's a fantastic guide to the Bible, and the beliefs of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

GB: I'm not sure if I would have fully appreciated the Heidelberg Catechism without first getting an understanding of the history of the Reformation and the purpose of such a catechism. Though I quickly saw the potential it could have on my life, I first had to formalize my understanding of why previous teachings didn't satisfy my desire to know God. Recognizing the Heidelberg Catechism as a "weekly" guide (fifty-two Lord's Days) to understanding the underlying concepts and teachings of Scripture, I am fascinated at the strength of the church to undertake writing such a considered and inspiring work. The strongest point for me is obviously Lord's Day 1 as it outlines the three aspects of living and dying in comfort that resonate not only throughout the fifty-two Lord's Days, but throughout each day of our lives. I'm not sure if it is a complete guide for Christian living, but it definitely serves as a foundation in better understanding God's Word and the purpose he has for us.

How has the Heidelberg Catechism helped you personally in your spiritual growth?

KN: It has definitely helped strengthen my understanding of the Bible and the Canadian Reformed Churches. Reading it, and exploring it through sermons, has answered many questions I have had.

GB: The Heidelberg Catechism will always be a tool for me in developing a stronger Christian life in the honour and glorification of God, but it also causes me to rethink many perceptions and beliefs I developed in my Roman Catholic background. Not only am I humbled by my incapability to live a perfect life, but I feel greater relief in my deliverance from sin and try to overcome what could be a paralyzing sense of guilt, opting for *thankfulness and love* as the only

motivations for living a life in Christ. I can't help but to compare the differences in such teachings, especially since I still have close ties to others who follow the specific doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church at varying levels.

The teachings in the Heidelberg Catechism have also helped me live more consciously of how my behaviour affects others, myself, and God. To acknowledge that I am a sinner and not a mere victim of circumstance in this world is a struggle. I also now recognize that blessings aren't chance, and tragedies aren't trivial curses – common mistakes we hear people make every day. That all I have is given to me out of grace, not merit, is an important message I once failed to hear. Starting each day with a prayer of thankfulness and praise based on such teachings has taught me more than I once could have imagined.

Would you recommend the Heidelberg Catechism to others? If so, what is the number one reason you would make that recommendation?

KN: I would recommend the Heidelberg Catechism to others for its readability. Its question-answer format and structure (through Lord's Days) breaks the rich doctrine down into more accessible "snippets" which can then be explored in more depth.

GB: In recommending the Heidelberg Catechism to others I would start by stating that it is the standard instruction for us to actively develop a healthy relationship with our Lord and Saviour. Not only does it shine a light on what God is asking of us or what we need to ask from God, but it also helps us understand ourselves better as individuals and collective children in Christ's church.

Any final thoughts you would like to share with our readers?

GB: I used to think that to be saved you had to be perfect and do good works, only then were you worthy. At some point, something began to fascinate me and that was to find people who are content and thankful despite suffering the pains of life's challenges. Though we have Scripture and Catechism as tools to guide us, what truly inspired me in pursuing catechism instruction was to actually witness Christ's love working in others. When you recognize this glorious work in others, you then become interested in searching for the tools that helped them so that this work can take place in you as well.





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Resources on the Heidelberg Catechism

Background studies

Apperloo-Boerrisma, Karla and Herman J. Selderhuis, *Power of Faith: 450 Years of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

– A gold mine of information.

Bierma, L.D., *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

– The best recent introduction to the Catechism.

Boekenstein, William, *The Quest for Comfort: The Story of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011).

– Something for children.

Payne, J.D. and Sebastian Heck, *A Faith Worth Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2013).

– Lots of good essays can be found here.

Van't Spijker, Willem and others, *The Church's Book of Comfort* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2011).

– A beautiful and lucid work.

Visser, D, *Zacharias Ursinus: The Reluctant Reformer and His Times* (New York: United Church Press, 1983).

– A closer look at a most interesting Reformer.

Commentaries

DeYoung, Kevin, *The Good News We Almost Forgot: Rediscovering the Gospel in a 16th Century Catechism* (Chicago: Moody, 2010).

– Catchy and contemporary introductions to each Lord's Day.

Jones, Norman, *Study Helps on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Publications Committee, Reformed Church in the U.S.).

– An older study still worth consulting.

Klooster, Fred, *Our Only Comfort: A Comprehensive Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 2001).

– The most comprehensive treatment in English; however, be prepared to pay.

Olevianus, Caspar, *A Firm Foundation: An Aid to Interpreting the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995).

– How great was his involvement in writing the Catechism? You decide.

Spykman, Gordon, *Never on Your Own* (Grand Rapids: Board of Publications of the CRC, 1969).

– Old but still eminently usable.

Ursinus, Zacharias. *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1985).

– A standard work but not always easy to read.

van Bruggen, J., *Annotations to the Heidelberg Catechism* (Neerlandia: Inheritance Publications, 1991).

– A sound explanation.



Vonk, Cornelis, *Living and Dying in Joy: A Devotional Guide to the Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2013).

– A favourite of Dr. J. Faber is in English at last and it's still required reading for all rookie ministers.

Williamson, G.I., *The Heidelberg Catechism: A Study Guide* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1993).

– A brief introduction to each Lord's Day, with good questions attached.

Witmer, A.C., *Notes on the Heidelberg Catechism* (Philadelphia: Grant, Faires & Rodgers, 1878).

– Kind of old, but still worthwhile.

Working, Randal, *From Rebellion to Redemption: A Journey Through the Great Themes of Christian Faith* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001).

– Interesting, provocative expositions.

Sermons

Stam, Clarence, *Living in the Joy of Faith* (Neerlandia: Inheritance Publications, 1991).

– Fine sermons by KS when he was still CS.

Wieske, G., *The Glorious Gospel of Grace* (Neerlandia: Inheritance Publications, 2010).

– More solid sermons on the Catechism.

Teaching material

Mathes, Glenda and others, *Life in Christ: A Graduated Study Course for the Grades 5 through 12 on the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards* (Grandville: Reformed Fellowship, 2012).

– An extensive curriculum that includes well-written material on the Catechism.

Praamsma, Louis, *Before the Face of God: A Study of the Heidelberg Catechism*, 2 vols. (Jordan Station: Paideia, 1987).

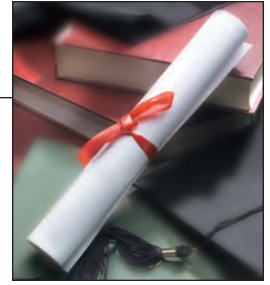
– Uses a particular biblical passage as a launching pad into each Lord's Day.

Van Delden, A., *Only by True Faith*, 2 vols. (Armada: Pro Ecclesia).

– Good stuff from down under.

Visscher, James, *I Belong: A Course of Study on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 3 vols. (Winnipeg: Premier, 1989).

– No comment. **C**



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International Conference of Reformed Educators IV

When reading about the 2013 International Conference of Reformed Educators in Orillia, Ontario, one question that might come up is “Why Orillia?” The town is definitely off the beaten track when it comes to Reformed churches and schools. However, Orillia boasts a waterfront conference centre at the YMCA camp at Geneva Park, which is undeniably a very appropriate name for a Reformed conference.

The first International Conference of Reformed Educators was held in 2004 in Lunteren, the Netherlands. The focus of this conference was to come to a common understanding of the definition of Reformed education: that Reformed education aims to equip the students to employ their talents in the service of God and his kingdom. ICRE II (2007) was held in Sumas, Washington, under the title of “Intersection of life, faith and learning.” Conference themes included discernment and apologetics. ICRE III (2010) was back in Lunteren. The focus that year was the characteristics of a Reformed teacher. The main speaker stressed that the inner commitment and beliefs of a teacher affects their actions. At ICRE IV, the conference attendees were from five different continents. There were thirty-five participants from Canada, thirty-five from Holland, and a few from Australia, South Africa, and Brazil. The conference focus was the student, and the theme was “Leading Learners to Discipleship.”

Sessions

The conference included a wide variety of sessions. Dr. Jason Van Vliet gave an opening keynote on the view of the child. In his address, he questioned the meaning of the “image of God” language present in much Christian curriculum and educational literature. He instead urged us to use the confessional definition of “image of God” – that is, that we were created in “true righteousness and holiness” and to further recognize the impact of the Fall

on this image. Instead of locating our students’ identity in their status as *image-bearers*, he urged us to find that identity in their status as *covenant children*.

Dr. Van Vliet’s keynote was followed by a “tri-continental perspective” on the view of the child with representatives from Canada, Australia, and the Netherlands. Dr. Christine VanHalen-Faber spoke about teaching and learning in a technological age. A number of small-group workshops were held, which dealt with topics such as service projects, student leadership, school identity, and teacher education. Finally, Ray Pennings from CAR-DUS shared the results of a survey of Canadian Reformed graduates, comparing their outcomes to those of public and generic Christian schools.

Although we made very good use of our time, we also found time for relaxation and interaction. We were treated to an organized tour of the Jesuit mission at Ste. Marie



among the Hurons. We also had time for individual conversations over the excellent meals that were served, or over a glass of wine in the evenings.

Unity and diversity

The unity among the delegates was obvious. One of the first speakers opened his address with “Brothers and sisters. . .” and went on to say that he used these words very deliberately. Indeed, all of the conference delegates shared a common faith in Scripture as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity. We also, for the most part, shared a common culture and language (the Dutch delegates demonstrated excellent English skills). This unity was further demonstrated by the excellent singing that took place throughout the conference.

While we were unified by faith, there was also much diversity. First, there was diversity in participants. The Australian and Canadian delegates were almost exclusively principals. The Dutch delegates held a wide variety of positions. Present were teachers, principals, superintendents, and even professional board chairmen. There were also many more women in the Dutch delegation than among the rest of the participants.

Diversity was also evident in our educational environments. The Dutch delegates stressed the diversity of the families and children that they serve. This is partly due to increasing diversity in the Liberated churches in



Holland. In addition, a broader definition of “Reformed” is in use in Holland – where the word is often used to refer to churches that are not Roman Catholic. As such, students from a variety of churches attend the Reformed schools there. The Canadians (and Australians) tended to interpret the term “Reformed” as pertaining to the Canadian Reformed churches (Free Reformed Churches in Australia) and those churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. Finally, the central importance placed on the covenant by the Canadians and Australians meant that they prioritized the unity of faith. By contrast, a perusal of the “identity” booklets published by a large Dutch school revealed that the word “covenant” is only used once, and is not used specifically to refer to students. As a result of all of these factors, admissions policies in Canada and Australia tend to be more restrictive than those in the Netherlands.

Other differences became apparent as well. We found that the Dutch educators emphasized creativity, while the Canadian schools emphasized conformity. This was further illustrated by the results of the CARDUS survey, which showed lower levels of creativity among Canadian Reformed graduates compared to both public schools and generic Christian schools. Cultural engagement is seen as very important in the Netherlands, resulting in a more Reformed view of culture, compared to what some described as a more Anabaptist view of culture amongst the



Canadian Reformed. In this regard, it is important to note that many of the principals from all countries expressed a desire to involve their staff and students in the wider community in a more meaningful way.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it cannot be denied that the situation in Holland is not the same as in Canada. We have the same foundation, but different emphases. It is important that we continue to talk about the things that unite us and the things that make us different. We can and should learn from each other, and a conference such as this helps us look at ourselves in the mirror as we compare beliefs and practices.

It is important that we continue to talk about the things that unite us and the things that make us different

A big thank-you is due to the organizers: Christine VanHalen-Faber, Hans VanDooren, and Harry Moes. We

appreciate the many hours of work that went into the planning of the conference and for all of the small details that made both the Canadian and international guests feel welcome.

Let me close with a quote from one of the Dutch delegates, responding to his experiences:

I found all the international conferences very encouraging, meeting colleagues from other places on the world who are doing the same thing we are doing in our country: giving good, Reformed education to serve students (and their parents). The setting makes that you are at distance from every day business; that is good for real reflection on what you are doing, day by day. Maybe this will help you to decide to come to the next edition of ICRE, the Lord willing in 2016 in Holland.

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 Arthur Kingma akingma@echs.ca.



Retirement of Rev. J. DeGelder

Final service

On June 9, 2013 the congregation of the Flamborough Canadian Reformed Church gathered together to worship one last time under the pastoral care of Rev. J DeGelder. At 2:00 in the afternoon he preached under the theme, “God’s church lives by grace alone.” We were reminded that a pastor’s work must always be motivated by his love for the preaching of the Word. By the grace of God through this preaching the congregation is to be motivated to live not for themselves but for him who sacrificed himself for them.

After the service opportunity was given for various dignitaries from other churches to address Rev. De Gelder. Through all this we could see how the work done by our pastor was done in all humility and sincerity and that also he relied completely on the grace of God to do this work.

Retirement celebration

On Friday, June 14 we all got together again in the Ebenezer church building to celebrate the retirement of Rev. DeGelder. All the DeGelder children were present as well as his brothers from Peru and the Netherlands.

Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder arrived in style in the back seat of a convertible through a crowd of well wishers holding streamers and blowing whistles.

We began the evening with the singing of “Oh Shout for Joy” by the students of Covenant Christian School. Psalm 145 was read and the evening was opened with prayer.

On behalf of the family Mieke and Alko gave us all an insight to the life of the DeGelders including a timeline of his ministry and immigration.

The study societies were then given the opportunity to do a presentation. They included the women’s Bible





study groups, couples Sunday night group, and the Young People's Society. After that the Youth Group Praise Band led us in singing of Rev. DeGelder's favourite psalm, Psalm 150.

Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder then came forward to receive two large binders containing a page precisely designed by each family or member in the

congregation. Included in this was a season's pass for the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

The now Emeritus Rev. DeGelder together with his wife was given the opportunity to say a few words. They thanked everyone not only for this evening, but also the time here in the Flamborough congregation. Also thanking our Heavenly Father who has guided him and his family through all these years and that he could also do it in good health.

Council Chair Charlie Van Dam closed in prayer this part of the evening. The CCS choir sang "May the Peace" with the congregation, after which we enjoyed snacks and refreshments in the Fellowship Hall.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: The Benefits of Personal Devotion (Clarion), October 4, 2013

Dear Editor,

We all know that personal devotion is important. So how should we do it?

It all starts by setting aside time for personal devotion. As a student, it can be hard to find a time for personal devotions. Between sports practises, orchestra rehearsals, and academic studies, my agenda seems quite full. When it comes time to do devotions, we are often quick to say things such as, "I'm too tired," "I don't feel like it," or "I'm too busy." We easily fill up our agenda with things we want to do, and the leftover time can be used for devotions. We all fall into this sin from time to time, but we must fight it! It is important that we set aside personal time with God. We need to prioritize. We need to do what God wants.

How easy we find ourselves listening to our boyfriend or girlfriend. When something is important to them, we willingly and excitedly listen to anything they have to say. When they would like to share something with us, we are eager to listen and we are attentive. Is this loving attentiveness our attitude to God's Word that he offers to us? Is this our attitude when we talk to him in pray-

er? Our service to God should seem effortless, something we should look forward to. It should be part of daily routine; it should be natural. This does not give us, however, a licence to absent-mindedly go through devotions. We need to bring ourselves humbly before God with a right attitude. Let's all be loving children of God.

*Madison Lodder,
Fergus, ON*



RE: "Provoking Reflection on the Christian and Sports" (Part 1) (October 18, 2013)

Dear Editor,

As senior athletes in our school, winning is a goal we aim for. To gain such a goal, one must be competitive while being respectable to the referee and fellow competitors. 2 Timothy 2:5 states, "Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules." If a team has won a game, but not played respectfully, the win will not be as victorious. To receive full victory our attitude must be respectful.

Mr. Derek Stoffels stated, "The desire to win, however, also leads to cheating, dirty play, theatrics, pushing the limits, and the intentions of the rules." This statement cannot be thrown on the heads of all athletes. Our team was taught to be a light to those around us, whether it is on or off the field. Referees and coaches from other teams have noticed this in our performance of play.

From experience, it may be difficult to always keep a Christian attitude in a competitive game. The goal of winning could overtake the focus of glorifying God. Glorifying God should be our main goal, but the goal of winning cannot be taken out of sports. If something is to be changed to keep this from happening, it must be our attitude towards sports. The question we should ask ourselves is, "Why am I playing sports."

We are always told to do our best, win or lose – it doesn't matter. This well-used concept is very important in sports. We must do our best using the talents God has blessed us with.

But we want to share a second thing. Another important component in sports is competition. The purpose

of sports is to compete against opponents to see who is the better player. While playing sports you are meant to test your skills against an opponent to see who is the stronger, faster, or more skilled. The point of competing is to receive more points than the opposing team or opponent. When competing, you compare two players or two teams to see who is superior. Competing is not unchristian, but as Christians we must have a positive attitude while competing.

In sports there are winners and there are losers. We need to learn to lose as Christians just as well as we need to win as Christians. Losing means there are more things to improve on and more ways to develop our God-given talents. No one wants to lose, but if that happens, everyone wants to feel as though they have done their best. The purpose of sports is to always do your best and to enjoy the sport you are participating in. As we compete we must remember to compete as a Christian.

*Laura Kottlenberg (Orangeville),
Laurissa Sikkema (Elora)*

*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.*



ADVERTISEMENTS

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

BIRTHS

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Psalm 136:1

We praise the LORD for the gift of our daughter

DEVRA SHALOM SIKKEMA

Born August 21, 2013 in Hamilton, ON

Tim and Francine (VanWoudenberg) Sikkema

Noah†, Avigail

PO Box 3009, Lae, MP 411, Papua New Guinea

timsikkema@gmail.com

*Know that the LORD, he is God! It is He who made us, and we are His;
We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.*

Psalm 100:3

We joyfully welcome our new baby daughter and sister:

TAMSEN LORENA

August 20, 2013

Jan and Melanie Kottlenberg (Van Dyke)

Kierijan, Taren, Kayella, Meleah

9023 Jackman Road, Lynden WA 98264