

Clarion

*In the Fruit of the Spirit Is Goodness
Being A Reformed MPP
Elm Creek Canadian Reformed Church*



Clarion: a trustworthy and engaging magazine, widely spread and read in Canadian Reformed households and beyond.

To equip God's people for his glory, in faithfulness to Scripture, as summarized in the Reformed confessions, Clarion adheres to the following core values:

Confessionally Reformed
Loving in manner
Attuned to current issues
Readable and Reliable
In Submission to Scripture
Open to constructive criticism
Nurturing Christian living

What's Inside

Have you ever been to the small town of Elm Creek, Manitoba? Well, if you're in that area on a Sunday you can now worship with Reformed believers who gather there weekly in the newly instituted Elm Creek CanRC. Read all about it in Mrs. Jenien Holtland's article and join them in thanksgiving to God.

Have you ever wondered what life is like for a Reformed Christian working in politics? Mr. Samuel Oosterhoff gives us a first-hand summary of his own experiences in "Being a Reformed MPP" while encouraging us to consider ways we all might serve the public good. In our country we still have many opportunities to do so freely as compared with Christians in China. Those poor folks are daily muzzled, controlled, and persecuted as Mr. Mitch Bosveld relates in another installment of *Persecution of Christians*. We should not only pray for those believers and count our blessings in the free West, but also pray for and work hard in our own political realm so that these freedoms may be preserved for us by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who rules over all.

Rev. Tyler VanderGaag is back with another fine article related to the fruit of the Spirit called "goodness." In *Treasures, New & Old* Rev. Richard Aasman puts each of us in the place of the indebted sinner with the calling to love our Saviour much. Rev. Keith Davis of the Bethel URC in Calgary reports on the fun and upbuilding Reformed Young Adults Conference held in that city last February. Another conference is being planned for February 2023 and sign-up time is soon! *Clarion Kids* teaches our youngsters about the communion of saints while *Ray of Sunshine* highlights the upcoming birthdays of three special saints. Don't forget to check out the press release to keep up to date on church news in central Ontario.

Finally, on the page over you can find my editorial on how to work with expert opinions—and to give each other space when the experts are not immediately believed. May your reading be pleasant!

Peter Holtvlüwer

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EDITORIAL

Evaluate the Experts

Have you noticed how people love to quote experts? We have experts for everything nowadays: political experts, nutrition experts, and scientific experts to name a few. And once the expert is quoted, the discussion is at its end. If you happen to be debating someone say on a scientific matter and your friend cites a scientific expert to back up his opinion, he expects you to capitulate. It's game over. And if you protest and challenge the expert's point of view, you are not taken seriously *because you are no expert*. "Stay in your lane," you're told. But is that fair? Or beneficial?

Appreciating experts

On the one hand there is much to appreciate about experts. Usually they have highly specific training in a given area which is often coupled with real-world experience. They know what they're talking about. Over the years they've seen so many scenarios within their field that their knowledge of how such things work or how events are likely to unfold is significant and may be relied upon by persons without such experience.

For instance, I love my mechanic. On top of his in-school training, he has worked on so many cars over so many years that he can often diagnose my car's problem accurately over the phone. And he consistently fixes it right the first time. I depend upon his expertise. I also love my family doctor. In addition to her years in medical school, she has a couple of decades of seeing patients of all kinds and treating them well. She has an excellent reputation. She's also cared very well for our family members and so I have a high degree of trust in her. Chances are, I'm likely to follow the advice of either one of these experts.


Experts not infallible

But not always. And not automatically. Experts can make mistakes—and true experts readily admit this. Sometimes I've taken the car home to find it still acting up a couple of days later. The mechanic had tried a certain fix, but it didn't end up working. I've taken medicine on the advice of the doctor that totally disagreed with me and made me feel worse. Both my mechanic and my doctor did their best and made informed, good-faith decisions that in the end proved to be wrong for the occasion. Do I appreciate them less? Not at all. The over-all trend of their professional work and care has done me (and my family) untold good. But I recognize that neither my mechanic nor my doctor nor any other human is infallible. Experts can most certainly be wrong.

And that's why there is a place for your gut instinct and for your intelligent evaluation of what the experts are telling you. I've never been trained in auto-mechanics or in medicine, but I listen, observe, and learn. If I bring my car in because the steering wheel shakes every time I come to a stop, and the mechanic advises to change the front tires, I will ask him instead to check the front brakes and especially the rotors. Experience has taught me that much. And if my doctor prescribes codeine pain medication to recover from upcoming surgery, I will ask her to prescribe something else because I react badly to that kind of medication. I know my own body at least to that degree. Expert opinion should be highly regarded but also carefully weighed.

Experts vs. experts

The need to evaluate what experts say is obvious too from how experts of equal credential and experience disagree amongst themselves. Did we not witness that during COVID-19? Mainstream news outlets constantly interviewed doctors and scientists for their expert advice on the danger of this ailment, on how the virus was spread, and on how to protect against it. Federal and provincial governments also had their "top doctors" hold news conferences. And frequently they all seemed to say the same thing. Yet there is a group of over 900,000 scientists, recognized experts the world over in both infectious disease and public health, that to this day disputes what those other experts advised and the government policies that were put into place (see The Great Barrington Declaration at gbdeclaration.org). Which set of experts are we to believe?

All experts, like all of us, are sinners with limits to their understanding. Their expert opinion can be tainted by wrong motives, outside pressure, missing facts, an incomplete analysis, or simply a well-intentioned but in-the-end poor judgment. This reality makes it necessary for us to proceed with caution. It's good to consult an expert (or several "second opinions" perhaps) as we weigh a matter, but then we must make our own decision. After all, we are responsible for our choices, not the experts. 



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TREASURES NEW & OLD :: MATTHEW 13:52

Now Which of Them Will Love Him More?

“A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?” (LUKE 7:36–50)

Simon the Pharisee invited the Lord Jesus to come to his home for dinner. It seems like this Pharisee was checking Jesus out to see if he was the real thing—a prophet. But he treated Jesus shabbily. He did not provide Jesus with water to wash his feet, or even give him a kiss, which would be similar to a warm handshake today.

During the meal a woman crashes the party. She is described as “a woman of the city, who was a sinner.” Most assume that she was a prostitute, although we can’t be absolutely certain of that. From the moment this woman enters the house she is crying. A river of tears pours from her eyes. As she stands behind the Lord Jesus, who is reclining at table, the tears wet Jesus’s feet. She wipes away the tears and the dirt with her hair, kisses his feet, and anoints them with oil.

Why is the sinful woman doing this? What’s the crying and emotional state all about? Jesus Christ clarifies this after Simon the Pharisee shows disdain for both the sinful woman and Jesus who allowed a sinful woman to touch him. He relates the parable of two debtors who could not pay their debt, but the moneylender cancelled both debts. Jesus then asks, “Now which of them will love him more?” Simon understands that the one with the bigger debt will love more.


The point is not really that one person has a bigger debt than the other. The fact is both Simon and the sinful woman had debt they could not pay. They owed God love and obedience. Instead they sinned. That’s true for all of us: we have a large debt of thoughts, words, and deeds that did not show love to God and neighbour.

Simon the Pharisee did not even realize that he had debt. He didn’t see his sins. He didn’t need a Saviour. But the sinful woman saw her huge debt. Therefore she is crying. Actually, there are two reasons for her crying: first she weeps over her sins and her sinful life, and second, she is standing by the one who can forgive those debts. She loves and adores her Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ confirms this when he says to her, “Your sins are forgiven,” and then, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” Jesus Christ

has cleared her debt because she confesses her sins and places her faith in Jesus Christ.

An important point that is being made here is that while the debtors have their debts cancelled, the moneylender has to shoulder that debt himself. Here we see that it is God himself who holds us accountable for our sins and debts. Those debts need to be paid for. But God cancels the debt by graciously and lovingly sending his own Son into this world to take our debts on himself, and to pay for those debts by his suffering, condemnation, and death on the cross.

The story of the sinful woman should not be seen as a rare case of a really bad sinner who needs forgiveness in the blood of Jesus Christ. Her story is our story. We all need to recognize: I am a sinner too. I weep over my sins. I stand in awe of a loving, gracious God who sent us his Son. I adore Jesus Christ who took my debts and cancelled my debt.

If I could stand on Golgotha, beneath that wooden cross, where my Saviour hung—bloodied, naked, dirty—I too would weep tears on his feet, and kiss those feet. This I know: that should have been me. Jesus died for me. 

Further reading

Isaiah 53

Questions for further study

1. Reflect on whom you identify with: the Pharisee or the sinful woman?
2. Why does awareness of our sins bring us closer in love and faith to Jesus Christ?
3. How does this passage about the Lord Jesus, the Pharisee, and the sinful woman cause us to be more compassionate to others who have fallen into sin and then repented?



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In the Fruit of the Spirit is Goodness

TYLER VANDERGAAG

“He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him” (ACTS 10:38)

“God is good, all the time! All the time, God is good.” You might be familiar with this saying if you’ve ever gone to a Bible camp. Apparently it’s also an African Christian greeting sometimes used in formal worship or more casually (Wright, *Cultivating*, 98). It’s a beautiful way to greet each other. “God is good, all the time! All the time, God is good.” That’s what we’ll see as we look at goodness in the fruit of the Spirit.

God’s goodness

Goodness is the attribute of attributes of God. He is not just good, he is “the overflowing fountain of all good” (BC, Art. 1). This is clear in Exodus 33–34. There Moses asks to see God’s “glory” (33:18). The LORD agrees but uses the word goodness instead of glory: “I will make all my goodness pass before you.” So here God’s glory and goodness are one and the same. Now you’d think that to see something so glorious and good would be a wonderful experience, but God’s goodness is a little bit like looking directly at the sun at high noon. It’s too much to bear. It’s too glorious. It’s too good! So even though Moses’s request is granted, the LORD will only allow Moses to see his back, not the radiant glory and goodness of his face. Now when God’s goodness passes-by Moses, it doesn’t pass by without commentary: “The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation’” (Exod 34:6–7). This is God’s own self-description of his goodness! It’s worth unpacking a bit.

Because God is good, he looks down upon us not with disappointment and frustration, but with a compassionate heart and a gracious spirit. God is “slow to anger”—that’s an expression of his patience. God has a long-patient nose because he’s good. He’s “abounding in steadfast love,” which is a description of God’s kindness. So, God is unusually kind because he’s good! He abounds, not just in love, but in faithfulness. Faithfulness is God’s promise to never forsake his covenant love and loyalty to his people. God is faithful even when we are unfaithful and stray from him (2 Tim 2:13). He will never throw in the towel even when his people give him every reason to do so by their sinful actions and rebellion. In his goodness he will “forgive iniquity and transgression and sin.” That’s our God!

God’s self-description ends on a somber note: he “will by no means leave the guilty unpunished” (v. 7 NASB). This too is an extension of God’s goodness. God is good, but he’s not a “softie” nor is he “lenient” with sin (Ortlund, *Gentle*, 149). Make no mistake about it: God punishes sin and rebellion, but his punishment doesn’t extend nearly as far as his loving kindness. The measly three or four generations of punishment are swallowed up, eclipsed, and surpassed by his unusual kindness and love that extends for thousands of generations (Ortlund, 150).

Realizing that all this is an expression of God’s glorious goodness, we begin to realize why God had to hide Moses in a cleft in the rock and cover his face. His goodness would not just overwhelm Moses, it would burn his eyes and send him to his grave. God’s glorious goodness is too much for the eyes of sinful men. That’s how gloriously and abundantly good God, your God, is!

"God is good,
all the time! All the time,
God is good."

Jesus: God's goodness

Remembering now that God's goodness and glory are one and the same, cast your mind forward to John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." Now if Jesus is the glory of God made flesh, he's the goodness of God made flesh too. Yes, Jesus is God's goodness in human form, with two legs and a heart that beats to the drum of God's glory!

With this in mind, we're not at all surprised to see that during his public ministry on earth, and anointed with the Spirit, Jesus "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). That's why he showed compassion and had sympathy for the hungry. That's why he healed the sick wherever he went. That's why he extended grace to the tax-collectors, prostitutes, and the worst of sinners—and still does today. That's why he patiently bore with his slow and hard hearted disciples and showed his unlimited patience towards Saul that great persecutor of the church and the worst of sinners. That's why he showed us kindness and unusual kindness by saving us from our total depravity and sin. That's why he faithfully carried out his father's will, became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, to forgive our wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Jesus died for you, gave up his life for you because he's good! It's that simple. It's that profound. That's also why one day he will come to punish the ungodly and unrepentant sinner too.

Knowing we have such a good Saviour in the Lord Jesus doesn't mean life will always be good from here on in. It won't and it isn't. But it does mean that God will always be good to us. He is always good and the overflowing fountain of all good! It's so easy to get bogged down, so easy to focus on all the hardships and struggles and trials in this life. The danger is real, I know. We can focus so much on the bad that we fail to see the good, fail to see God, and his goodness in Christ! But we can always turn to Jesus. The goodness he showed during his earthly ministry and on the cross is still overflowing upon us.

Our goodness

Filled with his Spirit, we're called to imitate and display the same goodness that God revealed to Moses. So, if you want to know if you have the goodness found in the fruit of the Spirit, just go through Exodus 34:6-7. Ask yourself: "Am I merciful and compassionate to others, the way God in Christ is to me?" Reflect again on your nose. Is it one of those long patient ones? Do you have that unusual loving kindness of God displayed in Christ? Faithful, trustworthy, dependable, unwilling to throw in the towel: are these apt descriptions of you? Have you forgiven those who sin against you? The last description of God's goodness in Exodus 34 is a little tricky—about punishing others for their sins. We'd probably have to say that this is not part of God's goodness that we're called to embrace. As Paul says in Romans 12, "never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God. . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (v. 19-21). That's our calling—"overcome evil with good."

Paul—along with the rest of us—knew how hard it is to continue to do good. It's a wearisome thing sometimes. So, Paul urges us with these words of Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Goodness in the fruit of the Spirit is not for the faint of heart. It's not the easy road. It's a bumpy, difficult, tiresome task. But do it anyway Paul says. Why? "For in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." We will not reap a harvest of corn or potatoes or sugar beets, but we "will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:8). Eternal life, what a harvest! What a motivation to do good! So don't give up, dear child of God. Keep at it. Don't throw in the towel, not now, not ever! Pursue goodness with all your heart. A harvest is coming. Eternal life is just around the corner!

Do all this in power of the Spirit. The same Spirit who provides us with the harvest of eternal life will sow goodness into our hearts, cultivate it, and cause it to blossom and bloom. He is also the one who will spur us on, encourage us when we're sick and tired of doing good and rarely see results or anything come of all our good efforts. In those moments, let the Spirit spur you on. Do not resist him. We don't do good to see results. We do good because God calls us to. The results are his business not ours. So regardless of the results, let us ever embrace that African greeting: "God is good, all the time! All the time, God is good." ☺



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Being A Reformed MPP

SAMUEL OOSTERHOFF



Editor's Introduction: Mr. Samuel Oosterhoff is the Member of Provincial Parliament for the riding of Niagara-West, Ontario. He is also a member of Smithville Canadian Reformed Church. Clarion invited Mr. Oosterhoff to write about what it's like to be a Reformed Christian working as an elected official in provincial government.

Latin in the Legislature

Latin phrases adorn the halls of Queen's Park. *Audi Alteram Partem*, or "Hear the Other Side," is the official motto of the Legislative Assembly. It is a reminder to the 124 Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) who sit in the chamber to carefully consider concerns raised by others as we review legislation. Many other short and memorable Latin phrases are engraved into key pillars around the historic pink sandstone building, urging MPPs to *Sapere Aude* ("Dare to be Wise"), *Spectemur Agendo* ("Be Judged by your Acts"), and *Docendo Discimus* ("By Teaching, Learn").

Recently, I spoke to a piece of legislation I brought forward adding religious expression to the Ontario Human Rights Code. I spoke about the importance of faith in Christ, and how that faith touches on every aspect of my life, while emphasizing the importance of protecting the right to religious expression for all Canadians. Following my remarks, a couple of my colleagues leaned over and asked me to explain the meaning of the Latin phrase I had concluded my speech with. "*Soli Deo Gloria*—Glory to God alone!" I responded. We talked about J. S. Bach's practice of signing each of his compositions with the initials *S.D.G.* as acknowledgement and praise of the grace of God in all of life.

As Reformed Christians, we often quote the words of Abraham Kuyper, famous Reformed theologian and past Prime Minister of the Netherlands: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'" This quote from a Reformed political leader emphasizes the importance of life lived *Coram Deo*, before the face of God.

Growing Reformed involvement

An increasing number of Members of Parliament, provincial legislators, and municipal politicians from the confessional Reformed community have been elected across Canada in recent years. There is a long history of Reformed Christians participating in political life, going back to the early days of the Reformation, and more recently in the Netherlands.

God opened doors for me to become involved in political service in ways that I never imagined growing up on a family farm in rural Niagara. I ran for the Ontario Progressive Conservative nomination in Niagara West with broad support from both the faith-based and the broader community and was elected to the Ontario Legislature in November of 2016. This occurred in the midst of controversial provincial conversations around parental rights, specifically around the Kathleen Wynne sex-ed curriculum, as well as my vocal defense of preborn human rights.

These are important matters. But beyond the "hot button" topics that generate headlines in the *Toronto Star* and heated debate in social media comment sections, I have the opportunity to work with colleagues and supporters who believe in the importance of living out the command to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves. For instance, in 2020 I was able to introduce the Compassionate Care Act, which has served to dramatically expand access to hospice palliative care in Ontario. At the various stages of debate, I was able to speak publicly in the Legislature about my confidence as a Christian in the sure hope of the resurrection. Topics such as death, dying, and palliative



care have opened up doors to have meaningful conversations about faith that I could never have anticipated.

Politicians and those involved in politics are not (generally!) pastors and preachers. I did not run and I do not serve as a pastor or as a missionary. Rather, I seek to share Christ while faithfully serving my region of almost half-a-million people, working closely with people from many faith backgrounds. There is always a tension between sharing the perspective that my faith as a Christian provides, acknowledging that there are irreconcilable differences in some of our perspectives, while also building consensus around issues of shared concern.

Other opportunities

Political opportunities are not limited to elected politicians. In many ways the work of MPs, MPPs, and mayors is just a tiny portion of the great amount of work that takes place in different areas of the political arena. There is an urgent need for faithful candidates, lawyers, judges, staffers, policy advisors,

clerks, volunteers, canvassers, chiefs-of-staff, press-secretaries, lobbyists, lawn-sign installers, directors of policy, analysts, and bureaucrats. There are many meaningful ways that Christians, and then particularly Reformed Christians in particular, can become involved in the decisions that impact our families and communities. Participating in non-governmental organizations such as ARPA, Cardus, or the like can also provide ways of having political impact outside the structures of formal political parties or governments.

The conversation in Reformed circles about what faithful political participation looks like has become increasingly complex over the past couple of years with the division around COVID and government responses to COVID. Political engagement has risen to new heights, as government interventions impacted the day-to-day lives of many in the Reformed and broader communities. Discussions about the proper exegesis of Romans 13, Article 28 of the Church Order, Lord's Day 39, and Article 36 of the Belgic Confession took on new meaning.

< Legislative Building at Queen's Park, Toronto



There is no room in this article to do justice to any of these topics, but there is great need for more Christians—including those from confessional Reformed backgrounds—to enter into the public sphere in different ways. For some, that may mean seeking elected office.

Challenges & joys

There are challenges in the task of any elected official. God's Word is good and true and provides guidance for each day. That does not always mean the truth of his Word is simple to apply to each and every situation. What does a Reformed approach to dealing with the housing crisis look like? What form should public healthcare take as we face a wave of aging Baby Boomers? How can the power of the state be restrained and the proper role of the family, churches, schools, enterprise, and myriads of other intermediary social organizations be promoted and recognized? Just as a Reformed electrician is not told in the Bible about stray voltage, much of the routine day-to-day


work of committees, Question Period, and reviewing of public accounts is not undertaken in an explicitly Reformed manner. But the way in which all of these activities are done can and should be seen through the lens of the worth of the *Imago Dei* impressed upon each and every person we interact with.

On the personal side, family and congregational ties can undergo immense pressure. It can be difficult to find other faithful Christians who understand the pressures and temptations that lifestyle and schedule entail. Social media takes on a new meaning, as it ceases to be merely a means of keeping in touch with family and friends and becomes a public forum for frustration and commentary. Public recognition means an anniversary dinner with your wife at a restaurant can quickly become an opportunity for disgruntled constituents to share a political grievance.

This public recognition can also make it challenging to be involved in other areas. As a personal example, I serve on the Home Mission Committee of our local church. At one of our meetings, we spoke about going door-to-door to invite neighbours to our worship services. I decided to excuse myself, as people would be confused by their local politician showing up on their doorstep inviting them to his church, rather than the voting booth!

There are also many joys in the work of an elected representative. MPPs have the privilege of working closely with people from across the riding and the province to bring forward policy ideas that improve the lives of people. We have the privilege of actively participating in the decision-making process through direct and indirect advocacy, whether in caucus, cabinet, or in the broader public sphere. This work can be delivering on local priorities that make a real difference in the lives of constituents, from new hospitals to housing and economic opportunities. Or it could mean speaking into the lives of and praying with everyone from constituents to cabinet ministers. God continues to place opportunities in my path—as he does in every Christian life—to speak about his grace and goodness, while “seeking justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God” (Mic 6:8).

Soli Deo Gloria

Latin is not a common language anymore, either in government, or broader culture. Fewer and fewer people may understand the phrases etched into the halls of Queen's Park without consulting Google. But whether as elected representatives, politically engaged citizens busy with our day-to-day lives, or composers of beautiful music, we can all lead with the confession: “*Soli Deo Gloria*—to God alone be the glory!” 

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS



China

As we consider the globe, the global church, and particularly the persecuted church, China looms large. Not only is it an enormous country with roughly 1.4 billion people, but there is a miraculous 100 million Christians among them. Because of the size of the nation, as well as the diversity between provinces, it is difficult to understand what the life of an everyday Christian in China looks like. However, we can be assured that in general, life for Christians is nothing short of challenging. Many things factor-in here, but primarily it centres around government restrictions on worship and online censorship.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the sole ruling party in China, and their stated goal derived from this idea of communism is to bring prosperity to China and improve people's livelihoods. The practical outworking of this means the people in China exchange their freedoms in order that the government can bring them prosperity. In reality, however, the clear underlying objective of the CCP is that they consolidate their power, at the expense of the people.

As part of this, the CCP sees Christianity as a threat. The Christian community is the largest social force in the country which is not under their control. So, the government views them with suspicion and thus tries to manage and regulate Christians as much as they can—read: “persecute.”

They allow Christians only one option: government authorized churches. These churches are legal but monitored by the government, and the CCP has input into who takes on leadership positions within the church. These churches are restricted in what they are allowed to preach; preachers have no choice but to include government propaganda in their messages. Thirty per cent of those who identify as Christian in China attend these government-authorized churches. However, the rest of the Christian population make an alternative choice to attend illegal, underground, house churches.

House churches

The house church movement in China is growing. A hunger to preach and be transformed by the pure and uncompromised message of the gospel leads people to worship in smaller, illegal gatherings. This of course, comes with its own set of challenges. Having to make it harder for the government to find them out and track them down, the people must constantly change worship locations and use code when messaging online, just to name a few things. If discovered, these churches experience harassment and raids, as the authorities do everything they can to obstruct their activities.

Recently, these churches have felt even fiercer pressure from the government. One church of note is the Early Rain Covenant Church whose minister, Pastor Wang Yi, is currently serving a nine-year prison sentence. The charges against him were “inciting to subvert state power” (preaching the gospel!) and “illegal business operations” (distributing Christian books). Despite this, the people continue to gather as often as possible, despite continual raids and constant monitoring by the authorities.

While that is only one story, over the past few months there have been numerous reports from churches all over China of elders, pastors, and church members being detained and

questioned about their activities. We can shudder to think of the consequences and follow ups from these raids.

Online worship

Another difficulty faced by house churches presented itself during COVID-19 lockdowns. Because all in-person meetings of any kind were banned during these lockdowns, Christians needed to meet online. Since the CCP heavily censors and regulates internet usage within China, the move to online worship meant that the government could much more easily monitor activities of the illegal churches.

Earlier this year, a new regulation came into effect which made not only physical church gathering illegal, but also that online. Now, anybody who wants to share religious content online must have a permit. As you can imagine, only individuals in leadership positions in state regulated churches have any chance of obtaining a permit—and even for them the chances are slim. Being caught in this newly illegal activity of online worship will result in fines and imprisonment.

Prayer

As we hear of this and watch from afar, we have no choice but to pray for the underground Chinese churches.

Pray that they may find ways to worship together, that they may stay strong in their faith, and may continue to bring glory to God through their worship.

While the government is becoming more innovative in the way they monitor and regulate Christian worship, pray for wisdom and ingenuity in the house churches so that they can continue to find ways to worship God.

Also pray for the CCP. Pray that their hearts might be turned, that they will be urged to see the evil which they are doing and even that they may turn to Christ, and humbly submit to his rule. 🙏



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Note: Most of the information from this article comes from the Voice of the Martyrs Canada and Open Doors USA websites. Both organisations have an email list which you can join if you would like to receive updates on the persecuted church worldwide.

“Counting the Cost”

Recapping Summit’s First

Reformed Young Adults Conference

KEITH DAVIS

This past February 17-20, 2022 Bethel URC in Calgary, AB hosted the first (of what we hope to be a yearly) *Reformed Young Adults Conference* (or RYAC). 116 post-high school young adults registered—well above expectations. What surprised us most was how many young adults came from outside Alberta. Several people flew in from Ontario; many others drove from Manitoba and Saskatchewan (to the east of Calgary); and a large group traveled from the Bulkley and Fraser Valleys (to our west). We were blessed with a large mix of young adults from both the Canadian Reformed and United Reformed denominations.

Conference set-up

The decision to host the conference at Bethel was one of necessity. Due to the vaccine mandate, conference space at area

hotels was off limits. But as it turned out, the decision to host the conference at Bethel was a blessing.

Conference organizers converted the large foyer of the church into a make-shift conference centre. Couches and end tables were brought in to create lounge areas. Several round tables were set up for playing chess and board games. Half the gymnasium was used for an eating area; the other half was used for games like nine-square, corn-hole, and ping-pong.

The conference began Thursday afternoon at 5:30 p.m. with registration and supper. It concluded Sunday afternoon, but many young adults stayed for the evening service as well and even played games and visited together before heading home on the holiday Monday. The Bethel Ladies Auxiliary provided delicious food and snacks for attendees—which was one of the biggest advantages of having the conference at church.



We had great food at a low cost, which kept registration fees more affordable.

The conference organizers struck a healthy balance between worship sessions (which included main topic talks, praise, prayer, and discussion time) as well as free time and fellowship. One of the main reasons for organizing RYAC was to provide an opportunity for like-minded Reformed young adults to get together and grow in the faith and enjoy fellowship. Based on that metric alone, RYAC was a huge success!

On Friday afternoon, registrants chose to attend one of three out-day activities: a Banff tour, bowling, or an escape room. Saturday afternoon's free time included hockey and skating at a local outdoor rink. (Calgary was having unseasonably warm weather—which made for some soft ice—but it was great to skate outdoors in February in a t-shirt!). Some young adults chose to remain at church and play board games and card games. Others simply rested. There were also group games and creative challenges throughout the conference.

Saturday evening was a time of praise and prayer. The young adults spent twenty minutes singing, then thirty minutes praying together in small groups, then everyone met together in the sanctuary for another twenty minutes of singing.

Speakers

The speakers for the conference were Pastor John van Eyk from Trinity Reformed in Lethbridge, AB and URC pastor emeritus Hank Van der Woerd. Pastor van Eyk spoke on the spiritual dimensions of the theme "Counting the Cost." He emphasised the need for us to die unto ourselves if we desire to follow Christ. On Friday night, Pastor van Eyk led us in a wonderful biographical overview of the life and ministry of John G. Paton. It was entitled: *Oh, that I had my life to begin again!*

On Saturday, Pastor Hank Van der Woerd took a very practical approach to the theme of "Counting the Cost." He focused on the biblical foundations and gospel motivations for putting Christ first in our finances. He addressed our need to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us—being good stewards

of our time, talents, and resources. Pastor Van der Woerd's advice and insight on finances was much appreciated and he stuck around to answer many questions after his session.

Conference attendees remarked how blessed they were by both speakers. On Sunday, conference registrants attended Bethel United Reformed Church and some attended the local Canadian Reformed Church. Bethel URC hosted a special RYAC fellowship meal in between services. All in all, the 2022 "Counting the Cost" conference was such a huge blessing and conference organizers received very positive and encouraging feedback from participants.

Next year

Plans are already underway for the second annual RYAC to be held at Bethel URC Calgary on Thursday, February 16 through Monday, February 20, 2023. Pastor Keith Giles from Covenant URC in Grand Prairie, AB will be our main speaker. The 2023 conference theme is focused on the church: "Staying Connected to the Body."

The RYAC Conference Committee is composed of seven young adults from across Western Canada: Jared Davis, Chantel Janssens, Cecil Tuininga, Alyssa Van't Klooster, Emily Van Dyken, Mike Vander Hooft, and Tyler Van Eeden Petersman. Pastor Keith Davis and his wife Laura assist the committee and help run the event. If you want to learn more about the Summit Reformed Young Adults Conference, go online to summitrefcon.ca and click on the **RYAC** tab on the main menu bar. Pictures and videos are posted in the Media Page. Lord willing, registration for RYAC 2023 will be open by November 7, 2022. Due to limited room, we may cap attendance at 150, so be sure to register by the end of November. 🇨🇦



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Elm Creek

Canadian Reformed Church

Inaugural Service

JENIEN HOLT LAND

For the afternoon service of September 4, 2022 we gathered together in Elm Creek, Manitoba, about 20 km north of Carman. There was a feeling of excitement in the air as church members and visitors filled the pews for the very first time. We were very thankful to be able to use the St. Andrews United Church building (while we are in the process of finalizing the purchase of the building).

At the doors, a congratulatory high-five was shared between Pastor James Slaa and Marcel Bergsma, a member of the Elm Creek Church Initiative Committee. “This is it!” Pastor Slaa said with a smile. “Yes,” Marcel agreed. “After three years, here we are!”

In an email sent by Council we read: “This is the result of countless hours of work done in love for the LORD by many brothers and sisters. They committed themselves to a task to complete it as best they could. However, they did not expect an outcome based on their own wisdom or expertise. Instead, it was done in prayer, that the outcome may be according to what the LORD had willed from this project. Therefore, we give thanks to our God who has directed everything together so beautifully.”

Opening message

The inaugural service was led by Pastor Slaa, who welcomed us to this historical event and opened the service by quoting Psalm 150:1, 2, and 6. The sermon was on Matthew 16:8, the theme being: “Jesus Christ will build his church.” Reference was made to the boldness of Peter, that despite his many known weaknesses and future shortcomings, his declaration of great faith—amongst a crowd of hardened unbelievers—was very bold. And that he was rightly named Peter (Rock), because he confessed the mighty truth that Jesus is the Christ, and upon this truth, Christ will build his church.

It should be our prayer that we are a gathering of believers like Simon Peter. A blessed company of imperfect, weak, but faithful people—of all ages and walks in life—joined together in faith. A church, united in one body, heart, and mind, washed by the blood of Christ and renewed by his Spirit. And that despite Satan’s attempts to tear down what God has built up, despite setbacks and trials that we as a new, young congregation are bound to face, we can be comforted knowing Satan will not prevail. We do not have to be afraid; nothing can ruin the new creation of Jesus Christ. While physical churches may come to an end, the spiritual church will never die. The body of believers, the church, is an offensive force; that through the preaching of the gospel, and as a light on a hill, is making a spiritual assault on the gates of hell and darkness in this world. How powerful then is the institution of a new church!

It was an excellent message, especially following the morning’s service in Carman West where we witnessed the ordination of our new elders and deacons for the Elm Creek Canadian Reformed Church, and thus also the institution. In that sermon we were encouraged, now that there will be two smaller congregations, creating new opportunities for members who may have faded into the background (intentionally or not), to step forward. It challenges each and every one of us to use and develop our gifts in service to God. We were reminded how the church is a living and active body of Christ that has been given a mission. That the church is not a social club, nor a playground, but a *pray*-ground. It is the training ground for spreading the gospel and becoming labourers for the Lord.

Thanks & congratulations

Following the afternoon inaugural service, Harry Vankammen came forward on behalf of Council and thanked Pastor Slaa





for his encouraging message. Special thanks was given to the Elm Creek Church Initiative Committee, as well as the St. Andrews congregation for the use of their building. Thankfulness was expressed at their eagerness to cooperate and communicate with us despite this being a somewhat difficult time of transition for them.

We were all reminded that our services are public worship services and that members and non-members alike are always welcome to join us.

Bill Vanderveen gave a message on behalf of Carman East church, noting what a blessing it is to continue to see growth in this area; first in 1999 when Carman split into East and West, and now with the institution of a church in Elm Creek.

Trevor Schriemer, on behalf of Ambassador (Niverville) and Redeemer (Winnipeg) Canadian Reformed Churches, reminded us that a church is more than bricks and stones—that it is a living body—“A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (1 Pet 2:9), and encouraged us to be a light that shines in the community.

Rob Kottelenberg spoke a message on behalf of Grace (Winnipeg) Canadian Reformed Church, expressing praise for the evidence of blessing poured out on God’s people here.


A letter was read on behalf of Emmanuel Church in Denver, in which Rev. Steve Vandeveld expressed his joy in this occasion, and quoted from 1 Timothy 3:15 that we are in “the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.”

Redeemer Reformation in Regina (URCNA) also sent a letter, stating it was a blessing to see growth and maturity, and expressing thankfulness at the blessing of office bearers capable of serving among us, and a church building to worship in. They also wrote, “we will rejoice with you and will remember and pray for you in worship today”.

On behalf of Carman West church, Pastor Slaa expressed his congratulations, explaining that it means “we rejoice with you” and “we share with you in the grace you are receiving from God.” He also included some personal remarks where he acknowledged things may not have gone exactly to plan in regard to being a co-pastor in Carman West, but that the church is a construction zone (1 Pet 2:5), always changing according to the plan which God has laid out for us.

Lastly, we heard from Rod Savage, the acting Reeve of the RM of Grey. He welcomed us to Elm Creek and spoke of how he had worshipped in this same church building for many years as a member of the St. Andrews United Church, and that he wished us the best moving forward.

Following the service, we all met outside for a coffee social and enjoyed a special time of fellowship together as a new congregation.

The institution of a new church is an exciting change. Already I have noticed a renewed energy within our congregation. Members are eager to share their ideas and use their talents. It’s a positive shift that I pray will lead to spiritual and physical growth, as we move forward in service to our Lord. 



December birthday wishes

Happy birthday to James, Julie, and Ava! We wish you all the Lord's blessing in the year to come. May you all continue to serve the Lord in all you do and be a light to those around you.

"Oh give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" Psalm 107:1

Update

Here is a small update on the three of them celebrating a birthday in December:

Julie is happy in her new home at L'Avenir. She continues to serve the Lord as she listens to her favourite music.

James spends much of his time playing "hockey" indoors and out. He enjoys living at Cornerstone and loves washing dishes and riding his bike.

Ava is enjoying her days at school where she works hard in her cooking class and enjoys spending time with her friends. At home Ava loves to listen to Christian music; she can often be found singing along to "10,000 reasons" at full volume in her room. May her love for God continue to grow in the coming year.

December Birthdays

10 James Kamminga will be **38**
Box 1125
Carman, MB R0G OJO

16 Julie Kamminga will be **34**
c/o River Road Place
440 River Road
Winnipeg, MB R2M 3Z9

17 Ava Pierotti will be **15**
7761 Regional Road 20
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

A NOTE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS If there are any address changes that I need to be aware of please let me know as soon as possible.

Rachel Vis >> 731 Lincoln Street, Wellandport, Ontario L0R 2J0 | tom.rachelvis@gmail.com | 905-329-9476

CLARION KIDS

AMANDA DEBOER

LORD'S DAY 21

Do you know many people in your church? Maybe you don't know them well, but you know their first or last names. There is something wonderful about being in church with all those people. We are God's children! Another word used for God's children is *saints*. All of us in church are a group of saints. We are the *communion of saints*. God has given his rich blessings to us all! God has also given us different talents. Talents are things we do well. And God wants us to use our talents to praise him. We should also use them to help the other people in our church. Maybe your talent is being creative. Then you can make a card for your sick friend. Maybe you love babies. Then you can take a turn in the nursery. It pleases God when the communion of saints works together for him.

Go to Lord's Day 21, Question & Answer 54. After reading this, try to fill in the missing vowels (a, e, i, o, u) to see how the Lord Jesus cares for his church.

The Son of God g __ th __ rs, d __ f __ nds, and pr __ s __ rv __ s his church for himself.

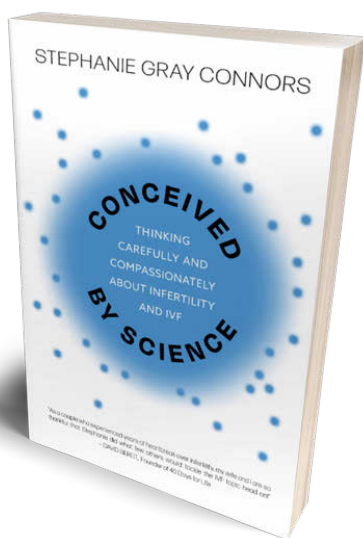
Think of a talent that you have. If you cannot think of one, ask your Dad or Mom to tell you about a talent that you have. Write the talent down here:

Now think of two ways you would like to use this talent to praise God and to help his people.

1. _____

2. _____

BOOK REVIEW



Can Christian Couples Use IVF?

Conceived by Science: Thinking Carefully and Compassionately About Infertility and IVF by Stephanie Gray Connors. (Florida: Wongeese Publishing, 2021). Paperback. 147 pages. \$15.50 CDN.

Infertility is a hugely sensitive issue. The magnitude of its sensitivity can only be matched by the controversy generated by IVF amongst Christians. This is particularly because unborn human lives are involved. Nevertheless, countless couples have used IVF to have children and overcome their infertility. As a pastor, I've known several Christian couples who've also gone this route.

What is IVF?

We're talking about "in-vitro fertilization." Instead of fertilization taking place in the womb, it takes place in the laboratory. Sperm is collected from the father, eggs from the mother, and they meet each other in a petri dish. One or more of the resulting embryos may then be implanted in the mother's uterus. It sounds straightforward, but there are some weighty ethical concerns around the process.

One of the biggest is the fact that multiple embryos are often produced and then frozen for later use. This process results in the death of some embryos and degraded health for others. Consequently, even those embryos which survive freezing and thawing are graded according to their condition. Only those in the best condition are implanted, and the rest are destroyed, i.e., killed.

IVF in Reformed ethics

Reformed ethicists have differed in their evaluations of IVF. Some have been categorically opposed, while others have held that it could be permissible under strict conditions. One of the latter was my seminary ethics professor, Dr. N. H. Gootjes. In the spring semester of 1998, Dr. Gootjes lectured on IVF in our Ethics 4411 class at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. As was his habit, he was exhaustive in his treatment of the subject. He spent several lectures on the checkered history and the abuses that happen. He interacted with several other ethicists. Then, of course, he went to the Scriptures and explained and applied some of the key passages.

Let me share the conclusions of Dr. Gootjes. He argued that IVF was permissible given all of these conditions:

- That it take place in the context of a marriage between a man and a woman, using only their gametes.
- No grading or selection of embryos is permissible.
- No freezing of embryos is allowed.
- All embryos should be implanted in the womb, with a limit of three.

At the time, I thought he made a good case. Over the years the pastoral advice I've given to couples has been based on what I heard in seminary.

But, of course, Proverbs 18:17 says, "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him." I approached pro-life activist Stephanie Gray Connors's book with that bit of wisdom in mind. Could it be that Gootjes was wrong and I've then been giving couples the wrong advice for the last twenty years?

Connors's case

What is the ethical standard by which Connors proposes to evaluate IVF? It isn't immediately clear. In the introduction she says she'll present arguments that are both "sectarian and non-sectarian in nature." That's a curious choice of words—what's the background of her "sectarian" arguments? Which sect? She says she makes "explicitly Christian appeals," but says that she has enough diverse information to challenge those "who embrace a different religion or no religion at all" (p. xiii). Her information mostly challenges various abuses of IVF, whereas her actual assessment of the procedure itself is based on appeals to divine authority.

While *Conceived by Science* purports to be about IVF, it spends a lot of time on related side issues. In particular, Connors argues against the practice of surrogacy, which typically involves IVF. She's right that this practice is ethically problematic—for example, it places the bearing of children outside the context

of marriage between a man and a woman. She raises valid concerns about the increasing commodification of humans, especially when it comes to the idea of “designer babies.”

Although Connors is sensitive to those who struggle with infertility, she concludes that IVF is not the way to address the issue. She categorically condemns IVF. Under no conditions whatsoever is it justifiable, in her view. Even if all the conditions described by Gootjes above are in place, IVF is not acceptable according to Connors.

Therefore, even if the sperm and eggs come from a married couple, IVF is out of the question. Rhetorically she asks, “Does it fit with God’s designs about sexual intimacy for Him to enlist a third party, outside of a married couple, when it comes to the very moment of creating new life?” (p. 64). Connors concludes, “God made sex necessary. IVF makes sex unnecessary. Sex receives humans that God creates. IVF manufactures humans” (p. 67). This is one of the author’s key arguments against IVF.

“Be fruitful and multiply”

In the Bible, children are both a duty and a blessing for husband and wife. They’re a duty in the sense that God told Adam and Eve, representatives of the human race, to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28)—a command later repeated to Noah in Genesis 9:7. Psalm 127:3 speaks about the blessing: “Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.” It’s therefore natural that a Christian couple would want to have children.

It’s true that sexual intimacy within marriage was God’s provision to help human beings fulfil their duty and experience this blessing. So, certainly, that ought to be the norm. However, because we live in a sin-blighted world, bodies don’t always function the way they should. Infertility is real and so is the accompanying hurt. It’s understandable that medical research would seek to address it. Today we have the means so that couples who might otherwise not be able to have their own children now can. But just because you *can* doesn’t mean you *should*. So, is there explicit guidance from the Bible on that? Well, no. Scripture simply doesn’t say that children may *only* be conceived in the uterus following sexual intimacy. We shouldn’t make prohibitions where God doesn’t.

Furthermore, Connors overstates things when she says that “IVF manufactures humans” or that “IVF creates new life.” Whether conception happens in the uterus or in a petri dish, *God brings that new life into being*—giving it not only a physical body, but also a *soul*. Medical scientists may engineer the circumstances of the union of sperm and egg, but they still can’t create a human life. Because we are both body and soul, only God will ever be able to do that. Whether *in utero* or *in*

vitro, conception always happens by God’s providence, *never* by science.

Conceived by Science has a few other issues. In chapter 11, Connors makes a leap from what the Bible says about Christians being temples of the Holy Spirit to all people being temples of the Holy Spirit. In the same chapter, Connors writes excitedly about her other-worldly experience worshipping at a Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church. Her opposition to the gifting of frozen embryos to other parents hinges on a tenuous distinction between “donation” and “adoption,” as if what we call it determines whether it’s ethical. She writes about the procurement of sperm via masturbation and argues that this necessarily involves evil—but if it’s done between a married man and woman to have children, is it wrong? I’m not convinced at all.

The Pope should be proud

That brings me to the bottom line with this book. Connors is a devout Roman Catholic. In an interview published last year she spoke about her serious Roman Catholic commitment. She described how she prays to and feels a special connection with St. Anthony of Padua before she preaches and proclaims the Word of God.¹ She takes her faith seriously, which is more than you can say for many Roman Catholics. So, as a result, she also takes seriously what the Roman Catholic Church teaches about IVF. As it happens, the Roman Catholic Church is unequivocally opposed to IVF, for exactly the reasons Connors gives in *Conceived by Science*. I can’t help but read it as an attempt to convince evangelical Christians that Rome is right on this.

Please don’t get me wrong. There’s certainly a lot of helpful stuff in this book. It’s informative on some of the abuses and issues around IVF. I don’t want to write it off entirely. For example, the penultimate chapter has a valuable warning against making the desire for children into an idol. That said, I continue to find Dr. Gootjes’s overall evaluation of IVF more persuasive. While IVF might not be the first choice for addressing infertility, it isn’t necessarily unethical from a biblical perspective. As long as the sixth and seventh commandments are honoured, I can’t say that it is categorically evil. If a Christian husband and wife can find an IVF provider who operates within those ethical parameters, it *can* be a way for them to honour God by being fruitful and multiplying. 🍌



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¹ “God & I: Stephanie Gray Connors,” by Mario Conte, online at <https://www.messengersaintanthony.com/content/god-i-stephanie-gray-connors> (accessed June 17, 2022)

PRESS RELEASE

Classis Central Ontario

September 16, 2022

Rev. Bill DeJong, on behalf of the convening church, welcomed all the delegates and opened the meeting with Scripture reading from John 20, singing from Hymn 52, and prayer. It was noted that this was the first classis for the representatives from Mercy Church since their institution.

Redemption Church reported that the primi delegates are in attendance with the exception of Pastor Winston Bosch who was ill. Classis was constituted. Rev. Clarence VanderVelde was appointed as Chair, Mr. Matt Harsevoort as Vice Chair, and Rev. Ian Wildeboer as Clerk. The agenda was adopted.

Memorabilia: The chair noted that Rev Winston Bosh has accepted the call to Streetlight Church resulting in an upcoming vacancy in Ottawa. Mercy Church was instituted on September 11, and Pastor Ian was installed as their pastor on the same day. The ongoing health concerns of Rev. Chris Bosch, Rev. John van Popta, and Rev. George van Popta were noted. Mrs. Mulder was also remembered.

Reports & question period

The church visitation reports for the Ebenezer, Fellowship, Jubilee, and Rehoboth churches were reviewed and prayed over. The churches in turn reported on their foreign and local mission activities and following each report their efforts were prayed over by a delegate from a neighbouring church.

Burlington-Fellowship church reported that the classis archives have been inspected and were found to be in good order except for a short list of items. The missing documents noted last year have been located and added into the archives.


The Treasurer's report was received and reviewed. The assessment proposal of \$3.50 per communicant member was approved, and Mr. John Hofsink was appointed as backup to the treasurer of Classis to replace Mr. Harry Sloots, who is retiring from this position. Mr. Harry Sloots was thanked for his work. Rehoboth church reports that the financial records have been reviewed and are in good order. Mr. Jack Spithoff was thanked for his work. Burlington-Rehoboth reported that the financial records for the Fund for Needy Churches were reviewed and found in good order. Mrs. Aafke Spithoff, Mr. Fred Lodder, Mr. Ed Jans, and Mr. Kent Baartman were thanked for their work.

Question period according to Article 44 C.O. was held. All churches answered yes, yes, and no with the exception of two churches who plan to appeal decisions of General Synod 2022.

Appointments

Appointments were made for the following:

- Committee of Examiners: Rev. Clarence VanderVelde, Rev. Bill deJong, Alternate: Rev. Tony Roukema and Rev. Winston Bosch.
- Church Visitors: Rev. Clarence VanderVelde (Convenor), Rev. Bill deJong, Rev. Tony Roukema, Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes, Rev. Winston Bosch (alternate), Rev. Ian Wildeboer (alternate).
- Church Archives: Burlington-Ebenezer.
- Church to inspect Archives: Burlington-Fellowship.
- Treasurer: Mr. Jack Spithoff, Mr. John Hofsink (back-up).
- Church for inspecting Treasurer's books: Burlington-Rehoboth.
- Committee for Needy Churches: Mr. Ed Jans, Mr. Fred Lodder, Mrs. Aafke Spithoff.
- Church for inspecting books of Fund for Needy churches: Burlington-Rehoboth.
- Committee for Appeals: Rev. J. deGelder (Convenor), Mr. Rick Ludwig, Mr. Andre Schutten, Alternates - Rev. Dr. Gijsbert Nederveen, Rev. John van Popta, Mr. Leo Kampen (in that order).
- Delegates for Regional Synod East: (Ministers) Rev. Jake Torenvliet, Rev. Hilmer Jagersma; (Alternates) Rev. Greg Davidson, Rev. Clarence Vandervelde (in that order), (Elders) Mr. Ron Bremer, Mr. Phillip deBoer, (Alternates) Mr. Henry Nieuwehuis, Mr. Dave Kampen (in that order).
- Convening church for next classis: Ottawa Jubilee.
- Suggested Officers for next classis: Rev. Ian Wildeboer (Chair), Ottawa Jubilee Elder (Vice Chair), Rev. Paul Aasman (Clerk).
- Date of next classis is set D.V. for Friday, December 9, 2022 at 9 a.m. at Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church (alternate date March 3, 2023).

Question period was held. Censure according to Article 34 C.O. was deemed unnecessary. The Acts will be drafted by the executive. The Press Release was read and approved. Rev. Clarence Vandervelde led in closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned. 

Matt Harsevoort - Vice Chair

