

A CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
TO ENCOURAGE, EDUCATE, ENGAGE, AND UNITE

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JULY 21, 2023



# Clarion

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# WHAT'S INSIDE

Church unity, both within our own federation and between sister federations, is a topic addressed by two articles in this issue. In the first, Jason Van Vliet continues a mini-series working out the biblical principles involved. In the second, Karlo Janssen brings us up to date on the situation in the Netherlands and what is happening in the wake of the dissolution of our bond with the (now former) Liberated churches there. The Lord continues to preserve his own and may it soon be that we can once again have a sister church in that land. While we have the freedom to discuss how best to unify, believers in many places struggle to find the basic freedom to be Christian and gather as the church. One such place, believe it or not, is India, as Andrew Douma describes in *Persecution of Christians*.

Ministers get calls and move around at times. Fergus Maranatha is on the receiving end of one pastor's move as David VanAmerongen relates. The need for more ministers continues but thankfully a press release from Classis Ontario West indicates that there are now at least three more candidates for the ministry eligible for call and six more brothers coming down the pipe. Occasionally a pastor retires from active duty. One of our own contributing editors falls into this category but as Danielle DeGroot's article indicates, Eric Kampen will be continuing his labours in different ways, including at *Clarion* (we are happy to say!). In fact, his editorial pleading for more "uniformity in practice" regarding liturgy is bucking the trend in our federation and will get you thinking. Maybe it'll inspire you to write a letter to the editor, which is always welcome. We have two of those in this issue as well, cautioning us writers about not overstating the case. Whether the particular cases cited were overstated or not we leave to the reader's discernment.

Rick Ludwig encourages us to reflect on whether we can improve our practice of empathy to the benefit of our neighbour. Clarence VanderVelde meditates on the one chance we have in this life to believe in Christ and serve God. Our *Podcast Review* column is back and Lucas introduces us to a timely new offering sponsored by Westminster Seminary Press. In the wake of Timothy Keller's recent death, Wes Bredenhof provides us with a timely review of a biography of this influential man. Katie de Boer of Abbotsford is featured in *Ray of Sunshine* (happy birthday to all our September brothers and sisters!) and this big idea called "repentance" is taught to our younger readers in *Clarion Kids* (but we all need to learn this lesson!). Lots of edifying things to read and ponder—enjoy!

*Peter Holtvliwer*

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## Clarion

A trustworthy and engaging magazine, widely spread and read in Canadian Reformed households and beyond.

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# LITURGY

After the death of Queen Elizabeth, I read an article in which the author expressed appreciation for the liturgy surrounding the death of a monarch. He wrote that liturgy includes “all those ‘public works’ of ritual that bind a people together and give voice to their identity, deepest convictions and aspirations. Liturgy, which is the distilled wisdom of the generations, spares us the burden of having to improvise our own response to the most profound mysteries of life and death” (de Sousa, *National Post*, Sept. 16, 2022). His words came to mind again when I watched the coronation of King Charles III.

## VARIATIONS IN LITURGY


These words struck a chord because they also apply to our weekly worship. My observation is that while each congregation will have a liturgy, that is, an order of worship, at best it binds a local church together in a certain ritual and gives voice to their local identity, deepest convictions, and aspirations. It is not the distilled wisdom of the generations.

Is this an overstatement? Picture a visitor, a newcomer to the faith, setting out on a tour of all the churches in our federation. Such a visitor would encounter a myriad of variations in liturgy. In one place, an elder goes on the pulpit, welcoming all those present and reading various announcements. In another place, the minister does this. Announcements may take place before the service, in the service, or appear only in the local bulletin. In one place the congregation rises spontaneously as the minister arrives on the pulpit, while in another they are asked to rise. In one place there is a call to worship, while in another the service begins right away with the votum. In some places, the congregation is asked where their help comes from, and it responds in unison, while in another, the votum is said by the minister. In some cases, the minister says Amen after the salutation, while in another all the amens come from the congregation. In some places the congregation stands for every song, while in another they stand for some songs but not for others. In some, the law is read verbatim, while in others it is read with commentary or by paraphrasing. In some the offertory precedes the sermon, while in another it takes place at some point after the sermon. In some congregations there is a song between the Scripture reading and the text, while in another reading, text,

and sermon form one block. In some places, the minister will read the question from the Catechism and the congregation reads the answer in unison, while in other places the minister reads both. In some places, the minister gives the benediction, including the Amen, while in another, the congregation says an Amen or sings a threefold Amen. Further, if the visitor tuned in to discussions in the church press and blogosphere, or read through general synod submissions, he would hear arguments for being freed from the use of set liturgical forms.

## MORE DISCUSSION

It is true that liturgy is left in the freedom of the churches. In the *Book of Praise* (p. 595–596), one can find samples of liturgies in common use in the churches, but not required. When one thinks of the variations, those examples are dated. Yet, one would expect that if all the churches are working on the assumption that liturgy is a matter of principle, not preference, why is there is such a diversity? Could it be the case that many of the discussions about liturgy began with a sincere desire to better understand what is happening, but then drifted into the area of personal preferences and turned a deaf ear to the distilled wisdom of the ages? Was it the case that the discussion would have benefitted from more discussion partners, that is, churches in one’s classis or the federation? What may seem like a bright idea can have the weaknesses exposed by broader discussion. If it is truly a bright idea, it can let its light shine beyond the local church and benefit others.

When it comes to liturgy, improvisation is draining for those called to lead worship and unsettling for the worshippers. It may be a matter of rowing against the stream, seeing the present diversity of liturgical practices, but it seems to me that unity of faith should show itself in uniformity in practice, using a liturgy that does more than bind people together locally. The church is catholic. Why not express that liturgically? 



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# ONLY ONE CHANCE

*“There was a rich man . . . and at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus.”*

(LUKE 16:19, 20)

Christ told the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, thereby teaching that we must focus our heart on serving God.

The rich man is described in his opulence: he is clothed in purple—the colour of royalty—he wears fine linen and feasts sumptuously every day. It’s not wrong for him to have this wealth, but the picture is one of self-indulgence. His attitude is evident from how he treats poor Lazarus lying at his gate. The rich man does not go out of his way to help Lazarus in any meaningful way. In this way, he doesn’t show love for God or the neighbour.

The rich man is exactly what Christ said about the Pharisees—exalted among people, but an abomination in the sight of God (16:15). The rich man lives for himself and dies unto himself, entering hell upon death. Lazarus dies and goes to heaven. The rich man isn’t even mentioned by name in the parable, indicating that although he is a somebody on earth, he is a nobody in God’s eyes because he doesn’t live for God.

Three times in this parable the rich man calls out to Abraham from hell. But his calling Abraham “father” rings hollow. It’s an indictment of the Pharisees who prided themselves on being Abraham’s children and thought that descent from Abraham guaranteed their salvation (Luke 3:8; John 8:33, 39). Abraham is the rich man’s father only according to the flesh because he doesn’t practice the faith of Abraham. His heart does not serve God.

Christ confronts us with the seriousness of focusing our life on serving God. When the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to provide some relief for him in hell, Abraham says that’s impossible. The rich man had his good things in this life. The point is that the decision for all eternity is made on earth, and it is irreversible and final. It was a warning for the Pharisees, and it is a warning for us today. Being a member of the covenant community does not alter the outcome of the rich man’s life. We must embrace God’s covenant promises in faith and show that the Lord’s service is our number one priority.

When the rich man then wants Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers, he is implying that God hadn’t warned him adequately! Abraham says, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them” (16:29). The rich man persists: “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent” (16:30). Now he is implying that the Word of God isn’t

good enough! The irony is that the rich man says this to Abraham who believed God on his word when called to go out, not knowing where he was going (Heb 11:8). Abraham didn’t even have Moses and the Prophets.

Abraham responds, “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead” (16:31). How true! A warning by Lazarus from beyond the grave would still have to be received in faith. If a person blocks out Moses and the Prophets, he will block that out too. Look what happened subsequently. Christ raised someone called Lazarus from the dead, and the leaders of the people wanted to kill Christ and even Lazarus (John 11:53; 12:10, 11). When Christ himself arose from the dead, the guards told the leaders of the people what had happened, but the leaders told the guards to say that the disciples had stolen Christ’s body (Matt 28:11–15).

Christ says to us today that we have everything we need to know about how to serve God, and about life and death. We have the whole Bible! We are called to focus our heart on serving God. It’s serious because it has eternal consequences. You only have one chance. **C**

## FOR FURTHER READING:

Luke 16:19–31

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What is the significance of the fact that we are told the rich man is buried but there is no mention of Lazarus’s burial?
2. What does the name “Lazarus” mean and how does that play out in the poor man’s life?
3. Evaluate your life and consider whether you are serving God from the heart. from God’s Word and how could you correct this?



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# ONE CHURCH

## *Unity among Federations*

JASON VAN VLIET

A shepherd in a dark coat stands in the center of a vast field filled with sheep. The scene is hazy and atmospheric, with the sheep appearing as a dense, textured sea of white wool. The shepherd is seen from behind, looking out over the flock. The overall tone is contemplative and serene.

Eccelesiastical fellowship. Sister church relationships. With which church federations? How many of them? What standards do we use as we explore these ecumenical connections? Suffice it to say, these questions provide more than enough fodder for lively discussions on Sunday afternoons or around campfires. Building consensus can be challenging; at times it seems well-nigh impossible. Where do we go with all of this?

In the two previous articles<sup>1</sup> on the phrase in the Nicene Creed, “one church,” we have learned to start with what we believe, based on God’s Word, not what we see and experience. Our experience with other church federations is a point, but it should never become the starting point. In the last article we applied this within a federation. Now we turn to relationships between or among federations.

In his “Theses Concerning the Church,” Prof. K. Schilder underlines this truth when, on the one hand, he emphatically states, “The *will* to act ecumenically is a primary distinguishing mark of the church.” He even ranks it as something that is of “first-rate importance” (Thesis X). No isolationist doctrine of the church in this professor’s teaching! On the other hand, if we approach our ecumenical calling based on experience and, in particular, *personal* experience, then Schilder warns that we are committing a “foremost error-of-principle.” To put it in his own words, “Such an error is made by one who, e.g., determines the distinguishing marks of the *church* . . . from the point of view of *strictly personal* events or experiences” (Theses XI and XII).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clarion, Vol 70, No 24 and Vol 72, No 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Canadian Reformed Magazine*, Vol 21, No 17 (Aug 19, 1972), 1–3. Schilder’s theses can also be found online at <https://spindleworks.com/library/schilder/19thesis.htm> or in the newly published *Klaas Schilder Reader*, ed. G. Harinck & M. De Jong (Lexham Academic) 267–72.

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*The work of Christ is so much longer, chronologically speaking, and so much broader, geographically speaking, than our limited experiences and impressions could ever encompass*

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#### GETTING OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT

Let's clear the air by making a confession. In all likelihood, everyone of us is guilty of committing this "foremost error-of-principle." Have you heard, or even made, comments like the ones below?

"It's so incredible! On a recent work trip, I traveled halfway around the world, and yet I felt so completely at one with some fellow Christians there. Sure, their liturgy and songbook were a bit different, but for the rest the preaching was great and for so many other things we were on the same page. Praise the Lord!"

Other experiences, though, raise eyebrows. "So, we went to one of our sister churches on our family vacation. As I expected, their worship service was not quite the same as we have it, but my concern is actually with the preaching. After all, that's the first mark of a faithful church. Sure, the preacher was engaging, but where was the Word of God? It was mostly stories, analogies, and opinions. Why do we have ecclesiastical fellowship if the first mark of a faithful church is questionable?"

To be clear, observations such as these are relevant. They should not be dismissed with little more than a shrug. But by the same token they do not form the foundation upon which we build our ecumenical efforts. Why not? Lord's Day 21 of our Catechism indicates at least three reasons.

First, the *who* is misplaced. Both comments above focus on I, me, and we. Lord's Day 21, though, puts someone else front and centre: the "Son of God," our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To be sure, a connection exists. We are the ones who experience what Christ is doing in his church. But we also encounter many sins and weaknesses of human beings. As a result, our impressions of our own federation and other federations will be, at best, mixed and, at worst, very confusing. Our first step, then, is to steady the eyes of our hearts on "Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:2).

Second, the timing, or the *when*, is off. We experience other federations for a week or two, if we are on a trip, or perhaps for a few decades, if congregations from two faithful federations are living side-by-side in the same neighbourhood. But Christ is gathering his worldwide church "from the beginning of the world to its end" (LD 21). The work of Christ is so much longer, chronologically speaking, and so much broader, geographically speaking, than our limited experiences and impressions could ever encompass.

Third, the instrument, or the *by whom and by what*, rests in the wrong place if we lean on our experiences. We clearly confess that the church of Christ is being gathered and preserved in the unity of true faith "by his Spirit and Word." We start, then, with what *the Spirit* says to the churches (Rev 2:7, 11, 27, etc.), not what *I* observe *within* the churches.

#### CALLED TO WALK THE WORTHY PATH

So, what next? Ephesians 4, one of the foremost chapters in the Bible on church unity, begins with these words: "I . . . urge you [referring to the whole church] to walk in a manner worthy of the *calling* to which you have been *called*" (v. 1).

This calling includes being humble and patient (v. 2), equipping the saints (v. 12), and avoiding heresy (v. 14). But these things are all connected to the central theme of maintaining "the unity of the Spirit" (v. 3) in the "one body" of Christ (v. 4), which is later referred to as the "unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God" (v. 13).

Calling differs from commentary. When we interact with other church federations, our leading question ought to be "What does the Son of God command us to do and to say here?" We can be curious and comment: "Isn't it interesting how they organize their worship services compared to the way that we do it?" But curiosity is not calling. In theory, we could be pragmatic and suggest: "Christians must unite, so let's make it happen with the least pain and most gain." But Christ's calling is not human pragmatism either. Rather, the calling of Christ is heard in the Spirit-inspired Word. Are we following him?

#### MATURING UNITY

Naturally, this leads to the question: to what kind of unity is Christ calling us? For starters, we read in Ephesians 4:3 about the "unity of the Spirit," that is, oneness that comes from the Spirit. Later, in verses 15–16 we learn that Christ himself joins and holds together his whole body. For this reason, the Spirit commands us to be "eager to *maintain* the unity of the Spirit" (Eph 4:3). *He* makes it, and he equips us to keep and guard it.

In fact, Ephesians 4:15–16 contains echoes of Psalm 139:13–15, which speaks of the Spirit knitting together a baby in a mother's

womb. In other words, church unity is different than a business merger. When two companies want to align as one, the bosses sit down together, find common ground, and map out shared objectives. Next, they draft up a business merger plan with a timeline. They obtain the necessary internal and external approvals. Finally, they implement the plan. Mission accomplished! Of course, ecumenical relationships between church federations involve some similar things. There are delegates, committees, reports, plans,

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### *We should not be satisfied with the status quo*

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and timelines. But fundamentally church unity is not a corporate merger. In Ephesians 4 the Spirit compares church unity to what happens within a human body, not the business world.

Interestingly, the body is not finished unifying when a baby is born. To be sure, with the Lord's blessing, all the different body parts are there, together in one cute, little bundle . . . that still needs a lot of further co-ordination. The baby has both hands and mouth at birth, but it will take much time and training before those hands can properly feed that mouth.

Similarly, church unity is anything but static. It not only requires ongoing maintenance but also continual growth. This is why the apostle urges that the saints be equipped "until we all attain to the unity of the faith" (4:13). By God's grace, we have ecumenical contact and ecclesiastical fellowship with other federations. But we should not be satisfied with the status quo. Christ himself calls us to *grow* and *attain*, not to sit still and atrophy.

This maturing unity is fed by *the faith*, *the knowledge* of the God's Son, and *the truth* (Eph 4:13, 15). This truth is "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph 1:13). The closer and more eagerly we follow him in wholehearted submission to everything—no picking and choosing here!—he has revealed in his Word (LD 7), the more we are pulled together by him. Conversely, the more time and energy we put into personal opinions, communal preferences, or man-made techniques, the more we drift apart or paper things over with something we may call "unity" but whatever it is, is it not the unity to which Christ calls us.

For this reason, the three marks of the true church, identified in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession, continue to play an important role in unity discussions between federations. As our confession reminds us, pure preaching, pure administration of

the sacraments, and the faithful exercise of church discipline are so much more than desirable options that we look for in a local church. Rather, those three marks coalesce into one essential focal point: "In short, it [the church] governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and *regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head*." If we lose or compromise our connection to our Head, the body will suffer, become sick, and could even disintegrate. Conversely, the three marks centre us on Christ who, in turn, unites us to each other.

### PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

Because we are all sinful, short-sighted, and at times, short-fused, unity within a local congregation is challenging. Within a federation it is even more challenging. And *between federations* it often hovers somewhere between discouraging and daunting. We understand that for many practical reasons church federations in different countries or on different continents cannot always be part of one and the same federation. Healthy sister church relationships, following the rules for ecclesiastical fellowship, are probably the highest form of unity we can experience with them on this side of final glory.

But what about faithful federations living in the same country? And how do we maintain the most mature unity with faithful federations in countries abroad? Often different histories, cultures, church orders, songbooks, liturgical practices, and perhaps even confessional collections all conspire together to derail discussions and stunt progress. Yes, we hear Prof. Schilder saying: "The will to act ecumenically is a primary distinguishing mark of the church!" But at certain junctures we feel like saying, "We tried but we did not succeed. The status quo will just have to suffice."

Such sentiments are understandable. But imagine that we took the same approach with our own personal sanctification. "My sinful nature, my wounds from the past, and my current circumstances merge into a Mt. Everest of difficulties. I can't climb any higher. My sanctification has plateaued. The status quo will just have to suffice." No sincere Christian should be satisfied with that kind of attitude. Neither should we throw in the towel on pursuing church unity. In line with Ephesians 4, growth in church unity, also known as communal sanctification, is part of maturing into the fullness of Christ (v. 13). That maturing will stop when Christ returns but not before. So, when concrete experiences and interactions with fellow Christians in other federations prompt us to consider anew Christ's calling to us all, here are four practical suggestions as to how to press ahead in his service.

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*We should not be satisfied  
with the status quo*

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**FOCUS ON PURPOSE RATHER THAN  
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED**

Concerning our personal sanctification, we confess that “even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience; nevertheless, with *earnest purpose* they do begin to live . . .” (LD 44). By extension, cultivating fellowship between federations does not always move very far, very fast. Admittedly it is in another context, but the prophet Zechariah reminds us not to despise the day of small beginnings (4:10). Let’s be motivated by the call of Christ (Eph 4), not the measurement of how much distance we still have to cover.


**FOLLOW OUR HEAD, FEED FROM  
HIS WORD**

I remember a new convert who once said, “By far the most edifying evenings I have in group Bible studies are the ones when our heads are *looking down* for most of the evening.” This was his point: whenever everyone around the table is busy looking up and at each other for most of the evening, it’s cozy and all, but the group ends up sharing and debating opinions rather than digging into the inspired Word. Well, perhaps that new convert provides some helpful direction for ecumenical discussions as well. It is good and necessary to sit down and talk about our respective histories, church orders, and orders of worship, please let’s do so with open Bibles and heads that look down frequently, extending the biblical principles into the practical details of church life. Opinions scatter; the inspired Word unites.

**ACKNOWLEDGE FINITENESS AND  
THEN ENGAGE WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT**

Relationships take time and effort. Moreover, the health of our relationships should never be taken for granted. Just ask married couples! While it is true that the Lord often enables us to do more than we had imagined (Eph 3:20), we are still finite. Whether due to geographical proximity or historical connection, our relationships with certain church federations need to have the priority. We can’t be all over the ecumenical map. As a federation, at times we must make choices, not because there are no more faithful federations in the world but because if we are going to do proper justice to all of those relationships, we will run out of time and people power.

**WRAP IT ALL IN LOVE AND HUMILITY**

Isn’t it striking? The foremost chapter in the Bible about church unity, Ephesians 4, begins with “*all* humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love” (v. 2). Later, when our calling to speak the truth is pressed upon our hearts that key phrase returns: “in love” (v. 15). Here, too, self-examination is in order. What attributes have characterized our will to act ecumenically? Humility or pride? Gentleness or harshness? Patience or “what’s taking so long”? Self-sacrificing love or self-seeking ambition? We will all have to answer these questions before our Lord. Let our answer be, “O Father of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, through your Spirit, please bless us with faithfulness, love, much energy, and even more wisdom. The beginnings may be small, but our purpose is earnest. We delight to see your one church become more united, even as you and your eternal Son are one” (John 17:21). 



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# Empathy

I recently attended a convention with colleagues from across North America, and one of the keynote speakers spoke about empathy in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> Her target audience was employers and managers of people working in grief-adjacent workplaces (her term). Her take-home agenda was to empower the people in supervisory roles in these traumatic environments to be more skilled in showing empathy in the workplace towards co-workers to not only improve their productivity, but also to enrich their work experiences and their lives as a whole. It was a thoughtful and energizing presentation. It also got me thinking about empathy in the church and the abundance of overlapping territory here.

The church has been called the “workshop of the Holy Spirit” particularly because it is here that God is very busy moving people to help each other under the direction of his Word and Spirit. This is done in a spontaneous way as a response to gospel preaching, and also in an organized way, through pastoral visits, small group gatherings, Bible studies, and other social events. Anyone who has been engaged in church life for any length of time will attest that it can be both invigorating and exhausting, sometimes at the same time! The church is the gathering of God’s people and gathering is not a passive business. It takes time and energy.

## EMPATHY DEFINED

It also takes empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. All the connecting and discussing and praying and sharing that takes place in a church community at the heart requires one person carefully listening to another. Hearing them, understanding them, and responding well to what they have spoken, both in their words and actions. We all know and sense when this goes well and when it does not. It can be reported as a good visit or a difficult one at the consistory meeting table. It is often divulged to friends as a waste-of-time home visit or a pleasant surprise. It may be declared as a great small group meeting or a dull disappointment, a

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lieselmeries.com/>

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## *Most people have empathy and try to show it*

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supportive Bible study get-together or just a bunch of pat answers. Often, what will prompt these reactions is how well or poorly empathy was exercised.

In a nutshell, empathy is characterized as having three main components: cognitive, emotive, and empathic (or more colloquially: head, heart, hands). This suggests that empathy is a holistic response. It requires some intellectual understanding of the other person's experience or situation, sometimes called an ability to put yourself in their shoes. It is being able to see something from their perspective. As it is understood, it is also felt. There is a sense of coming alongside and sharing the burden. Not just intellectually but also emotionally. And then it also elicits a response to action. An offer of specific help, a gesture of care, a patient being with the person in the moment. Empathy requires our full attention!

### **BEST EFFORTS?**

I think most people have empathy and try to show it. Probably a true narcissist does not, but they are rare. Where we all run into some trouble is in how we exercise it. It requires much patience and humility to do it well. The speaker in the workshop gave some examples of how this can be fumbled in the workplace. I have adapted some of her examples for the church setting. They are caricatured so that we can all see ourselves in them while we avoid pointing fingers.

*Buck Up Bob:* This type A personality is a faithful servant but is reticent to get in the trenches with the fallen sheep. He is armed with the good news, and it powers him through any of life's challenges. Eyes upward as we march to Zion. It is a mantra he offers for all of the ups and downs for the pilgrim journey. He connects well with those who experience life like him but leaves the others in the dust of his enthusiasm.

*Silent Sam:* This peace-loving person arcs toward a hands-on project to help others and shies away from emotional sharing. You are in the middle of telling him your burden and he is slowly shifting away to help clean up the cups from the coffee social. You can see it in his eyes that he feels in over his head talking to you.

*Fix-It Francine:* You can see that this caring friend is eager to help as she shows it by energetically offering answers to your problems almost as quickly as you can share them. At the end of your conversation, you wonder how someone can have everything all figured out.

*Cheer Up Charlie:* Always looking on the bright side he hardly lets his smile slip away when hearing your difficult news or feelings. "It could always be worse" is his well rehearsed response as


he has no time for sackcloth and ash. He is a big help and gets a lot done in the church but won't be slowed down by moroseness.

*Commiserating Candace:* She sidles up close and is very engaged in hearing your story only to jump in with her anecdote to let you know how much she understands. She is a practiced story stealer and always feels like she has been a big help when all is said and done. She feels heard and happy, and you feel overwhelmed and deflated.

### **EMPATHY MODELLED**

We can all enjoy a laugh as we consider these extremes and also squirm a bit as we recognize ourselves in some of these responses. Being empathetic does not mean we have to be perfect, but it will always mean we have to move ourselves out of the centre to make room for the other. Empathy will require life-long training to be an effective part of our relationships. Thankfully we are not without a good example. The apostle Paul offers a recipe for empathetic relationships in Philippians 2 in the opening verses and he bases that formula on the imitation of Christ's humility. No need to reinvent anything here, but instead, only press on in our continual transformation to be more and more like Christ. Tenderness and compassion first. Unity and love at the forefront. You before me. Your concerns above mine. Communal wellness ahead of me being heard or being right.

There may be no more stirring story in the Scriptures than that of the travesty that Job faced in the loss of almost everything. The ending verses of Job 2 show his three good friends showing up in loving empathy. They came with purpose, they lowered themselves to his suffering, and then sat with him in torn robes with ashen heads for seven days with nothing to say because there was nothing to be said. *They saw that his suffering was very great.* Our best empathy often looks different than we imagine it would.

*Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.* (Job 2:11-13) 



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# *CanRC Connections in the* **Netherlands**

KARLO JANSSEN

**A**t General Synod Edmonton 2019 the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) decided to terminate their sister church relationship with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated) (GKv). This decision was conveyed to the GKv in person in January 2020. General Synod Guelph 2022 decided not to renew any mandate for contact with the GKv.

GS Guelph 2022 did mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER) to maintain contact with two other federations of churches in the Netherlands: the Reformed Churches (the Netherlands) (DGK) and the Reformed Church the Netherlands (GKN).

Upon request of *Clarion*, here follows an update on where things are at.

## **G K V**

Our former sister church, the GKv, has maintained its decision to allow women to serve in the offices of minister, elder, and deacon. According to reports, an increasing number of churches within the GKv are now allowing females to serve as office bearers. At our GS 2022 it was also reported that the GKv intended to reunify with the Dutch Reformed Churches (NGK), a further reason for concern.

The NGK and GKv were one church federation from 1944 to the late 1960s / early 1970s. The NGK was expelled from the federation

of the GKv for failure to maintain the church order. The issues related to questions of doctrinal tolerance within the churches and the measure of autonomy for the local church. When the NGK formed their own federation of churches, their church order was known as “Accord for Living Together.” Instead of prescribing that the churches “endeavour diligently to observe the articles of this Church Order” (see CanRC CO Article 76), the church order became a guideline allowing local churches the final say in everything without endangering their participation in the federation. It has been this reality that allowed local NGK to introduce women in office in the early 2000s and tolerate, if not condone, same-sex relationships.

Discussions with a view to reunification suggest that the GKv has shifted towards the NGK position where tolerance is concerned. On May 1, 2023, the reunification (the Dutch call it a “fusion”) became fact. The new church federation is known as the “*Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerken*” with the acronym NeGK. The NeGK is being characterized as a modern Christian church, tolerant of women in office and same sex relationships.

Two churches as well as several ministers and various groups of individuals have decided not to participate in the fusion. At this point in time, it is not clear where they will go. They could join the Christian Reformed Churches (CGKN), the “mother church” of

the Free Reformed Churches in North America. They could also seek affiliation with one of two federations that have previously split from the GKv: the DGK or the GKN.

The fusion has also meant that the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA), our sister churches there, have ended their sister church relationship with the GKv.

As the GKv had not relinquished its stance on women in office, in October 2022 its membership in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) was terminated upon a motion submitted by the CanRC and seconded by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC).

## DGK

The DGK are a federation of churches that began separating from the GKv in the early 2000s. Their concerns with the GKv focused on various doctrinal, liturgical, and church polity matters. At the time the CanRC shared some but not all of these concerns; they did not consider these concerns sufficient to warrant ending the sister church relationship with the GKv. The DGK website ([www.dgkh.nl](http://www.dgkh.nl)) lists eleven churches as members of the federation.

In 2008, a number of people in the Fraser and Nooksack Valleys declared the CanRC a false church. They left the churches of which they were members and established the Liberated Reformed Church of Abbotsford (LRCA). The LRCA and the DGK entered into a sister church relationship. The reality of that relationship prevented the CanRC and DGK from entering into a relationship, though contact always existed.

On March 5, 2022, GS 2022 of the DGK judged that the LRCA deviates from Reformed doctrine with regard to the confession of the catholicity of the church. It also determined that the LRCA has not proven that Reformed doctrine was not or is not maintained, confessed, or defended in the CanRC. The DGK, therefore, decided to admonish the LRCA and called upon the LRCA to return unconditionally to the CanRC.

As the sister church relationship between the DGK and LRCA had not yet been terminated, GS Guelph 2022 determined not to offer the DGK a sister church relationship at this time. The CER was mandated to continue contact with the DGK. A second reason for the CanRC not to enter into a sister church relationship with the DGK was the existence of the GKN, with whom the DGK are in merger talks.

## GKN

Roughly six years after the formation of the DGK a second schism took place in the GKv, with several churches leaving. These

churches federated to form the GKN. They did not join the DGK because of perceived issues within the DGK as well as a desire to retain certain GKv practices which the DGK frowned upon. The GKN website ([www.gereformeerdekerken.nl](http://www.gereformeerdekerken.nl)) lists seventeen churches as members of the federation.

The GKN seeks to be the continuation of the GKv as it was. As such it sought sister church relationships with churches abroad, such as similar churches in North America (CanRC), South Africa (FRCSA), and Australia (Free Reformed Churches of Australia-FRCA). It is also seeking closer ties with several Presbyterian churches, including the OPC. In 2022 the GKN was received as a member of the ICRC.


## DGK & GKN

The DGK and GKN have recognized each other as true and faithful churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are working on merging into a single federation. Several churches that have left the GKv have indicated that they might be interested in joining the DGK and GKN once they have merged. Should this happen, there would be a church federation in the Netherlands close to half the size of the CanRC.

The path to merging is not a smooth one. For one, the LRCA is not heeding the call of the DGK to return to the CanRC. This reality is causing division within the DGK. Further, in some places where both a DGK and GKN exist, there are issues to work through, especially in places where there has been a move of members from the DGK to the GKN.

## CANRC & DGK & GKN

The GKN are to meet, the Lord willing, in synod later this year. The CER intends to send a delegation to this synod. In-person contact is always the best way to come to understand each other and build on relationships. No doubt this will provide an opportunity to meet with both GKN and DGK.

In recent years contact with both the DGK and GKN has been very hearty and transparent. May the Lord bless our contacts so that we can be of mutual benefit to one another in building each other up to God's glory. 



**Karlo Janssen**

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# Rev. Eric Kampen

## *Retires*

DANIELLE DEGROOT

### FAREWELL CELEBRATION

Celebrating a forty-year career is a joy and blessing; when it is accompanied by a farewell, it becomes bitter-sweet. On Friday, March 24, the Orangeville Canadian Reformed Church was able to celebrate the forty-year pastoral career of Rev. Eric Kampen with a celebratory Farewell Evening. Joining the congregation were their five children and some of their own families, including the three daughters and families that remained settled in B.C. when the Kampens came to Orangeville. As such, Rev. Kampen commenced the evening with an impromptu introduction of the family to the congregation.



As the evening progressed, the congregation was able to also witness glimpses of more than Eric the minister; they were able to meet Eric the son, husband, father, grandfather, brother, craftsman, and friend. The daughters from British Columbia were able to share some of their memories in a three-daughter speech. They spoke of how the congregation views Reverend Kampen as a preacher and teacher, but to them he is “Dad.” They also shared how this would often lead to them being used as “material” in some of his sermons. They shared the fondness Rev. Kampen had for Numbers 27:1-11, where five daughters pushed to receive inheritance as they were part of God’s people. Reverend and Kim taught their girls that they also have a place in this kingdom. The speech shared the less important (but still necessary) things their dad did, like rescuing them from spiders, taking them camping, approaching them about their entertainment choices in books and movies, and having “awkward conversations with the boys we brought home.” In everything, they expressed their thankfulness that he

could live his life both equipped *by* his Lord and *for* his Lord and pray he may continue to do so in this new stage of ministry.

### FAREWELL HUMOUR

Certain humorous facts emerged over the course of the evening; for example, it was revealed that Rev. Kampen knows it is time for a haircut when he and his mother video chat and she tells him it’s needed. Whether he can dance at all was not made clear, but he definitely cannot “dab!” One of the MCs presented Reverend and Kim with “Preacher Profile” and “Kim Profile” hockey-style cards outlining their various stats and abilities. Reverend’s stats in a nutshell:

- Height—6’2”
- Married—01-08-1981
- Writes—Right Hand
- Types—Both Hands
- Sermons in Orangeville—1175



- Taught Catechism—42 years
- Co-editor *Clarion*—16 years and counting

Kim's stats included:

- Height—4'11"
- Married—01-08-1981 (MC note—it is good these dates match!)
- Paints—Right Hand
- Bakes—Both Hands
- Hours of support of her husband—countless

As her hockey card reflected, Kim's support of her husband and her own impact in the congregation was not unnoticed. Kim's talent for baking was referenced many times throughout the evening; during renovations to the Orangeville Canadian Reformed Church, Council and Consistory meetings were often held at the manse . . . and the men clearly looked forward to the goodies that would be created for (or tested on) them!

One of the humorous anecdotes shared included how Rev. Kampen raised funds for the church renovations at a wedding; he was dared to jump off a tall structure overlooking a pond. He agreed to do it for the price of \$10,000.00, possibly not thinking anyone would collect that much. It only took a few tables worth of donations to raise the first \$5000.00. Suffice to say, the money was raised, a swimsuit was borrowed, and the minister literally chucked himself into a good cause! A photo montage of the life and times of Eric was concluded by video evidence of this jump, much to the delight of the audience.

### FAREWELL MEMORIES

A poem was written and orated by various ladies from one Bible study group. The poem shared not only the joyful events but also the challenging and heartbreaking events that happened in their lives where Reverend Kampen became a source of strength, comfort, and sound counsel. The poem shared how he had made



an impact on the lives of the congregation—visiting a recurrently hospitalized child, providing support for a daughter struggling with an eating disorder, giving attention to the little of the lambs in the Orangeville “flock”—these were all noted along with the sound doctrine that was preached each Sunday.

To thank the Kampen’s for their time, gifts from the congregation were also given to them. A memory book, to also include pictures taken over the course of the evening and farewell service, is being planned for them. A charcuterie board made from one of the old church benches and engraved with the Orangeville Canadian Reformed Church’s logo was also presented, along with a travel voucher. The presenters shared the congregation’s hope that these will be enjoyed in the Kampen’s retirement and serve as mementos.

It was fitting for Reverend Kampen to conclude the evening with his own words, both of thanks and of encouragement to the Orangeville church as it enters a time of vacancy. While he has

been an active servant and messenger, God enabled him to do this work and it was for God’s glory, not his own. His redirection allowed for the evening to conclude and the attendants to leave with their hearts set towards the glory of God.

### FAREWELL SERMON

The farewell sermon was held the following Sunday afternoon, and the text was the very last verse of the Bible, Revelation 22:21, “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.” Prior to the sermon, the psalms sung allowed the congregation to praise the Lord, and Rev. Kampen revealed how these specific ones were very special to him. He selected Psalm 150, partially because he loves how the congregation sings this song. It was the last song sung in the old building prior to renovations and was the first song in the newly renovated building. He became emotional as he also asked the congregation to sing one of his wife’s favourites—Psalm 23. He opened his sermon by expressing how last words are the most






likely to be remembered, yet only make sense with what comes before. The Holy Spirit, in the last words of the Bible, also leaves us with memorable, lasting words: “We are encouraged by the last and lasting words until our Lord comes: The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen!” John, guided by the Holy Spirit, made sure these words are the conclusion of the Word of God. *This* final greeting has deeper value than any of our customary greetings. As Rev. Kampen stated, it is one “drenched in grace.”

As he concluded the sermon, Rev. Kampen acknowledged that while the congregation’s memory of him as pastor may fade over the years, it is his hope and prayer that “the message of God’s grace in Jesus Christ for all who believe will never fade.”

The Lord uses a pastor beyond the scope of his own congregation. This was apparent in the appreciation that was expressed

by other churches in the classis, who were given a chance to share their best wishes and thanks. They also shared their prayers and encouragement for the church now vacant. One of the representatives in attendance was Rev. VanLuik, who had attended the seminary with Rev. Kampen, had been his roommate, and was even the best man at Eric and Kim’s wedding. These personal details were enjoyed, but quickly led to more significant words of direction and encouragement. He emphasized the kingdom work for Eric and Kim is not yet done as we are all called to live and work in the grace of Jesus Christ. May the Lord continue in his care of the Orangeville Canadian Reformed Church, and may he provide a blessed and fruitful retirement for Eric and Kim! 



# WELCOMING THE LUDWIGS

## *The Wait is Over*

DAVID VANAMERONGEN

“I just can’t wait to get our own minister!” exclaimed my brother a few weeks before the arrival of the Ludwigs. I think it’s fair to say that we were all very much looking forward to the benefit of consistent preaching and closer contact with our very own minister of God’s Word. Several weeks later, on a warm, spring Saturday afternoon, the church family of Fergus Maranatha came together to welcome their new minister of the Word—Reverend John Ludwig with his wife Esther.

The celebration was opened with thanksgiving prayer and the reading and singing of Psalm 118. The psalm was fitting, encouraging us with the theme that “His steadfast love endures forever” and expressing the crowning content of that love towards us with the words, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you” (v. 26). Christ is the marvelous capstone who has come and will come again, and Pastor Ludwig is called to be Christ’s minister to us.

The children kicked off the entertainment with an obnoxious yet lovable song trumpeting how they’ve been getting soft and really could benefit from some gentle correction. Next the elders tried to show off by playing a competitive “match the sheep with the trait/skill” game, carefully exhibiting their impressive, and astounding, knowledge of the flock under their care. It seemed odd how only a few elders were “in the know.” After this astounding exhibition of obscure facts, there was a slideshow highlighting all the wonderful places in the surrounding area that the Ludwigs could enjoy exploring, some with their new kayak. The young people Bible study group presented a gift basket along with warm greetings and loving wishes. More entertainment followed until finally Rev. Ludwig put his foot down and concisely closed the conviviality with prayer and gratitude (no doubt he was hoping to jump into that kayak yet in order to catch the sunset with Mrs. Ludwig).

### INSTALLATION

On the morning of Rev. Ludwig’s installation, Rev. Wierenga preached to us from Colossians 1:28 with as theme the church’s maturity in Christ Jesus. “Your new pastor must rely on Christ to proclaim Christ, and congregation—you must rely on Christ. As you seek Christ both congregation and pastor must be rooted in Christ.”

We are thankful to our heavenly Father for providing us a minister of Christ Jesus. May we, through Rev. Ludwig’s preaching, more and more be ruled by the Spirit and Word, be preserved and increased, learn to obey our King with joy and trust—no matter the persistent opposition of our enemies—that, and until, the fullness of his kingdom comes. **C**

## Igreja Reformadas do Brasil (IRB) Caruaru

God has been very good to the growing congregation in Caruaru (a couple hours inland from Recife). Slowly but surely, the congregation is not only growing in numbers, but also in maturity and responsibility. Last week, the missionary, Pr Lucio, had to undergo a knee surgery, and was unable to be present for the services. Yet the worship services continued without incident. One of the young men led a reading service, and even several new guests showed up and were shown a warm welcome by the congregation. Please remember Pr Lucio in your prayers as he recovers from his surgery and carries on the good work that he has been doing. Pray also for the men in this congregation. Although there are no other office-bearers yet, there are several men who show leadership and faithful service within the congregation, and Pr Lucio is leading a training group for the men.

The latest census of the IRB showed mildly encouraging growth in numbers overall, but a disappointing fall in the number of actively-serving office-bearers. Several of the churches are keenly feeling the absence of men who are willing and able to serve. Please continue to remember this in your prayers!

## Maragogi

Although the Reformed Churches in Brazil face many challenges, we cannot lose sight of God's faithfulness through the "ordinary" preaching and administration of the sacraments, pastoral care, and joyful congregational life, which can be witnessed in every church and missionary congregation.



"...THE FIELDS ARE WHITE FOR HARVEST..."

(John 4:35)

A couple weeks ago, Pastor Madson in the Reformed Church of Maragogi had the privilege of administering baptism to three infants in the same service. It's an encouragement to see Christ's promises sealed upon these three young members and to hear their parents make their baptismal vows.

*GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. (MATT. 28:19,20A)*

May Christ continue to strengthen the young families of the IRB who are striving, against many odds, to raise their children in the fear and instruction of the Lord, and may they have the joy of seeing their children grow up to be men and women devoted to Christ and His church.



## Cabo Frio

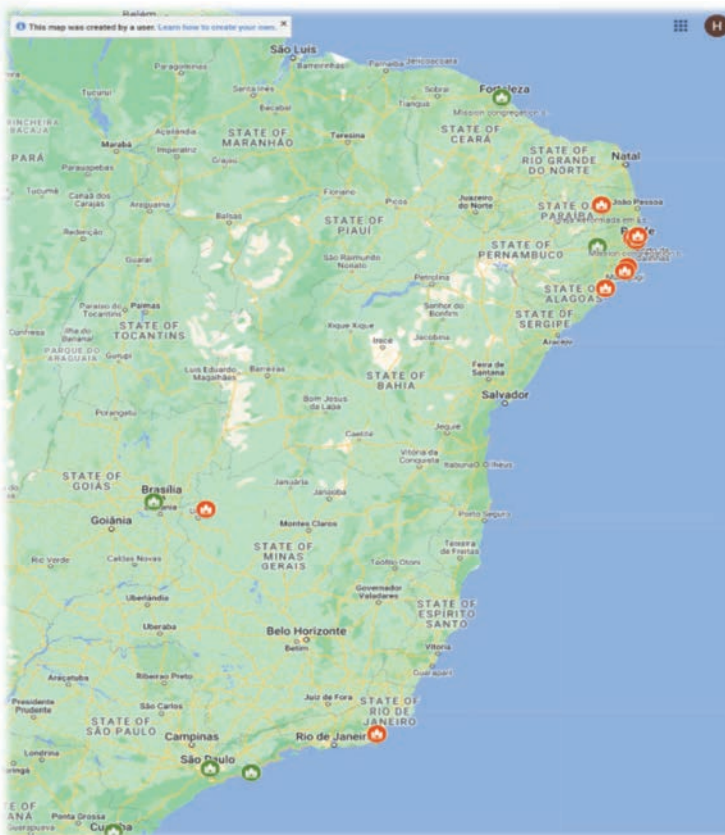
Earlier was mentioned the urgent need for men to serve in the offices of elder and deacon in the IRB, and the disappointing decline in office-bearers in the last couple of years. One positive update comes from the church of Cabo Frio, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, which recently had the joy of installing five office-bearers. Two of them (one elder, one deacon), were men who were already serving, and were willing to serve for another term without a break; three others (one elder, two deacons), were serving in those offices for the first time. The congregation, and Pastor Marcel who is serving there, are very thankful to God for these men who are willing and able to serve.



**Growth in the IRB**  
~Rev Chase

The Lord blesses the churches with growth one person at a time through birth and personal one-on-one evangelism and relationships, but once in a while we see God’s hand at work in an entire congregation. There are a number of other congregations that have close ties with the IRB, but are not officially part of the federation. Indaiatuba, Itapira, São Luís do Maranhão and João Pessoa would be examples. How do these congregations get in contact and become part of the IRB? The following describes the process of churches joining the IRB:

Normally, they first make contact with one of the IRBs—usually those that have an online presence, or otherwise through friends-of-friends. The IRB has a synodical committee for contact with churches in Brazil, and that committee will be informed, and will arrange some visits. For example, Rev Chase is hoping to visit two such churches in São Paulo, together with Pastor Adriano, during the month of April—and there are a good number of other congregations on that list, from all over Brazil. There are still others that at this point haven’t been contacted by the committee, but are working closely together with one of the local churches.



For more details visit IRB churches at <https://missionbrazil.ca>

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TODAY AND  
FOREVER  
(Hebrews 13:8)

The pastors of these churches are encouraged to get to know the federation, for example by spending a week observing Concílio Synod). This gives them a chance to get to know many other pastors in the IRB, and get a sense of the issues faced by the IRB, and what it means in practice to be a confessional federation. This often leads to other informal visits by pastors in the IRB, where they preach, deliver Bible studies, and they help structure the local council of the church.

Often these churches have no real structure—if they have office-bearers at all, they are largely subservient to the pastor. So it can take a lot of instruction and orientation, which

“HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD, ALL YOU PEOPLE OF JUDAH WHO COME THROUGH THESE GATES TO WORSHIP THE LORD.” (Jeremiah 7:2)

takes time. The church will learn about Reformed confessions and reformed liturgy, and slowly implement these reforms. Depending on the pastor’s level of theological training, he may choose to take some online courses with the IJC or IRTC.

Once a church has a complete council (minimum two elders and one deacon), subscribes to the confessions, and has a reformed liturgy, then they can request to join the IRB, and Concílio will examine that request, taking care to confirm that everything is in good order. The minister will be examined with a full peremptory exam, just like any ministers within the IRB. All of this may sound like a very complicated process (and it is!), but don’t miss the fact that it’s also a very joyful and exciting process for these churches. For example, if you were to talk to Pastor Messias from the Reformed Church in Indaiatuba (currently in the middle of this process), he tears up as he describes the joy that his congregation experienced in discovering the federation of the IRB, after years of searching fruitlessly for a faithful reformed federation that they could join. They have really involved themselves in the life of the IRB.

Members of the congregation, when they go on vacations, choose locations where they know an IRB can be found, so that they can worship in these churches and get to know their brothers and sisters. Pr Messias has faithfully participated in every Concílio for the last several years, and is dearly loved by the other ministers within the IRB. He’s currently brushing up on his Greek via online lessons with Pr Laylton. Right now, the church is one office-bearer short of the minimum needed for institution, so they are patiently waiting for that.

“SO THE CHURCHES WERE STRENGTHENED IN THE FAITH, AND THEY INCREASED IN NUMBERS DAILY.”  
(Acts 16:5)

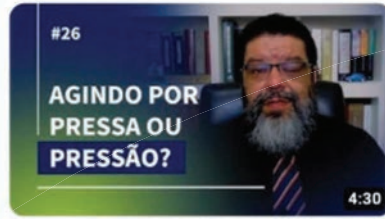
## The IRB online

A number of the churches of the IRB have very active online publications that they use as a means of teaching a biblical worldview, spreading the Reformed faith, and making the name of the Reformed Church more familiar to the general public. Here are just a few examples:

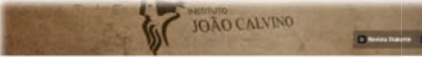
- For some years, pastors Adriano Gama, Elienai Batista, and Marcel Tavares have hosted the “Academy for Biblical Masculinity”.
- Pastor Elienai Batista hosts the online radio program “Christian Perspective,” which collects various other audio/podcast publications together, adds psalms and hymns to fill in the gaps, and thus creates a 24/7 radio. Notable publications included here are the TriviumCast which deals with topics related to Classical Education and Self-Education; and the “Big Questions” podcast, recently launched. A large number of IRB ministers have contributed to this series.

“PRAY IN THE SPIRIT AT ALL TIMES AND ON EVERY OCCASION. STAY ALERT AND BE PERSISTENT IN YOUR PRAYERS FOR ALL BELIEVERS EVERYWHERE.” (Ephesians 6:18)

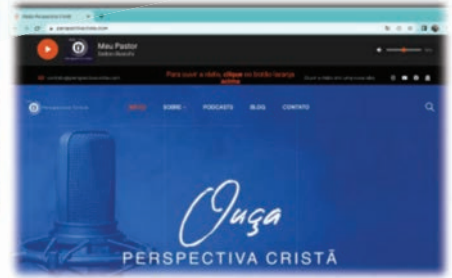
- In Cabo Frio, Pr Marcel Tavares recently launched a video series entitled “Questions and Answers from the Reformed Church” where he deals with frequently asked questions regarding reformed doctrine and practice.
- In Colombo, Pastor Adriano Gama hosted the “Servants in the Offices” training course. Pr. Witteveen and Pr Chase have contributed to that.



**CUIDADO COM A IMPRUDÊNCIA NO AGIR #masculinidadebiblica**



**Instituto João Calvino**  
3.58 subscribers



**QUE É UMA IGREJA REFORMADA?**  
Marcel Tavares  
35 subscribers

GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE CREATION.  
(Mark 16:15)

- Pr Iraldo Luna in the Reformed Church of Brasilia teaches online Greek lessons, as an online extension of the IJC.
- The IJC publishes the bi-monthly Diakonia magazine (Brazilian edition), aimed at equipping elders and deacons for their work. Each edition has a specific theme. Most of the articles are translated from the Christian Study Library, editorials are written by Pr Witteveen and Pr Chase, and one or two pastors of the IRB will write an article for each edition. This magazine is currently only digital, but we hope to turn it into a print publication and get it into local bookstores.
- The IJC also regularly releases short video lessons by Pr Jim and Pr Chase on the Reformed Confessions. These sorts of publications have proven to be very useful in building contacts and in creating interest in the Reformed faith and Reformed churches. None of them ever take the place of in-person discipleship and evangelism, but they serve to create opportunities for in-person ministry, and also simply to encourage and support church leaders and members seeking to live faithfully and fruitfully.

## Prayer Items:

### Igreja Reformadas do Brasil (IRB)

- That God would raise up men to serve in the offices.
- For continual growth of the missionary congregations, as well as the established churches.
- That the local ministers of the word would not lose heart, in the face of much work and many disappointments, but would carry on the work with joy.
- For the upcoming Concílio in May. One student will be examined in order to be able to preach, and will, Lord willing, begin his internship. Also pray that this internship would be a fruitful time of learning for the students, and that opportunities to serve would open up for them after seminary.

### Pastor Chase and family:

- Wisdom to encourage the churches in Greater Recife and Paulista
- For continuing health, for the family, as well as up coming travel

### Pastor Witteveen and family:

- For continuing health and up coming travel to Brazil for the family.
- Effective in person instruction for pastor Witteveen

### Brother Boersema and family:

- For patience and wisdom in the church building work
- Continuing health for the family, and up coming travel plans

### Visitation Team (Aldergrove)

- Safe travels and fruitful visit on May 9-24.

## Birthdays:

Chase family:

Jonathan: Oct 24  
Daniele: Mar 13  
Abel: Sept 4, 2014  
Abigail: Sept 7, 2017  
David: April 22, 2021

Witteveen family:

James (Jim) - May 26  
Nallely - Mar 20  
McKinley - Sep 6, 2001  
Ashton - Jul 1, 2007  
Jesse - Aug 5, 2008



Boersema family:

Chris - Feb 17  
Thécia - Aug 03  
Miguel - Sept 30, 2008  
Martin - July 02, 2010  
Brianna - Feb 01, 2012  
Raphael - Nov 25, 2013  
Benjamin - Sep 23, 2017  
Alan - July 22, 2020

# VIOLENCE

## IN MANIPUR, INDIA

Over the last number of weeks, the prince of darkness has increased his attacks on the bride of Christ in Manipur, a state in northeast India. Not surprisingly these attacks usually occur at night under darkness. The brutality inflicted on our brothers and sisters soundly asleep in bed is primarily caused by the fact that they are not Hindus. The persecution can range from vandalism of property, slaughtering of livestock, or it can escalate to maiming and murder. Survivors flee to refugee camps, leaving behind their homes and churches to looters. Finally, to ensure no survivors return, the churches and homes are set on fire.

How can such violence go unpunished in India, a country recognized internationally as a legitimate democracy? Its constitution specifically guarantees that the state will protect every person's freedom of religion and enforce that right if necessary.<sup>1</sup> The propagated narrative from mainstream media, if even covered, is that

India's remote areas contain tribal tensions that sometimes erupt into violence. We praise the Lord for Christian organizations<sup>2</sup> who have contacts within Manipur, thereby informing the whole body of believers of what is really happening there. It allows us to read Psalm 7:9 with passion and conviction; "Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end."

### THE INSTRUMENT OF EVIL

In 2014, Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of India, after previously serving as leader at the state level. He is leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a fascist, Hindu nationalist political party. India has eight union territories which are directly run by the federal government and twenty-eight states which each have their own government. PM Modi's national agenda is referred to as Hindutva<sup>3</sup> which promotes Hinduism as a defining identity

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental\\_Rights,\\_Directive\\_Principles\\_and\\_Fundamental\\_Duties\\_of\\_India#Fundamental\\_Rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental_Rights,_Directive_Principles_and_Fundamental_Duties_of_India#Fundamental_Rights)

<sup>2</sup> Since PM Modi has put the crosshairs on foreign aid coming into India, it seemed wise to leave these organizations and Indian nationals I have personally spoken with unnamed.

<sup>3</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindutva>




that must permeate all of Indian culture. Thus, for India to ever truly be India it must only have one religion.<sup>4</sup>

PM Modi has promoted this ideology by passing legislation that greatly limits foreign aid and foreign aid workers, even freezing bank accounts of organizations that attempt to shine a light.<sup>5</sup> Christians are already marginalized by limited employment and commerce, and cutting off foreign aid is another means of persecution. Further, state-sponsored discrimination against Christians (particularly Hindus who have converted to Christianity) is evidenced through India's anti-conversion laws.<sup>6</sup> This is essentially an attack on freedom of speech, thereby directly opposing a Christian's *raison d'être* (Matt 28).

Those slaughtered in Manipur have gathered under the altar of the martyred souls, thereby increasing the volume and intensity of their petitions for the Sovereign Lord to judge and avenge

their blood (Rev 6). On earth, the Spirit responds by emboldening Indian brothers and sisters to hold fast to their faith and by miraculously opening the eyes of Hindus who then believe in Jesus and are saved, even though it will guarantee danger and hardship.

“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:5) 



**Andrew Douma**  
Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church  
[agdouma99@gmail.com](mailto:agdouma99@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> Readers may wonder if other non-Hindu religions aren't also persecuted. The desire is certainly there to persecute the Muslims, however it is not as overtly done because neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh have millions of Muslim brothers with the means and will to fight.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/ngo-india-bill/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-conversion\\_law#:~:text=The%20punishment%20for%20forced%20conversion,is%20two%20to%20seven%20years](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-conversion_law#:~:text=The%20punishment%20for%20forced%20conversion,is%20two%20to%20seven%20years)

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 6** Katie de Boer will be **23**  
3558 Thurston Pl.  
Abbotsford, BC  
V2T 6Y2
- 8** Marsha Moesker will be **46**  
c/o Lighthouse  
6528 1st Line RR 3  
Fergus, ON  
N1M 2W4
- 14** Jerry Bontekoe will be **59**  
c/o Anchor Home  
361 Thirty Road RR 2  
Beamsville, ON  
LOR 1B2
- 15** Cindy Blokker will be **34**  
c/o Harbour Home  
42 Spadara Drive  
Hamilton, ON  
L9B 2K3
- 22** Nick Prinzen will be **51**  
c/o Beacon Home  
653 Broad Street West  
Dunnville, ON  
N1A 1T8
- 25** Dave Vanveen will be **53**  
c/o Lighthouse  
6528 1st Line RR3  
Fergus, ON  
N1M 2W4
- 29** Paul Dieleman will be **54**  
c/o Beacon Home  
653 Broad Street West  
Dunnville, ON  
N1A 1T8

Happy Birthday to all of you celebrating in September! We wish you all the Lord's blessing in the year ahead, and a blessed day of happiness with your loved ones. "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." (Num 6:24-26)

## RAY OF SUNSHINE

Rachel Vis

# Katie de Boer



**H**ello everyone, I would like to tell you all about me, Katie de Boer. Since I don't speak, my mom is writing all the things I would tell you if I could! I live in sunny Abbotsford, BC. Well, today is sunny, which I like. Sometimes it is rainy here, which I don't like. It makes my sandbox wet and then I can't pour the sand into my buckets. I would probably play in the puddles, though, if

my family let me outside! I love water: any kind of water. Baths and swimming are two of my favourite activities. I also enjoy playing with the taps when no one is looking, and at times venture out to play with other fun liquids. Recently I enjoyed making a vinegar and chocolate powder mix until my care family discovered me. Perhaps by the strong smell.

I should explain that I have two families! I have my Dad and Mom, my brothers Alex and Ethan, and my sister Josie. I also have a care family with whom I live. In December 2021 it was time for me to move out into a new home. Through Bethesda Christian Association we found a wonderful care family who took me into their home in a HomeShare arrangement. They also take care of another client, my friend Sharon. It was a confusing and difficult time for me. I had been visiting my care family for a year already on respite weekends, but all of a sudden I was living there everyday. I missed my family even though they came to visit every week. I think they missed me too! After some time, I realised that now I lived in this new home and my old home was my weekend respite place. Ah! This I could understand! So, I settled into my new routine and happily go about my day. Every Sunday I visit my own family and go to church with them. I love to be at my old place. But when it comes time to go back to my new home, I'm happy with that too.

My care family is wonderful for me. They love me like I'm their own daughter and take great care of me. I always look pretty because they paint my nails! They even took Sharon and me camping with them and their whole family! It was so exciting, although I wasn't allowed to visit the neighbour's trailer. I had to stay in mine. Oh well.

When I moved, my daily routine stayed the same. Phew! I take the HandyDart bus to a Bethesda Day Program three days per week where I meet my friends and we do activities, crafts, listen to Bible songs and go for walks and other outings. On the other two days I visit my friend Wendy at her house. Wendy takes me to the pet store sometimes. I love to watch the fish!

I am happy and I show this by humming hymns. You can hear me humming daily as I play with my keychains (my favourite toy) which I jingle together like an instrument. My favourites are "You shall love the Lord your God" by Steven Green and "Seek ye First." I listen to them often. My family and I thank God for loving me and taking care of me everyday!



# CLARION KIDS LORD'S DAY 33

Let's pretend something a little sad. Just for a moment. Let's pretend you hurt Mom's feelings because you complained about supper. What would you do afterwards? You would say sorry, right? And Mom is kind. She would forgive you. This would make you feel so relieved! Because you are so happy that Mom forgave you, you would make sure that you don't ever do that again, right? Now, how much more should we do this with God! We sin, which hurts God every day! Many times each day! And he keeps saying again and again, "Christ died for you. You are forgiven." Does this make you happy? God is so good! Because we know God is good, it is a joy to serve him. And we want to fight against our sins! When we say sorry and, with the Holy Spirit's help, fight against our sins, we are REPENTING from our sins.

DRAW A LINE TO SHOW WHICH SENTENCES ARE TALKING ABOUT REPENTANCE OR LIVING IN SIN.

REPENTANCE	Saying sorry, but doing the same thing again
	Hating sin and loving to serve God
LIVING IN SIN	Saying sorry and, with the Holy Spirit's help, fighting against sin
	Not saying sorry

LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES AND FILL IN THE BLANKS:

LUKE 15:7

Just so, I tell you, there will be more \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven over one sinner who \_\_\_\_\_ than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

REVELATION 3:19

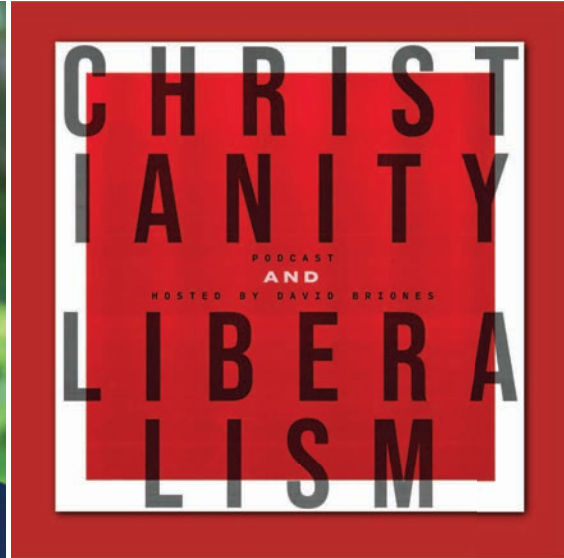
Those whom I \_\_\_\_\_, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and \_\_\_\_\_.



## HEY KIDS!

Do you have questions about something you have read in the Bible or heard in a sermon? Maybe you are wondering about something you have read in a Lord's Day. We have a new column coming called KIDS' QUESTIONS. We warmly invite you to ask Mrs. DeBoer your question! With your parent's permission, email [deboerca@gmail.com](mailto:deboerca@gmail.com) and find your question and an answer in Clarion!

AMANDA DEBOER



## CHRISTIANITY & LIBERALISM

This edition's podcast review column features an exciting, brand new podcast from Westminster Seminary Press entitled "Christianity & Liberalism," named after the famous book written by J. Gresham Machen back in 1923. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of this influential text, Westminster has created a podcast series dedicated to examining the importance of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the early twentieth century and its outworkings in the church today. To say it more plainly, the podcast delves into the corrosive effect that Liberalism has had on the modern, mainline churches in America (and by extension Canada as well) and why a faithful, orthodox remnant has remained.

### HOST & TOPICS

The podcast is hosted by Dr. David E. Briones, associate professor of New Testament at Westminster, and also an adjunct professor

at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. Briones's grasp of the subject matter is firm and he is a skillful host and narrator. He takes care to set the scene for his listeners as he dives deep into the contents of Machen's work with a variety of well-known and respected guests.

As of the time of writing, only the first two episodes, featuring Kevin DeYoung and Rosaria Butterfield, are available. The episode with DeYoung, called "The Ampersand," focuses on the small yet crucial word in the title, "and." DeYoung and Briones break down Machen's case for why Liberalism and Christianity cannot be harmonized, as they are two competing religions. Episode two with Butterfield focuses on the reinvention of self in the modern world and how the LGBTQ movement was able to capitalize on that and join forces with the modern, liberal churches. Future notable guests include Stephen Nichols (President of Reformation Bible College), Al Mohler (President of Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary), and Eric Watkins (Pastor, missionary, and past *Real Talk* podcast guest 😊).

## DEALING WITH LIBERALISM

To further whet your appetite, consider the excerpt (below) from the description of episode one.

If you are interested in a podcast that explores how we arrived at this current moment in church history here in the West, at least over the last 100 years or so, I would highly recommend giving this podcast a listen. Both episodes so far are around the hour mark in length and have only served to further my interest in this topic. As many of the readers of this magazine no doubt understand, a healthy and well-informed knowledge of church

history is a valuable tool in tackling the problems that arise from the clash of modern day secularism and the historic, orthodox teachings of the Christian faith. Whether you are already familiar with Machen's writings or are brand new to them (like me), I think you will find this podcast series to be an interesting and edifying use of your time. 🎧



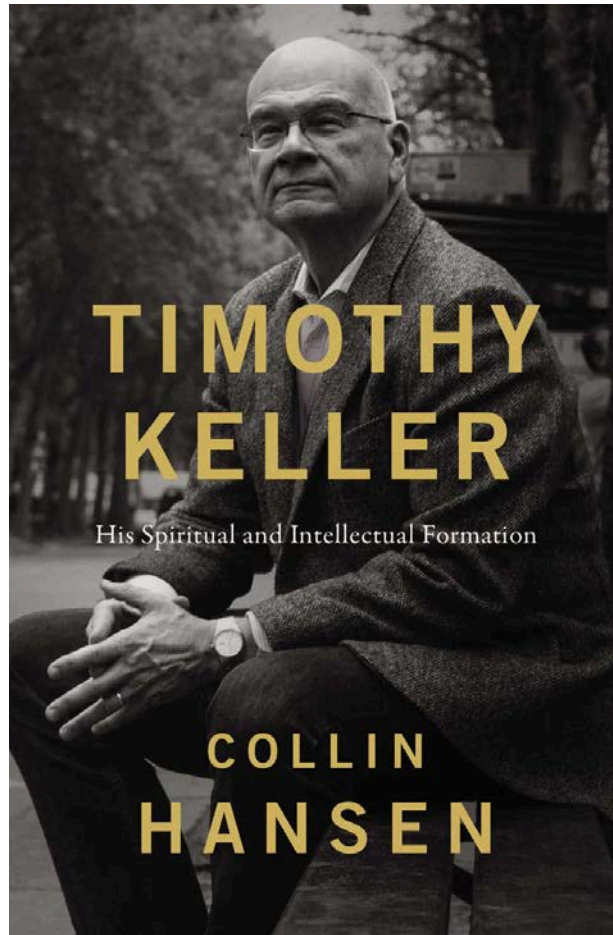
**Lucas Holtvlüwer**

Co-host

Reformed Perspective's Real Talk podcast

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Many are calling for a re-evaluation of **biblical views** on sexual attraction, the sanctity of life, ethnic diversity, or even what it means to be a man or a woman. Although the topics have changed, the **motivation** for liberalism today isn't all that **different** from that scathing **critique** of the church Machen **confronted** 100 years ago. Back then, the American church tried to compromise essential **tenets** of orthodox **Christianity** in order "to make it work." And, as **Machen** predicted, it resulted in arrested development. In the years after Machen's book, liberal **protestant** mainline liberal churches folded, **thousands** made a **shipwreck** of their faith, **denominations** split, and scores of ministries **succumbed** to the trajectory of theological **compromise** and, ultimately, to decline into the **outward appearance** of faithfulness—beautiful buildings and good deeds on the outside, but without a genuine saving faith in Jesus within. So, **what should we do?**



## WHO MADE TIM KELLER?

*Timothy Keller: His Spiritual and Intellectual Formation*, by Collin Hansen. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023). Paperback. 306 pages. \$28.50 CDN.

With Tim Keller's death on May 19, many tributes have been written. Remarkably, even the *New York Times* noted his passing in an article. There's always been an unofficial Tim Keller fan club, but I haven't part of it. Sure, I appreciate a lot of what he's written. I've positively reviewed some of his books, including, most recently, *Forgive*. He was a gifted communicator and usually had good gospel instincts. But that said, I've also read enough of Keller to know there are a couple of areas where he isn't at his best. He was a fascinating figure, always interesting to read, but not without his issues.

Unlike me, Collin Hansen does seem to be part of that fan club. This book is an adulating look back at Keller's career and who made him who he was. Keller participated in the writing of the book, so it's not impartial or critical in the scholarly sense. Hansen is an admiring friend, and his book has that tone.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The book is biographical, but with a twist. While telling his life story, its emphasis is on those who influenced him along the way. Hansen essentially tells us that Tim Keller was one of the most

unoriginal theologians of all time. His influences have included his mother, his wife Kathy, C. S. Lewis, Edmund Clowney, David Powlison, John Stott, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Elisabeth Elliot, and Roger Nicole. What made Keller unique is how he blended these influences together in his preaching, teaching, and writing.

Keller was well-known as the founder of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. Hansen explains how Keller went from being a relatively unknown church planter in the Presbyterian Church in America to being one of the “New Calvinist” celebrity pastors. Apart from briefly mentioning how Keller never became an effective manager (p. 213), you won’t find much critical analysis of Keller’s ministry at Redeemer. However, if you want to understand who or what was behind his approach, chapter 13 will certainly fill you in.

Chapter 15 will introduce you to another surprising influence in Keller’s life: his younger brother Billy, who died from AIDS in 1998. While he had spent much of his life identifying as gay, in his last few months he was brought to confess saving faith in Christ. At his funeral, Tim Keller preached on the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:23–32. It’s a passage that Keller first heard preached by Edmund Clowney and it formed the basis of his 2008 book, *The Prodigal God*. Hansen shows us how this passage and those in his life connected with it powerfully shaped Keller’s gospel instincts.

## REMAINING CONCERNS


I’ve mentioned it before, but it needs to be mentioned again: Tim Keller was a theistic evolutionist. He believed that God created using billions of years of biological macro-evolution, also known as Darwinism. Hansen mentions this once, briefly (p. 103). I would have been interested in hearing what influenced Keller to believe this, but Hansen doesn’t say. He just drops this one sentence where he says this is what Keller believes.

Keller’s best-selling *The Reason for God* was published in 2008. I and other writers critiqued his apologetical method as not being sufficiently Reformed, which is to say, biblical. This is an area where Hansen is murky. He writes: “Keller gravitated instead toward the neo-Calvinist approach typified by Cornelius Van Til of Westminster

Theological Seminary. Keller also departed from Van Til, however, by emphasizing the doctrine of common grace” (p. 65).

It’s especially that last sentence that makes me go “Hmmm. . .” Van Til was actually known and criticized (!) for emphasizing common grace. He wrote a booklet entitled *Common Grace and Witness-Bearing* in which he argued for a balanced view which would challenge the wisdom of this world. Chapter 8 of Van Til’s *The Defense of the Faith* is all about the proper place of common grace in Reformed apologetics. So, making the Keller the one who emphasizes common grace as compared to Van Til? Really?

Yet it gets stranger. Hansen writes that in *The Reason for God*, “Keller employed a version of the presuppositional apologetics of Cornelius Van Til” (p. 235). There is a footnote for this claim, but it isn’t to anything that refers to Keller and Van Til, but to a book by Ted Turnau (*Popologetics*) explicitly using Van Til’s Reformed apologetics in analysing culture. In his Acknowledgements in *The Reason for God*, Keller explicitly wrote that his two biggest influences were C. S. Lewis and Jonathan Edwards. He never mentioned Van Til and never used presuppositional apologetics. That’s why people like me critiqued it. But then on page 245, Hansen writes that *The Reason for God* used a more classical apologetical approach, whereas the later book *Making Sense of God* used presuppositional apologetics. I haven’t read *Making Sense of God*, so I can’t assess that last claim. Whatever the case may be, if he is a presuppositionalist at all, Tim Keller certainly was not a consistently principled one. The concern remains.

Don’t get me wrong, overall I quite enjoyed this book. Whether you’re a big fan or have just benefited from a Keller book here or there, you might enjoy it as well. It’s an easy reading, popular level book about one of the most significant Christian figures of our day. 



**Wes Bredenhof**

Minister

Free Reformed Church of Launceston

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*Dear Editor,*

In your recent issue of *Clarion* (June 20, 2023) you wrote a good article about streaming worship services. I essentially agree with it, but I wonder if you might agree with me that we should be careful about overstating a case. You stated that “there simply is no connection between the congregation and yourself” when you livestream a service at home, and you also wrote, “In the same way that you cannot genuinely participate in family life and be a blessing to your family members unless you are present in the same space and time as the other members, so we cannot participate in God’s family unless we show up, take part, and stay involved.”

To make a point, let’s go back to the old days of letter writing. When two lovers were separated and their only communication was by letter, was there no connection in any sense? When dealing with a case of immorality, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing” (1 Cor 5:3–5). To the Colossians he wrote, “For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ” (Col 2:5). Surely, there was a form of togetherness between these congregations and Paul; and when Paul closed his second letter to the Corinthians with, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all,” was there no sense in which the Corinthians really receive the apostolic blessing across the distance of both space and time?

*Warmly,*  
*Ralph Boersema*

*Dear Editor,*

I have just written you a letter expressing concern about overstating a case in your issue of June 20, 2023. In the same issue of the magazine, I find another overstatement in Rev. Bredenhof’s very interesting and important review of *A Still and Quiet Mind*. He writes, “However, there is only one place on earth that God promises to be present to bless his people and that’s where the Word and sacraments are administered.” Really? Surely, he must mean something different than I understand the sentence to say. I can think of many Scripture references which teach that God promises to bless and be with his people at all times and everywhere, as long as they obediently seek Him in faith. Let me just mention Matthew 28:20, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

*Warm regards in Christ,*  
*Ralph Boersema*

# CLASSIS ONTARIO WEST

*Convened on May 24 and Reconvened on June 7, 2023*

*Held at Eben-Ezer Chatham, ON*

## MAY 24

On behalf of the convening church of Eben-Ezer Canadian Reformed Church of Chatham, ON, Br. H. Tamminga opened the meeting in a Christian manner. In prayer, he remembered the health concerns of Rev. J. Temple, the work of CRTS, the needs of Dr. N. Gootjes and his family, and the upcoming commemoration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He welcomed the delegates as well as the students present to be examined. The credentials were found to be in good order and Classis was declared constituted.

The executive suggested by the previous classis were asked to take their place: Rev. P. Holtvlüwer as chairman, Rev. K. Kok as vice-chairman, and Rev. J. Temple as clerk. The chairman thanked the convening church for their work in preparation for this classis. The agenda was adopted.

## LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS

Five CRTS students presented themselves to be examined for permission to speak an edifying word (Art. 21, CO). They each presented sermon proposals which were discussed in closed session. Each proposal was deemed sufficient to continue with the examinations. They each were examined in doctrine and creeds.

After sustaining the examination and after promising not to preach or teach anything contrary to the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, the following brothers were granted permission to speak an edifying word: Mitchell Bosveld, Hongdi Chen, Reese Gaillard, Todd Linde, and Tony Zheng. Brothers Bosveld, Chen, Gaillard, and Linde are second year students and received permission for three years. Brother Zheng is a third-year student and received permission for two years in accordance with classis regulations.

## QUESTIONS, REPORTS, & PROPOSALS

The chairman asked the questions set out in Article 44 CO. All the churches answered that the ministry of the office-bearers was being maintained and that the decisions of the major assemblies were being honoured. No church sought advice.

As classical treasurer, Br. Vanderhout proposed that Classis raise the mileage rate to the match current CRA guidelines (\$.68/km). Br. Vanderhout also recommended that Classis should continuously match CRA guidelines moving forward. The proposal was adopted.

The financial report from the classical treasurer was received with thanksgiving. The audit of the classical books found them in good order. The report of the inspection of the classical archives was received.

Trinity Canadian Reformed Church of Glanbrook, ON was appointed to convene the next classis. The date for the next classis was set as September 13, 2023 (with December 13, 2023 as the alternate date). The suggested officers for the next classis are: Rev. K. Kok as chairman, Rev. J. Temple as vice-chairman, and Rev. T. Van Beek as Clerk.

Use was made of the personal question period. The chairman determined, with thankfulness, that nothing censurable was said, or done in the course of the meeting. The Acts, to this point, were read and adopted, and the Press Release, to this point, was read and approved. Classis is scheduled to be reconvened on June 7, 2023. The chairman adjourned the meeting in a Christian manner.

## JUNE 7

On June 7, the chairman called the meeting to order and opened in a Christian manner. In prayer, he remembered Rev. J. Temple's recent surgery and that Rev. D. Feenstra had accepted the call extended to him by Jubilee Canadian Reformed Church of Ottawa, ON. All the properly credentialed delegates were present. Because of Rev. J. Temple's absence, Rev. A. Vreugdenhil was appointed as clerk.


## CANDIDACY EXAMINATIONS

Three brothers who had completed their studies at CRTS presented themselves for preparatory examinations (Art. 4, CO). Brothers

Faustin Emadjeu, Matthias Schat, and Timothy Slaa presented their sermon proposals. In closed session, Classis deemed each of the proposals to be sufficient to continue with their examinations. In open session, each of the brothers was examined in Old Testament exegesis, New Testament exegesis, and doctrine and creeds. In closed session, Classis determined that each of these brothers had sustained their examinations. After each promised not to preach or teach anything contrary to the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, Classis granted each of them a certificate of candidacy for the ministry, lasting for a three-year period.

## LICENSURE REINSTATED

Classis dealt with a request from Br. Raoul Kingma to have his permission to speak an edifying word, which had lapsed, to be reinstated and extended for two years (twenty-four months). Classis acceded to this request, provided that Br. Kingma has his sermons approved by a minister within the federation, as is customary for others with permission to speak an edifying word.

Use was made of the personal question period. The chairman determined, with thankfulness, that nothing censurable was said or done in the course of the meeting. The Acts, for this day of Classis, were read and adopted, and the Press Release, for this day, was read and approved. The chairman then closed the meeting in a Christian manner and Classis was declared closed. 

*For the Classis, Rev. K. Kok, vice-Chairman, e.t.*



