

Clarion



Rev. K. Stam
1948-2016

TRIM YOUR SAILS
CHURCH SNAPSHOT
YOU ASKED



Klaas Stam

Easy?

The Reformed faith is simply amazing

This editorial was originally written for Clarion Volume 58, No. 4 (published February 13, 2009).

There was this lady who remarked that those Canadian Reformed people have it so easy. They believe they're all in the covenant and are saved regardless of what they do. Salvation is automatic. In the CanRC you are *baptized as an infant* and it is believed that nothing can go wrong. You are home-free and safe, just as in baseball.

Well, I know from personal experience that things can easily go wrong, even if you are baptized as an infant. More about that later. Right now I want to state that it is easy to make a caricature of someone else's beliefs and then piously attack the caricature. Accuse us of automatism and then wax indignant over such a heresy. One ought to do justice to others' views. It is not easy, I know, but we should try. Doing justice is proof of true rebirth. Otherwise it isn't worth a solitary dime.

The biblical doctrine of salvation is rather clear. One is saved by faith in Christ. This faith is worked in us by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel. This faith regenerates us (present tense = ongoing regeneration and sanctification). The source of this salvation is God's grace. The Reformed doctrine is God-oriented, Christ-centred, faith-based, Bible-founded, and Spirit-filled. In all this also the teaching about God's covenant has its place. But it's not as easy as some would have us believe.

My favourite passage

Someone said to me once that Christians shouldn't have favourite texts. Gives you tunnel vision. We have to abide by *all* the Scriptures and not a few favourites. *Tota Scriptura*, he said, with pursed lips. I agree with that, but

I still have a favourite passage. I am a bit naughty, but I can't resist.

I love to read and meditate on Ephesians 2:1-10. You should read it for a moment and then revisit it regularly. It tells us how we come *from death to life*. Surely that has piqued your interest. If you follow the line in that passage, you find roughly the following:

- a. We were dead in transgressions and sins – fall
- b. We were by nature objects of wrath – curse
- c. God who is rich in mercy loved us – love
- d. God made us alive with Christ – faith
- e. God raised us up with Christ – justification
- f. We have been saved by grace – grace
- g. We are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms – ascension
- h. We are not saved by works so that no one can boast – praise
- i. We do good works, prepared in advance by God – new life

Notice that from beginning to end, *the entire work of salvation* is done by God in Jesus Christ. We are dead objects of wrath made into living people of grace who excel in good works because God wants us to be holy. Does this sound easy? It's quite a process and involves a life-long commitment and struggle. There is nothing automatic here. There is something ecstatic and outstanding here: my salvation rests not in myself but in Christ! Still, I am fully involved in that work of salvation from start to finish, from A – Z. The Reformed faith is simply amazing.

It would be easier if we ourselves could do part of the process. God can do all the initial ground-breaking stuff, but activated by the Spirit we will take care of the regeneration and the sanctification. We will not boast, but

always affirm that we have been saved by grace. Meanwhile, back at the ranch. . . we will diligently tend to our works as evidence of regeneration. Sometimes we might stand back for a moment and admire the result that came through much effort. Better than the CanRC's easy and glib idea of Wal-Mart salvation.

When things go wrong

Sometimes things do go wrong in a Christian's life. I have another favourite Bible passage (I am almost ashamed to admit it, tunnel vision, remember?) and it is found in Romans 7. I'll focus on

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

On the first day of 2016 the Lord took Rev. Clarence (Klaas) Stam home to himself. Here at *Clarion* we will remember him for his work as editor for many years now. We are thankful for his contributions to our federation as a preacher and writer. We will miss his writing, his presence among the editorial team, and we extend our condolences to his family.

It was enjoyable to read through his editorials to find "the perfect one" to reprint. In the end the editorial I chose was Rev. Stam's words on salvation, faith, and his favourite Bible passages. A beautiful confession – still written in the Rev. Stam style. To quote his editorial, "I am a bit naughty, but I can't resist."

Issue 3 contains many of our regular columns: Treasures New and Old, Clippings on Politics and Religion, Church Snapshot, Education Matters, You Asked, and Ray of Sunshine. There is a canticle and a press release. Thank you also to Rev. Doug Vandenburg for writing "In Memoriam: Rev. Clarence Stam."

Laura Veenendaal

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CLARION
Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, MB Canada R2J 3X5
Phone: 204-663-9000, Fax: 204-663-9202

Subscriptions subscriptions@clarionmagazine.ca
Advertisements ads@clarionmagazine.ca
Website www.clarionmagazine.ca

2016 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

			Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada			\$49.00*	\$ 82.00*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds			\$69.00	\$102.00
International			\$98.00	\$171.00

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

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PUBLISHER

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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

Agreement No. 40063293; ISSN 0383-0438

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verse 18 for now, “I know that nothing good lives within me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.”

It’s not as easy as it sometimes seems. It can take a lifetime of struggle and triumph to overcome one weakness. Some weaknesses we carry with us into the grave, to leave them there with the body of death. This does not mean that the weaknesses are okay, but that they are very hard to overcome. When the Apostle Paul speaks about a *war raging inside*, I understand what he means. When things do go wrong and I again fall into a sin of which I know it is a sin, I am comforted in Christ and I do affirm my delight for God’s law. I hate myself, but I love my Saviour.

Salvation is not easy. But our Lord Jesus Christ is a sympathetic high priest, who was tempted in every way we are, yet without sin. (See Hebrews 2, another one of my favour. . .). When we fall, he lifts us up. He knows how to lead his sheep. Sometimes he carries me in his arms, because I cannot go anymore on my own. The *Can. Reffers* have it easy? Not this one. Not anyone I know.

Almost forgot about the covenant

I am developing tunnel vision. I almost forgot to write something about the function of the covenant. Does the covenant make things easy? Is the covenant an assurance of automatic salvation? What utter nonsense!

Ask Abraham how easy it was – a promise of children and a barren wife. Have some tea with Isaac and Jacob. Read the history of their lives, so carefully recorded for us in Scripture. See how the Nazirite Samson loses his hair and his head. Envision David standing on the rooftop lust-ing after a bathing Bathsheba. Check out John the Baptist in his prison cell when he began to wonder if Jesus was truly the Man. Read Hebrews 11. What more can I say? Stand in faith at the old rugged cross and hear the words, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” Easy?

All these were in the covenant – circumcised just as we are baptized. And they knew that it is not easy to live as a covenant child. Some fell deeply and wept greatly. The covenant is not a free pass to eternity. The covenant is a working relationship that God has established with us and our children, with believers and their seed, people who know that salvation is not easy, but possible, yes, guaranteed in Christ. So, get to work.

DECLINED

Declined the call to the Flamborough Canadian Reformed Church:

Rev. D. Wynia

of the Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church in Lincoln, ON.

CALL EXTENDED AND ACCEPTED

Called and accepted the call to the Smithers Canadian Reformed Church to serve as missionary in Prince George, BC and declined the call to the Pilgrim Canadian Reformed Church at London, ON:

Candidate Tim Schouten

CHURCH NEWS

Re-baptism

When God establishes a relationship, he means it. He means every word that He ever said to us, regardless of age, gender, or status. I discovered that in the course of their lives some people mistakenly come so far that they seek *re-baptism*. Nowhere does the Bible speak of this. It is not a biblical requirement but a human invention.

We do read that Apollos only knew of the baptism of John and the way had to be explained to him more adequately (Acts 18:25). We do not read about any re-baptism. If it happened, it was not important enough to mention.

In Ephesus there were a number of disciples who had never heard of the Holy Spirit and they had received only the baptism of John. Of these people it is said that they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. It is not called *re-baptism* because there was in their case really no prior proper baptism. Other than this, the Bible is silent about re-baptisms.

This denial of infant baptism is symptomatic of a deeper shift. It is a denial of the doctrine of grace. See my favourite passages. Why can God not claim children of believers as his own and give them the sign of his covenant? God is gracious, even to infants, conceived and born in sin.

I have also discovered that some develop “itching ears” syndrome (2 Timothy 4:3-5). They seek out preachers who tell them what they want to hear. Ask someone who is church-hopping why they left where they were and began attending elsewhere and you may get the answer, “We were not hearing what *we wanted to hear*, so we left.” Well, how can you argue with that?

It is *not* easy being “Reformed” today. As churches we need to stand together and encourage one another. We need to seek sister churches who also love the Reformed faith. Generally, I’d like to see *more enthusiasm for the Reformed faith* among office bearers, teachers, parents, and young people. A lot of good initiatives are developing. Cool.

Our churches have never taken the easy way out. We should not start now.





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Trim Your Sails

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

(2 Corinthians 4:8-9)

Timothy. . . fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. (1 Timothy 1:18b-19)

Close to my home there is a marina, and in the summertime there are many sailboats tied up to the docks in behind the breakwater. One of them is owned by my neighbour, Murray. Many years ago, as a young man, I learned how to sail a sailboard, and ever since, I have wanted to learn how to sail a boat out on the open water. I have been out on Burlington Bay on Murray's forty-two-foot sailboat. Out of the breakwater, we checked the wind and set the sails. You get a certain thrill from the wind in the rigging, from the wind-filled sails straining on the mast, with the boat heeled over, and the spray of the waves coming over the bow, sailing smoothly and briskly with the wind.

When great troubles come upon us, we wonder why God visits us with difficult circumstances. Seasons of serious illness, disability, depression, discouragement, can overwhelm us. We might think that a truly blessed life should be smooth sailing, especially if a person lives a Christian life. However, that was not the Apostle

Paul's experience. He testifies that he endured all kinds of hardship and adversity: even beyond imagination. In another place he writes of being imprisoned, flogged, stoned, beaten. He even knew what it actually meant to be shipwrecked, three times. How did he endure?

Like Paul, our lives are often very difficult. We go from one storm into another. Oh, at times the sky is blue, the wind gentle, the water calm. And we do thank the Lord for beautiful days: for respite between the storms. But the truth is that often life is very challenging. How can we endure?

One of the first things my neighbour told me as we headed out onto the bay was, "You can't direct the wind, but you can trim your sails." To have the boat quickly respond to the helm and not capsize or shipwreck on the shoals, a sailor must learn how to trim the sails to be set correctly to the wind. Paul learned how to "trim his sails" in the storms of life. He had learned how to respond in faith. And we too can learn this. Though we can't control most circumstances of our lives, we must always respond in faith. On the other hand, if we develop wrong attitudes and perspectives, and hold to wrong priorities, we can make ship-

wreck of our faith. Paul's circumstances did not drive him onto the rocks. He knew that the Christian life is a hard fought battle. Paul encouraged Timothy to fight the battle well, holding onto faith and good conscience.

With faith in Jesus Christ we can say with Paul, "I am hard pressed on every side, but not crushed." When all around us it seems that circumstances are weighing us down, we find strength in God's promises, so that we are not crushed under the weight. With faith in Jesus Christ, you can say with Paul, "I am perplexed, but not in despair." When life's circumstances are bewildering and confusing, we pray the Lord encourage us and keep us from despair. With faith in Jesus Christ Paul could say, "Even when I'm persecuted, I know I'm not abandoned." By God's grace we too will be able to rejoice, having been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name of Jesus. With faith in Jesus Christ we can say with Paul, "even when I'm struck down, I will not be destroyed." God is at my side; what can man do to me? God is at my side! What can life's circumstances do to me? You can't direct the wind, but by faith in Christ Jesus, you can trim your sails!



For Further Study

1. How might you "trim your sails" today?
2. How might you fight your battle well this week?
3. What should you pray for when you feel crushed, or despairing, or abandoned?

Rev. Klaas Stam



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On January 1, 2016, the Lord received into glory his faithful servant, Rev. Clarence (Klaas) Stam. Rev. Stam was born on September 17, 1948 in Hasselt, The Netherlands. He was the fourth child born to Klaas and Gerdina Stam. When Clarence

was only two years old, the family moved to Canada. They arrived on May 21, 1951. After a very brief sojourn in Coaldale, Alberta they moved on to greener pastures, arriving in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia in November of 1951.

In 1964, Clarence, only a teenager, moved back to The Netherlands in preparation for entering the seminary of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Liberated). At the time, there was no seminary he could attend in Canada. He brought with him his love of writing, music, and flared red pants with pink shirts. After all, it was the 1960s! During his time in seminary, he met and fell in love with Marga Kraal. They were married on July 16, 1970. In time they were blessed with five children: Lawrence, Edward (who preceded his father into glory in 1992), Richard, Alina, and Anne-Marie.

Rev. Stam was ordained into the ministry on September 24, 1972 in Langeslag, The Netherlands. On June 22, 1975 he preached his farewell sermon there and for a second time in his life moved to Canada, this time with Marga and Lawrence joining him. In Canada, Rev. Stam faithfully served the Canadian Reformed Churches of Burlington (1975-1979), Smithville (1979-1985), Fergus (1985-1988), and Hamilton, until the advance of Multiple Sclerosis forced him into early retirement in the fall of 2004.

Early retirement did not mean inactivity. He enjoyed the extra time with Marga, their children, and grandchildren. While old hobbies like gardening could no longer be maintained, Rev. Stam continued with other hobbies. He became well known on the auction circuit

and in thrift stores. He often put his finds on eBay where from time to time he would even turn a tidy profit. For a few years, he also hosted a local radio talk show "What Does the Bible Say?" with Rev. George van Popta. This project had begun in January 2003 and it was one which he enjoyed very much during his retirement.

In his retirement, Rev. Stam continued to nurture his passion for writing. He wrote editorials for *Clarion* with an unmatched style. He was provocative and also, to borrow some words from Mark Steyn, "a wit, which is a higher art than being a jokester." He continued to write books, finishing his last one just before entering the hospital in December 2015. His many books have served not only the Canadian Reformed Churches, but churches and Christians around the world.

In addition to being a *Clarion* editor, Rev. Stam became the editor of the magazine *Reformed Perspective* in August 1985. In the years that followed, his editorial pages showed that he was in tune with the Christian church of the day and with what was happening in the world in which the church lived.

For Rev. Stam, the art of writing led to the art of preaching. Above all, we remember his faithful service to Christ in the weekly preaching of the gospel. His sermons were memorable for their style as well as their content. Time and again he pointed his listeners to the grace of God in providing salvation to sinners through his Son, Jesus Christ. Because Rev. Stam knew the depths of his own sin and misery, he experienced the reality of grace that he preached. In the end, we remember him in his public ministry as he would wish to be remembered: he was but a jar of clay which held the treasure of the gospel in order "to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Cor 4:7).

May our gracious God continue to care for his widow Marga and their family.

Rev. Klaas Stam (1948-2016)



Rev. Klaas Stam



We remember with thankfulness the service of Rev. Klaas Stam. A minister of the Word known for his gift for preaching, he served the churches through his love for the gospel.

As publisher we note his many years of work as co-editor of *Clarion*. In our magazine dated September 4, 1976, we announced: "We are happy to tell you that both the

Rev. J. Geertsema and the Rev. Cl. Stam have declared themselves willing to become co-editors. . . . The latter's contributions first appeared now and then, but have become more or less regular features during the past few months." Besides a brief hiatus in the early 80s he continued on until 1988, when he made a lateral move. Our Publisher's Note in the year-end issue of 1988 included this: "At this time we also wish to thank Rev. Cl. Stam for his contributions in the past.

He has now taken up the task of editor of *Reformed Perspective*." In 2000 he again took on a role in our editorial committee, a position he held until the end of his earthly life. All told, he served in this role almost twenty-five years.

Rev. Stam clearly enjoyed writing, and his personality came out in it. One of his common literary tools was his own brand of humour and sarcasm. He certainly didn't mind to stir the pot a little. But at the heart of it all was a desire to see the gospel of his Saviour promoted and defended.

Rev. Stam's love for writing was certainly not limited to his editorial magazine work. Over the years, we published ten books on a variety of Bible books, biblical concepts, and confessions. We are thankful that the progressive nature of his physical limitations did not prevent this prolific output.

The churches have lost his faithful service. His family has lost much more – a beloved husband, father, grandfather. To our sister Marga and your family, our heartfelt condolences. May you be comforted by the gospel that was so beloved to him.

W.J. Gortemaker





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Sharia Law and Church Closures in Indonesia

Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim majority country. The most conservative part of the country is the Aceh province in the northern tip of Sumatra. It is here that Islam was introduced into the area in the thirteenth century and it is the most conservative Islamic part of the nation with the highest proportion of Muslims. In 1999, the government of Aceh started issuing Sharia-based regulations. The province of Aceh has 4.4 million Muslims with a mere 50,000 Protestants and 3,300 Roman Catholics. This Christian minority is at the mercy of the Muslim majority.

Raymond Ibrahim (November 11, 2015, Gatestone Institute) has chronicled some of the outrageous events that have taken place. The imams, the Muslim religious leaders, incite their congregations during their Friday sermons to demonstrate and take action against Christian churches. As a result the civil authorities in Aceh have bowed to the pressure and begun to destroy Christian churches. But even then, the government does not always act fast enough for the fired up Muslim population. On October 12, 2015 "a mob of approximately 700 Muslims, some armed with axes and machetes, torched a local church. . . . The Muslim mob then moved on to a second church, an act that led to violent clashes. One person, believed to be a Christian, died after being shot in the head. Several were injured, as Christians tried to defend their church against the armed mob." About 8,000 Christians were driven from their homes and many fled to the next province. "Their fears were justified: Islamic leaders continued issuing messages and text messages saying, 'We will not stop hunting Christians and burning churches. Christians are Allah's enemies!'" Nothing is apparently being done to punish the perpetrators of such violence. Since 2006, more than 1,000 churches have been shut.

Although many of these churches have been in existence for a very long time, the Muslim charge that they are not registered and should therefore be destroyed is considered justified by Indonesia's Joint Min-

isterial Decrees on Construction of Houses of Worship (2006). These decrees effectively make it impossible for a church to obtain a permit in a Muslim region. To obtain permission to build, a church needs to "get 'signatures from 60 local households of a different faith,' presumably Muslims, as well as 'a written recommendation from the regency or municipal religious affairs office' – that is, from the local sheikh and council of Muslim elders: the same people most likely to incite Muslims against Christians and churches during mosque gatherings. Christian activists say there are many mosques that are unregistered and built without permits, but the authorities ignore those infractions."

The problem is not restricted to the Aceh region. Even where Islamic law is not enforced, "fully registered churches are under attack. These include the Philadelphia Protestant Church in Bekasi – nearly 1,500 miles south of Shariacompliant Aceh. Even though it had the necessary paperwork, it too was illegally shut down in response to violent Muslim protests. On December 25, 2012, when the congregation assembled on empty land to celebrate Christmas, hundreds of Muslims, including women and children, threw rotten eggs, rocks, and plastic bags filled with urine and feces at the Christians. Police stood by and watched." Another example is found in Bogor where Islamic law is also not enforced. "Yet the ongoing saga of the GKI Yasmin Church there illustrates how Islamic law takes precedence over Indonesian law. In 2008, when local Muslims began complaining about the existence of the church, even though it was fully registered, the authorities obligingly closed it. In December 2010, the Indonesian Supreme Court ordered the church to be reopened, but the mayor of Bogor, refusing to comply, kept it sealed off."

Ibrahim typifies all this oppression as the Indonesian jihad on Christian churches. It is "taking place in varying degrees all throughout the East Asian nation and is not limited to Shariacompliant zones such as Aceh." **C**

Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church

Our background

The Owen Sound Canadian Reformed Church was instituted on July 5, 1992, officially bringing together a diverse group of people from the Christian Reformed and Canadian Reformed Churches, to form a bond in worship and fellowship. Two years after our institution we were able to start a Christian school and a few years later, we were blessed with the opportunity to move into our own unique, dual-purpose facility, housing both church and school under one roof. We have enjoyed the benefits of this arrangement, and we acknowledge the hand of the Lord in guiding our steps and granting us a cohesive church and school community.

Our demographics

We certainly are not regarded as an “old” congregation since there are only nine members over sixty-five! The other age groups show a similar “young” trend: fifty-seven members aged forty to sixty-five, seventy members aged eighteen to forty, and 114 members under eighteen. Total membership stands at approximately 250 members, which has remained relatively steady over the



past eight years. We are a relatively young congregation made up of a harmonious mix of young families, older families with teenagers/young adults, and a few retired members. Among the more experienced members are seasoned leaders who have served and continue to serve the congregation faithfully – whether in council, school, or mission. It is also encouraging that the younger men of the congregation show good leadership potential, ensuring that our council, committees, and boards will be, the Lord willing, well served into the future.

Our outdoor playground

The Grey-Bruce area is Ontario's premier vacation and active-lifestyle destination, boasting stunning vistas, countless hiking trails, waterfalls, down-hill skiing, pristine beaches, watersports, fishing, canoeing – almost anything for the outdoor enthusiast. Oh, and if you like hockey, get ready to enjoy some of Ontario's best backyard rinks or catch the action of Junior A with the Owen Sound Attack! As a result, our congregation welcomes many visitors, giving us the wonderful opportunity to fellowship with a significant number of our brothers and





sisters in Christ! The sanctuary is ordinarily full to overflowing on long weekends and the singing is truly awe-inspiring!

Our uniqueness

A rich diversity is what makes our congregation unique in the Canadian Reformed federation. Many original members came out of the Christian Reformed Church and together with some Canadian Reformed people, formed the Owen Sound congregation. We have also had a significant contingent join from us from urban and much larger congregations. This diversity of experiences and

backgrounds create a wonderful mosaic within the communion of saints where we can learn from each other's differences and grow in areas we may have been lacking. Our body is blessed to be made up of many different parts, serving each other for his glory. It has allowed us to grow into a very close, large family with a caring, supportive bond – even amidst weakness and brokenness. We praise God that he brings a wonderful variety of individuals together, forming an unbreakable bond of fellowship as an eternal family, united and sustained by him. Despite our sin, we have been formed into a united, functioning, and fellowship of believers, whose chief desire is to serve our Almighty God and bring him glory.



Edu-Sketch



*Chris de Boer
Principal of
Dufferin Christian School,
in Carman, Manitoba*

First love

Do we still have that sense of “first love” for the Reformed Christian schools that we were able to establish some sixty years ago? Of course “we” is used in the broadest communal sense. I was not involved in setting up a new school. Few of us today have been. That being said, the community in Burlington was able to open its new school, Grace Canadian Reformed School, with 187 students and many enthusiastic staff members. While this meant the closing of two schools for the cooperation of one, there is undoubtedly an air of excitement and renewed vision for this school. Their new vision statement is: “To provide educational excellence for each student to achieve his/her learning potential, grow in spiritual discernment, and glorify God in his/her life as a disciple of Jesus Christ.” This is an exciting time to be involved in Reformed education in Burlington!

Motivated by a love for covenant children

Another community that is planning on establishing a new school in September 2017 is the Glancaster Canadian Reformed School Society. They write: “With thankfulness to our LORD, the . . . school society has been notified that we were the successful bidders in the Bell-stone school tender! We are humbled at the provision and direction that the LORD has given to us. We were given a closing date of December 7th.” The school building is in need of some repair, but the community is grateful for the opportunity to purchase this eleven acre parcel at a good price and to continue making plans for the opening of their school. This project is not without its critics, but as long as members of the participating school communities trust that the varied opinion holders are motivated by a love for their children and for their children’s education, then they will be able to enjoy the blessings of the communion of saints, even when a disagreement on an issue or two arises.



Building, rebuilding, and stuffed monkeys



Other things can also reinvigorate the vision and passion for the hubs of covenant education. Additions to buildings, which are planned or recently executed in various places, are such things. Another might be the great renovations to old buildings with the hopes of moving and getting one’s own own school, as in Fergus.

The excitement of welcoming a new principal, as in Langley, where Mr. Kent Dykstra will serve at Credo Christian High School, and in Owen Sound, where Mr. James Meinen



will be serving at the Harvest Canadian Reformed School. I highly recommend that you check out Harvest’s website (harvestschool.ca). This rebranding of the school, together with a vibrant website, will also add to the renewed excitement for the work done in the school, we trust.

Another unique activity for sharing the love of Reformed education was done in Smithers, BC. This somewhat remote school community enabled their grade two class to travel the world vicariously through their stuffed monkeys. The students prepared a short note in their little journal that serves as a passport. They then sent their beloved stuffed monkeys out to experience life in the world – some travelled with grandparents, others with famous violin players, pilots, neighbours, or other special people. As the monkeys were passed along, the recipients were asked to keep the Grade 2 class updated either by mail (post-card) or by email. So far, the monkeys have been to areas close to Smithers, but some have made it to Alberta, Ontario, New York, and even Hawaii while some have plans to visits other places in the USA, Australia, Holland, South Africa, India, Sweden, and Vietnam! What an exciting opportunity for the Grade 2 class in Smithers. They hope that the stuffed monkeys will return with their full passports by April 15.



Involved in and involving the community



One of the ways that Coaldale Christian School continues to keep its community engaged in the excitement of the school is by adding to the structure of the building – great plans are underway, and by engaging in a partnership with the surrounding community in order to set up a new play structure. From their website we learn:

Currently, the playground located on the east side of Coaldale serves a variety of community groups. This playground is enjoyed on a daily basis by students attending Coaldale Christian School, an independent school educating 171 children from K-12. This school's enrollment has been steadily increasing over the past number of years, and the current playground is inadequate to meet the need of the increasing population. For residents in the neighborhood of Parkside, this is the only playground within walking distance. This playground also serves as the closest outdoor play area available to residents in the modular home community of The Seasons. Once these two developments are fully established, they will house close to 500 families. Lastly, this playground is the closest to visitors camping at The Owl's Nest, Coaldale's only campground.

Clearly Coaldale Christian School plays a vital role in the community and by sharing its playground, it can qualify for government grants, be a recipient of community fundraisers (Coaldale Fun Run), and raise money as a school community.

Timothy Christian School also likes to involve the community:

Now in its third year running, our annual Festival, held in September, is the highlight of the school year. The school doors open up to the surrounding neighborhood and a celebration of community begins. It is the largest fundraiser the ladies auxiliary plans and requires over 100 volunteers to make the day run smoothly. This highly anticipated event offers fun for the entire family – from a rib fest to bouncy castles, to home decor, to baked treats! The school transforms from standard classrooms filled with desks to a festival with over 20 venues to explore. This is not only a fundraiser but a FUN raiser in every way!



So what is it about your schools?

In his first official newsletter, Mr. Jason Heemskerk – League Coordinator (the schools in Ontario have a League of Canadian Reformed Schools) – piques our interest in the striking question that he is often asked by those who may be critical of our schools, by those who are just curious, and by those who are intrigued by their successes: “So, what *is it* about *your* schools?” In response to that question he writes:



I believe there are many things that set us apart. Funding (or lack thereof), Christ-centred and covenant-focused teacher training, a communion of saints perspective on schooling and, most importantly, possessive adjectives. . . it is the difference between the words “our” and “your” as opposed to “His.”. . . What is it about our schools? Nothing, except that everything is done in them with an eye to the fact that our schools are not ours, they’re “His.” (Vol 1. Issue 1 – Nov. 2015)

Why would I let unbelievers. . . teach my children?

Let me conclude this *Edu-Sketch* with some words written by CanRC blogger Ryan Smith. Approximately four years ago he, like so many third/fourth generation of parents and members of a CanRC school, had to ask himself if he really wanted to send his children to a Reformed Christian school. On a Facebook post he makes this observation:

This evening I listened as my 6 year old daughter sang the first verse of one my all-time favorite hymns. The Church's One Foundation, written by Samuel Wesley:

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.
I did not teach it to her.

No, she learned it in school, since this was her weekly memory work. I love to hear my kids sing God's praise, it makes my heart leap with joy and thanksgiving to the Lord.

It is amazing to think that a few years ago we were contemplating sending our kids to public school, simply because we thought we could not afford it. But not now, now I would never go back. Sending her to a private Reformed Christian school has not been easy for us, we have struggled to make ends meet, but in the end this is what is best for her.

No, I am not so naive as to think that private schools do not have problems, but here at John Calvin School (JCS), she is surrounded by people who love her as a covenant child of God, people who care for her as their own. When she gets on the bus in the morning she is greeted by a smiling “Mrs. W” the bus driver – Mrs. W sits right behind us in church. On the morning bus she sits with her church friends and her cousins. On the afternoon bus she is dropped off by “Mrs. S” who is the wife of a friend who goes to the church at the other end of town. Her Kindergarten Teacher was “Mrs. V” who also sits behind us at church. Her new teacher, who I do not know very well

yet, is also a sister in Christ. Our Churches Christian Schools are about God and his covenant people. We are a family, a community of believers and it is so sweet to be a part of. I thank God for those people who persuaded us to choose JCS for our kids – you all know who you are and I thank God that he used you all to change my mind (and Teresa’s).

On his blog (<https://onechristiandad.wordpress.com>) he writes: “We were going to go the public system. But then a thought struck me: ‘If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, why would I let unbelievers, who hold to a completely different worldview and value system, teach my children? I cannot afford to not make use of “this luxury,” even if it costs me in this life.”

May each one of us who sends our children, or sees our grandchildren, nieces, or nephews, or sees covenant children attend a Reformed Christian school – yes, may we all help each other to keep these schools running effectively to the honour and glory of the LORD and may we be committed to their purpose!





William den Hollander
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Q

What is the difference between the names “Zion” and “Jerusalem?”

A

The name “Zion,” though obscure, is generally understood to mean “fortified tower.” In the OT Zion is mentioned for the first time in 2 Samuel 5:7, where we read that David conquered the “stronghold of Zion,” a Jebusite fortress. He established his own royal residence there and calls it “the city of David.” It was located above the Gihon spring, in the same area as the Ophel (2 Chron 33:14). This stronghold was lower than the temple and palace complex built by Solomon, since it was necessary to “bring *up* the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion” (1 Kgs 8:1).

Since the ark was located first in the Jebusite fortress, “the stronghold of Zion,” and then in the newly built temple, “Zion” became known as the sacred dwelling place of the LORD, the One “who sits enthroned in Zion” (Ps 9:11). Hence we read about the dwelling place of the LORD in *Jerusalem* as “Zion, my holy hill” (Ps 2:6). The LORD of hosts dwells at Mount Zion (Ps 74:2). Thus *Mount Zion* and *Jerusalem* are sometimes named together (Isa 10:12). Zion is called “the city of our appointed feasts” (Isa 33:20); the capital, *Jerusalem*, is evidently meant here, since it was the focal point for the three great annual pilgrimages.

In poetic passages *Zion* denotes a variety of meanings, with *Jerusalem* being the focal point most often: Psalm 48, “The *city* of God, his holy mountain,” is “*Mount Zion* the city of the great King.” Quite frequently, how-

ever, the *city* itself is called “the *daughter* of Zion” (2 Kgs 19:20), while the *people* are called the “sons of Zion” (Lam 4:2) and “the daughters of Zion” (Isa 3:6). Zion itself is sometimes characterized as a fortified city with gates (Ps 87:2), towers, ramparts, and citadels (Ps 48:12). Thus the sons and daughters of Zion in a spiritual, religious sense became “the people of God,” who lived in Jerusalem, Mount Zion, God’s holy hill!

The NT writers usually referred to Zion only in quotations from the OT (e.g. Matt 21:5; John 12:15). None of these references imply a connection with any particular location within Jerusalem. Twice, however, the NT “Zion” has a *spiritual* meaning. In Hebrews 12:22 it represents the Christian fold as the city of the living God, i.e. the “heavenly Jerusalem,” and Revelation 14:1 makes Mount Zion the focal point of the messianic reign.

In conclusion, therefore, we see Zion as the dwelling place of the LORD, where he lives with the people of the LORD. In the OT this dwelling place was located in and identified with the city of Jerusalem. In the NT, Zion has become the church of God, and its completion and fulfillment we will see in the New Jerusalem.

*Is there something you've been wanting to know?
An answer you've been looking for?*

Ask us a question!

Please direct questions to Rev. W. den Hollander
denhollanderw@gmail.com

23 Kinsman Drive, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0



Thomas VanderZwaag's New Home

July 29, 1953 – November 13, 2015

"Friday, November 13, 2015 – was it a sad day?!?!"

That day was a really wonderful day for me.

No more sickness or misery! I've been set free!

On that very day, I, Thomas VanderZwaag,

Was called Home by my Lord and Saviour –

Jesus who loves me and I'm very happy here in my new Home,

Yes, Heaven is a truly wonderful place!

Dear friends and loving family, left behind – I know you are sad,

But please smile through your tears because right now –

And forever-more, I am in the BEST PLACE that there is;

I am happier and healthier than I have ever been before!

I am singing praises to my Great Redeemer and thanking Him –

For all of the wonderful things that my God has done,

And some glad day, my very dear friends and loving family –

If you truly love this ONE, and ONLY Saviour, Jesus Christ like I do,

Then, oh yes, then you will surely see me again, completely whole –

When everything is brand-new, we will be together – this time,

FOREVER!

Oh, Happy Day! What a Truly Glorious Day that Day will be!"

CEvA – Saturday, November 14, 2015

Thanks so much to Connie Vanamerongen for her wonderful and moving poem. Connie was a fellow resident at Anchor Home with Thomas Vanderzwaag.

Thomas VanderZwaag, though did not very often have many words, had a large part in the Anchor Home. Jerry Bontekoe was constantly giving Thomas high fives. His latest thing he liked to do was go to other bedrooms and steal their comforters off of their beds! Thomas had lived at the Anchor Home in Beamsville for twenty-two years. To everyone he was just known as Tom. He was loved by everyone who knew him. The last few years of his life he spent most of his time sitting in his chair, but he still loved his walks wandering the hallway. Tom will be greatly missed by many, but we all know he is in a better place now.

Birthdays in March

3 **TREVOR HOF SINK will be 38**

14407 McQueen Road
Edmonton, AB T5N 3L3

9 **DAVID RAWSON will be 54**

c/o Twin Oaks
3217 Twin Oaks Cres
Burlington, ON L7M 3A8

10 **JAMES BOONE will be 20**

c/o Care West "Nickel House"
950 Robert Road, Calgary, AB T2E 7T4

12 **GERRY EELHART will be 54**

c/o Mrs. Grace Eelhart
120 13425-57 Street
Emmanuel Home
Edmonton, AB T5A 2G1

14 **TINEILLE VANROOTSELAAR will be 20**

1488 Highway 3 E, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W7

14 **LISA ALKEMA will be 35**

c/o Harbour Home
42 Spadara Drive, Hamilton, ON L9B 2K3
email: lhalkema@gmail.com

15 **JIM VANDERHEIDEN will be 57**

c/o Beacon Home
653 Broad Street West
Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8

Congratulations to all of you who are celebrating in March. May you all have a wonderful birthday celebrating with family friends, and blessed year ahead.

A NOTE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

If there are any address or other changes that I need to be aware of please let me know as soon as possible.

Rachel Vis

731 Lincoln Street, Wellandport, Ontario L0R 2J0
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Press Release of Classis Northern Ontario December 22, 2015

On behalf of the convening church of Guelph Living Word, Rev. D. Agema called the meeting to order. He read Luke 1:67-79 and requested the singing of Psalm 132:6, 10. He led in prayer.

The church of Guelph Emmanuel examined the credentials. The churches were properly represented.

Classis was then constituted. The following officers took their place: chairman: Rev. M. VanLuik; vice-chairman: Rev. M. Jagt; clerk: Rev. E. Kampen.

The chairman welcomed Regional Synod deputies and fraternal delegates as well as many visitors, present especially for the examination of Br. Randall Visscher. He noted the vacancies of the churches of Elora and Owen Sound – and that of Grand Valley, to be filled shortly, the Lord willing.

The provisional agenda was adopted.

The church of Grand Valley had requested a peremptory examination for candidate Randall Visscher. The required documents were presented and found to be in good order.

Br. Visscher then presented his sermon proposal on Titus 3:1-8. In closed session classis discussed the sermon proposal and concluded that there were no hindrances to continuing the examination. Br. Visscher was then examined in the eight additional areas of a peremptory examination.

Classis and candidate enjoyed a brief break for a hearty lunch. After this Rev. R. Lankheet conveyed fraternal greetings on behalf of the URCNA. The exam then continued in the remaining areas.

In closed session, with the concurring advice of Rev. J. Ludwig and Rev. J. VanPopta, the deputies from Regional Synod East, Classis concluded that Br. Visscher had sustained the examination. In open session this was conveyed to him.

Rev. VanLuik led in a prayer of thanksgiving for Br. Visscher and the church of Grand Valley. Psalm 89:1 was sung. Br. Visscher gave his approval to the Form of Subscription.

Classis reviewed the details of the call extended to Br. Visscher and gave its approbation. Rev. P. Feenstra was appointed to represent the churches of Classis at the ordination, scheduled for January 17, 2016.

In accordance with Art. 44 C.O., the churches reported that the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued and the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured. There were no additional matters for which the churches needed help.

The church of Orangeville was appointed to convene the next classis to be held on March 31 or April 1, 2016. The following officers were suggested: chairman: Rev. D. Agema; vice-chairman: Rev. E. Kampen; clerk: Rev. M. VanLuik.

Question period was held.

The chairman deemed that censure as per Art. 34 C.O. was not necessary.

The Acts were read and adopted. The Press Release was approved for publication.

The chairman thanked the brothers for their good co-operation.

After the singing of Hymn 15:1-3 he closed the meeting with prayer.

*For Classis,
M. Jagt, Vice-chairman, e.t.* 