

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

V 66 N 7 APRIL 7 2017



**We have a
living Saviour!**

OWEN SOUND WELCOMES REV. DAVID POL

CLARION KIDS

YOU ASKED

Easter and Resurrection

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*Deny the resurrection of the dead and you deny
the resurrection of Christ*

Selective faith

It sometimes happens that a person who professes to be a Christian makes it clear that while he or she may believe most of what the Bible teaches, there are exceptions. In other words, there are certain teachings and doctrines that they do not accept as true.

One that comes to mind at the moment is the teaching of the virgin birth of Christ. There was a time in the nineteenth and early twentieth century when it was a very popular thing to say that this teaching was nothing more than a fiction of the early church.

Now, it may on the surface seem like an insignificant thing to deny Christ's virgin birth; however, a closer look reveals that it has repercussions – serious and far-reaching repercussions. For example, it touches on the very person of our Saviour, as well as on the nature of man, the fall into sin, the saving work of Christ, his role as mediator. The list goes on and on.

In some ways it's like throwing a stone into a smooth body of water. No sooner do you do that and the ripple affect spreads everywhere. The same is true of biblical doctrine. The same is true of the virgin birth. And, the same is true of that central event of the Christian faith that is being dealt with in this issue of *Clarion*, namely Easter or the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

The Corinthian situation

To see that clearly I ask you to turn your attention for a moment to the Church at Corinth and some of the issues in that church. The one that stands out in that famous chapter 15 has to do with the resurrection of the dead. In Corinth

some believers said that they were taking a pass when it came to the belief that one day the dead in Christ would be raised. They considered this to be pipe dream, a desperate fiction, and a distorted hope. "There is no resurrection of the dead," they said.

But then the Apostle Paul takes up his pen and exposes the foolishness of such a denial. In 1 Corinthians 15:12 he states, "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then . . ." After which he shows that this view has huge and devastating consequences.

Denial fallout

The first consequence, Paul writes, is this, "Then not even Christ has been raised" (v. 13). Deny the resurrection of the dead and you deny the resurrection of Christ. You cannot disconnect the one from the other. If they will not be raised, then he has not been raised either. He is still in the grave. He is still dead. We have a past tense Saviour. He was but is no longer.

The damage, however, does not stop there. It continues. "And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain. . . ." Preaching, the means most often used to spread the gospel and to strengthen believers, is nothing more than a useless, powerless, and worthless exercise.

And what about our faith? Paul says that it too is empty and vain. What gain is there in believing in a dead and lifeless Saviour? Why direct your faith, love, and hope at someone who is dead, gone, and buried, never again to rise? It is all a trivial business.

Crooked business

But it would also be a crooked business. Paul goes on to say, "We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised" (v. 15). In other words, if Christ is still dead, the apostles are nothing more than a bunch of snake oil salesmen. Thus when Peter stood up on Pentecost day and said to the assembled crowd, "God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:24), he was telling a lie. When Stephen exclaimed, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

This is our Easter issue. The editorial is written by Dr. James Visscher. The Easter story reminds us how important faith is: that believing every word Scripture teaches is vital to relevant and meaningful hope. Our Easter issue also reprints a Treasures New and Old meditation from Rev. Carl Van Dam.

Issue 7 brings the conclusion to Keith Sikkema's three-part article, "Billy, the Reformation, the Bourbons, and the Breach." We also have a report from Owen Sound on their welcome to Rev. David Pol.

This issue brings readers several regular columns, Clippings on Politics and Religion, *Clarion Kids*, and You Asked, as well as a press release.

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right hand of God" (Acts 7:56), he was delusional. When Paul stood before the philosophers at the Aeropagus in Athens and said that God "has given assurance to all by raising [Jesus] from the dead" (Acts 17:31), he was grossly exaggerating. In short, deny the resurrection of the believers and their Christ and you undermine the witness of the apostles.

Futile faith

Yet it does not stop there. For Paul draws more conclusions from this denial. He writes, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (v. 17). Earlier Paul said that this denial results in a vain or empty faith, now he adds that it also leads to a futile faith. What is a futile faith? It refers to an ineffective faith, a faith that is going nowhere, a faith that is a waste of your time, your energy, your involvement, your devotion.

The reason for this is that, he adds, "you are still in your sins." Nothing has changed as far as your standing and status with God is concerned. You were born a sinner and a debtor and you are still a sinner and a debtor.

How can this be? Well, what we need to understand is that by raising his Son from the dead, God the Father was sending out a loud and clear message to the world. And the message is this: "My Son has paid the price. He has given his

life as a ransom. He has appeased my anger against the sin of the human race. He has proven himself to the perfect Sacrifice, the complete Redeemer, and the victorious Saviour."

But now if the detractors and deniers are right and if Christ is still in the grave, then all of this is false and just so much

wishful thinking. A dead Saviour means that his people are still a sin-stained people. He is a failure and a fraud. And as for his followers, nothing has changed. They remain dead in sin and trespass, and are headed for a sure and certain condemnation.

Pathetic people

So you would think that by now Paul has made his point. Only not quite, for there is something else that he wants to drive home. If what these people say is true, then there are two more dire consequences that flow from this. The first is that those who have died already as believers or "fallen asleep in Christ" are to be considered as belonging to the "perished" (v. 18). Don't bother talking about them as if they are still

alive with God, are in heaven or are coming back one day. Forget about seeing them again. It won't happen. They are history. They are past. They are dead, buried, and no more. Finished! Forever gone! Lost!

And as if that were not bad enough there is a second consequence. It applies to all of you people who are still living and believing. You are a most sorry bunch! What other people have set their hopes so high, have made their dreams so big, have filled their hearts with so much hope and expectation? Yet, if the dead are not raised and if Christ is not raised, all of this comes crashing down. Then the whole world will mock you and pity you. Who else has had such glorious convictions pushed over a cliff and dashed into so many pieces? Poor, pitiable, and pathetic people!

But

Obviously, the Apostle Paul is brutal in summing up the consequences of denial. At the same time, however, he is not finished. Why, he is just getting started. For after dealing with the doubters and deniers, what does he say? He lets out a shout, and the shout is "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (v. 20).

One little word can and does make all the difference in the world. And here it is the word "but." It puts all that has been written in the verses 12-19 in their place and context. It introduces us to the great reality and the true confession that we have a risen and raised Saviour. He is not dead! He is not still in the grave. He has not perished and gone into oblivion. No, he lives; he reigns; he saves; he intercedes! Easter 2017 can be an awesome celebration because we have an awesome living Saviour.

You?

And that's nice, that's neat, but you know it's only profitable and beneficial if you actually believe in him. Admiring the risen Saviour will not do. Neither will just studying, reading or talking about him. Only committing your life and heart to him will do. Only listening to his voice will do. Make this Easter a time of rejoicing and thankfulness for the fact that you have a Saviour who lives and thus makes preaching relevant, believing profitable, forgiveness possible, and hope meaningful.

Oh, and remember to handle the Christian faith with care. You never know where denial leads. You may think that what Scripture teaches about this or that does not matter and you can dismiss it with ease, but be not deceived. Embrace all of the gospel with a deep joy and especially the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. Hallelujah, he lives!



Jesus Christ Lives!

***"Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here; he has risen!" Luke 24:5b-6a***

This meditation was originally published in this magazine in 2005.

If you can't find your shoes, do you look for them on your bookshelf? Of course not! What a ridiculous idea! No matter how difficult it might be to find your shoes, you can be sure that they won't be among your books. You're looking in completely the wrong area and your search will not be successful. In order for your search to be successful, you need to look in more likely places and you need to remember what has happened in the past with the lost items. Then you will look in the right places and will find what has become lost.

Looking for things in the wrong places, looking for someone in the wrong place, is just what the women did on Easter morning. They had attended Jesus Christ and his disciples for quite a while and supported them from their own means (Luke 8:3). And on Good Friday, while much of the crowd went away after Jesus had breathed his last, these women remained and at a distance watched everything that happened (Luke 23:49). Now at the earliest opportunity, on the day after the Sabbath, they had come to pay their last respects to Jesus Christ. They had come to the tomb in which he was buried in order to give him a proper burial. They wanted to anoint Jesus' body with


perfumes and spices so that it might be preserved as much as possible. In this way, they wanted to show their love and devotion to their Lord. They came very early in the morning for there was no time to lose as the decay could set in quickly.

And so there the women went, carrying their spices. They thought that they were going to find the dead body of Jesus in the tomb. He had died after all, hadn't he? Indeed, another possibility never even occurred to these women. They had all witnessed his agonizing death on the cross. The images of this were still vivid in their minds. It was all they could think about. So now they go to where they are certain he is to be found, among the dead, in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

But when they arrived at the tomb, they immediately noticed that something was amiss. The first thing that they found, as it says in Luke 24:2, was that the stone was rolled away from the tomb. What could have happened? Why was the stone removed from the opening to the tomb? Had the body of Jesus been tampered with? They entered the tomb, seeking the body of their Lord. They looked for something that does not belong in a tomb. They were convinced that the body of Jesus must be found in this tomb and they were very perplexed when they did not find his body here. They had expected that his

body would stay for many days and gradually decompose and so they had brought their spices and ointments.

But instead of a dead body, the women found two live men dressed in clothes that gleamed like lightning. They were angels, messengers of the Lord Most High! And they asked the women how they could be looking for the living One among the dead. Did the women really expect the Son of God, the long awaited Messiah from heaven to remain in the tomb, the place of the dead, forever? Could death conquer the One who has the springs of eternal life, the One who gives such life to those who believe in him? Of course not! What a ridiculous idea!

Jesus Christ lives! He continues to live also today and cannot be found among the dead. We have never seen him and do not see him now, but nevertheless he lives. Death could not hold him because he has won the complete victory over the powers of darkness and the evil one when he died on the cross. The death that he suffered was for the sake of our sins. He did not die because of his own sins, for he never committed any sin. He was holy and blameless and therefore he did not belong among the dead and should not have been sought among the dead. Jesus Christ is the living One and because of his life, we may also share in his rich benefits, the forgiveness of our sins and life everlasting. 

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Billy, the Reformation, the Bourbons, and the Breach (Part 3 of 3)

The second part of this series reviewed the French Wars of Religion. This installment focuses on what happened on February 2, 1576, where French Protestants are at today, and the justification of revolt.

March for War

As Calvinists, John Casimir of Zweibrücken (son of the Elector-Palatinate) and William of Orange might well have known the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563, and what it says about comfort, God's providence, and the communion of saints. Henry of Navarre and Henry of Bourbon, the Prince of Condé, both Huguenots, likely also knew Articles 8, 39, and 40 of the Gallic Confession of 1559, about God's providence, and the civil authorities. Part of their motivation and justification may have been to help out their fellow-believers, trusting that all things are in God's hands.

***The story of
Billy and the
Wars of Religion
give reason for
humility and awe
towards God***

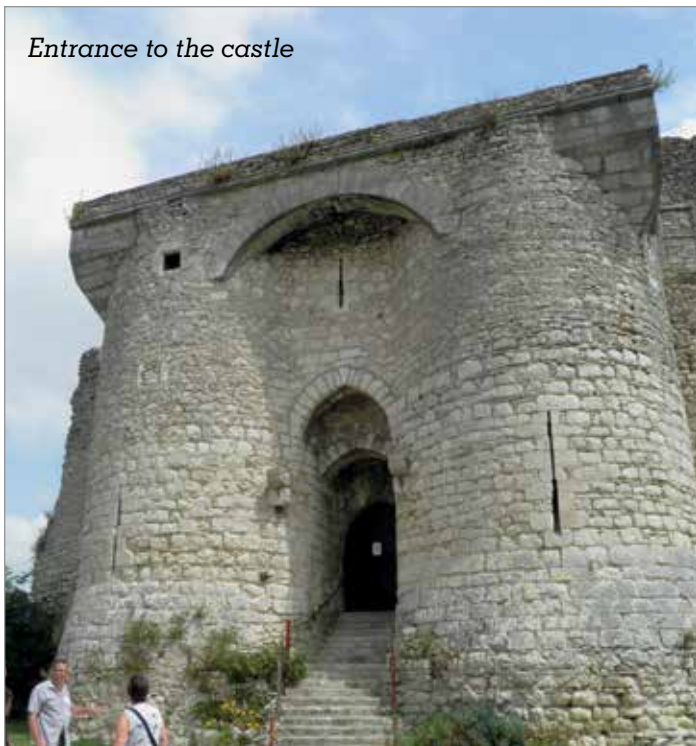
This guarantees little about the mercenaries they hired, however. Mercenaries were professional soldiers who would fight for personal purposes, often without real commitment to the prince who hired them. Mutiny and desertion were common when pay or reward were delayed or disappointing. If well-paid and provided for, and properly trained and disciplined, they were key assets in any battle. Yet, apart from their skills as foot-soldiers and pike-men, and understanding of cavalry, artillery, and guerilla-like tactics, they also were known for looting and barbaric treatment of citizens and defeated enemies. During the siege and capture of Billy, 1575-1576, things were no different.

The Protestant campaign came to Billy by late fall of 1575. There was a Huguenot community here, anxiously awaiting the Lord's guidance and praying for his protection in the upcoming events. While the castle's garrison was subject to the king, it remained Bourbon property, and a French-language inscription on a sixteenth century house near the castle has an obviously Reformed intent: "Woe to those who forsake God to serve riches; they amass property and lose their soul; God is my high tower and fortress." A Roman Catholic would have used Latin and invoked saints.

Siege

Though no written records exist, oral tradition confirms that Billyans knew that trouble was at hand. They scrambled to get themselves and their valuables to safety. The church's priest hurriedly carried the baptism register for half a mile along the winding and climbing road to the captain's house, steps from the castle. Both friars and families sought shelter inside the castle, perhaps 100-200 people, with their food, livestock, and valuables. Archaeological work must yet confirm what was all inside the 2000 m² inner court, but, minimally, there were soldiers' quarters, a bakery, a chapel, supply rooms, a cooking facility, stables, and a well. The castle's towers included a sizable grain-cellar, but defenders also needed space – and the captain would have restricted where the guests were allowed to go. Weather, births, sickness, and deaths continued as before; and, as no one could guess how long a siege might last, food would likely be rationed. One can imagine that privacy was at a minimum, tensions ran high, tempers flared, and the smell must have been atrocious. There may have been some assurance in considering that the castle had been taken only once (during the Hundred Years' War), significant improvements had been made fairly recently, the natural and technical defences were formidable, and that an attempt to storm it would seem to be madness from any angle. Yet,

Entrance to the castle



one never knew, and twenty miles north, in Moulins, the King's Catholic army dared not intervene. Everyone prayed, to God or to saints.

The castle was besieged by some 8,000 mercenaries, four big cannons, sixteen pieces of field artillery, and other gear, supplies, and equipment. The two princely leaders, quite confident of their just cause, would have sought the Lord's blessing. The mercenaries did as usual, increasing the grief of those inside when the watchmen reported that houses burned and the church was destroyed. Only the church crypt was left sufficiently intact to remain to this day. If there was any wine in it, soldiers would have their way with it; but, it is reported, the most grievous was the disappearance of the statue of the Holy Virgin. Horsemen of John Casimir are also said to have presented an eight-month-old girl at the Castle of Noailly, some six miles further east, for ransom. It is not clear where they got her, but, in the castle, the parents gave the horsemen too much wine to drink, and the girl was freed.

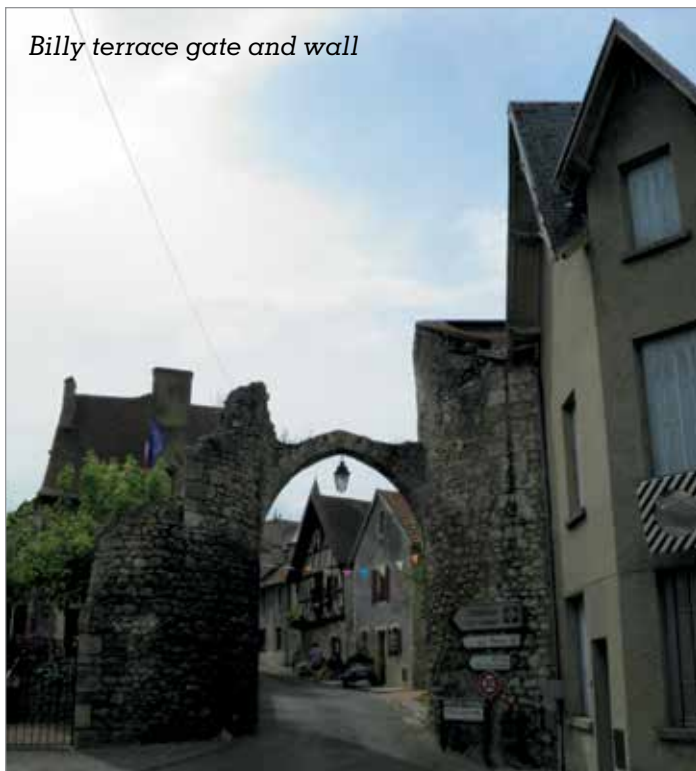
Battle

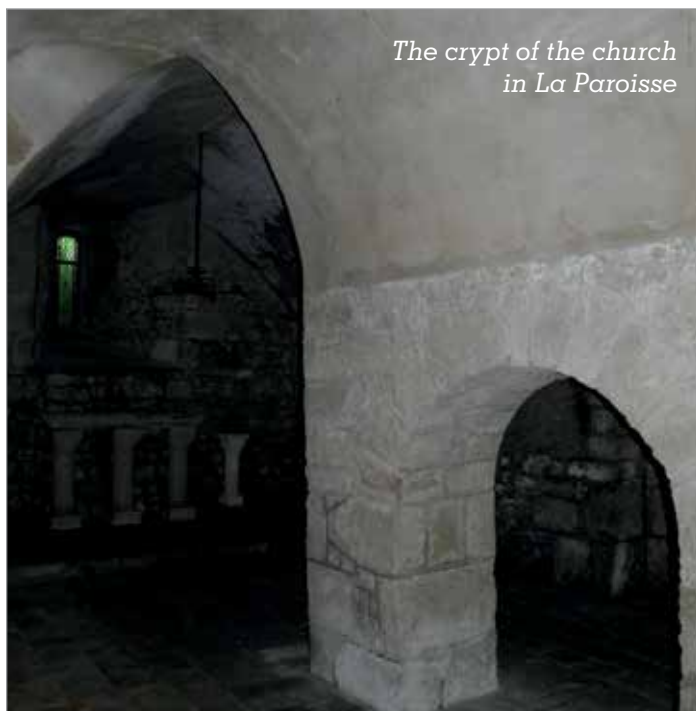
Fall went by, Christmas came, and by the end of January 1576, it got very cold. On Monday, February 2, the ice

on the marsh was strong enough to maneuver the heavy cannons into positions close to the castle's northern wall. It did not take them much to destroy the protective cover over the battlements. Imagine the mayhem, the injuries, the fires, the deaths, the screams and groans, as the attackers continued to pound the massive four-to-six-foot wide stone wall until it finally collapsed. The attackers stormed the castle through the breach, took it, and burned it. There is no record of people fleeing, or what the mercenaries did to those inside, and whether they made any distinctions between Huguenots and Roman Catholics, but one shudders at the inherent horrors.

Prince Henry of Condé left a garrison in charge of John Casimir, and moved on. This battle was won, as was the war, and the King hastily agreed to a seven-month truce and a promise of half a million livres for John Casimir to go away and stay east of the Rhine. In the Edict of Beaulieu (May 1576), such things as freedom of public worship (except in Paris and at Court), representation in parliaments, and restitution for losses suffered in the St. Bartholomew's Massacre were added. They were promises only, however: Before the year was over, the agreement began to fall apart, and hostilities were on again.

Billy terrace gate and wall





*The crypt of the church
in La Paroisse*

Fast forward

The castle has seen many uses since, but was never fully rebuilt: There was no money and there was no need, as the time of castles was passé. It fell into dangerous disrepair by the early twentieth century, was classified as a historical monument in 1921, and is now a tourist attraction awaiting funding for archaeological research and repairs.

Because of the persecutions, many Huguenots fled abroad, taking convictions, trades and skills with them, to the benefit of those who took them in. Today, perhaps two percent of some sixty-five million French are still Protestant. Though scattered through the country, there are concentrations in some regions along the German and Swiss borders, the Cévennes and the Pyrenees in the south, and in Normandy, for instance. In 2013, two larger federations (the Reformed and the Evangelical Lutheran Church) joined to form the United Protestant Church of France, with some 400,000 members, which allows for the ordination of women and blessing of same-sex unions. It is claimed that a strong drive for unity lets matters of order and doctrine drift to the background. The more conservative Reformed Evangelical Church did not join the unification trend, and a more orthodox perspective may also be found at the Faculté Jean Calvin seminary in Aix-en-Provence, with Presbyterian and Reformed members among its faculty.

Some issues

What should parents and teachers tell their children and students about this? In line with the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21 the focus can be on the "the Son of God who gathers, defends, and preserves his church by his Word and Spirit." In this context, it should be noted that 1) The church is the LORD's work: all glory belongs to him; 2) Christ gathers his church in all times and places, through faith in him; and 3) Because the Church belongs to the LORD, it lives by the Word of God. Keeping our eyes focused on God's work lets us marvel at it, as people are best at making a mess of things. The story of Billy and the Wars of Religion give reason for humility and awe towards God. We may note the tremendous blessings the Huguenots experienced in the late 1550s,

and may be grateful for the gift of John Calvin at the time, and for the blessings of his work for many even today – such as in our Genevan Psalter, our Church Order, his *Institutes*, and our Three Forms of Unity. We can highlight how today also, there are French-speaking brothers

and sisters – in Quebec, in France, in Haiti, the Congo, and other places, and how Huguenots played significant roles in the founding of our country. We may acknowledge how hardship and suffering led the afflicted to cry out to God for deliverance – and how he granted it, among others, by giving places of refuge, such as Strasbourg, Geneva, Frankfurt, Emden, Amsterdam, and London, or by giving steadfastness when called to martyrdom. We may be moved to empathize with and pray for those who are persecuted today, as we again read the experiences of the cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11.

With older students, we can discuss the question of how we ought to live, and whether or not the Huguenots did well to revolt and reach for the sword. We can discuss what Jesus meant in Matthew 26:52 and Luke 22:36, and whether perhaps they all should have fled, as in Matthew 10:23 and 24:16. We can dig deeper and lay out before our children that Scripture has more to say than just these brief verses, and that, even in the days of the French Religious Wars, there were Anabaptists who, with apparent

*In the end, rather
than probing
people's motives
and actions,
Scripture would
have us consider
the Lord's doing*

piety, opposed all resistance and vied for pacifism. Connections can be made to Romans 13 and the fifth commandment, to 1 Timothy 2:2 and 1 Samuel 24:9, and to the Egyptian midwives who were commended for *not* obeying the authorities. Calvin addressed the question in his *Institutes* (IV, 20, 29-31), stressing the obligation to honour and respect (see also BC, Art 36), and Beza followed him, that lower magistrates may legitimately oppose the evil actions of a tyrant king, and even revolt, as a king must serve in the place and for the purpose for which God gave him authority, and has no absolute right to commandeer his subjects. (Douma, in his *The Ten Commandments*, addresses the question in the context of the fifth commandment.) Thinking of the horrors of the German peasants' revolt (1524-1525), and of government authority in more absolute terms, Luther had made no allowance for revolt, other than legitimate protest. Zwingli, however, was quite open to deposing evil governments who would not listen to the people's unanimous protests.

In the end, rather than probing *people's* motives and actions, Scripture would have us consider the *Lord's* doing.

People sin, but the Lord carries on with his plan of salvation. Brokenness and breaches remain, but so does the message of our Huguenot Billy brother: "Woe to those who forsake God to serve riches; they amass property and lose their soul; God is my high tower and fortress." Those who hope in the Lord for salvation and restoration have the comfort of Psalm 23:3: He restores their soul, and they sing Psalm 46.

Resource Sidebar

Among others, I used the following resources:

Besson, Antonin (1968). *Le Destin d'une Chatellenie*. Billy, Allier: Cahiers Bourbonnais.

Brierre, Jacques (1995). *Le Château de Billy*. Billy, Allier: Office de Tourisme

Jaenen, Cornelius J. (1976). *The Role of the Church in New France*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited.

Rocher, Marie-Claude, and Drouin, Catherine. (1993). *Un autre son de cloche: Les protestants francophones au Québec*. Québec: Musée du Séminaire de Québec; Le Musée des Religions, L'Université Laval.



An Overlooked Blessing

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Current Western “wisdom” includes the mantra: “Keep religion out of politics.” After all, running a government has nothing to do with religion. So, Christians, keep your beliefs at home when engaging in any policy or government matters.

Now much could be said about this issue, but let me only mention the following. Every government, whether it recognizes it or not, is ultimately responsible to God. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in the capital city of Rome that “there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” And a little later, he added that the governing authorities are “God’s servant” (Rom 13:1-2, 4). As an agent of God, government is responsible in the first place to God and will one day have to give an account. This truth is especially telling in a nation like Canada where the Prime Minister and many parliamentarians profess to belong to a Christian church.

Futhermore, the watchword, “keep religion out of politics,” overlooks the fact that in God’s providence, Christianity has been an enormous blessing to the Western world. Its dominance and prosperity would have been unimaginable without the enormous cultural impact of the Bible and Christianity. Think, for example, of the concepts of limited government, the rule of law, high moral demands, the work ethic, and the concept of private property.

All of this came to mind when I was recently reminded of the fact that some Chinese academics have come to realize that Christianity is a major source of the West’s strength and influence. David Aikman, in his 2003 book, *Jesus in Beijing*, reported that in 2002 a scholar from China’s premier academic research institute, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told astonished American tourists in China’s capital that:

One of the things we were asked to look into was what accounted for the success, in fact, the pre-eminence of

the West all over the world. . . . We studied everything we could from the historical, political, economic, and cultural perspective. At first, we thought it was because you had more powerful guns than we had. Then we thought it was because you had the best political system. Next we focused on your economic system. But in the last twenty years, we have realized that the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity. That is why the West has been so powerful. The Christian moral foundation of social and cultural life was what made possible the emergence of capitalism and then the successful transition to democratic politics. We don’t have any doubt about this. (p. 5)

Aikman even notes that early in 2002, China’s then-president and Communist Party leader, Jiang Zemin, was asked at a dinner party, “If before leaving office, you could make one decree that you knew would be obeyed in China, what would it be?” Jiang is reported to have replied with a smile: “I would make Christianity the official religion of China” (p. 17-18). Niall Ferguson in his *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (2011) gives other examples of prominent Chinese academics who have come to recognize the enormous historical blessing of Christianity (pp. 287-288).

Today, little of this appreciation for Christianity is evident. China’s current leadership is actively persecuting Christians. But, it is doing so to its own long term hurt.

In Canada there is little appreciation as a nation for the rich biblical heritage that has shaped so much of our country’s institutions and laws. As our country leaves its Christian moorings, we are increasingly living on borrowed capital. But that capital of lingering Christian influence could eventually run out. Where will we then get our direction from as a nation? May we all, along with organizations such as ARPA and others, work for a recognition of God’s rights and biblical principles in our nation. Our country desperately needs it.



Owen Sound Welcomes Rev. David Pol

Ordination service, December 18, 2016

On a beautiful wintery day, during the season of celebration, with the sun glistening on freshly fallen snow, we brought our thanksgiving worship and praise. It was a very short vacancy with the retirement of our former pastor, Rev. Jack Moesker. We were blessed with faithful pulpit supply during our vacancy and now, we come together for a joyous occasion to ordain our freshly graduated student of seminary Hamilton, David William Pol. The heralding of Jesus' victory continues here in Owen Sound.

David's father, Dr. A.J. Pol from Carman East CanRC, had the honour of ordaining his son into his first congregation. Dr. A.J. Pol chose the theme, "Speak well of *our* Father

in blessing, who blesses *us* with spiritual blessings in heavenly places." The theme was based on Ephesians 1:3. We are encouraged to celebrate! "Our God reigns!" The laying on of hands was done by Rev. M. VanLuik, delegated by Classis Northern Ontario and pastor of Brampton CanRC, Br. W. Kruisselbrink, elder and chairman of council of O.S.C.R.C., and Dr. A.J. Pol, father of Rev. D. Pol. After the service, we held to Owen Sound's tradition of reading and signing the form of subscription. God prepares us with more than enough to live abundantly with him to eternity. Neighbouring congregations, former pastors, and Classis Ontario North representatives were then given opportunity to give their congratulations. Subsequently the congregation was given opportunity to share their joy with Rev. David Pol and fiancée, Erika Langendoen.

During the afternoon service, Rev. David Pol delivered his first sermon to our congregation with the theme, "Pray for an increase in knowledge and love in the congregation." Ephesians 3:14-19 was the text, acknowledging our Father, who adopted us as his children and heirs, promising eternal blessing now and forever. Being an apostle of prayer, Paul uses the power available to him, to be strengthened in his calling. Rev. David Pol desires to shepherd his flock, bearing fruit.

Welcome evening

Owen Sound congregation then gathered together on Friday, January 27, 2017 to celebrate and welcome Rev. David Pol and Sister Erika. Many fabulous desserts were shared and appreciated to celebrate this special occasion! At approximately 8:15 pm the evening celebration was opened with reading of Psalm 127 and singing. The preschool children sang "Loving Shepherd" and "Jesus Loves Me." The calling committee presented a special gift of literature: one book for a new young pastor beginning his call and one book presented to the new young couple to use as





a devotional. The Harvest School made a presentation in song, welcoming the couple to Georgian Bay. The Youth Group challenged Rev. Pol and Erika to a match child to parent game. “Oh, that was difficult!” The Young People made their appearance as “The Jungle Band,” in honour

of Rev. Pol’s birthplace of Indonesia. Up next, enjoyed by young and old alike, a fantastic timing game where a number of items had to be identified upon turning over the box that covered them. One unusual surprise entry half way through had the participants gasp, or as Erika pleased us with, a shriek, at the sudden presentation of *it* (someone’s live head!). The young ladies from Young Peoples presented a slide show with photos courtesy of Facebook posts from the young couple which they accompanied with beautiful vocals. The Woman’s Bible Study sang “Romans Doxology,” as they have just recently completed the study of this book and invited Rev. Pol to do a series on this book sometime during his time with us. They also spread the cold and flu in vocal classy fugue from Beethoven! “Achoo!!” The congregation and Rev. Pol were encouraged to be a people of prayer; to *be* equipped to do battle in the heavenly realms and experience peace (Rom 16:20)! Together we sang Hymn 15. The Retro Billies then came and strummed us a beautiful poem in rhyme with a variety of instruments and voice.

Rev. D. Pol and Erika were wearing their authentic smiles throughout the whole evening. Rev. D. Pol ended the evening celebration with a word and prayer of thanksgiving. We joined together in thanksgiving with Hymn 85.



Clarion Kids

Elijah

1 kings 17 - 2 Kings 2

Elijah was one of God's prophets. He lived during a time when the king of Israel was very wicked and the people were not serving God. Elijah told the king that there would be a very long time with no rain. This meant that a lot of people would get very hungry. The king was very angry and he wanted to kill Elijah, but God protected him. The people of Israel tried praying to the god Baal to make it rain but Baal is not God, and he cannot make it rain. Finally, Elijah prayed to God that there would be rain again and God sent rain. God is the only one who can control the weather.

Go to www.clarionmagazine.ca to print and colour this picture!



Word Search

G	C	K	H	C	Z	G	K	N	T
Y	A	D	R	Z	N	Y	E	G	A
Z	R	D	R	I	J	N	L	B	G
G	P	G	K	O	I	W	I	Z	X
I	Z	B	N	S	U	P	J	Y	J
G	E	W	R	U	R	G	A	T	Y
B	A	A	L	Y	H	A	H	W	R
D	E	K	C	I	W	P	I	T	G
L	K	V	B	B	G	S	J	N	N
I	A	Y	F	H	V	S	J	T	A

Angry	Baal	Drought
Elijah	Hungry	Israel
King	Rain	Wicked

Matching:

Draw lines to match important words and phrases from the story.

Across	A long time with no rain
Baal	Controlled by God
Drought	God's prophet
Elijah	False God
Israel	People who were not serving God

by Emily Nijenhuis

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Q May we eat halal meats?

I would appreciate it very much if you would address the issue of eating halal meats. This is food that has been dedicated to Allah before slaughter, i.e. altar sacrifice to a pagan god (idol). I have read 1 Corinthians 8 and also Acts 15:28, 29, but still find the answer ambiguous. Are we not giving silent assent to the Islamic practice of slowly inuring the population to the creeping in of an act of Shariah law? Do we need to take a stand?

A We know from Acts 15 that the apostles and elders of Jerusalem decided to exhort the churches not to eat meat sacrificed to idols. Paul does not make a direct reference to this decision; he does, however, show agreement with it and refutes the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. In order to understand his position, we should realize that this matter of eating meat sacrificed to idols is connected very much to the time and place when this eating took place. The halls in which this sacrificial meat was eaten were part of the temple complex in which the sacrifices were made, and these halls were as sacred as the temple itself was. There all the rituals took place that accompanied the sacrifices. Hence participating in the meals was very much connected to the sacrificial offerings in the temple. After the gods (demons, 1 Cor 10:20) had eaten their share, the participants in the meal enjoyed theirs.

Having said this, it also happened that meat that was sanctified in the temple, ended up in the market place and private homes as well. Though meat certainly was no regular staple but an expensive luxury, also people who were *not* participants in the above rituals and sacrificial offerings and meals, were confronted with the eating of meat that originated in the temple. It is in these circumstances that also the believing Corinthians were confronted with the

possibility of eating this meat, or with the reality of certain members eating it. We may assume from Paul's writings in the epistles to the Romans (14f.), 1 Corinthians (8-10), or 1 Timothy, for instance, that he passed on the decision of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. Now in the church at Corinth Paul was confronted once again with this problem concerning the eating of meat offered to idols.

Paul's concern, first and foremost therefore, in 1 Corinthians 8-10 is the possibility that some in the congregation still desire to participate in the temple rituals and sacrificial meals that took place in the dining halls of the temple complex. He refutes such desires vehemently! Besides, Paul also had to deal with the tensions among the members between those who were in the position of being able to eat the meat that (perhaps) originated in the sacrificial practices but that appeared in the butcher shop, the market place, or in the houses of the rich. Those who felt they had the (Christian) freedom to eat the meat because it was presented in settings unrelated to the religious practices were called "the strong" (Rom 15:1). They were "strong" in that they, by faith, rejected the false religion, appreciated meat as a gift from God that could be enjoyed as such (Ps 24), and wanted to enjoy the "freedom of the children of God set free from the idolatry of the heathen." The "weak" on the other hand, were those who, though freed from this false religious idolatry as well, still saw

the connection between the sacrifices and the meat and believed that it should be rejected completely for that reason. They were “weak,” Paul indicates, because they were not free from this idolatry and did not really enjoy freely the good gifts of God’s creation (Ps 24) that could be enjoyed, sanctified as it was by thanksgiving.

Coming to some conclusions, we may first of all conclude from Paul’s dealings with this issue that he suggested that it is not necessary at all to raise the question about the origin of this meat with a view to your own conscience. In your conscience you may resolve that all God’s gifts are his for us to enjoy. You don’t need to have any doubts about this. Things are different, however, if someone would inform you that the food has been offered to an idol. That man, then, shows, that to him it makes much difference whether food has been offered or not. If you would eat, you would confuse him (or the “weak” that sees you eat this nonetheless); they could receive the impression that you do not completely reject heathen worship. Then the *love* for the “weak” compels the “strong” to abstain, because love trumps the lack of understanding and need for further

instruction of the “weak.” Paul, himself, also voluntarily restricted himself of certain rights and freedoms for the sake of his brothers and sisters (1 Cor 9).

Applying these conclusions to the present day situation of eating halal meats and its implied assent to Islamic practices (e.g. in cafeterias at colleges and universities that inundated with halal products!), we should be sensitive to the particular settings and circumstances as well. If and when certain foods are offered by adherents to the Islam religion with the explicit indication that these foods are sacred and that those eating it should realize that there are these religious overtones in eating it, we should refuse it as an expression to such a Muslim that we don’t wish to participate in such religious practice. Of course, I realize that this will hardly ever happen (now), but that it could happen in the future. Right now however, when we see food that’s labelled as halal meats in the grocery store or cafeteria, we should have no problem eating it, since for us it is undone and unrelated to any religious overtone but just is good food/meat that can be enjoyed as gift of God our Creator!



**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. denHollander
denhollanderw@gmail.com**

23 Kinsman Drive, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0

Press Release of Classis Pacific East convened in the Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church on February 23, 2017

Rev. Roukema of the convening church welcomed the delegates, including Rev. Lou Slagter from Abbotsford URC. He Read Acts 11:19-30, led in prayer, and Classis sang Hymn 47:3, 4.

Rev. Witten, from Vernon, examined the credentials and finds them to be in order, noting that there is a request from Abbotsford for the release of Rev. Janssen who accepted a call to Willoughby Heights Canadian Reformed Church.

Rev. Eikelboom was appointed chairman, Rev. Roukema as vice chair, and Rev. Schouten as clerk.

Classis was constituted, with Rev. Lou Slagter seated as fraternal delegate from the URC of Abbotsford, and the agenda was adopted. Correspondence was received from the committee of needy churches; from Yarrow, regarding the inspection of archives; and from Abbotsford with respect to the release of Rev. Janssen, upon accepting a call to Willoughby Canadian Reformed Church.

There was a discussion about whether email correspondence should be signed. It is agreed that all documents from the churches should be signed. The church at Aldergrove will investigate whether the regulations cover electronic signature.

Abbotsford submits request for release of their minister Rev. Janssen. Classis accepts the documents submitted and grants Rev. Janssen honourable release to serve as Minister for Willoughby Canadian Reformed Church.

Rev. Lou Slagter addressed Classis on behalf of the URC. He expresses gratitude for our ecclesiastical fellowship and expresses his hope and prayer that the unity would grow more and more over time. Rev. Roukema, classis contact with URC, responded with some appropriate words.

Rev. Pol reported on his contact with RCUS. Chilliwack submits a proposal to financially support RCUS mission work. The report is received with gratitude. Classis decides that the support for RCUS is not a classis matter and encourages Chilliwack to facilitate a collection among the churches in Classis Pacific East. Chilliwack graciously agrees to do so.

The chairman asks the three questions with respect Article 44 of the church order. Everyone answers yes to the first two questions. Some of the churches request advice for various matters.

The next classis is planned for June 1 and the convening church will be Aldergrove. September 21 is suggested as the alternate date.

Classis suggests that for next classis Abbotsford provide chair, Aldergrove provide vice chair, and Chilliwack provide the clerk.

Classis appointed the committee for examinations. Revs. Wielenga and Schouten are appointed as exam coordinators and sermon evaluators. Rev. Wielenga is appointed to examine Old Testament exegesis and church polity; Rev. Witten for New Testament exegesis and diaconiology; Rev. Pol for knowledge of Scripture; Rev. Schouten for doctrine and creeds; Rev. B. J. Berends for Church history; Rev. Roukema for Ethics.

In view of the upcoming departures of Rev. Eikelboom and Rev. Janssen, Classis appointed Rev. Witten as a church visitor, effective June 1, 2017. Classis also reappointed as church visitors, Rev. Schouten and Rev. Wielenga.

Aldergrove is appointed to speak on behalf of Classis at the farewell of Rev. Janssen. Chilliwack is appointed to speak on behalf of Classis at the farewell of Rev. Eikelboom.

The Chairman closes the meeting and leads Classis in prayer.

For Classis Pacific East,
Rev. Justin Roukema,
Vice chairman at that time 