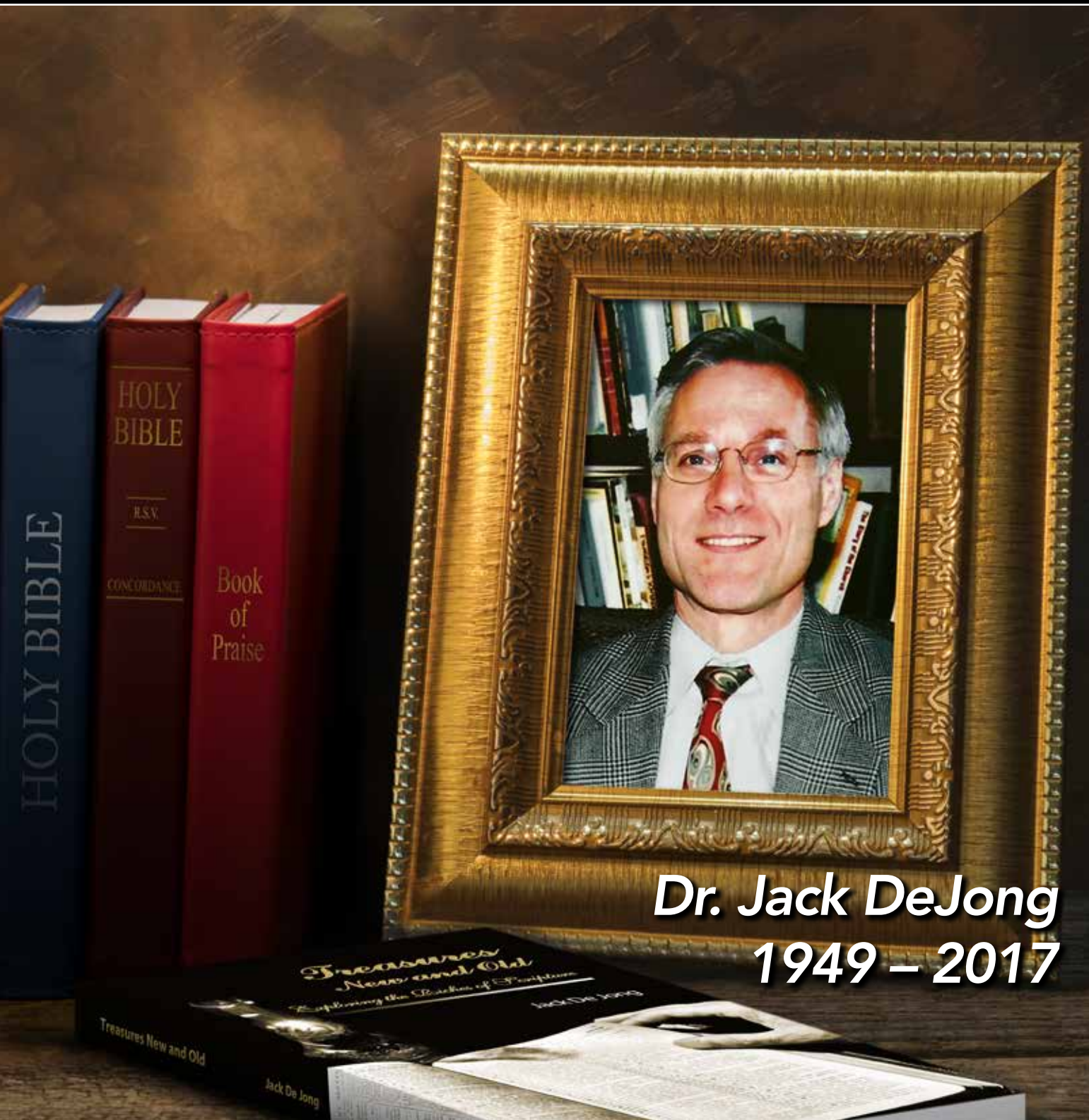


Clarion

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Dr. Jack DeJong
1949 – 2017



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Pentecost: The Key to Knowledge and Understanding

*When the witness of the Holy Spirit is removed,
science is no longer done in the service of God*

The disciples of Christ could not yet imagine the great scope of their work when the Lord Jesus gave them the great commission to go and make disciples of all nations. The Lord understood the immensity of this calling and therefore promised the disciples just before his ascension, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.” He then commanded them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

The power of the Holy Spirit became evident ten days later when the apostles received the opportunity on Pentecost to speak to the people in Jerusalem about Jesus Christ as the risen Lord. On that day, three thousand souls were added to the church. It was a powerful testimony to the power of the Spirit to open hearts and minds.

Senseless people

In the Scriptures, the Lord God makes clear there is no knowledge of God apart from the witness of the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the distinguishing mark between the mind of the senseless person and the righteous one in Psalm 92. “The senseless man,” literally someone who has the mind of a beast, “does not know, fools do not understand” (v. 6). They do not know and they cannot understand God’s great works and how profound are God’s thoughts (v. 5).

The psalmist acknowledges that such senseless people will often flourish, many will be known for their great achievements when they amass great wealth, or create a great name for themselves in the field of science, or become powerful world leaders, and yet the reality is that they do not know, they do not understand the great works of God or how profound are his plans.

The righteous understand

On the other hand, the psalmist pictures the righteous person as someone who will flourish like the palm or cedar tree, for they are planted in the courts of the Lord. A righteous person will still bear fruit in old age, for they are firmly planted in the spiritual soil of God’s holy word. Only the righteous know and understand, for only they can see the world through the lenses given by the Holy Spirit. Paul reflects on this in 1 Corinthians 2, when he argues that wisdom comes from the Spirit. He argues that without the Holy Spirit, we cannot accept the things that are revealed by the Spirit of God – they would be foolishness to us and beyond human understanding. He concludes that these things can only be spiritually discerned.

Theology as the Queen of Science

In modern society, people look to the universities and academics to explore the great questions about life. Today society has the expectation that all the answers to life can be found by exploring the material things of this universe. If we do not yet know the answers today, we will know them tomorrow. There is optimism, for a better future for tomorrow will bring more knowledge and better understanding.

Over a period of centuries, the field of scientific inquiry has completely divorced the spiritual from the material things of this universe. Many of our universities, even in Canada, began as seminaries for the study of theology and other areas of inquiry arose around the seminary. In medieval times, theology was called “The Queen of the Sciences.” For a long time, it was accepted that science and academic work could only be done within the framework of theol-

ogy and that without the revelation of God's Holy Spirit there was no knowledge and understanding.

That close relationship between academic study and theology began to change when the sacred text of Scripture became severed from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is severed from the Holy Scriptures in the mind of mankind, the Scriptures are now

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Dr. Jacobus (Jack) DeJong was called home to the Lord on Saturday, April 15, 2017. *Clarion* magazine was blessed by his contributions both as editor and author for a span of over twenty-two years. A note from our publisher as well as Dr. DeJong's funeral address are printed on these pages; both quote Dr. De Jong's writings – a beautiful profession of his faith, confidence, and joy. We at *Clarion* extend our condolences to the DeJong family: may the Lord grant you comfort and peace.

Issue 10 includes our Pentecost editorial from Rev. Matthew Van Luik, a continuation of Rev. Rob Schouten's series, "Sermons: A Listening Guide," an introduction to CRTS's graduating student James Zekveld, as well as several of our regular columns.

Laura Veenendaal

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open to criticism as just another work created by human beings. The result of this separation is that a new arrogance entered the academic world, for surely you cannot expect an intellectual person today to believe that people who lived thousands of years ago could have any insight into life that is still valid for us today. The result of this new attitude is that history is either meaningless or it has become totally irrelevant and unimportant.

This modern attitude was expressed by John Kerry, former secretary of state of the U.S., in a speech given in Ethiopia, "Some people believe that people ought to be able to ... live by their interpretation of something that was written down a thousand plus, two thousand years ago. That's not the way I think most people want to live." When the Holy Spirit is separated from the Word of God, it is easy to dismiss God's Word as of no value for us today. The Apostle Paul had a high view of God's Word and so reminded the Corinthians that the things in Scripture were written down as warnings for us (1 Cor 10:11).

The Holy Spirit and scientific inquiry

A high view of Scripture as the work of the Holy Spirit provides a perspective on the universe that the senseless and foolish do not have. The Spirit says that the senseless do not know and the foolish have no understanding. Without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, human beings cannot see the great and mighty works of God in creation, they cannot understand the thoughts or accept the plans of God. In every area of academic investigation, knowledge is impossible without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

Scientific inquiry is impossible without a theological understanding about God. When the witness of the Holy Spirit is removed, science is no longer done in the service of God, to uncover the awesome glory and wisdom of the Lord, but it must now be used exclusively in the service of mankind to serve the needs of human beings. The psalmist in Psalm 92 does not argue that the senseless and foolish cannot do great things. In fact, he speaks about the senseless and foolish as springing up and flourishing like the grass. There are brilliant minds in the field of science, people who know so much about their area of expertise, and yet the Spirit says they are senseless and foolish.

Knowledge comes with humility

Think about the great strides modern science has made today in understanding the human body. Such prog-

ress also leads to an arrogance in which people believe that over time they will learn everything there is to know about how the body functions, that every mystery will be completely explained in a mechanical way. But those enlightened by the Spirit understand that even as we learn more about the human body, there will always be that mystery about the body that we will never be able to understand. The body is much more than a mechanical instrument, for who can fathom the spirit or the soul of mankind? Faith gives us a spirit of humility that acknowledges that God's wisdom is so great that we can never fully fathom the mystery of the human body and soul.

The same humility must be present for those who study the universe. There is so much that we can learn about the beau-

ty and majesty of God's creation, but we are also left with a sense of awe in which we cannot explain the wisdom of God. Humans attempt to give a rational theory about the beginnings of the universe, people want to explain it in a mechanical way, but the Holy Spirit reveals that the world was created by the voice of God. The more the believer learns about creation, the more we stand in awe at the infinite wisdom of God.

The purpose for knowledge

The work of the Holy Spirit also affects the way we approach the use of science. When science is understood to be solely in the service of mankind, then its ultimate end is only to serve the needs of humanity. Then the question becomes, "How does this serve mankind?" and there is no longer any thought on how it glorifies God. Modern science and academic study must now fit the narrative that is determined by human beings. It is not God who determines how science will benefit us but it is mankind who determines how science should serve us.

When God is divorced from the material world, utilitarianism becomes the driving force behind society. What is considered moral today is no longer what God teaches

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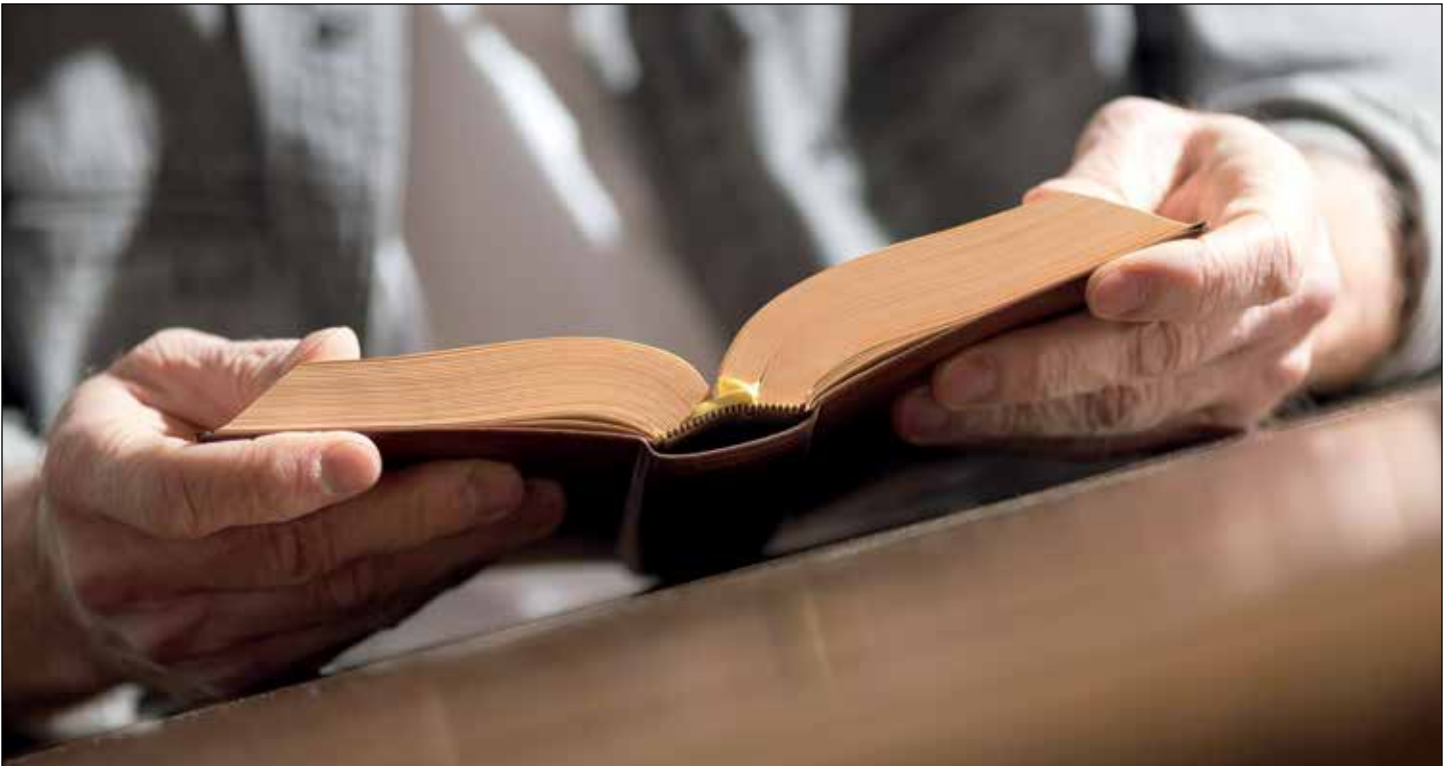
is moral, but whatever is useful to human beings becomes moral. From a Christian perspective, we feel like we are living in a world that is set upside down. When a child is conceived in the womb of the mother, the Holy Spirit creates in us a sense of wonder for this new life. There in the womb, God has created a child with both body and soul, one on whom he lavishes his love. Without the wisdom of the Spirit, modern society simply looks at what lives in the mother as a piece of flesh that is either wanted or not wanted. If it is not wanted and loved, it is easy to remove and if it is, you can let it grow to its useful end. Even the definition of what is moral changes as seen with Richard Dawkins' advice to someone who asked about being pregnant with a child with Down Syndrome; "Abort it and try again. It would be immoral to bring it into the world if you have a choice."


Without the Holy Spirit, mankind is infused with an arrogance in which everything must serve their own needs. Today we live in a society that largely functions on this basis. The most important question is not what is right or wrong, but what do you feel, or what are your needs? To serve God and to do God's will, as Jesus Christ revealed two

thousand years ago, is no longer considered moral, but the new morality is to be true to yourself.

Knowledge leads to the praise of God

When the heart of mankind is not being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, it will affect every area of life, even that of music which has the power to deeply affect and move the heart of mankind. Without the Spirit of God, music becomes sterile when its purpose is solely to give people pleasure and to gratify our human sense of hearing. Without the transforming work of the Spirit, the sole purpose for music is to give pleasure to oneself. On the other hand, Bach understood the first purpose for music was to give glory to God and as God received the glory, it gave refreshment to the soul. Or as the psalmist expresses so beautifully, "It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, to the music of the ten-string and the melody of the harp." Through the power of the Holy Spirit we lift high our hearts to praise our God and Maker.





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The Gifts of the Spirit

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

This meditation was originally published in this magazine in 2005.

Some time ago, a young woman in our congregation was approached by a group of young people. When asked if she believed in Jesus Christ and had been baptized, she responded yes. Then they wanted to know if it was a real baptism. At first she didn't know what to say to that. She responded that she had been baptized as a child, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They told her that she had just experienced a baptism by water. What she now needed was a baptism by the Holy Spirit, which could be evidenced by the gifts of the Spirit in her life: things like speaking in tongues, or the gifts of prophecy or healing. Here the special gifts of the Spirit were sought as evidence that she was a true Christian. But should we expect this? What is the purpose of the special gifts of the Spirit?

When the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, many different gifts were given to the church. Immediately we read that the brothers were able to speak in tongues so that men from around the world heard them speaking in their own languages. Later we read of other special gifts of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12, for example, it speaks of the Spirit giving people the message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy,

distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and the gift of apostles, prophets, teachers, and workers of miracles. In Romans 12 it talks about some other gifts as well: serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, giving leadership, or showing mercy.

What is the purpose of these gifts? Paul addresses this issue in the letter to the Corinthians. Even though those in Corinth had been blessed with many spiritual gifts, it becomes clear that they did not know how to use those gifts in a proper Christian manner. Some who had received special gifts of the Spirit had become proud and looked down in contempt on those who were not as rich in gifts. The apostle responds by pointing out the true purpose of spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12:7 he says, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

Paul elaborates on this point by comparing the church to a body. The body needs all its different parts to function properly. We couldn't operate if the whole body were an eye or a hand or an ear. In the same way, in the church God has given different gifts so that all the different needs of the church could be met.

Now it should be clear that there is a difference between the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The

fruit of the Spirit is a requirement for everyone who calls himself a Christian. But Christ gives the special gifts of the Spirit to each person individually. We cannot expect others to have the same spiritual gifts that we have. Nor can we say that to be a real Christian a person must have certain spiritual gifts.

In fact, it is questionable whether we should expect some of these gifts to function in the same way in our context as when the gospel was first going out into the world. When the gospel first went out to pagan people, the Lord used signs and wonders to confirm the preaching of the Word (Mark 16:20). In the book of Acts we repeatedly read that the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people (Acts 5:12). The expression "signs and wonders" reminds us of the signs and wonders that God performed when he delivered his people out of Egypt (Acts 7:36). Just as God demonstrated his presence among his people at the beginning of Israel's existence as a nation, so he manifests himself at the beginning of the early Christian church following Pentecost (2 Cor 12:12).

Pentecostal groups who claim that in the established church today the Spirit still manifests himself in gifts of healing, prophecy (as in new revelation), and speaking in tongues do not adequately appreciate the way God has moved forward in the history of salvation. Furthermore, if anyone claims

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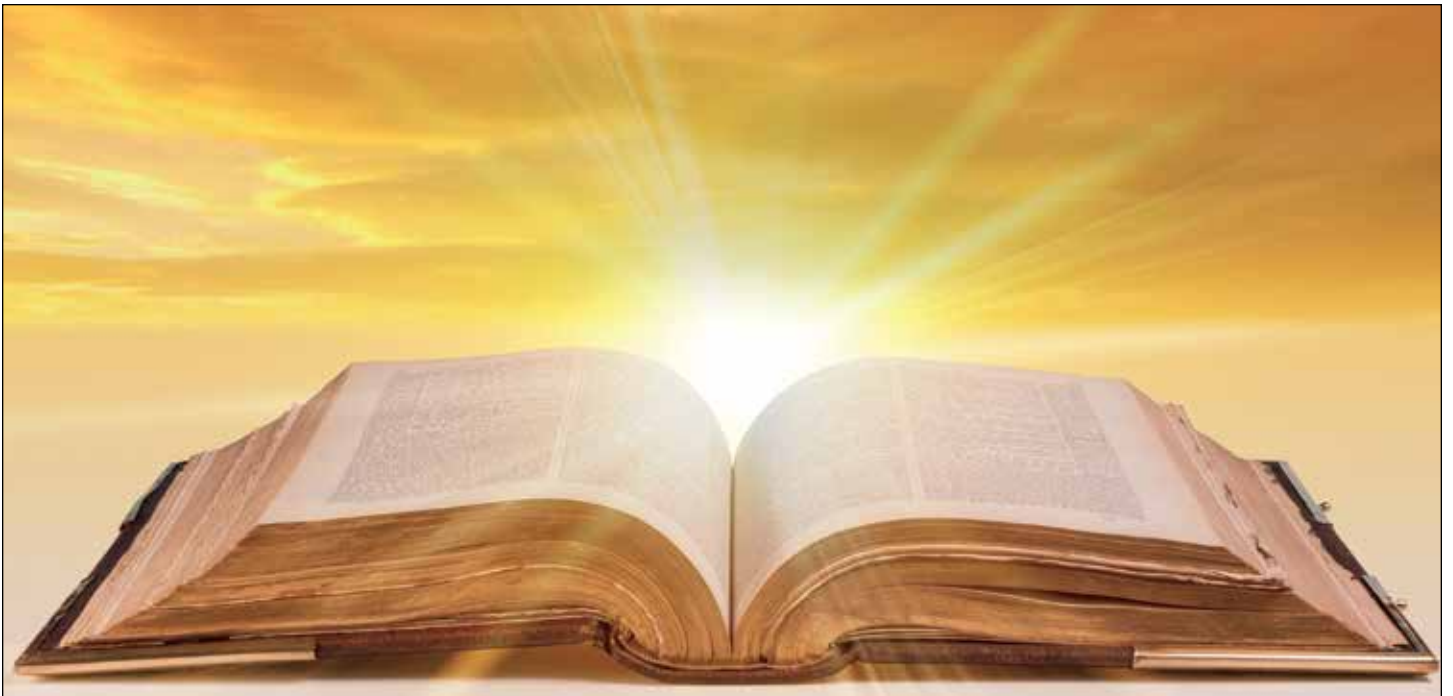
CHURCH NEWS

that these gifts are needed before someone can think of themselves as a true Christian, such a person should not think of himself as bearer of the glad tidings because he undermines the faith of God's children. We can be helped in this regard by Article 29 of the Belgic Confession. There we confess that true Christians are people who believe in Jesus Christ the only Saviour, flee from sin, pursue righteousness, love God and their neighbour, and crucify their flesh and its

works. Pentecostal groups who insist that every Christian needs to have special spiritual gifts stand in the line of the Donatists in the fourth century and the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, who also sought a certain standard of holiness before people could be members of the church. We ought not to go in this direction for then we require more of people than what the Lord requires of us.

Now this does not mean that the congregation is devoid of spiritual gifts.

The Holy Spirit still pours out gifts of wisdom, knowledge, teaching, service, exhortation, comfort, and many other gifts in the congregation. We should take note of these gifts and make use of them so that the body of Christ may be built up. We should demonstrate our love for God and for each other by taking to heart the words of the apostle Peter, "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Pet 4:10).



Sermons: A Listening Guide (3)

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Last time, we looked at some ways in which believers can prepare themselves both physically and spiritually for the hearing of the Word of God in the public worship of the church. We will now go on to consider what happens when you actually arrive at church and the sermon is presented.

Great expectations

When you are about to hear the minister deliver the sermon, it's good to remind yourself that you are about to hear the Word of God. In 1 Thessalonians 2, the apostle gives thanks to God for the Thessalonians because "when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe" (v. 13).

What was true for the Thessalonians is also true for Christians today. When the Spirit-breathed Scriptures are sincerely and accurately proclaimed by a lawfully called and ordained minister of the gospel, then we can say that what we hear is truly the Word of God and not merely the opinions of a human being. We can go to a worship service of a faithful church of Christ with every expectation of hearing the true voice of God and being changed by it.

In Ephesians 2, Paul says to his readers: "He [Christ Jesus] came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near" (v. 17). During his earthly life, the Lord Jesus did not travel to Ephesus. Yet Paul says that Christ came and preached peace to the Ephesians. How did Christ do this? He did it through his representatives on earth, namely Paul and his fellow-workers such as Apollos. As Jesus said: "Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects him who sent me" (Luke 10:16).

Because of the nature of preaching, we ought to bring to the sermon an expectation of a life-changing encounter with the living and active Word of God which is able to work faith and radically transform our lives. When God brings his own Word, what can we do but say with utter sincerity, "Speak Lord, for your servant listens."

Active engagement

Listening to a sermon is not like watching a thriller movie or going to a sports event. In these sorts of human experiences, we can be quite passive. We sit back to be entertained. Not much is required of us and the whole experience is designed to be enjoyable. When you pay serious money for entertainment, it's not supposed to be hard on you. You can be as involved as much or as little as you want to be. Even if you decide to opt out and leave early, nobody really cares.

However, worship is not like that. Worship is based on a relationship in which communication is happening. If somebody opts out of watching the Stanley Cup playoff game, that's fine. In contrast, if somebody unexpectedly opts out of a conversation with you, that is not fine. In fact, it's quite rude and potentially damaging to a relationship. When the one communicating to you is none other than your God and Saviour, it stands to reason that you will give his message your full attention.

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Attentiveness is improved when we are well-rested (see part 2 of this series), when we sit upright and train our eyes on the pulpit. To be sure, there will be distractions in every service, such as the complaints of a small child or the departure of a member to the restroom or a coughing fit or the ring of a cellphone. If we are determined, however, interruptions like these won't throw us off. We'll be able to block them out and remain on track with the sermon. Just like we have to ignore roadside distractions when we are driving, so we can learn to remain concentrated on the message coming from the pulpit.

For many people, staying with the sermon is greatly enhanced by taking some notes. Note-taking is a bit of a lost

art, it seems to me, but those who practice it soon develop some good skills in taking down the main points of a sermon. Some studies suggest that the benefit of taking notes is found primarily in the possibility this practice creates of subsequent review. Note-taking together with a review process results in maximal retention in long-term memory. I know a woman with several shoe-boxes full of sermon notes on five by eight cards. They are carefully organized by their place in the Bible and have proved a treasure trove for personal and group Bible study.

In my own congregation, the pastor recently began providing questions for discussion and review which are sent to the congregation by email on Friday or Saturday. Reading the text and the questions before hearing the sermon promotes curiosity. Having questions answered as one proceeds through a sermon is a satisfying way of interacting with the Word of God. While many members seem to appreciate this new practice, others may find such questions a distraction. What is helpful for one may be a nuisance for others.

When the Word cuts sharply

When we go to church, it's entirely proper that we expect to hear good news of great joy. We may anticipate that Christ will be among us and will minister comfort and encouragement to our souls. However, in order to build us up in the true joy of Christ, the Holy Spirit is always at work to disabuse us of false ideas and to remove from us ways of living which don't reflect the Lordship of Christ.

Instead of leaving us with our false comforts and deceitful thoughts, the Word of God opens us up and judges the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. It lays us bare before God (Hebr 4:12-13). Our entire lifestyle, all of our

**We are a
people under
reconstruction**

choices and habits and even our doctrinal understandings and priorities, are put to the test by the light of Scripture. We should expect sermons to challenge us. At times,

they will make us deeply uncomfortable, so much so that we may feel like rushing out of the service. On occasion, we may even feel insulted by what we are hearing (Luke 11:45). Our pride may be injured and our self-image shattered.

Instead of assuming in such cases that the problem lies with the preacher ("he's always so negative"), we should thank God that he does not leave us as we are but cuts deep-

ly into us with the scalpel of his Word in order to remove whatever sinful thought, word, or deed is infecting our life of faith and hindering our fellowship with him.

We are a people under reconstruction. God is at work to remove what is old and to build up something new in its place. That sort of process is bound to be difficult and painful. Humble listeners will say, "The Bible is right and I am wrong and I need to change my thinking and my life."

Lazy-ear syndrome

In Hebrews 5, what the biblical author writes indicts his readers because they have become "dull of hearing" (v. 11). The word "dull" has the sense of being lazy and passive. Instead of listening energetically, pushing through to new levels of understanding, the Hebrew believers had become complacent. They didn't have a desire for growth in the knowledge of God. The status quo was good enough for them. In short, their ears had become lazy, unwilling to work hard to advance in the knowledge of God. Perhaps they complained about "dull sermons" but in reality the dullness was in their own hearts.

As a result, instead of being ready to teach others the Word of God, these Hebrew Christians were in need of going back to spiritual kindergarten. Instead of advancing, they had regressed and needed to learn again the basic things of the gospel. Addressing this same problem, Paul rebukes the Corinthians with these words: "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not ready, for you are still fleshly" (1 Cor 3:1-3). When babies long for milk, that is wholesome but if we have to rock a fifteen year old to sleep with a bottle, that is a big problem.

Lots of Christians have been in church for a long time but have not matured in their knowledge of the Word of God. They are stuck at the beginning. They are unskilled in the deep truths of the faith. That could be the fault of the church and the preacher but it's just as likely to be a matter of spiritual laziness. Let's recognize that growing in the Word takes hard work. Both minister and congregation need to be trained in godliness and this happens through the Word (2 Tim 3:16-17). Every form of training requires dedication, persistence, and lots of self-discipline. Listening to sermons is hard work but this work has great rewards in terms of love, joy, and peace.

To be continued



Funeral Message for Dr. Jacobus DeJong



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Reading (NIV)

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:10,
Revelation 21:1-5, Deuteronomy 33:24-29

Text: Deuteronomy 33:27a

“The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Marg, Joanna (and Ryan), Dave (and Crystal), Tim (and Biz), Esther (and Greg), Nathan (and Amber), Carina (and Jon), Brendan, Heidi, Taliah, Miriam, Elena, Edie, Gabriel, Callie, and Jack:

Your husband, father, grandfather, Jacobus DeJong was born on August 24, 1949 to Cornelis and Joanna De Jong after his siblings, Clasina, Siebe, and before Sita. In 1978, after studying economics at Simon Fraser University and completing the M.Div., he was ordained to the ministry in London, Ontario, and served thereafter as minister in Burlington, Ontario before being appointed as professor at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton in 1991. It was probably in 1973-4 that I first met him; you see, prior to becoming a student at seminary, he moved to Toronto to study languages and philosophy to meet the entrance requirements; at that time, I was also a university student in Toronto, and also on a pre-seminary track. His brother Siebe and his wife Grace showed up as well, as they moved to Toronto around then. And so we had great times. Heady, late night discussions, solving all the world's problems as only the young can do. . . and delving into some of the deeper philosophical and theological questions, solving all of them as well, as future seminarians thought they could. It was also in those years that I said to Jack one Sunday afternoon, “Hey, I have some great-looking cousins in Oakville. . . let's go out there.” He was eager – he

obviously had the most to gain as they were my *cousins*. Once we ascertained that my old student jalopy was sufficiently roadworthy, there we went down the freeway. Jack met Marg and the rest is history; they were married later by Rev. VanDooren with the rich promises of a similar text from Deuteronomy (31:8), “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.” Here today we have the blessed result with children and grandchildren. They were blessed with seven children, and now eight grandchildren. Jack became not only a family man, but also a churchman, serving where he could, not only the churches in his charge but also the federation through various committees, and his writings in *Clarion*. He laboured also for the unity of the church, wherever he could. When an opening came up at the seminary, Jack accepted for the sake of the church – even though it was not really his field of interest and specialization. When I joined Jack on the faculty of the seminary later and the first signs of his illness showed up, it was hard to know how much of that was the illness; for, you see, Jack did not need a seminary appointment to make him the professorial type. Absent-mindedness came naturally to him. And so, those were difficult times, as not only Jack but also our dear colleague, Niek Gootjes, later showed signs of a similar illness. The hopes and dreams of many of us seemed to go in one direction, but God was leading them in another. . . .

But there is comfort. Jack loved to study, not only in a formal way, by earning a doctorate through the Theological University in Kampen, but he loved to just study the Word. And write about it. His dissertation was called *Accommodatio Dei*: it was about how God accommodates himself to us, using language that human beings can understand. And during his years as a minister and also as a professor, he loved to show that and work



it out for the folks in the pew by writing up many of his meditations in *Clarion*. Dr. Van Dam also did us a service by making many of those available in the book *Treasures New and Old: Exploring the Riches of Scripture* (Premier, 2004).

And so today, I'd like to offer you some comfort as we think along with Jack, in an earlier day, in one of those meditations. It was published in *Clarion* in 1988, and can be found in the book. It was called "Carried Home," about the words of the first part of verse 27 of Deuteronomy 33: "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

As he writes about this, Jack starts off by showing us how God, in this piece of his revelation, used, through Moses, a term that referred to the lairs and the dens of wild animals. "Refuge," "dwelling place" – that's what animals would seek. And that's what God knew his people needed.

He points out how it's striking that *Moses* is God's instrument of this message. The Moses who left the wealth and security of Egypt in order to lead God's "homeless, wandering people through the desert." A homeless man leading a homeless people, depending on God's promise of Leviticus 26:11, "I will put my dwelling place among you. . . ."

There were allusions here to the tabernacle that God had his people make, and to their eventual home in the

promised land. But all the while, the final point is not that tent or that land – both of those were to point to a greater reality. Wrote Jack:

He is pictured as the mighty God who carries His people in His arms. As He makes His way to the dwelling place of His choosing, He moulds and safeguards His people so that they may be grafted and set like jewels into the home of His choosing.

It's an image for God's people to remember as they are about to enter the promised land. So it also becomes an image important for us! Not the land, but God is their real home! As they arrive at their destination, they must see God as their eternal dwelling place. . . .

In those meditations, though, Jack was not content to leave us just at that moment of history. He learned and he taught that the redemptive-historical movement of Scripture had to be portrayed. All of Scripture is pointing to and fulfilled in Christ. Jack was so emphatic on that, that we even quipped yesterday that if he had had a choice as to what day to die on, what day to go home, it would have been that day – between the cross of Golgotha, and the resurrection of Easter Sunday. Well, I have no doubt that God knew that.

And so, also with this passage, Jack writes about how this too is fulfilled in Christ, thinking of the words of John 1, about the Word who "tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth," and Colossians about how "the whole fullness God dwells bodily" (2:9). In Christ, the risen Lord at God's right hand, true God and true man, God has been pleased to make his eternal home! And it's even fulfilled in us! Thinking of 2 Corinthians 6, and how the people of God become the dwelling of God in the Spirit, he writes "So the church may be the temple of the living God, and we, with our life in the body here today, may be temples of the Holy Spirit, God's dwelling place in Christ!" The echoes of Moses' words reverberate through to today.

And even beyond. Because Jack rightly saw this as headed towards the pages of Revelation 21, where God is the eternal dwelling place of his people. Moses in the desert reverberates all the way to John on Patmos. "The eternal God is your dwelling place" becomes "now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. . . ."

Jack wrote:

This song of blessing [of Deut 33] also makes clear where the LORD is going with His church. He is the eternal God, always ahead of His people, breaking



Jack with Rev. Mulder

open a pathway of victory for them. This great drama unfolds in the Revelation of John. God strides in power and might with His people towards the day when He can dwell with man. Thus, even though it appears that the entire creation is loosed from its foundations, the church has nothing to fear. God is in the midst of her (Psalm 46:5). It is His home, His dwelling place. . . . So we can continue our pilgrimage with confidence. He is always ahead of us, the eternal God. He has been sure and steadfast in His purpose! He will carry Jerusalem as a mother carries a child (Isaiah 66:13). Underneath are the arms that encircle and protect us. And He will carry us home!

In this context, Jack did not bring up the imagery of 2 Corinthians 5. There were space limitations on those meditations. But I have no doubt that he would agree that the message of Moses reverberated also to the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5, where Paul writes so poignantly about how “as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord” and that “we. . . would prefer to be away from the body and at *home with the Lord*.” “The eternal God is your dwelling place. . . at home with the Lord.” It speaks delightfully about the extent to which our lives are secure in Christ. I am sure that as family you often wondered, “What is the point of all those years in a nursing home?” And today you wonder: “What is the point of this?” Husbands, fathers, and grandfathers are meant to be a blessing, an encouragement, a help to us. So true.

But is this not where the deepest meaning of our lives is to be found: in the presence of God? That God should be *your* dwelling place all the days of your life? It’s a delightful reality that even those years in Sha-

lom could not deprive Jack of. The promises of God are stronger than the brokenness of this life. It depends not on our striving, our works. The only reason God is a refuge to anyone is because of the bountiful nature of his grace. Our lives are secure in Christ or they are not secure at all. Was God not with him all those years? Is he not with God now? Better to be “at home with the Lord.” God has “carried him home.”

And what we have learned and seen in these years is: It’s not a disease that threatens that. It’s not even death. It’s life. It’s possible for us to be “at home in the body” and yet to be far away from the Lord Jesus. Then we are the ones we should be weeping and praying about, because then God is not our refuge, not our dwelling place. But this is the gospel. Go to him, when you’re weary and burdened, and he will give us rest. He is gentle and humble in heart. His yoke easy, his burden light. In him we receive rest for our souls. God is indeed going somewhere in redemptive history. The best is still to come. Israel wondered about the truth of that as they wandered in the wilderness no doubt. And we wonder today, in our present “wilderness.” But with his people, God is heading towards a place and a day when his dwelling, in every way, will be with his people. In him we are “at home” until the day when he carries us home.

You know, today, even when you get the pleasure and the privilege of travelling to the most wonderful places in the world, there comes a point where it is just good to go home. I am sure the people of Israel felt that as they journeyed through the wilderness – not a wonderful place. I am sure the people of the new covenant often thought that – think of the words of Peter to the people in the dispersion. Think of persecuted Christians. Enough already, we want to go home.

But what makes it really special to go “home” is when there is someone there whom you love, and they love you. A father, a mother. A husband, a wife. That’s what turns a building of bricks and mortar into a home. Well, this is what’s special about going “home home” when our lives are done. People whom we love are there. Jack, your parents, Herman, so many more, too many more. We’re all on the waiting list for that home. But best of all, it is the dwelling place of God. Our Father. It is the place where *Jesus* is in all his fullness today. *Our brother*. That’s what makes it so special. “We. . . would prefer to be away from the body and at *home with the Lord*.” “The eternal God is your dwelling place. . .” “at home with the Lord.”

Amen.

Dr. Jack DeJong (1949 – 2017)



Jack with his oldest daughter Joanna



Jack and Margaret



Jack in his study



Bedtime routines with the family



Theological College, opening of the new library (2001)



Jack with sons Dave and Tim

Dr. Jack DeJong

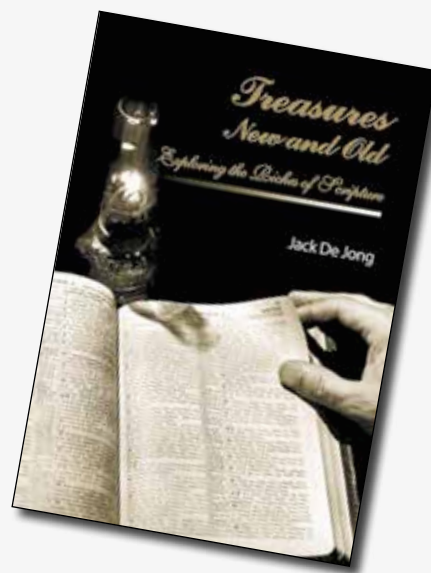
By the grace of God, our brother Dr. Jack DeJong now walks by sight, no longer by faith. We give thanks for the blessings we have received through his service for the churches.

There was a close connection between Premier Printing and Dr. DeJong. In the early 70s, Dr. DeJong was one of a number of young men aspiring to the ministry, a number which also included my father, Bill Gortemaker. Together they enjoyed their studies, debates, and shared love and hope for the church. This connection was not severed when their paths diverged in 1975. It is a source of wonder and comfort to know that they may again share their joy together in so much more fullness.

Perhaps this friendship also prevailed on Dr. DeJong when he agreed to join the editorial committee of *Clarion* magazine, though from his writing it appears it was something he quite enjoyed. He is first listed as an editor in Volume 30, Issue 18, dated September 25, 1981.

Best known among his writings are perhaps his meditations, first published in the *From the Scripture* column, renamed in 1998 to *Treasures New and Old*. These meditations show his love for finding and sharing treasures from the Scripture. They show his conviction that each text reveals God's faithfulness in redemptive history and points to Christ. And they express Dr. DeJong's pastoral concern for the hope and comfort of his readers. We were pleased to publish these wonderful meditations in a book titled *Treasures New and Old*.

Yet these 125 meditations account for less than half of his writing for *Clarion*. Many editorials, articles, Press Reviews, and College Corner reports filled *Clarion* before his declining health put an end also to these contributions with one last editorial in August 2003.



For us this was a sad end to a fruitful partnership of more than twenty-two years. But we especially grieved for his family who slowly lost the beloved husband, father, and grandfather they had known.

In his 1988 meditation on Proverbs 14:13 – “Even in laughter the heart is sad, and the end of joy is grief” – we read the following:

Still today we are called to view life from its end: grief and pain is the end of all earthly joy. All our festivities end with a funeral. But from this perspective we are able to... prepare ourselves for the joy which our Master in heaven already shares today, the joy of which we may have a foretaste in His Word. If we live in patience and persevere... we know that we will soon inherit the “fullness of joy” that Christ shares today. Then we may be among those who through every trial inherit the kingdom. We may be among those who, having sown in tears, may reap with shouts of joy.

To our sister Margaret DeJong and your children and family, our heartfelt condolences. May these words bring comfort as you take refuge in the everlasting arms of the eternal God.

W.J. Gortemaker

Student Profile at CRTS

Gerhard H. Visscher
Principal and professor of
New Testament studies at the
Canadian Reformed Theological
Seminary in Hamilton, Ontario
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Like many other things, seminary enrollment has its ups and downs. Last year, we had eight graduates, this year we have only one. There were others who began study with James but not in the four year Master of Divinity program. In any case, it was great to have James and we do welcome students from many different ecclesiastical backgrounds, especially from our sister federation, the United Reformed Churches in North America. We encourage you to read the words of James. He is candid as always. We wish him and his wife, Hannah, every blessing from the Lord wherever he leads them.

And since you're curious, I can tell you that, while the numbers are not all settled yet, we will have a larger M.Div. class starting in September. May the Lord, through his church and your families, keep sending us godly, promising young men!



James Zekveld

Hi, I am James Zekveld. My wife, Hannah, and I are currently living in Hamilton, where I attend the Canadian Reformed Seminary and she is teaching at Timothy Christian School. We are members at Rehoboth United Reformed Church.

For the great majority of my life I have lived in Toronto. My Dad, Tony Zekveld, is a missionary to that area. He has worked in Rexdale (the most northwestern region of Toronto) for the last twenty years with people of the Sikh religion. Although I was born while my dad was in seminary, the majority of my life has been in the mission context. I grew up singing Punjabi songs almost every Sunday.

I never intended to go to seminary, even though I have always been interested in the Bible, in theology, as well as history and philosophy. Even though seminary was not on my mind, my undergrad was at a school that probably gave

me excellent seminary training: New Saint Andrews. God was preparing me even though I didn't know it.

When I had finished my undergrad, I didn't know what to do. I looked into teaching and I looked into politics. But God slowly led me away from those things. On the third Friday of September 2012, I told God that I would become a minister. Then I told my parents. They were surprised but at the same time happy and supportive.

A question I get a lot is, why did I, a member of the United Reformed Churches, attend the Canadian Reformed Seminary? I was moved by a couple things. I was happy to see that they were serious about languages, especially Hebrew. I had connections to some of the professors through my dad (some had been involved in a Christian-Muslim forum, which largely found its genesis in the work of my dad and a fellow named Tariq Khan). Finally, I was drawn by a desire for the unity of the church. I knew that the link of the United Reformed and Canadian Reformed churches might be strengthened through such an action. I don't know if it actually did, but that is in the Lord's hands.

My time at CRTS has been a huge blessing for me. I was given time to ponder the deep things of God and to study his Word. I am thankful for the professors, particularly my mentor, Dr. Van Raalte, who has, as much as possible, been free for conversation and for questions. I am also thankful for the internships I was able to participate in during my time at the seminary. I was able to spend time with Rev. Bouwers in Jordan Station and Rev. Pols in Edmonton, as well as a short time with Hope Reformed church in Brampton. I had the opportunity to practice the gifts that God has given me in these churches. I am grateful for the words of encouragement I received, both from my pastoral mentors and through individual members of these congregations. God has encouraged me again and again through these words from brothers and sisters in Christ.

I was also blessed in meeting my wife, Hannah, during my time at CRTS. Sometime during my second year, my uncle, who is a pastor in New Westminster B.C., introduced me to Hannah Mallie. We fell in love fairly quickly and during the summer following my second year she said "yes."

We got married the next year and were able to do an internship in Edmonton together, as well as my internship with Hope Reformed in Brampton the following year. Hannah has been a huge support in the last two years. She has been an encouragement during times of questioning and worry. I am happy to say that she is fully willing to go with me and support me wherever the Lord calls.

Two questions people often ask me in part because of my circumstances as the son of a United Reformed missionary who is attending the Canadian Reformed Seminary, are “What type of ministry would you like to be

called to?” and, “Would you be open to taking a call to a Canadian Reformed Church?” To the first question: I am open to ministry in both a church plant and in what is sometimes called “regular ministry,” that is, a church that has been planted for some time. I am also open to missionary work. To the second question: I have pursued ministry in the United Reformed Churches and am excited about working in that federation but if God, through the request of a congregation, calls me to the Canadian Reformed Church, or to another federation, I would prayerfully and honestly consider the request.



Do you remember your baptism?

For you it could have been less than twenty years ago. For some of you it could have been fifty or more years ago. Do you remember when the minister said: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"?

No matter how long ago, you likely do not remember it because you were only a little baby. But let's think on what beautiful things were promised to us when we were baptized by the Holy Spirit.

God said to each one of us: "I will dwell in you and make you a living member of Christ." The Holy Spirit will renew our lives each day. And because Christ died for us, at the end of our lives he will give us an amazing, perfect life, eternally with God! Wow, what a gift this is for us and for all our brothers and sisters in the Lord!!

Pray each day that the Holy Spirit will live in us and cause us to live thankful lives to God's glory.

Today we can talk about what a rich blessing it is that we can celebrate Pentecost together. On Pentecost the Lord Jesus sent his Holy Spirit for the purpose of gathering, defending, and preserving his church. The Holy Spirit was poured out among the disciples and they were able to speak in different tongues and languages. We can be so thankful for this beautiful gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on us that day. What a great God we have that he lives in us, sinful people, and makes us new as his children!

Through the Holy Spirit we can have faith in our Lord and continue to work to be faithful to him and love him. We must go on with the Holy Spirit in our lives, so that we can strive to serve the Lord better in his kingdom.

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

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tom.rachelvis@gmail.com • 905-329-9476

The Holy Spirit. . .

1. Is God
2. Is eternal
3. Is our teacher
4. Is our guide
5. Builds up the body of Christ
6. Accomplishes the unified will of the Father and the Son

Five things the Holy Spirit does for us:

1. He comforts us (John 12:26)
2. He teaches us (John 14:26)
3. He strengthens us (Ephesians 3:16)
4. He prays for us (Romans 8:26)
5. He gives us access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18)

Five divine attributes of the Holy Spirit:

1. He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14)
2. He is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10)
3. He is omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
4. He is omnipotent (Luke 1:35-37)
5. He is holy (Romans 1:4)

June birthdays

- 1 JOAN KOERSELMAN will be 60**
2120-19th Street, Coaldale, AB T1M 1J8
- 20 Lars Huijgen will be 26**
2629 Aspen Drive, Coaldale, AB T1M 0A2
- 26 Devon Niezen will be 17**
454 St George Street E, Fergus, ON N1M 1K8
- 30 Beverly Breukelman will be 55**
2225-19th Street, Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4

Congratulations to all of you celebrating a birthday in June! We all wish you the Lord's blessing in the coming year and a wonderful day with family and friends.



Josiah

2 Kings 22 - 23:30

Josiah became the king of Judah when he was just 8 years old. Josiah loved God and did his best to serve Him. He fixed up God's temple and destroyed many idols. One of the most important things he did was to celebrate the Passover. Before Josiah became king, everyone had stopped celebrating the Passover, even though God had told them that it was important. Even though Josiah did many things that pleased God while he was king, the people were still very wicked. As soon as his son Jehoahaz became king after him they went back to idols and forgot about God.

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



Word Search

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

Eight	Idols	King
Passover	Jehoahaz	Love
God	Josiah	Wicked

Matching:

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

<i>Josiah</i>	Celebrated by Josiah
<i>Jehoahaz</i>	Became king when he was 8
<i>Idols</i>	Fixed up by Josiah
<i>Temple</i>	Josiah's son
<i>Passover</i>	Destroyed by Josiah

by Emily Nijenhuis

Trigger Warnings (not) Wanted

I was surprised to see an article in *Clarion* which promoted trigger warnings for topics covered in church services which might hurt the feelings of some of the listeners. Here follows my attempt to present some of my thoughts on the matter. Perhaps it would be nice to include some trigger warnings, so suffice it to say that though my words may have some ability to shock, they will never achieve the awful power of the words of the prophet Ezekiel, who recorded God's coarse and graphic description of the unfaithfulness of his people (chapters 16, 23; and *he* never gave trigger warnings!). Christ is God, and knew what was in the hearts of men. Yet at the Synagogue of Nazareth he spoke in a manner which "triggered" the assembly to such wrath that they went to cast him down a cliff (Luke 4:16-30). He did not include a trigger warning, though he surely knew what their reaction would be. We would be ignoring God's perfect example if we were to start giving trigger warnings before the preaching of the Word.

Come to think of it, the Bible is full of things that make us wince, sans trigger warning. It records the utter destruction of the world by the flood, incest, rape, imprecatory psalms (Psalm 137), bloody sacrifices, Judas' suicide, the suffering of our Saviour, the deaths of the martyrs. We are not shielded from the harsh realities of life in a sinful world, the curse of death, or the hatred of the world for those who love God.

The world is rated R, and no one is checking ID for us to enter. I don't mean that we should not mourn evil and suffering, and long for the perfection of God's future dwelling on earth with man, when God will wipe every tear from our eyes (Rev 21:4). I do mean that appalling things happen, so we should be prepared to deal with them in the strength given to us by God through the preaching of his Word. Our reaction should be like that of Job, who said amid all his suffering "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!" (Job 19:25-27) The Bible

is abundantly clear about the destructive effects of sin, but also about the only place where we must find healing. Do not hide from harsh realities or pain, but turn to God for healing!

As God's people, we confess his providence, that nothing comes to us by chance, but by God's fatherly hand. God places us in difficult and ugly situations in life in order that we may learn perseverance, rely on God, grow in love for him, and grow in appreciation for his grace. The brokenness of life is as nothing when compared to the great riches we have in Christ. God our Father has promised to avert all evil or turn it to our benefit, so when we receive painful situations, we must trust that a day will come when we will look back and see how our Almighty God turned affliction into life for us (Ps 119:71).

God has given the members of the communion of saints a variety of painful personal struggles. Some struggle with depression, some lose young children or young siblings, some have unbelieving family members. I lost a brother when he was very young. Does this give me a just cause to be angry with God? Similarly, if someone struggles with depression, does that excuse suicidal thoughts or a lack of thankfulness to God? Our situation in life is never, ever an excuse to run from the Word of God. I am weak and sinful too, and I understand that difficulties bring temptation and struggle. But we know that God provides a way of escape for every temptation. That way is not to flee from church, or to ask to hear a "nice" version of the gospel, but to submit our lives to the scrutiny of God's Word, which hurts like sword thrusts (Hebr 4:12). Of course we will feel ashamed when our sins and weaknesses are pointed out to us! Let it not be the shame that comes with the fear of what people think of us, but shame before Holy God who knows all things. If we stay and listen, then we will hear about how God did something that no one would have expected. He became man and suffered alongside us – more than that – *in our place!* Christ is our great high priest, who is like us in every respect, yet without sin. By his wounds we are healed, and that includes healing for mental health issues.

It is precisely because Jesus Christ knows our weaknesses that brothers and sisters who have not experienced the same difficulties as us may rebuke us in love for wrong thinking and wrong actions. The world says, “You don’t know my pain so you can’t speak to my situation.” The Word answers: “Jesus Christ knows all our weaknesses and shortcomings, and his Word reflects that knowledge.” Do you think God didn’t know about depression when he caused things to be written related to suicide which might hurt people struggling with depression? We are to use the Word to build one another up for every good work (2 Tim 3:16). God gave us the communion of saints so that we may care for and lovingly admonish one another, helping each other in our weaknesses and shortcomings. Sometimes that involves standing alongside someone without saying anything, as Job’s friends did at first. Other times that will involve long talks, a hug, or sharing in grief. Sometimes it will involve firm rebukes. Our attitude towards these should be “let a wise man rebuke me – it is a kindness,” and “reprove

a wise man, and he will love you” (Ps 141:5, Prov 9:8). The relationships which grow out of these interactions are one of the various ways in which God turns evil to our benefit.

My brothers and sisters, we must not suppose that the preaching of the Word should be comfortable for us to hear. Instead, we should go to church each Sunday expecting to be cut to the heart because of our sins, to repent, and then to receive healing by the words of our God (Acts 2:37). We need the pure Word of God to be preached, not a version which gives us opportunity to brace a shield of hardness against the strokes of the sword of the Word. It does not need to be softened in any way. God disciplines those he loves, and does this through the preaching of the gospel, which opens and closes the kingdom, pointing us to the Saviour by whose wounds we are healed. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Hebr 12:11).

Sean Stel 

*From time to time Clarion will publish longer responses to articles received.
The decision as to which responses to publish will rest with the Editor.*

