

# Clarion

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

## Roles in submission to Christ



VOLUME 68 • NUMBER 12 • JUNE 14, 2019

***A CALM AND QUIET SOUL  
DRAMA IN REAL LIFE***

# Clarion

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

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

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**L**oving in manner  
**A**ttuned to current issues  
**R**eadable and Reliable  
**I**n Submission to Scripture  
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## What's Inside

We start with "Roles in Marriage and the Church in a Modern Culture," by Rev. Matthew Van Luik. His article looks at how cultural values affect our attitudes regarding roles of men and women within the church and leads the readers through a biblical perspective of God's law for these roles.

In "Drama in Real Life" by Rick Ludwig, he poses the question: "Is there such a thing as a good graveside service? Or a poor one?" Are there words and actions that can either open the way for the gospel to meet grief, as opposed to perhaps even shutting the door to this being a faith-building experience?

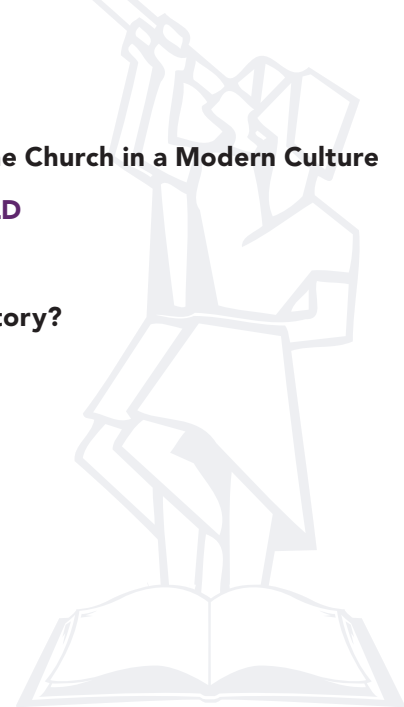
For the past couple of issues, we have been running reader responses to questions of music in the church posed by Rev. Peter Holtvliwer. In this issue you receive the final one: "Music During the Offertory?"

Issue 12 runs regular columns such as Treasures, New & Old, Education Matters, and *Clarion Kids*. There is also a Further Discussion article from Rev. Randall Visscher, a book review, a canticle, and a press release.

Laura Veenendaal

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# Roles in Marriage and the Church in a Modern Culture

*The New Testament church is not to accommodate itself to the culture of the world, but to live according to the norms set out by the will of God*

One of the fundamental social issues today is understanding the proper role in our relationships. In our society there is a breakdown in authoritative structures as well as interpersonal relations. Issues of the day revolve around race relations, questions of gender relations where gender is completely fluid, and trouble in the relations between men and women. Today's hot topic is the #MeToo movement, in which many men are accused of having inappropriate sexual relationships with women. It is ironic that the #MeToo movement is the result of abandoning biblical principles. If men show proper respect for women as commanded by God, there would be no need for such a movement.

These things come to my mind as I think about how relationships have evolved through the history of this world and how these trends in our society impact our relationships within the church. When it comes to race relations, Christians too may struggle with sinful prejudices against people from different races; but I think we all understand that while we may have different cultural backgrounds, yet we all belong to the same human race, since we all have a common ancestor in Adam and Eve. But what about the role of men and women, especially in marriage and in the church? How does the attitude of society affect our attitude to these questions? As Canadian churches we are dealing with this issue in our relationship with our sister churches in The Netherlands, who have decided to open the offices in the church to both male and female members.

## Cultural influences on God's law?

To a large degree, biblical arguments used to justify following the direction our society gives on these questions are based on the premise that God has given his law in an arbitrary way and that God could just as well have given a different law or rule to govern our relationships. If that is indeed true, then one can argue that when God gave his law within the cultural context in which his people were living, his law would have been determined by the cultural climate of the time. Since Israel was a patriarchal society, therefore God's Old Testament law reflected that cultural norm.

It has been argued that in Ancient Rome, men held all positions of power and as heads of their families they virtually had unlimited power over their wives and children. And so, in this culture, you would expect the apostles to command women to submit to their husbands and determine that men should have authority in the church. In this way, God's people are to show respect for the cultural norms of that day.

## Christ's perspective

From a biblical perspective, there is an underlying problem with this argumentation that is clearly exposed in Christ's interaction with the Jews in Matthew 19:3-9. The Pharisees ask if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife. Jesus replies that when a man and woman are married, they should not separate what God has joined together. The Pharisees argue that Moses gave a law that allowed divorce. Jesus replied that Moses permitted it because

of the hardness of their hearts, but it was not so in the beginning. Jesus warns that from now on, divorce is not to be permitted, except in the case of adultery.

The Lord Jesus makes clear the Lord God accommodated this sinful cultural practice in Israel, but this was not the way it was in the beginning. This is not what God intended in the beginning, for when God created man and woman, he joined them together in marriage for their whole life. God's law is not an arbitrary set of rules that can be changed at our whim. Jesus says that while God was accommodating to the situation in Israel, that will no longer be tolerated by the Lord in his New Testament church.

That means that the New Testament church is not to accommodate itself to the culture of the world, but to live according to the norms set out by the will of God. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that it is possible for God's people to resist the cultural norms and to submit to the will of God. It is the Spirit who transforms our lives so that we conform our life more and more to the will of God as God intended it in the beginning.

### **God's law reflects his will from the beginning**

Christ's words remind us that God's law reflects the way in which God created the world in the beginning. In Paradise, there was no need for the law, for mankind understood how God had created all things. Adam and Eve did not need a law to tell them how they should live together in marriage, for their heart was perfect and they understood perfectly how they should live together. But when sin entered into the world, the sinful heart not only destroyed the marriage relationship, but it undermined every other relationship, including relationships between parents and children, and between governing authorities and its citizens.

When God created the world, he brought order into his creation, so that there was perfect harmony in every relationship. This harmony was broken when people rebelled against God's order and everyone desired to do what was right in their own eyes. It all began with rebellion against the authority of God and from there mankind began to rebel against every other authority God has given in the world. Not only does mankind rebel against or resist those in authority, but those who receive authority now also abuse their authority and use it to promote their own sinful desires.

### **Purpose of the law**

Now, the purpose of God's law is to restore the proper order in all human relationships. The law is intended to restore the harmony both with God and in all our human relationships as it was in the beginning. When mankind no longer understands what that harmony looks like, we experience God's curse; but when, through the grace of God, we begin to understand God's will for us, we will begin to experience God's blessing on our lives. Broken relationships lead to death, restored relationships lead to life.

### ***The sinful heart undermines every relationship***

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul deals with the question of men and women showing proper respect in public worship. While there are on-going discussions about the propriety of covering and uncovering one's head during public worship, what is clear from Paul's writing is that there is an order of priority in the relationship between a husband and wife and it begins already in understanding our relationship with God. Paul writes in verse 3, "I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."

### **The order of priority in relationships**

The order of priority is as follows: God the Father, Jesus Christ, the man who is the husband, and the woman who is the wife. Jesus Christ as the Son of God submits himself to the authority of his Father, the husband submits to the authority of Christ, and the wife submits to the authority of her husband. This is not an arbitrary order, but it is the order that God has set out in creation. The Son is the Word of God through whom the whole universe is created, the man is created first, and then the woman. That is the order that God has set in creation.

That is the order against which all mankind has rebelled and from which people want to free themselves. When mankind rebels against the authority of God, not only do they usurp God's authority, but they also abuse the power they claim for themselves. When a husband refuses to submit to Christ, he abuses his authority over his wife and when a wife refuses to submit to her husband, she brings



chaos into their relationship. In our society, we see those with governing authority abuse their power, often to force the people to submit to their own will; we also find citizens who rise up in rebellion against those in authority. When the fine balance God has set out in creation is overturned, it results in uncertainty and chaos and leads to much frustration (Rom 8:20-21).

### Christ restores order

Jesus Christ came to restore that fine balance in creation. It can only be restored through Christ, for Paul writes in Romans 8:5 that those who live according to the flesh, referring to the human desires of the heart, have their minds set on those earthly desires, but those who have their minds set on the Spirit, have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. Paul expands on this in verse 7, arguing that the mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not and it cannot submit to God's law.

### *A renewed heart desires to align itself to God's order*

The heart that has been renewed through the power of Christ not only recognizes God's order for creation, but it also desires to align itself to God's order, because we know and believe that it is good for overcoming the frustrations of this life and experiencing the blessings of God. This will impact our relationships in marriage and in the church. From this perspective, Paul's instructions in Ephesians 5:21ff with regard to marriage become clear. Paul commands wives to submit themselves to their husbands and husbands are to act as the head of their wives. Paul writes that this instruction needs to be understood within our relationship with Christ. As the church submits to Christ, wives also submit to their husbands.

Therefore, as Christ is subject to the Father, so husbands are to be subject to Christ and wives to their husbands. This submission is not forced upon us, but we submit willingly. As Christ loves to do the will of the Father, so husbands want to submit to Christ and wives to their husbands. The relationship that Christ restores never reveals itself in lording over one another, but it must always lead to a harmonious working together in love. A husband who loves his wife does not work against her but works together with her for their mutual well-being.

### GENERAL SYNOD 2019: GKv decision

With sadness the General Synod 2019 of the Canadian Reformed Churches decided unanimously to discontinue the sister church relationship with the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKv) and to implore the CanRCs to remain in prayer for the GKv. May the Lord have mercy on them and on us.

### CALLED

Called by Hamilton Providence, Ontario, Carman (East) Manitoba, and Chilliwack, BC Canadian Reformed Church to serve as minister:

**Dr. Jeff Temple**

### ELIGIBLE FOR CALL

The following candidates have sustained their preparatory exam at Classis Ontario West (Hamilton-Cornerstone), and are declared eligible for call:

**Chauncey Knecht, Eric Onderwater,  
Jeremy Segstro, Mark Ten Haaf**

## CHURCH NEWS

### Proper order in the church

Paul, in 1 Timothy 3, reveals how this has important consequences for leadership in the church. When he writes about qualifications for leaders in the church, marriage becomes a training ground for church leaders. If a man manages his own marriage and family well, that is a good indication that he can also manage the church well, which is the family of God (3:4). The same qualities a husband must display in his marriage and family are the qualities that leaders in the church need.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, Paul does not just indicate that men should give leadership in the church because that was the cultural norm, but because this reveals the pattern that God has set for his creation. It is not that men are better, or higher than women, for all men and women are equal in the eyes of God, but it is that the Lord has given different roles for men and women. These roles are not opposed to one another; they are to complement one another as we work together, not for our selfish desires but for the well-being of one another and for the glory of God.

In this discussion we also need to address the issue of headship (authority) and submission. Too often we fill these concepts with sinful notions of authority and submission and therefore I hope to address this next time.

<sup>1</sup> Paul does not disqualify unmarried men for offices in the church, as that would disqualify himself. For Paul, the advantage of being unmarried is that he was free to totally commit everything in his life to the ministry Christ had given him. The point he makes here is that office bearers must be able to rule well and we judge that by the way a man is to manage his family, which is out of love and genuine care for those God has placed under his care.





# A Calm and Quiet Soul

*"But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me." (Psalm 131:2)*

How do we find rest in such fast-paced, turbulent times as our own? There are just so many things that are beyond our control and it can be hard to cope with everything that is coming at us. What do we do? Where do we turn?

In Psalm 131, David, who faced many and various troubles in his life, goes to the Lord and he humbles himself before him. He knows his limitations and he realizes that there are some things over which he has no control, that there are some things which he simply cannot change no matter how hard he might try. And because he realizes this, he does not try to influence them and does not concern himself with them. For those matters are too great for him and too marvelous. They are beyond his capability and therefore he does not worry about them.

David compares the quiet in his soul with a weaned child with its mother. A weaned child is a child who no longer drinks from his mother's milk. Such a child has now progressed to solid food. As any mother who has nursed will know, the weaning process

is not an easy one. When the mother first denies the child her milk, he is upset and frustrated and really doesn't like it. The struggle continues for some time, until finally the weaned child is able to find rest with his mother. Then he no longer seeks her out for her milk but just to be with her and experience her presence as a comfort in itself.

So it is now with David's soul. David is totally at peace with what God has given him and he does not go to God only in order to get something from him but he enjoys being with God and finds his rest and peace with him.

A weaned child of God is willing to give up what is precious to him in order that he might continue to enjoy the Lord and be in the comfort of his presence. He finds his chief joy and delight in the Lord himself. It is the Lord who is the secret of his contentment and inner peace.

Have you found your peace in the Lord alone? Are you content with what the Lord has given you and do you rejoice that he is your Saviour and that therefore you have nothing to worry about? Is the Lord the chief source of joy in your life?

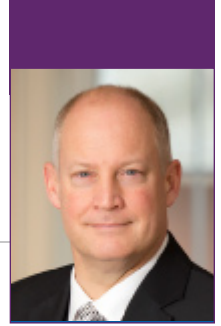
The image of a baby sleeping peacefully with his mother is one of the most amazing pictures there is. When a child is with his mother, then he feels the most secure. Then the child is truly at peace. May we be at peace in this life because of the Lord. We live in a time of much uncertainty and restlessness for many people. There is no peace in this world, but everyone strives after their own affairs and seeks to influence and change matters that are too great for them. So many try to outdo each other in a never-ending conflict for control.

Do not get caught up in such a view of life. Quiet your soul with the comfort of knowing that you belong to Jesus Christ our faithful Saviour. Believe in him and be assured that he has paid for your sins with his precious blood and that there is nothing at all which can separate you from God's love in Christ. Neither death nor economic hardship nor sickness nor wars or earthquakes, nothing at all can threaten the security and peace which we find in the Lord.



## For further study

1. What were the kinds of trials and tribulations David faced in his life?
2. How does knowing that God loves you give you peace during difficult times?
3. How do we know that Jesus Christ fully understands us and identifies with us?



# Drama in Real Life

The view from the lead car in a funeral procession can be quite surreal. The string of high beamed lit cars snaking solemnly along the route to the cemetery bears witness to something significant about to take place. There is a feeling of preoccupation in the moment, imbued with a sense of calm reflection. A time of pondering about what will happen next, what it really all means, what can and should be said about it, and how will it all play out. A quick glance to the passenger seat will snap the funeral director out of any prolonged reverie as some plans need to be finalized before the arrival at the grave site. What does the presiding minister think? What does he have planned to say and do?

I have to admit, there are times we've been caught off guard with the pastor's response. A minister once remarked after a graveside service on the way to a memorial service, "I like the drama of the moment at the cemetery for the family, but beyond that I think it is a waste. As far as I'm concerned, you could cremate the body after that and bury it in a field and save the money for mission work." Gripping the steering wheel a little tighter, I admit I wasn't sure whether to challenge his economics with a reference to Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* or go straight to the more significant matter at hand, the resurrection of the dead!

Another time, as my colleague relayed to me, the pastor proclaimed as they entered the cemetery, "I'm not really sure why I'm here. This is a time for the family. I have nothing to say here. I'll say it at the church service." In other words, this is a time for sentimentality, truth will follow later. Of course, most ministers have given advance thought to what should happen at the cemetery, and readily explain to us what they have planned and in what order they would like to do it. And occasionally an inexperienced minister, looking a bit uneasy, may candidly admit that he is unsure of what is appropriate to say and do. Assuming I've walked this path a few times he'll even venture, "What do you think?"

## Charade or drama?

As funeral directors, we do think about the cemetery service a lot – what makes for a good interment service and what comes up short. What words and actions open the way for gospel to meet grief and what may actually shut the door to this being a powerful, faith-fueling experience. Is there such a thing as a good graveside service? Or a poor one? Sure there is, and everyone knows when it happens one way or the other. There is no place to hide at the graveside! At the heart of it is a genuine reckoning with the *reality* of the burial event. Is it a charade played out for emotional impact and sentimentality, laced with a scriptural tie in to the Easter story? Is it a metaphysical activity or is it a dramatic event? Does the *act* of burying the deceased body of a loved one have intrinsic meaning?

When I was young, I regularly visited a friend who had a *Reader's Digest* subscription. Other than the jokes inside, one of the things that regularly caught my attention was a serial article called "Drama in Real Life." These were true life stories of fantastic events that had taken place; how someone lived for months lost in the frozen tundra, how another person survived a grizzly bear attack, how a refugee escaped his homeland on a raft by crossing an expanse of ocean. The Christian burial service is a drama in real life. It is a story that began with a lost person being found, a sinner destined for death given new life, and ultimately a body that has been destroyed being buried as a seed that is guaranteed to burst forth to new and eternal life. The graveside event does not point to another story ... it is the climax of a very personal story! It is a story that needs to be told so that the present experience is caught up in the promised future reality: where the "already" of salvation embraces the "not yet." The graveside service provides a pinnacle moment of ministry opportunity for the man of God.

## Sacramental and confessional underpinnings

Where to begin? We don't have to search far for the words that not only help tell the story, but also resonate with our hearts and minds as we stare down at the raw earth opened to receive the dead body of our loved one. In my experience, to begin with prayer helps ground us well in the embrace of our Father when we need it most. I recall one pastor opening with the familiar covenant words of the baptismal liturgical prayer, with a slight rephrasing, looking backwards and forwards with thankfulness:

*We thank you that, in your infinite mercy, you graciously looked upon this your child (baptised name added) and incorporated him (her) by your Holy Spirit into your Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she) was buried with him by baptism into death and was raised with him and walked in newness of life.*

*We thank you that he (she), following Jesus Christ day by day, joyfully bore his (her) cross and cleaved to him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love and that he (she), comforted in you, left this life, which is no more than a constant death, and at the last day may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ your Son.*

*All this we pray through him, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who with you and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.*

The Scriptures are filled with the words to bring comfort and the Catechism dutifully provides the helpful contours to guide us in speaking to death's reality, even at the graveside. How did our sin bring us to this place? Who has redeemed us to transform this moment to a victorious one?

## Prayer, Scripture, and song all testify to a faith that sustains us through the heart break of loss

How will we move forward from here? A reckoning with our guilt in sin, God's grace in Jesus Christ, and the purposefulness of a life of gratitude is the bedrock for a well-rounded graveside message. The committal of the body back to the earth is not the final word for the cemetery service, but rather the opening acknowledgement. With our first parents, Adam and Eve, we share in the reality that "we are dust and to dust we shall return." The vestiges of our sin are fully evidenced at the grave. Enter the second Adam, the victor over death, the first born of the dead, the Redeemer, the fulfillment of all God's promises, the great Reconciler, the One who reigns and prepares rooms for us and promis-

es to return. He transforms the bleakest looking moment to the most promising future. He changes the cemetery landscape from a battlefield of defeat to a plain of glory. And all that makes way for a meaningful step forward on the road heading back home with hope. Difficult and low days ahead are now buoyed by a promised eternity of joy and peace with God. A glimpse at a coming kingdom where there is no pain or tears. A vision of the New Jerusalem! And the promised Spirit to carry us through to a guaranteed "happy ever after."

## Musical theatre

And this need not only be recited from Scripture, even better when it is amplified in song. One of my most faith-stirring memories of a graveside service is watching two young boys confidently sing the Apostle's Creed while staring down into a child's grave. Never a doubt in their minds who was in charge of that cemetery! Impending on the horizon was the great day of trumpet sounding, tomb opening, Christ appearing, cloud riding, glorification of all believers, with the dead in Christ leading the way to meet him in the sky! There is no shortage of rich songs to be sung to both preach to ourselves and proclaim to others the victory of Christ Jesus over the grave. Prayer, Scripture, and song all testify to a faith that sustains us through the heart-break of loss as we say good-bye to the real-life presence of our loved ones. This is no charade, but rather, a heart-gripping and intense reality!

## Dramatis personae

The graveside is a place for both gospel drama and personal sentimentality as we necessarily probe the depths of our faith. We need the healing truth of the gospel to bring us our only comfort in the face of the last enemy, death. The stark reality of the burial of a loved one's body nudges each one of us closer to peer at our own mortality. This reality forces us to be aware that we too will have to let go of everything we have and to increasingly make Jesus our everything, as we experience him firmly holding on to us. Standing at the graveside, we suddenly realize we are not merely spectators of an unfolding drama; instead we are the *dramatis personae*, each playing a role in God's great redemption story. There are glorious lines to be spoken and songs to be sung to help break the silence of the graveyard. May we not be shy about reciting and singing what we have spent a lifetime rehearsing, and let's be sure to take our places on cue. And may the preachers be bold to take the lead!







Connect with him on  
Facebook or Twitter (@  
PeterHoltvluwer) where  
he is currently tweeting  
on Christ in the Psalms.

# Music During the Offertory?

Last fall in the editorial “Passionate Singing?”, I asked interested readers to write short answers to several questions relating to musical practices in the Canadian Reformed Churches. It came with the promise to publish the most helpful of them in *Clarion*. Here is the third and final installment, with just one response to print in answer to the question, “During the offertory, would silence be more fitting than music?” Enjoy!

## A Time for Reflection

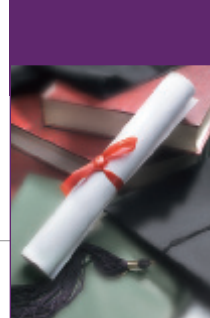
By Martin Jongsma

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I think silence, within our current Canadian Reformed context, could provide a valuable moment for reflecting on the meaning of the offering as an expression of our thank-

fulness for what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. However, the sad reality is that the offering frequently becomes a moment to chat with your neighbour (and usually not about the sermon). On account of this, my preference would be to play an appropriately reflective piece of music (i.e. something that relates to the sermon). I believe that a minister can also help to initiate a proper attitude of reflection by encouraging the congregation to use this time of offering to quietly reflect on the message of the sermon (i.e. when following the B – Order of Worship). Secondly, a conscientious accompanist could then play fitting music (maybe a psalm or hymn selection from that service’s liturgy) in a suitable manner which helps to further integrate the minister’s song selections. Personally, as an organist, I find that playing at a quiet dynamic level helps to foster an atmosphere of reflection.





# Relationships with Indigenous People (Part 2)

Last time we saw how the settlers' and their descendants' sins and presence brought trauma to Indigenous peoples, leaving us with ongoing consequences. Did we have any justification to be here at all? What good works would God have us do today? We seek a Scriptural perspective and conclude with implications for our schools.

## Ownership

Genesis 1, part of God's inspired and true Word, proclaims who made and therefore owns the cosmos: In the beginning, God made everything. As crown of his creation, he also made man, in his image, and gave him a mandate: Be fruitful, fill the earth, and have dominion (Gen 1:1, 26-28; Ps 24, Eph 4:24, Col 3:10). Soon, however, disobedience devastated man's initial righteousness and holiness – resulting in depravity of mind, will, heart, and affections. Everlasting hope remained only for those who were reconciled to God, through Christ (CoD III/IV,1; Gen 6:5, 8:21; Rom 15:9-12; 2 Cor 5:20-21). After the Flood, God's rainbow signified his faithfulness to this promise of hope and restoration. Depravity did not end at that time. Trying to *climb* up to heaven (rather than *look* up to God), and to *pile up* (rather than to *spread out*), people built a tower at Babel. God promptly dispersed them, each in the intended direction (Gen 9:6; 11:8-9). Haudenosaunee were also made in the image of God, equally depraved, and dispersed – but they retained scant memory of this, and hold very different beliefs about the Creator, the cosmos, truth, values, and human nature.

God willed the dispersal from Babel. Scientists disagree how and from where people spread out, and Indigenous people believe they were always here, but the routes, events, and endpoints were never random: "The Most High gives the nations their inheritance; he makes them great and destroys them; he enlarges them and leads them away. . . ." Even the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged this (Dan 4: 17, 25). God does it, sovereignly; it is not for us to question it, or

to either covet or take another's land (Deut 5:21, 19:14, 32:8; 1 Kgs 21; Job 12:23). From the Assyrians to Hitler's Aryans, successive empires existed for God's purposes; he also directed the Haudenosaunee to the south-shores of Lake Ontario, ravaging others as they went. Honouring God, we must disperse, respect others' territory, and acknowledge that God gives it to them, for a time.

## Covenant

At Sinai, God told Israel not to make themselves carved images to bow down to – for Yahweh is "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate him." Subsequent generations must not pay for the sins of the fathers, for God does not punish children for their dad's sins (Deut 24:16; Jer 31:29; Ezek 18). Yet, it is by God's providence that people live when and where they do, and that reality comes with the consequences of prior events and behaviours. Also, people must take care not to walk in their parents' sinful choices or claim them as an excuse.

*It is here that God calls us to serve him and put our trust in him*

When God's covenant people obstinately chose to depart from him, ignoring the prophets without repentance, their personal and communal guilt increased. Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah found themselves in exile because of this, and, rather than blaming their forefathers, they accepted it without claiming personal innocence or distinguishing between covenant breakers and covenant keepers. They rather pleaded on God's mercy and covenant faithfulness to allow a remnant to return (Exod 20:4-5; Ezek 9:7; Neh 1,

9; Jer 29:10; Dan 9). Whether by birth or by naturalization, we are in part what our country stands for and did, and God sovereignly placed us in this situation. It is here that God calls us to serve him and put our trust in him.

Through Jeremiah, God told his people to settle down, and to “seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” This fits with the call to treat strangers as a native (Lev 19:34; Jer 29:7), and it echoes in 1 Timothy 2: “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to

*Our children may receive this place  
with gratitude from the hands of  
our God and should consider it their  
task to honour him in this context*

come to the knowledge of the truth.” Governor Winthrop knew this in 1630; and in 1847, Rev. van Raalte bought land reluctantly ceded (in the 1821 *Treaty of Chicago*) by the Anishinabek Three Fires Confederacy (League of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi First Nations), but at Holland’s twenty-fifth anniversary in 1872, he likewise told his people, “Beloved, who follow us in this inheritance, we give it over to you with joy. But do not forget, we received it from God as a training ground for eternity – a workplace for God’s Kingdom. This shall prosper in your hands provided God and His Kingdom remain your precious portion in life.” To seek God’s kingdom where God places us, as a city on a hill, we should know the people among whom we live, and seek their welfare (Mic 6:8, LD 32:86).

Isaiah 34-35 speaks of God’s wrath on the nations for the cause of Zion and encourages God’s people in the process. Isaiah confirms God’s worldwide sovereignty, but also presents messianic hope, even beyond Israel: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute sing for joy” (35:5-6). Jesus’ parable of the weeds shows that these messages of judgement and of hope must go out to the world: “The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom” (Matt 13:38). Eu-

ropean settlers of all sorts were seen as Christians, but the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples was not conducive to proclaiming the kingdom: The enemy planted weeds, thorns and thistles in our experience, but, because of Christ, we can yet have confidence that the messianic promise holds. God’s work will be accomplished not by might, nor by power, but by his Spirit (Zech 4:6; Acts 2).

## Invasions

European settlement can be described as an invasion, but it is fundamentally different from the just-war invasion of D-Day in 1944, to defeat the German aggressor. Perhaps the former was more like the Angles and Saxons overrunning England, fleeing the invasions of the Huns. Was that justified? Injustices and atrocities committed by invading settlers cannot be justified and remain a challenging burden. At the same time, we realize that it is God who allots people “periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God” (Acts 17:27). Clashes and devices of nations fall under Christ’s power and authority. “He who sits in the heavens laughs” at their scheming, and whatever they plan in their hearts is established by the Lord (Ps 2, Prov 16:9; Matt 28:18-20). Scripture leads us to the divine purpose and sovereign direction and leaves us with our calling to love God and our neighbour, today, with these neighbours, in the big context of Christ’s church gathering work, and of God’s plan to reconcile all things to him.

## Schools

While many seek to build earthly utopias, those who hope in the Lord look beyond. They build on their covenant relationship with the living God, and look up to heaven, where Christ is, and from which the New Jerusalem will come down. Then God will dwell with them, the kings of the earth will bring their splendour, and the leaves of the trees along the river will be for the healing of the nations. This may not satisfy warriors on barricades, or those who hate First Nations, but we accept it by faith, and it motivates us to win our neighbours for Christ (Col 1, Heb 11:13-16; Rev 21, 22; LD 32:86, 44:114,115). ARPA helps us answer some of the big related questions, and to respectfully submit suggestions to governments, which must inevitably address their *Indian Problem* (BC 36). As the Haudenosaunee themselves are also divided, both religiously and politically, we expect that it will be difficult to find a broadly-embraced single solution.



In light of the above, more and refocussed attention for matters Indigenous is good for our schools – even if some may argue that it is overdone, as it would replace other history that defines us as Canadians. This is the history, and these are the roots of this land in which God placed us. Our children may receive this place with grat-

*If it is only the teachers who speak from this perspective, it would accomplish little*

itude from the hands of our God and should consider it their task to honour him in this context. Learning about and understanding it and its peoples is an important component of being effective in that task. There should also be no condoning of what was wrong. Therefore, teachers need to be knowledgeable, first about local Indigenous histories, and, as they teach older students, also with big-

ger picture patterns and the complex realities of post-colonialism – along with consideration for building relationships, and critically evaluating proposals and opinions from a distinctly Christian perspective. The big question remains how we equip our children with a mindset that seeks the welfare of (all!) those around us, so as to win them for Christ. This is at odds with some attitudes among us, and we need to have a conversation here: If it is only the teachers who speak from this perspective, it would accomplish little.

In the end, praise must be given to our faithful covenant God, who, for the sake of Christ and his elect, will bring the New Jerusalem down from heaven. Then, two rows, neither Dutch nor Mohawk, but sheep and goats, will diverge: The redeemed sheep will go to the right, and the lost goats to the left (Matt 25:31-46). Pray for wisdom and courage for all who must work with the challenges. Let us pray for God's mercy, mindful of Micah 7:18-20 and seeking to walk in the good works he prepared for us (Eph 2:10).

C





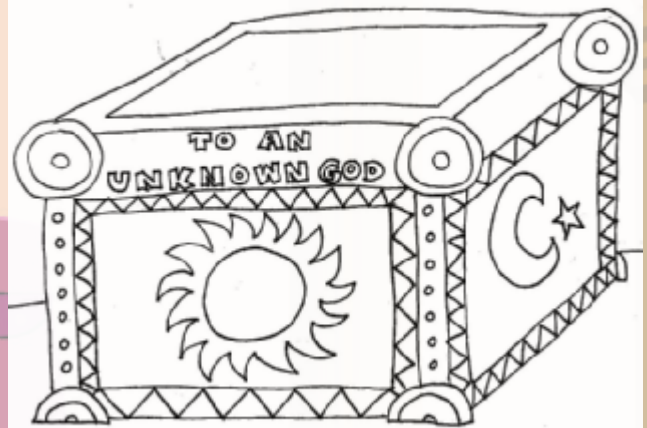
# Clarion Kids

## To an unknown God

### Acts 17:16-34

One of the cities that Paul visited in his travels was Athens in Greece. While he was there, he noticed that there were altars all over the city. He even saw one that said "To an unknown god" on it. Paul used the opportunity to tell the people of Athens about the one true God. He told them about how God had created the whole world from nothing. He told them about how God wanted them to repent from their sins, and about the resurrection. Some of the people who heard him made fun of him, but some others believed. A man named Dionysius and a woman named Damaris were two of the new believers that day.

Go to [www.clarionmagazine.ca](http://www.clarionmagazine.ca) to print and colour this picture!

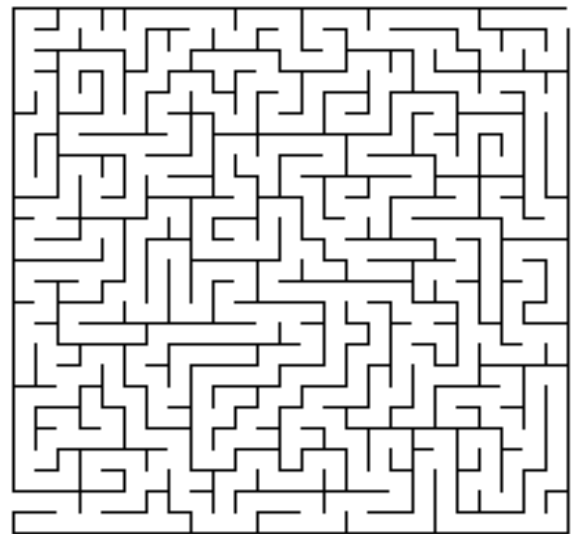


#### Word Search

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

Altars	Athens	Believers
Created	Damaris	Dionysius
Greece	Repent	Unknown

**Maze:** Help Paul navigate through the city of Athens!



by Emily Nijenhuis



# I Believe in Jesus Christ

*I believe in Jesus Christ*

1. I be - lieve in Je - sus Christ, God's own Son in whom I trust.  
 2. Those who look to self or saints won't be freed from sin's re - straints.  
 3. He is al - so called "the Christ" for he is our great High Priest.  
 4. Christ is our e - ter - nal King who rules o - ver eve - ry - thing.  
 5. Christ our Proph - et does re - veal God's own coun - sel and his will.

He saves us from all our sins, life and well - ness from him springs.  
 Though they boast of him in words they, in fact, de - ny the Lord.  
 > He died on the curs - ed tree to re - deem and set us free.  
 By his Spir - it and his Word he di - rects us as our Lord.  
 He's the one from whom we learn what his sav - ing death did earn.

He's our Sav - iour, he a - lone, for in him God's grace is shown.  
 Place your faith in him a - lone. For our sins he did a - tone.  
 > Now for us he in - ter - cedes with the Fa - ther for our needs.  
 Our re - demp - tion is se - cure. He pre - serves us ev - er - more.  
 Je - sus Christ, the Son of God! We will praise his Name a - broad.

Text: QA 29-32, Heidelberg Catechism (Art 2a, Apostles' Creed,) vers. George van Popta, 2019  
 Tune: Richard Redhead, 1853

77 77 77  
 REDHEAD/AJALON



## FURTHER DISCUSSION

### Dear Editor,

I was pleased to see that the *Clarion* has published an entire issue dedicated to the topic of music within the Canadian Reformed churches, as this seems to be quite the hot topic in our federation as a whole lately. However, I was rather disappointed to find that, before we have even had a proper article from the *Clarion* introducing the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* and congratulating our URC and OPC brethren for their work on a new songbook, we have an article written by Rev. H. Holtvlüwer which is clearly aimed at discouraging its adoption in the Canadian Reformed Churches. It hardly seems fair to indirectly knock down the idea of adopting the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* without properly introducing this songbook to the majority of the readership.

While I recognize that there are difficulties in having a large selection of songs to choose from every Lord's Day, I believe Rev. Holtvlüwer's article overstates these difficulties to a significant degree, particularly with regard to adding the songs of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*. Since this is the only large collection of songs which is under serious consideration for adoption at this time, I think it's appropriate to consider whether his concerns are relevant with regard to this particular songbook.

First, I would argue that the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* (henceforth *TPH*) gives us an opportunity to become more familiar with the Psalms, not less. The reason for this is that it would provide us with alternate tunes for many of the Psalms and most of these tunes are written in a manner which is more familiar to the modern ear. The *TPH* contains 238 metrical psalms (due to variations on the 150 Psalms), twenty-five of which use Genevan tunes. By using this songbook, we would not only be adopting hymns, but also additional variations on the Psalms, which would allow us to better know the inspired words of God.

We currently have one tune for Psalm 23. With the *TPH*, we would gain three alternative tunes to help us sing and appreciate this Psalm. Other psalms might not offer quite this much variety, but I believe we would gain at least one alternative tune for every one of the 150 Psalms. That is an opportunity to gain an even richer appreciation for the Psalms and the role they can have in our worship services!

It is true that the overall balance of psalms and hymns would shift, for we would then have roughly 363 metrical

versions of the psalms (I am excluding twenty-five Genevan psalms that are found in both the *TPH* and the *Book of Praise*) and roughly 485 hymns. But the number of psalms versus hymns is not what guards the primacy of the psalms. What guards this principal is the crafting of liturgies by ministers, who believe the primacy of the psalms is important and craft their liturgies accordingly.

If we truly want the Psalms to be sung, we should embrace the opportunity to gain variations on the Psalms, many of which are far easier to sing than the ones we currently possess in the *Book of Praise*. I understand that others may think a better solution is to simply replace or improve the tunes we already have for the 150 Psalms, but, realistically, that is far more difficult than it may sound. I say this with some certainty because we have discussed the idea of having different tunes for the psalms at the level of General Synod since the 1950s,<sup>1</sup> and we have never made any significant headway in this matter. To ignore the opportunity we have in front of us to gain new tunes in favour of a hypothetical option which has never been seriously pursued after all this time would be tragic. Our sister churches have already done the legwork in collecting the best versions of the psalms that they could find. Why not simply add what they have judged most suitable for worship to our own psalm collection?

Second, I find it curious that Rev. Holtvlüwer mentions being hampered in worship by an inability to sing the songs in various other federations but does not mention the fact that adopting the *TPH* would go a significant distance in addressing that very issue. Would it not be a huge blessing to have a song book available in our churches which would enable members to visit hundreds of URC and OPC churches across North America and feel at home in their worship services? I understand that not every URC or OPC church is using the *TPH*, but most of the psalms and hymns which they treasure are present in this song book. According to the editors, ninety percent of the hymns of the *TPH* were drawn from the best hymns used in the earlier hymnals from these two sister federations.

Third, we should note that the *TPH* is not exactly filled with contemporary songs and so we should not worry that this specific song book would lead to the creation of contemporary versus traditional worship services. It does contain some more recent selections, but the majority of the songs have been in use for more than 100 years. Nothing



in these songs would demand a new liturgical style or the division of worship services.

I also doubt they would bring about a true generational divide. When older members have an interest in learning new songs, they can pick them up just as quickly as the younger members. The Canadian Reformed Church has adopted twenty new hymns in recent years and the senior members in my congregation are just as skilled in singing them as the younger members (if not better!). Local choirs are filled with members of the “older generation” who have proven time and time again that they are capable of mastering new pieces of music if they have a reason to do so.

In addition, what I have seen at weddings, funerals, and school assemblies is that many of the hymns which are being chosen for these events are found in the *TPH*. *Amazing Grace*, *In Christ Alone*, *Be Thou My Vision* – we already recognize the beauty and truth these songs convey. The songs we sing in many of our Christmas programs or after our Christmas worship services are already present in the *TPH* as well. There are hundreds of songs in the *TPH*, but many are already familiar and many of the others are extremely easy to pick up.

Fourth, simply because we might have access to 800+ songs does not mean we have to sing them all with equal frequency or gusto or skill. Pastors will have the ability to expose their congregations slowly and thoughtfully to the riches of this additional songbook without overwhelming them or splitting the congregations. In adopting the *TPH*, we would not be required to overwhelm our congregations all at once with unfamiliar songs or tunes.

Yes, adopting a collection of songs as large as the *TPH* would come with challenges. Some songs would be rarely sung. We might not get to learn some of the songs for years. But is that really such a concern? We would be gaining numerous songs already sung by thousands of brothers and sisters in Christ! I’m willing to have a few extra songs present in the churches that we rarely sing, simply for the sake of that unity, never mind the benefits we will reap in our federation by having access in our worship services to many of the best psalms and hymns which have ever been written.

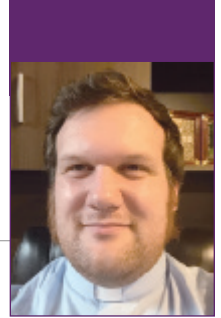
Randall Visscher  
Grand Valley, Ontario

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acts 1958, Art 172 1; Acts 1962, English Art 21. p. 26; Acts 1965, English Art 3. p. 70







Under the supervision of the  
Redeemer Canadian Reformed Church  
at Winnipeg, MB

# Grace Worth Fighting For:

## *Recapturing the vision of God's Grace in the Canons of Dort*

by Daniel R. Hyde

**Paperback: 437 pages**

**Publisher: The Davenant Press**

On the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dort, Rev. Daniel Hyde wants to remind us again of the importance of Dort to the whole church. So what makes Rev. Hyde's book special among all the literature on Dort? Rev. Hyde wants to demonstrate the catholicity of Dort. He desires to prove Dort's continuity with the 1500 years of Christians doctrine before it. This catholicity not only affirms the historic doctrine of the church of Christ, but also seeks a consensus on the various ways in which the Reformed had interpreted that tradition up to this point. The men of Dort wanted to be guided by Scripture and so were careful not to condemn theological systems that sought to affirm the primacy of the grace of God in his electing purpose. Rev. Hyde has written this book so his contemporaries can recover the catholic vision exemplified in the Canons.

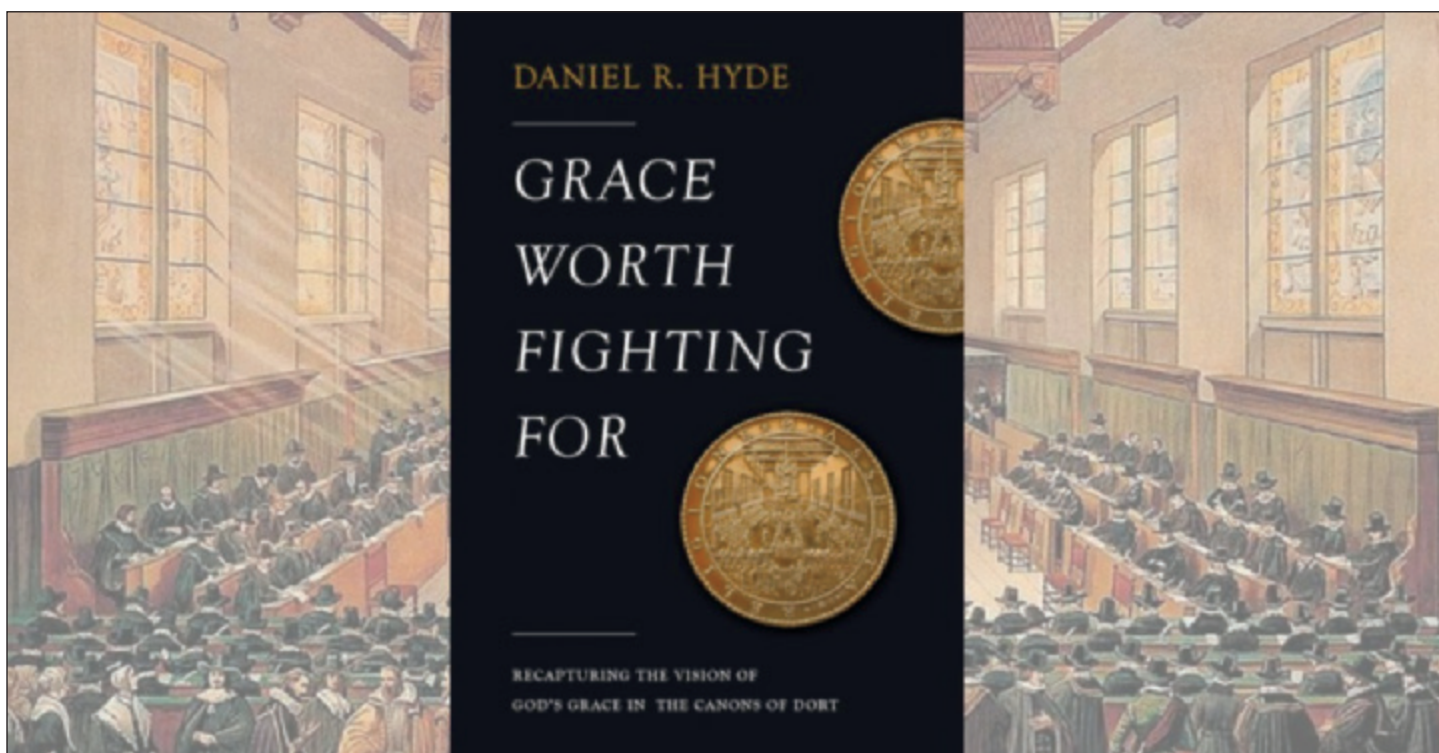
Rev. Hyde wants to do this in an accessible way so that the regular pastor and layman can have better access to the theology of the Synod. He succeeds. The book is easy to read and well laid out. He explains the significant points of the Canons well along with historical awareness. Somebody who wants to begin studies in the Canons of Dort would have a hard time finding a better resource for understanding the theology that produced the language of the Canons.

Hyde frames his work within recent scholarship recovering the depth and breadth of Reformed theology in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, particularly Muller's work on the Reformed Scholastics. Muller has rehabilitated the theology of the Reformed Scholastics, demonstrating their continuity with the first reformers; Luther, Calvin, Bucer, and others. He has also reminded us once again of the diversity of thought among the Reformed. It is wonderful to see these insights integrated into an accessible explanation of the Canons. They flesh out the picture of what was going on at Dort for us.

The recent scholarship of Michael Lynch on the British Delegation to Dort also brings a unique perspective to the book. There is sometimes a tendency to devalue or ignore the contributions of the British Delegation. Though some of their views were in the minority, they had an important voice in shaping the Canons and in providing a moderating voice between different factions. Notably, the wisdom and erudition of the British delegate John Davenant played a role. There was also politics involved. James I was an essential ally against The Netherland's primary enemy at the time: Spain.

Rev. Hyde is at his best when he brings out the importance of the catholicity of this synod. He argues that the way the Remonstrants framed the doctrine of predestination completely undermined the historic doctrines concerning Christ and his works. As Turretin likes to note, it was the Remonstrants who were the innovators, meaning that it was the Remonstrants were departing from and undermining the historic doctrines of the church. Hyde draws parallels between the work of the Synod of Dort and the Councils of Orange and Carthage, along with numerous references to the Church Fathers and Medievals. This historical background is part of the catholicity of the Synod. It desired to preserve what had always been taught by the church of Christ.

There was another aspect to this catholicity. The Synod's catholicity was revealed in their attempts to affirm the theologies of the various Reformed traditions so long as they attempted to grapple with the truth of an election based on God's good pleasure. Even though there were deep tensions in the Synod of Dort, the Synod ended with a document that could be affirmed by the diverse group of delegates. Hyde's attitude channels the final fraternal Spirit of the Synod, even if the process may not have been so "catholic." We can see this in his generosity to the Lutherans in his discussion on the Perseverance of the Saints.



In this desire to emphasize catholicity perhaps he does miss a couple of things. One is the role of the civil government in pushing these men to a consensus. It is a real question whether the Synod would have held together without the push from James I and Prince Maurice. What is the significance of the interference of the civil government to the catholicity of the Synod? Another discussion that is missed is the reception of the Canons in the countries from which the delegates came. Hyde does mention that the Dutch and the French received it as a standard, meaning that they bound their ministers to this standard. I was left wondering about the reception in Germany, Switzerland, and England and how that affects the enduring catholicity of the document. These are not major critiques, but some interaction with these realities would have added an important perspective.

The book left me wanting more (something that a good book does). I was curious to learn more about the particu-

lar theologies of the German delegates. How did the French church and the Swiss church interact with the Canons? What were the particular differences between the delegates on the perseverance of the saints? What about church order? Were there conversations on that? What other peripheral issues were discussed? Of course, a popular treatment will not deal with all these questions, but I hope that this work will prompt others to dig into this synod that is unique in the history of the Reformed churches.

I have high praise for this book. It challenges both pastor and laymen to stand firm against those who militate against the doctrines of grace. It should incite in all Christians a doxology to the “depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!” This is the God who saves. At the same time, it should give the pastor and laymen humility as the church seeks to find the best way to express the mysteries of God’s grace.



## Press Release Classis Manitoba held on April 12, 2019

On behalf of the Redeemer Canadian Reformed Church at Winnipeg, Rev. Joe Poppe opened the meeting by requesting we sing from Psalm 19:1, 3, and read Psalm 19. As memorabilia the following were mentioned: Sunday worship services were established at the Westman church plant at Rivers, near Brandon; the ongoing vacancy in Carman East, and the fact that Carman West has established a calling committee to call a second minister; God has blessed Rev. & sr. James and Hannah Zekveld with a son, Victor, and Rev. & sr. Steve and Cecilia Vandeveld with a daughter, Abigail. Rev. Poppe led in opening prayer, asking for God's blessing over the meeting.

Credentials were received from all the churches and examined. The churches were all properly represented. Classis was constituted. Executive officers were appointed: Rev. Rick Vanderhorst as president, Rev. Joe Poppe as vice-president, and Elder Larry Hillmer as clerk. The president, Rev. Vanderhorst, thanked the convening church for organizing and hosting Classis. He welcomed brothers Jacob Kuik and Peter Veenendaal as Deputies for Neighbouring Classis and Presbyteries. He also welcomed brothers Bert Vane and Kevin van Delden as representatives from the Aldergrove Mission Board. The agenda was adopted. The brothers from the Mission Board gave an update on the ongoing mission work in Brazil, and the delegates at Classis asked various questions. Dr. Andrew Pol led in intercessory prayer for the work in Brazil.

The treasurer for Classis Manitoba, sister Wilma Bergsma, submitted her report and suggested an assessment of \$10 per communicant member for 2019. Classis adopted her recommendation. Reports are also received from Carman West regarding the inspection of the books of the treasurer; from Redeemer regarding the inspection of the classis archives; and the deputy for contact with the provincial government. These are received with thanksgiving.

A church visitation reports to the church of Denver for 2018, and to the churches of Carman East, Carman West, Winnipeg Grace, and Winnipeg Redeemer for 2019 were read. These were received with thanksgiving. After each report, one of the delegates gave thanks and laid the needs of each church before the throne of God.

A letter was received from Rev. Ralph Pontier on behalf of Classis Central of the URCNA passing on fraternal greetings.

The chairman asked the questions according to Article 44 of the Church Order. Each of the churches indicated that the ministry of the office-bearers was being continued, and the decisions of the major assemblies were being honoured. The church at Carman East requested advice in a matter of discipline, and concurring advice was given.

There was one instruction from the church at Denver. Colorado is home to three United Reformed Churches. These churches are within a one to two-hour drive of the Denver church. Denver has commenced with pulpit exchanges with one of these churches and reached out to another. Thus, the church of Denver requests that for future meetings Classis Manitoba extends an invitation to Classis South West URCNA to send a fraternal delegate to attend Classis Manitoba. This would allow Classis Manitoba to also interact with these neighbouring URC churches as we do with URC churches near Manitoba. Since the majority of the churches in Classis South West URCNA are from California, the church of Denver is encouraged to further the contact with their neighbouring churches, but Classis decides not to accede to their request to invite their fraternal delegates to our classis meetings.

An appeal from a member of Carman West against the consistory of Carman West was dealt with in closed session with the delegates from Carman West absenting themselves from the meeting. This matter was remembered in intercessory prayer. A letter of response will be sent.

Carman East is appointed the convening church for the next classis. It will be convened, the Lord willing, on June 21, 2019 (if necessary), or else on September 27, 2019. The suggested president for the next classis is Rev. Steve Vandeveld.

During personal question period, a question was asked whether the churches would be willing to support an occasional pulpit exchange with churches in neighbouring classes and presbyteries. Approval was given. Brotherly censure was not necessary, the press release was approved, and the acts adopted. Rev. Vanderhorst closed in prayer.

*Clerk at the time, Rev. Joe Poppe* 