Clarion

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Denver Family Camp

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SALT AS A SYMBOL OF THE COVENANT

MUST WE EVANGELIZE?

Clarion

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Issue 18 leads with "Sacrificial Salt." Dr. Cornelis Van Dam takes a look at the Old Testament covenant of salt, what Jesus taught about sacrificial salt, and the sacrificial service in the life of a Christian. I should also mention that this is Dr. Van Dam's final article as editor, as he is retiring from the *Clarion* team. We are very thankful for his contributions over so many years as editor!

We bring readers an article from reformation21.org, "Evangelical Evolution?" by Rev. Richard Phillips. There is also the second part of a series from Martin Jongsma, "Simply Singable: The *Anglo Genevan Psalter* Reconsidered."

Denver reports on their annual Family Camp; we include regular columns Treasures, New & Old, Education Matters, You Asked, and *Clarion* Kids; in addition, there is a letter to the editor, a Canticle, and a book review.

Laura Veenendaal

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Sacrificial Salt

Salt became a symbol of the covenant

As Christians we meet challenges and trials on an ongoing basis, whether in our personal lives or within the context of the secular society in which we live and function. In all of this we strive, as the apostolic word puts it, to present ourselves "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1). It may be helpful to consider this holy desire to offer our entire being as a sacrifice and thank offering to God within the larger biblical context of the sacrificial service.

Covenant of salt

It is an interesting fact that for any Old Testament sacrifice to be acceptable to God, it had to be salted. The priests had to sprinkle salt on the whole burnt offering (Ezek 43:24); the grain offerings had to be seasoned with salt (Lev 2:13); and a critical component of the incense offering was salt (Exod 30:35). Not surprisingly, salt came to have a very important place in ancient Israel. When the temple was rebuilt after the Babylonian exile, it had a special room just for the salt.

Since salt was required for every offering, it became a symbol of the covenant. Indeed, God's covenant was known as a "covenant of salt" (Num 18:19). This is an enduring covenant, a fact dramatically illustrated after Israel split into two warring kingdoms after Solomon's death. At one point, King Jeroboam I of Israel and King Abijah of Judah faced each other with their armies on the battlefield. Then Abijah stood on a mountain and dramatically addressed Jeroboam and his men, pointing out that the Davidic kingship was the only legitimate one. He started by saying: "Jeroboam and all Israel, listen to me! Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?" (2 Chron 13:4b, 5). The "covenant of salt" is clearly an everlasting covenant. Yes, for salt makes sacrifices acceptable to God. Salt is integral and necessary in the preparation and maintenance of the covenant relationship.

But what does all this have to do with our life today? The Old Testament sacrificial service is over, fulfilled in Christ. Indeed, we may praise God for that! But there is more.

Christ's teaching of sacrificial salt

When our Saviour spoke of his suffering and sacrificial death, he taught his disciples that also their lives would involve suffering and be a sacrifice to be prepared for God. And if their lives were to be acceptable to God, their life – their sacrifice – would have to be salted! This is painful! Christ even told his disciples that if their hand or foot causes them to sin, cut them off; if their eye would cause them to sin, pluck it out! It's better to enter eternal life maimed and with only one eye than to be thrown into hell (Mark 9:45-47). In other words, if there is anything in the life of a Christian which hinders one from being prepared for God as a sacrifice pleasing to him, then whatever it is, even if it is part of oneself, it must be done away with, as decisively and promptly as a surgeon can cut away a leg or eye if necessary! And then Christ added: "Everyone will be salted with fire" (Mark 9:49). This is a clear reference to the fact that all sacrifices, also a sacrificial life to God, needs to be salted in order to be acceptable to God. Indeed, some ancient manuscripts of Mark 9:49 add to Christ's words: "And every sacrifice will be salted with salt."

Mark was originally written for the Christians at Rome. They knew what it meant to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which was their spiritual service (Rom 12:1). How these Christians literally experienced that when emperor Nero unleashed fiery trials over them; many lost their lives because they were Christians. Sacrifice implies death, and many Christians today still give the ultimate sacrifice for their faith. In our case, the death in view is especially that of the old nature, of cutting of the hands and poking out the eyes of the sinful self so that we can be acceptable to God.

But who is able to so salt their life with such a relentless putting down and killing of the old nature? No one. And, therefore, notice the passive: "Everyone will be salted" (Mark 9:49). God does it. This is a word of grace. But the divine salting of our lives can be very painful. It is a salting with fire. Fire purges, cleanses, and purifies (cf. 1 Pet 1:7). So, our heavenly Father prepares, yes salts Christians, so they can be sacrifices which are acceptable to him. No one is exempt from this salting and painful work of God. "Everyone will be salted with fire." The one person has this grief or struggle in life, the other has something else. In the life of every Christian there are real difficulties. It is God salting us to prepare us as his holy sacrifice. As fire purges, so God's salting activity also does. God can clear away, for example, the underbrush of sin or an overemphasis on the concerns of the present moment by preparing us to be a sacrifice pleasing to him. And as God works with us as his children, he makes us realize that it is not the fire of judgment, but of purification and testing that enters our life in order to draw us closer to himself and partake of his salvation. As God engages in his purifying work of salting with fire, he makes us realize it is all for our life preservation.

This salting process of our lives is to be sure a miracle. Sacrifices were meant for death. But God means it all for life! The fire of his salting is not to kill, but to preserve. Salted with fire! When we present ourselves as a sacrifice to God, a sacrifice of thankfulness to give our lives for his service, then God salts us, as all his covenant sacrifices must be salted. He salts with fire for life preservation.

We live in a corrosive, sinful, civic culture where decay comes very easily. The rot of sin is in the air. Indeed, our society defends and exalts sin. Who could survive in this world without God graciously salting us? Praise be to him for his covenant of salt! In the midst of a world going through death travail, he salts us with fire for life preservation. Yes, it's for life, for Christ has come in our place to be the sacrifice prepared for eternal death. He died that we may live. Because of that reality, we may rejoice and know that as believers in Christ and his sacrifice, we are being prepared for eternal life.

Our sacrificial service

And so, it is with great gratitude that we thank God for Christ offering himself in our place, and we let our heavenly Father prepare us to be living sacrifices pleasing to him. We let him work in our lives and direct us through all the ups and downs, even if it causes pain, hard decisions, saying no to our sinful selves, and mortifying the old nature. There is a hurt in being a Christian with the unceasing struggle against sin and the unbelieving spirits of this age. But in the process, the Lord prepares us as sacrifices pleasing to him, salting us as necessary with fire. In this way, we are enabled, as the apostle Peter put it, to offer up "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5), sacrifices based on the old covenant of salt.

In the old dispensation, there were three basic offerings that needed to be salted. These old sacrifices have been fulfilled in Christ, but they also still speak to us today, for by God's grace they can find fulfilment in our lives as well through Christ who enables us.

The incense sacrifice spoke of the prayers ascending to God's throne. "Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Ps 141:2). As the incense offerings were seasoned with salt, so our prayers rise up to the throne of Almighty God as our incense offering. As the author of Hebrews 13:15 puts it: "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise–the fruit of lips that confess his name." And our God savours the fragrance of our thanksgiving and joy. He likes the smell, for this incense is the result of his seasoning!

And then there were the grain or cereal offerings. Like cereal offerings, we offer gifts to God, the gifts of a happy Christian life in which God can recognize his seasoning salt!

Last but not least is the whole burnt offering. In line with the whole burnt offerings of the Old Testament, we place ourselves completely on the altar of thanksgiving. We know it will hurt, for fire is involved, but it is not for death, but for life! For our bodies are to be "living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God" (Rom 12:1). It is not for sorrow, but for jubilation and thanksgiving. With the psalmist, we can affirm:

> *I must perform to you, O God, my vow.*
> *Before your throne with grateful gifts I bow;*
> *thankofferings I will bring before you now,*
> *for you from death have saved me;*
> *yes, in the book of life you have engraved me.*
> *You have upheld me, foes could not enslave me,*
> *so that I in the light of life you gave me*
> *may walk before you now.*
>
> (Ps 56:5, *Book of Praise*)

C

MATTHEW 13:52

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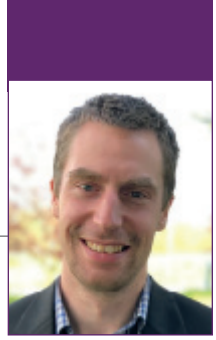

Wisdom is a Tree of Life

"She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed." **(Proverbs 3:18)**

In Proverbs 3 you can find some beautiful descriptions of wisdom, but maybe none quite so beautiful as verse 18, where wisdom is described as "a tree of life." The tree of life only comes up at the beginning of Genesis and the end of Revelation. Genesis 3:22 mentions that if Adam and Eve would eat of the tree of life, they would live forever. Revelation 22:2 mentions that the leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations. The tree of life gives life. It makes the eater of its fruit incorruptible and immortal. For the reader of the Bible, it seems like no one will be able to access the tree of life until the new heavens and the new earth.

However, Solomon says that wisdom is a tree of life. In other words, wisdom opens up access to the tree of life now already. When you get wisdom, she provides healing for you, she makes you live forever.

What is this life-giving wisdom? Wisdom, if you look through the rest of Proverbs, is knowing the right or wrong action in a given situation, and actually doing the right and rejecting the wrong. Wisdom is to weigh the complexities of this broken life and make a decision for what is best.

To say that wisdom helps you to live forever, then, seems like an overstatement. As Christians, we are used to saying that only faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ should make you live forever. And it is true that before Christ, the readers of Proverbs would have been terribly frustrated when they tried and tried to get this wisdom, but always fell short in some way or another.

But we must keep in mind that Jesus Christ "became to us wisdom from God" (1 Cor 1:30). In Christ, you too can have wisdom: the ability to know and do what is right in this life. We get this through the Spirit's work in us. With the Spirit, we not only begin following the commandments, we also grow close to God. We grow in knowing him intimately as Father. In Christ, you find wisdom, and because of his wisdom, you find life.

Wisdom is a tree of life then for you still today. Imagine that for a moment. That most precious tree is right in front of you. It is in the Word. It is in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is in seeing how he lived for you, and desiring to live that way in response.

Get wisdom. Take hold of her leaves and eat of her fruit. If the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge (Prov 1:7), then hold the LORD in awe and be a humble pupil listening eagerly at his feet. Take in his Word and grow in wisdom through it. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom to work in your heart too. In the true fear of the LORD you will find life.

But also remember that this tree of life is available to you only because Jesus Christ first died on a dead tree, the cross. He took hold of the fruit of the cross: the rejection of God, eternal death. He did this to open up the way to life that was blocked off for you. Without Christ, wisdom is too difficult to get on your own. With him, the tree of life is opened up for you! So give thanks for him, and through Christ take hold of the wisdom that is now open to you. C

For further study

1. In what ways have you seen wisdom act as a life preserver or life sustainer practically?
2. How has the gospel of grace helped you to act wisely?
3. How does Jesus's taking of the dead tree of the cross affect how precious access to the tree of life is for you?

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Evangelical Evolution?

Given what *World Magazine* once called a "major, well-funded push" to promote the acceptance of evolution among evangelical Christians, the case must be persuasively made against the compatibility of evolution and the Bible. In answer to a pro-evolutionary stance, I am one of those Bible teachers who believe that the implications of evolution involve sweeping changes to the Christian faith and life.

While I appreciate the moderate spirit of many who want to find a way to accept evolution alongside the Bible, I find that the more radical voices are here more helpful. For instance, I share the view of Peter Enns in the conclusion to his book, *The Evolution of Adam,* writing that "evolution. . . cannot simply be grafted onto evangelical Christian faith as an add-on," but requires a fundamental rethinking of doctrines pertaining to creation, humanity, sin, death, and salvation. But Christian ethics must also be revised. Enns writes that under evolution "some characteristics that Christians have thought of as sinful," including "sexual promiscuity to perpetuate one's gene pool," should now be thought of as beneficial. Even so foundational an issue as the Christian view of death must be remolded by evolution. An evolution-embracing Christian faith must now see death as an ally: "The means that promotes the continued evolution of life on this planet."

I am not a qualified scientist and have virtually nothing to contribute to the science involved in evolution. As a Bible teacher and theologian, my concern is the necessary beliefs that flow from the Word of God. For the ultimate issue involved with evolution is biblical authority: must the Bible submit to the superior authority of secularist dogma? Or may the believer still confess together with Paul: "Let God be true though everyone were a liar" (Rom 3:4).

Evolution vs. Genesis 1

The first topic to consider is our reading of Genesis 1. It is frankly admitted by evolution supporters that anything like a literal reading of Genesis 1 rules out evolutionary theory. As Tim Keller wrote for Biologos: "To account for evolution we must see at least Genesis 1 as non-literal." I would alter that somewhat, since the issue really is not the absolute literalness of everything we read in Genesis. Rather the question is whether or not Genesis 1 is a historical narrative that intends to set forth a sequence of events. Evolution requires that Genesis 1 is teaching theology but not teaching history. But is this an acceptable categorization of Genesis 1?

First, though, does an historical Genesis 1 rule out evolution? The answer is "Yes."

Consider Genesis 1:21, which records that God created species by means of direct, special creation: "God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind." These "kinds" are species, which did not evolve from lower forms but were specially created by God. This special creation is highlighted in the case of the highest creature, man: "God created man in his own image; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). If these verses are presenting a record of history, it is a history radically at odds with the history posed by evolutionary theory.

This raises the question as to the genre of Genesis 1. Literary scholars teach the widely accepted view that different kinds of literature cue different reading expectations. So what is the genre of Genesis 1? According to those who support evolution, Genesis 1 functions as a poetic rather than historical genre. The argument is that Genesis 1 employs highly stylized language and a repetitive structure.

Keller's white paper argues that Genesis 1 is like the Song of Miriam in Exodus 15 or the Song of Deborah in Judges 5. It corresponds to more historical chapters by presenting a poetic rendition that must not be taken as the history itself. Just as Exodus 14 tells the history of the Red Sea crossing, followed by the Song of Miriam in Exodus 15, so does Genesis 1 relate to the more historically acceptable version of Genesis 2. Given this poetic form, Genesis 1 may be ruled out as teaching historical events.

The problem with this view is this: 1) there is a recognizable form to Old Testament poetry and 2) Genesis 1 is not written in this form. You can see this by reading Genesis 1 and then reading the Song of Deborah.

Genesis 1:1-2: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

Judges 5:1-3: "Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day: 'That the leaders took the lead in Israel, that the people offered themselves willingly, bless the Lord! Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes; to the Lord I will sing; I will make melody to the Lord, the God of Israel.'"

These passages are not written in the same genre. I would point out in passing, however, that while Judges 5 certainly is a poem, the history it presents is nonetheless true. This observation challenges the idea that to label a chapter as poetry serves immediately to remove its historical value. Judges 5:26 celebrates Jael slaying Sisera: "She struck Sisera; she crushed his head; she shattered and pierced his temple." That is pretty much what Judges 4:21 says happened.

While defending the historical potential of poetry, that subject is not germane to Genesis 1. The reason for this is that the Bible's first chapter has a different genre, namely, historical prose narrative. Old Testament poetry is shaped by parallelism and repetition. Consider Psalm 27:1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid." Hebrew poetic parallelism involves the second line interpreting or expanding the meaning of the first. This is not what we see in the narrative of Genesis 1.

It takes great effort to deny that Genesis 1 fits the genre of historical narrative. Here, we see a structure consisting of a series of *waw* consecutive verbs. The *waw* is the Hebrew letter "V," which means "and" when attached to the front of a verb. When attached to a noun, it is disjunctive – it stops the narrative flow. When it is consecutive, before a verb, the *waw* advances the narrative flow. "This happened and then this happened and then this happened." This is what we find in Genesis 1: "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness" (Gen 1:3-4). Given this construction, literary guides to the Bible commonly identify Genesis as "an anthology, or collection, of stories" in which "narrative is the primary form." Therefore, just like so many other chapters in the Bible which contain divine wonders that the unbeliever will reject, Genesis sets itself forth as recording events from history. Christians are expected to read accounts like this and believe that what is recorded actually happened, however contrary to secularist expectations.

A challenge to this view comes from Jack Collins' description of Genesis 1 as "exalted prose narrative." On the one hand, he admits "that we are dealing with prose narrative. . . [and] the making of truth claims about the world in which we live." On the other hand, he says the chapter presents an "exalted" form of writing. The reason for this is because of "the unique events described and the lack of other actors besides God" and also because of "the highly patterned way of telling it all." By this latter point he means the structure of successive days and the morning/evening pattern. Because of these features, Collins assets that "we must not impose a 'literalistic' hermeneutic on the text." By this, he means believing that the events happened as the text says they did. But why the exalted features overthrow the normal way of reading the text is not made evident. Might the exalted nature of the narrative be a function of the event itself: God's unique creation of all things? Wouldn't we expect an account of this to be "exalted" simply by virtue of the stupendous events? And what other actors than God might there be in such an account?

The reality is that the genre of Genesis 1 is the same as the genre of Genesis 2 through 50: historical narrative. Therefore the arguments used to remove the historicity of Genesis 1 must inevitably apply equally to the whole of Genesis, with all its teaching about God and man that is opposed to secularist dogma, including the Fall of Adam, Noah's Flood, the Tower of Babel, and God's covenant of salvation with Abraham. All of these narratives are highly stylized accounts involving exalted and unusual themes, at least from our perspective.

There is a reason, of course, for isolating Genesis 1 from the rest of the book. Admittedly, it is more "exalted"

a narrative than others – it is the creation account! But Genesis 1 is also the chapter that most stands in the way of the theory of evolution, for which scholars are determined to find room by warning against "highly literalistic" readings – i.e. ones that take the narrative seriously as history. And when Genesis 1 has been neutralized, the same approach can be applied to other pesky narratives like Genesis 3 and the Fall of Adam. After all, there can be no Adam when evolution has been accommodated or accepted by our reading of Genesis 1. So now the danger of a "highly literalistic" reading has advanced to chapter 3. But, wait, the flood narrative cannot be taken seriously in light of today's science and that narrative is highly structured, too. It will not take too long before the entire book of Genesis is reduced to historical rubbish.

One of the grand motives, I believe, for accommodating evolution in Genesis 1 is so that evangelicals can stop arguing about science and start teaching about Jesus. But do we fail to note that Jesus's story begins in Genesis 1? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . ." (John 1:1). In fact, when the interpretive approach used to neutralize Genesis 1 as history is necessarily extended by evolution, then the reason for Jesus's coming is lost? After all, without a biblical Adam as the first man and covenant head of the human race, then what is the problem for which the Son of God came? Here we see just how right Peter Enns is: evolution is not an add-on to the Bible; it is a replacement.

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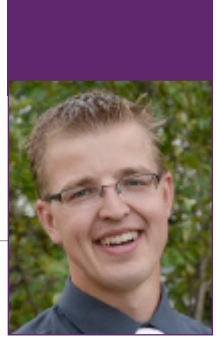


Simply Singable: The *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* Reconsidered (Part 2 of 3)

Melodic masterpieces

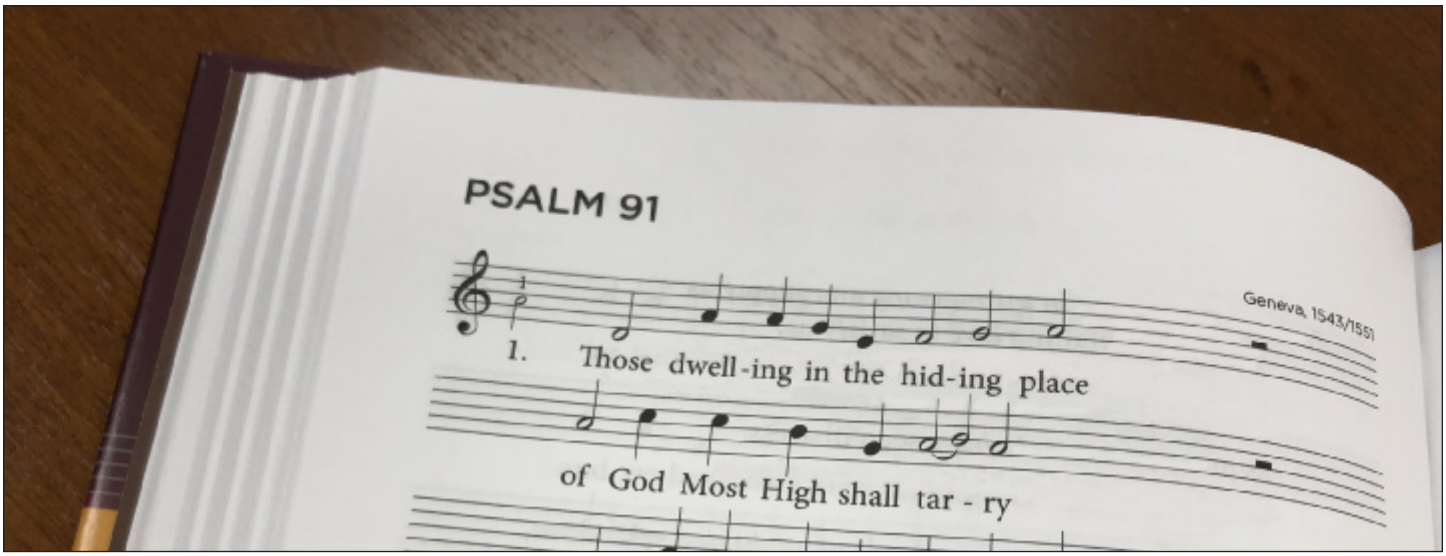
The melodies that comprise the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* are musical masterpieces. In the first place, these melodies are marked by a dignity or *gravitas* characteristic of sixteenth-century sacred music; this was a deliberate decision. Referencing the early church father Augustine (354-430), Calvin writes in his 1543 preface that the psalm melody is not to be "light or frivolous," but that it is to "have gravity and majesty."[1] The melodies were designed to radiate a quality that was representative of the biblical text and suitable for the worship of a holy God; they are highly balanced, simple, yet exquisitely elegant.

The majestic elegance that characterizes the Genevan melodies is partly due to its simple rhythmic construction, which consists of only two note lengths, long and short (or in our modern notation, half-notes and quarter notes).[2] In spite of this rhythmic constraint, there is an internal impetus (or energy) to move from note to note, or line to line. The movement within each melodic line is very natural, allowing for ease of congregational singing. The underlying pulse or *tactus* of each melody is the half-note (at the beginning of each psalm, there is a half-note with a little 1 above it – this indicates the *tactus minor* or half-note pulse which marks each psalm melody). Despite such rhythmic restrictions, the musical composers of the *Genevan Psalter* demonstrated their creative genius by creating/ rearranging 124 melodies that used nine modes, set to 110 meters.

Each psalm melody uses a particular mode and is a complete, stand-alone piece; it does not require a particular harmonization in order to "complete it." Rather than embracing the major/ minor tonal system, popular during the mid-sixteenth century, a conscious decision was made to construct melodies within a modal framework. In this way, the composers were not entirely breaking from the musical practice of Gregorian chant and were in actuality linking themselves to a long tradition of sacred music that links to the early Christian church and possibly even to music used in the synagogues.[3]

Another advantage for using modes, rather than major or minor tonality, is that the modes provide many more options for musical expression and are thus well suited to the varied nuances of each psalm. In this respect, the *Genevan Psalter* uses nine modes as the basis for each of the melodies. The modes are "scales" (for lack of a better word) which contain eight pitches that use specific intervals distinguishing one from one another. They were carefully selected and applied to fitting psalm texts (eg. Psalm 19 – the Mixolydian mode; Psalm 51 – the Phrygian mode). Thus, the characteristics particular to a certain mode were consciously considered when a melody was constructed and applied to a psalm text; this means that specific modes became associated to particular themes (eg. sin and confession – Phrygian, creation and the majesty of God – Mixolydian, crying out to God – Dorian, praise – Ionian, like our major scale).

Each of the modes have two musical reference or support points: the call tone ("dominant") and the rest tone ("tonic").[4] It is around these two points that the modal melody is constructed. For example, in the instance of D-Dorian, the resting point is "D" and the call tone is "A." It would be inaccurate to call them tonal centres, but their ability to attract or centre the melody does suggest a point of reference or even a modal centre. Moreover, these two tones often serve as starting or ending points in the musical line. For instance, Psalm 91 (notated in D-Dorian) finds all of the lines beginning with a "D" or "A." These modal reference points help to stabilize the melody as well as to assist the singer.



Another feature of the Genevan tunes, inherited from Gregorian chant, is the frequent step-wise motion and the avoiding of large interval leaps (usually no more than a fifth). Additionally, if a large leap does occur, it frequently uses the "modal centres" as launching or arrival points. For example, looking again at Psalm 91, the opening two intervals of lines 1 and 3 occur from the modal reference points of "D" up to "A" (an interval of a fifth) in this D-Dorian setting. The melodic range of the Genevan melodies was generally restricted to one octave; this limited range ensured that they could be sung by a musically untrained congregation.

The vast majority of the Genevan melodies are also syllabic (or one syllable per note). Only a handful of psalms (eg. Psalm 6 – line 1 or Psalm 91 – lines 2 and 4) have melismas (multiple notes per syllable). Syllabic construction gave priority to the sung text and facilitated the singing for what was, by and large, a musically illiterate congregation. Moreover, it underlined the Reformation principle: *sola Scriptura*. The unison singing of the congregation also ensured that the text could be clearly understood by the singer.[5]

The careful versification of the text with the deliberate and careful composition of the melody served a practical and pedagogical function. The primary intention of this psalter was to generate a song repertory that enabled the people of God to memorize both melodies and texts so that these versifications of the biblical Psalms were internalized providing both comfort and hope. In order to properly implement and familiarize the church with the *Genevan Psalter*, the latter psalter of 1562 as well as the Genevan Bible of 1567 included tables outlining a plan for singing through the psalms in an orderly fashion. Such singing was not done from first psalm to last, but it was divided so that an approximately equal number of stanzas were sung each time; this table was followed at the two Sunday services and at the mid-week Wednesday service. Moreover, it meant that the Genevan congregations sang through the entire psalter two times a year.

In summary, the Genevan melodies are, as the Winnipeg church musician Dennis Teitsma accurately writes: "*Simple* but not simplistic, *unique* but not difficult, *characteristic* but not odd, *easy* to learn but not repetitive, *uplifting* but not frenzied, *comforting* but not boring, *exuberant* but not frantic, *consoling* but not intoxicating, *edifying* but not hysterical, *dignified* but not haughty, *majestic* but not pompous, *mood reflective* but not sentimental, *rhythmic* but not metric, *varied* but not strange, *elevating* but not frivolous."[6] Indeed, these melodies reflect the variety, fluidity and dignity which is the Hebrew psalms.

Endnotes

[1] Elsie Anne McKee, ed., *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001): 94.

[2] As an aside, the final note of each psalm melody is marked by a breve or double whole-note, indicating the end of the melody.

[3] This idea is especially advocated by the Winnipeg church musician Dennis Teitsma in his: *Music in Reformed Liturgy* (Winnipeg: Lightning Quick Printers, 2014): 10.

[4] H. Kriek, "De modi," in *Nieuw Handboek voor de kerk-organist,* edited by Christiaan Ingelse, Jan D. Van Laar, Dick Sanderman and Jan Smelik (Zoetermeer: Uitegeverij Boekencentrum, 1995): 78.

[5] Other reformers and theologians, like Martin Luther, Martin Bucer, Desiderius Erasmus and Thomas More, all appealed for a simpler style of worship so that the word of scripture is easily spoken and in turn understood. See Ross J. Miller, "Calvin's Understanding of Psalm-Singing as a Means of Grace," in *Calvin Studies VI*, ed. John H. Leith (Davidson, North Carolina: Davidson College, 1992), 37.

[6] Teitsma, *Music in the Reformed Liturgy,* 10.

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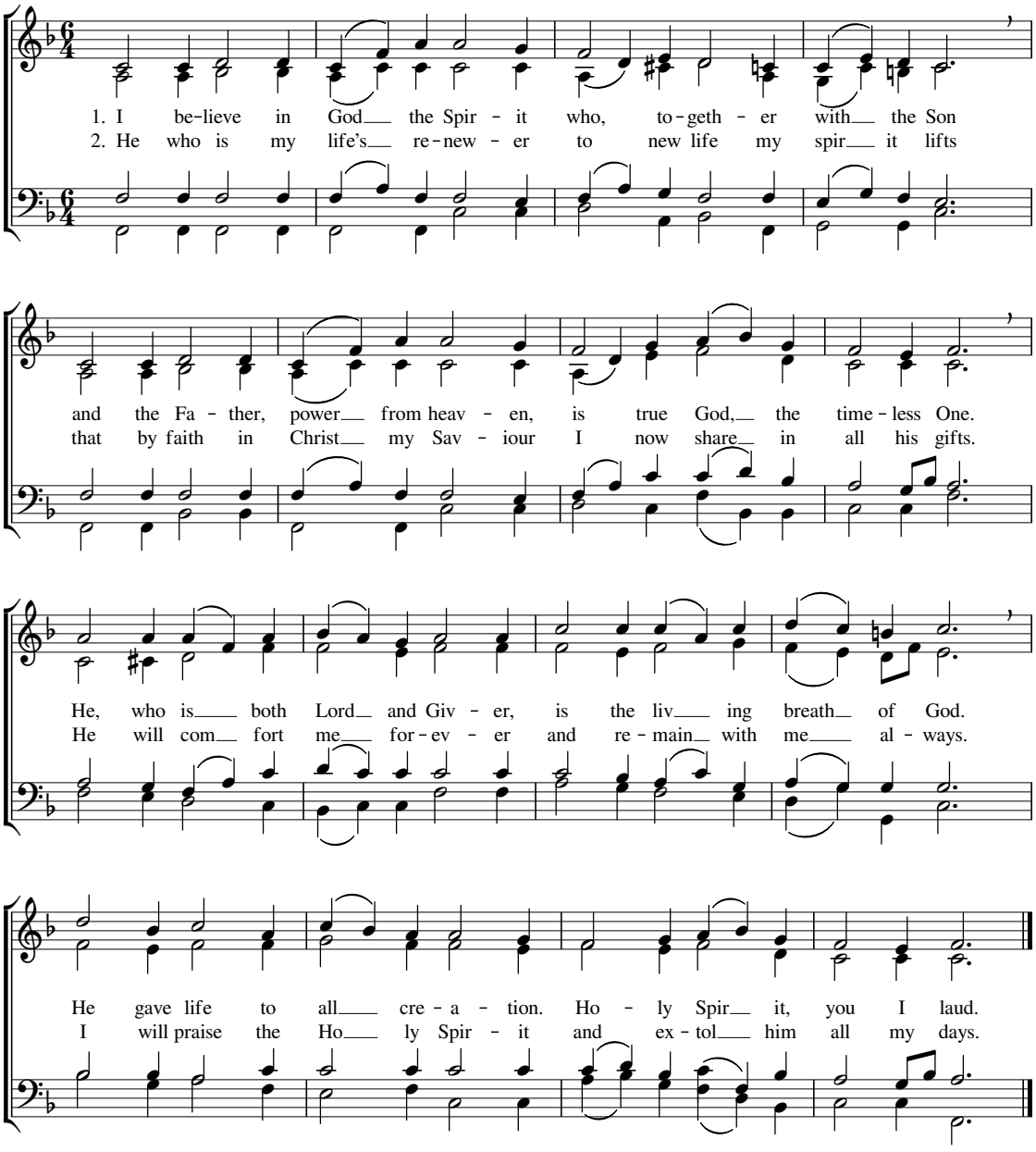
I Believe in God the Spirit

I believe in the Holy Spirit.



Text: QA 53, Heidelberg Catechism (Art.. 8 Apostles' Creed); vers. George van Popta, 2019
Tune: William P. Rowlands, 1905

87 87 D
BLAENWERN

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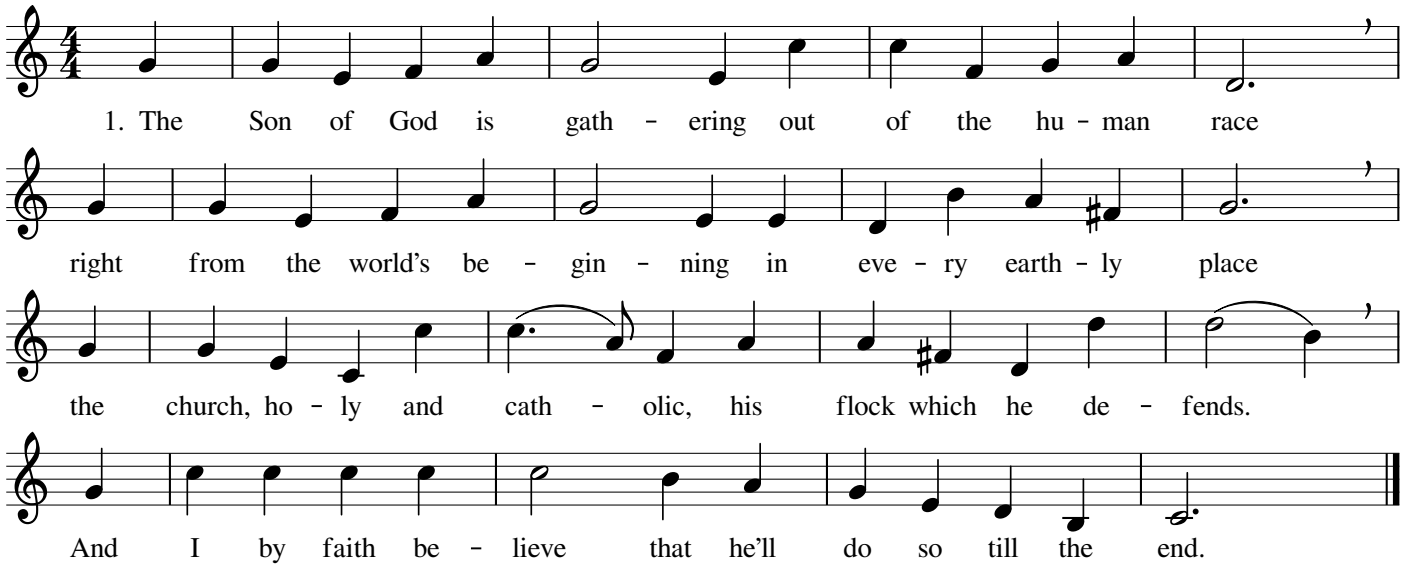
The Son of God is Gathering out of the Human Race

I believe a holy catholic Christian church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins.



2. I am by faith united
to all who serve the Lord,
with those whom God has chosen
and brought in by his Word.
And I believe that I am,
and evermore shall be,
a living member of it
in friendly company.

3. The church is a communion
of saints, born from above.
Of Christ we all are members
and one another love.
We share in all his treasures
and all his heavenly gifts.
With them we'll bless each other
and all the saints assist.

4. Because of Jesus' offering
God will show me his grace.
He will no more remember
my sins, but me embrace.
He'll not recall my nature
which vile and sinful is
but graciously will grant me
Christ Jesus' righteousness.

Text: QA 54-56, Heidelberg Catechism (Art. 9 & 10, Apostles' Creed); vers. George van Popta, 2019
Tune: Henry T. Smart (1813-1879)
For an SATB setting,, please see http://mostlycanticles.blogspot.com/

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LANCASHIRE

C

Cecilia Vandevelde
Photo credits: David Salazar and Haley Callico

Denver Family Camp 2019

It was the July long weekend, which means it was time for the twelfth annual Denver Family Camp! Before long the trees and rocks at Camp Eden were once again ringing with the joyous shouts and laughter from the attendees as they gathered for a weekend of encouraging fellowship, good food, and spiritual nourishment.

After the preliminaries the children set off on a bug hunt (taking many breaks to visit the snack table) while the adults settled in and then gathered in the main hall to welcome guests, have a cup of coffee, and chat a while. Our speaker and his family were welcomed by one and all and after our first delicious dinner we settled in to hear the introductory speech.

Our speaker for the weekend was Rev. R Anjema from Providence URC in Winnipeg, and his topic was Samson: Strength through Weakness. The first speech was titled, "The Riddle of Samson," based on Judges 13. We focussed on Israel's need for a judge, as well as the promise of a ruler. Samson's life began with such promise and hope.

After the speech we sang for a while until the evening when everyone headed for the woods for a game of Hide and Seek, with the hopes of a game of Lantern Sneak once it got dark enough. Alas, a thunderstorm rolled in and cancelled the plans and those that weren't already turning in

for the night joined up at the Willis Activity Center (WAC) for some games and fun before bed.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny, and breakfast was enjoyed before we settled in to hear Rev. Anjema once again. The second speech was titled, "The Selfishness of Samson," and it was based on Judges 14. We took time to consider the disappointment that Samson turned out to be, the strength he still had despite his sinfulness, and the redemption work that God worked through Samson despite his sinfulness.

Then it was time to stretch a little and go for a hike to find a beautiful view from a nearby rock. Those who opted not to hike watched and waited from the deck of the main hall and finally we saw the green dots (which were the green camp shirts) ascending the top of the rock and returned the waves from those at the top. The returning hikers were treated to a game of capture the flag before cooling down with sponge wars. The weather turned cool and soon everyone was shivering and were happy to see lunch served in the main hall.

After lunch there was an opportunity for those who wanted to try ziplining, mountain boarding, or archery. The Camp Eden staff did a wonderful job of facilitating all the events, and we had an enjoyable time trying out some new

skills. Everyone then gathered at the WAC for some time of games and fellowship.

The third speech was just before dinner. Rev. Anjema once again spoke to us with the topic, "The Emergence of Samson," based on Judges 15. We considered how the Israelite people were just as bad as Samson in their spiritual lethargy, even being willing to deliver the Lord's judge to the heathen people for what should have been certain death. But God hears Samson's prayer, as weak as it was, and brings deliverance once again through his sinful servant.

Dinner was once again delicious, and after dinner Rev. Anjema took the microphone to answer questions on the speeches he had already done. He also enriched our church library by having a fun competition for a book, which was won by our church librarian.

After the questions were asked and answered, we gathered in the RV park for a campfire and Rev. Vandevelde had us all in stitches by reading some of the Vandevelde's favourite campfire stories. Young and old enjoyed some marshmallows and sweet fellowship in the warmth of the fire. Then those who were young and still energetic gathered in the WAC for some more games while the rest turned in for the night.

Sunday morning breakfast was delicious, but even sweeter was the Word preached to us by Rev. Anjema titled, "The Triumph of Samson," on Judges 16, and we were greatly encouraged once again by God's incredible providence and how even with the weakest and most broken vessels God can still work his redemption, and we all were left in wonder at the salvation that the Lord has worked through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We were treated to a delicious lunch, smiled for a camp photo, enjoyed some down time while our children did crafts inside with Monique, and then gathered back again for the afternoon service where we paused to consider Psalm 62 under the theme of God as our Rock. Rev. Vandevelde led the service and helped us to think about what it means to have God as our Rock, and to consider what sorts of false rocks we might have in our lives that were useless in comparison to our Rock.

After a delicious dinner, we met once again for closing, and Rev. Vandevelde led us in thanking all those who had contributed to the weekend, and then we had a time of singing and fellowship before we began the difficult process of saying goodbye to those who were leaving that night or early the next morning.

Monday morning breakfast was delicious but bittersweet, as we knew that the final goodbyes happened next, it was hard to say goodbye to new friends and to the delightful camp atmosphere and head back down to our regular altitude to restart our daily lives. And yet the spiritual encouragement and delightful time of fellowship put a spring in our step.

Guests that join us often comment on how they feel like a part of the Emmanuel family, and indeed that's what Denver Family Camp is all about. Not only to bond those of us from Emmanuel who are able to attend, but also to welcome others into our church family for a time. Family Camp is an excellent way to lessen the distance between Denver and our brothers and sisters in the Canadian and American Reformed Churches, and hopefully will also in the future begin to forge ties with other local faithful churches.

So, mark the dates on your calendar, the next Denver Family Camp will, the Lord willing, happen July 3-7 2020, and you don't want to miss it! C

Clarion Kids

The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 4:16-26

There is absolutely nothing we can do to earn our own salvation – Christ took care of every single part of it when he died on the cross for our sins. But that doesn't mean that we can do whatever we want in our lives. We are called to live lives led by the Holy Spirit. When we are living according to the way of the Spirit, our lives will show it. In Galatians, Paul writes that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. If these things are showing in our lives, we can know that we are keeping in step with the Spirit and living a life that is pleasing to God.

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Love
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Goodness
Faith
Gentle
Fruit

Double Puzzle

Unscramble the clues to solve the final word.

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LUHSFITFENSA
1 13 8 9 7 3

LEFS RLCONTO
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DIESKNNS
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1 2 3 4 5 | 6 7 | 8 9 10 | 11 12 13 2 14 15

by Emily Nijenhuis

Jordan Ellens
Graduate of Redeemer University College and teacher at Providence Reformed Collegiate in Komoka, ON.

Jordan is married to Amanda, they have four children, and they attend Providence United Reformed Church in Strathroy, ON

Metaphor as Education

Part 4: Metaphor and Empathy

This is the final article in a series of four which deal with Metaphor as Education. The first discussed how Education is Relational, the second emphasised the importance of Metaphor in Education, the third discussed Technology and its effects on Relationships. This article will emphasize the importance of Metaphor for stimulating empathy and encouraging relationships.

There are two stories from the Bible that I find particularly fascinating. In the first, the prophet Nathan compares David to a rich man who kills his poor neighbour's only sheep (2 Sam 14). In the second, David's commander Joab has a woman come to David with a story about her sons. One had killed his brother and she fears for her family line because of the "avenger of death" (2 Sam 12). In both cases, David passes judgement and in essence judges himself.

Aside from the individual lessons that David learned from these stories, it is interesting to note that when King David is confronted, it is through metaphor. This suggests that his ability to see, grow, and learn is linked to his ability to relate to a given situation. In general, he excels at discerning and dispensing justice. In order for him to learn about his own heart, however, he must stop being blind to his own situation. The metaphor is the tool that provides David with perspective. With it, David is gently but profoundly convinced of his own actions.

"Knowledge" in modern language is associated with information. A knowledgeable person has a wide degree of information and ability at the ready. On the other hand, "understanding" very literally means to stand under. Like a support holds up the weight of a building, understanding bears the weight and responsibility of knowledge. The word "understanding" assumes a relationship. It is more like the word "know" as used in the Bible. To know God is to have a personal relationship with him; understanding suggests depth more than breadth.

Like understanding, empathy takes work and is built on relationships. Empathy, the ability to come alongside and see things from another's perspective, stands opposed to hasty "judgementalism." We can only empathize when we spend time thinking about others. We must openly listen to their words and consider their actions and situations. This then provides us with a context to relate to others and deal with others compassionately and correctly. The ability to empathize is shaped by our thought processes and also shapes our human relationships. The previous article suggested that technology often hinders our ability to empathize but perhaps encouraging metaphorical thinking can stimulate empathy.

Consider our Lord Jesus Christ. He summarized the law with two commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37) and "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39). The King's command is couched in relational language. We are not just to love our neighbour, but to love as much as we love ourselves. How much interest do we take in the lives of those next to us? How much would we sacrifice to preserve our neighbours from harm? The words "as yourself" are relatable and convicting. Likewise, we are to love God with "heart," "soul," and "mind." How well are we doing in the heart department? What about the mind? Now that we have something to compare or measure our love by, we can see our shortcomings and areas for growth. We can now begin to understand what these commands mean. While we spend time considering the comparisons we can begin to empathize with others and, hopefully, act wisely based on our understanding.

Our Lord also often spoke in parables. Just like David's situations are addressed using metaphor, Christ Jesus often uses metaphor to instruct his audience. While the purpose of the parable is to hide the meaning to those who are unspiritual, the way in which parables relate to the everyday experiences of the audience deepens the meaning to those who are "spiritually discerning." Thus, the parable of the two sons who are asked to go and work in the vineyard (Matt 21; a quite relatable story) becomes a deep warning against the Pharisees and those like them. It encourages

the audience both then and now to act out the Father's will. Having the example of these two sons allows us to compare the sons to each other and to ourselves. Like David, the parallel situation allows us to judge others and then look at our own hearts to see how we measure up.

A previous article discussed how metaphor is the language of learning because it is the language of relationships, but metaphor also encourages understanding so well because it allows for some wiggle room. It is more like a comfortable coat than a straitjacket. Rather than being forced into a position, the listener can consider a situation from his or her own perspective. Suppose I am teaching about the sun and say, "The sun is a burning ball of gas." This fact leaves little for the listener to do other than try to absorb. On the other hand, suppose I were to say, "the sun is a like a lantern." Now the listener should start making their own connections. It could be about the burning that is occurring, or the heat that is produced, or quality of the light that is produced. There is more than one possible answer. Quick students will also be able point out flaws in the analogy and see where the comparison fails. It allows each person's brain some leeway in finding their own connections.

I have found that in teaching this, leeway is important, since it also makes the students feel less trapped. It is a way for me as a teacher to allow students to be comfortable. If I ask a somewhat open-ended question and expect the students to come up with the exact phrase that is in my head, then they can sense that I am not satisfied with their other answers, as reasonable as they may be. The students become less likely to want to answer in these scenarios. It is perhaps the same reason why true and false and multiple-choice questions are disliked by so many students. Our brains do not all work in the exact same way, and a metaphor provides the space for different connections to be made.

Let us again refer to the example of the parable of the Two Sons. One person may relate to the belligerence of the first son and another to the laziness of the second. Or, the same person may relate to both sons. The parable acts as a metaphor for each person's life and the metaphor has multiple points of connection. Thus, the wiggle room makes the story universally relatable. It lets us empathize with each type of weakness.

Metaphor also encourages the audience to be active. It allows us to draw from our own experiences and make our own associations. While the aforementioned fact about the sun can only be absorbed, the lantern analogy asks the brains of the audience to engage. This is a little like technology as well. Technology is visually stimulating; but it is also often mentally deadening. So much time is spent absorbing that little is spent reflecting, evaluating, or understanding. Metaphor, however, suggests a relationship and asks the audience to create connections. Whereas technology covers over gaps and hides distance, metaphor uncovers distance and asks you to fill in the gaps.

Using metaphor to engage minds and make many connections between ideas can perhaps also give one more benefit. It just might allow us to empathize with people more readily. If we train ourselves to see not just differences but also to be able to see similarities, then perhaps this will allow us to relate to people of various backgrounds and differences. Perhaps differences will not be as jarring. It is easier to be compassionate when you can imagine stepping into someone else's shoes. Empathy helps us to consider the second greatest commandment. The ability to empathize has benefits in the classroom among peers, and beyond school into church life and evangelism.

Christ Jesus embodies relational understanding. He is God and has become man to overcome the distance between God and man. Where King David needs metaphor for instruction and correction, Christ has become our metaphor for our resurrection. He is the way, the truth and the life. Finding him is like stepping onto dry ground with dangerous seas all around. Finding him is like gasping and finding fresh air when you were certain that you were dead from poisonous fumes. Encouraging the use of metaphor in our lives can make us reflect him a bit more.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letter to the Editor

I read with interest the You Asked column question: "Is There Still Shame in Sin?" As a counsellor, I have dealt with "shame" a lot over the years. I, too, have come to some conclusions about the relationship of shame to sin. When I look at the Genesis account and how Adam and Eve hid themselves from God, they knew they had sinned. Shame of what they had done and their estrangement from God overwhelmed them. As Rev. den Hollander points out, "sin and shame are inseparably united." Shame only occurs, though, when sin has been exposed. Adam and Eve fled because they were naked and ashamed of their nakedness. They were exposed.

When God looks for Adam and Eve in the Garden and finds them hiding, he exposes the sin, shame envelopes Adam and Eve, and immediately they shift to the next stage of sin – contempt and blaming. The exposure of sin causing shame is, therefore, a gift from God to come clean, admit guilt, and once again live in relationship with the Creator. Our human tendency is to deflect God's kind gaze away from our failings.

So, what I am saying is that I like what Rev. den Hollander wrote as an answer. I just would add that shame is a gift from God to bring his people back to a relationship with him. Think here of Romans 2:4, "Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?" (NLT) There is absolutely no blasphemy in shame.

John Siebenga, Houston, BC

Letters to the Editor should be written in a brotherly fashion in order to be considered for publication. Submissions can be sent to editor@clarionmagazine.ca and need to adhere to a 750-word limit.

YOU ASKED

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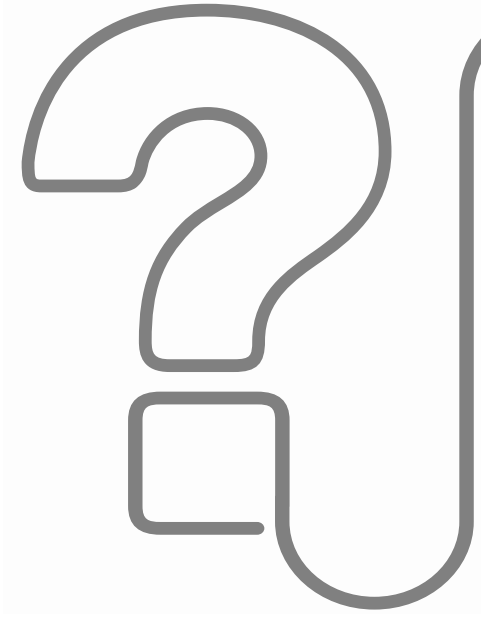
Q What Exactly is Our Duty with Respect to Evangelizing?

In 1 Peter 3:15, we are exhorted to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have," and in Lord's Day 32, "that by our godly walk we may win our neighbour for Christ." But in Ephesians 4:11, Paul lists different offices (gifts) in the church; some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers…" (etc.). What exactly is our (everyone's, men and women's) duty with respect to evangelizing?

A Indeed, as the questioner poses, with 1 Peter 3:15 and LD 32, for instance, we see the importance of our conduct and projection in the midst of a secular society and of equipping ourselves for speaking the Word and serving the neighbour with love. In Ephesians 4:7-16, we see that in the early church there were not only the office of apostles, but also the members with special gifts who served in the church with their knowledge and understanding as prophets and evangelists more formally. Hence, Paul shows the various ways and means the Holy Spirit uses to work in us, to give us a heart of love for the neighbour and train us to use our relationships in this world for outreach (or evangelizing).

"Relationship Evangelism" is a particular approach to outreach. It's not the one and all; there are other ways of sharing the gospel and bring people to a saving knowledge of God's gift of love in Jesus Christ. However, with a view to the questioner's inquiry about "everyone's *duty* with respect to evangelizing," relationship evangelism is a *natural*, spontaneous, and organic way of sharing the gospel with those neighbours (and not so much a "duty"). They are the ones with whom we have a relationship through work, study, and neighbourhood, or through incidental meetings at the doctor's office, the dental clinic, on the plane, or in the store, etc. The possibilities are endless! At the appropriate times and opportunities we reach out to them, people whom you see on more or less regular basis. The relationship makes it more effective, because you know them, you can relate to them; you can seek to have a growing relationship and open up to them. Instead of waiting for people to find us, we go to them; and they're next door!

What should motivate us to pursue such relationship evangelism is the love of God for lost sinners, and the love for the lost neighbour (not just those in our family, among our acquaintances, or in the church). Our neighbour is not only a wife, our children, our fellow members in the church or school, but also those whom the Father in his providential care puts in our place and on our path. When we consider reaching out with the gospel, it's not just getting the message right, it's about relating to people through love so they experience firsthand what the love of God is all about! Love helps us look differently at our neighbours, not so much as "one of the world," but as fellowman for whom we care, to whom we show interest. Yes, we do so, not only with a view to faith but regarding the neighbour's whole life. Hence listening is important, showing genuine interest. This way our life, our lifestyle ("our godly walk," LD 32), is not something they observe from a distance, but something they see in how we relate to them. C



Is there something you've been wanting to know?

An answer you've been looking for?

Ask us a question!

Please direct questions to Rev. W. denHollander

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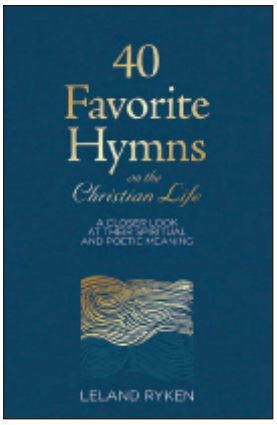
40 Favorite Hymns on the Christian Life



40 Favorite Hymns on the Christian Life
A Closer Look at their Spiritual and Poetic Meaning
by Leland Ryken

Hardcover: 160 pages
P&R Publishing 2019

There are various reasons why it is a good idea to buy good books about good hymns. Not only do they help us understand and appreciate the hymns, they also make for great birthday presents. For Canadian Reformed folks there is now an additional reason: the Synod of Edmonton (2019) has approved the addition of more hymns to the *Book of Praise* and the churches have been asked to come up with recommendations.

The book *40 Favorite Hymns on the Christian Life* by Leland Ryken, published earlier this year by P&R Publishing, will be a great help to those of us who want to make a contribution to the process of choosing new hymns. Many of the hymns discussed in this book are suitable candidates for being added to the Canadian Reformed repertoire (for example, Crown Him with Many Crowns, In Christ Alone, Rock of Ages). The book also contains commentaries on hymns that are already part of the *Book of Praise* (for example, O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing, The Church's One Foundation, Jesus Shall Reign).

Leland Ryken is emeritus professor of English at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. He is the author of books such as *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. He was also the literary stylist for the ESV translation of the Bible. Given his expertise, it is not surprising that he focusses especially on the poetic characteristics of hymns. In the introduction of the book he makes the point that "every hymn is a poem first, and only later becomes a hymn."

Ryken suggests that there is a threefold value in reading a hymn as a poem. First, we get a better sense of the progression of thought from beginning to end. Second, we can read slowly instead of being hurried along by the music and the singing. Third, we learn to appreciate the verbal beauty of the words and phrases rather than the beauty of the music.

In line with Ryken's focus and interest, this book deliberately does not provide the melodies of the hymns that are discussed, but only the text. Ryken usually starts by giving a little bit of background regarding the author and the historical circumstances, then spends most of his time commenting on the literary features of each hymn. As one would expect of an English professor, every explication includes an account of the flow of the successive stanzas of the poem under consideration and examines how different rhetorical and literary techniques are used in each one.

I warmly recommend this book. My wife and I (being empty nesters) enjoyed reading sections of the book at mealtimes (this may not work so well for busy families.) The book will be a great resource for anyone who wants to study the hymns – but let me add a few caveats: For the reader

to get value out of the book, it will require him or her to go back and forth between a poem and its accompanying explication. So, you need to give yourself time to do this. In addition, you should be prepared to work your way through some dense sentences. Here is an example: Commenting on William Cowper's hymn God Moves in a Mysterious Way, Ryken writes: "The poem is built on a principle of incremental (growing) repetition, as the cumulative weight of assertions about God's benevolence in hostile circumstances keeps getting stronger in our thinking and feeling" (p. 136). Sentences like these require repeated reading in order for one's understanding to grow incrementally!

Along the way, Ryken provides some really interesting tidbits of information. For example, I never knew that the hymn Abide with Me is sung before FA Cup soccer Finals which are played annually at Wembley Stadium in London (p. 82). I checked it and indeed, at the recent FA Cup final you hear the crowd singing "in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lM804-S2hiU). Quite remarkable! Nor did I know that the hymn Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah is sung by the crowd at rugby matches in Wales, especially those involving the national rugby team (p. 99). I found it hard to believe that a rugby crowd would sing "bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more," but I googled it and they really do (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0g3a8npAVBM). C