

# Clarion

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

**What kind of race  
are we running?**



VOLUME 68 • NUMBER 19 • SEPTEMBER 20, 2019

**COUNSELLING BIBLICALLY**  
**NEW HOPE ORPHANAGE**

# 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:

**C**onfessionally Reformed  
**L**oving in manner  
**A**ttuned to current issues  
**R**eadable and Reliable  
**I**n Submission to Scripture  
**O**pen to constructive criticism  
**N**urturing Christian living

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## ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

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

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

## 2019 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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

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## PUBLISHER

Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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We acknowledge the financial support  
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Agreement No. 40063293; ISSN 0383-0438

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

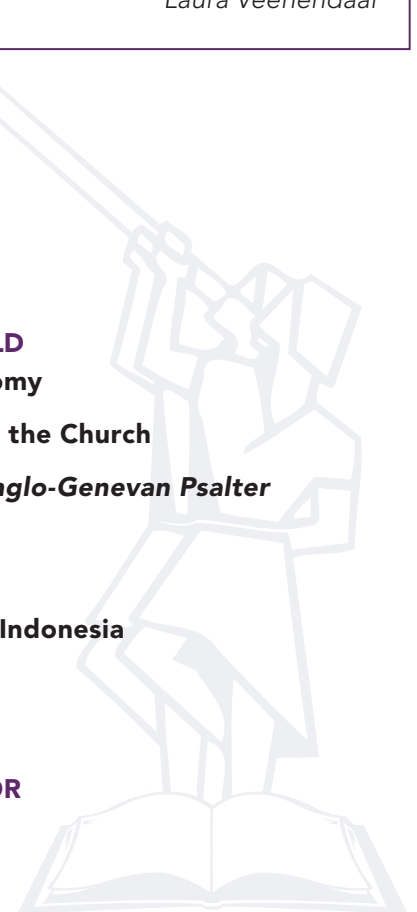
Rev. Eric Kampen leads our issue with his article, "Relay Marathon." In it he looks at Christian life and ministry in terms of a long-distance team run. This issue also brings readers an article from our editor-in-chief, Dr. James Visscher, "Biblical Counselling and the Church." There is also the conclusion to a three-part article by Martin Jongsma, "Simply Singable."

Issue 19 contains a number of our regular columns: Treasures, New & Old, *Clarion Kids*, and Ray of Sunshine. We finish off a series of canticles by Rev. George van Popta. There are also several letters to the editor and Mission News.

Laura Veenendaal

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# Relay Marathon

*It is not just a burst of activity;  
rather, it is an all-round Christian lifestyle*

*Relay Marathon.* Those are not two words we tend to put together. It is normal to speak of a relay *race*. In a relay race, you have a team of four people running a segment of 100 or 400 meters each, passing along a baton, and running as fast as they can. A marathon is not a team sport. Individuals compete against other runners over a course 42.195 km long. In the four times 100-meter relay, the race can be over in less than a minute. The median time for a marathon runner is four hours and twenty-two minutes. The long distance means the runner must pace himself. There is simply no way to maintain the speed of the 100-meter relay race. If that was possible, the marathon runner would be done in an hour and ten minutes.

Why, then, are the two words put together? They are put together because they capture the character of the Christian life. In this article, I will work this out with respect to Christian living, as well as the work of ministry, so that we may all continue to pace ourselves and faithfully fulfill our turn in the relay marathon of faith.

## Christian living

First, our Christian life is not the 100-meter sprint. When someone learns to know the Lord, there may be an initial outburst of enthusiastic service, putting to shame those who have known the Lord since birth, but this is not sustainable over many years of serving him. Those who have known the Lord since birth may get visions of grandeur and begin to sprint, looking somewhat judgmentally on those who are plodding along. Again, such sprinting is not sustainable in the long run.

While there will be people with extraordinary abilities and energy, the ones that have biographies written about them, most of us are just ordinary human beings. In this respect, it is just like the sports world. There are only so many superstars with exceptional gifts. It can make us feel very

inadequate if we measure our lives by what others were able to do. In our case, it is not about beating others, but faithfully staying the course for the years of life God gives to us. It is important to pace ourselves, or face the danger of spiritual burnout.

But what about the relay part? This becomes clear when we remember how God works through the generations. God established his covenant with Abraham and his descendants. It is the task of the one generation to instruct the next generation. In Psalm 78, Asaph mentions the things “our fathers have told us.” Anyone who sings this Psalm commits himself to tell “the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders he has done.” The children, in turn, are to teach their children. It is not that faith is inherited. Only the Spirit can work faith. The marvel of God’s covenant dealings is that each generation gets to run a segment in the great marathon, passing on the baton of faith to the next generation. We can also think of how Paul wrote to Timothy how the faith had been passed on by his grandmother to his mother, and then to him (2 Tim 1:5).

As the Christian life is a marathon, it is evident that instructing the next generation is not done in bursts of speed, but steadily, as is indicated by the instruction in Deuteronomy 6 to speak of the LORD and his ways “when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (v. 7). To put it concretely, it is not just a burst of activity when you take them to church, send them to catechism classes, have them attend a summer Bible camp, or send them to a Christian school. Rather, it is an all-round Christian lifestyle, where the children see their parents keep a steady pace in serving the LORD in love. It is always a joy to parents when they see their children begin their turn and raise the next generation, and there is a time of overlap, as generations run the marathon beside each other.

## Ministry

The concept of a *relay marathon* can also be applied to the work of the ministry. Ministry is not like the 100-meter sprint. When someone starts in the ministry, there may be an initial outburst of enthusiastic service, making those who have run for a while look rather slow footed, but that is not sustainable over many years of serving him. While there will be ministers with extraordinary abilities and energy, the ones that have biographies written about them, most ministers are just ordinary human beings. Not everyone has the stamina and influence of a John Calvin or an Abraham Kuyper or a Charles Spurgeon. There are only so many superstars with exceptional gifts. It can make ministers feel very inadequate if they measure their lives by what others were able to do. It can make congregations disappointed if their ministers turn out to be just ordinary marathon runners. Ministers, and those whom they serve, must realize it is not about beating others, but faithfully staying the course for the years of service God gives. Ministers must pace themselves, or they face the danger of burnout. If I look back over years of ministry, it is when one is in a congregation for many years that this truth becomes very clear. There may be eagerness to hit the ground with both feet moving, but the 100-meter approach to ministry is not sustainable. Even elite spiritual athletes have discovered that by running hard for too long, they ran themselves into the ground. For the wellbeing of the minister and the congregation, consistories will do well to be aware and to ensure their minister has the mindset of a marathon runner.

But what about the relay part? We see this when we remind ourselves that the God who works through generations also works through generations of ministers. We can even speak of the task of the one generation to instruct the next generation. We think of Paul's words to Timothy, "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). After all, ministers are human and will not live forever. The gospel must be passed on to others, who will take their turn in teaching God's people.

There have been times in history when ministers would mentor young men for the ministry. Whenever possible,

this instructing of the next generation has been done collectively by the churches by establishing seminaries, where ministers are set apart to teach men for the ministry.

You will be aware that this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS), also known as the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The seminary itself is an example of a relay marathon, as by this time we see the third and fourth generation of men teaching at the seminary. Many were trained there in the first place, served for some time in the ministry, and then were called to teach the next generation. In this way we see the baton of the gospel being passed along from teacher to their eventual replacements, as well as to many who enter the ministry.

At the same time, in keeping with the image of the marathon, it will be evident that instructing the next generation is a process which requires persistent, steady effort. Four years of training may seem like a long time, but there is much knowledge that must be communicated, skills that need to be cultivated, and faithful commitment to God's Word to be modelled.

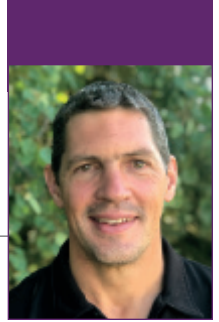
## Finishing the race

The image of a relay marathon drives home the importance of staying the course. Each runner, be it in the race of faith run by all believers, or by those called to ministry, is only assigned a segment in the race. If a runner suddenly gets it in his head that he has better ideas and veers off course, it not only upsets the immediate chain, but it will drag many others dependent on him off course. To be sure, due to our sinful nature, there may at times be a need for course correction, but that is different from veering off in a totally different direction. What is needed are those who faithfully stay the course, so it can be said with the apostle Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award. . . to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Tim 4:7, 8).

May our gracious God give us all strength to run our segment of the relay marathon faithfully.







# God Controls the Economy

***"Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do.'" (Genesis 41:25)***

Genesis 41 tells you that the Sovereign God told Pharaoh in a dream interpreted by Joseph that there would be seven years of plenty in Egypt followed by seven years of famine (Gen 41:1-7, 17-31). Joseph makes it clear that the dreams were a revelation from God (41:16), who was telling Pharaoh what he was about to do (41:28, 32). It was a shocking revelation for the masters of Nile irrigation and agriculture to learn that there was a God they could not control, who was able to announce a fourteen-year plan of plenty followed by famine (41:26-32; 47-57). God's revelation in Genesis 41 also helps us today when we find ourselves believing that certain people, policies, or political parties can be depended upon to ensure a strong economy.

Genesis 41 shows to what extent God is in control of our food. Just think about all that the LORD needed to do to keep his promise of plenty and famine for Egypt! He is in control of the rainfall and streams in the mountains that flowed into the Nile River, the amount

of arable land, the growth of the plants, the health and number of the workers, and even the nutritional value of the food when it is consumed. Although economists may study the impact of government, natural disasters, wars, and work ethic on our economy, Genesis 41 reveals very clearly that *God* controls the economy.

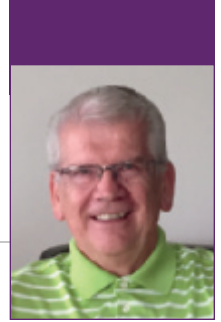
When we look behind the scenes of Genesis 41, we are able to see that God's "economic plan" was put into place to raise Joseph up so that he might save many lives. Not only the lives of God's covenant people, but also the lives of many from the nations around! Both Egypt and the surrounding nations were blessed by the godly wisdom of Joseph who administered God's gifts for the benefit and well-being of his neighbour. Pharaoh and his servants could easily recognize the wisdom of God in the proposal that Joseph made (Gen 41:33-38), which applied God's commands to trust in him alone, honour authority, love your neighbour, and show generosity (cf. 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th and 8th command-

ments). God blessed his church so that all the families of the earth might be blessed by the church.

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray to our Father in heaven for our daily bread, so that we might be equipped to reflect God's mercy and generosity to the world (cf. Eph 4:28). The God who controls the economy also blessed the world with the wisdom of his Word proclaimed by the church in her teaching and walk of life. Christians have an important role in society to display and exemplify the wisdom of God in their conversations about the economy, in the management of their companies, in their political action, and most importantly in the use of their resources. You may not be the chief finance minister of the country like Joseph was, but you are the chief finance minister of your own possessions. The Holy Spirit explains in 2 Corinthians 9:11: "You will be enriched every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God." C

## For further study

1. Read Genesis 41
2. How do people often show that they have forgotten that *God* controls the economy?
3. How can Christians reflect the mercy of God revealed in Genesis 41?



# Biblical Counselling and the Church

## What all offices have in common

One of the things that all three offices in the church have in common is that they will all be called upon from time to time to give advice or counsel. The deacon will be asked for counsel that relates especially to financial matters. The elder will be requested to give counsel in matters that relate to Christian lifestyle and discipline. The minister will be called upon to render counsel in all types of situations and difficulties. Indeed, when it comes to giving counsel or counselling, the minister will often bear the brunt of the load. More than anyone else in the church, this is assumed to be part of his calling and office, even his specialty.

## Biblical counsel or advice

The kind of advice that the minister and the other office bearers are expected to give, however, is not just any advice or counsel. Rather, it is expected to be biblically based and biblically rooted. Worldly counsel is available anywhere and everywhere. But that is not what we are after within the context of the church and kingdom of God. In that setting, we want counsel that comes from God, adheres to the teachings of the Word of God, and brings blessings from God. What does biblical counsel look like? It seeks to be:

- *Anchored in the Word of God* – Which means that there is a standard that one can refer to and turn to, even a divine standard;
- *In step with the person of God* – For he is the ultimate source of all insight and understanding. As such it will be characterized by love, justice, holiness, compassion, mercy and truth;
- *A way to wisdom* – For all who receive it. The aim of all biblical counselling is that its recipients will hear, understand, and implement God's wisdom in their lives and turn away from every crooked path;

- *A source of blessing* – Ultimately this counsel seeks to make its recipients happy and blessed. It seeks to help them live the life that God wants them to live which is a life full of peace and joy.

## The place and role of the Bible

We can only truly speak of biblical counselling if and when we take the Bible seriously. This means that we need to see it as special, different, and unique. The Bible is not to be compared to the teachings of Buddha. It is not on par with the contents of the Koran. It is not on the same level as the teachings of Hinduism. No, the Bible is the Word of God. It is his revelation and as such it is inspired, infallible, and inerrant. Or, as the Belgic Confession puts it, "We receive all these books [of the Bible] *and these only*, as holy and canonical, for the *regulation, foundation and confirmation* of our faith" (Art 5).

What this means is that the Bible more than anything else will shape and form the views and insights of the biblical counsellor. It will teach him about:

- *Creation* – God is the creator and sustainer of all things;
- *Man* – God made man good and in his image, to rule over creation;
- *Fall and sin* – Man rebelled against God, became corrupt and sinful, and cannot do the will of God due to his fallen nature;
- *Devil* – The Devil lured Adam and Eve into disobedience and continues to lure people into sin today;
- *Redemption* – Christ came to save and redeem sinners; sinners need to repent and believe in him to be saved;
- *Forgiveness* – Through faith in Christ, believers are forgiven their sins, and no sin is too great or awful to be beyond forgiveness;
- *Renewal* – Only the Holy Spirit can change a person; he gives power to live a new life;

- *Holiness* – God desires a holy people; holiness is a life-long pursuit;
- *Church* – The church supports believers through preaching, sacraments, fellowship, and accountability. It is a community of forgiven sinners living by grace.

## A special Bible book

Of all of the books in the Bible, the book of Proverbs stands out as the greatest source of practical wisdom. It contains wisdom that relates to proper speech, listening, money, parenting, sexuality, marriage, child rearing, work, friendship, business, laziness, poverty, drunkenness, and many other practical matters.

Other books that are also most helpful are Job and Psalms, as well as the teaching of the Lord Jesus in the gospels, and the letters of Paul, James, John, and Peter. In addition to these books, all of the other books contain material that gives insight into right daily living.

## The Bible as a counselling textbook?

Does this mean that the Bible represents a counselling textbook? Basically, the Bible is a textbook only when it comes to one thing, and that is salvation. What it teaches about science, history, geography, family, counselling, and the like is all reliable but not necessarily complete or exhaustive.

For example, when the Bible mentions places, it is accurate but most of them are in the Middle East. As such, the Bible does not speak about places in India and China and hence is not a textbook on world geography. Also, when the Bible speaks about man, it deals with him in terms of creation, fall, and redemption, but not in terms of anatomy or brain chemistry.

What this means is that when a minister counsels someone, he will make use of the Bible and its insights, but at the same time he will not ignore the services of the doctor, the psychologist, and even the psychiatrist.

## The Bible on the human condition

What are some of the insights that the Bible gives when it comes to counselling? The first has to do with the human condition.

The most widely held view in the West is that man is basically good. If he does bad things, then it is due to his environment. It may be a lack of nutrition. It may be parental abuse or neglect. It may be poor living conditions. It may be harmful role modelling. In other words, if only the environment had been better, the results would be better, and a lot of the problems would be nonexistent.

Now, there is truth in all of this; however, it is not the whole truth. For the fact of the matter is that environment is not the only damaging thing. In addition, there is also nature or the personality with which a person is born. In this respect, the Bible teaches that this is an extensive condition, as the heart of man is corrupt, sinful, and spiritually dead (Ps 14; Eph 2:1-10). It also teaches that this is neither a new nor limited condition. Rather, it goes way back. Man's fall into sin is as old as the very beginning of time and the fall into sin. It is also a universal reality and a hereditary disease (Ps 51).

As a result, when man does wrong it is not just case of either nature or nurture. No, it is almost always a case of both. A nature that is deeply out of synch with the will of God is also influenced negatively daily by the examples and lifestyles of imperfect people. Many years ago, *The Globe and Mail*, a Toronto newspaper, ran a daily item on its front page called "Your Morning Smile." One morning it contained the following: "At the end of the school year a boy came home with a really bad report card. As his father was stewing over the results, the boy said, 'Dad, what do you think is the problem: heredity or environment?'" Ouch! Smart boy but, of course, the answer is not one or the other. It is "Both!"

## The Bible on the power to change

Does this mean that a person is condemned to live a ruined life? Not necessarily, for the good news of God in Jesus Christ is that redemption, deliverance, and change are possible. How does this happen? Through the power of the Holy Spirit, who is called "the other Counsellor" (John 14:16), change is possible.

Who changes a Saul into a Paul, a Simon into a Peter, a eunuch into a believer, a general into a worshipper, a soldier into a servant? None other than God the Father, who uses the power of the first Counsellor, Jesus Christ, and augments it with the power of the second Counsellor, the Holy Spirit. Together they can and do change hearts and lives.

## The Bible on right behaviour

Another insight of value has to do with human behaviour. One of the problems with mankind today is that people do not know the difference between wrong and right living. A careful study of Galatians 5:16-25 gives us the understanding that we need. It reads,

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are

against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now *the works of the flesh* are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But *the fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

What does the wrong way of living look like? Look at the works of the flesh and you can see it clearly. What does the right way of living look like? Look at the fruit of the Spirit and you can see it clearly.

Yet, notice as well that flesh and Spirit stand opposed to each other. They are diametrically opposed. In other words, you cannot have a little bit of both, mix them together, and come up with a suitable result. No, it is either one way or the other. And then the better way is obvious. It is the way of belonging to Christ, crucifying the flesh, and walking in step with the Spirit (Gal 5:16).

## The Bible on mental health

One more insight to be gained from the Bible has to do with mental health. Looking around in the world at large soon reveals that many people suffer from poor mental health. They are a bundle of nerves, anxieties, worries, and fears. They have no rest and they know no peace. They are constantly popping pills, seeing doctors, and experimenting with different therapies.

So how does one deal with such a stressed-out life? The Bible gives us a number of pointers. The first one comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, who tells his followers not to be anxious (Matt 6:25-34):

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

The obvious lesson here is that being anxious or worrying constantly are useless exercises. They accomplish nothing. They do not add time or quality to your life. Resolve to move away from what is really a fruitless obsession.

Another lesson: learn from the birds and the lilies. The birds can teach you about living a worry-free life. The lilies can teach you that if God cares for them, he will most certainly care for you. Indeed, there is no comparison between your value and the value of a field full of lilies.

A third lesson is that instead of worrying about your life, you should be seeking the kingdom of God. Change your focus! Make it your aim to pursue the righteousness of the kingdom.

Finally, strive to live by the day. Anxious people spend too much time trying to look into the future and then speculating about what may or might or could happen. Instead they need to live day by day. Concentrate on the affairs of the day you are living in. Do not obsess about tomorrow.

Still, we can learn a better way to live not just from Matthew 6 but also from Philippians 4. There, as well, the matter of anxiety is addressed. The way to counter it, Paul says, is by praying. Call on the Lord and bring to him all of your worries. Ask him for help. Ask him for strength. Let him know what is weighing down your soul.

In addition to praying to God, there is also resting in God. Wait on him to give you peace and rest. Take Christ up on his invitation, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11: 26). Those who seek him truly will time and again be surprised by what they receive from him. He has the power and the ability to quieten every human heart.

But then if there is praying to the Lord and resting in the Lord, there is also confidence in the Lord. "I can do all



things through him who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13). Indeed, Paul says, “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger” (Phil 4:11, 12). Paul knows where true strength comes from, and that is not from within himself, but from Christ.

If people live anxious lives, they also end up living insecure lives. Often because of abuse or a poor home life, they come to the conclusion that they are worthless, useless, and loveless. Yet here again the Bible has the antidote. A passage such as Romans 8 teaches believers that there is life in the Spirit for them and that they are heirs along with Christ himself. No one who is “in Christ” is worthless. For all who are in Christ have been raised to the level of being sons and daughters of God. They are heirs. They have status. They are in line for a most glorious inheritance. What matters most in the end is not the temporary abuse or neglect of an earthly father, but the eternal love of the everlasting Father.

Suffice it to say, then, that the Bible has much to teach us when it comes to living right and living well.

## **The minister as counsellor**

If God uses the Bible or his Word to teach us, he also uses the office bearers of the church, and in particular the minister of the Word. He should strive to be, among other things, an effective counsellor. Only, what does an effective counsellor look like?

## **A heart of compassion**

The first thing that defines a successful counsellor is a heart full of compassion. If he is a minister, he is a shepherd too, and compassion is something that a good shepherd always needs. He needs to love the sheep. He always wants the best for them. It bothers him deeply when they are sad, suffering, confused, or wandering.

## **A soul full of Christ**

The second thing that a good biblical counsellor needs is a soul that is full of Christ. He knows and is convinced that the answers to all of life’s sorrows and struggles lie in Christ Jesus. Hence, he will seek to let Christ shine though in all that he does and says. This does not mean that he becomes “preachy,” but, rather, that in many and various ways it becomes obvious that he serves a higher Master.

## **Ears ready to listen**

Another quality that marks such a counsellor is the ability to listen. Some people are poor listeners, and that can include counsellors too. When someone comes to them and unloads on them, they do not really listen all that carefully or try to understand all that well. Either their minds are elsewhere already looking for a quick and easy solution or their tongues are wagging far too soon. Some simply talk way too much. In reality, counsellors need to concern themselves first with listening, just listening, hearing well what the person in front of them or beside them is saying or trying to say.

## **A mind always learning**

A fourth mark of a good counsellor is an active and alert mind. Sometimes people come to a counsellor for help and before they know it the counsellor has already decided what it is that ails them. He has not even heard their story or been told about their pain, and he claims to know it all already.

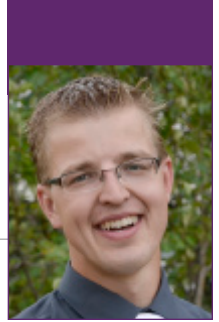
At other times someone comes and the counsellor is quick to think “this is a hopeless case” and “I do not know what to do.” He is ready to bail out before he has even stepped in. His mind is soon overwhelmed and he loses interest. Instead of putting his mind in gear or asking for advice, he is quick to throw in the towel.

Counsellors need to work hard, and they also need to work hard with the mind that God has given them. Not every solution lies close to the surface and not every problem is hopeless. True biblical counsellors will always seek to feed their minds with more knowledge and insight. They will never stop learning and growing, asking, and digging.

## **A mouth always asking**

In their desire to help, every good counsellor will probe and ask pertinent questions. In every story there are gaps or assumptions or things left unsaid. In order to get the fullest and clearest picture possible, a counsellor will need to ask relevant “what” questions, “when” questions, “how” questions, “where” questions, and even “why” questions. What a troubled soul may think is insignificant may in fact be highly meaningful. Questions need to be used skillfully, carefully, and wisely. The aim is to know fully in order to be able to help as effectively as possible.





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

## Foreign or familiar?

As seen in the earlier two articles, it is clear from both a historical background of the Genevan Psalter as well as from a compositional standpoint that these melodies were intended and designed to be sung by the whole congregation. Though “simply singable,” the Genevan melodies are not “simplistically singable” (as in a commercial jingle that requires little to no practice); rather, they require some practice. With many things in life, practice converts what were difficult tasks initially into easy and simple tasks. When one is not very familiar with a melody, of course it is difficult, if not impossible, to sing. The remedy is in repetition, not simplifying the task. In this respect, the composers of the Genevan tunes purposefully strove for melodic excellence. They clearly recognized that the worship of holy God required the best in both text and melody. Moreover, each melody became a stand-alone composition whose primary purpose was to assist the singer with internalizing the versified biblical text of a particular psalm.

As John Calvin writes in his preface, “the heart and the affection must follow after the intelligence, which is impossible unless we have the hymn [or melody] imprinted on our memory in order never to cease from singing.”<sup>1</sup> The reality is that the Genevan melodies need to be firmly fixed in our mind so that full attention can be given to the song texts. As a result, a knowledge of the song melody promotes the internalization of the sung text. Thus, Calvin viewed the melodies as a means by which the versified teachings of the Bible, and specifically the psalms, could be understood, and even more importantly, believed. Evidently, familiarity with the Genevan melodies is the key for beginning to truly appreciate the value of the French Reformation’s musical contribution to sacred music, as we find it in our *Anglo-Genevan Psalter*.

In this light, what are we as churches doing to ensure that we fully reap the benefits of this psalter specifically, and the *Book of Praise* more generally? In considering this question, I will use the well-known, Reformed triangle of home, school, and church.

## Home

As parents, what are we doing to ensure that we and our children know the song book of the church? I trust that family devotions are a priority in your home and that such times of family worship are marked by Bible reading and prayer. But are these occasions also marked by singing? God’s Word is abundantly clear that we ought to sing; simply look at Psalm 96 – the first stanza: “Sing to the LORD with exultation. O sing a new song, all creation. Sing to the LORD and bless his name.” And would it not be fitting, then, to utilize our church’s song book (that is, the *Book of Praise*) as a vehicle for such singing? It is only through the regular exercise and discipline of singing through the church’s song book that we begin to truly appreciate the depth, variety, and substance of our *Book of Praise*.

Shortly after we were married, my wife and I consciously decided to sing through the *Book of Praise*. Not only did we want to ensure that we were familiar with the content of our church’s song book, but we also saw it as a way of affirming the promise made at baptism “to instruct your child in this doctrine, as soon as he/ she is able to understand, and to have him/her instructed therein to the utmost of your power” (Form for the Baptism of Infants). While it seemed a little awkward or strange for us at first to sing out loud, singing is now a very normal and essential part of our family worship. Singing, and particularly singing of the psalms, is so refreshing for our souls. Let singing from the *Book of Praise* be something, then, that

characterizes each of our family's worship and may we encourage one another in this.

## School

As Canadian Reformed churches, we are greatly privileged to have our own schools. Our elementary schools have the good practice of assigning weekly memory work that enables students to learn the melodies and words of the *Book of Praise*. The practice of memory work promotes the viability of healthy congregational singing (that is, singing marked by a familiarity of both melodies and words). That being said, are there not more ways in which we can incorporate our church's song book into our schools' curriculum? For example, writing level-appropriate arrangements for music ensembles? Promoting choral singing of psalms and hymns? Teaching the musical history of our church's songbook? Predominant use of the *Book of Praise* in school programs/ functions? I know that these suggestions are being pursued, at various levels, with success. However, as mentioned earlier, already at the inception of the *Genevan Psalter* in 1539, John Calvin recognized the need for teaching the melodies and words to the children. A typical school day at the Genevan Academy was marked by one-hour of psalm-singing. Think about how familiar one would become with the melodies and words of the psalter by such daily repetition!

## Church

In the majority of Canadian Reformed churches, the minister prepares the song selections for the Sunday liturgy. This responsibility of choosing songs comes with its challenges. It requires a knowledge of the songs in our *Book of Praise* and also an understanding of the Reformed liturgy. It also necessitates a certain discipline to avoid repeatedly selecting the same songs. I understand that this can be a daunting task and so maybe the occasional timely email or conversation with your church's accompanists ("Hey, what do you think?" Or, "Do you know some songs that speak of this theme?") can help to facilitate the selection process. I also think it is beneficial for ministers in our churches to develop a plan to sing through the entire psalter over the course of two or three years. That way, the congregation is reminded of the range of melodic and textual contrast in our *Book of Praise* and the accompanists are also given the opportunity to work with all the musical materials of the church's song book! Elders can also play a role during the sermon evaluation process to encourage the minister to be comprehensive in his use of the *Book of Praise*. Accompanists in their preservice, offertory, and postlude playing have an excellent opportunity for familiarizing the congregation with the melodies of the

*Book of Praise* and musically demonstrating through these melodies the substance of the sermon. Finally, as members in the pew, we should strive to sing with our whole heart, focussing on the words and drawing comfort, strength, and encouragement from them.

Turning again to the 1543 preface, Calvin provides three reasons highlighting the importance of singing: 1) singing for one's own refreshment: meaning the delight and valuable encouragement gained from singing by one's mind and soul as God instructs in the Bible; 2) singing as a reminder of one's salvation: what Christ has done for us; and 3) singing for the benefit of one's neighbour: this includes both the emotional benefits of singing as well as the instructional value gained from singing the biblical text.<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

To summarize, we as Canadian Reformed churches are profoundly blessed to have our own song book; namely, the *Book of Praise*. Within the psalm portion of this book, we are privileged to have a completely versified psalter, set to the melodies of the original *Genevan Psalter*. This collection of Genevan melodies elegantly carries the scriptural truths, doctrines, and human emotions which comprise the Bible's book of Psalms. Without a doubt, the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter* is a masterful collection of melody and rhyme that enables our federation to sing the psalms today. Yet, do we realize the value and significance of this musical gem? A historical overview of the *Genevan Psalter* confirms that this collection was geared for congregational singing, involving the whole congregation. Musically, the melodies of the Genevan tunes are carefully crafted compositions that encourage congregational singing, while at the same time promoting a dignified character reflective of Reformed worship. Finally, a cursory reflection of our lives at home, school, and church reveals that there are ways and means for a more comprehensive integration of our church's song book, and particularly the *Anglo-Genevan Psalter*. Indeed, the Genevan melodies are not "too difficult;" rather, they are "simply singable." Not "simplistically singable," requiring little to no practice, but "simply singable," requiring time and effort to learn and sing! Allow me to conclude with this rhymed versification of Psalm 108: "My heart is steadfast, O my God. Your mercy I will ever laud; your name I will in song extol, make melody with all my soul."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elsie Anne McKee, ed., *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001): 96.

<sup>2</sup> McKee, *John Calvin*, 97.

<sup>3</sup> © 2007, William Helder; *Book of Praise*, Psalm 108, stanza 1, p. 270. **C**



# When my Mortal Life is Over, and my Soul to Christ has Flown

*...the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.*

1. When my mort - tal life is o - ver, and my soul to Christ has flown,  
then my bod - y will be bur - ied; as a seed it shall be sown.  
But the power of Christ is bound - less: he will raise my flesh, trans - formed,  
and u - nite it with my spir - it. Then I'll be to Christ con - formed.

2. In my heart I feel already  
now a taste of lasting joy.  
This is but a small beginning  
of the bliss that I shall know.  
What no ear or eye has witnessed  
nor the heart of man conceived  
such will be the joy and gladness  
which by grace I will receive.

3. I believe in God the Father,  
I believe in God the Son,  
I believe in God the Spirit,  
God Almighty, Three in One.  
Alleluia, praise the Father!  
Alleluia, praise the Son!  
Alleluia, praise the Spirit!  
Praise our God! Amen, Amen!

Text: QA 57-58, Heidelberg Catechism (Art. 11 & 12, Apostles' Creed); vers. George van Popta, 2019  
Tune: Rowland H. Prichard (1811-1887)  
For an SATB setting, please see <http://mostlycanticles.blogspot.com/>

87 87 D  
HYFRYDOL





# New Hope Orphanage, Indonesia



Statistics report that Indonesia currently has 3.2 million orphaned or abandoned children. The NTT province ranks highest, with about 500,000 children living without a mother, father, or both. These are children that lack stability, food, healthcare, and love.

The Bible clearly instructs the people of God to take care of orphans. James 1:27 states, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." For some this means doing the work on the ground. Others make this possible by supporting through prayer and gifts. We are very thankful that through New Hope we can help children to regain stability in the form of a physical place to live, daily needs, Christian education, love, and encouragement from the house parents and counsellors.

While most children thrive and flourish, exploring and using their God-given talents and abilities, there are also those that struggle to overcome past pain and addictions. For Simon (not his real name), the struggle against the eighth commandment is very real. Before he came to the home, stealing was a way of life for him in order to survive. There is no need for him to steal while living at New Hope, yet the urge to take what is not his is very great. Over the past few months, more and more things were reported

missing at New Hope. The other residents complained about personal belongings disappearing; a bar of soap, a bottle of shampoo, belts, shoes, and even a phone belonging to one of the house parents! It was the phone that gave Simon away, as he had forgotten to change the setting to "silent" while he went about his afternoon chores. His roommate heard it ringing and picked it up; it was the house parent!

Initially Simon denied everything, but, realizing that there was lots of evidence, he admitted and acknowledged having stolen all that was claimed missing over the past few months. It takes wisdom and understanding to deal with a situation such as this. Punishment ... definitely, but above all, we pray and hope for a true deliverance of this sin through Jesus Christ. The counsellors agree that this is the hardest part of their ministry. Keeping calm, remaining patient, knowing how to disciple with love, as a parent would a child. Most of the New Hope counsellors are not parents yet themselves, but they have to deal with parenting issues every day! What a comfort it is that neither the children nor the counsellors are on their own. Only through God's grace and his daily help are we able to live each and every day.

## Citizens of Heaven

Easter Sunday was a joyful day, celebrating Christ's resurrection together with the saints. We were strengthened and comforted by the preaching of God's Word, which reminded us that we journey this earth but only temporarily. We are holding citizenship cards of Heaven. A timely message, especially since it was election time in Indonesia, where so much focus and attention are given to choose our earthly rulers. Little did we know that one of us would enter eternal glory that day.

Esry (not her real name), came to New Hope six years ago to study at the Elpida Senior High School. She was raised by her grandmother. Her father had neglected his role and responsibility since Esry's birth, forcing her mother to work as a migrant worker in Malaysia to make ends meet. Both parents remarried and had other children, leaving Esry with strong feelings of neglect and a longing for





love and care. Esry's grandmother found out about New Hope through one of our counsellors from the same area, and she asked for Esry to be taken into the home. She could not afford continued education for Esry, and also could not afford the medical check-up Esry needed. Esry had been experiencing sudden seizures and needed to see a neurologist. Through the medical fund provided by New Hope, Esry had a complete check-up, including a CT scan, yet all results came back negative. Based on these results, the neurologist concluded that the attacks were a result of extreme stress. Despite the ongoing attacks, she was able to complete high school. Upon graduating she enrolled at the teacher's training program at STAKRI where she thoroughly enjoyed her studies and friendships.

Easter Sunday, she walked to church together with her friends, feeling completely fine. When they came home, they had some lunch and then a siesta. She had just gone into her bedroom when an attack came on, from which she never recovered. Upon arrival at the hospital, she was declared deceased due to brain damage caused by the seizure.

The first thing to do was contact immediate family, which proved very difficult. Esry's grandmother had passed away three months earlier, and no other immediate family lived in the village. Through an uncle we were able to get the contact details for her mother, who was living in Malaysia with her husband, two young children, and was seven months pregnant. She mentioned right away that she would not be able to come to the funeral. Kupang does not have a funeral home. This left an awkward situation where the body had to be brought back to our home to await further arrangements for burial. Thankfully, the uncle and his wife were willing to help out and so the following day we set out for the sad journey to Ayotupas, about a six hour drive one way.

Rev. Domingus was asked to lead the funeral service, and again we were comforted with God's Word. We were reminded that Esry had received her crown, just as all believers will in God's time. We came home quite exhausted and emotionally tired. Many of the New Hope children

and STAKRI students had difficulty processing the grief of such a sudden loss. They needed care and direction working through this, focussing on the fact that we are citizens of Heaven, sojourning on this earth!

Despite the struggles we face in this ministry, we are thankful for every day the Lord allows us to be a testimony and to reach out in love to these children entrusted to our care. This is the time of the year that school is wrapping up. Some of the students have passed exams and will move on, while others will stay and continue their time at New Hope. Newcomers will arrive over the next few months. We appreciate your continued care, support, and prayers!

"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:17-19).

*In Christ, Femmy Dethan-Bouwman*

### **From the Board of Mission Aid Smithville**

We wholeheartedly thank you for your past support, and covet your prayers and support as we move forward. Please consider helping us meet our operating budget for 2019! You can donate by cheque or online.

All cheques need to be written out to: "Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund," earmarked "New Hope," and mailed to: Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund, PO Box 85225, Burlington, ON, L7R 4K4.

Donations can also be accepted online by following the link below and hitting the "Donate Now" button and selecting "5-New Hope-Timor" <http://www.crwrf.ca/prayers-and-support/donations/> All donors will receive a receipt for tax purposes.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

*In Christ,*

*The Board of Mission Aid Smithville  
([bomasmithville@gmail.com](mailto:bomasmithville@gmail.com))*



# Clarion Kids

## Doing Good to All

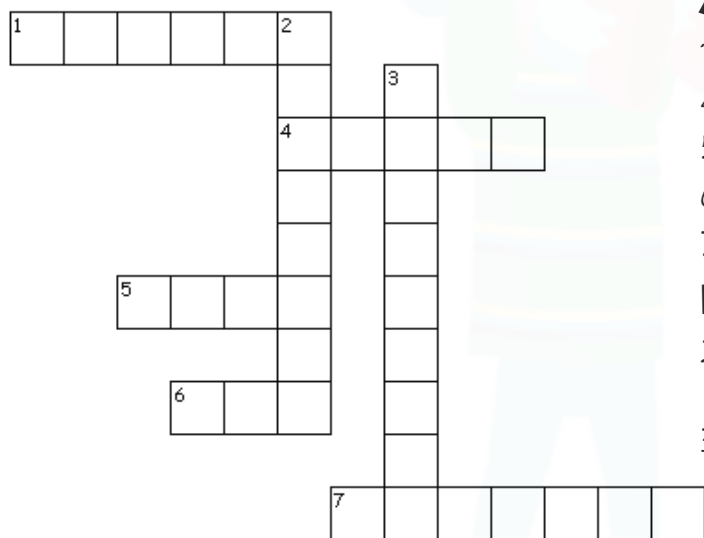
### Galatians 6:1-10

God has called us to do good to all people. It's usually easier to do good things for those who love us and love God. It's important to do good to these people as well. But it doesn't matter if someone is our enemy, we are still to treat them well. Just think of the story of the good Samaritan! Sometimes it can seem like no matter how hard we try, no one appreciates the good things we do. But trust that God sees what you are doing. He tells us in the Bible to not grow weary of doing good. If we do not give up on doing good things, we will be rewarded by our heavenly Father, and that's the greatest reward of all!

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



**Crossword Puzzle:** Solve the clues to fill in the puzzle.



#### Across

1. It is \_\_\_\_\_ to do good to people we love.
4. We should not grow \_\_\_\_\_ of doing good.
5. God calls us to do \_\_\_\_\_ to all people.
6. The one who sees what you are doing.
7. We must even treat out \_\_\_\_\_ well.

#### Down

2. We will be \_\_\_\_\_ by our heavenly Father.
3. The story of the good \_\_\_\_\_ is an example of this.

by Emily Nijenhuis



## A sister's reflections

It kind of crept up on us, the year 2017. You see, my brother Henry Vandervliet turned fifty that year. I can vividly recall the night Dad came home and told us Mom had a baby boy. I was hoping for a sister (I have only one), but it was another brother (now I had seven). I was kind of confused by my Dad's lack of enthusiasm for another son, but I went back to sleep, hoping that we would get more details in the morning. But Dad was very short on details at breakfast. The only thing I got was my new brother's name, Henry Ralph, named after the youngest brother in both my Dad's and my Mom's families. It soon became evident to me that there was something very wrong. For one thing, Mom came home without the baby. He was sent to Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto. He came home only intermittently during that first year. Henry was born with Apert Syndrome and had about a dozen surgeries in his first year of life. Although some Apert Syndrome children are born with a normal IQ and life expectancy, some of the ones born with a developmental delay do not, so the doctors told Mom and Dad not to expect a long life for him. Henry does not converse, but he'll answer a question with one-word answers. He will not volunteer comments or contribute to conversations on his own. He understands simple instructions and will carry them out exactly as they have been given. It should be mentioned that while there are delays in some areas, Henry has some gifts that his "normal" brothers and sisters don't have.

When Henry was home, we found him to be an extraordinarily happy little guy. He was always glad to see us when we came home from school. He was always smiling. He loved to kick his feet when he saw us coming. He went to school, he played with blocks, liked to be read to, loved walking through mud puddles, playing with balloons, and with our collie dog. He also loved music and it didn't take long for us to figure out that he has an incredible memory. We have always had music in our house both from the record player and our Mom and brothers playing various instruments.

We all sang and would naturally fall into four-part harmony. Henry seemed to be able to repeat a hymn or song on our organ and by singing after hearing it only once. He could also read anything; whether he understood what he read is open to conjecture, but he could read anything you put in front of him. He always pronounced the words correctly. He can do word search puzzles faster than anyone I know, even in Dutch. We have cousins in Holland who are identical twins. We see them about once every five years or so. Henry always knows which one is which. As Henry grew older and us older siblings moved away, Henry began taking on the mannerisms of our aging parents. He became content with quiet evenings doing puzzles with Mom and watching hockey games with Dad. He was also involved with the Special Olympics participating in bowling and darts. He has a lot of awards for proficiency in those sports.

Henry moved to Anchor in the late 1990s because of the health concerns of our Dad. The process of getting a placement for Henry in Anchor Home is a story of God's providence, and Mom and Dad were immediately at peace with the decision to move Henry there. Henry loves living at Anchor and has made it his home. It was easy to see this was the case as he made himself right at home there almost immediately. The care he receives made Mom and Dad very grateful for being led to Anchor Home.

We can praise God for Henry being fearfully and wonderfully made. Henry too was knit together in our mother's womb. Henry has shown us that God's blessings are to be found in even the most adverse situations. Sometimes we are like the disciples in John 9, where we read that, when confronted by a man born blind, they asked Jesus who had sinned, the blind man or his parents. Jesus sets them straight by telling them that neither was the reason for the man's blindness, but that God was going to be glorified in his life. We too can glorify God for having a brother like Henry. So, we can be thankful that God has spared him these past fifty plus years, more than what Mom and Dad were told to expect.

*Written by Henry's sister Bonnie*





## October Birthdays

**3 Janell DeBoer will be 29**

6311 Silver Street, RR 2, St. Ann's, ON LOR 1Y0  
Email: janell.db90@gmail.com

**3 Jeanette Wieringa will be 24**

610 Belsyde Avenue East, RR 4, Fergus, ON N1M 2W5

**6 Henry Vander Vliet be will 52**

c/o Anchor Home  
361 Thirty Road RR, 2, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2

**8 Lindsay Kottelenberg will be 29**

c/o Lighthouse  
6528 1st Line, RR 3, Fergus, ON N1M 2W4

**12 Leona Barendregt will be 35**

Box 2601, Smithers, BC VOJ 2N0

**13 Nancy Schipper will be 63**

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

**17 Alan Breukelman will be 53**

2225 - 19th Street, Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4

**21 Cameron Dantuma will be 27**

c/o Lighthouse  
6528 1st Line, RR 3, Fergus, ON N1M 2W4

**22 Nelena Hofsink will be 59**

Bethesda Clearbrook Home  
32553 Willingdon Cr., Clearbrook, BC V2T 1S2

**28 Mary Ann De Wit will be 63**

#4 6560 Vedder Road, Chilliwack, BC V2T 5K4



Happy Birthday to all of you celebrating a birthday in October! We wish you the Lord's blessing in the coming year.

### A NOTE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

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

**Rachel Vis**

731 Lincoln Street, Wellandport, Ontario LOR 2J0  
tom.rachelvis@gmail.com • 905-329-9476



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Response to: Rev. K. Janssen

*Re: Dort Polity – Running a Reformed Church  
(Vol 68, No 6, March 22, 2019)*

Thank you to Rev. Janssen for highlighting the history of Dort Polity. I've been sitting on this for a bit, but I think Rev. Janssen was perhaps awaiting a response. What caught my special interest was his question, "Who runs the church?" Rev. Janssen rightly points out, "This tension between the BC [Belgic Confession] and the CO [Church Order] is still felt in our churches today where the precise role of the deacons in the ruling of the church is concerned." In a recent deacon survey of the churches, one question was: "Who would you say functions as the governing body in your church. . . council or consistory?" Of the sixty-six respondents, thirty-three said the consistory and thirty-three said the council. While this survey may not be totally accurate because some smaller churches include deacons with the consistory, the survey indicates that Rev. Janssen is correct!

Why this tension? Here is what I believe to be the case based on 1 Timothy: Deacons are really "elders" with a special task/passion geared for charity and should be part of the consistory. This may sound a little strange in the Canadian Reformed landscape, where the deaconry is often considered an apprenticeship to becoming an elder, but one only needs to follow the logic of Scriptures, the Belgic Confession, and using Strong's Exhaustive Concordance (SEC). i.e., 1 Timothy 3:2 "A 'bishop' (#1985 SEC) Note: bishop. . . separate term from that of the elder. Elder is a term which includes both bishop and deacon and so deacons were likely included in the "body of elders" in 1 Timothy 4:14.

I have heard some concede on the above but then would argue that the office of deacon today does not necessarily function the same as if it would have in biblical times. Shaky ground? Why would we then continue to use Acts 6 or 1 Timothy, or for that matter any other part of Scripture for a basis for the ordination of elders (bishops or overseers) and deacons?

If we continue to use the deaconry as an apprenticeship for the elder, we do an injustice to the charity of the church. Charity/love is the heart of the church (1 Cor 13)! It should be important enough to have a good number of experienced office bearers devoted to the task.

Rumblings can also be heard among our church members that they are okay with women deacons because they are not in a ruling capacity. A logical conclusion.

Suggested Solution: Do away with one of the terms. . . council or consistory. Preferably use the term consistory, since this term relates more to church matters whereas the term council has more to do with civil governments. Council could also be acceptable since that is what the Belgic Confession uses. Many continue to allow the Church Order, or their own interpretation of it, to trump the Belgic Confession, whereas the Belgic Confession should come first. If we give the rightful place to the deacons, then I believe the tensions, perceived and real, between Belgic Confession and Church Order will mostly disappear.

*Yours in Christ,  
Aubrey Vandergaag*

### From the Editor

*Rev. Janssen has indicated that he plans to interact with this letter in a future article. I would only add at this point that br. Vandergaag overstates his case when he argues that elder is a term that includes bishop and deacon. In 1 Timothy 3:2 Paul uses a term that can best be translated as overseer, guardian, or bishop. In 1 Timothy 3:8 he uses a term that is most often translated as servant, helper, or deacon. (Compare 1 Timothy 3:2 and 1 Timothy 3:8 and note how Paul distinguishes between an overseer and a deacon.) Later, in 1 Timothy 4:14, he uses yet a third term which is often rendered as elder. Confusing? Somewhat. One of my professors used to say, "While all bishops are elders, not all elders are bishops." He did not include deacons in the mix.*

*JV*

*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](mailto:editor@clarionmagazine.ca) and need to adhere to a 750-word limit.*

*Re: Impressions from a Visit to the Dutch Churches (GKv) by Prof. Dr. Arjan de Visser*

Thank you for your personal impressions of the current situation in the GKv and highlighting for us some lessons drawn from the Dutch situation. As a former board member of elementary, high school and teachers' college associations and retired long-term educator in our CanRC schools, allow me to make an additional observation. Changes in their Reformed elementary and high school level schools have had a significant negative impact on the youth in our former sister church and, over time, on the then sister church federation itself.

Specifically, the impact of opening up enrollment to non-Reformed families has, over the last few decades, contributed to the undermining of the Reformed "foundations." Reformed schools in The Netherlands, as well as our Canadian Reformed schools, were started by parents not wanting their children to attend "general Christian" schools. The triangle of church, home, and school functioned well. The ethos for covenant youth in Reformed schools, living in the world but not being of the world, was grounded on the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity and closely aligned church and school.

The culture the youth of the church grow up in changes when their schools are opened up for non-Reformed fami-

lies. This occurred in most schools in The Netherlands and hopefully will not occur in our CanRC schools. When the schools the youth of the church attend become more "open" and "general Christian" they quickly develop, perhaps as an unintended consequence, more broadminded, tolerant and non-judgemental thinking. Co-operative learning engaged in with those from very different denominations has consequences. Over time that learning does not stress the unique Reformed basis, especially because the place and impact of the confessions of the church are lessened and diminished. The teaching of the antithesis with the culture of the society we live is weakened. Chances are that later as adults, the critical analysis and judgement needed for assessing ecclesiastical issues and decision making may well be compromised.

God's Word and the maintaining of the Reformed confessions are a safeguard for us to combat inappropriate tolerance and intolerance as well as a secular worldview in our parental schools. When our local CanRC Reformed school boards keep their enrollment limited to families who are formally committed to the biblical and confessionally based foundations, as exhibited by their Reformed church membership, we can prayerfully avoid the negative consequences observed in our former sister churches.

*Dr. Art Witten*  
*Hamilton, ON*

