

# Clarion



# Clarion

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

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

In our Remembrance Day issue, we begin with Rev. Eric Kampen's lead article on the topic. Remembrance Day is an important day to observe, lest we forget the price paid for freedom. Rev. Kampen draws a parallel to another day of remembrance, the Sabbath, and the freedom we celebrate and remember every week.

As 2020 marks 100 years since the death of Abraham Kuyper, we have an article on the life of "Father Abraham" by Dr. Ted Van Raalte.

Issue 22 reports on the welcome of the Slaa family to Carman West church as well as an update from MERF. There is a Treasures, New & Old meditation, a canticle, a book review, a letter to the editor, and a press release.

*Laura Veenendaal*

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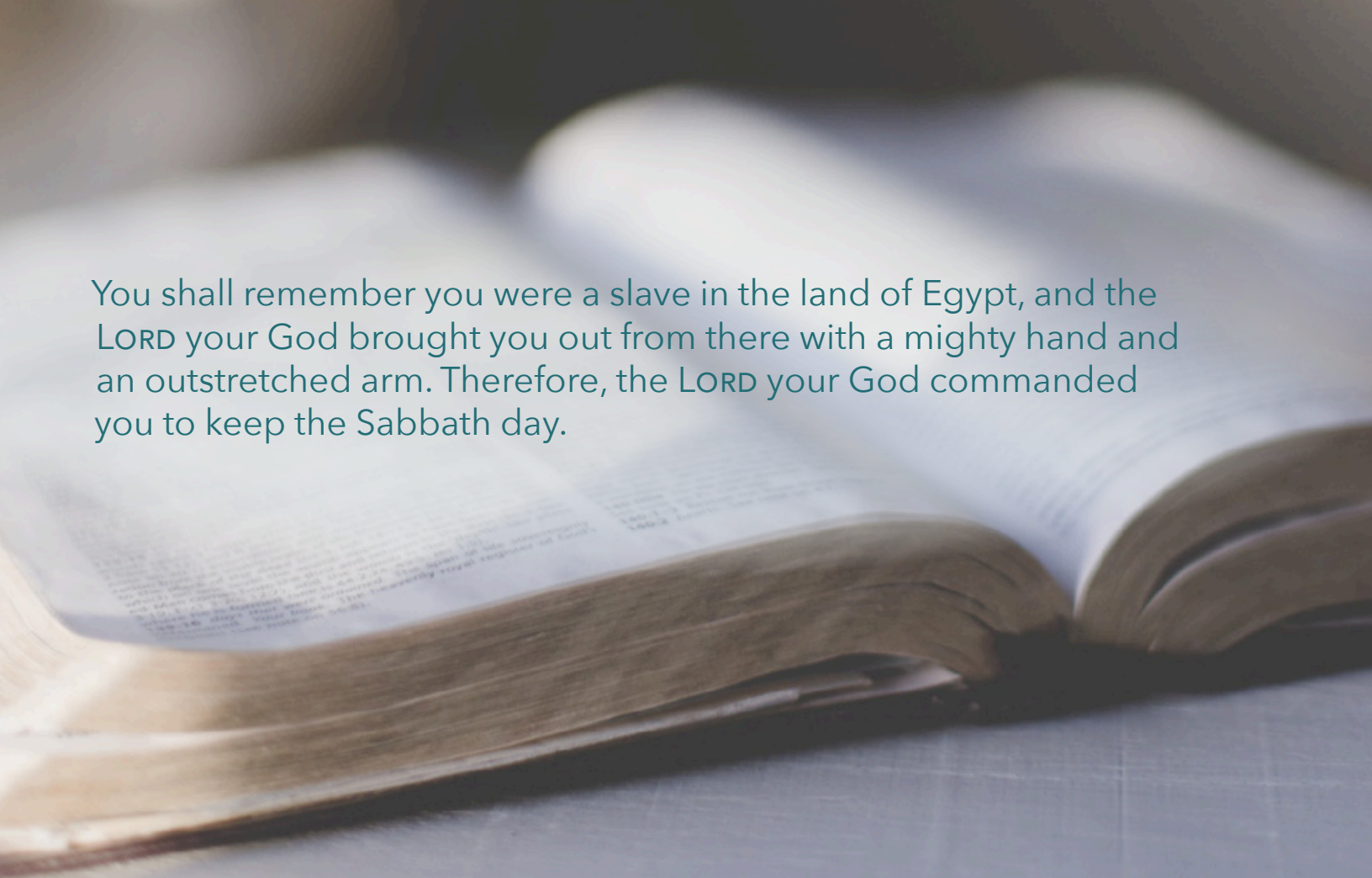
# Remembrance Day

This *Clarion* will be in the hands of readers around the annual Remembrance Day, November 11. It is the day we remember those who gave their lives to obtain or preserve freedom from oppressive regimes in the previous century. While one can watch the national observation of this day in Ottawa on television, there will be Remembrance Day ceremonies throughout the land. Especially if one lives in smaller centres or towns, it will be easy to know when and where the ceremonies will take place and to attend in person, to watch the parade of veterans and others involved in serving the community, such as police officers, firefighters, and paramedics. At least in the smaller town settings, the ceremony will still have many Christian elements, including the reading of some Bible passages and the singing of some hymns.



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**E**ven though Remembrance Day is a holiday in various provinces, it is a day that can easily slip by unnoticed. Perhaps the youth are the most aware, as it receives attention at school. I would suspect that in the vast majority of cases, just like other holidays like Good Friday and Christmas, people will take the holiday if there is one, but give little attention as to the real reason they have the day off. As a result, refrains of the Remembrance Day ceremony such as “We remember them,” or, “Lest we forget,” do not mean too much. The dead are not remembered.



You shall remember you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

We forget their sacrifices. If this *Clarion* is in your hands before Remembrance Day, I would encourage you to attend a ceremony in your community, to remember those who died and the terrible cost of freedom we enjoy.

## Weekly Remembrance Day

Yet, the annual Remembrance Day, as important as it may be, pales in comparison to the weekly Remembrance Day, better known as Sunday. The difference comes out already when we consider that the annual Remembrance Day is just a human invention, while this weekly Remembrance Day is a divine ordinance. We read in Genesis 2:3 how God “blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.” We hear a specific command for remembrance in the fourth commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” This was not just a call to make a mental note of this day. Rather, there was a call to a special ceremony. This is evident in the way the command states that “the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God,” a day on which we are to cease from our daily labour. In the instructions about all the annual feast days in Leviticus 23, it is specified that the Sabbath day was the day for a holy convocation (v 3).

People were called to gather for worship. The day was not to begin by a quick reflection on God’s work of creation, but the whole day was to be devoted to it.

When we think of the origin of the Sabbath, it was the time to remember and worship God the Creator. It was also the day to remember God as Redeemer, the Saviour of his people. We hear this in the slightly reworded fourth commandment in Deuteronomy 5, “Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.” The word “observe” implies some sort of ceremony. After the call to rest from daily labour, the reason given is that “you shall remember you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.”

From a passage like Leviticus 23, we know that there were other remembrance days on Israel’s calendar, but the most basic was the weekly Remembrance Day. If we go by what we read in the books that describe Israel’s history, Judges through Kings, we must come to the sad conclusion that Israel did not observe these days of remembrance very well. The people forgot God, their Creator and Redeemer. They forgot his mighty deeds by

which he had set them free from bondage in Egypt. Because Israel forgot how they had obtained freedom, the result was the loss of freedom as they fell under the rule of foreign kings. Eventually, they went into exile.

## New ways of remembrance

By the time the Lord Jesus came, the people of Israel were quite scrupulous in remembering the Sabbath day. The focus, however, seemed more on rules and regulations than joyful remembering of God's creative and redeeming work.

The Lord Jesus, however, gave new things to remember, as well as new ways to observe the Sabbath day. He brought that about by rising from the dead on the first day of the week. This is followed by several resurrection appearances on the first day of subsequent weeks. While there is no specific command recorded to switch from the seventh day to the first day, we do observe a special place for the first day of the week in the practices of the early church. In his letter to the Corinthians, for example, Paul calls his readers to set aside something for the collection for the saints in Jerusalem on the first day of the week (1 Cor 16:2). We read of believers gathering on the first day of the week to break bread and hear Paul preach (Acts 20:7). The book of Revelation tells us of John being in the Spirit on the Lord's Day (Rev 1:10). The first day of the week, our Sunday, became the day to remember the resurrection of our Lord, and how, by his death and resurrection, he has set us free from bondage to sin and Satan, and makes us a new creation. The themes of creation and of redemption foreshadowed in the Old Testament find their fulfillment in our Lord's work.

As for the new observance, we can note the way the church began to gather around the apostles and their teaching, rather than at the temple or the synagogue. Furthermore, we can think of our Lord's instruction when he instituted the Lord's Supper, saying, "Do this in remembrance of me." As New Testament church, therefore, remembering and observing the Sabbath day has to do with remembering Christ's work and celebrating the Lord's Supper. We do get the impression that the early


church celebrated the Lord's Supper each week as they gathered for worship.

## Attendance essential, lest we forget

We do well to note that, from the beginning, the Lord has called for a weekly Remembrance Day. Throughout history, there is much evidence that this has been hard to maintain, with devastating consequences. If we look at the history of Western Christianity, there has been a precipitous decline in church attendance. It has come to the point that if you attend once or twice a month, you are considered quite committed. Maintaining the weekly Remembrance Day has faced a new round of challenges, even for the committed, as actual attendance is limited to a few times a month, due to restrictions on

the size of crowds because of COVID-19. It takes effort and commitment to watch a live stream as it is broadcast, and not just catch the recorded version at a convenient time, and then just skip to the sermon right away. COVID is a test of our commitment to the weekly Remembrance Day. We desperately need to attend the weekly Remembrance Day ceremonies, lest we forget our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, yes, our Triune God, and the great price paid to obtain our freedom.

Governments make great efforts to keep Remembrance Day alive in the minds of the people, and it good that they do. If we forget, we come across as a thankless people, with a sense of entitlement, taking our freedoms for granted. As Christians, we must make great efforts to keep the weekly Remembrance Day alive in our minds and our actions. If we forget, if we cannot be bothered, we can lose in one generation what has been built up over many generations. We can be back in in the spiritual slavery of paganism in a flash.

It is worthwhile to take your family to the annual Remembrance Day ceremony. It is eternally worthwhile to take your family to the weekly Remembrance Day ceremony and reflect on the price paid for our freedom, namely, the precious blood of our Saviour. Let us strive to attend faithfully, lest we forget, and we lose our share in the freedom he obtained for us by his death. 

We desperately need to attend the weekly Remembrance Day ceremonies, lest we forget

# Is the Extra Mile Extra?

“And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” (Matthew 5:41)

**A**ncient Israelites ruled by the Roman Empire were subjected to what was called “angareuo” – compelled work without pay. At that time, this word referred especially to the Roman’s soldier right to conscript the local population into forced portering up to the required limit of one mile. Imagine, walking on the road with your family, when a Roman centurion pulls you aside, tells you to stop what you’re doing, and, instead, transport his load a mile down the road. A local Jewish zealot would have felt oppressed and humiliated. Surely, in such a case, a local Jewish man could stand up and fight for his rights. Surprisingly, in the Sermon of the Mount, the Lord Jesus tells his disciples that if someone asks them to go with them one mile, they should go with them two. From this verse we get our modern phrase, “Going the extra mile.”


In this phrase, the word “extra” is wonderful. Extra suggests that a person is exceeding expectation, going above and beyond the call of duty, and doing more than anyone might demand. Being a recipient of the surprising extra mile is an unexpected, confusing, and yet wonderful gift.

But is this extra mile really “extra”? If we consider our Lord’s teaching in this passage, we will notice the extra mile isn’t so extra.

Our sinful hearts always look to limit love, to require the least amount of self-effort and sacrifice. How much am I reasonably expected to love? Under what conditions can I stop loving? Who am I reasonably expected to love? Can I, or how can I, reinterpret the all-encompassing “neighbour” of Jesus to exclude certain individuals? Laws in the hands of selfish sinners become wonderful opportunities to limit love while still claiming righteousness. If I’ve done precisely what the law requires, have I not fulfilled the command of love?

King Jesus explains in Matthew 5 that anything short of the perfect righteousness of God cannot be called true love. In convicting fashion, he explains that God’s commandments expect a heart of love and expands the recipients of love to include even your enemies. Our King not only taught this, but also lived it. 1 John 3:16 helpfully tells us, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us.” True love did not stop short of giving all. Out of love, he turned the other cheek (Mark 15:19),

he gave the clothes off his back (Matt 27:35), and he walked the extra mile to the cross (John 19:17). He did this willingly, for he had the power to stop his tormentors at any moment. Never forget that at any moment he could have called legions of angels at a moment’s notice and ended the torment (Matt 26:53), and it would have been his “right” (Phil 2:1). Yet he did not stop his tormentors; instead, showing divine love, he died for us while we were still enemies (Rom 5:10). He did all this so that you and I might know true love and through his body be brought into the love of the Triune God.

Is such “extra mile” love only expected of Christ or also of us? 1 John 3:16 continues, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” Yes, if love could be fully defined by a set of laws, then the extra mile is extra, and love will inevitably be limited. However, for those who know God’s everlasting love and grace, the extra mile ceases to be an extra. Can someone demand the extra mile? No. But should you graciously give the extra mile? Yes, for you have come to know divine love. Next time you pat yourself on the back for “going the extra mile” perhaps instead thank God that you can say, by the grace of God, “I have only done my duty” (Luke 17:10). 

## For Further Study

1. The word “love” can be casually thrown around. Meditate on Matthew 5, Romans 5:10, and 1 John 3:16. As you do, ask yourself: based on Christ’s teaching and his sacrifice, what does true love look like?
2. Consider in your own life moments where you have encountered the extra mile. If you were the recipient, what was it like to receive an “extra mile”? If you were the giver, what motivated you to go the extra mile (2 Cor 5:14)?



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There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'

# Father Abraham

## One Hundred Year Retrospect

One hundred years ago, on November 8, 1920, Abraham Kuyper died. Who was he? What did God accomplish through him? What can we learn from him? Most importantly, Kuyper was a child of God, a Reformed leader of deep trust in God and strong convictions. In his day, his fellow Netherlanders called him "Father Abraham" and "Abraham the Mighty."

We can learn positively from his zeal, his consistent efforts to apply faith to life, and his conviction that the Reformed faith provides the best foundation for work in all areas of life, including education, the sciences, politics, the arts, and law. But we should also guard ourselves from adopting some of his unhelpful theological constructions, from endorsing his sometimes sexist and racist views, and from falling prey to workaholism and burnout.

Kuyper was struck by the consistency of the Reformed worldview and began to think about how to make this faith current and relevant to the liberals of his own time.

## Funeral

At Kuyper's funeral in The Hague on November 12, 1920, students of the university he founded followed the bier on foot, then fellow professors, leaders of the political party that he founded, publishers of his newspaper, and government cabinet ministers. Behind them came members of the Dutch royal family in a coach, members of his household staff, and others.<sup>1</sup>

This funeral occurred one hundred years ago, yet Kuyper's importance continues. In the last ten years, numerous works of Kuyper on the intersection of Christianity and culture have been translated into English for the first time and published, with two more in process.<sup>2</sup> Thus, his influence – at least outside of his native land – is likely to accelerate.

## Kuyper's life summed up

If one considers the course of Kuyper's life it will become clear why such prominent people made up his funeral procession.

Kuyper was born in 1837 in South Holland in a Reformed pastor's family. At the age of twenty-one, he had finished his bachelor's degree. Two years later, he won a medal in a national scholarship competition, and by the age of twenty-five, he had completed his doctoral degree. The next year he married and became a rural pastor. When he was thirty-five, he took over editorial duties of a daily newspaper *De Standaard* and its Sunday supplement, *De Heraut*. Over the course of his life thereafter, he held these duties and wrote thousands of articles for these papers. By the age of thirty-seven, he resigned from active ministry in the church to become a member of the Dutch Parliament.

Between forty and forty-three years of age, he founded a new political party, a Christian school association, and a society for a new "free" university. When he was forty-three, he opened this new university – the Free University, still in existence today. Between forty-six and forty-nine years of age, he led a major reformation of the mainline Reformed church, with ten percent of the congregations leaving it (the *Doleantie*) and then joining churches that had left the mainline church about sixty years earlier (the *Afscheiding*). In the decade following this, he wrote millions of words not just for his newspaper, but also for multi-volume works on theology and society. Throughout this time, he and his wife Jo received eight children, of whom one died in 1893 at age nine. Kuyper's wife died in 1899. The peak of his career occurred in 1901–1905, when Kuyper served as Prime Minister of The Netherlands (age sixty-four to sixty-eight).

Clearly, Kuyper was a great man, used by God for many worthy ventures and callings. We do well to learn from his life and writings, his successes and failures.

## A man of passion and breakdown

Most mortal men would despair of coming even close to Kuyper's accomplishments. In fact, he himself also despaired of this at times, when his nervous energy drove him to breakdown and depression. At the age of twenty-four, while feverishly writing his doctoral thesis, he suffered his first serious nervous breakdown, and took five months to recover. A similar event occurred after two years in Parliament, at age thirty-eight, and he needed almost eighteen months to recuperate, which he did in Italy, Switzerland, and France. Thereafter, he rigidly

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<sup>1</sup>My main source in this article is James D. Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013). Bratt's is the first scholarly biography on Kuyper in English. I have also consulted Jan de Bruijn, *Abraham Kuyper: A Pictorial Biography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014); and L. Praamsma, *Let Christ Be King: Reflections on the Life and Times of Abraham Kuyper* (Jordan Station: Paideia Press, 1985). If readers would like to have a copy of the present article with page references to my sources, they may email me at [tvnraalte@crts.ca](mailto:tvnraalte@crts.ca).

<sup>2</sup>The Kuyper Translation Society and the Acton Institute are working with Lexham Press to provide a 12-volume series called, *Abraham Kuyper Collected Works in Public Theology*. Completed volumes within the series include *Our Program, Common Grace* (3 vols), *Pro Rege* (3 vols), *On the Church, On Islam, and On Education*. Forthcoming volumes include *On Charity and Justice* and *On Business and Economics*. See <https://lexhampress.com/product/55067/abraham-kuyper-collected-works-in-public-theology>. Accessed 2 October 2020. Works of Kuyper already available in English include: *Principles of Sacred Theology, Lectures on Calvinism, The Problem of Poverty, Rooted and Grounded, Near Unto God, The Work of the Holy Spirit, Honey from the Rock, and Our Worship*. Other works are just now being translated as well, such as Kuyper's devotions on certain Psalms, under the title, *Ever in Thy Sight*.



maintained a daily schedule of morning devotions with family and servants, as well as a two-hour walk after lunch. He also commonly took a two-month vacation each summer, climbing in the Alps. Nevertheless, in yet a third occurrence of burnout, at the age of fifty-six, Kuyper nearly died and needed six months to repair his nerves and his lungs (he was prone to bronchitis). Finally, upon defeat of his party in the elections of 1905, Kuyper took a forty-week tour of the world of the Bible as part of his recovery, though in this case he was able to gather a wealth of information about these lands for a book of over a thousand pages that he would publish two years later.

Clearly, there were times when his passion and workaholicism got the better of him. One cannot doubt that these breakdowns came at enormous cost to his health and his relationship with his immediate family. Here already we can learn that it is better to pace oneself and meet *all* of one's responsibilities consistently than to burn oneself out in the pursuit of one particular calling, even if it be such a high calling as the pastorate, a professorship, or a political duty. A man's duty as husband and father is just as much a high calling from the Lord.

## Kuyper's conversions

Kuyper's intensity of character was also evident in his religious conversions. As a young adult at university Kuyper became a liberal – in his early twenties, he tried to convince his fiancée that she had no grounds to believe that the Bible was divine revelation or that God's Son had existed before the incarnation, and he added that he could not comprehend immortality after death or the need for Christ's blood to atone for human sin.

His first religious conversion occurred while reading a novel given to him by his fiancée. He was then seeking his first call to ministry, but was not receiving one, and came to recognize something of his own pride. He began to attend church – it seems hard to believe, but he had not been in the habit, in spite of seeking to become a pastor! He also confessed that he was a sinner in need of God's grace. This opened the way to a call by the church of Beesd.

In this pastorate, he was brought to a much fuller conversion as he encountered simple believers who challenged him to preach the truth of the Reformed faith. One young woman, Pietje Baltus, refused to hear his modernistic sermons, so he visited her. God used these conversations to send Kuyper into deep soul searching, reading, and praying. Kuyper was struck by the consistency of the Reformed worldview and began to

think about how to make this faith current and relevant to the liberals of his own time.

In spite of this spiritual progress, Kuyper took a step backwards one year after he had resigned from active ministry to become a member of Parliament (age thirty-seven). He attended a series of holiness movement meetings in England that were led by American Wesleyans. A spiritual "high" followed: He returned to his homeland so "full of the Spirit" that, while on the political campaign, he began to recount this as his third story of conversion. However, this feverish "high" gave way to his worst "low," his second nervous breakdown. After his recovery, he acknowledged the errors of the holiness movement – its perfectionism and Arminianism. Thereafter, he passionately promoted the Reformed faith as an entire worldview.

## Kuyper's newspapers and books

Kuyper's national pulpit was his daily newspaper, *De Standaard*, and its weekly supplement, *De Heraut*. From 1872 until almost 1920 – except during his breakdowns – Kuyper wrote daily columns. Under this regimen, he was able to write many of his books in serial fashion. For instance, Kuyper's three volumes on *Common Grace* first appeared over a six-year period in *De Heraut* (1895-1901). His meditations on death ran for three years after his own wife's death, and became a book, *Asleep in Jesus*. In 1907, he rolled out the first of many articles that would become his three-volume work, *Pro Rege*, regarding Christ's kingship in all of life. The effect on many Netherlanders of having a daily diet of Kuyper's writing cannot be underestimated. One of the keys of his political platform was his concern for the "little people," the common Netherlanders, and this came through both in his speeches and in his writings. To them he was indeed like a father, "Father Abraham."

## Kuyper's teachings: Christ's sovereignty

Kuyper's most repeated quotation comes from his lecture entitled "Sphere Sovereignty," given at the dedication of the Free University in 1880, when he argued, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" This was in part Kuyper's way of stating that while his university was to be "free" of state and church control, it was not to be free of Christ's oversight. In fact, his vision was that not only theology but also law and medicine would be taught from a Reformed standpoint.

let us pray at the same time that they may be humble, resting in the Lord when things do not go their way, knowing that while we are called to live for Christ in all areas of life, we cannot build the coming kingdom here on earth.

Kuyper was adamant that it was not possible to approach any of these subjects from a purely neutral standpoint. Every approach, he said, has some religious root, which is either for Christ or against him. After our Lord's death and resurrection, and especially upon his ascension, every little part of existence has come under his authority. Christians must acknowledge this in their scholarship as much as in society, politics, and the church. Christ is king, and as our king he asserts that we must make every lawful occupation part of our reasonable service to him; we must serve him in the new way of the Spirit. Every sphere of life – the family, the school, the church, the political party – needs to work from the same starting points of creation, fall, and redemption in Christ, who is now the King.

### **Kuyper's teachings: principled pluralism**

Christ's universal sovereignty challenged Christians to live consistently, so that their spiritual lives were not bits of piety isolated from the rest of life. It also motivated them to seek to guide society in light of Christ's claims, even to seek political power for his glory. However, Christ's universal sovereignty was not recognized by non-Reformed people. Thus, Kuyper came to promote a new vision for society, a kind of principled pluralism. He reasoned that the public tax monies should equally benefit each group and that each group should live according to its own principles, under its own banner, and with its own worldview. Thus, let the Roman Catholics live out their faith; let the social democrats live out theirs; and let the Reformed live out their own as well. Each group would operate their own schools, newspapers, hospitals, political parties, banks, sports clubs, etc., with public monies channelled to each of these three (or four) different "pillars." This model guided Dutch society for much of the twentieth century.

### **Kuyper's teachings: common grace**

The danger of dividing society into several different clusters or pillars, as Kuyper suggested, was that common ground would be lost. Each "pillar" would become a silo. Thus, Kuyper built up a theory about God's gifts for all humanity in which he explained

that all good done by unbelievers is due to "common grace." Common grace is what allows human societies to develop. Culture through the ages, all over the world, said Kuyper, was built by common grace. For our part, we agree that God gives such gifts, but whether to speak of this work of God as an act of *grace* is debateable. For his part, Kuyper considered his theory to be very Reformed, for it allowed him to emphasize total depravity, and then counter it with the doctrine of common grace to explain how totally depraved people could yet do moral and civic good. It was a powerful explanation, especially with Kuyper's genius pulling all of world history into the story, to show how God, by his common grace, had allowed particular gifts to develop among the particular races of the world.

### **Kuyper's teachings: regeneration**

One of the reasons why Kuyper theorized extensively about common grace was because his view of special grace was that it was *only* for the elect. God could not, in any sense, give any special grace towards the reprobate, only common grace. As a result, God's grace for the children of believers was only for the elect children. This then meant that they had to be presumed elect in order to be baptized, more precisely, that they had to be presumed to be regenerated. In the 1940s this theorizing of Kuyper came to be adopted by the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands as the only right way to understand the grounds for baptism. Our forefathers in the faith refused and were then deposed from office as ministers and elders. Thus began the Liberated Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, and, five years later, the first Canadian Reformed Churches.

In part because Kuyper was so adamant about God's sovereignty, he also adopted what is called a supralapsarian view of God's decree to elect. This means that he theorized that God in his mind first decided to elect sinners. Then, to obtain this goal, he decided to create, to permit the fall, and then to work out his election. There were various reasons of consistency why Reformed theologians debated supra- and infralapsarian approaches in the past, but let's just say that we cannot know the answer to such questions. It is better to leave such matters alone.

## Some other shortcomings

We should never be blind to the failings of great men. Even Moses and Paul described their own failings in Holy Scripture. All glory be to God alone, who uses sinful men and women to accomplish his good purposes!

So, if Kuyper's views on common grace and presumptive regeneration have their difficulties, we in our day will rightly be even more ashamed of his views on ethnic superiority. According to his most recent biographer, in *Common Grace*, Kuyper "bluntly set the white race over the yellow and the yellow over the black, with the red doomed to extinction in the wilds of North America." In Kuyper's studied opinion, seeing Arabs evoked his sense of beauty; the Dutch were rather common; but seeing Africans evoked in him a feeling that I will not repeat. I do not understand how Kuyper could write what he did about Africans and then go on to say that the image of God shows itself most fully in the spectrum of the whole human race. The latter statement is good, but the two statements together infer that certain strands of the image of God are not beautiful. This is wrong. Racism is sinful.

Kuyper's treatment of the woman who became his wife was also not always commendable. In her teenage years he chided her in a very condescending manner because of her lack of education. He wrote to her, "I'd rather shape a girl, teach her to think, raise her more and more up to the level where I stand." At the end of his life he also wrote to a friend about how his then deceased wife had turned every admonition of his into a complaint, "then aired them ceaselessly outside the family." Somehow Kuyper was blind to himself doing this in the very letter he was writing. I myself also find some of his expressions in his letters to friends and foes overly aggressive and manipulative. He was sometimes willing to invoke God for his cause just to get his way.


One other shortcoming of Kuyper's program was a lack of attention to gospel outreach. In his passion for cultural transformation, and in his compartmentalizing of Roman Catholics, Reformed, and social democrats, he neglected to speak of local mission work. Similarly, he had no place for Christian apologetics in the disciplines that should be taught at seminary. Perhaps his overemphasis on divine election led to such neglect, the

thought being that God will obtain his elect without our efforts and that Dutch Christians had no excuse for not knowing the gospel. Yet this disregard is surprising when one considers that he himself had been the object of domestic mission and apologetics, being brought from darkness to light through the efforts of the Reformed folk in Beesd (his first pastorate).

## What we can learn from Kuyper

We have seen that Kuyper was a great man who pushed Reformed Christians to be consistent and who gave them great encouragement that they had been granted a view of reality that is true, powerful, and equips them to be at the forefront of any area of life. We may be encouraged in this regard. Some of his theological constructions were unnecessary and unhelpful. When these were enforced as orthodoxy in the church in the 1940s men were unjustly deposed, but this was not Kuyper's fault. Some of his personal conduct and his views on race left much to be desired.

Still, there are times when we might pray that God would raise up more Kuypers, to boldly lead God's people vis à vis our culture. Yet let us pray at the same time that

they may be humble, resting in the Lord when things do not go their way, knowing that while we are called to live for Christ in all areas of life, we cannot build the coming kingdom here on earth. We live as a remnant, a minority, pilgrims, in anticipation of Christ's return. Yes, this is Christ's world, not Satan's. We are not exiles or strangers to God's creation, as some Christians incorrectly teach, but only to the worldly world that denies our Lord. Let us hold together our calling to live obediently for Christ our Victor and Lord in all spheres of life, every day, while also knowing that the glory belongs to him and the fullness of his kingdom is yet to come. 

The glory  
belongs  
to Christ and  
the fullness of  
his kingdom is  
yet to come.



**By Ted Van Raalte** *Professor of Ecclesiology*  
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# Carman West Welcomes the Slaa Family



On Sunday, August 16, Carman West Canadian Reformed Church was able, with thankfulness, to have their new co-pastor installed at their church. Pastor Slaa came to us from Smithers, British Columbia and will be co-pastoring with Rev. Pol until his retirement. Rev. S. C. Van Dam performed the installation service. He preached on 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and how the Lord gives his servant the charge to preach the Word. He proclaimed to Pastor Slaa and the congregation the character, the manner, and the importance of this charge. He reminded Pastor Slaa to be diligent in his preaching and encouraged the congregation to be open to the messages that will be proclaimed in the coming years from our new minister. After the service and installation were complete, we were able to hear letters of encouragement from the other churches in our classis.

In the PM service Pastor Slaa preached his first sermon to us on Isaiah 40:1-5. He preached on how God calls his servant to proclaim abounding comfort to his afflicted people. How they

must proclaim: that we are God's people, that we have been forgiven, and that God will bring us home.

On August 29, we as a congregation were able to personally welcome Pastor Slaa, his wife Miriam, and their children, Hannah, Sarah, Guido, and Titus, to Carman. Due to the COVID virus we were not able to have a typical welcome evening, but instead had a casual meet and greet. We gathered out in the country at a member's home and the different wards had set times where they could come and welcome our new minister and his family. There were refreshments and games to be played and good fellowship was had by all. Pastor Slaa was presented with detailed maps of the area, labelled with the location of members' homes, and with gift certificates to local businesses. The weather was beautiful and hopefully Pastor Slaa and his family made a good start on getting to know the congregation and feeling at home here in Carman. 



www.merf.org



## Hope in Beirut

On August 4 a huge explosion at the port in Beirut, Lebanon devastated it and surrounding neighborhoods, leaving miles and miles of destruction and rubble. About two hundred died, thousands were injured and hundreds of thousands of homes instantly became uninhabitable. Due to Lebanon’s severe economic crisis, tens of thousands of these families are not be able to fix their houses at all.

Quickly MERF team members in Lebanon organized volunteers from faithful churches with handymen to help those not able to help themselves to clean-up, assess and then fix windows, doors, plumbing etc. of homes not damaged beyond repair. Reaching people with the Gospel is at the core. Listening to suffering people, sharing Scripture and

prayers are an integral part of the project.

### *An update from the field:*

The way God is turning the tragedy into an opportunity to bring glory to His name is astonishing and encouraging. Just three weeks since the explosion, more than five hundred households have been directly touched by MERF’s emergency diaconal aid in Beirut. This project opened the door to build relationships with a community that we have been trying to reach with the message of the Gospel for years. Although there are several evangelical churches and others in the most affected areas, before this disaster residents largely kept to themselves. It was not easy to get close to them.

Now, as we do home visitations to assess and aid, we have had the chance to sit and talk with hundreds.

The MERF team in Lebanon has repaired more than 200 homes so far, distributed hundreds of meals, provided hundreds of food vouchers, replaced destroyed basic, necessary furniture and provided medications to many. They have also distributed thousands of sanitizers and masks.

Also, many Bibles, Scripture portions and gospel booklets were distributed. We had hundreds of conversations with people wondering why God would allow such a thing to happen and were able to share biblical answers. Tens have committed to attending a local Bible study.

Only four miles from the port, a MERF sponsored bookroom and outreach center was spared serious



Damage Assessment

Download MERF News at: [powerofchristatwork.net](http://powerofchristatwork.net)

Continued on back



Aid to the elderly

injuries when the explosion shattered glass and mangled door and windows frames. Now it has become central to MERF's Beirut Explosion Disaster Diaconal Relief Response. Here hearts are being touched by the Word of God. Many have visited since the explosion. All had the opportunity to hear the Gospel. As we pray with them and give practical help, they also are delighted to know many others are praying for them.

### Some personal stories:

- Hadi came after hearing about our work from a friend. His eyes revealed intense pain. As we sat with him, he explained how he and his wife and four chil-

dren had tragically lost their home and were now forced to live with relatives. Hadi shared his great devastation and hopelessness. Were it not for the sake of his family, he would have ended his own life. We prayed for him and explained what the Word of God teaches about our life and its purpose. Hadi listened with passion for over 40 minutes, then he asked for a copy of the Scriptures and R C Sproul's book "What is Reformed Theology?" published in Arabic by MERF. He said that he had never heard such teaching before. He always thought that God was unable to stop pain and suffering. Now Hadi realized God's majesty and how pain is only part of God's plan for the good of this world.

- Hoda is a 40 years old single lady whose dwelling place was affected by the explosion. Thus far, our team visited Hoda three times -- first to assess damage, second to fix windows and doors, and the third time we were invited to her home for lunch. Hoda said that she loves us, not because we have helped her fix her house, but because she was moved by the Word of God



that we shared with her.

- A team member arrived at a volunteer's home to deliver 20 grocery vouchers for him to distribute to specific needy families, but the volunteer, Joseph was not home. By phone, he arranged for the vouchers and booklets to be left with his neighbor. Joseph arrived to find that the neighbor had distributed the grocery vouchers to his own family and friends. Of course, Joseph was angry. He demanded that his neighbor pay for the vouchers distributed without permission. The neighbor apologized and collected and returned them. But the story doesn't end here. One family who had wrongly received a voucher from the neighbor and returned it, phoned

asking for help. They were struggling from losing their jobs in Lebanon's economic collapse. We invited them to come tell their story and were able to share both spiritual and material help. As he was leaving, the husband said, "God knows that the man leaving this place now is not the same man who entered."

*Please pray for Fairouz, who is still at the hospital because she was injured by the explosion.*

*Pray for our team, who are working until midnight every day.*

*Pray that God will open the hearts of many people who will join in Bible study.*

*Pray for us so that God will give us the wisdom to use the resources we have to bring glory to His name.*

### MERF-Canada

Thank you for your faithful support! Please make cheques payable to MERF-Canada and send them to the address at the bottom of the page.

Online donations can be made to Middle East Reformed Fellowship (Canada) Inc. through [www.merf.org/support](http://www.merf.org/support)



MERF volunteers provide food & literature

*"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."*

*— Galatians 6:10*

## To the Editor,

I certainly enjoyed Dr. de Visser's piece on Schillebeeckx and Schilder in *Clarion* (Aug 7, 2020). There was a clarity in his call to look to heavenly things first in our desire to be a light in this world. Mission and edification, the horizontal and the vertical, are not opposed to one another. It is when the members are most filled with Scripture, prayer, and through those things, deeds of love and mercy, that the churches light shines brightest.

However, I do have one concern as I read the article. Dr. de Visser warns about high expectations regarding the impact Christians can have on the world. Arguably, his caution is common among the Reformed establishment today. So, I do not write merely to him, but to many who tend pessimistic about the future of this world.

In contrast, I would argue that Christians ought to have the highest expectations about the impact that they can have on the world. Because of the resurrection.

The failure to articulate this is behind missional efforts that are so often stillborn. Trusting that the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord gives us patience and fortitude as we deal with stubborn and thick-headed non-Christians and Christians alike, as we go through our ministry seemingly without discerning real fruit.

The problem comes when Christians have high expectations based on their own strengths: a great apologetic, a wonderful church order, a great missional goal and vision, or a perfectly organized theology. We go then toward Schillebeeckx's heresies, where we focus on the things that are of this world rather than our assurance in Christ, seated at the right hand of God.

However, a low expectation about the Christian impact on society also comes from looking at the things below. We look at the success of evolutionary theory, the degradation of worship, the success of critical theory, and the growth of liberalism, and we grow pessimistic about our impact. This is what Judah does in Judges 1. She sees the chariots of iron of her enemies and decides to stay in the hills instead of following the command of God. This is the same lack of trust in Joash king of Israel when he only strikes the arrows on the ground three times in 2 Kings 13:14-19. Today, we see the success of anti-Christian ideologies and we are fearful.

But when we look beyond this world to the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ reigns, we can be confident. Not in our own wisdom, but with the wisdom of God, in the strength of the Spirit. We become less so that God may be greater.

We also undermine the practical power of the resurrection. Jesus died and rose again. Our society is dying, but Jesus has the power to make it alive again. That is something the Old Testaments saints did not have; the knowledge that their own flesh was alive and strengthening them in the task he had given them.

The ability of the church to impact society is ultimately something I believe by faith, not by sight. God gave a promise long ago to Abraham. The promise wasn't merely a promise to Abraham and his seed, but it was a promise that God would bless all nations through Abraham. That promise is repeated again and again through Scripture, not least in Revelation 21 where God promises that the nations will bring their riches and

glory into the city of God and Revelation 22 where the nations receive healing. (I am assuming this city in Revelation 21:9-22:5 refers to our present age. After all, there is no need for leaves for the healing of the nations, once all has been made perfect.)

This is the type of confidence that was foundational for so many martyrs to lay down their life in the early church and in the period of the reformation. Of course, martyrs come in many kinds, but certain theologies provide a better foundation for martyrdom than others.

I will continue to believe that the church will have a powerful impact on *this* world, even if I die while Western Civilization continues its descent into barbarism and perversion. But that's

## Response,

To my Former Student,

I appreciate the response of Rev. James Zekveld. The way he corrects me gently shows that he is a good student of Paul (1 Tim 5:1). His exhortation that we should have high expectations of what God can do in the world is a good reminder, especially (to quote from his letter) in times that Western civilization seems to descend into barbarism and perversion. As William Carey said: Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God!

Rev. Zekveld's response gives me the opportunity to set the record straight: Unfortunately, the wrong version of my article was published. Due to a miscommunication, a draft version made it into *Clarion* instead of the final version. When the mistake was discovered, it was already too late. The correct version was immediately posted on the *Clarion* website, but I imagine that few readers have noticed this.

As for the content, I can understand that Rev. Zekveld was not happy with the last paragraph of the article. I was not happy with it myself, which is why I revised it. For the benefit of Rev. Zekveld and other readers, here is the correct version of the last paragraph as it is found on the *Clarion* website:

In our time it is quite common to have high expectations regarding the impact Christians can have on the world. People speak about "transforming the culture" or "redeeming the city." Again, we can appreciate the zeal to be a blessing to the world. But we can learn from Schilder that we should not be too optimistic about the prospects of changing the society. More importantly, we

not in my strength or in my confidence in the church's institutions. It is through Christ, who strengthens me in this hope. It is through faith in the promises that God has given in Scripture. Finally, it is through love for the same world that Christ died for.

I truly love and respect Dr. de Visser and studying under him I learned to appreciate his patience, his kindness, and his love for truth and the church of God. Yet here I want to encourage him as a son to a father, do not be cautious in your expectations of what God might do!

*In Christ,*

Pastor James Zekveld

should watch out for the opposite effect: that instead of the church impacting the world, the world might have an impact on the church. Let's not underestimate the power of sin and worldliness! We are to be in the world but not of the world (John 17:14-16). The enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent continues to be a reality (Gen 3:15).

I would expect Rev. Zekveld to be more happy with this version than the one that landed on his reading desk, but perhaps only moderately so. I sense that there remains a difference between us with respect to our expectations regarding the impact the church will have on society. One could frame this in terms of being more optimistic versus more pessimistic. The more important question is what is *biblically realistic*. What does God's Word teach us about the impact the church may expect to have on society, especially in the end times? It is good to have high expectations, but it is not helpful to have false expectations. I will resist the temptation to respond to Rev. Zekveld's comment about Revelation 21:24 (the kings of the earth bringing their glory into the New Jerusalem). It's a big topic that would require much more space than what is available in this column.

Again, I thank my former student for the interaction and I wish him the Lord's blessing on his mission work.

Dr. Arjan de Visser



# S. G. De Graaf: Life, Influences, Theology

Perhaps some of you are familiar with the four-volume set on covenant history called *Promise and Deliverance*. If you are, you will probably know that the author of these four volumes is Rev. S. G. De Graaf. Perhaps you want to know a bit more about this man and his theology. Well, the author of the present volume, Rev. H. T. Wendt, minister of the Reformed Church of Waardhuizen, The Netherlands, revised the master's thesis he wrote at the Theological University of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands and published it in book form to help us understand De Graaf's life, theology, and the influences that shaped his theology.

Rev. S. G. De Graaf (1889-1955) was a pastor in the Reformed Church in The Netherlands, pastoring a church in Amsterdam for almost thirty years. He did not join the *Vrijmaking* or Liberation in 1944. As a youth, S. G. De Graaf experienced a mixed upbringing in the Dutch state church and the Reformed church. As a student, he was especially influenced by the views of Bavinck and his pastor in Amsterdam, J. C. Sikkel. As a pastor, he realized how the covenant of grace was needed to give people assurance concerning their salvation. The world De Graaf lived in was marked by deep uncertainty and confusion because of two world wars. This had its own effect on the churches. The Reformed churches he ministered can be divided into three groups: a conservative group, which wanted to adhere to all of the teachings of Kuyper and Bavinck; a middle-orthodox group, which was more focussed on experience and synthesis; and a group known as the Reformed Movement that

H. T. Wendt, **S. G. De Graaf:**  
*Life, Influences, Theology:*  
*A Preliminary Study*

Inheritance Publications,  
Neerlandia. 141 pages.  
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challenged some of the teachings of Kuyper and Bavinck, such as, the pluriformity of the church, common grace, and the covenant and baptism. Whereas some divided the covenant up into an external and internal covenant, contrasting the covenant of grace with the covenant of works and strongly emphasizing election, others rejected this distinction, seeing a continuation of the covenant of grace with the covenant of works and thus strongly emphasizing the obligation of man in the covenant. In this social, ecclesiastical, and doctrinal environment, De Graaf developed his theology of the covenant.

Central to De Graaf's covenant theology is the glory of God, for God creates and saves for the sake of his own glory, i.e. that his people would share in the fellowship of his love in Christ through the Holy Spirit and serve him in his kingdom through being obedient to him. Through the covenant God shows us how to do this. That is why God made a covenant with Adam in Paradise. Initially, De Graaf referred to this as a "covenant of works," because in this covenant Adam would have to earn eternal life. Later he rejected this term and referred to it as a "covenant of favour," because Adam would inherit eternal life by accepting God's favour and remaining in it by responding to God's love with his love. After Adam fell into sin, God made a new covenant with him, viz. a covenant of grace. Initially, De Graaf considered this covenant to be a replacement of the covenant of God's favour. Later, however, he considered it to be a renewal of this covenant. De Graaf was fond of comparing this covenant to a marriage, in which God gives his love to us and we respond to his love with our love in a way that living in

God's covenant becomes everything for us. The flame of his love for us kindles a flame of our love in return. However, because we do not always respond to God's love with our love, this same flame of love consumes everything that is not responsive to his love in our lives.<sup>1</sup>

De Graaf describes responding to God's love in faith as surrendering ourselves to God and resting in what he has promised. When we do, we enter into a relationship that was determined in eternity, according to De Graaf. Because the covenant of grace is made with the church, members of the church have a right to what God has promised. The sacrament of baptism is a sign and seal that God has bound himself to us in love and obligated himself to be merciful. Consequently, parents and children receive the assurance of God's love for them by resting in the promises of their baptism.

Because De Graaf stressed that God made his covenant with the church and that faith is resting in what God has promised, the author believes that De Graaf's theology of the covenant is a powerful antidote to individualism and subjectivism of our day. Wendt's book is only a preliminary study. His desire is that in the future a bilingual (Dutch-English) "Complete Works" will be published.

I enjoyed reading Wendt's book. If you are interested in reading more about how the flame of God's love is meant to function in the life of the church, I would recommend that you purchase a copy of the book (<http://inhpubl.net/products/17601>). Heartily recommended. 

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<sup>1</sup>The title of Wendt's Master's thesis is: *The Love of the Lord is a Flame: The Covenant Theology of S.G. De Graaf in the context of his Work and Life.*

# Psalm 119: 15-22 Part 3 of 3

An Acrostic (O-W)



15. Out with the dou-ble-mind-ed! Let them flee! O Hid-ing-Place, please keep me safe for-ev-er.



Out-side of God there is no place to go. Of all the "gods" the Lord a-lone is right-eous.



Our God speaks words that I will al-ways do. Ought I not trem-ble fear-ing God my Mas-ter?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>16. Protect, O LORD, the justice of my cause.<br/>Pledge to me, God, some good to show you love me.<br/>Pining away my eyes look up to you.<br/>Pity your servant for he loves your treasure<br/>Prized far above the finest gold on earth.<br/>Praised be your precepts loved by all the righteous.</p> <p>17. Remarkable are all your holy laws<br/>Revealed by you to give me understanding.<br/>Return to me and all who love your name.<br/>Rule over me that I may walk uprightly.<br/>Redeem me from the ways of evil men.<br/>Rivers of tears I shed for man is sinful.</p> <p>18. Steadfast and true are all God's rules and ways.<br/>Strict righteousness is what the Lord finds pleasing.<br/>Small and despised seem I, but blest am I:<br/>Servant of God who does his Master's bidding.<br/>Suffering always is my lot in life<br/>So I depend upon your word eternal.</p> <p>19. That I may keep your statutes, answer me!<br/>To you I cry, save me your humble servant.<br/>Toward the dawn I look with anxious heart.<br/>Throughout the night I dwell upon your promise.<br/>Teach me to trust in you my only Help.<br/>Then I will stand against the persecutor.</p> | <p>20. Under affliction is your servant, Lord.<br/>Uphold my cause and give me life eternal<br/>Unknown to those who do not seek your laws.<br/>Unnumbered are your gifts to those who serve you.<br/>Upset the faithless and the reprobate.<br/>Unchanging is your word of truth forever.</p> <p>21. Vexatious persecutors fill the earth.<br/>Victorious am I for the LORD sustains me.<br/>Villains I loathe because they hate your law.<br/>Value, I pray, my sevenfold thank-offr'ing.<br/>Votive fine gifts I sacrifice to you.<br/>Vast is my love for all your testimonies.</p> <p>22. Where shall I look for wisdom in this life?<br/>Will you not save me as you once had promised?<br/>What sort of praise shall pour forth from my lips?<br/>Would you but move your hand to save your servant!<br/>Whene'er I stray like sheep that run away<br/>Welcome me back for I love your commandments.</p> |
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## Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary held on September 10, 2020

### Opening and Roll call

The chairman of the Board, Rev. J. D. Louwerse, led in opening devotions. All governors were present; some in person and some via Zoom. The Board meeting was conducted via some of the new audio and video technology installed to allow CRTS to provide distance education due to COVID-19. Dr. J. Van Vliet was present as Principal and sr. L. Kuizenga was present as requested to take the minutes of the meeting.

### Memorabilia

Information was shared about the personal circumstances of emeriti professors, as well as widows of professors. These include sisters Deddens and DeJong, and Dr. N. H. Gootjes, Dr. C. Van Dam, and Dr. G. H. Visscher and their spouses. Professor J. Geertsema was taken home to be with the Lord this past March.

### Minutes and Agenda

The minutes of the meeting held on January 16, 2020 were approved. The agenda for the meeting was established. Matters on the action log were reviewed.

### Decisions, Reports, Agenda Items

1. Outgoing correspondence to various committees at CRTS and to the churches was reviewed. Two of the churches responded in a gracious way to this correspondence. The Board is thankful for the support of the churches.
2. A "Fall 2020 Committee" reported on the measures that needed to be taken to reopen CRTS in the Fall of 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. CRTS's approach to the new school year was to teach face-to-face as much as possible and hybrid/online only as much as is necessary. Six of seven of our international students have not been able to get visas or to travel to Hamilton. As a result, CRTS needed to offer its courses in a hybrid model, teaching in class, while making the lectures available to students studying abroad. This has required adjustments to how

professors teach their courses; extra training was taken, and support made available for teaching online students effectively. Close to \$80,000 was spent on audio and video equipment and software and web services. This is to allow lectures to be livestreamed and students to participate in class, as well as integrating interaction between professors, students, and staff in one cohesive system. Personal health criteria were adopted so that all those coming into the CRTS building know how to self-screen for COVID-19. Hygiene and cleaning protocols, and physical distancing measures were put in place. This committee will continue monitoring the COVID-19 situation.

3. The Board received a "Metrics Report," which provides feedback allowing the Board to evaluate how well the Seminary is functioning. This report was received with thankfulness, and it will be used in next year's strategic planning session.
4. The Distance Education Committee gave an extensive report on its work. Due to COVID-19, CRTS has moved ahead with a hybrid method of teaching for at least the fall semester, and probably for the 2020-21 academic year. Yet this report considers the long-term desirability of teaching at least some of our students via distance education. The committee recommended approving a guiding principle for distance education that: "CRTS should make an accredited, hybrid mode of its programs available to prospective students when a good argument can be made that this is the best option available for their particular circumstances." Face-to-face instruction is extremely valuable, because training for the ministry involves whole person growth. Being part of a seminary community and participating in the spiritual formation program are critical parts of CRTS's program, and these things are difficult to replicate on-line. Nevertheless, there are students who cannot get a Canadian visa, or who cannot come to Canada because of extenuating circumstances such as health, persecution, etc.

There may also be circumstances where there are significant differences between the cultural context and the standard of living in a student's home country and Canada. In such circumstances it may be necessary or preferable to teach students from a distance. The Board mandated the Senate and the Distance Education Committee to continue working on the implementation of a distance education program, and to provide a brief update on their work in January 2021, and a full report to the Board in September 2021.

5. A committee established to investigate a further emphasis on mission and church planting at CRTS reported to the Board. It recommended that training for evangelistic and missionary ministry be seen as an integral part of the Master of Divinity Program. It proposed that when a comprehensive review of the Master of Divinity Program is done, a specific course on church planting be included in the curriculum. It outlined some possibilities for post-graduate training in church planting and mission. The Board received this report with thankfulness, considers that the mandate of this committee has been fulfilled, and thanks the committee for its work.
6. The Board decides to conduct a Strategic Planning session in September 2021, and some preliminary plans for this are discussed.
7. The Executive Committee presented a proposal for how to involve the Australian Deputies for Theological Education so that they can interact with matters being addressed as Board, and how to allow for further communication with the Curators for Theological Education of the South African churches.
8. Revs. J. Slaa and J. Poppe reported on lecture visits to CRTS on March 20 & 23, 2020. Due to COVID-19 these visits were conducted via Zoom. This report was received with thankfulness.
9. The Finance and Property Committee presented the CRTS annual budget for 2021, and it was approved. It presented the financial statements for 2019, and these were formally approved. The Finance and Property Committee will commence a planned capital drive later this year, in order to raise funds for building maintenance and improvements, and distance education. Minutes of their meetings since

January 2020 were provided for information. The health and safety policy was approved by the Board.

10. The Governance Committee submitted proposals on various matters to update the CRTS Handbook. The By-law on "Resolutions by Mail" was updated to reflect that most of our communication takes place electronically. The By-law of the "Definition of a dependent" was specified more clearly. The By-law relating to "Sabbaticals" was adjusted to give more time to make final arrangements for a proposed sabbatical. A proposed By-law about "Freedom of Inquiry" for the librarian was sent back to the committee for further consideration. The changes to the By-laws need to be submitted to General Synod for final adoption.
11. Margaret Alkema was present for the next portion of the meeting as ATS Coordinator. CRTS belongs to the Association of Theological Schools, and in 2019 and 2020 we went through the accreditation process. ATS has reaffirmed the accreditation of CRTS for a period of ten years (the longest period possible under their guidelines). The Board is very thankful for the immense amount of work put in by our Assessment Coordinator, faculty, and staff to make this result possible. ATS has mandated that CRTS give attention to certain areas of needed growth, and it will require some follow-up reporting. An ATS Institutional Peer Profile Report 2019-20 and an ATS Strategic Information Report 2019-20 were received for information.
12. Margaret Alkema was also present for the discussion of the Annual Report of the Assessment Coordinator, the Minutes from Assessment Day (May 20, 2020), and the Alumni Survey 2020. These reports were received with thankfulness. The Board spent some time considering the workload of our professors and staff. This matter will be further considered at our strategic planning session next September.
13. The principal presented his principal's report, and it was received with thankfulness. The Chairman reported on a positive review of the work of our principal, who has dealt admirably in his role with all the extra pressures last year, including accreditation, fiftieth anniversary celebrations, COVID-19, and distance education.

**14.** The Senate recommended the appointment of two new adjunct lecturers for catechetics. The Board approved the appointment of Mr. Jack Huizenga and Mr. Menco Wieske, full time lecturers at the Covenant Canadian Reformed Teacher's College, to give a few lectures in the Catechetics courses. Dr. A. J. De Visser presented a final copy of his Sabbatical Proposal and the principal gave an evaluation of it. These were approved by the Board. The Senate also recommended the appointment of an adjunct lecturer for Fall 2020 in the Ministry and Mission Course, while Dr. De Visser is on sabbatical. The Board approved the appointment of Rev. J. De Gelder.

**15.** The following annual reports were received with thankfulness: course work report, registrar's report, library report, website report, convocation committee report, Faber-Holwerda bursary report, publication foundation report, conference report, foreign student bursary report, and the lecture schedule for 2020-21.

**16.** Dr. J. Van Vliet reported on his attendance at the Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents conference. Also this report was received with thankfulness.

## New business

1. Lecture visits were organized for semesters 1 and 2 of the 2020-21 school year.
2. The date of the next Board Meeting was set for January 14, 2021 at 10:00 am.

## Press release and closing

The completion of the Press Release was delegated to the vice-chairman in consultation with the Executive and the Principal. Rev. M. H. van Luik closed the meeting with prayer.

*On behalf of the Board of Governors  
of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary,  
Rev. J. Poppe (Vice-chairman)*



# ASK A QUESTION

Is there something you've been wanting to know?  
An answer you've been looking for? Send us your  
most thought provoking questions to explore  
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Please send questions to **William den Hollander**, *Minister emeritus*  
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Wedding announcements, anniversaries (especially those with an open house) should be submitted **six weeks** in advance.

**HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY  
TO OUR DEAR HUSBAND, DAD AND GRAMPA  
NICK NYENHUIS  
1940 - NOVEMBER 23 - 2020**

*"I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock  
and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock,  
in whom I take refuge" Psalm 18:1-2a*

We are thankful to God for His loving care and guidance over the past 80 years and pray that Nick will be blessed with many more. A wonderful blessing that we, his wife, children and grandchildren, may be able to celebrate this milestone with him D.V.

*His loving and grateful wife, children and grandchildren,*

**Betsy Nyenhuis (nee Slomp)**

Brookings, SD **Jacqueline** (nee Nyenhuis)  
**& Gene Stegeman**  
Fargo, ND Derek Jelsma  
Brookings, SD Laura Jelsma  
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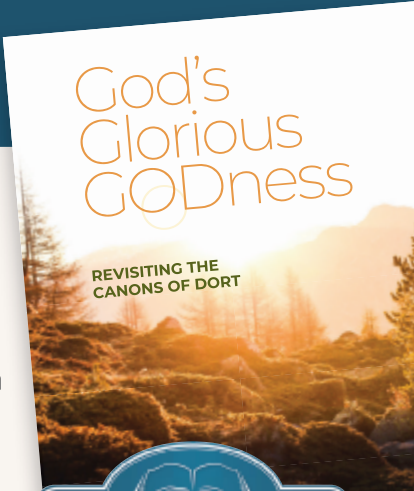
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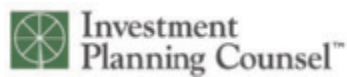
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