

# Clarion



ONE CHURCH

CONSIDER THE CITY

PREACHING TODAY!

# What's Inside

**W**hile our federation confesses one church in our creeds, we observe that our world is full of many churches and federations. This is the topic of Dr. Jason Van Vliet's lead article, "One Church."

We are thankful to have an article from Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes in this issue, "Consider the City." It is followed by an article entitled, "Preaching Today!" by Pieter Boonstra (translated by Pieter Torenvliet).

Issue 24 contains the regular columns Treasures, New & Old and Ray of Sunshine. There is also a press release from the CRTS Board of Governors.

*Laura Veenendaal*

- |                                 |                             |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>667</b> One Church           | <b>675</b> Preaching Today! |
| <b>671</b> TREASURES, NEW & OLD | <b>679</b> PRESS RELEASE    |
| <b>672</b> Consider the City    | <b>681</b> RAY OF SUNSHINE  |

**On our cover:**  
*Wake up for the sunrise,*  
Juan Rojas, Toronto, Canada.

# Clarion

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LEAD ARTICLE



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# One Church



“We believe *one* holy catholic and apostolic church.” We confess this in the Nicene Creed. Indeed, millions of Christians around the world affirm this creed. Still, do you sense an irony here? The millions of Christians who uphold this article of faith belong to hundreds, even thousands, of different church federations. How can we truthfully speak of *one church* when there are so many different *churches*?

## How can we truthfully speak of one church when there are so many different churches?

Bringing things closer to home, within our Reformed congregations we commonly sing, or recite in unison, the Apostles' Creed each Sunday. Like its creedal cousin, the Apostles' Creed also speaks of the church of Christ in the singular. In Hymn 1 of the *Book of Praise* we sing, "I believe a holy catholic church," not churches. But is this catholic, or worldwide, church of Christ really one? Worldwide there are about 45,000 different Christian church groups, increasing at a rate of nearly two percent per year.<sup>1</sup> Can we honestly sing about one catholic church every Sunday again?

Despite the apparent irony, the answer is "yes, we can," so long we understand correctly what we are singing. Understandably, our attention is immediately drawn to the word "one," but the key lies in the word "believe." A voice from the past helps us grasp this.

### Theses concerning the Church

That there is a church, one cannot see but *only believe*. Every attempt to determine the "essence" of the church ... on the basis of what one observes here in this world, or on the basis of axioms other than those which Scripture has *revealed*, is therefore a work of unbelief - even if the results include a number of truths. Finding (inventing) truths is a form of pride, also in this connection.

Professor Klaas Schilder penned these words back in 1935, but they remain relevant today. The quotation above is the first of his nineteen "Theses concerning the Church."<sup>2</sup> Overall, these theses offer us a challenging, but valuable, read. In his first thesis,

Schilder drives home one basic point: our teaching concerning the church must arise from what we believe, not what we see, from what God reveals in Scripture, not what we experience in our lives. Also concerning the church, we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7).

Such an obvious truth would not require much emphasis were it not for the fact that all of us forget it so frequently. Listen carefully in the next conversation you have with someone about the church of Christ. How many thoughts exchanged could be prefaced with, "In this particular passage of Scripture we learn the following about the bride of Christ...?" By contrast, how many statements could begin with "In my experience in the church..." or "Based on what others have told me about what happened to them in the church...?"

Please do not misunderstand. It is not wrong to share our experiences. But, as Schilder points out, those experiences and observations do not provide the correct basis upon which to build our doctrine of God's church. As we confess in Lord's Day 7, we believe that which God *reveals*, not that which we observe.

### Confessing our God based on our observations?

To make this point even more clear, imagine that we would base our teaching about God himself on what we observe. Close to one billion people go to bed hungry each day. Millions of them die from malnutrition each year. Annually tens of thousands of people die from hurricanes and floods; the winds and the waves sweep away the possessions and livelihood of millions. Based on these observations, can we still speak of a *merciful* God? Or, if he is merciful, can he really be *sovereign* over all things? Also the tsunami that inundates an unsuspecting village of poverty-stricken families?

Of course, we could balance things out with brighter observations. Although many go hungry each day, many more - almost eight times as many - are well-fed. Despite numerous natural disasters, the world economy steams ahead, through bull and bear markets alike. Yet even if we combine this positive data with the negative statistics, are we any further ahead concerning a correct understanding of the one true God? We might well

<sup>1</sup> [www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity)

<sup>2</sup> *Canadian Reformed Magazine*, Vol. 21.17 (Aug 19, 1972), 1-3. Schilder's theses can be found online at <https://spindleworks.com/library/schilder/19thesis.htm>.

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# Building a doctrine of our God based upon our human observations and experiences is an unmitigated disaster

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conclude that God is unjust or inconsistent, giving extraordinary riches to some while afflicting others with abject poverty.

Clearly, building a doctrine of our God based upon our human observations and experiences is an unmitigated disaster. More than that, as Schilder would say, it is unbelief and pride. Why, then, would it be any different with the doctrine of God's church?

## Confessing God's church based on divine revelation

Thankfully, our ecumenical creeds are consistent and correct. They use the same verb, "believe," concerning our triune God, and the church of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection of the dead.

In this respect, the Belgic Confession speaks the same language. The last sentence of Article 29 easily perplexes us: "These two churches [i.e., true and false] are easily recognized and distinguished from each other." With some 40,000 different church groups in the world, how can that statement ever be realistic? Our ecclesiastical *experiences* indicate otherwise.

However, we quickly forget that this article, just like almost every other article in the Belgic Confession, begins with the words "we believe," not "we see." We affirm these truths not "on the basis of what one observes here in this world, or on the basis of axioms other than those which Scripture has *revealed*."

In Scripture God reveals that his church is one. From the letter to the Ephesians, we learn that just as surely as there is "one Spirit," there is "one body" (4:4), which is "the church ... the fullness of him who fills all in all" (1:22-23). That the church is one also makes perfect *scriptural* sense because the church is the bride of Christ (Eph 5:23-33), and Christ is betrothed to one Royal Lady not many different women (2 Cor 11:2-23).

So long as we profess our creed with the Word of Christ dwelling richly in our hearts (Col 3:16), we should have no

hesitation to sing "And I *believe* a catholic church / one holy Christian congregation" (*Book of Praise*, Hymn 2).

## Concerns and conundrums

Yet, shortly after the words of the Apostles' Creed leave our lips, we turn to face the realities of daily life again. We meet sincere Christians who are members of churches that hold to certain false teachings that cannot be squared with Scripture. Now what?

We do not want to come across as sectarian, affirming that our own federation of churches is the only true church, yet when we reach out to other faithful churches and try to express our God-given spiritual unity in a well-organized, ecclesiastical union, the efforts often stall because of present distinctives and past baggage. Now what? (By the way, Schilder himself was a strong *opponent* of sectarian views of the church, as any honest reading of his writings will confirm.)

One small article in this magazine will not solve all these challenges and conundrums. Far from it! The Lord willing, in the new year, in the next volume of *Clarion*, there will be opportunity to work out some practical implications of this in more detail. At a minimum, though, we can now orient our compass in the right direction, in the first place, by identifying the wrong route. Some seek to solve these conundrums with distinctions. They may say the *invisible* church is one, but the *visible* churches are, sadly, many. Or they propose that we enjoy *organic* unity with faithful Christians in other church federations but simply admit that *institutional* union is a bridge too far.

Such distinctions may provide a degree of intellectual relief, for now there is a "system" by which we can start sorting through the complexities of the church "by schisms rent asunder." But from where do these axioms - visible and invisible, organic and institutional - arise? From Scripture? Without slipping into the error of biblicism, we should admit that even if such distinctions

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## And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband

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“include a number of truths,” to borrow Schilder’s phrase, they arise more from our observations and our desire to resolve church conundrums than from careful scrutiny of divine revelation. In the end, setting our sights and our hopes on a collection of distinctions will disappoint us and, more importantly, dishonour our God.

### Living faith

That still leaves the question, “What now? Where, then, should our compass be pointed?” With the church of all ages and places, we began with “we believe,” so let us keep walking in that path of faith, without veering off onto sight-based sideroads.

Faith expresses itself in action, or as the apostle James writes, “Faith apart from works is dead” (2:26). Since God reveals his church to be one, and we believe what God says, we then also strive for fulsome unity without flagging in zeal and without failing to pray (Rom 12:11, 12). We fret not if the progress seems small or non-existent to us. Our Lord has not said that faith apart from “complete accomplishment” is dead, but rather faith apart from “works” is dead. There is a difference. So, we carry on: *ora et labora*.

We strive for fulsome unity that is in complete submission to the Word of God - nothing less and nothing more. Some may regard this as out of touch with reality. Yet, with the Word of Christ in Ephesians, we say, “To this our gracious God has called us.” Surely the bride of Christ “should submit in everything” to her heavenly and perfect Husband (5:24). Indeed, in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession we agree together that we *believe* precisely this: “In short, [the church] governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head.” Walking that path will be hard, but in humble submission we keep following our Head.

So, with the compass of our hearts oriented by faith, we step forward again, confident that one day we will also see. Not today. Perhaps not tomorrow. Perhaps not even twenty years from now. No one knows the day or hour, except God. But one Day, by the sovereign grace of our God and when the angelic trumpet sounds, we will also see *one* church.

“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a *bride* [not brides] adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:2). **C**

# Coming Times of Difficulty


*“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty” (2 TIMOTHY 3:1)*

Many people who read what Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:1 might be reminded of our Lord Jesus’s warnings of false Christs, wars and rumours of war, nation rising up against nation, famines, earthquakes, persecution, and betrayal (cf. Matt 24:4-14). Some may even wonder if the COVID virus and its global consequences are a sign of the beginning of these “times of difficulty.” However, although the apostle confirms that the church today is living in the last days mentioned in our text, he also shows that the difficult times are much more pervasive than the events of our day.

When the apostle writes about “coming times of difficulty,” this is not a prophecy of a coming natural catastrophe, but it is a prophecy of increasing godlessness. “Evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim 3:13). This godlessness will even be found among people who call themselves religious and believe themselves to be righteous in God’s sight. People will have the appearance of godliness, but deny its power (2 Tim 3:5). The greatest threat to the church in all times and places in the world, in all its different circumstances, is that godless people gain a foothold and lead people astray in their deception (cf. 2 Tim 3:6-9). More terrible than the uncertainty caused by a virus are the sins that are exposed by our response to this hardship. The Holy Spirit lists these sinful thoughts and attitudes in 2 Timothy 3:2-4 so that we might fight against them in our own hearts.

Paul urges Timothy and all God’s servants to understand that if you desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, you need to focus your attention on your hearts and the source of your knowledge. When we become overly focused on the debates concerning the interpretation and correct response to challenging times of war, persecution, and natural catastrophes, we end up living a life that is controlled by those circumstances, rather than by God’s Word. Herein lies the struggle. Are our positions and responses to others who are facing the same difficult circumstances determined by our sinful desires (cf. 2 Tim 3:2-4), or by

the sacred writings which are able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Tim 3:15)? If we merely have the appearance of godliness, calling ourselves Christians, but are fighting the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we actually become the difficulty in these last days, and are more dangerous to the church than any virus.

The power of the gospel can be seen when Christians keep in step with the Holy Spirit and distinguish themselves by their godliness. Paul makes a strong contrast between the people with corrupt minds who are disqualified regarding the faith (2 Tim 3:8) and those who follow his teaching, his conduct, his aim in life, his faith, his patience, his love, his steadfastness, and his endurance in persecutions and sufferings (cf. 2 Tim 3:10-11). We are indeed living in very difficult times in these last days before our Lord Jesus returns. Whether we are experiencing peace or plague, people are lovers of self, lovers of money and pleasures, proud, and unkind. May the Lord help his church to stand out for being completely different in these last days. Look to your own hearts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart (2 Tim 2:22). 

## For Further Study

1. Use 2 Timothy 3:2-4 to identify the sins you need to fight against in your own heart.
2. What does 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5 highlight as distinguishing Christian characteristics?



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A photograph of a busy city street at dusk or dawn. The street is filled with cars, including a prominent orange taxi in the foreground. Buildings line both sides of the street, and traffic lights are visible. The word "Consider the City" is overlaid in large white text. The word "Consider" is in a smaller font, and "the" is in a very small font. "City" is the largest word, with a large dot on the 'i'.

# Consider the City

**A**t 8 a.m. on a Monday morning, I stepped on the GO Train at Gormley Station heading south to Union Station in Downtown Toronto. Being a terminal station (Richmond Hill, where I live is on the outskirts of the “city”), the train was empty when I boarded, but at each subsequent station it quickly filled up, with hundreds of people waiting to board. As the train snaked south, green valleys, river crossings, and pockets of forest whizzed by. For a moment, I wondered, “Was I heading into the city?” Then I remembered: railway lines tend to slither through small slivers of “green space” with valleys and trees shielding the view of the city. These spaces are small, but treasured, mementos of nature within city limits. Eventually, the greenery disappeared, and skyscrapers loomed beside railway lines as we approached Union Station.

Union Station in Toronto serves as transportation hub for subway, trains, streetcars, and buses. Over 200,000 people from every tribe, nation, and tongue spill through the Grand Hall on an average business day (pre-COVID). Above ground, trains

and buses rumble in from the surrounding cities and towns to the inner city. Underground, the subway whisks by every two or three minutes, shuttling people throughout the inner city, until, like groundhogs, they pop out streetside into the urban centre next to work or home. An underground network of tunnels, shops, and food courts (the “PATH”) connect skyscrapers in the city centre - making it possible for a person to move about the city without ever braving the biting cold winds of winter.

As I burrowed out of Union Station, I was dwarfed by skyscrapers and crowded by thousands of image-bearers, all making their way somewhere to do something. It being a Monday, there was both a determinedness filling the air and an atmosphere of easy distraction that lingers over memories of the weekend. I made my way to Quantum Coffee, a well-known coffee shop advertised as, “a destination for quality coffee born out of a passion for connecting people and ideas.” There I sat down, paused, and reflected.

I escaped into the city and the city was magnificent.



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## In the city, people learn to work together, with diverse backgrounds and gifts, to produce works of wonder; a creative wonder made possible as image-bearers of a glorious God.

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Iconically, soaring above the cityscape, the CN Tower reaches high into the sky. Tourists stand gazing upward, dwarfed in its shadow. Tickets are purchased, groups are herded into the elevator and whisked to the top. Up high, they stand on the 6 cm thick glass floor and stare 342 meters straight down. They circle the top of the viewing deck and look out to see an endless landscape of skyscrapers, condos, highways, and streets. An imaginative mind can visualize the entire subterranean city of tunnels, pipes, subways, sewers, foundations, and parking garages. Like roots of a tree, the city extends many meters below ground. Toronto, like many great cities, is a modern engineering marvel.

But engineering isn't the only thing to marvel at in Toronto. At the Roy Thompson Hall, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra gives an exquisite, awe-inspiring performance of Handel's Messiah. At the Scotiabank Arena, speed, agility, and reflex combine in another wizardly goal by Austin Matthews. At the Art Gallery of Toronto, exquisite artistry of colour and form capture the imagination and transport tourists to other realms. The Science Centre documents the work of great physicists, chemists, astronomers, and inventors.

And these are all finished products. We haven't toured the countless creative meetings and brainstorming sessions where people are thinking, designing, creating, developing, composing, building, and practicing. In the city, people learn to work together, with diverse backgrounds and gifts, to produce works of wonder; a creative wonder made possible as image-bearers of a glorious God. In surveying the ancient engineering marvel

at Babel, the LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language, they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them" (Gen 11:7, NIV). In the city, a small glimpse of the potential of humanity is seen.

And yet, like a hollowed-out pumpkin, there's a profound sense of emptiness and rot, as if, despite all the striving of busy crowds, the glory is on verge of collapse. The magnificence is somehow missing the mark and lacks enduring quality (Ps 90:4-6).

As a pastor my life is devoted to declaring the glory of God among the nations. Yet how can we do so in a city where everything seems to cry out, "Come and see the glory of man! See the wonders he has done." In nature, the smallness of humanity is clear, and the vast glory of the creative God is on the display. "When I look at your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon, and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?" (Ps 8:3-4, ESV) Does the city undermine this message, or can we see the same thing in the city? I believe we can.

Allow to me to offer four points for your reflection.

### **First, the city is magnificent and testifies to a glory**

This is unmistakable. The ingenuity, creativity, and ability of humanity is incredible, and time after time, there is something to marvel at. In some ways, a person can have a similar awe-inspiring experience touring the city, surveying the cityscape from the CN Tower viewing deck, enjoying a concert, or visiting an

art gallery as one can have laying underneath a star-lit sky. We should not diminish this truth or feel that we need to suppress the “Ooh” or the “Wow.”

## **Second, we must remember humanity is part of the “things that have been made” that declare God’s eternal power and divine nature (Rom 1:20)**

God created creation, all of it, and Adam and Eve were the crowning achievement of his creation. God declared his glory in creation as he saw what he had made and declared it good. The only part of creation that was not good was a man alone (Gen 1:18). So, God created the woman, Eve, and in her creation God’s glory was magnified. “God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen 1:31, ESV). God tells us, “God’s invisible attributes ... have been clearly perceived ... in the things that have been made” (Rom 1:20, ESV). This includes humanity in her togetherness.

The glory of God is magnified not only in *what* is created but also *how* it works. A singing bird, an ever-changing fall landscape, the shifting constellations, and the rising and setting sun all function to the glory of God. So also, the work of humanity, in all their ability is a created gift of God. The fruit of their labour is a testimony to the power and divine nature of God. Just as the star-lit heavens declare the glory of God (Ps 19:1), so also created human beings working in community can declare his power and glory simply in the things they do.

## **Third, stolen glory is common in a godless city**

In nature, humanity hears a clear message, “God is glorious!” Although voiceless, nature faithfully communicates this message. It is in the sinner’s heart that this message is suppressed (Rom 1:20). The sinner foolishly redirects the glory elsewhere. Today they try to credit the gods of chance, random mutations, time, and fascinating catastrophes with the ability to create. On the other hand, for believers enjoying nature, the message from nature isn’t suppressed, but embraced and echoed. In nature, we add our voice to the cosmic praise, as we echo the glory of creation and sing, “How Great Thou Art.”

This is different in the city. In a godless city, the messenger is faithless and tries to control and change the message of glory. Although humanity is created by God with amazing abilities to create, compose, and compete, they do not give glory to God for who they are and what they can do. Instead, they steal God’s


glory by trying to keep it for themselves. As buildings are raised, performances are given, and art is displayed, instead of singing “How Great Thou Art,” the predominant message in a godless city is “How Great We Are.” This is stolen glory.

As believers, these faithless messengers can make the city confusing. On the one hand, the magnificence of the city is undeniable – even with faithless messengers, the true message still spills out. On the other hand, it is clear something is wrong. The stolen glory bothers us, and we rightly refuse to join in stealing the glory.

What do we do instead? This leads us to a final reflection.

## **Fourth, where glory is stolen, our task is not to diminish the wonder, but to be faithful messengers and restore credit where credit is due**

Up till now, we’ve primarily focused on the glory of the city. Yet, anyone who has visited a large city knows there is deep darkness as well. In Toronto, you don’t have to go far to find passed out drunks, suffering homeless, poverty, drug addictions, prostitution, greed, arrogance, hatred, and other forms of sin and misery. This truth is part of the city that we should not avoid in a tour of the city. It points to the depravity of humanity and a glory that will quickly fade. The darkness shows the need for the gospel message, calling all people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and join all nations in declaring the glory of the LORD in all that we do. As the church of Jesus Christ, that is our message.

However, as we expose the truth of human depravity and bring this glorious gospel, we should be careful not to belittle the things that are magnificent in the city. To do so would join in diminishing the glory of the creator. Many things human beings have done is incredible. He has made man “little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor” (Ps 8:4-5, ESV). This magnificence produced by humanity is just one more reason to praise our Creator God. Even though they may not give glory to their creator; we can give glory where glory is due. Praise God for his glorious creation. 



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In the November 2020 issue of *Neder Bekeken*, Dr. Boonstra authored a very crucial article concerning the decisions their most recent general synod that permits women in all offices of the church. In many issues of *Neder Bekeken*, Dr. Boonstra has been a leading critic of many of the changes in the Dutch Reformed Churches (Lib.).

# Preaching Today!

In the area of preaching, shifts are taking place; these shifts raise questions. Is preaching, as such, still happening? One can only wonder. I suppose that I could address this question by initiating a discussion of specific sermons. Actually, people send me sermons quite regularly, accompanied with a remark: this is how sermons are preached nowadays.

Alternatively, I could also profile some of the criticism people submit and try to evaluate that criticism. But I won't do that either. In my opinion, it is important, first of all, to explain what preaching actually is. And then focus more specifically on the question that follows: what is *Reformed* preaching? It's important to first

establish that focus clearly (again) to be able to answer the question: what is the state of preaching today?

## What is preaching?

Let me begin at a very basic level. Reading from Scriptures is a regular part of the church service, and this reading normally takes place before the sermon. That aspect of the liturgical order tells us two things. In the first place, the sermon is related to that Bible reading, and that Bible passage has a specific role. Traditionally, it's been the assertion that the Bible reading is explained in the sermon. There's more, however. In the current

situation, there's also going to be an application and an appeal to the hearers. Though this description of preaching has its drawbacks, it does indicate clearly that preaching is more than the reading of the Bible.

The second thing that can be said of the church service: preaching is not simply reading a passage from Scripture, nor is it the retelling of a passage from the Bible preaching. A crucial feature of a sermon is that it has an application. What does that mean? I cannot articulate this any better than Prof. Dr. K. Runia<sup>1</sup> once did. The basic pattern of the sermon, he says, is that someone proclaims salvation to me on behalf of God and appeals to me to accept this salvation and practise it. Runia calls this the "indispensable and essential element" of the sermon.<sup>2</sup> In other words, a sermon distinguishes itself from the reading of Scripture at the point that a minister proclaims a concrete application that is focused on the congregation.<sup>3</sup> In this context, the question whether a sermon is still being preached can be defined further: does the sermon still contain a concrete claim rooted in the Bible passage that was read earlier and is this directed to me? Am I being challenged, and called upon to do something? Does he direct an appeal to me?

## Problem

When the description of a sermon is expressed in the above fashion, it will become clear that, today, we may be confronted by a problem. The other day I heard a colleague say: "In a sermon, I don't dare to say anymore: 'Thus says the Lord!' Why not? Well, we've discovered that everything is now a matter of interpretation. So, we have to be careful; we are children of our time under the influence of our culture. This culture is what determines our interpretation. We must be wary about being judgemental." More and more people today have embraced this mode of thinking. Last year a Christian periodical placed interviews held with three people who said they were Christians but did not go to church (anymore). One of them explained why: "I have a particularly difficult time with the certainty with which ministers say things from the pulpit as if the minister or pastor knows exactly what God's intention is for me, or for our lives."

What the interviewee continues to say is insightful: "Rather regularly I hear the expression, 'The Bible is quite clear about this.' According to me, the Bible is not clear about anything, which is exactly why there are so many different views and types of churches."

The above statement provides us with the core of this line of thought. Doesn't this thinking appear to make sense? The interviewee has appeared to connect us with sentiments that we may also experience. With regard to the same Bible text, it's possible to present different things. It simply depends on your perspective. Different interpretations are possible, and, therefore, who can say that the preacher is correct in what he tells the congregation, claiming that it's based on the Bible? Is an appeal to another interpretation even possible?

## Is everything simply a matter of interpretation?

As logical as this above reasoning may sound, there is, however, a fallacy here. The fact that with the same Bible text you can say different things does not mean that the text is unclear or that you can do anything at all with that text. Compare this problem with the recount of a car accident: Several people have seen it. But everyone has his own story about that same accident. In those stories, people tell their personal view on the matter. To say it in a more complicated way: we must not allow different *perspectives* on the truth to be confused with a fundamental disagreement about what is factually true.<sup>4</sup> When we apply this principle to a Bible text and a sermon, it's possible to look at a Bible text from different sides and then come with a different appeal to the congregation. That is also why two sermons on the same text can be quite different.

Now, let's apply this problem of perspective to a Bible text and the sermon. The story in Luke 7, about the woman who anointed Jesus, can be viewed from the perspective of the woman, what she does, and at how the Lord Jesus responds. If a preacher takes that approach, he can also proclaim to us, as Jesus proclaimed to the woman: your sins are forgiven – if you believe.

<sup>1</sup> Klaas Runia (1926 - 2006) was a Dutch theologian. In 1956 he was appointed Professor of Systematic theology at the Reformed Theological College in Geelong, Australia, In 1971 he was appointed Professor of Practical Theology at the Kampen Theological University. During his professorship he was heavily engaged in church affairs and was regarded as a leader of the orthodox wing of the Dutch Reformed Church (Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland). (Wikipedia)

<sup>2</sup> Dr. K. Runia, *Heeft Preken nog Zin?* (Does preaching still make sense?) Kampen, 1981, p. 39 (emphasis is in the original text). Or, as Prof. W. Kremer stated: "The sermon is not a leaflet, thrown from an airplane, whirling on the wind, hoping that where it lands it will be picked up somewhere by a passerby," in: W. Kremer, *Priestly Preaching*. A collection of his own works, collected and presented on the occasion of his golden anniversary, Amsterdam, 1976, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> What Runia puts into words here is based on what is stated in: HC, LD 25, Q/A 65 and LD 31, Q/A 84, and CoD, V/14.

<sup>4</sup> Julian Baggini, *Een kleine geschiedenis van de waarheid. Troost in tijden van nepnieuws* (A short history of the Truth. Comfort in times of fake news), Utrecht, 2018, p. 72.

Another possibility is to look at this story from the perspective of the Pharisee, Simon, and his guests. What moves them, what do they think, and how does Jesus respond to them? From this perspective, the preacher will appeal to the congregation in different way: i.e., we should know and realize that we have been forgiven much and that when we realize that we have this grace, it should inform and motivate our actions.

The example from Luke 7 shows us that there are several possibilities. Those different perspectives also provide the reason why sermons can differ from each other. What is important here, however, is that the appeal in the pastor's sermon or the application which comes to me as hearer is legitimate. In other words, has the preacher done justice to the text in the light of the immediate context and in the light of the whole Bible? The hearer can check it out and verify this, as the people in Berea did. Paul had preached a sermon there in which he proclaimed the gospel. Then you read that the people in Berea were "examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

This Berean situation also rings true today. When the preacher directs an appeal in a sermon based on a Bible text, then he has interpreted this text in a certain way. Does this mean that there can be a misinterpretation? Of course. Consequently, this may mean that a preacher may speak bold-faced words that do not stem from the text. This problem has occurred in the past, and it can still happen today. That is why it is important that the hearers can examine what the preacher said in his sermon to hold him accountable, as the people in Berea did: is the interpretation that the preacher presented to the congregation in accordance with God's Word? In contrast to the people in Berea, who could only access the Old Testament, we also have the New Testament containing the gospels and the apostolic writings. That situation requires that the hearers have knowledge of the whole Word of God. Only in this way can the hearers judge whether justice has been done to the text and to the Bible as a whole. Or they must determine whether the text has been misused and that there's a misinterpretation.

This thinking should not be done from a motive to "settle the score with the preacher." Rather, the Berean approach is to serve the pastor, that he will explain the text in the sermon as

clearly as possible so that the message he delivers (the appeal) will be justified on the basis of the pertinent Bible text and in the light of the whole Bible. Only in this way can they judge whether justice has been done to the text.

## Reformed preaching

We now come to the next question.

In response to the question - what is preaching? - it will be necessary to go into more detail. Why? This additional description is directly related to the fact that we are Reformed churches. Before ministers are permitted to preach, it is still a prerequisite that every minister must officially subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity. And that's not a formality: their signature declares that as a preacher they subscribe to the Reformed doctrines; that has irrevocable consequences for the preaching. The question is then: what are the consequences of this subscription? Or in other words, what is characteristic of Reformed preaching?

In the first place, Reformed preaching is characterized by the Reformed way of reading the Bible. I have written about that characteristic earlier in another context;<sup>5</sup> therefore, I will only summarize it here. The Reformed way of reading the Bible finds its basis in our confession in which we hold that the Bible is the revealed Word of God as written in the Scriptures (BC, Art. 3). When you've subscribed to this confession, this reality means that you will treat the Bible with the utmost care. You are constrained from self-serving interpretations of the Bible. That is why you look at the text in its context and then you proceed from the text to the whole Bible and back again, in the knowledge that God cannot contradict himself. In all this, the apostolic teaching is our guide. The apostles are our witnesses and teachers. In the words of the above apostles and teachers, we are bound by their perspectives on the truth. Finally, it is important to have an eye for the development of the history of salvation and the central place of Christ in this redemptive history. A Reformed minister has respect for this great narrative of the Bible. Unavoidably, therefore, this consideration and respect will be reflected and heard in the sermons he delivers.

In the second place, Reformed preaching is concerned with the conviction, summarized concisely by Luther, that we are "at the same time both sinner and righteous."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See *Nader Bekeken*, Sept. 2018, p. 241ff.

<sup>6</sup> This conviction can also be found in our confessions: HC, LD 23, Q/A 60; CoD, V/1

<sup>7</sup> Dr. M. te Velde (ed.), *Confessies. Gereformeerde geloofsverantwoording in zestiende-eeuws Europa*, (Confessions. Reformed Faithful Giving Accountability of their Faith in the 16th Century.) Heerenveen, 2009, p. 189 ff.

# Preaching is the means to bring us to salvation

## Salvation

This conviction means that a sermon is much more than a moralizing story: a moralistic talk in which attention is mainly focused on what is, or what is not is not allowed. Preaching goes much deeper. Of course, the sermon may proclaim what God says and what he commands. Sometimes there can be an application referencing what is or is not allowed. But that will always be in a larger context, i.e., in the context of our salvation. Preaching is the means to bring us to salvation, as Calvin once said. After all, our salvation is not a simple announcement that you only have to have heard once and needs no repetition. In this sense, the Bible is not to be compared to a novel or to a movie. Reading a novel or watching a movie once is usually enough. Of course, you can read novels or watch movies several times. But at a certain point you know the plot and the various plot twists.


Our salvation is not a reality of which we take possession: i.e., that once and forever God has forgiven me all my sins and that from now on I am no longer a sinner anymore, but a righteous one forever. For a good reason, the Lord Jesus teaches us in the Lord's Prayer to ask for forgiveness and to ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to stand firm in temptation. As believers, we are sinners until we die (cf. Rom 7:24-25). Because our sinfulness is a reality, again and again, we must be called to reconcile ourselves to God. As Paul also says to the church (!) in Corinth: "On behalf of Christ we ask you: Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20). Preaching stands in the context of what Paul calls the "ministry of reconciliation." In preaching, "it is proclaimed and publicly testified to each and every believer that God has really forgiven all their sins for the sake of Christ's merits, as often as they by true faith accept the promise of the gospel" (HC, LD

31, Q/A 84). The Canons of Dordt therefore say quite correctly that the promise of the gospel "ought to be announced and proclaimed universally ... to all peoples to repent and believe" (CoD, II/5).

What is the hallmark of Reformed preaching? That an appeal is proclaimed to the congregation, based on the conviction that the congregation is both righteous and sinful. This appeal does not get bogged down in moralism (you must do this or that). Nor is the appeal to be characterized by the attitude: we've got it all together (don't worry, we are reconciled). Nor should this appeal be invalidated by pretending that no truth exists anymore and that everything is only a question of interpretation. The appeal is determined by the fact that the promise of the gospel must be presented to us again and again and that we must appropriate these promises again and again. In this way, the sermon is a means of grace, bringing us salvation.

One of our Reformed ancestors, Theodorus Beza, expressed the preaching of this promise of the gospel in his confession as follows: "The Holy Spirit ... uses this outward preaching as if it were a conduit. In this way, he can ... penetrate into the depths of the spirit in order that, solely and simply by his grace and goodness, he gives the children of God the ability to grasp and understand this great mystery of their salvation through Jesus Christ. In this way, he also renews their thinking.... Moreover, he corrects and changes their will."<sup>7</sup>

## Building blocks

Is preaching still happening? Although the discussion about the sermon is timeless, in our time this question has been posed by quite a few people. With what I have presented, I hope to have provided the first building blocks to begin a conversation with one another. 

*Translated by Pieter Torenvliet*



**Pieter Boonstra** Minister  
GKv (Liberated Reformed Church),  
and editor of *Nader Bekeken*  
a church periodical.

## PRESS RELEASE

# Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary held on September 9, 2021

## Opening and roll call

The chairman of the Board, Rev. John Louwse, led in opening devotions. All governors were present, except for Rev. Clarence Vandervelde (on sabbatical) and Rev. Rob Schouten (health reasons). Dr. Jason Van Vliet was present as Principal and Administrative Assistant Leanne Kuizenga was present to take the minutes of the meeting.

## Memorabilia

Information was shared about the personal circumstances of emeriti professors, as well as widows and families of professors. We express thankfulness that the Lord has blessed Dr. and sr. Gootjes with their forty-fifth wedding anniversary (even though the last years have been severely impacted by Dr. Gootjes's health), and Dr. and sr. Van Dam with their fiftieth wedding anniversary. An academic symposium and a small dinner will be held later this week for Dr. Visscher, with thankfulness for all his work done at CRTS.

## Minutes and agenda

The minutes of the meetings held on January 14 and May 25, 2021 were approved. The agenda for the meeting was established. The action log was reviewed.

## Decisions, reports, agenda items

1. The Board received two letters from Dr. Ted Van Raalte (May and September), giving an update on his health circumstances. We are thankful for the Lord's care, preserving his life after a snowmobile accident and granting renewed health and strength. Dr. Van Raalte is on partial sabbatical for the fall term, and only has the responsibility of teaching one course. He has been relieved of his administrative duties for the coming school year, and the Board is quietly confident that his workload should be manageable for the fall semester. If possible, Dr. Van Raalte will return to a full teaching load in semester that begins in January. The Board discussed alternative plans should he need some relief.
2. The Board received a letter of resignation from Rev. Rob Schouten due to his health circumstances. It is thankful for the contribution that Rev. Schouten has been able to make as Board member since his appointment last synod and wishes him the Lord's blessing on the treatment he is receiving.
3. The Board received a letter from the Deputies for Training for the Ministry of our sister churches in Australia. They are requesting our cooperation in investigating the longer-term possibilities of setting up an Australian affiliate campus of CRTS in Australia. The Board decided to defer this letter to our January meeting.
4. The Board reviewed the strategic planning that took place on September 7 and 8. The Board discussed and approved a revised vision statement for CRTS. It is: "To glorify our Lord by providing high-quality training for gospel ministry to more students, focussing on the growing needs of our supporting Reformed churches." It also approved slightly amended core values, and some revised metrics. An ad hoc committee was appointed to consider how to address the proposed initiatives and coordinate them with the existing projects we are working on.
5. The Distance Education Committee gave a comprehensive update on their work. Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, hybrid education has become a reality at CRTS. The principle upon which distance education is offered is: *on campus as much as possible, online as much as necessary*. During the past school year, five students studied via distance education full time, while COVID-19 restrictions required the entire student body to transition to distance education at certain times when health restrictions required this. Professors and students have learned how to use the technology, and the systems purchased have served us well. The Board thanked the committee for its extensive work and considers their task complete.
6. Revs. Rob Schouten and James Slaa reported on lecture visits to CRTS from April 13-16, 2021. Due to COVID-19, these visits were conducted via Zoom. They also visited

with four of the five professors (except for Dr. Van Raalte, who was on sick leave). This report was received with thankfulness.

7. The Finance and Property Committee presented the CRTS annual budget for 2022, and it was approved. It presented the financial statements for 2020, and these were formally approved. The Board appointed an auditor to audit the finances of CRTS.
8. The Long-Term Financial Planning Committee presented its report to the Board. It details various financial risk factors to the long-term financial vitality of CRTS and presented strategies to mitigate this risk. The Board made decisions on the proposals presented.
9. A first draft of CRTS's report to Synod Guelph 2022 was presented.
10. The search committee appointed by the Board to come up with candidates who can fill the upcoming vacancy in the Ministry and Missions department presented its report. Decisions on this report will be made at the Board meeting in January 2022.
11. CRTS presented the Association for Theological Schools with an application for Online Education. ATS granted this approval! The Board expresses its thankfulness especially to Margaret Alkema and our principal Dr. Jason Van Vliet, who did most of the work in putting together this comprehensive report. From ATS we received an Institutional Peer Profile and a Strategic Information Report, Zort. These reports help to assess the work of CRTS and to present issues that might need further attention. The reports were received with thankfulness.
12. Dr. J. Van Vliet presented his principal's report, and this 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 dealing with COVID-19, the implementation of distance education, and dealing with the effect Dr. Van Raalte's injury had on CRTS.

13. The Board received a report from the COVID committee. The report was received with thankfulness. The committee was reappointed. A fall update was received from the principal detailing how to receive students in the new semester considering the new regulations.
14. 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, foreign student bursary report, and the lecture schedule for 2021-22.

### 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. James Slaa closed the meeting with prayer.

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary,

*Rev. Joe Poppe (Vice-chairman/Corresponding Clerk)*







## RAY OF SUNSHINE

Rachel Vis

# Julie Kamminga

**H**i, my name is Julie Kamminga. I'll be thirty-three years old on December 16. I live at Health and Transition Services (St. Amant) in Winnipeg. I have been living here for six and a half years.

I really like having visitors. My Dad and Mom come quite often. Before the pandemic, they would often take me out for drives, which I enjoyed immensely. I also enjoy having Face Time regularly with my parents and my siblings. I am looking forward to the time when I can leave the residence for outings and can have more visitors.

I spend a lot of time watching my favourite DVDs. I also enjoy seeing videos of my nieces and nephews. My friends and I sit together a lot in the lounge on our ward, and we enjoy it when staff entertain us or clown around. I like watching staff put up decorations and I often get to "help" them.

I receive a lot of cards in December for my birthday and for Christmas, and they all get hung up on the wall in my room. Thank you for sending them.



Happy Birthday to the three of you celebrating a birthday in December! We wish you the Lord's blessing in the coming year and a wonderful day with family and friends. May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you safe in his abundant care.

## December Birthdays

- 10 James Kamminga** will be **37**  
Box 1125 Carman, MB  
R0G OJO
- 15 Julie Kamminga** will be **33**  
c/o River Road Place  
440 River Road  
Winnipeg, MB R2M 3Z9
- 17 Ava Pierotti** will be **14**  
7761 Regional Road 20  
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

**A NOTE TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS** If there are any address changes that I need to be aware of please let me know as soon as possible.

Rachel Vis >> 731 Lincoln Street, Wellandport, Ontario L0R 2J0 | tom.rachelvis@gmail.com | 905-329-9476



**December 14, 1966 Maasdijk, The Netherlands**

**December 14, 2021 Guelph, Ontario**

Celebrating the love you share, that only God could have planned.  
Thankful for each of the 55 years that you, our dear parents and grandparents,

## *Ann Rabbemond and Keith Vanleeuwen*

have been blessed to receive from our heavenly Father, by His grace and providence.

*"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us,  
and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers."* 1 John 3: 16

**Dan and Susan (Poppe)**

Kendra and Gabriel Dorantes  
Morgan Vanleeuwen and Kyle Armstrong  
Damian  
Alexis and Drew Endeman  
Olivia  
Christiaan

**Dianne and Duane Westrik**

Spencer Westrik and Rebecca Kottelenberg  
Reuben Westrik and Alexandra Sikkema  
Sophia

**Cor and Yolanda (van Amerongen)**

Casey  
Jonah and Corina Vanleeuwen  
Ryan  
Nathan

**Emma and Dave Kuizenga**

Karys Kuizenga and Sean Breukelman  
Stefanie Kuizenga and Calvin Buikema  
Nick

**Brian and Laura (Lindhout)**

Eva Vanleeuwen and Warren Buikema  
Joelle  
Karina

**Mike and Deanna (Vanderwoerd)**

Emmanuelle  
Troy  
Hailey Vanleeuwen and Thomas Flach  
Jordan

**Correspondence:** [ajvanleeuwen19@gmail.com](mailto:ajvanleeuwen19@gmail.com)



# Is your church interested in sponsoring a refugee family?

To learn more, please visit our website, or contact us:

Rachel - [refugee.efrcbc@gmail.com](mailto:refugee.efrcbc@gmail.com)

Esther - [refugee.efrc.on@gmail.com](mailto:refugee.efrc.on@gmail.com)

Our mission is to encourage churches to consider the needs of refugees and welcome them to Canada.

[www.cityofrefuge.ca](http://www.cityofrefuge.ca)





**February 28, 1945 - November 3, 2021**

The Lord in His infinite wisdom and his perfect timing has called to himself our dear wife, mother, and grandmother

## ARENINA (Diane) ONDERWATER

**Loving wife of Martin Onderwater for 56 years.**

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." John 5:24*

She will be missed by her loving children & grandchildren:

Smithers, BC	<b>Brian and Elaine Onderwater</b> (nee Kippers) <i>Naomi Onderwater</i> <i>Jonas Onderwater</i>
Smithers, BC	<b>Stephen &amp; Cyndi Onderwater</b> (nee Barendregt) <i>Luke Onderwater</i> <i>Seth Onderwater</i> <i>Aleasha Onderwater</i> & <i>Kinnon Brinton</i> <i>Joshua &amp; Jenae Onderwater</i> <i>Bethany Onderwater</i> <i>Leah Onderwater</i> <i>James Onderwater</i>
Yarrow, BC	
Vernon, BC	
Fort St. John, BC	
Edmonton, AB	
Smithers, BC	
Houston, BC	<b>Robert &amp; Natasha Onderwater</b> (nee VanDellen) <i>Anthony Onderwater</i> <i>Nigel Onderwater</i> <i>Riley Onderwater</i> <i>Wesley Onderwater</i> <i>Bradley Onderwater</i>
County of Barrhead, AB	<b>Evelyn &amp; Marvin Peters</b>
Barrhead, AB	<b>Claudia Wattel</b> <i>Ashley Wattel &amp; Corey St. Louis</i> <i>Kurtis Wattel &amp; Bethany Strebchuck</i> <i>Sydney Wattel</i>
Goulais River, ON	
Barrhead, AB	
Barrhead, AB	<b>Eric &amp; Brenda Onderwater</b> (nee DeLeeuw) <i>Kierra Onderwater</i> <i>Darren Onderwater</i> <i>Sheldon Onderwater</i> <i>Nadia Onderwater</i>
Houston, BC	<b>Jason &amp; Laura Onderwater</b> (nee Kort) <i>Felicity Onderwater</i> <i>Evangelene Onderwater</i> <i>Chandler Onderwater</i> <i>Peyton Onderwater</i>

Corresponding Address: 4-3603 11 Street Houston, BC V0J 1Z2  
Email: 25mar39@gmail.com



**Dedemsvaart, Overijssel**

**APRIL 2, 1927**

**Strathroy, Ontario**

**OCTOBER 24, 2021**

*In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8 : 37 - 39

Peacefully, at the age of 94, the LORD called home our dear mother, grandmother and great grandmother

## Aaltje (Alie) Janssens (nee Vanderheide)

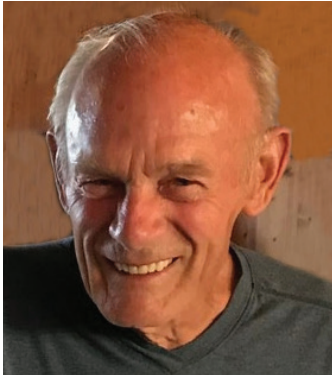
Her husband, John, was taken into glory in 2007 - they were blessed with 55 years of marriage.

She is also survived by her brother and sister-in-law, Sipke & Seike Vanderheide, of Chatham, Ontario.

Meaford, ON	Marion & Freeman <sup>†</sup> Boyd
Toronto, ON	Eric
Meaford, ON	Jennifer & Ryan Dorgelo <i>Blake, Jena</i>
Orillia, ON	Karen & Jordan Cunningham <i>Joel, Brooke, Claire</i>
Sarnia, ON	Mark Janssens
Vancouver, BC	Joyce Arthur
Inwood, ON	Jim & Jackie Janssens
London, ON	Jonathan & Heather Janssens <i>Gabe, Maggie, Inara</i>
London, ON	Alicia & Colin Versteeg <i>Peyton, Ethan, Darryl, Casey</i>
Strathroy, ON	Micheal & Sara Janssens <i>Landon, Savaya, Anica, Braxton,</i> <i>Kianna, Talia</i>
London, ON	Michelle & Chris Breukelman <i>Tyler, Carter, Chloe</i>
Watford, ON	Bob & Janine Janssens <i>Kayla, Shane, Vanessa</i>
London, ON	Alan & Annette Janssens <i>Kyle, Connor, Lucas, Logan</i>

Correspondence address:

466 Mornington Avenue, London, ON N5Y 3E1  
aa.janssens@rogers.com



*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith - more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." 1 Peter 1:3-9.*

Promoted to glory a few months  
after his beloved Alida (Alice),

### **Aarnout (Art) Poppe**

July 19, 1939 - October 9, 2021  
Our beloved father and Opa,

Ottawa, ON	Nancy and Henry Schriemer
Haywood, MB	Sylvia and Jan Borstlap
Hamilton, ON	Annet and John Louwerse
Aldergrove, BC	Josh and Henriette Poppe
Winnipeg, MB	Judith and Derek Dewitt
Carman, MB	Elsa and Gerry VanLaar

30 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren

**Elsa VanLaar** Box 607 Carman, MB R0G 0J0  
gevanlaar@gmail.com



### **In Loving Memory**

September 11, 1933 - September 22, 2021 (88 years)  
Sleeuwijk, the Netherlands - Houston, British Columbia  
The Lord in His infinite wisdom called home

### **Arie (Archie) Brien**

Beloved husband of 63 years to Jean Brien - Hofsink  
Loved father, grand-father and great grand-father of:

#### **Claudia & Henry Hansma**

Daniel & Nadine Hansma, *Jayden, Carter, Kenley*  
Michelle & Tim Dykstra, *Owen, Morgan, Jase*  
Steph & Kent Ostermeier, *Eden, Madi, Ivy, Lark*  
Andrea & Kevin Alles, *Nora, Claire, Reese*  
Katie & Brandon Vandenbrink, *Bryce, Finn, Emrie*

#### **John & Clara Brien**

Arthur & Lindsey Brien, *Aaron, Elliott, Graham, Arie, Savannah*  
Kimberly & Nicholas Plett, *Adalynn, Rebecca, Audrey, Walter*  
Cheri & Daryn Kobes, *Julianna, Landon, Blake*  
Brittany Brien & Jesse Barden

#### **Bill & Madelene Brien**

Dawn & Gavin Hamblin, *Emmett, Elliott*  
Darren Brien & Kayla Proctor, *William*

#### **Arch Brien †**

Ashley & Kevin Milne, *William, Jaimison, Katie*  
Kristin & Nick Kirkby, *Jaxon, Linden*  
Kyla & Elias Bailie, *Trinity, Michayla, Koen, Gracy, Aelyn*

1850 Omineca Way, Houston, B.C. V0J1Z2

If anyone wishes to view the service it is available on Youtube, under Houston Canadian Reformed Church's livestream, October 1, 2021. The obituary is available by searching obituaries, Houston Today.

*Present The Past*

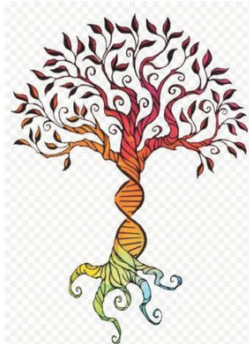
What is your  
family's story?

**Monique Graafland**

Genealogist with nearly  
30 years experience.

See [presentthepast.ca](http://presentthepast.ca) for details

[raafland@xplornet.com](mailto:raafland@xplornet.com)





*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28*

**March 8, 1951 - September 11, 2021**

The Lord lovingly and mercifully called home his covenant child,

**Ann Wilma Witten (nee DeBoer)**

after a struggle with illness. Her race is over; the battle won.

**Loving wife of 48 years to John Witten**

Loving mother and grandmother of:  
Dan and Rosy Witten - Grimsby, ON  
*Sawyer, Hayden, Neve, Luther*

Michelle and Steve Vis - Grimsby, ON  
*Reid, Weston*

58 Conrad Pl., Grimsby ON L3M 5S5



According to God's Sovereign plan, after a long battle with cancer, the Lord heard our pleas. Our Faithful Father took

**Neil Dykstra**

into His Everlasting Arms.

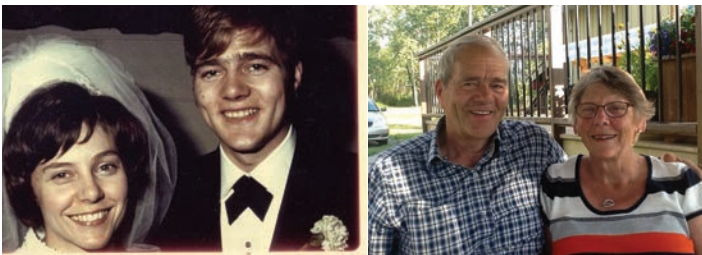
May 22, 1979 - October 20, 2021

Beloved husband of Heather (nee Roodzant)  
Dear father of Kendra and Desiree  
Neil will be greatly missed by his immediate family, his extended family, and his many friends.

*The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psalm 34: 17, 18

150 Viewmount Road North, Smithers, B.C. V0J 2N6



**Dec 11, 1971- 2021**

With so much thankfulness, please join with us, in your hearts and prayers, in celebrating our parents' and grandparents' 50 years of marriage!

Through their marriage God has blessed them with eight children (& spouses), 32 grandchildren, and many more wonderful relationships across the country.

**Henry & Ann Penninga**

*"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your Name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness." Ps115:1*

Much love, your children & grandchildren

Contact Henry and Ann at Box 2802 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0, 250-847-3450, or hpenninga@hotmail.com



*"Educating Covenant Children to be Kingdom Citizens."*  
We invite applications for the following position:

**Full-Time Principal Position**  
*For September 2022*

We have been blessed with a dedicated school society, as well as a cohesive and enthusiastic staff. We are in our fifth year of operation under the LORD's blessing, with an enrolment of 130+ students.

We are looking for qualified applicants who are committed to the Reformed faith and are passionate about educating God's covenant children. Applicants should be members of the Canadian Reformed Churches or of a church with which we have ecclesiastical fellowship.

Please submit a letter of application along with a resume, a statement of faith, your view of Reformed education and two letters of reference. If you have an interest in this position and would like to discuss it further, please do not hesitate to call or email us for further information.

Applications and requests for further information can be directed to: edcom@bellstoneschool.ca or please call **Jake DeJong** at 519-865-2487.



**Dinxperlo, Netherlands - Langley, BC**

**April 18, 1922 - October 15, 2021**

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. - Romans 8:38-39*

Our faithful God took to himself his child, our dearly loved mother,  
oma and great-grandmother

**Marrigje Elisabeth Vander Horst - nee de Jong**

at the blessed age of 99, at Manoah Manor in Langley BC. We will miss her strong, loving, supportive presence in our lives, but are thankful in the firm conviction that she is safely in the arms of Jesus.

Preceded into glory by her husband of 56 years, Jacob Vander Horst (May 15, 2003).

- Allie and Brian Dale-Johnson, Langley, BC - Alana (Gerald Cole), Heidi (Kareem) Allam
- Ena and Rob Bontkes, Langley, BC - Jeffrey (Lisa), Natasja (Kees) VanRhee, Marc† 2009, (Chanel), Tim (Petra), Justin (Carolyn), Renee (Darren) Leffers
- Dick and Alida Vanderhorst, Surrey, BC - Alisa (Tony) Roukema, Karen (Julius) Van Spronsen, Dana (John) Jagersma, Linda (Richard) Welfing, Meagan (Eric) Vandergriendt
- Danny and Wyn Vanderhorst, Abbotsford, BC - Julia (Jeremy) Janzen, Terry (Kelsey), Russell (Kristina), Brenda (Jason) Mertke
- Jack and Linda Vanderhorst, Burlington, ON - Jack (Johanna), Marlaine (David) Buist, Chris (Krista), Kim (Henry) Hutten, Derrick, Sarah (Jonathan) Baarda
- Margaret and Peter Aikema, Neerlandia, AB - Kevin (Sheri), Suzanne (Hendrik) Hulleman, Brad (Rebecca), Robert, Dennis (Missy)
- Mabel and Peter Roukema, Langley, BC - Aren (Deborah), Maria (Michael) Nagtegaal, Robyn, Ryan (Emily), Stephanie (Brent) Beugelink
- Eric and Julette Vanderhorst, Burnaby, BC
- Conrad and Dinah Vanderhorst, Langley, BC - David, Kyle (Nadia), James (Rebecca), Laura
- Norman and Diane Vanderhorst, Langley, BC - Amy, Jason (Ardis), Kayla, Matthew (Lauren), Dana (Jaxon Schouten)
- Gordon and Debbie Vanderhorst, White Rock, BC - Robert Mackie (Jessica), Christina Mackie (Steve)
- Peter Alan Vanderhorst† 1962

and 109 greatgrandchildren

Funeral Service was held Friday, October 22, 2021, in the Langley Canadian Reformed Church, (Langley, BC) with Reverend James Visscher officiating.

*Mailing Address: 19630 Wakefield Dr. Langley, BC V2Y1J9*



"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame."

1 Peter 2:6

We are inviting applications to fill the position of:

### Principal/Teacher

Duties to commence August 1st, 2022

Cornerstone operates a K-8 school with double grades and currently has a student body of 89 students.

We seek qualified applicants with a love for Reformed Education and a desire to support our community in its mandate to raise our children in the fear of the Lord.

For further details please contact the Principal:

**Mr. John Van Iperen**

Phone 519 837 4092 (school)

Email - principal@guelphcornerstone.com

Or the Education Committee Chair:

**Anita Van Rootselaar**

edcom.chair@guelphcornerstone.com

Applications may be sent to:

**Cornerstone Christian School**

108 Forest Street, Guelph, ON, N1G 1H9

Attention: Anita Van Rootselaar

Education Committee Chair

Or to: edcom.chair@guelphcornerstone.com

Applications should be submitted by

**Dec. 1st, 2021**



# GRADE 1 POSITION

FOR JANUARY OF 2022

### Neerlandia Covenant Canadian Reformed School Mission Statement:

*"Assisting parents by training students for a life of service to God and their neighbor through Biblical redemptive teaching."*

We are looking for a Grade 1 teacher to cover a maternity leave that would commence in January of 2022. If you are passionate about Christian teaching we would love to hear from you!

### CONTACT US AT:

secretary@covenantschool.ca

**Emma Kuizenga**  
REAL ESTATE BROKER  
(519) 546 5498  
emmak@homegrouprealty.ca

**Keith Vanleeuwen**  
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*Learning to Walk Together  
in the Light of God's Word*



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The board of Covenant Christian School invites applications from qualified individuals for the following permanent position beginning March 2022:

**Full-time Teaching Assistant (Grades One and Two)**

We are a vibrant, growing school community comprised of families from Canadian Reformed, Free Reformed, and United Reformed churches.

- Positive Christian work environment and newly expanded facilities
- Student population of approximately 180 in grades K-8
- Supportive, engaged community with excellent volunteer base
- Extensive Special Education program

Letters of application (including Statement of Faith and Philosophy of Reformed Education) may be sent to:

<b>Principal:</b> Mr. Shawn Wolski 519-203-0266 principal@ccslondon.org	<b>Education Committee Secretary:</b> Mrs. Madelyn Poort 905-348-5531 edcomm@ccslondon.org
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# PRINCIPAL POSITION

**Neerlandia Covenant Canadian Reformed School is looking for a principal for the 2022/2023 school year.**

Whether you are an experienced principal looking for a change, or a teacher, or a vice principal with the desire and aptitude to lead, we would love to hear from you!

**CONTACT US AT:**  
secretary@covenantschool.ca

**WANT TO SEE MORE?**

View our promo video at:  
[COVENANTSCHOOL.CA](http://COVENANTSCHOOL.CA)

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# Clarion

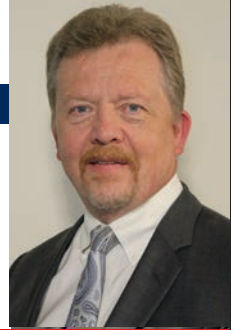
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Having a church home is a huge blessing for each congregation, as it is a place to worship, gather, teach our youth, and serve our great Lord. It is also important in connecting a congregation to the local community and adds to its identity.

After using a gym for over 10 years, our congregation, Guelph Living Word, was finally able to purchase their own building - the former Westminster St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on Victoria Road, which has been in this community for over 63 years.

Living Word welcomes you to celebrate and participate in this next step in our life as a congregation. Project Praying Hands has a goal of \$2.3 million for our new church home. Living Word has already raised 52% of the total goal. But we need your help! Your gift of any amount will help with the much-needed renovations and updates so this building can serve as a living, vibrant church in the city of Guelph, Ontario. Please consider supporting Project Praying Hands as it is people like you that will help us reach our goal.

We ask that you keep the work of Living Word and Project Praying Hands in your prayers.

How can you donate?

By e-Transfer: [give.livingword@gmail.com](mailto:give.livingword@gmail.com)

By mail: 17-370 Stone Road West, PO BOX 25044, Guelph, ON N1G 4T4

Please be sure to provide your personal information for tax reporting purposes and donation receipts.

Thank you for giving this matter your prayerful consideration.

With Christian greetings,  
Fundraising Committee of Living Word  
Linda Devries | Jane Harlaar | Jasper Harlaar | Duane Westrik



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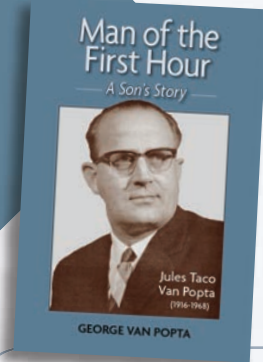
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BY GEORGE VAN POPTA

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Order "Man of the First Hour" at  
[Press.ReformedPerspective.ca](http://Press.ReformedPerspective.ca)



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- Jannes Smith  
Professor of Old Testament, Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary



**Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School**  
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*ECRS is a vibrant K - 12 school located in Smithers BC, with 240 students in single grade classes. The school is supported by four local Canadian Reformed and United Reformed Churches.*

Expressions of interest and applications are welcome for the following positions:

- **High School — Effective Immediately**
- **Intermediate Position — 2022/2023**
- **High School — 2022/2023**

### Considering ECRS?

We invite you to come for a visit. Complimentary flights can be arranged.

### Did you know ECRS offers a bursary program?

Post-secondary students going into teaching may qualify. See school website for more details.

### Contact our Principal:

Derek Stoffels  
(250) 847 3492  
[principal@ebenezerschool.com](mailto:principal@ebenezerschool.com)



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# Clarion

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- In Submission to Scripture
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- Nurturing Christian living

