

# Clarion

A CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE TO ENCOURAGE, EDUCATE, ENGAGE, AND UNITE | YEAR END 2024

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697

TO ALL OUR READERS,

*Best Wishes*

AND THE

*Lord's Blessings*

IN THE YEAR

*2025*

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# WHAT'S *inside*

PETER HOLTVLÜWER

**M**erry Christmas and a happy New Year! It's a long-standing Christian tradition to express these (or similar) best wishes to one another at this time of the year. Against the trend in our culture to demote Christmas ("holiday tree" anyone?) and basically yawn at the meaningless (to them) passage of time, it is good for us Christians to maintain such traditions but then to use them with meaning and purpose. Winston Bosch's meditation on the Song of Mary helps to re-focus our attention on the wondrous gospel of the incarnation, as does Tony Roukema's reflection on the love of the good Shepherd at Christmas. Rick Ludwig helps us deal with our sorrows and heartaches by demonstrating how we might offer Christmas laments to our gracious God and experience the peace of Christ in so doing. And Jake Torenvliet riffs on the traditional "State of the Union" address which occurs south of the border to present

a thoughtful "State of the Federation" perspective on the CanRC as we head into the year of our Lord 2025.

2024's final issue includes two newsletters (MERF & CFAM) and also a *Service Snapshot* of the ministry to support brothers and sisters with special needs known as Anchor Christian Homes (in Ontario). Ontario's beautiful fall colours were on display in mid-October at Muskoka when more than thirty-five pastors and their wives gathered for the annual Eastern Ministerial Conference, which you'll find reported on inside. And as a kind of joyful bonus, we present a vignette from missionary Edwar Dethan on the surprising way the Lord opened a most unlikely door for sharing the gospel with local Muslims. And don't forget Michael Ezinga's short but very worthwhile piece on a practical way to develop intergenerational discipleship in any congregation. Good stuff!

Wes Bredenhof and Rick Ludwig round out the articles with three book reviews and, as per usual, give very thoughtful takes on thought-provoking works. Thanks, brothers, for your diligent work in producing book reviews (and other contributions) over the year! In addition to our *Ray of Sunshine* we also have a very up-to-date and really-get-you-thinking editorial on Artificial Intelligence by Jason Van Vliet. Stimulating!

May your celebrations of our Saviour's birth and the turn of another year which belongs to him and brings us closer to his return bring to you and yours much comfort and joy! **C**





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## Clarion

A trustworthy and engaging magazine, widely spread and read in Canadian Reformed households and beyond.

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

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

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# AI: At What Cost?

Recently I stopped at a gas station to tank up and grab a coffee. As I waited for the java to finish brewing, the owner and his friend lamented over how the economy was spiralling downward. Intrigued I asked, “Why do you think this is happening?” Without hesitation they responded: “AI!” To their way of thinking, embracing artificial intelligence (AI) comes at the cost of many jobs.

Now, whatever you think about this analysis of AI’s economic impact, it does raise a valid question. Artificial intelligence can save us hours and dollars, but are we paying the price in unintended consequences? That is a *very* big question, but right now we will zero in on only one aspect: the potential of AI to erode redeemed relationships.

## AI FEELS MORE HUMAN

In November 2022, OpenAI released ChatGPT. Instantly it went viral. Fast forward two years: Microsoft Office, Zoom, WhatsApp, and almost every other app are adding AI features.

Why is AI growing so quickly? In short, interacting with ChatGPT feels a lot like conversing with a human being. You ask your question in normal language, and the AI platform comes up with a succinct answer, once again, in natural language. If AI’s answer is not quite what you are looking for, you simply ask a follow-up question and the chatbot refines its answer. Sure, AI is not flawless. Then again, we humans do not always get it right the first time around either, do we?

But if ChatGPT converses more like a human, does it have personality or feelings? Well, that is changing. Enter “Replika: the AI companion who cares,” as the company tagline promises. With Replika, Character.ai, or other similar chatbots, people custom design a digital friend, chat regularly with him or her (although really, *it*), and the AI companion is always there “with encouragement and support and a positive attitude,” as one user put it.

Okay, but a chipper, reassuring chatbot does not *look* like a person, does it? Perhaps not yet, but that, too, is evolving rapidly. Enter “Gatebox” and other companies that combine AI and holographic, 3D imaging, so people can even see their AI companions in their homes. What will they come up with next?

## AI AND THE HOLY GOSPEL

Before going any further, we should ground ourselves on several unalterable truths: God created human beings—not AI-powered

chatbots—in his image (Gen 1:26–27). In part this means that our God created us to be his children (Gen 5:1–3; Luke 3:38). Sadly, our first parents, Adam and Eve, turned a deaf ear to their heavenly Father and revolted against him (BC 14). By nature, we are no better (BC 15). Yet out of mere grace and at the cost of his own Son’s blood, our Father redeemed us and adopted us to be his very own children and heirs. *This* is our family, the household of God (1 Tim 3:15), and no advance in AI will ever change that!

These blessed truths have real-life implications. For instance, if you’re a young couple trying to decide how to buy a home, you could consult a savvy AI real-estate adviser. This may even be quicker and less complicated than speaking to your parents, especially if there are a few disappointing chapters in the history of your relationship.

But particularly if your parents and you are part of God’s household, ongoing and in-depth conversations about housing strategies might even prompt you to clear up some hard feelings from the past. Quick AI answers are handy. But Christ died . . . also for reconciliation between generations.

Or, as another example, if you’re a mom seeking tips on raising teenagers, you could theoretically ask an AI family counsellor. That approach might be easier than asking your husband, whose less-than-considerate comment earlier in the day still niggles at you. Before the Lord, though, discussing this with your husband, for whom Christ died and with whom you are called to reconcile, is the higher priority.

Some psychologists, like Joel Pearson of the University of New South Wales, are pointing out that people who frequently use AI companions, ironically and sadly, may end up increasing their loneliness. Deep down, they know that AI is *artificial*, and they long even more for real relationships.

The internet, cellphones, and social media have already left us spending too much time with our devices and too little with our loved ones. Will AI accelerate that trend? Hopefully, and prayerfully, not. AI has some valid uses, but not at the cost of our relationships with the people for whom Christ paid the ultimate price. **C**



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# Christmas Lyrics

## WORTH LISTENING TO

*My soul magnifies the Lord!*

– LUKE 1:46

When Mary was pregnant, she wrote a song. You should listen to it on repeat. It contains a message that is personal, universal, and social, and it teaches us how to celebrate Christmas. These are Christmas lyrics worth listening to.

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior . . . for he who is mighty has done great things for me” (Luke 1:46–47, 49). These are personal words. If you have ever been pregnant, you know that the baby growing inside of you will change your life. But Mary understood that on a whole other level. She knew she had been personally blessed, chosen among all women in history to carry the Messiah. But more than that, she knew the baby in her womb was not just a saviour for others, but also for her. Christmas was personal for Mary. And that is how we should celebrate Christmas. Not as just as a nice tradition, but with personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that this Christmas the song of your own heart would be that of the blessed virgin: *MY soul does magnify the Lord, for he Most High has shown to ME his favour!* (See Hymn 17, *Book of Praise*.)

Mary’s song is personal, but also universal. She sings of how God has remembered his covenant with Abraham (v. 55), and how God’s mercy in the Christmas child extends to those who fear him from generation to generation (v. 50). Eve received the promise that her seed would crush the serpent’s head; Abraham was given the same promise, and now Mary bears that seed. Her song is joy to herself personally, joy to the Jews waiting for a Messiah, but also good news of great joy for all peoples. Christmas is joy to the world! And that is how we want to celebrate it too, as the universal good news that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever should believe him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). So, let’s celebrate Christmas by singing Mary’s song with personal faith, but also along with the holy universal church of Christ: *With mercy he is near to ALL who him revere; his love endures forever!*

Mary’s song is personal, universal, and also social. “He has scattered those who are proud. . . . He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty” (vv. 51–53). Her

lyrics celebrate that oppressors will be thrown away like the Christmas wrapping paper, while the faithful nobodies of this world will get the gifts. Mary herself was one of those nobodies, and her son Jesus would grow up to spend time with the outcasts, the voiceless, the marginalized. His ministry meant “the blind would see and the lame would walk; the lepers would be cleansed, the deaf would hear and the dead would be raised up” (Matt 11:4–5). Christmas was and is good news for those the world forgets. That is one of the reasons why Christians have always given gifts to the poor at Christmas. The good news of Jesus’s birth is highlighted by social acts of generosity to the marginalized nobodies of this world. That should be part of our own Christmas celebrations. May Mary’s song be on your lips and her lyrics carried out in your actions: *Abundant gifts the Lord has on the hungry poured; their suffering he has ended.*

Mary’s song is one of the great Christian hymns. I hope you sing it and live it. Personally, universally, socially. May God bless you as you celebrate the birth of Christ. Merry Christmas! 🎄

### FURTHER READING:

Luke 1:46–56

### QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

1. Sing Hymn 17, *Book of Praise*. Can you detect the personal, universal, and social themes?
2. Read 1 Samuel 2:1–10. How many parallels can you find between Hannah’s song and Mary’s song?
3. How can you reflect the social theme of Mary’s song this Christmas?



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*Dear reader:* we are pleased to bring you another update on *Clarion*. Before we get to some transitions, a word in general about our work in the past year. From a content, editorial, and design perspective, we continued our push to make *Clarion* relevant, fresh, and engaging. We hope you like the results! If you have suggestions, we would love to hear them. From a mailing perspective, we have dialled in our scheduling all along the process to ensure you receive each issue in a timely manner. Of course, as we have seen with the recent Canada Post strike, we are at the mercy of other parties. But we hope you have seen more consistency in the timing of receipt of the magazine.

### TRANSITIONS

The first transition, already completed, is the departure of Rev. Jim Witteveen from our editorial committee. Thank you, Rev. Witteveen, for the thought-provoking editorials and other articles, as well as your leadership contribution at the editorial committee level, over the past two-and-a-half years! We pray for the Lord's blessing on your family and your work in the churches. We're happy to report that Rev. Calvin Vanderlinde has joined the editorial committee, not only filling out our numbers again, but also expanding our point of view to include an American perspective.

Our long-time managing editor, Laura Veenendaal, has indicated her desire to pass this torch to someone else within the next year. Laura started this task some time in early 2005, so it will have been 20 years of service to our magazine! That works out to nearly 500 issues, mostly on a firm 2-week cycle. Laura really has been at the front lines of our work: she was scheduler, secretary, editor, proof-reader, liaison to designer and printer, among other tasks. Laura has served with calmness, grace, sensitivity to the reader, and discretion. Laura, our heartfelt thanks! This transition means we are actively searching out candidates to take on this work.

Last but not least we have transition on the design side. This issue is the last one designed by Matt McClay who has worked on the magazine over the last 5 years. Matt has taken the visual presentation of *Clarion* to new heights, with a keen eye to design and presentation. He's also had to work on a demanding cycle and tight turn-around. Matt: thank you for the mark you've made on our magazine! As of the first issue of 2025, layout and design duties will be taken on by Alexis Gortemaker. Welcome on board, Alexis!

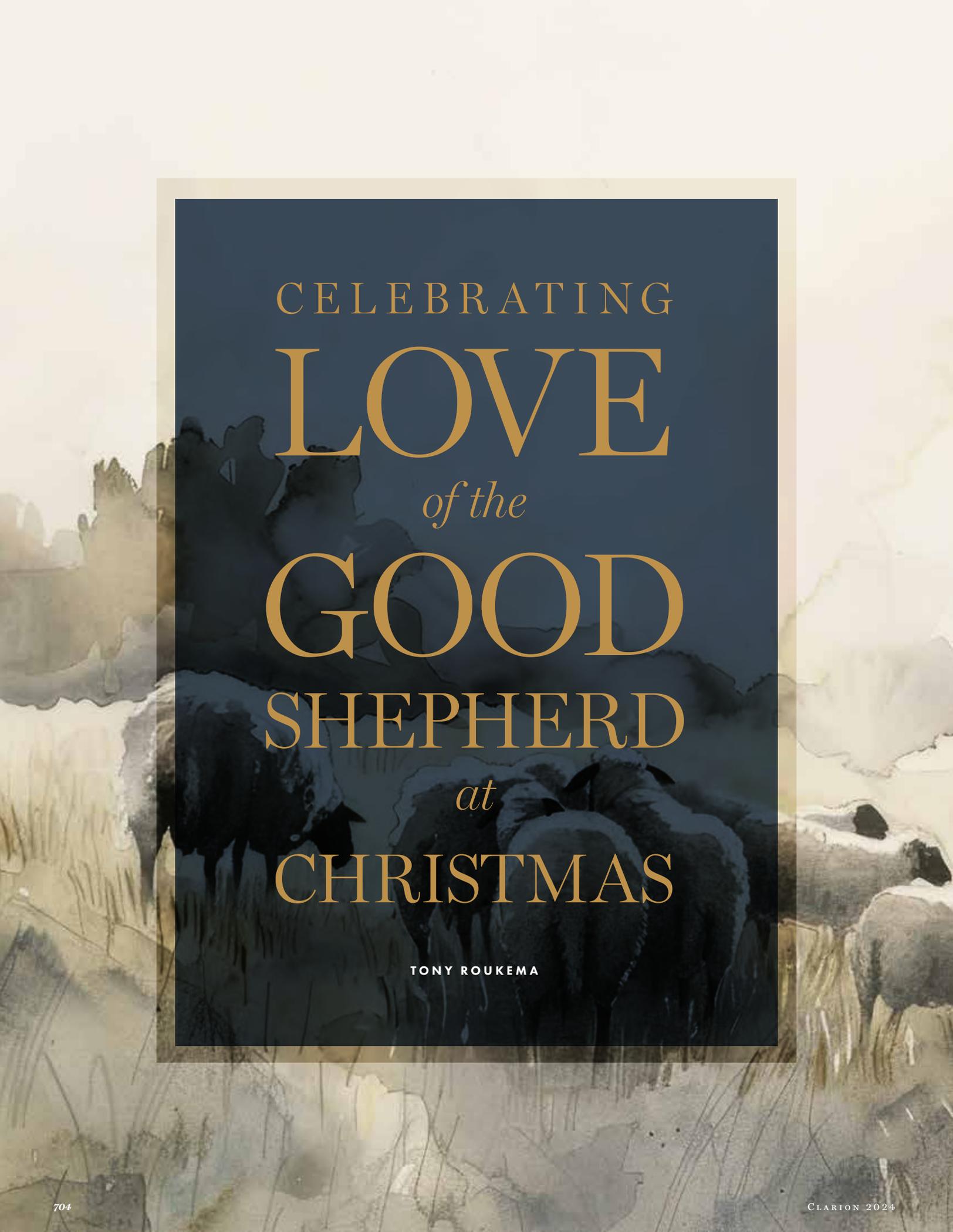
### THANK YOU

What has not changed is the dedication of our editorial committee and regular contributors. Thank you, Rev. Holtvlüwer, the editorial committee, and contributors and coordinators of our regular columns. Thank you to our local correspondents who promote the magazine and serve as a link between subscribers and publisher.

Dear subscribers and advertisers: without you our work is impossible. Thank you for the privilege of serving you, and for your support.

Our warm greetings this Christmas and our very best wishes for the new year. May we thrive as we place our hope and confidence in our risen Lord and our heavenly Father.

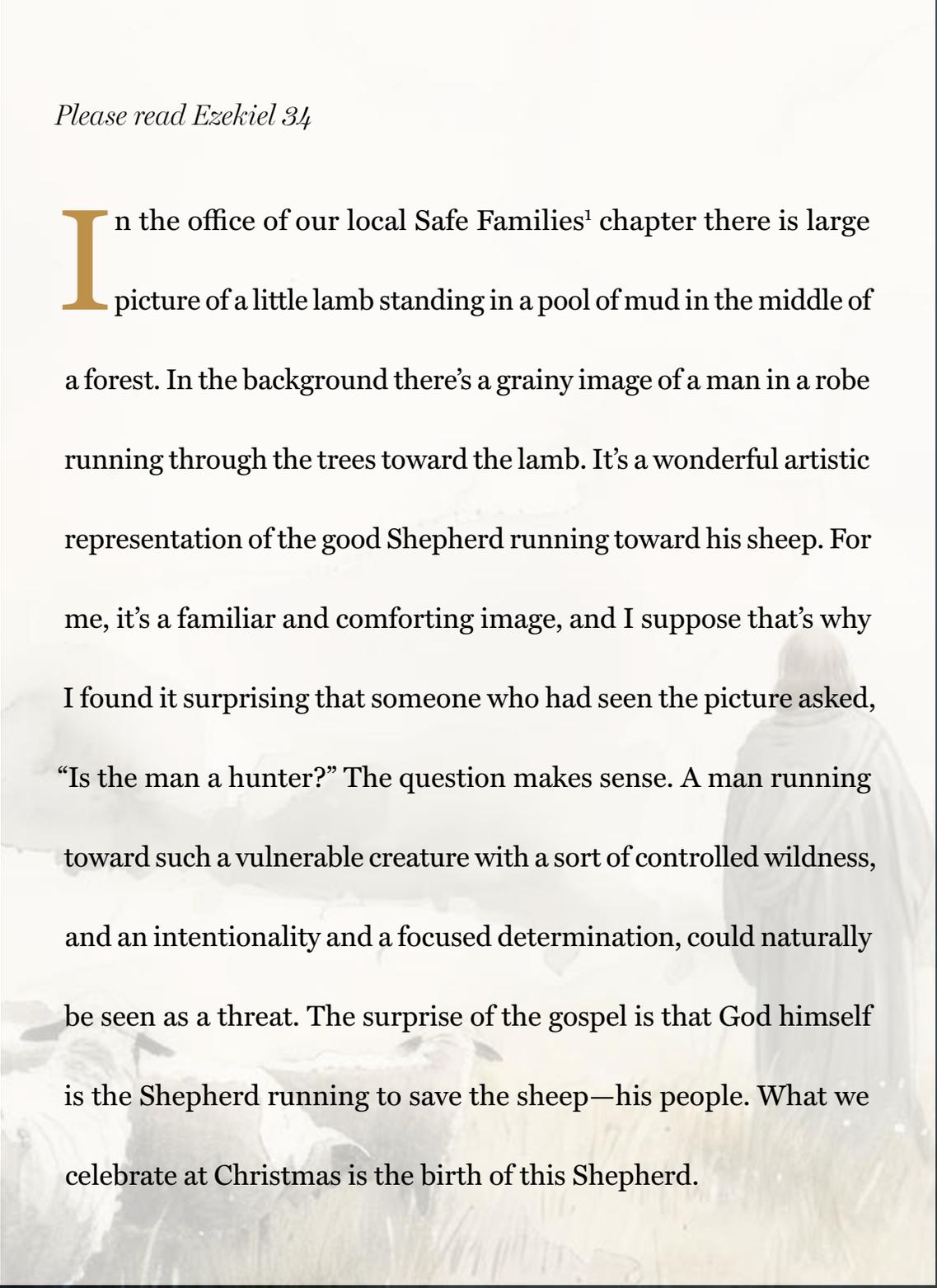
*Will Gortemaker*

A watercolor illustration of a shepherd with sheep, rendered in shades of blue, grey, and white. The shepherd is in the center, wearing a hat and holding a staff. The sheep are scattered around him, some facing him and others looking away. The background is a soft, textured wash of colors, suggesting a landscape or sky. The entire illustration is framed by a thin, light-colored border.

CELEBRATING  
LOVE  
*of the*  
GOOD  
SHEPHERD  
*at*  
CHRISTMAS

TONY ROUKEMA

*Please read Ezekiel 34*



**I**n the office of our local Safe Families<sup>1</sup> chapter there is large picture of a little lamb standing in a pool of mud in the middle of a forest. In the background there's a grainy image of a man in a robe running through the trees toward the lamb. It's a wonderful artistic representation of the good Shepherd running toward his sheep. For me, it's a familiar and comforting image, and I suppose that's why I found it surprising that someone who had seen the picture asked, "Is the man a hunter?" The question makes sense. A man running toward such a vulnerable creature with a sort of controlled wildness, and an intentionality and a focused determination, could naturally be seen as a threat. The surprise of the gospel is that God himself is the Shepherd running to save the sheep—his people. What we celebrate at Christmas is the birth of this Shepherd.

<sup>1</sup> Safe Families is an organization that seeks to help families in crisis and many CanRCs and their members have been involved in this ministry. You can learn more here: <https://safefamiliescanada.com>



*When we  
look at Christmas  
through the lens of Ezekiel 34,  
we see something  
magnificent and beautiful  
about God's love,  
who he is, and how  
he views us.*

While John 10:1–18 is the passage where Jesus speaks of himself as the good Shepherd, he is working with Ezekiel 34, where the LORD emphatically says that he—he himself—will shepherd his people. The prophet Ezekiel was part of the exiles living in Babylon, speaking to the people of Israel just after they had received news that the temple had been destroyed. They had lost their identity as the people of God and felt alone, unknown, unseen, and unloved. But God speaks these words telling them that he is their Shepherd still. When we look at Christmas through the lens of Ezekiel 34, we see something magnificent and beautiful about God's love, who he is, and how he views us.

### SEEING THE GOOD SHEPHERD'S LOVE

Ezekiel 34 itself is a prophesy against the leaders of Israel, the shepherds, and against the strong sheep who have oppressed the weak, but what rings throughout the entire passage is the love of God for his people—his sheep. God knows, sees, and loves his people.

*God knows us.* He knows our nature. We are sheep, and what you see in verses 4 through 8 is a description of the nature and character of sheep. Sheep, by their very nature, are needy, weak, defenseless, easily injured, vulnerable to predators and disease, and prone to wander or be led astray. Sheep simply want to be happy and eating something. They'll mindlessly go their way, following anyone or anything as they do that and get themselves into trouble all the time. It's just what they do.

*God sees us.* God sees you in your situation. God knows your nature as a human being and he knows you individually. He knows your story, your hopes and dreams, your fears and joys. In verse 4 the LORD speaks of the injured, lost, and attacked—those scattered

over the face of the earth, prey for beasts of the field. He sees what you've done, sees what's happened to you, and sees where you've been and where you've gotten to. He knows you and he sees you.

*God loves us.* There's a lot going on in Ezekiel 34 as God speaks to the leaders and the strong, but everything God is saying about what he is going to do is a testimony to his unrelenting love his sheep—for you. Spend some time learning at the feet of the good Shepherd about his love for you by seeing the lengths he will go to for you and how much you mean to him. He knows everything about you, sees everything in your story, and he loves you still.

### GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

We often hear all the negative stuff about sheep and how it's a lousy animal to be compared to, and that's there, but it doesn't appear to be the point of the comparison for God. It's about their status as belonging to God and being his beloved. We often identify ourselves by our sins, failures, mistakes, embarrassments, shame, weaknesses, or by what others think of us. We see ourselves as lonely, hurt, afraid, abandoned—as unknown, unseen, and unloved. But God knows you, sees you, and loves you. That's your identity. Nothing else about you, nothing else that you've done, nothing else that's happened to you, and nothing else about what people think of you means more than that. You are beloved. The gospel is the story of what God did for his beloved. What if you lived like that was true? May your celebration of the birth of Christ this year be an opportunity to remember who God is and how he sees you.

### SEE LOVE IN HIS ANGER

When you read through Ezekiel 34 you cannot escape the reality that God is angry. God had provided shepherds—rulers—and people with strength and riches among the people to be instruments of his love in the life of the sheep he knows, sees, and loves, that they would be for the flourishing of his people. In verses 3 through 10 the shepherds were to lead, feed, protect, tend the sick and injured, and find the lost. But these leaders had become part of the problem. They were feeding themselves and not the sheep (v. 3). They had not tended to the weak, injured, sick, straying, and lost (v. 4). As a result, the sheep were scattered because there was no one to search for them, and they became prey and food for other animals (vv. 5–10). In the end, God needs to rescue his people from those very shepherds. On top of that, the fat sheep—the local rulers, elders, and rich—were oppressing the lean, the weak, and the small (vv. 17–22). And God is angry.

What makes you angry?

Your anger shows what you love. Sometimes that can show our unhealthy loves and

idols of the heart, but it can also show godly loves. If someone harms your child, your spouse, or is abusive and oppressive, there can be a righteous anger that looks for justice and peace. Righteous anger and justice are what love bleeds when it is cut.

### WHAT MAKES GOD ANGRY?

Here in this passage, it is when his sheep, his beloved, are being hurt rather than healed, helped, led, and found. His anger is against those who would hurt you, his beloved. His voice shakes with anger against those who have harmed you. Do you see yourself as one so precious to God that his anger burns at what would hurt you? That you are not unknown, unseen, and unloved? That the birth of Jesus Christ tells you that you cannot say that no one cares about you or what has happened to you? The birth of Jesus Christ is about justice and about God making right what sin has done in us and to us, not only on the cross, but already in his birth. He himself has come to be the Shepherd we need.

### SEE LOVE IN HIS DETERMINATION

Ezekiel 34 shows us God's determination. He emphatically takes his sheep back from his shepherds (v. 8) and becomes the shepherd himself—I myself will shepherd the flock. In verses 11 through 16 we see God himself seeking out the lost, gathering the scattered, finding grazing land, bringing back the strays, binding up the wounded, strengthening the weak, and bringing justice. He doesn't come up with another system of leadership or another type of people—he enters into the system of leadership he has

already provided, and comes to his people as one from among them who is the perfect Shepherd. One who is for their flourishing and who judges the strong and oppressive. God himself runs toward his sheep to be the shepherd his provided leaders could never be, even at their best. He pursues them into the mess they got themselves into, the mess made worse by the faithless shepherds. He's unflinching in his pursuit.

In the birth of Jesus you see the Creator of the universe, the most powerful being in the universe, pursuing you for your good and flourishing and doing it all out of an unspeakable love, pursuing with determination, purpose, and intentionality. Jesus, the Son of God, Isaiah 53's sheep led to the slaughter, slapped, spit upon, punched in the face, whipped, mocked, nailed to a cross, carrying our sin and shame, scorning the shame—is running through it all to pursue you because he loves you and sees you. Nothing dissuading him. Nothing stopping him. This is Jesus. This is the birth you celebrate at Christmas. May you see and learn from the love the good Shepherd, and may you see yourself through the lens of that love and live out of that love. 



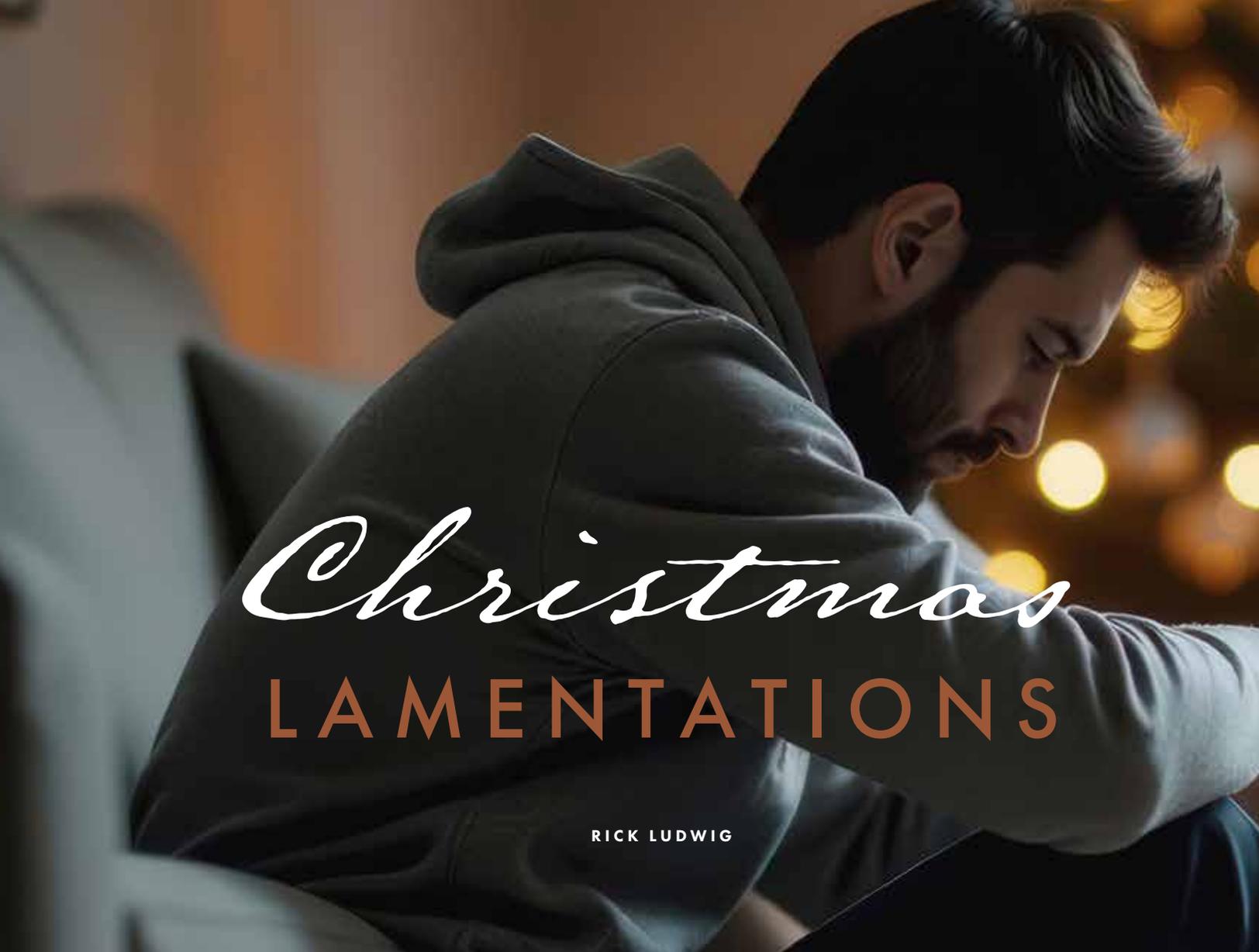
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# Christmas LAMENTATIONS

RICK LUDWIG

**E**ach year, as the Christmas season presses upon us, our thoughts and prayers go out to those who are suffering in grief, particularly for people caught in the vice-grip of the pain of loss or brokenness. There are those who are overcome by hurts brought on by the death of one who was close and loved, or through the destructive force of sin that can hamper relationships at home or work, in families and in churches, in the neighbourhood, or even across the globe. The holiday jubilation and festivities can butt up harshly against our personal anguish. While we are overcome with missing loved ones or suffering hurt, we mostly hear discord as we try to sing along with the carols of the season. Somehow, they just don't seem to suit the place where we find ourselves. We may even feel a little like the despairing Jews in captivity sitting beside foreign rivers so long ago. *How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?*

## PRACTICING LAMENT

Recently, I was encouraged in hearing Mark Vroegop, author of *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, speak about the benefits of practicing lament while grieving. He described lament as prayers in *pain* that lead to *trust*. A lament is a plea directed to one who can actually help. It is not the same as just whining or bitterness. In the Psalms we can see beautiful examples of this, where the poet complains about what is wrong, what seems incongruent with God's character or promises, and then responds to his own thoughts with statements about what he knows to be true about God and his ways from the Scriptures. This complaint always includes a pivotal *yet* or a *but*. A lament asks for help in understanding

a present hurtful situation in the framework of God's overarching and redeeming love. In this way we can see that Christmastime may be the perfect opportunity for songs or prayers of lament. After all, the coming of Jesus is God's response to a groaning world. Our words of despair are answered in the Word who became flesh.

The challenging thing about a lament is that it is not simply a theory or theological idea to think about and find some comfort in. It actually needs to be put into words and then be spoken aloud. It requires a pouring out followed by a gathering in. Like breathing in and out, it is an experience for the whole of our being. A keening, if you will. Lament is only helpful as it is felt, expressed, and experienced.

## A SAMPLING OF CHRISTMAS LAMENTS

What follows are a few sample laments. These laments are not meant to speak your words but to show you a way to offer your own words and feelings to God. Laments bear witness to the pain of hurt and loss while hearing the "yet" of the Scripture that places this very pain in the reality of Christ's promised coming and arrival. They offer a way to set your heart-felt hurts before God in the middle of the realities of our Christmas joy.

A lament may be read aloud on your own or responsively with someone you trust. Here are a few attempts:

*"I am so alone since my wife died.* I never knew I could feel this way. Desperate. Restless. I have lost my purpose and any resolve. I am empty and tired. Also, angry. It seems like I don't know how to even look after myself. I can't figure out the online banking or even make a decent meal for supper. The kids just seem frustrated with me. I find it hard to explain to them how I am doing. I hate it when they ask too much, and when they don't ask enough. I trusted in God that he would help me. I have kept up my worship and Bible reading and praying yet I can't seem to find rest in it. What will happen next? Is the rest of my life pointless? I don't enjoy my work anymore. Even my golf game is garbage. And God seems very distant. Where are you God? I am struggling." **The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.** (Isaiah 9:2, 6–7)

*“Our house seems to scream with silence.* That empty bedroom is killing me, but I cannot change it. I will not. How could our little boy be gone? Where has he gone? It feels like he is just around the corner, that he could just jump back into my arms. But there is nothing. Emptiness. I am so numb. Will I ever feel again? Feel anything. I want to talk with my husband about it, but we just end up fighting. I know he is hurting too but he doesn't seem to understand me. He can't talk about it. How can he just go to work every day and carry on? God, where are you in this? What about your covenant and your promises? What about our promises we made to our son? To raise him as your child. Clearly, we were not finished! I feel so discouraged and I'm doubting everything. When my pastor tries to comfort me, I don't know whether to yell at him or fall apart in his arms. O God, help me!” **Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”** (Isaiah 40:1–5)

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*“I feel all alone and so much darkness.* I don't want to get up, but I also can't fall asleep. My best friend has left me and now I have no one. The others in my class just look at me strangely and avoid me. My parents don't understand me and seem worried about me all of the time. I feel like I'm just a big problem. I just want to shut everything out, to numb myself even though I know I shouldn't. Or just hurt myself to feel something. Jesus, will you help me? I love you but I feel so far from you now. Help me see you. Help me feel alive again. **Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not, say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.** (Isaiah 40:9-11)

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*“I can't believe this has happened* to our family. How is it possible? I did not see this coming. I can't bear all the lies and the secrets that are coming out each day. How will we survive this? God, will you help us? I can't find you in the middle of this mess. I wake up each day looking for your new mercies, but I only see what seems like punishment. And more pain. My children are struggling. I want to be brave for them. I want to share your truth with them, but it falls weakly from my lips. I can hardly pray. I have lost my confidence. Can I still trust in you God? Can I believe your word? Will you answer me?” **And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”** (Luke 2:8–12)



## THE GREATEST LAMENT

Lamenting is hard work. It is also healing work. And it is Christ-like. The greatest lament ever raised came from the mouth of Jesus our Saviour when he cried out from the cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” He took those words from Psalm 22 where David also questions where God is and why he doesn’t seem to hear his cry. If you read or sing through this song you begin to feel the rhythms of despairing and trusting, railing and resting, that ultimately lead to landing in the arms of a faithful heavenly Father. “Lament stands in the gap between pain and promise” (*Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, p. 26). In our lament we learn to reconcile ourselves with the paradox that life is hard *and* God is good.

This Christmas may be a season of lament for you. It is a holy task, set apart for God’s children! Seek your Saviour in the middle of your trouble in this special time. Come close to the holy manger of your God who came down from heaven to be like you, to stand in your place and take your suffering upon himself. Write out and

speaking your lament and then pair your complaint with Scripture passages that speak the gospel truth to your heart about God your Father and his Son Jesus. You can do this on your own or with the help of someone you trust. As you do this, you may experience the Spirit of Immanuel: God with us. You can begin to find hope again and learn to trust in God in the middle of your troubles. And you can start to find the peace he offers you again today: a Christmas peace for the grieving. And slowly and sweetly, the songs of the season may begin to warm your troubled heart and make sense again.

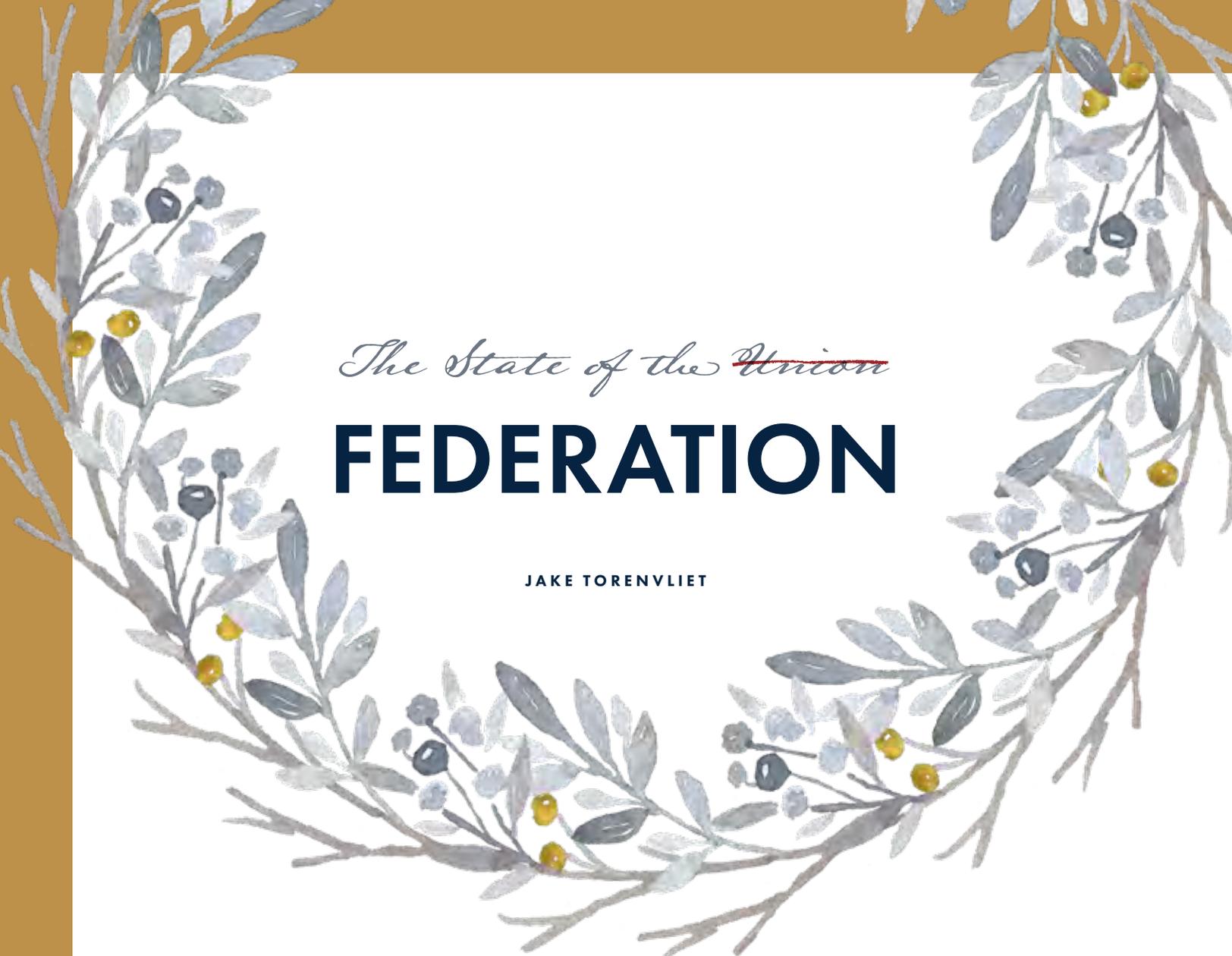
*Gloria in excelsis Deo!* 



**Rick Ludwig**

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*The State of the ~~Union~~*  
**FEDERATION**

JAKE TORENVLIET

*Church & State*

On January 8, 1790, President George Washington delivered the first, and shortest, State of the Union message to the United States Congress. Since then, with an occasional exception, each subsequent president has followed the precedent set by Washington by giving an annual address in which the present condition and health of the union among the states is described, combined with a vision for the best path forward.

## *We share a common confessional basis, and desire to see the name of Christ exulted in this world*

It should go without saying that the Canadian Reformed Churches are not the United States of America, but we are not entirely different. While we aren't a union of states, we are a federation of churches. We are not a centralized denomination called the Canadian Reformed Church, but we are the Canadian Reformed Churches. We are a collection of equally independent, elder-led congregations with unique contexts, cultures, and compositions. Each church has voluntarily organized—federated—together because we share a common confessional basis, and desire to see the name of Christ exulted in this world. We cooperate and collaborate for the advance of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

### **THE EARLY CHALLENGES**

Still, humanly speaking, there are significant challenges in federating together as such different congregations. In November 1954, the Canadian Reformed Churches met together for the first general synod in Homewood-Carman, Manitoba. It was a historic moment, and one that was preceded by much anxiety. Would differences between regions cause tension, or even fracturing and splitting?

Reverend J. T. Van Popta, who served as president of this first synod, alluded to these anxieties in his closing remarks on November 9, 1954. His remarks might even be considered a first quasi-state-of-the-union—state of the Canadian Reformed federation—address to the assembly. He stated:

More than one was afraid that this synod would be witness of the fact that East and West would differ one from another more than once. But how the Lord has made us feel ashamed of our expectations. . . . We have seen that the Lord Jesus Christ by His Word and Spirit can bridge great distances and that we were and are one in Him. . . . Let it be enough for us today, that this promise accompanies us, and helps us, wherever we have to do our regular work. . . . We believe the Unity of the Church. We believe the Unity of the Churches. We believe one holy Catholic Church. (*Acta, National Synod 1954*, Art. 109).

In 1954 the state of the fledgling federation was that Christ kept the churches as one in him. In 1954, the faithful path forward was a wholesale embrace of gospel unity in Jesus Christ.

### **THE PRESENT CHALLENGES**

Seventy years have passed since president Van Popta's state of the federation address; seventy-five years since the first Canadian Reformed church was instituted. The federation has grown to include approximately seventy local churches and more than 20,000 members in four provinces and two countries. There are urban, suburban, and rural churches; there are richer and poorer churches; older and younger churches; larger and smaller churches; mono-ethnic and multiethnic churches; more healthy and less healthy churches; traditional and less traditional churches; churches with pipe organs and churches with music teams. The first generation of members and preachers is all but gone; the original language of immigrant worship services is no longer heard from pulpits; the ecclesiastical relationships with sister-churches throughout the world, and particularly in North America, is ever evolving. The members of the Canadian Reformed Churches today are far more Canadian (or American), than they were in the first decades. The membership is more ethnically and culturally diverse than ever before. In sum, the things that threaten to pull the federation apart have only grown in number and intensity.

As the year of our Lord, 2025, dawns and a twenty-fourth general synod is soon to convene in Aldergrove, British Columbia, there is a virtually endless list of reasons to be anxious about the state of the union, humanly speaking. More than one might be afraid that our differences will cause tension, or even fracturing and splitting. But what is the true state of the union today? What is the best path forward in all of this diversity? If Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow then the words spoken at the close of the first general synod so long ago should continue to ring true today. We believe the

## *Enforced uniformity is a human response to the perceived dangers of diversity*

unity of the church! We believe the unity of the churches! We believe one holy catholic church!

### **THE CONVICTION OF FAITH**

It should be noted that these are statements of faith. This is significant because “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). In other words, despite what we see with our eyes, or feel in our anxious moments, true faith is convinced of a deeper reality. All seventy member churches in the Canadian Reformed federation, without exception, are unified—not uniform—in Christ! This spiritual oneness isn’t threatened in the slightest by diversity. On the contrary. As we walk by faith we will begin to see Christ’s wisdom. Our growing diversity makes our oneness in the gospel shine ever brighter in a dark world! The gospel of Christ is the only explanation for why we are together as churches!

This isn’t the wishful thinking of a naive idealist. It’s the hopeful conviction of faith revealed in the pages of Scripture. Take, for example, the teaching of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 2 and 3. The church in Ephesus was as diverse a church as any in history. Its membership was comprised of those who had formerly been dead in Judaism and others who had formerly been dead in paganism. Yet both had been saved by grace and raised to new life in Christ (2:1–10).

From our vantage point today it’s easy to miss how unique the composition of the Ephesian church was. Time and again, the New Testament draws attention to the fact that Jews and Gentiles did not associate with one another (cf. Luke 10:25–37; John 4:1–42; Acts 10–11; Acts 15; Gal 2:11–14). Yet, here in Ephesus, a shocking community had sprung up through the power of the Word and Spirit—Jew and Gentile had become one in Christ! Paul writes in Ephesians 2:13–16: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in

his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”

### **UNITY & DIVERSITY LOCALLY**

But breaking down the dividing wall and killing the hostility is not the same as obliterating every distinctive and difference! Instead, Christ unites to himself, while simultaneously retaining and celebrating the diversity. He goes even further. He uses differences that should divide, according to human wisdom, in order to reveal the mystery of the gospel to a watching world!

Worldly wisdom can explain why members of a book club would associate together, or single moms in a mom’s group, or people of similar political leanings, or fans of the same sports team. Similar interests bring together similar people. It’s explainable. But the local church defies human explanation. It is the only institution on earth where people who should not belong together do belong to each other in Christ. The local church is filled with rich and poor, old and young, male and female, Jew and Gentile, sports fanatics and art historians, philosophers and blue-collar workers, liberals and conservatives, people of different colours and cultures. The only explanation we have is the gospel. It is the love of Christ that binds the local church together in perfect harmony (Col 3:14).

In this way diversity in the local church uniquely displays the glory of Christ in the gospel. Paul calls this the mystery of the gospel. He writes, “This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel . . . so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph 3:6–10). What is the manifold wisdom of God? In *The Compelling Community: Where God’s Power*

*Makes a Church Attractive*, authors Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop answer the question as follows: “As people with little in common in the world’s eyes love each other as if they are closer than family, all heaven looks on with wonder at what the gospel has created” (p. 73).

Diversity in the local church is a God-given strength, not a weakness; an asset, not a liability; a feature, not a bug. 1 Corinthians 12 makes this abundantly clear. A local church is a body comprised of many diverse parts working together in love for God’s glory. In fact, uniformity would prove disastrous! We read in verses 14–19: “For the body does not consist of one member but of many. . . . If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.”

## UNITY IN DIVERSITY

It’s clear, of course, that Paul had in mind the Ephesian and Corinthian congregations when he first wrote his epistles. Still, the principles enunciated within them concerning unity in diversity also ring true for different churches that have federated together. It isn’t uniformity that is the Canadian Reformed Churches’ strength. It never was, and it never will be. Enforced uniformity is a human response to the perceived dangers of diversity. Uniformity would only lead to a deformed, lopsided, and impoverished federation. We should never want a federation of churches in which every congregation looked identical to Langley CanRC, Barrhead CanRC, Redeemer CanRC, Orangeville CanRC, Blessings Christian Church, or Redemption CanRC. We cannot all be eyes or ears!

Instead, it is our unity in Christ— “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 3:5–6),— expressed in a wonderful

kaleidoscope of diverse colour and variety that is our strength and witness to the world, even “to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (3:10). Our diversity as a federation of churches uniquely reveals the manifold wisdom of God!

This also means, as with members in the local church, the churches within the federation need one another. Rather than begrudging Christ’s wisdom by seeking human solutions to mitigate the perceived dangers of diversity, let’s celebrate this diversity and need. We need Grace CanRC in Brampton as much as we need Eben-ezer CanRC in Chatham, or Taber CanRC in southern Alberta. So, let’s together rejoice when one church rejoices (Rom 12:15), suffer when another church suffers (1 Cor 12:26). Let’s welcome one another as members of this federation with the welcome we have all received from Christ (Rom 15:7)! After all, what unites us is infinitely greater than what threatens to divide us. It is the Word and Spirit that binds us together in love as a federation!

## WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

What is the state of the federation as we begin another year? Ultimately, it isn’t the assessment of a president that matters. What matters is the truth of Scripture. In 2024 our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, has kept the churches as one in him. In 2025, the only faithful path forward as churches is a wholesale embrace of gospel unity in Jesus Christ. We believe the unity of the church. We believe the unity of the churches. We believe one holy catholic church. 



**Jake Torenvliet**

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## The Supremacy of Christ

Guitar chords do not match vocals.

Based on Colossians 1:15–20

D A Bm Em A Bm A D

1. In Christ the God whom none can see is seen, Shown through the  
 2. All rul - ers and au - thor - i - ties and pow'rs, The hosts of  
 3. Christ has ex - ist - ed from e - ter - ni - ty And holds to -  
 4. Our God, through Christ, in whom His full - ness dwells, Has brought a -

E F#m Bm Esus E A D A Bm Em

won - der of the in - car - na - tion Of Him who is and was be -  
 an - gels, ranked in their for - ma - tions, Both seen and un - seen things—He  
 geth - er all that was cre - at - ed. He of His church, His bod - y,  
 bout a glo - rious res - to - ra - tion By rec - on - cil - ing to Him -

Bm A D E F#m Bm Esus E A

fore all things, Who as the first - born o - ver all cre - a - tion  
 made them all, As - signed to them their prop - er place and sta - tion.  
 is the head. As first - born He from death was res - ur - rect - ed  
 self all things In heav - en and on earth, yes, all cre - a - tion,

D G D A F#m Bm D/A A D

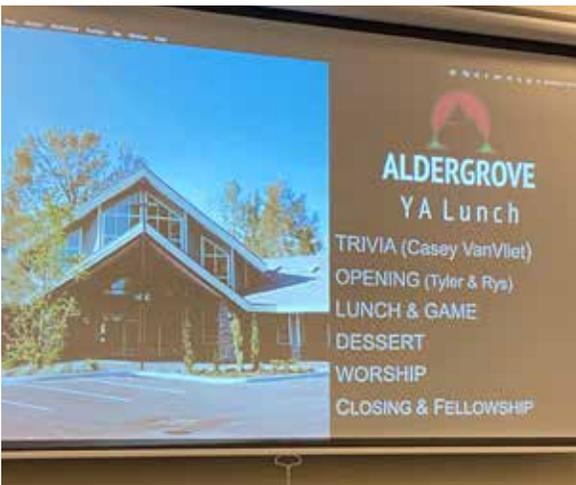
Made ev - 'ry - thing in heav - en and on earth. Hal - le - lu - jah!  
 Through Him and for Him all things came to be. Hal - le - lu - jah!  
 So that in all things He might be su - preme. Hal - le - lu - jah!  
 Through His Son's blood, poured out up - on the cross. Hal - le - lu - jah!

Music: Christian Gregor, 1784

Text: William Helder, 2024 © 2024, William Helder, wllmhldr@gmail.com

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# INTERGENERATIONAL *Discipleship*

MICHAEL EZINGA

**O**ur churches practice multigenerational worship. On Sundays, people of different ages worship together by joining their voices, praying, and listening to God's Word. The children's voices join the senior voices and everything in between. However, what happens outside of corporate worship? How does the multigenerational congregation function during the week? Is there a role for the generations within the congregation?

When speaking with Tyler Witthoef (Assistant to the Pastor in Aldergrove Canadian Reformed Church) about discipling young people, he said, "It fascinated me that young people in our churches hold Stepping Stones in high esteem. I realized that for many young people, it was their first time having an older mentor talk with them about life and faith." Further brainstorming in our church resulted in a plan to continue this relationship between the younger and older generations.

#### **A NEW EVENT**

Earlier this spring, the Aldergrove church hosted a lunch between church services for young people and more senior people. The intention was to foster relationships and discipleship between the age groups, hoping that bonds between church members would grow closer, stimulating spiritual growth, discipleship, and being equipped in faith.

Although the event was new, more than forty people attended the lunch. The tables featured a mix of age groups,

and the event started with an ice-breaker trivia game (Canadian Reformed Church-themed, courtesy of Casey Van Vliet). Following devotions, wonderful conversations about life, church, faith, work, education, current events, and much more accompanied the lunch.

Some attendees shared their experiences, describing the event as "encouraging and fun" (Rhys McCarthy, 25), "really special" (Janelle Vane, 16), and "a great time of interaction and fellowship" (John Roukema, 78). Through these interactions, the young people gleaned valuable insights from the more senior people shaped by life experiences and seasoned faith. In turn, the older generation better understood the challenges the younger generation faces, including living out their faith in the twenty-first century. It is worth repeating that young people have a strong desire for discipleship from older Christians; for many young Christians, this desire is not being fulfilled.

We hope to build and foster a culture of intergenerational discipleship, as Titus 2 instructs. In all circumstances of life, hearts directed heavenward and minds focused on Jesus because of the praiseworthy deeds of our God encourage the younger people (Ps 78:4). We wish to share our experience with other churches as this has blessed not only our younger and older members but our entire congregation. 

*Michael Ezinga*



# *A Time to Rest* EMC 2024

PETER HOLTVLÜWER

Ministers regularly attend conferences. There are counselling conferences and preaching conferences and general faith-building conferences. The Eastern Ministerial Conference (EMC) offers something different for pastors: a time to rest and be refreshed in both body and soul—and to do that in the company of their wives! Of course, single ministers are fully welcome as well, but one of the unique features of the EMC is that pastors may seek refreshment together with their brides—and that doubles the blessing!

The EMC 2024 took place at the quiet and beautiful Muskoka Bible Centre near Huntsville on October 15–17. The seventy-six participants made it the largest gathering in the seven years of its existence, with pastors coming from such area NAPARC churches as the RPCNA, PCA, HRC, URCNA, and CanRC. For three days pastors and their wives mingled, chatted, laughed, listened, discussed, and generally relaxed as they set aside their many daily tasks and reposed together in the delightful fall setting. The colours of the leaves were just about at their peak and with mostly dry weather many walks and hikes and even some peaceful country drives were much enjoyed.



### WHAT'S IT LIKE?

To give you a sense of what happens at the EMC generally, let me quote the basic mandate followed by the organizers: "To organize a three-day, two-night retreat-style conference for area NAPARC ministers and their wives for the purpose of spiritual and physical refreshment." The spiritual nourishment this year came in part through the talks of our main speaker Dr. Craig Troxel, an OPC pastor and Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary California. He spoke to us about the heart as Scripture uses this term. In the Bible, the heart is much more than the centre of our feelings; it's also the centre of our thinking, our desires, and our will. When God says he wants our heart, he wants all that we are. And when God says that he is creating within us a new heart, then he is making new all that we are. Stimulating and encouraging to think about!

Other spiritual refreshment came in the form of Pastor Thabet Megaly, who gave a fraternal address reminding us of how the Lord is near to us in all our labours and that as we work for him he

works within us. Along the way we opened Scripture, prayed, and sang to our God multiple times. Optional group prayer times were made available each morning. We also heard from four panelists on the subject of mentorship, of how valuable a practice it can be within church life. And perhaps one of the best-loved features of spiritual encouragement is the many chats had with colleagues and friends old and new, whether over coffee or a meal or at the fireside. Relaxed sharing on whatever topics come to mind with brothers and sisters who "get" each other is a boon for the soul.

On the side of physical refreshment, the very facilities at MBC provide excellent hotel-like accommodations in the midst of a fall paradise setting. Every single pastor as well as all married couples have their own space and blocks of time are given for walks, hikes, drives, or simply extra rest. For the more energetic there is an afternoon of sports activities; for the more socially minded there is an evening of euchre. On top of that, no one has to cook or clean or put children to bed! It's three days away to both recharge and reconnect.



Clockwise from Top Left: Dr. Craig Troxel; Rev. Thabet Megaly (fraternal address); Matt Kingswood (RPCNA), Jeremy Veldman (URCNA), Marc Jagt (CanRC) Panel discussion on mentorship, (l-r): Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer, Dr. William den Hollander, Mrs. Teny Visscher, Rev. Harry Zekveld, Mrs. Denise Ludwig; Guys and gals shooting the breeze.

## WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAY

If you are a NAPARC pastor in Ontario, Quebec, or northern New York thinking of attending in 2025, let the following voices from among this year's participants encourage you to do so:

- *“My husband and I love this conference, especially the amount of time there is for fellowship and socializing. It’s nice that it’s not heavy on speeches and workshops, but instead gives ample opportunity for relaxing, resting, and enjoying good food!”*
- *“My husband and I really enjoyed the conference. The speaker/topic was great and it was the perfect mix of learning, fellowship, and relaxation. The location is beautiful, and we appreciated the delicious meals as well. We left feeling refreshed!”*
- *“I was richly blessed by attending the EMC this year. The focus on the heart by Dr. Troxel was scriptural and timely food for the soul, and the fellowship with like-minded brothers and sisters was very encouraging. I also found the venue to be clean, beautiful, and relaxing.”*

Let me conclude with a huge thank-you to the many churches who see the value in this annual conference and cheerfully cover the costs for their pastor and his wife to attend. We also have benefitted from some private sponsors who wish to remain anonymous—thank you too! Under the Lord’s blessing many pastors and their wives are enabled to return home encouraged and reinvigorated for their work, and in the end that’s a blessing for the communities we serve.

For anyone interested in learning more or for follow-up inquiries regarding next year’s conference or even to donate, feel free to reach out to our contact person Pastor Tsjibbe DeJong at: [easternministerialconference@gmail.com](mailto:easternministerialconference@gmail.com). 



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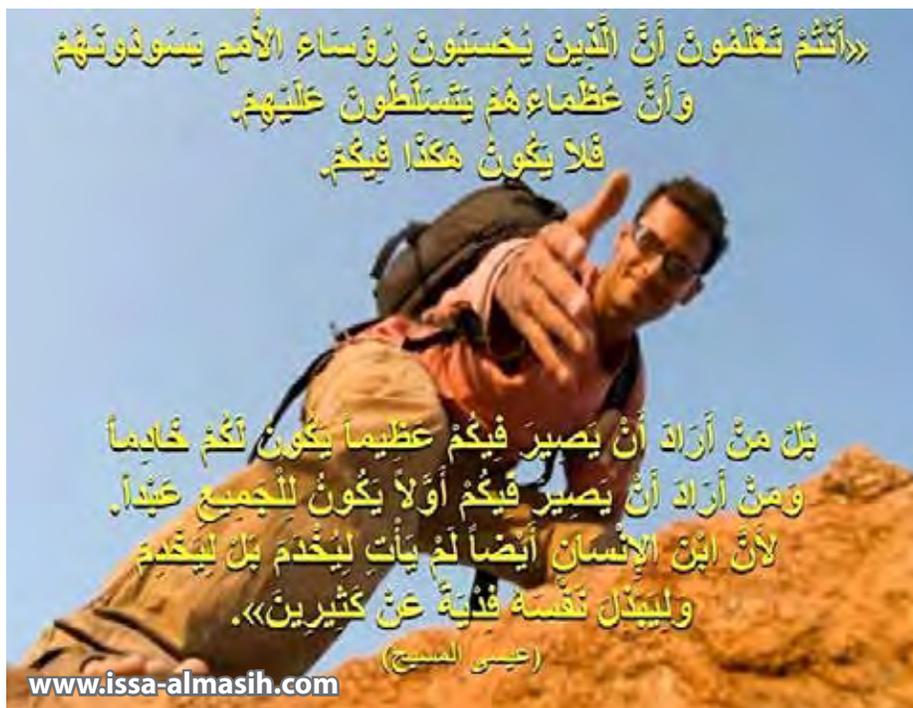


“Faithful, Fruitful and Cost-Effective Indigenous Missions!”

## Blessed Are the Peacemakers

The present conflict in the Middle East is stirring immense hatred and fear between two groups who desperately need to know the “Prince of Peace.” This war is the latest in a series of devastating regional wars since 1948. The violence began then with the expulsion of 85% of Palestinian Christians and Muslims from their homes by Zionists to create the state of Israel. (More than 30 Palestinian churches were closed in 1948 due to this event.) Over 75% of Gazans are from these refugee families.

At first, the new state largely received European refugees traumatized by sufferings in World War II. Other immigrants followed. (It is well documented that Zionist extremist terrorized Jewish enclaves in Muslim lands forcing their immigration to the newly-created state. Some of these extremists became leaders of the new state.)



“... But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ...  
... For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,  
and to give his life as a ransom for many.” - Mark 10:42-45

### 76 Years Later

Israeli society is unsettled by insecurity, political divisions and economic crisis. Palestinian Christian and Muslim refugee families in Gaza and the occupied West Bank still struggle to survive under severe restrictions of systematic occupation, illegal under international law yet continuing unopposed. This continues the cycle of anger, resentment and despair spawning violent attacks by radical groups, like Hamas, provoking more violent

retaliation. The most recent violent events on October 7, 2023 were followed by over 12 months of destruction of homes, killing, maiming and withholding food and medicine from the whole Gazan population and continues unabated. The revenge cycle increases suffering for all. *Can we as Christians turn a blind eye? What is our calling? Certainly, we are called to fervently pray for peace, for justice, for a great turning in repentance and faith in the Messiah Savior for both sides.*

### Is Prayer Enough?

Few in the West know: 1- The recent conflict has already claimed the lives of over forty thousand (mostly Palestinian women and children). 2- There remains uncounted tens of extended families who did not survive the collapse of apartment blocks in heavy bombings. 3- Hundreds of thousands in Gaza are seriously injured or maimed, again mostly women and children. 4- Hospitals have been systematically destroyed and insufficient food and medical supplies are allowed to enter. Hunger and disease are widespread. 5- Except by rare special permit, Gazans are not allowed to leave. 6- About 90% of Gazan residents have lost their homes or are internally displaced. 7- Thousands of children survived their trauma to become orphans. 8- With attention on Gaza, settlers in the occupied West Bank aggressively displace locals to annex more properties.

**Lebanon**

The situation now extends to Lebanon. Pastor Samuel Kharrat reports:

*More than one million people (almost a quarter of the population) [including 18 evangelical churches] have fled their homes because of the devastating war that Israel is waging on Lebanon. The Lebanese Ministry of Health continues to provide updates. So far more than three thousand civilians have been killed, including many children, women and elderly people, over the past three weeks alone. Hundreds of areas and villages in (south Lebanon, Beirut Suburbs, Baalbek and the Bekaa Valley) have been razed to the ground. The numbers are rapidly changing due to the fluidity of the situation with daily airstrikes and shelling around the country.*

At the same time, all the countries of the region face record levels of inflation, joblessness and insecurity. Some fear this horrific conflict could lead to World War III.

**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)  
e-transfers:  
[merfcanada@gmail.com](mailto:merfcanada@gmail.com)

**Arabic Gospel Media**

In this context, MERF's Arabic Media Team works around the clock to share the soul refreshing message of hope and comfort in Christ online and over radio airwaves.

T and his wife E, of Syria are among those who respond to the programs with admiration for the Savior: "... Now we know and understand the difference between Jesus the Messiah and all prophets..."

Please pray for the Lord's wisdom to prepare programs that faithfully and compassionately bring the gospel of God's grace in Jesus, the divine Messiah Savior who brings people together from all nations.

**Accurate Bible Teaching**

For the protection of Christian minorities in Muslim lands and the good of all, accurate Bible teaching is urgently needed worldwide. The haughty liberal Western agenda and the false teachings of Christian Zionism both must be exposed. Christians, Muslims and Jews alike need to understand that the Bible teaches that the promised **true Messiah** came to establish **a new humanity among all families of the earth**; these are **God's true people, the true children of Abraham** (Galatians 3:15-29). As the **New Creation**,



*Diaconal Aid for Displaced Lebanese families.*

they are called the **Israel of God**, to whom God's peace and mercy are granted (Galatians 6:13-16). It is not an ethnic nation or kingdom, but a spiritual one of peace and self-giving love, shaped after the image of Jesus, the divine Messiah Savior. It is the apostolic **holy nation, chosen race, the royal priesthood, called from darkness to Jesus' marvelous light.** (1 Peter 2:4-10). They are the **true Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem**, freed by Christ's saving grace (Galatians 4:21-31; Revelations 21:9-14)

**Diaconal Aid**

MERF also supports modest efforts of local church volunteers to aid some of

the needy in Christ's name in Bethlehem, Palestine with food and in Lebanon to the displaced with blankets, food and sanitary goods.

*Please join us and Christians in Muslim lands in earnest prayer for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Both Muslims and Jews desperately need the true Messiah's gospel of peace.*

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."*

*— Matthew 5:9*



# ANCHOR HOME

## *in Grimsby*

HARRIET VAISANEN

Anchor Home first opened in February 1986 in Burlington, Ontario, with two adult residents. Several years before opening, the planning stages for Anchor were put into motion when a need was expressed to have a home in place for individuals with developmental disabilities who were no longer able to be supported at their parental home. The Burlington location was a temporary solution and in September 1986, the present residence on Thirty Road in Grimsby was purchased. A third resident joined the Anchor family in November 1987. The purpose of

Anchor Home was, and still is, to support individuals with developmental disabilities in their daily life and to provide a warm, Christian, family style atmosphere for them. For many years, the organization was called Anchor Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped. We now know it as Anchor Christian Homes.

Today, Anchor Christian Homes has grown from one home to five homes, with a sixth home in the works. Each home is unique and will be featured one at a time in this magazine in the coming years. In this article we will focus on Anchor Home in Grimsby.

### **ANCHOR HOME**

Anchor Home is located in the beautiful outskirts of Grimsby in the Niagara Peninsula, amidst apple orchards and vineyards. Even though the home is in a country setting, it is still conveniently located near the bigger cities of Hamilton and St. Catharines. Therefore, if services like specialist appointments are needed from nearby cities, we do not have to travel far.

Over the years, Anchor Home has grown from two to seven residents. Anchor Home is also able to accommodate

one individual for respite care. Of the seven residents, Jerry Bontekoe is still happily living at this home since Anchor opened its doors thirty-eight years ago! What is especially profound is that, while his mother was told at his birth that he likely had only six hours to live, Jerry celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday this past September! The Lord sure works in marvelous ways and has a plan for all things. What a comfort knowing that our God has everything in his control and that he is the one who numbers our days here on earth!

There are many such stories. Another Anchor Home resident, Rob DeHaan, was 58 years old when he was promoted to glory this past year. When Rob was born, his mom was told by doctors to leave her son alone and not feed him or hold him since he would not live long anyway. He was lovingly supported at Anchor for over twenty years. Throughout the years, Anchor Home has had a few more residents who have gone to be with the Lord, six in total. It really does not matter how long or short they have lived at Anchor Home; they are missed by residents and staff alike. Residents tend to share a special bond with each other. Each resident brings his or her own unique talents and gifts to the home and become like family to each other.



They see each other and interact with each other daily, as families do. They share meals together, do devotions together, say good morning and good night to each other, etc. It is no wonder then, that Anchor becomes their second family. How beautiful that is!

Throughout the day, residents are assisted in their everyday activities as needed. While it is sometimes easier or quicker for staff members to complete tasks for residents, we strive to encourage each resident to become as independent as possible. Much planning and creativity goes into developing strategies for how best to support residents in this—living out their fullest potential as God’s image bearers, for his glory. This could be related to housekeeping chores like laundry, cleaning, meal prepping, or baking, or it could be providing support in volunteering or employment. While many of these tasks are easier to learn for some than for others, each accomplishment, small or big, is celebrated and cherished. As a Christian home, residents are also supported in their relationship with their Saviour Jesus Christ, which is very important to them!

Most of the residents are kept busy with jobs outside of Anchor. This could be a paying job or a volunteer job. Finding something outside of the home gives residents an opportunity to use their God-given gifts in their community, helping them to feel valued and appreciated. Making a difference in their community gives them a purpose, which is something we all long for. At times staff will drive residents to and from jobs, but recently we have taught some residents to take a shared taxi ride to and from their locations. They get picked up right at the door and for a small fee they get dropped off at their desired destination. This service gives them a further sense of accomplishment and independence. This program also frees up time for staff and allows staff to focus more on the residents who stay behind in the home.

Anchor Home has four full time staff and nine part time staff members. Each staff member is qualified and trained in supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. Each staff member brings unique talents and creative ideas to the table. We are there for the well-being of the residents, working to promote their spiritual, social, and emotional growth to the best of our abilities. We also have a number of volunteers who help out in various ways. Volunteers are definitely valued and appreciated for everything they do, and Anchor Home would not be the same without them. We have volunteers teaching music, doing Bible studies, doing



woodworking projects, taking residents out to various outings into the community, opening their homes/yards for us to go swimming, or simply visiting us to play a game or have a coffee.

Anchor Home is a wonderful home, for residents as well as for staff members. We continue to covet your prayers! Anchor does not receive government funding and depends on the church community for financial support. Please consider becoming a member or regular donor of Anchor Christian Homes. Ultimately, we give praise and thanks to God for his continued blessing of Anchor. *Soli Deo Gloria!* 🇺🇸

*Harriet Vaisanen*  
*Anchor Home Manager*



# *Teaching English*

## A TOOL FOR MISSION

CLARENCE BOUWMAN

The Smithville Board of Mission received a story from our missionary in Timor (Indonesia) which we thought would be of great interest to Clarion's faithful readers. Rev. Edwer Dethan, with his wife Femmy faithfully at his side, has laboured on the island of Timor (Indonesia) for more than twenty years. In slightly modified form, his story goes as follows.

*Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest—JOHN 4:35*



## A SURPRISING CALL

Our prayer is to be willing tools in God’s hand to further his Kingdom. Opportunities to be such tools often come unexpectedly and in ways beyond our imagination. This was the case when we received a phone call from the Premier of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur six weeks before our annual departure to Canada. He is the province’s first Muslim premier, not someone we expected to call on us!

It all started with a request from the local Muslim Student Organization to have a group of eager post-graduate students sent to Kampung Inggris (English Immersion Training in Java). They hoped to improve their English sufficiently to continue graduate studies abroad. A stay at Kampung Inggris involves a lot of money for transportation, accommodation, and the like. Instead

of sending the students away, Mr. Premier sought a way to accommodate this program locally. Amazingly, the Lord put our Elpida schools on his mind as a possible facilitator of this program, thus the phone call! [Note: “Our Elpida schools” are missional institutions of learning run by members of the churches that resulted from Rev. Dethan’s work.]

Practically speaking, it was not the greatest timing considering our upcoming trip to Canada. But after giving this request prayerful consideration, the Lord allowed our eyes to be lifted up and see the white fields! So, we said yes; how could we let such an unprecedented opportunity pass? A flurry of activity followed this phone conversation, including a meeting with the Premier’s assistant to discuss the aim and details of this program. We decided on a three-week on-campus course, allowing for full English

immersion. We brought up the fact that we are Christians, that we keep pigs and dogs, and that we will not be teaching on Sundays. This was all brushed aside, as long as we were willing to take this project on! Two weeks of preparation was barely enough, but we managed to put together a curriculum, schedule, and menu as well as prepare the volunteers helping out. Whereas the main goal was to improve the participants' use of the English language, from our side it was a God-given opportunity to present the gospel.

We openly mentioned that we would be using the Bible as one of our textbooks, arguing the fact that learning English is so much easier when studying familiar subjects/stories. The Quran has included and adapted many of the biblical stories and events—we used this opportunity to present and discuss the biblical narrative, highlighting the fact that these stories are not mythical but real historical characters and events.

Kampung Inggris was officially opened with a fun program presenting our vision and mission on June 19. The media had gotten wind of Elpida's new venue, and a video covering the event went viral with more than 42,000 views. We stand in awe of the ways of the Lord to allow so much publicity for the Elpida schools.

## HOW DO YOU EVANGELIZE MUSLIMS?

Of course, we agree with Paul, who writes that faith comes through hearing the Word of God. Yet, the message will not be heard if the potential listeners are apprehensive towards us and believe the misconception that all Christians are bad people. From a Muslim's perspective, Christianity stands for low morality shown in the way they dress, talk, and behave. This of course is a sweeping generalization, which makes sense when we understand that the Muslim world views Christianity as a religion originated and belonging to the West; in their understanding all Westerners are Christians.

The only way to break this misconception is by showing love.

Christians also tend to have general conceptions of Muslims, thinking them all to be terrorists who wish to see non-Muslims dead rather than alive. When the opportunity arises to talk with Muslim individuals, we should not judge them in advance or stir up their anger by attacking what they value and love. Instead, let Jesus's love and truth shine in our words and actions. Putting this into action was our aim, and it works! Amazingly, after a week of

being together, they referred to us as Dad and Mom; initially, it was Pak and Ibu (Mr. and Mrs.) It was clear that we had gained their trust.

Each meal and teaching session started and ended with prayer. Daily worries and joys were mentioned in our prayers, and we hope that this personal connection with our Heavenly Father was noticed.

The daily schedule consisted of both formal and informal teaching sessions. As mentioned previously, the Bible was used as one of the textbooks. Prior to the daily lesson, vocabulary words were given to be memorized, words that would come up in the Bible story. The story hour was embraced with much enthusiasm and keen interest.

At the end of a particular session, one of the participants raised his hand and asked whether it would be OK to borrow a Bible!

With such a close bond established, we were able to discuss freely just about anything, including marriage, divorce, what happens after death, etc.

## POSTSCRIPT

During their recent holiday in Ontario, Rev. & sr. Dethan had shared this development with the Mission Board. They had added that they fully expected that after their return to Timor the Premier would send a second group of eager students for instruction in English. As we listened to our brother and sister tell us about their experiences with their first class, we could not help but be *taken* by their enthusiasm for the work and their eagerness to tackle the second chapter. We marvel at the ways of the Lord and pray for his continued blessing also over presidents and premiers! 🇮🇩

*On behalf of the Board,*



**Clarence Bouwman**

*Minister Emeritus*

Smithville Canadian Reformed Church

[clarence.bouwman@gmail.com](mailto:clarence.bouwman@gmail.com)

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit."



**Our leadership training program for our team in Pakistan**



**Message from  
Chairman Naeem Zafar**

I am deeply moved as I reflect on the incredible journey we have embarked on together at Christ For All Ministry. Your unwavering dedication and commitment to our shared vision and mission have been inspiring. I am thankful to you and want to express my sincere appreciation for every one of you who has played a part in advancing the work of our ministry. For the past 6 years, I have had the honour of officially serving with CFAM in Canada. I am deeply thankful that God is using me for His purpose, helping to reach more people with his Word. Serving the Lord is a privilege, and I believe that loving God through serving His people is essential. Christ told Peter, "If you love me, feed my sheep." We are all on a daily journey to learn about God and his righteousness, seeking eternal life. This world is broken, and everywhere Satan spreads poverty and illiteracy to prevent people from knowing God and His glory. Darkness covers the world, as 2 Corinthians 4:4 states. However, as ambassadors of Christ, we must fulfill our duties just as Jesus did.

Serving in Pakistan can be challenging due to extreme poverty, lack of rights for Christians, suffering, lack of education, and job opportunities. But mainly, persecution and the continued killing of Christians add to the difficulties. Despite these challenges our local Christian team tirelessly supports the new generation, empowering them with the Word of God and meeting their spiritual and physical needs. Our primary mission is to bring the true Gospel to people through evangelism and to reconcile our brothers and sisters who know Jesus but do not know how to follow Him.



**Saimon is leading the teacher training**

Saimon as an educationist, is deeply passionate about empowering communities through education. He firmly believes in the transformative power of uplifting individuals through spiritual, value-based, and skills-oriented education. His commitment to the Christian community's advancement is evident in his enthusiastic support for initiatives such as Sunday School programs and youth empowerment projects aimed at fostering both spiritual growth and practical skills development. Saimon's philosophy aligns seamlessly with the mission and vision of Christ for All Ministry, inspiring him to engage with our initiatives in diverse ways. Since April 2023, he has worked with CFAM-Pakistan as an active member, channelling his passion, energy, and expertise into the design and implementation of various initiatives.



**This year, we've launched a new Bible study book in Urdu, tailored for youth. It features workbooks with answer sections for thorough exploration. Additionally, we've initiated basic study materials for Brickline children's books.**

BN: 792298119RR0001



**CHRIST FOR ALL**  
MINISTRY



**Poverty Relief: Offering food assistance to our brothers and sisters living at the Bricklin**

Christ for All Ministry (CFAM) supports brothers and sisters by providing food packages, allowing our team to reach many Christian families. Through this, we can teach them about God and guide their children. Your support makes a significant contribution to their lives, both physically and spiritually.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25:35) By partnering with us, you not only help to meet the physical needs of these families but also provide them with spiritual nourishment. Each food package opens the door for our team to share the message of God's love and salvation, impacting lives for eternity. Join us in this mission and be a blessing to many.



**Please pray for Brother Samson as he evangelizes among the Hindus. We have provided him with Bibles and audio Bibles to share with them.**



**This coming Christmas, we are evangelizing through coins engraved with the Ten Commandments and a Gospel message. We are distributing 1,000 coins to inspire the youth to think about God and His work of grace, with the hope that people will be encouraged to return to God.**

**Thank you to all the Reformed Churches for your support over the past 6 years.**

**Thank you to individuals.**

**Thank you to Business donors**

**Thank you to Clarion Magazine**

**Thank you to Volunteers**

**Thank you to the Advisors**

**Thank you to Schools**

**Prayer Request:** Prayer for the persecuted families in Pakistan. Pray for the safety of our team in Pakistan. Prayer for the Christian refugees who are suffering around the world especially those who are in Prison in Thailand. On the second week of September 8 families were arrested from school as illegal refugees. **Prayer for brothers who were recently falsely accused of blasphemy.** **Prayer for our Bible project.** **Please prayerfully consider being a prayer partner**



Message from  
Andy Luiten Advisor  
Canada

**Dear brothers and sisters, Greetings,**

I have been supporting the Christ For All Ministry (CFAM) over the years, and it is truly amazing to see how this organization continues to grow and thrive. It is a blessing to witness their work of reconciliation and evangelism in countries where hostility against Christians is a daily reality. We are all called to support our fellow believers, especially those who were born Christians but have never truly had the opportunity to hear or read the Word of God. Many of these individuals are struggling to meet their basic needs, devoting all their time to earning their daily bread. One powerful example of CFAM's work is among the brick kiln workers in Pakistan, who labour seven days a week, with no access to church or regular pastoral care. CFAM steps in by providing Audio Bibles, negotiating with Muslim brick kiln owners to allow the workers to listen to the Word of God while they work. This is followed by visits from pastors and leaders, addressing their spiritual and physical needs. Additionally, CFAM runs Sunday schools for their children in various locations. With volunteers on the ground, CFAM ensures that these families receive ongoing support. We are all called to stand with our brothers and sisters. As **1 John 3:17** reminds us, "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?" I urge you, my brothers and sisters, to make a difference in the lives of these families by supporting CFAM through prayer and thoughtful consideration of your support. May God be with you all, and thank you for taking the time to read this.



From Mehwish  
Tahseen  
Director CFAM  
Canada

Christ for All Ministry highlights the significance of women's Bible study in empowering women to nurture their children with strong Christian values from an early age. They believe that when women are well-versed in the teachings of the Bible, they can effectively impart these lessons to their children, laying a solid foundation for their spiritual growth. The ministry also stresses that women's Bible study groups create a supportive community where women can share experiences, grow in faith, and encourage one another. This communal aspect is seen as vital for personal growth and for fostering a strong, united church community. Additionally, Christ for All Ministry often points out that women play a crucial role in their families and communities. By equipping women with biblical knowledge and spiritual strength, they aim to positively influence the broader society, promoting Christian values and principles in everyday life.



**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them. One in Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9**



## CHRIST FOR ALL MINISTRY: TREASURER'S REFLECTIONS ON GROWTH AND OUTREACH

Message from  
Josh Poppe  
Treasurer  
Canada

### International work of CFAM in Pakistan and Thailand

I have had the privilege of serving with Christ For All Ministry (CFAM) over the years, and I would like to share some of the ongoing and future projects we are working on. CFAM has several exciting projects currently in progress, as well as others in the pipeline:

- Opening two new Sunday schools in Brick kiln communities in addition to the 14 that we already run.
- Starting discipleship courses for youth. After six years of working with our Sunday schools, many of the children have grown into youth, and we have launched the Bible Time Course at each center, requiring us to purchase more course materials.
- Distributing food packages this Christmas to families in need.
- Engraving and distributing coins with the Ten Commandments and a Gospel message as part of our evangelism efforts.
- Printing the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of John in Urdu, English, Hindi, and Punjabi to spread the Gospel further. Evangelizing among Hindu families.
- Supporting the brick kiln Christian community by providing Audio Bibles and ongoing food packages.
- Opening a sewing center for young women, giving them the opportunity to become self-sufficient.
- Supporting Pakistani refugees in Thailand, who are living in poor conditions. We provide food, necessities, medicine, and offer workshops and skill training. Our team also leads Bible study groups for these urban refugees through volunteers.

As we continue these projects, our mission remains focused on evangelizing and reconciling people to God. In 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, we are reminded of God's call for us to be His ambassadors of reconciliation, and we strive to fulfill this calling.

We kindly ask for your prayers for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Pakistan and Thailand. Please prayerfully consider how you can support these efforts, and together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of these families. May God bless you all for your prayers and support.

**Christ For All Ministry is a registered Canadian Charity (BN: 79229 8119 RR0001) We offer tax receipts.**

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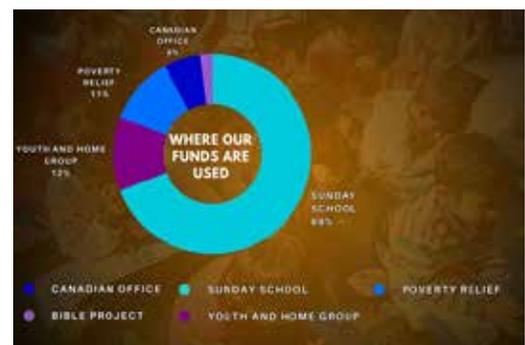
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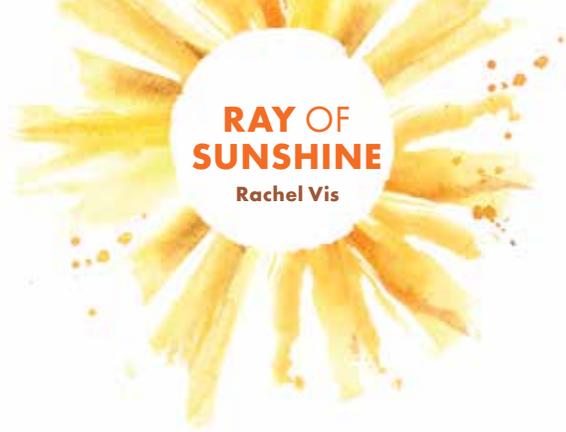
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**We invite you to support our Audio Bible Project by donating. Your contribution will help us bring the word of God to many more people.**

- **Donate one audio Bible for \$15.**
- **Donate 10 audio Bibles for \$150.**
- **Donate 100 audio Bibles for \$1,500.**





## RAY OF SUNSHINE

Rachel Vis

# JANINE SMID



**H**ello! I am Janine Smid and will be 55 years old.

I have been living at the Beacon Home for the past six years. I love living at my home and enjoy being with my friends everyday. I belong to Dunnville West Canadian Reformed Church.

While I don't have a job, I manage to keep busy at home. I fold the laundry everyday, and with nine people that's a lot of laundry! I also do my own laundry every Friday, which I also enjoy doing. When it's nice outside I hang it on the laundry line.

I enjoy puzzling in our living room and have lots of puzzles.

On Monday nights we have Bible Study, Tuesday we go to Friendship, on Thursdays we go to Rivers Edge—I love to see the animals. We go bowling every other Monday during the school year. We have someone come and read to us every other Wednesday and then on the first Friday of the month our friends from Anchor and Harbour Homes join us for a fun night. So, you can see I live a busy life!

But the best part of my life is my family! I have two sisters and one brother, a bunch of nephews and nieces, and two great nephews and two great nieces! It's so fun to be an aunt! My parents live in Evergreen Terrace in Grimsby, and I get to visit them every other Wednesday. The Lord has richly blessed me in my life and I want to thank you for remembering me on my birthday- **I love** getting cards from you all!

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

**6** Jason Herrewynen will be 51  
c/o Harbour Home  
42 Spadara Drive  
Hamilton, ON  
L9B 2K3

**7** Christine Breukelman will be 53  
2225 19th Street  
Coaldale, AB  
T1M 1G4

**13** Ben DeJong will be 34  
c/o Harbour Home  
42 Spadara Drive  
Hamilton, ON  
L9B 2K3

**14** Stephen Dykstra will be 42  
Box 3573  
Smithers, BC  
VOJ 2N0

**17** Henry Driegen will be 69  
PO Box 2532 Station A  
Abbotsford, BC  
V2T 6R3

**19** Edwin Schutte will be 41  
844 Bowman Road  
Abbotsford, BC  
V3G 1S9  
northchilliwakkhome@bethesdabc.com

**19** Janine Smid will be 55  
c/o Beacon Home  
653 Broad Street West  
Dunnville, ON  
N1A 1T8

**26** Katherine Nijenhuis will be 59  
c/o Lighthouse  
6528 1st Line  
RR 3 Fergus, ON  
N1M 2W4

**30** Tyler Hoeksema will be 36  
6755 Lorne Dr  
Sardis, BC V2R 2G3

**Happy Birthday to Jason, Christine, Ben, Stephen, Henry, Edwin, Janine, Katherine, and Tyler!**

There are many of you celebrating a birthday in January. We wish each and everyone one of you a happy birthday and God's blessing in the year to come! May you have a great day celebrating with your loved ones.

# CLARION KIDS **ASK!**

## Calling all kids:

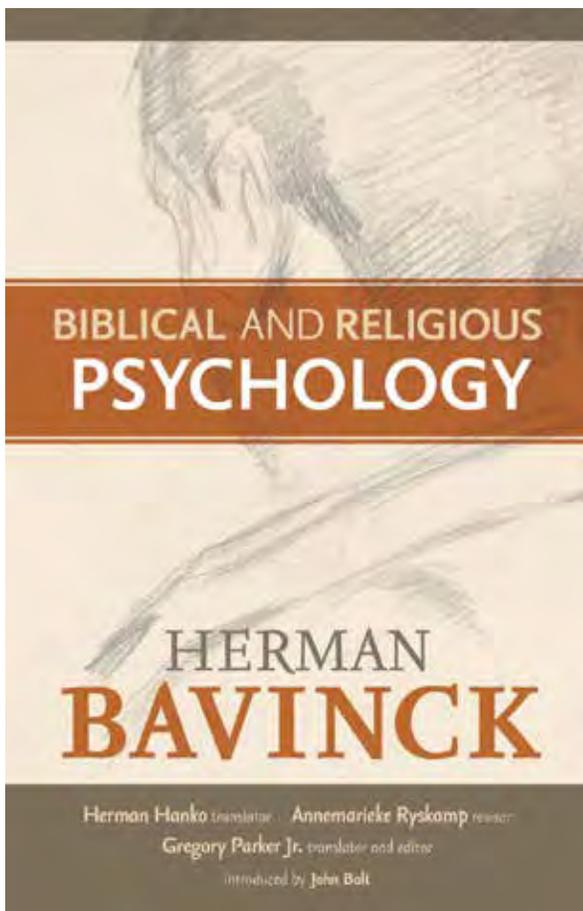
Do you have a question  
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Any questions about  
**something in Clarion**?

**Ask away, and we'll  
get you answers!**

Email your question to  
**[editor@clarionmagazine.ca](mailto:editor@clarionmagazine.ca)**  
and watch for the answer  
here in the Clarion!

# PSYCHOLOGY FROM THE BIBLE



*Biblical and Religious Psychology*, by Herman Bavinck. (Jenison: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2024). Hardcover. 236 pages, \$39.95 USD.

Reading the title of this review, you may be thinking: what does psychology have to do with the Bible? If so, it's likely because you associate psychology with a secular social science dealing with the human mind and behaviour. Because so much psychology is based on humanistic foundations, it may seem like it can't have much, if anything, to do with the Bible. Think again. In a university you could take an anthropology course. But did you know you could also take an anthropology course in seminary? In that context, anthropology is an area of systematic theology dealing with the study of the human race—what does the Bible say about it? Similarly here, Herman Bavinck is approaching the study of the human mind and human behaviour from an explicitly biblical perspective. What does the Bible say about our psychology?

The author was and remains one of the giants of Reformed theology. Herman Bavinck (1854–1921) was first a professor in Kampen and then later in Amsterdam at the Free University. He was a prodigious writer, authoring hundreds of articles and dozens of books. We're experiencing a surge of interest in Bavinck in the English-speaking world and more and more of his books are now finally appearing in English. We can be thankful for that because, though Bavinck has been dead for over a hundred years, he still has a lot to offer us today.

The chapters of *Biblical and Religious Psychology* were originally written as articles published in a periodical for Christian teachers. As such, some of the material is directly about biblical child psychology, but much of it is more broadly applicable. The book has a helpful introduction from Dr. John Bolt, who taught at Calvin Seminary for nearly three decades. *Biblical and Religious*

*Psychology* often mentions figures and books obscure to us now—but the editor (Gregory Parker) has helped us along with many informative footnotes throughout.

According to Bavinck, Scripture enriches our understanding of psychology in three ways. First, it helps us to know man as he is “in his origin, essence, and destiny.” Next, it introduces us to man’s soul-life like no other book. Finally, “it never does all this in abstract conceptions, but it makes us see everything in the full reality of life” (p. 16).

The book proceeds in two main sections. The first considers the “structure of human psychology on the basis of Scripture’s teaching about body, soul, spirit, and will” (biblical psychology). The second part gives attention to the “more theological arena of the soul’s relation to God. How does the fact that God created us in his image, in relation to him, affect our human psychology?” (religious psychology) (p. 35).

Bavinck’s exploration of what Scripture says on these things is worthwhile in its own right. However, others (like myself) may also be interested in the historical value of this work. For example, there’s a chapter on “The Heredity of Sin.” Bavinck wrote, “Heredity remains a mystery in the fullest sense” (p. 143). While DNA was discovered in 1869, it wasn’t until long after Bavinck’s death in 1921 that its function in genetics became more clearly understood. There are other examples that betray the age of this work, but not its value.

There are two points I’d like to briefly interact with from *Biblical and Religious Psychology*. In chapter 8 and elsewhere, Bavinck works with the venerable Reformed distinction between the image of God in man broadly considered and more narrowly considered. I agree with that distinction. What surprised me, however, was his categorical assertion that Lutherans either reject or de-emphasize this distinction. He paints with a broad brush here. However, in his *Christian Dogmatics*, Lutheran theologian Francis Pieper points out that this distinction was held by Quenstedt, Baier, “and others.”

The other point has to do with the source of general revelation as discussed in chapter 9. He writes that saying with the Belgic

Confession that we know God through nature “is not incorrect, but it is currently incomplete and prone to misunderstanding.” He says that “nature” formerly “had a much richer and broader meaning that it does today.” Bavinck asserts that “also culture and history are part of the means by which the invisible attributes of God are known . . . God reigns even in this age; nature, culture, and history are means through which he speaks to us even more loudly than in the past” (p. 206). I’m not sure that there is an earlier broader sense of “nature” in Reformed theology. Bavinck didn’t provide any evidence to support his claim, and my sources don’t seem to support it. I checked his Reformed Dogmatics to see if he said more about it there. He did (Vol. 1, Chapter 10). However, there he also didn’t give references and, interestingly, he didn’t include culture. I don’t believe the Bible teaches that culture is a form of general revelation. I bring this up only because so much mischief results when culture is considered as a form of revelation. If science is considered part of culture (which it should be), then science becomes a form of revelation. If entertainment is considered part of culture (obviously it is), then TV shows, movies, and pop songs are forms of revelation. Some “neo-Calvinists” in our day argue for exactly that and I wonder if the seed of that development might be here in Bavinck.

Bavinck is one of my favourite theologians. I love him for always being thought-provoking, but also for (almost always) grounding his thinking in Scripture. He was one of those men who embodied copiousness—he was filled to overflowing with the reading he’d done. He read broadly and deeply on all kinds of subjects and this book reflects it. There might be more scientifically up-to-date treatments of psychology from a biblical perspective, but Bavinck’s relevance will no doubt abide for many years to come. 



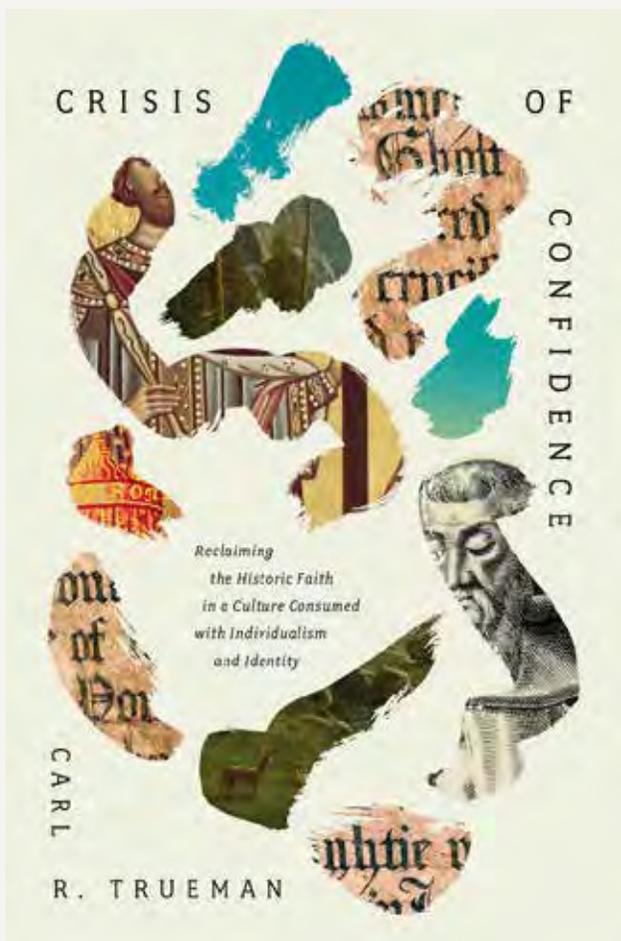
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# THE CREEDAL IMPERATIVE REMAINS



*Crisis of Confidence: Reclaiming the Historic Faith in a Culture Consumed with Individualism and Identity*, by Carl R. Trueman. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2024). Hardcover. 92 pages. \$36.12 CDN.

In the broader Christian world, creeds and confessions face an uphill battle. There are those who see such documents as being a threat to the ultimate authority of the Bible. They view those churches that have creeds and confessions as sell-outs to the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura*. But sometimes the animus towards creeds and confessions also comes from within our churches. Some would like to see less of an emphasis on them, less attention to them, even less rigour in holding to them.

Carl Trueman first wrote about the importance and inevitability of confessions in his 2012 book, *The Creedal Imperative*. This new book is a revised and expanded edition. Between 2012 and 2024, Trueman published his highly acclaimed *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*. That book explained our culture as a place where “expressive individualism” reigns. *Crisis of Confidence* takes that insight and applies it to issues surrounding creeds and confessions. With its animosity towards institutional authority, expressive individualism has made creeds and confessions even less plausible and even more distasteful. This book attempts to address that, especially in chapter 1.

Trueman explains the biblical basis for creeds and confessions. He describes the development of creeds in the early church. He reviews the history of various Protestant confessions, including the Three Forms of Unity. Trueman explains how creeds and confessions should function in our public worship. Finally, he explains the usefulness of creeds and confessions. We may be used to hearing about them as being useful for teaching, for uniting the church, and for warding off false teachings. Trueman helpfully goes beyond those more obvious uses.

One of his best insights has to do with what Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:13, “Follow the pattern of the sound words. . . .” As he notes on page 60, “To claim to have no creed but the Bible, then, is problematic: the Bible itself seems to demand that we have forms of sound words, and that is what creeds are.” He connects this to 1 Timothy 1:15, “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Writes Trueman, “Here it seems abundantly clear that Paul is using previously established phraseology, a form of sound words, to capture in a nutshell the gospel” (p. 61). I know a Reformed pastor from New Zealand who regularly introduces his reading of the Heidelberg Catechism in the PM service by calling it a “pattern of sound words.” I like that. It connects our confessing with Scripture, not just the content of our confessing, but also the fact of our confessing.

Trueman is a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, so he’s most familiar with their history and practice. He can perhaps be forgiven then for getting a couple of things wrong when it comes to our history and practice in the Reformed churches. On pages 26–27, he states that the ecclesiastical adoption of the Belgic Confession took place at the Synod of Dort in 1618–19. However, it was written to be the confession of the churches in the Low Countries—it even bore that title. It was never the personal confession of Guido de Bres—he wrote it intentionally with the first person plural, “We believe. . . .” Furthermore, as Dr. N. H. Gootjes pointed out, it was adopted already by the time of the Synod of Antwerp in 1565 (*The Belgic Confession: Its History and Sources*, pp.94–95).

Another thing Trueman gets wrong is his claim that continental Reformed churches require “confessional subscription of every communicant member” (p. 156). He contrasts that with churches like the OPC who have a low bar for communicant membership, requiring only “a simple but publicly coherent profession of faith

in the line of Romans 10:9–10.” First, our churches (for example) do not require confessional subscription of our members. That’s something only office bearers are required to do. We do, however, have confessional membership and our members are expected to be committed to the Reformed doctrine found in our confessions. But that isn’t the same thing as subscription. Subscription is far more rigorous in its demands. Second, I wonder if Trueman, as an OPC minister, is aware of the CanRC/OPC agreement on confessional membership which led to the establishment of ecclesiastical fellowship in 2001. That agreement states:

Anyone who answers the membership vows in the affirmative is bound to receive and adhere to the doctrine of the Bible. The patristic church has summarized this teaching in the Apostles’ Creed and the churches of the Reformation have elaborated on this in their confessions. Every confessing member is bound to this doctrine and must be willing to be instructed in it.

Given Trueman’s statement, I wonder how well-known this agreement really is in the OPC and whether what’s stated here is actually the case. It would seem not.

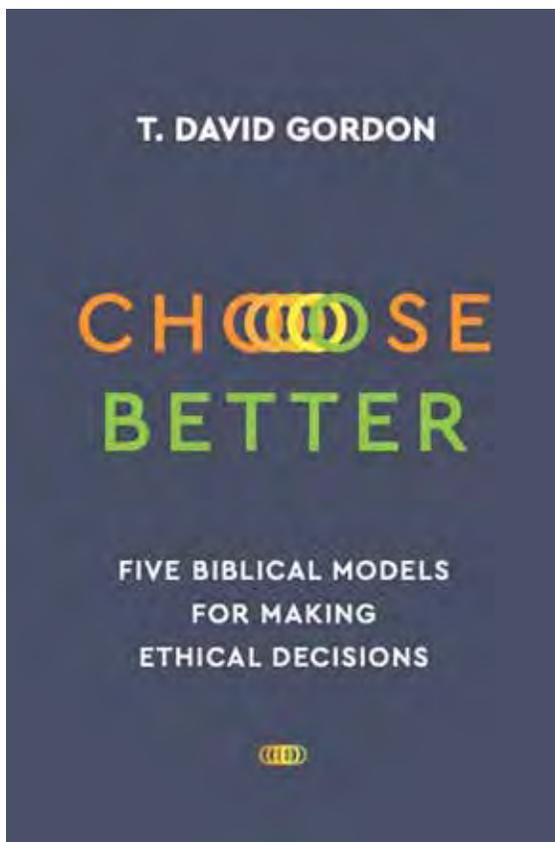
If you’ve already read *The Creedal Imperative*, should you buy and read *The Crisis of Confidence*? Yes, because there is a substantial amount of new material here. But even otherwise, buying it would give you reason to re-read it—and it’s a book well worth re-reading. Not only is it helpful for Reformed church members, but also for those who are contemplating coming over from other backgrounds. 



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# HOW DO I CHOOSE?



*Choose Better*, by T. David Gordon. (P&R Publishing, 2024). Paperback. 123 pages. \$23 CDN.

We make thousands of choices each day, from the most banal in everyday routines to the more complex, requiring thoughtful discernment. The process of our deeper thinking is under investigation in T. David Gordon's recently published work on the topic of ethical decision making. Gordon is a retired professor of religion and Greek, former associate professor at a seminary, retired Presbyterian pastor, and author of numerous publications. His latest offering provides an accessible and sometimes wry look at five biblical models for making ethical decisions and how they intersect with each other, including commentary on how our understanding of the process can also help us *choose better*.

Christian decision making is not simply identifying right from wrong or choosing good over evil. It is a much more nuanced mental and spiritual process of determining what is a better choice from among a number of possible good choices. The example of Martha and Mary in the gospels provides an opening illustration. Jesus commends Mary for making a *better* choice, to sit and listen at his feet, than Martha, who has dutifully made a practical choice to serve the guests. Here we see that context, perspective, and purpose can all influence what is the better decision in the moment. The deeper principles at play in shaping our decisions are often woven into the preaching, teaching, and catechizing a Christian may receive over a lifetime of growing and maturing in faith. Gordon suggests that identifying and understanding how our ethics are formed will help us not only evaluate our process, but also aid in scripturally growing and maturing in it.

The book is divided into an introductory chapter on the key concepts followed by a chapter for each model: Imitation, Law, Wisdom, Communion, and Warfare. The author explores the scriptural basis for each model and how the prevalence of that particular model can influence decision making both positively and negatively. For example, the law model tends towards biblical *commands* of right and wrong where the wisdom model is inclined to *commend* one action in contrast to another in terms of outcomes. One method searches out scriptural edicts while the other considers clusters of actions and related consequences. The imitation model is geared towards understanding what it means to be created in God's image and then more specifically how we live as *imitators* of Christ. How does *taking up his cross and following him impact our daily decisions*? In the same way, decision making based on the importance of living in communion or in the face of realizing an ongoing spiritual battle may channel decision making for better choices in differing directions. When we reflect on our Christian responses to the challenges and choices of the recent global pandemic, we can see variations of all of these models at play!

Gordon also addresses the interplay between models and comes to his own conclusion regarding which one is preeminent or perhaps the most scripturally overarching. What I found especially interesting was his assessment of the tradition he lives in,

coming out of the Protestant Reformation, where the law model is well embedded in the catechisms. He considers the law model's strengths in terms of how it protects a fallen society from itself, how it speaks to guidelines for law and liberty, how it promotes love for God and neighbour as its basis, and how it curtails subjectivism. Its weaknesses are that it can often appear (with cause) pharisaical, legalistic, self-righteous, and judgmental in a fallen world and it can emphasize what one *does* over who one *is*, allowing a seemingly un-Christlike person to still appear to be doing right. It is often more attractive to an immature believer who is looking for direction (*application*) above wisdom, and it can tend to eternalize covenant stipulations that are not meant to be forever or for all people. It can also seek to command what other traditions commend without significant biblical warrant, usually to do with ethical choices around Sabbath observances, liturgical practices, family worship patterns, and the like. This approach often leads to heated discussions if this model fails to be well integrated with the other models! If you find that to be intriguing commentary, then this is a book for you. Humbly recommended! 📖



**Rick Ludwig**  
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## CRMA'S 2024 MEETING

# Short Report

The AGM meeting of the Canadian Reformed Missions Association held on September 7, 2024 was opened in a Christian manner. Board members are Otto Bouwman, John Smid, Julius VanSpronsen, and now Ian Wildeboer, who will be replacing Dr. Arjan de Visser who retired after serving as vice-chair since its inception. The following boards were in attendance: Abbotsford/Vernon/Willoughby, Bethel, Dunnville, Hamilton Cornerstone, Hamilton Providence, Smithville, Hamilton Streetlight, Owen Sound, Asia, CRWRF. The following boards were not in attendance: Aldergrove, London, Smithers, Winnipeg-Redeemer. Edmonton-Immanuel, supporting Darren Versteeg as he shares the hope of salvation in the Edmonton community, was received as a member.

The boards present had the opportunity to share updates on their missions works. Rev. Victor Atallah, general director of Middle East Reformed Fellowship, also presented an update of activities with a focus on mission opportunities in Cyprus. He explained that there is a strong need for a mission board to support this project. He requested that Canadian Reformed churches see if a church could take this project under its wing. A 3-minute MERF overview video can be found at the bottom of the MERF newsletter site: [www.powerofchristatwork.net](http://www.powerofchristatwork.net).

An ad hoc committee report was presented (follow up the action item from the 2023 AGM "Ad Hoc committee to perform a SWOT and develop a strategic plan for how the

various mission initiatives can work together and break down silos”). The CRMA whose primary focus is on foreign missions has the following mandate:

- to assist the members in the fulfillment of their respective roles and tasks;
- to keep one another informed of mission work being done by member churches and by other faithful Reformed churches (e.g. churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship, ICRC and NAPARC);
- to consult with one another about matters and issues of mutual concern;
- to promote missionary training, research, and development;
- to facilitate co-operation where there is geographical overlap or possibilities of mutual assistance;
- to sponsor conferences and seminars that will better equip members, churches, boards, missionaries, mission workers, and other personnel;
- to envision together possible target areas for future work within and outside of Canada and make suggestions to the churches;
- to have Canadian Reformed mission efforts represented at international mission gatherings sponsored by organizations, such as The International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) or the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)

In a discussion concerning the recent articles in *Clarion* by Dr. de Visser outlining some of the strengths and weaknesses of the CanRef approach to missions, the following weaknesses were noted: (1) Challenging to build up expertise; (2) Not geared to consultation; (3) Difficult to strategically view new initiatives/opportunities; (4) Limited communication among different mission boards and churches; (5) Lack of cooperation to resolve issues (on field, board/missionary etc). The ad hoc committee discussed if the CRMA could have a role in assisting growth in these areas under its present mandate and/or if it may be better to pursue other ways to promote cooperation and communication and proposed that the mission boards meet for further consultation on the question.

The members decided to have the CRMA host a Mission Consultation from April 10–12, 2025 in the Hamilton area with all

the member-churches represented along with anyone with experience on the field that the boards are able to send. The purpose of the meeting will be to put together a proposal supported by all the sending churches on how to resolve the issues/challenges facing Canadian Reformed mission work. Each board will provide updates on structure/personnel, field, plans, and most importantly challenges. Guest speakers will be invited to speak on the topic of mission organization and cooperation.

Our webmaster Rev. George van Popta provided an update on mission communications and the following was decided:

- a. Continue with the posts to [www.reformedmissions.net](http://www.reformedmissions.net) linking them to the Canadian and American Reformed churches Facebook page
- b. Send a monthly PDF of the blog articles to consistories to distribute via Church Social. These illustrated stories are memorable and identifiable.
- c. Send weekly prayer requests to the consistories. On average, one email per month with related requests for each week of that month. The prayer request would be for a specific missionary/worker or pastor and include up-to-date prayer and praise requests for their work. Also, send this info to the churches for publication in their bulletins of that specific day and as (possibly) a PowerPoint slide for display in preservice (on-screen) church news updates. They would all follow this same format and so make it quite easy for someone offering the congregational prayer to include it. These measures should serve to raise the profile of our missionaries and their activities.
- d. To further investigate the support and feasibility of replacing the mission calendars with maps of where in the world our missionaries are living and working, which could then be distributed to all the churches.

Otto Bouwman reported on the 2023 Statement of Financial Position along with the 2023 Statement of activities. He will send out a reminder to those members whose 2024 dues have not yet been received. The assessment for 2025 will remain at 0.2% of members' budgets.

The chairman thanked everyone for their attendance, cooperation, and participation. Deep gratitude was expressed for the outgoing vice chairman Dr. Arjan de Visser's service for so many years. The meeting closed with singing and prayer. 

*Dear Editor,*

I read with interest the article by Pastor Hendrik Alkema in the latest Clarion on Delightful Friendship. It brought back a flood of memories. This past October 31 reminded me of a friendship that started before grade school when I went to my friend's birthday party on that day. I phoned him for his birthday this year—sixty-five years later. Our conversations have never been about the weather but what God has done with us the past year.

My definition of a friend is not necessarily someone I talk to every day but someone I can phone and know that he cares for me and I care for him. Like Bert. We call. We talk. We laugh. And remark how good God has been good to us. Or Harry. We maybe talk once a year, but when we do, we discuss most of the issues that currently confront the CanRC, dealing with and solving them; God loves the church, so we'd better love her too. And John, who gets so excited about the goodness of God that he can hardly get the words out.

These are good friends. And yet they are all miles apart and don't even know each other.

But when I get together with any one of them, the laughter, the tears, the talk, and the pain of leaving know no bounds. We know and are assured that someday we will be together forever and that is the ultimate best.

These are friends who accept me, warts and all. We also know that if God can love us with those warts, we can put up with a few anomalies.

Thanks for the article, Hendrik, it was a delight. You too have been a good friend through the years. 

*John Siebenga  
Chilliwack, BC*





1974 - Oct 25 - 2024

## Art & Mary Grim (nee Vreugdenhil)

*"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion." ~ Ps 84:5*

We are so thankful to our faithful Father that our parents and grandparents have been able to celebrate 50 years of marriage! God has been good and gracious over the years, and we pray that He will bless you with many more years together in His strength on your pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem!

**Jeremy and Marie Grim (Langley, BC)**  
(Peyton, Mykelti, Carsen, Ashlyn)

**Bryan and Leanne Grim (Sioux Falls, SD)**  
(Adam, Morgan, James, Emily, Sara, Nathan, Elizabeth)

**Aaron and Tania Grim (Sumas, WA)**  
(Gavin, Madison, Brandon)

**Shaun and Brenda Raap (Sioux Falls, SD)**  
(Seth, Hazel, Lyla, Jonas, Thomas)

**Jason Grim (Surrey, BC)**  
(Colin and Kym Grim (Coeur d'Alene, ID))

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Psalm 119:105

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**Applications may be sent to**  
Chair of Personnel Committee, Pete Harthoorn  
peter.harthoorn@mnp.ca



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The application deadline is October 8, 2024. Duties to commence in August, 2025. For further details, see the job description on our website, [guidobres.org](http://guidobres.org).



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- Send completed applications to Mrs K Wielstra - Assoc Sec [wielstrak@jcs.tas.edu.au](mailto:wielstrak@jcs.tas.edu.au)

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God sent forth his Son, born of woman,  
born under the law, to redeem those who  
were under the law, so that we might receive  
adoption as sons. And because you are sons,  
God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our  
hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

#### **GALATIANS 4:4-6**

---

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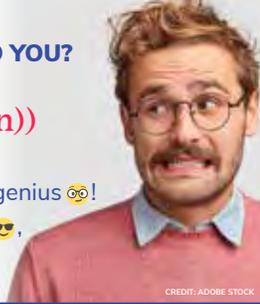
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# Seasons Greetings

## FROM THE CHURCHES

### ABBOTSFORD

#### *Pathway Christian Church*

*“And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.’” Luke 2:10-11*

*During this festive season, may your hearts be filled with joy as we commemorate the miraculous gift of Jesus’ birth and the happiness He brings to our lives. It’s a true blessing to celebrate this special time together and cherish the bonds we share. May you continue to experience God’s abundant blessings throughout 2025 and in the years to come.*

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Patrick and Andira Bigo  
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*Noah, Samuel, Brooklyn, Desmond*

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*Keyanah, Adalia, Makaiya*

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## ALDERGROVE Canadian Reformed Church

*"Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29*

*The following brothers and sisters as well as the rest of the congregation extend our best wishes of the season to all of you. May the peace of Christ fill your hearts throughout the year ahead.*

John and Grace Dam  
Ron and Shirley de Haan  
Michael Ezinga  
Hugo and Erica Feunekes  
*and family*  
Betty Klaver  
Henry and Clasina Klos  
Harold and Tina Ludwig  
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Rob and Janet Schouten  
Tony and Marcelle Togerez  
Peter and Ina Vandeburgt  
Adrian and Sheila Van Delft  
Aubrey and Jane Vandergaag  
Chris and Krista VanderHorst  
*and family*  
Casey and Ria VanVliet

## ANCASTER Canadian Reformed Church

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*  
*Luke 2:11*

Adrian and Kerri Bartels  
*Jemma, Carter, Finnley*  
Ben and Ingrid Bartels  
Bill and AnneMarie Bartels  
Dan and Rena Bartels  
*Hailey and Gideon, Samantha and Gus, Tyler, William, Christina, Paige, Dayna*  
Anna Bartels  
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John and Irene VanAndel  
Roland and Janice VanAndel  
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*John, Todd*  
John and Nellie Vis  
Dien Woudenberg

## ATTERCLIFFE Canadian Reformed Church at Attercliffe

*And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*

*Luke 2:10-11*

*We wish you all a blessed Christmas and the LORD's guidance in 2025!*

Tyler and Brittany Aalbers  
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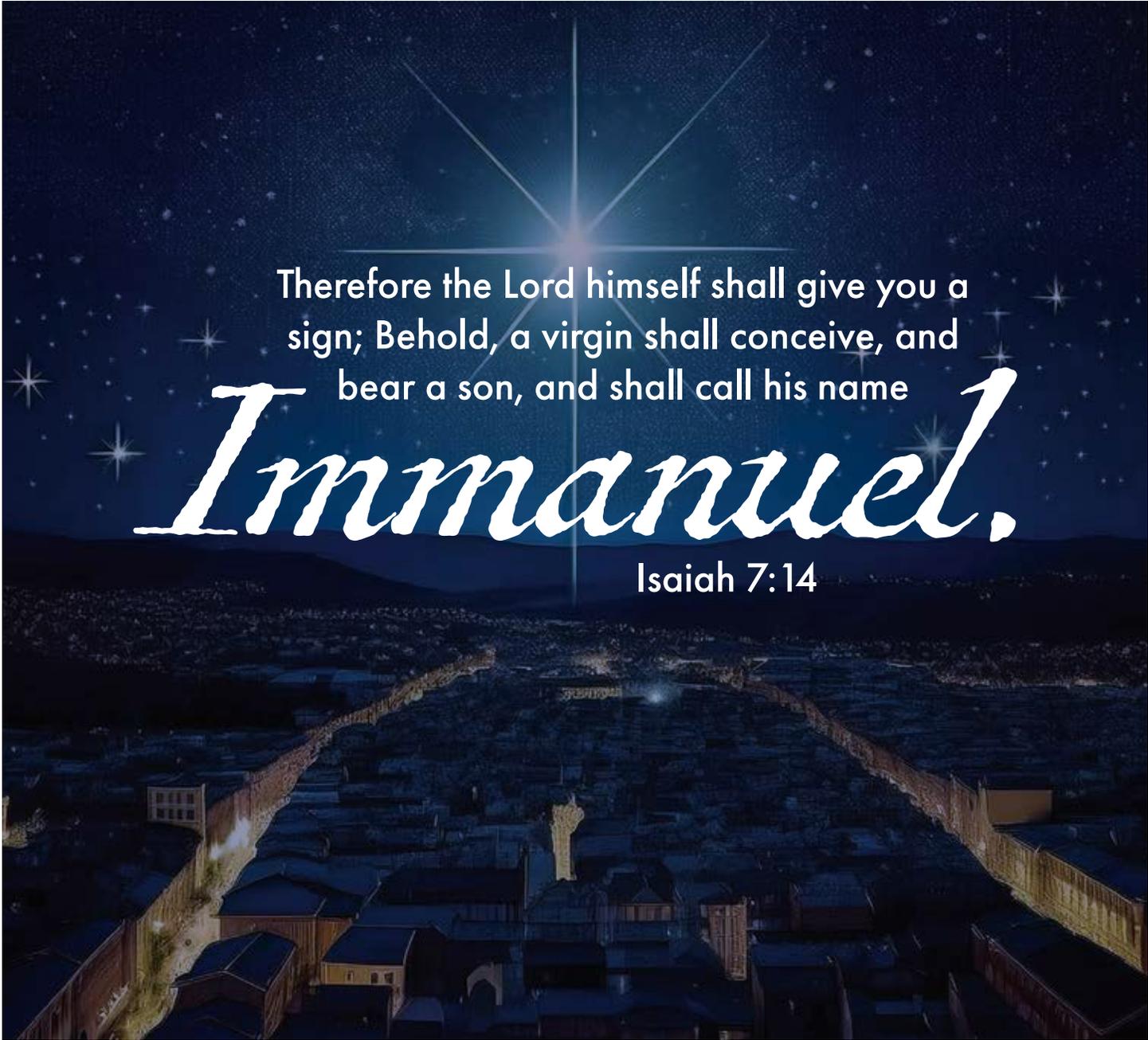
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*Derek, James, Renée, Laura*

## BARRHEAD Canadian Reformed Church

*We wish everyone the joy and peace of the Christmas Season and the Lord's blessing and guidance throughout the New Year.*

*"Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."*  
*Luke 2:11*

Dirk and Tania Barendregt  
*Maddisyn, Ava, Judah, Genesis, Noa*  
Brian and Emily Berends  
Nathan and Hannah Berends  
Harry and Gezina Deboer  
*and family*  
Damian and Nancy Derochers  
Adrian and Stephanie Devink  
*Brynlee, Kruz, Oaklynn, Kapri*  
Rick and Stephanie Devink



Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name

# Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14



*We wish you joy and comfort remembering our Saviour's birth and gift of grace this Christmas season, and throughout the New Year.*



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 Anita Zielman

## BURLINGTON Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church

*The following members wish all our  
 brothers and sisters in Christ, throughout  
 Canada and abroad, God's blessing at  
 Christmas and in the New Year.*

**TWIN OAKS:** Ron, Derrick, David,  
 Grace, Cornelis, Joanne Van Dam  
 Matt and Ruby VanderMooren  
 Betsie VanSjdenborgh  
 Gerald and Cathy Bosscher  
 Bini Buist  
 John and Linda Douma  
 Mrs Alberta Harke  
 John and Patricia Hofsink  
 Leo and Diane Kampen.  
 Gijsbert and Annie Nederveen  
 Klaas and Marg Spithoff

## Fellowship Canadian Reformed Church

*"For unto you is born this day in the city of  
 David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord"*  
*We wish all our brothers and sisters around  
 the world the Lord's blessings and guidance  
 for the coming year.*  
 Rev. Chris and Rita Bosch



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*“But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” Titus 3:4-5*

Wishing you and your family  
much joy and peace this Christmas season,  
and a New Year ahead filled  
with God's love and goodness!



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*Rehoboth Canadian Reformed  
Church Burlington/Waterdown*

*Christmas Greetings from Your Brothers  
and Sisters of Rehoboth Canadian  
Reformed Church and a Blessed  
New Year 2025.*

*“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and  
bear a son, and his name shall be called  
“Emmanuel” (which means, God with us).”  
Matthew 1:23*

Ann VanderWoude  
John and Alida Bol  
Susanna Groenwold  
Luke and Jill Jelsma  
Henk and Janice Van Dam  
Marten and Joane Postma  
*and family*  
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*Nicole, Patrick, Gregory, Amanda  
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Frank and Irene Marchese  
Henry and Jackie Smouter  
Dennis and Marg Muis  
*Lee and Sheena, Dean, Ember, Evan,  
Raven*

**CALEDONIA**  
*Canadian Reformed Church*

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy  
and peace in believing, so that by the power  
of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”  
Rom 15:13*

*Wishing our brothers and sisters in Christ  
a blessed season of joy and celebration as we  
remember the birth of our Saviour!*

Dan and Tracy Aasman  
*Lily, Brock, Nash, Eden*  
William and Diane denHollander  
*Gabe, Silas, Zion*  
Harry and Gail Jans  
*Jarod, Blake*

James and Ang Meerveld  
*and family*  
Mike and Amanda Nederveen  
*Jayden, Daniel*  
Josh and Dina Roodzant  
*Hailey, Kristopher, Lauren*  
Frank and Karen Schuurman

**CALGARY**  
*Canadian Reformed Church*

*“For unto us a Child is born and unto us a  
Son is given, and the government shall be  
upon his shoulder and His name shall be  
called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”  
Isaiah 9:6 ESV*

*Wishing our brothers and sisters in Canada  
and abroad a Merry Christmas and the  
Lord’s blessings in 2025! From your  
Brother’s and Sisters in Calgary, Alberta.*

Al and Judy Bergsma  
*Laura, Denise and Jocelyn*  
Tony and Marion Boone  
Shaun and Debbie Chin  
*and family*  
Richard and Gwenda deHaas  
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Kevin and Irene VanTil  
*Austin*  
Eric and Natasha Veenendaal  
*and family*

Dean and Karin Wallace

**CARMAN EAST**  
*Canadian Reformed Church*

*Greetings from the Carman East  
congregation, May the LORD richly bless  
you in the year to come.*

Eric and Lisa Bergsma  
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**CARMAN WEST**  
*Canadian Reformed Church*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy  
and peace in believing, so that by the power  
of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”  
Romans 15:13*

*Greetings from your brothers and sisters in  
Carman West.*

Jordan and Linnette Beukema  
*Maggie*  
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Les and Agnes Vanderveen  
Glen and Nancy VanderVelde



# Blessings

to you and your family  
this Christmas

“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners— of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in Him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:15-17



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## CHATHAM

### *Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church*

*"And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you." Psalm 39:7*

*Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church of Chatham wishes our brothers and sisters all over the world a blessed Christmas and hope for the New Year.*

Pete and Teresa Bergsma  
Doug and Karen Beintema  
*Abby, Olivia, Madeline*  
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John and Wanda Veenema  
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*Amelia, Hannah, Garrett, Wesley*  
Wilma Veenema

## CHILLIWACK

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

*Wishing you all a joyous Christmas and the Lord's Blessing and guidance in 2025!*

Norm and Helen Bysterveld  
Peter and Evelyn Driegen  
Dennis and Jennifer Flokstra  
*and family*  
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Garry and Rita Hovius  
Mike and May Krabbendam  
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Frank and Alice Schouten  
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Leving and Jenise Tinoco  
*and family*  
Harry and Freeda Werkmen

## CLOVERDALE

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

*"Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15.*

*May the presence of Christ fill your heart with His joy now and throughout the coming year. Greetings from Cloverdale, BC.*

Garrett and Anita Dam  
Siebe and Grace DeJong  
Kent and Belinda Dykstra  
*Carlina, Melody, Kendal*  
Art and Mary Grim

George and Amy Gunnink  
*Lydia, Andrew, Ben*  
Jake and Carolyn Kuik  
Stan Leyenhorst and Lyn Metzlar  
Leyenhorst  
Lucas and Janice Nincao  
*Jeremiah, Hadassah, Philip, Elijah*  
Henry and Audrey van den Hoven  
Aren and Mary Van Dyke  
Jenny Vanderzyl  
Rick and Nora VanOene  
Henk and Rita Visscher

## COALDALE

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

John and Diny deHaas  
Dirk and Wilma DeVries  
Leon and Rachel Diek  
*Matt and Emmy, Meaghan*  
Joop and Jenny Harthoorn  
Henk and Maggie Hofsink  
Keenus and Jennifer Leffers  
*Sophia, Darek, Kylie, Travis, Evan, Caitlyn, Amelia*  
John and Erna Moedt  
*Tristan*  
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Ite and Jane Veurink  
Charlene Voorhorst  
Jim and Zan Voorhorst  
John and Jenny Voorhorst  
Nic and Jolene Voorhorst  
*Jayden, Liam, Madison*

## DEVON

### *Devon Canadian Reformed Church*

*We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the Lord's blessing and His guidance for 2025.*

Brayden and Karlee Bredenhof  
*Haven, Layla*  
Conner and Maria Bredenhof  
*Faith*  
Martin and Leona Bredenhof  
Charles and Caroline de Boer  
Harry and Martha De Gelder  
Caleb and Shanelle Kos  
*Titus, Zadok*  
Tomas and Shanese Leyenhorst  
*Bryce, Austin*  
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# Glory to God

IN THE HIGHEST  
& ON EARTH

# Peace

TO THOSE ON WHOM HIS  
FAVOUR RESTS

LUKE 2:14

Merry Christmas from our family to yours!

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## DUNNVILLE EAST

### Canadian Reformed Church

*Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Christ, the Lord's continued blessings and guidance in the year ahead.*

*"Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*  
*Luke 2:14*

Andrew and Maria Bosma  
*Travis, Rylee, Reuben, Caden, Arden*  
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Andrew and Kerri Jans  
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Wayne and Jane Oosterhoff  
Justin and Amanda Vanandel  
*Ezra, Conner, Miya, Lexi*  
Tom and Rachel Vis  
*Chantelle, Kaitlyn, Mckenna, Ezra, Emery*

## DUNNVILLE WEST

### Canadian Reformed Church

*Wishing you all the Lord's blessings in the New Year.*

BEACON HOME: Janine Smid, Derek Kok, Nancy Schipper, Paul Dieleman, Clarence Zwiép, Jim VanderHeiden, John VanWyngaarden, Nick Prinzen, Eddie VanRootselaar  
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Jack and Michelle Vandervelde  
Henk and Emily Vandervelde  
*Greg*  
Jack and Marlene Vanrootselaar  
*Tinielle*

## EDMONTON

### Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church

*We wish all of our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad a blessed Christmas and the Lord's blessings in 2025.*

Rob and Emily Duker  
*Sierra, Jaxon*  
Jerry and Sandra Dykstra  
Anthony and Jane Hoeksema  
Rick and Gigi Johannesen  
Amy Li and Linda Chan  
Hilda and Jean Stikisma  
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*Mason, Lochlin, Sawyer, Huxley*  
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David and Rachel Vanderzwaag  
*and family*  
Julius and Karen VanSpronsen  
*and family*  
Aafke Vanderzyl  
Kelvin and Marj Van Dasselaar  
Cathy Visscher  
Lorna Visscher  
Murray and Marita Vrieselaar  
*Jolene, Marco, Bellamy, Janna*

### Providence Canadian Reformed Church

*Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. Psalm 98:1*

*We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a blessed 2025!*

Richard and Joanne Aasman  
Henry and Loretta Baker  
*Avery*  
Mark and Nelena Geusebroek  
*Kalla, Amy, Jared, Owen, Mallory*  
Mrs. Tenie Stikisma  
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Mrs. Flory van Orizande

## ELM CREEK

### Canadian Reformed Church

*"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song and he has become my salvation." Isaiah 12:2*

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas and God's blessings through the New Year.*

Anton and Cheryl Borst  
*and family*  
John and Hilly Beukema  
*and family*  
Kevin and Lisa Breukelman  
*Kelsey, Sara, Thomas, Ashley, Caleb*  
Henry and Betty Breukelman  
Adrian and Kimberly Borstlap  
*Ariena, Zachary*  
Ron and Lucie de Ruiter  
*and family*

## ELORA

### Canadian Reformed Church

*"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in manger."*  
*Luke 2: 11-12*

Gerry and Henny Broersma  
Mike and Diana Broersma  
*Hadassah, Nathaniel, Micah Christian*  
Bert and Dinah Hutten  
Jerry and Claire Hutten  
Hank and Marg Jager  
*Ashley*  
Wilma Jansen  
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Dick and Dina Lodder  
Colin and Laura Meerstra  
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Marnix and Anne-Marie Sikkema  
*Erika, Reuben, Isaac*  
Bert and Henrietta Tenhage  
Gary and Alice Veenman

## FERGUS

### Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church

*Greetings to all our brothers and sisters. May we all with united voice, join with Mary as we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, our Emmanuel.*  
*"And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the*



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Colossians 3:17

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---	--

**Work with us! Contact Ryan or Kevin**

*Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior," Luke 1:46-47*

Harry Bouwman  
*(at Shalom Manor, Grimsby, ON)*

Jeannette Bouwman

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Rod and Janine Dykstra  
*Tyler, Jaydelle, Kenzie*

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Hein and Juanita VanLuik

Terrance and Charmaine Vis  
*Travis, Jared and Chanelle Brouwer, Chase*

Charles and Linda Westrik  
*Joshua, Daniëlle*

## FERGUS NORTH

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

*Wishing all our Brothers and Sisters in the Lord a Joyous Christmas and the Lord's Blessing and Guidance for 2025!*

Jake and Anita Bouwman

Bernard and Michelle Breukelman

John and Heather Broersma

Stephen and Joanna DeBoer  
*Jordynn, Madison, Micah, Alexis*

Sjoerd and Lisa deHaan  
*Travis, Logan, Jakob*

Marc and Jody Jagt  
*Benjamin, Evan, Mikaia*

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*Jacob*

Willem and Roelie Smith

Ben and Jo-Anne Vanderzwaag

Kevin and Andrea Vanderzwaag  
*Josh, Nick, Lily, Leah*

## FLAMBOROUGH

### *Redemption Canadian Reformed Church*

*Greetings from the following brothers and sisters from Flamborough! We wish all brothers and sisters in Christ a joyous Christmas season and the Lord's blessing and guidance throughout the New Year.*

Jeff and Eileen Breukelman  
*and family*

Leo and Angelina Buitenhuis  
*and family*

Will and Janet Havenaar

Rob and Connie Hofsink  
*Jonathan, Luther*

Herman and Joanne Jans  
*and family*

Joop and Elly Lootens

Matt and Nadia Poort  
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Job and Donna Schenkel  
*Jordan, Tristan and Rachel, Connor, Dylan*

Rich and Cynthia Vanderlaan  
*and family*

Joe and Shannon Vogel  
*Russell, Emily*

## GLANBROOK

### *Trinity Canadian Reformed Church*

*Family in Christ, we pray that you are all blessed with a joyous Christmas and God's richest blessings in 2025!*

*"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."  
Isaiah 43:1b*

Ed and Lisa Baker  
*Simon, Katrina*

Wayne and Hilda Bartels  
*Karly, Lorissa, Rebecka, Waylon*

Paul and Irene Boeringa

Claude and Teresa Boisvert

Nellie Buitenhuis

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*Keziah, Lincoln*

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*Reuben*

## GRAND RAPIDS

### *American Reformed Church*

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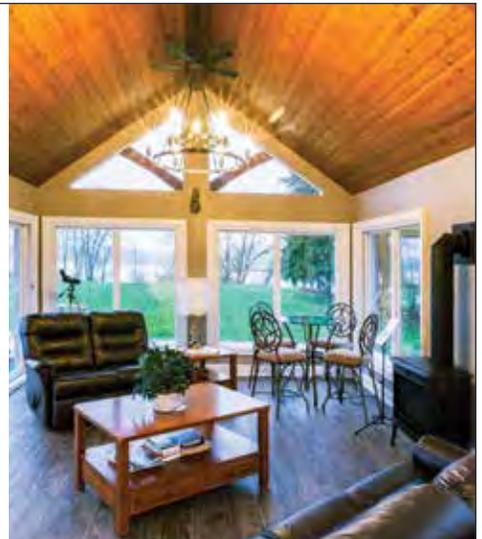
## GRAND VALLEY

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

*The following brothers and sisters of Grand Valley greet you! We wish all our brothers and sisters in Christ, the Lord's blessing and guidance throughout the year of our Lord 2025.*

*"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness"  
Psalm 115:1*

Brandon and Nelene Bouwman  
*Ezra, Elias*



May the blessing of Christ's birth fill your home  
with warmth, love and laughter this holiday season.

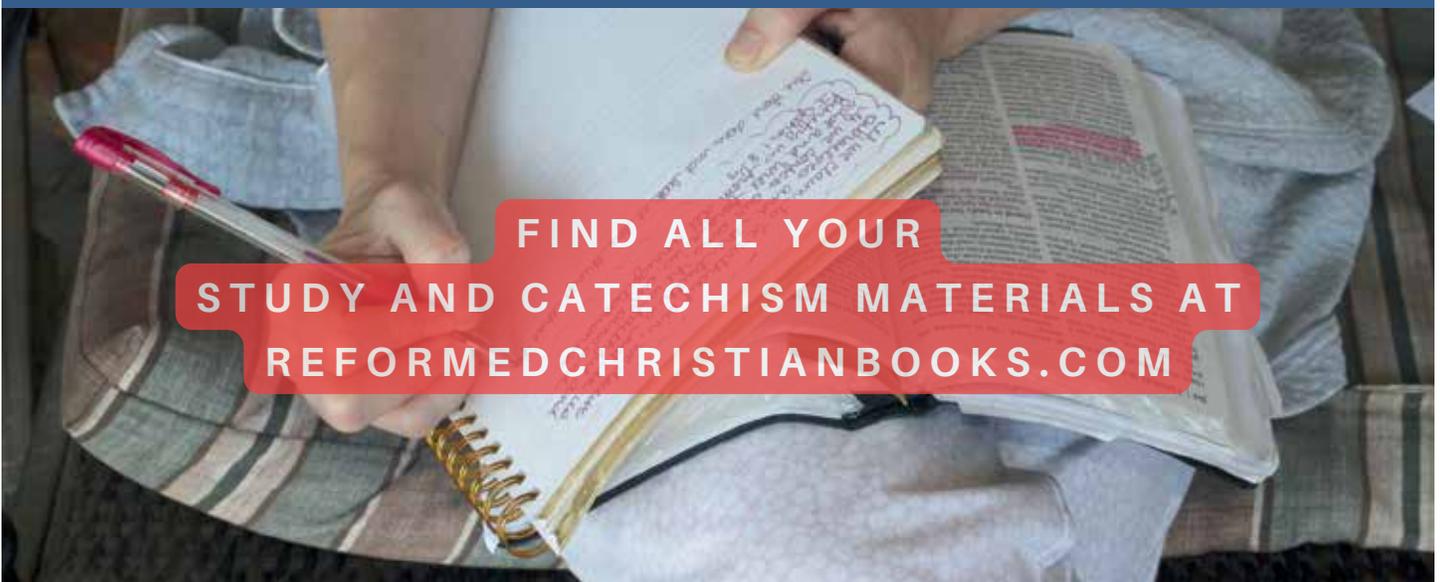
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PSALM 78:4



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*Roy, Jeremy*  
 Sheldon and Jessica van Sydenborgh  
 Anthony and Kim Vis  
*Tracy, Courtney, Eric*  
 Andrew and Janet Wildeboer  
*and family*

## GRASSIE

*Covenant Canadian Reformed Church*

*Wishing our brothers and sisters around*

*the world God's blessings in this holiday season and throughout the New Year!*

*"Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations." Ps. 90:1*

Wes and Jaclyn Blokker  
*and family*

Fred and Joyce Bosscher

Alan and Melanie Datema  
*and family*

Mark and Mary Deboer

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*Paige*

## GRIMSBY

*Living Light Canadian Reformed Church*

*Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad, the LORD's blessings and guidance in the year ahead.*

*"For the Lord your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete." Deuteronomy 16:15*

Mrs. Dicky DeBoer

Pastor Rolf and Liz denHollander  
*Jake, Micah, Ethan, Madilyn, Jonah, Anneliese*

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Gord and Esther VanEgmond

*Rachel V and Ethan Harsevoort*

Bert and Janet VanGoolen

*Robert and Hannah*

## GUELPH

*Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church*

*We wish our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the joy and peace of the Christmas Season and the LORD's blessing and guidance throughout the New Year 2025.*

*"At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:10-11*

Mrs. Rika Bouwman

Dale and Annie Dallinga

Charles and Theresa Doekes

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*Merry Christmas*  
& A BLESSED NEW YEAR!



Gerry and Heather Van Woudenberg  
*and family*

Andrew and Theresa Westrik  
*and family*

Fred and Riki Westrik

John and Robin Westrik  
*and family*

### *Living Word Canadian Reformed Church*

*May the gifts of God's peace, joy and love be  
yours in abundance during the Christmas  
season and throughout the year of our  
LORD 2025.*

*"Trust in him at all times, O people; pour  
out your heart before him; God is a refuge  
for us." Psalm 62:8*

Piet and Tineke Agema  
*Douwe, Harriet, Roelof, Matilda,  
Willem, Rik*

John and Rachel Broekema  
*Seth, Joel, Dayna, Elyse*

Trevor and Linda Devries  
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*Sophia and Jonah*

Spencer and Rebecca Westrik  
*Sadie*

## HAMILTON

### *Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church*

*Let the wonder of Christmas fill your hearts  
and minds with joy, peace and love.*

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing  
salvation for all people. Titus 2:11*

Cliff and Rose Buitenhuis  
Barb Bultena

Arjan and Inge De Visser

Fred and Sharalee Dewit  
*Kendra, Cameron, Quinton*

Carl and Janet Groenwold

William and Anne Helder

George and Sharon Hofsink

Harold and Sharon Meerveld

Nick and Betsy Nyenhuis

Ralph and Teresa Vanderlaan

Ebelien Witten

### *Providence Canadian Reformed Church*

*Greetings from the following brothers and  
sisters of Hamilton! We wish all brothers  
and sisters in Christ a joyous Christmas  
season and the Lords blessing in 2025.*

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
peace among those whom he is pleased."*

*Luke 2:14*

John and Martha Beintema

Bert and Jean Blokker

Steve and Jackie Blokker  
*and family*

Aart and Martha Blokhuis

Peter and Eleanor Boeringa

Matt and Elsa DeGelder  
*Garnet, Kate, Landen, Erin*

Janny Groenwold

Goerge and Coosje Helder  
*and family*

Steve and Roslyn Onland  
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J. Smith  
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Justin and Ayden VanEgmond  
*Drew*

Ted and Christine Van Raalte  
*and family*

Bert and Anne Van Straten

George and Dora Vanpopta

Rev. G. Wieske

## HOUSTON

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

*Extending to all our brothers and sisters in  
Canada and abroad, our hope that the Lord  
will guide and keep you in His care in the  
New Year.*

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it  
again: Rejoice!" Philippians 4:4*

Jean Brienen

Tim and Michelle Dykstra  
*Owen, Morgan, Jase*

Henry and Diane Fennema

James and Sydney Fennema  
*Jack, Kate, Luke*

Sina Fennema

Henry and Claudia Hansma

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Jane Meints

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Henry Nyman

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*Casey, Ainsley*

James and Ashlee Viersen  
*Markus, Tessa, Kira*

## KERWOOD

### *Grace Canadian Reformed Church*

Arjen and Maria DeJong  
*Adalyn*

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*Lydia, Kara, Rozlyn, Zachary, Brett*

Rev. Steve and Kryna van Leeuwen  
*Helena, Carmen*

“The Lord is near to the  
brokenhearted.” PSALM 34:18

*For all those remembering a  
loved one this Christmas season,  
our prayer is that you will feel  
God's closeness and comfort  
and experience his blessing  
in the new year.*



Rick Ludwig



Denise Baynton



Greg Luxon



Garnet VanPopta



Diane Russell



Kayla Ruggi

## LANGLEY

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

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*Quinton*

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Heres and Frieda Snijder

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Ken and Cory Hoff

Frank and Jenny Oostdyk

Ted and Lynda Schouten  
*Evan*

Keith and Terry Temple

Menno and Jo Anne Werkman

## LYNDEN

### *American Reformed Church*

*Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Christ, the Lord's continued blessings and guidance in the new year.*

*"The Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations." Psalm 100:5*

Jim and Stephanie Bareman  
*and family*

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*and family*

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Henry and Shirley Veldman

Mrs. Martin Vreugdenhil

Bill and Brenda Wielenga

## NEERLANDIA

### *Hope Canadian Reformed Church*

*Thankful for the good news of great joy this 2024 Christmas Season. Greetings to our brothers and sisters across the world!*

*And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for*

*behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10*

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*Lane and twins*

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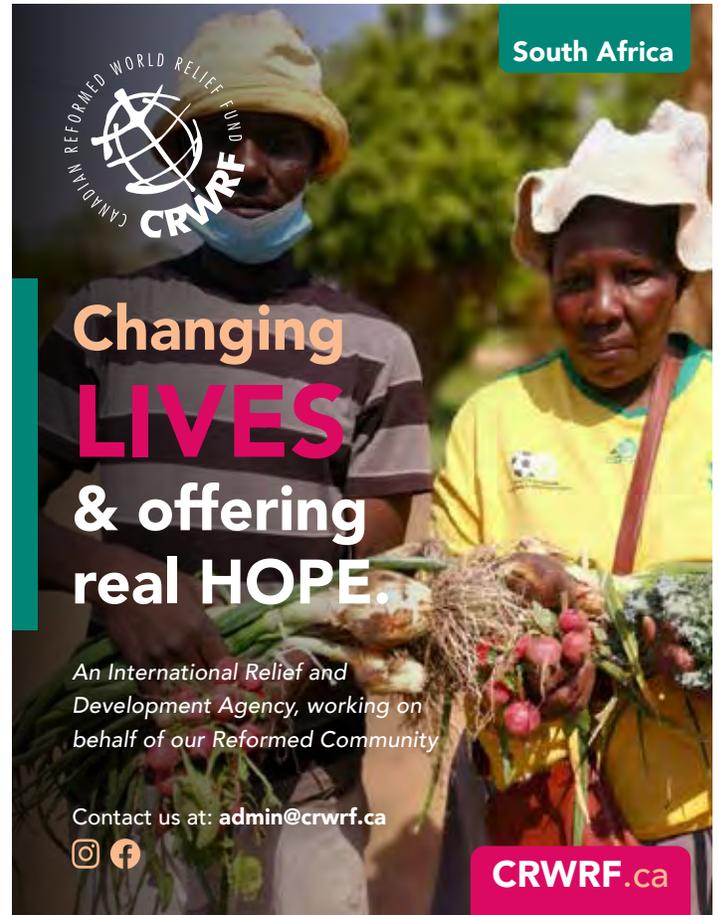
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Rudy and Dorothy Ouwersloot

Shawn and Andrea Schutten  
*and family*

Ed and Jennifer Vander Vegte

Jan Vanzanten

## NOOKSACK VALLEY American Reformed Church

*"We wish all our brothers and sisters in  
Christ a joyful holiday season and the  
Lord's blessing for 2025!"*

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave  
his only Son, that whoever believes in him  
should not perish but have eternal life. For  
God did not send his Son into the world to  
condemn the world, but in order that the  
world might be saved through him." John  
3:16, 17*

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*Elijah, Paul, Jasper, Genevieve*

Marvin and Bernice Vreugdenhil

## ORANGEVILLE Canadian Reformed Church

*We wish all our brothers and sisters around  
the world the Lord's blessing and guidance  
for the coming year.*

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
peace to men on whom his favor rests."  
Luke 2:14*

Rob and Anne Bouwers  
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*Caleb and Courtney, Josiah and*

*Annelies, Seth, Hadassah and Jeremy,  
Isaiah, Levi, Jesse and Joanna*

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*Isaac, Myles, Brody, Wesley and Joel*

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Brady*

Albert and Nellie Vansydenborgh

Jeff and Karen Vansydenborgh  
*Jonah and Sophia, Hanna, Lydia*

## OTTAWA Jubilee Canadian Reformed Church

*May our Lord God bring a revival in our  
hearts this Christmas and may our lives in  
2025 only be for His glory.*

Peter and Ellie Buist

Richard and Emma Buist  
*Peter, Evan, Charlie*

Darren and Laura Feenstra  
*Aziah, Javan, Rowan, Evianna  
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## OWEN SOUND Canadian Reformed Church

*May God richly bless our brothers and  
sisters as we remember His gift to use in the  
birth of His son Jesus and rich blessings in  
the New year.*

Jack Boersema

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### Canadian Reformed Church

*"Rejoice the LORD is King! O come let us adore Him!"*

*Christmas greetings and God's blessings for 2025 from the church at Sardis!*

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Chester Baarda

Ed Boes

John and Florine Breukelman

Jenny Byker

Ed and Flo deHaan

Fred and Cora DeHaas

Leonard Hoogerdijk

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*Maddi*

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*Lorien, Perrin*

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Carmen, Hendrik*

Brad and Anthea VanWoudenberg  
*Kaladin, Gracelyn, Hayden, Ainsley*

Peter and Jean VanWoudenberg  
*and family*

John and Linda Woelders

## SMITHERS

### Canadian Reformed Church

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."  
Isaiah 9:6*

*The church at Smithers, BC would like to wish our families, friends, and brothers and sisters across Canada and abroad, a wonderful Christmas season, and a new year rich in the fruits of the Spirit.*

Hendrik and Kristen Alkema,  
*George, Judah, Emily*

Rick and Lori Bandstra  
*Sam, Anna, Elyse, Thomas*

Phil and Karen Bandstra

Andrew and Jane Barendregt

Ineke Barendregt

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*Sam, Carter, Julia, Summer*

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Eden, Jude*

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*Janelle, Bradley*

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*And Greetings from Prince George, BC:*

James and Hannah Penninga  
*Elora*

Pastor Tim and Linnet Schouten  
*Miriam, Jenna, Asher, Sadie, Chloe,  
Lillian*

## SMITHVILLE

### Canadian Reformed Church

*We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the LORD'S blessing and His guidance in the New Year.*

Jake and Winnie Bos

John and Diane Bos  
*Trevor*

Liz Bos and Cindy Bos

Rev. Clarence and Arlene Bouwman

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*Shane*

Johanna Breukelman  
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Zwany Linde

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Rick and Danielle Ravensbergen  
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Julia, Leanne, Thomas*

Fred and Mieneke Stoffels

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John and Theresa VanDoodewaard

John and Mary VanEerde

Bill and Corrie VanWoudenberg

## ST. ALBERT

### Canadian Reformed Church

Jack and Pauline DeHaas

Ben and Rhea Hofsink  
*Asia*

Martin Hooimeyer

Jeremy and Tanya VanderGaag  
*Nathan, Samuel, Phoebe, Audrey*

Bernie and Barb Van Raalte

Shawn and Laura Veenendaal  
*Mya, Chloe, Graham, Hannah*

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*Avery, Cadence, Alexis, Damian*

*"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11*



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FROM

AND THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM, "FEAR NOT, FOR BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY THAT WILL BE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE. ~ LUKE 2:10



## SURREY

### *Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church*

*The brothers and sisters of Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, B.C. wish all the brothers and sisters in Christ a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.*

*"May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!" Luke 2:14*

## TABER

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."  
John 3:16*

*May the Lord bless you and keep you in the coming year! Christian greetings from the church in Taber*

Stuart and Darlene Boeve

Paul and Kinske deVos

Andrew and Tineke Doeve  
*Ashlyn and Joel*

## TINTERN

### *Spring Creek Church*

Wilco and Julie De Haan  
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Rob and Joyce Van Amerongen

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Gord and Gelinda Van Woudenberg  
*Derek*

## TORONTO

### *Bethel Canadian Reformed Church*

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" Luke 2:14*

*Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Christ, the Lord's continued blessing and guidance in the year ahead.*

Andrew and Mariann Baartman  
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## VERNON

### *Canadian Reformed Church*

*We wish all the brothers and sisters around the world Season's Greetings and the Lord's blessings in 2025!*

Kevin and Desiree Alderliesten  
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# MERRY CHRISTMAS!



"WHEN THEY SAW THE STAR, THEY REJOICED EXCEEDINGLY WITH GREAT JOY. AND GOING INTO THE HOUSE, THEY SAW THE CHILD WITH MARY HIS MOTHER, AND THEY FELL DOWN AND WORSHIPED HIM."

MATTHEW 2: 10-11



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## WILLOUGHBY HEIGHTS Canadian Reformed Church

*We wish all our brothers and sisters the Lord's blessing for 2025!*

*"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through the generations."*

*Psalm 100:4,5*

Cory and Emma Flokstra  
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### Grace Canadian Reformed Church

*We wish all our brothers and sisters around the world the Lord's blessing in 2025.*

*"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David. Luke 1: 68-69*

Frank and Shirley Ann Baker  
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*And greetings from Niverville  
Ambassador:*  
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The Outdoor Reflections team wishes you a blessed  
Christmas and Happy New Year!

— Matt & Lydia Van Andel



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## Christ for All Ministry

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We want to take a moment to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your incredible support for Christ For All Ministry. Your prayers and generosity are helping us bring hope and light to our brothers and sisters who face challenges and hostility for their faith.

This Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, we're reminded of the power of His love and grace. Let's proclaim it together: Hallelujah! Jesus Christ is King!

Thank you for standing with us in this mission. Together, we can continue to share the Good News and make a difference in the lives of those in need.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed and joyful Christmas!

With love in Christ,



Naeem Zafar



Josh Poppe



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**Irene Malda**

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**Henry Smouter**

Burlington-Waterdown (Rehoboth)

**Tamara den Hollander**

Caledonia

**Marion Boone**

Calgary

**Charlene Veenendaal**

Carman East

**Natasha Slaa**

Carman West

**Debbie DeBoer**

Chatham

**Michelle Rekers**

Chilliwack

**Mary Grim**

Cloverdale

**Jenny Voorhorst**

Coaldale

**Harry Noot**

Devon

**Linda Jansema**

Dunnville

**Cathy Visscher**

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**Nelena Geusebroek**

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**Lisa Breukelman**

Elm Creek

**Wilma Jansen**

Elora

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Fergus Maranatha

**Heather Broersma**

Fergus North

**Joanne Jans**

Flamborough

**Tamara den Hollander**

Glanbrook (Trinity)

**Maria VanDijk**

Grand Rapids

**Ryma Van Raalte**

Grand Valley

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Neerlandia-North

**Jennifer Vander Vegte**

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**Margaret Jansen**

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