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TO ENCOURAGE, EDUCATE, ENGAGE, AND UNITE

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Clarion

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what's inside

We start off Issue #11 with an editorial by Matthew VanLuik on the great value of faithful fathers in our families and congregations—some excellent suggestions in there! What follows is a thought-provoking meditation from Bill Slomp on what can be learned from Christ's interaction with a Samaritan woman. Rob Schouten presents a timely article on how to view our daily callings in light of Christ's reign. Jason Van Vliet provides an explanation of the phrase "All Israel shall be saved," and helps us get a handle on a tricky topic. Rodrigo Reed then fills us in on the Jerusalem Catechism, a project with a rich history of believers working to show Jesus as Israel's true Messiah and King. Wes Bredenhof dips into the realm of the attributes of God and gives us a healthy way to think about God's love and God's wrath.

We also have various community events reported on: the Fraser Valley's Women's Fellowship Day, the graduation of 111 students from Guido de Brès Christian High School in Hamilton, and the ordination of a new minister in the Taber congregation.

Did you know that Reformed theological training has been going on throughout the Portuguese-speaking world for 25 years? Exciting! Read all about it in the IRTC newsletter (and congratulations to them!). The spreading of the gospel is crucial in a world full of darkness and even hatred of Christ and his church, something which should have our attention and prayers, as Andrew Douma reminds us in *Persecution of Christians*. Jan DeGelder's *Governing the Church* column returns with a stimulating explanation of what Article 73 of the Church Order (Christian censure) is really all about.

We welcome a new writer to our magazine, Ms. Mariah Tamminga, who has taken over from Lucas Holtvliuwer in writing the *Podcast Review* column. Luc, thank you for your solid work in the past. Mariah, thanks for going forward with this! Still there is more: church history (monasteries), a new song, and a review of an apologetics book that could be most helpful to our high schools and senior catechism curriculums—check them all out! May your reading be blessed!

Peter Holtvliuwer

PS. Sneak peek: did you know that the Canadian Reformed federation is turning 75 years old this year? We'll have a special Issue #12 to tell you all about it, so stay tuned!

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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:

Confessionally Reformed
Loving in manner
Attuned to current issues
Readable and Reliable
In Submission to Scripture
Open to constructive criticism
Nurturing Christian living

THE NEED FOR FAITHFUL FATHERS

The importance of fathers is increasingly acknowledged in today's society. Concerns about the behaviour of youth such as the diminished lack of respect for others and rising violence is attributed to the absence of fathers in their children's lives. Law enforcement officials occasionally plead with parents to supervise their children. From a biblical perspective, it is unsurprising that fathers are entrusted with the responsibility to care for their children. Furthermore, the church relies on devoted fathers to assume leadership roles within the church as the family of God.

LEADERSHIP ROLE

The father's role is to provide leadership to his children. Children often seek their father's advice and look to them as examples when navigating life's challenges. In today's environment, secular influences and societal pressures encourage children to adopt values at odds with their faith. Children are unable to navigate these issues on their own but depend on the thoughtful leadership of their fathers. While mothers also play a vital role, this discussion invites fathers to reflect on their unique role within the family.

Effective leadership involves both teaching and setting a positive example for our children. Instruction of our children must naturally flow from our example. Inconsistency between words and actions undermines credibility. For instance, a father who discourages the use of inappropriate language but uses such language himself has lost credibility with his children. Your example speaks louder than words.

EXAMPLES OF JOYFUL SERVICE

The greatest example a father can set is to demonstrate genuine joy in serving the Lord. This attitude extends to fulfilling family responsibilities with dedication and approaching daily tasks with enthusiasm. Regular, joyful participation in worship and engagement in the church community, combined with personal devotions such as Bible reading and prayer, provide a powerful example for our children. On the other hand, a negative attitude towards the church and its people will have an adverse effect on the atmosphere in the home and negatively influence the children's well-being. It is essential for fathers to instill a supportive and nurturing atmosphere in the home.

Deuteronomy 6 highlights the importance of fathers to impress the will of God on their children. Everyday situations—whether at home, during travel, or throughout daily routines—present valuable opportunities for meaningful conversations. Learn to laugh with your children and enjoy good fun with them but also take time to

have important and serious conversations with them. Fathers need to strive to understand each child individually, recognizing when encouragement, admonition, or attentive listening to issues in their lives is required. Achieving this will require intentional effort, and consistent reflection on the needs of your children.

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Leadership in family devotions is another crucial responsibility. As children mature, their spiritual needs evolve. Young children benefit from hearing biblical stories that teach about the greatness of the Lord. As children mature, they face more complex issues that require deeper discussion. While devotionals can be helpful, the regular reading of God's Word remains fundamental for their spiritual growth. You want to impress upon them God's Word as the guide for their lives.

When reading a portion of God's Word, engage your children with questions suited to their age. For young children, ask questions that help them understand what was read and to see God at work in the story. Ask older children to talk about what God is doing in the passage and what that means for their lives. Asking questions suited to the age of your children encourages understanding and will lead to important conversations that can profoundly influence their development. Do not be afraid if there are times you cannot answer their questions. These are opportunities to grow together as you seek to understand and apply God's word in your lives.

PRAYER

Additionally, fathers should instill the practice of prayer as a regular part of family life. Prayer should not be limited to mealtimes but should extend to moments of crisis and personal difficulties in the life of your child. Pray with your child both in times of need and times for thanksgiving. Such examples show them how important it is to always bring their concerns and joys before the Lord.

As fathers, take great delight in the children the Lord has given you and lead them joyfully in the ways of the Lord. Model for them how wonderful it is to live in the care of a loving Father in heaven. Doing so will be greatly rewarded by the Father in heaven. 



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Breaking Barriers with **LIVING WATER**

Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life

– John 4:13-14

In a world increasingly parched—emotionally, spiritually, and relationally—many people feel a deep, unspoken thirst. It’s not physical dehydration, but a longing for something more: meaning, purpose, and hope. They seek fulfillment in relationships, careers, entertainment, or material success, yet their souls remain parched.

Jesus spoke directly to this kind of thirst during his remarkable conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. It’s a story not just about water, but about restoration—the kind that renews the soul and breaks down the walls that divide us. It’s a master-class in grace, truth, and how to reach those who are lost without drowning them in judgment.

“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,” Jesus tells the woman. “But whoever drinks the water I give them will never be thirsty again.” These words convey an important truth. Water sustains the body; living water sustains the soul. Jesus knew the woman wasn’t just tired from drawing water—she was weary from a life of failed relationships, shame, and rejection.

Human beings can only go a few days without physical water, but many survive years—sometimes a lifetime—without ever drinking from the spiritual well that brings eternal life. The Samaritan woman had been trying to fill that void in all the wrong places. Sound familiar?

Jesus could have avoided Samaria, like most Jews of his day, but he didn’t. He went right through it. More than that, he sat at Jacob’s well and engaged a Samaritan woman in conversation—a triple social taboo. She was the wrong ethnicity, the wrong gender, and had a messy moral history. But Jesus didn’t see those barriers. He saw a soul worth saving.

Rather than begin with condemnation, Jesus simply asked for a drink. It shocked the woman. Jews didn’t share vessels with Samaritans. “You want to drink from *my* cup?” she asked, astonished. But Jesus was on a mission—not to shame, but to restore.

Jesus didn’t preach at her. He listened. He asked questions. He drew her in. He allowed her to guide the conversation, then gently steered it toward deeper truth. Many of us make the mistake of trying to win people with words before we’ve won their trust. But real transformation begins with authentic relationships.

James 1:19 reminds us: “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak.” Jesus embodied that wisdom. He knew her story already—five husbands, and now living with someone who wasn’t her husband—but he didn’t blast her with guilt. Instead, he affirmed her honesty. “You are right,” he told her. That moment of grace cracked open her heart.

Once she was ready, Jesus offered something better than relief—he offered renewal. Not just water from the well, but a spring of water that wells up to eternal life. The woman, intrigued and longing, asked for it. Step by step, Jesus led her from curiosity to conviction, from isolation to inclusion, from shame to salvation. He even addressed her deepest religious and cultural wound—the division between Jews and Samaritans. She raised the debate about worship on Mount Gerizim versus Jerusalem. But Jesus moved beyond place and politics: “The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.” The location didn’t matter. The heart did.

Jesus’ conversation at the well is not just a story of one woman’s redemption—it’s one blueprint for how we bring others to Christ. Start with compassion. Break down barriers. Listen deeply. Speak truth with gentleness. And above all, lead with the living water of God’s grace.

In an age where people are spiritually dehydrated, we are called to be wellsprings. Let’s be people who don’t just talk about faith but who live it, offering refreshment to a thirsty world. **C**

FURTHER READING:

John 4:1–26, Ephesians 5:25–32

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

1. What am I trying to quench my spiritual thirst with—and is it truly satisfying me? Consider whether the things you pursue are bringing lasting fulfillment or just temporary relief.
2. Am I willing to cross social, cultural, or personal barriers to show grace and compassion like Jesus did? Reflect on whether biases or fears are preventing you from reaching out to others in love.
3. Do I listen attentively to others before sharing my faith, or do I rush to deliver my message? Think about how you engage in spiritual conversations. Are you making space for genuine connection?
4. Am I offering people living water—or just religious routines and empty words? Evaluate whether your life and faith invite others into a deeper, authentic relationship with Christ.



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Crowned with Glory:

HEBREWS 2 AND THE HUMAN CALLING

Few passages in Scripture speak so clearly to the question of human purpose as Hebrews 2. Interpreting Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 through the lens of Christ, the author of Hebrews gives us a sweeping vision of what humanity was created to be, what has gone wrong, and how that calling is being gloriously restored in Christ. In Hebrews 2, we see that our Redeemer Jesus not only shares in our humanity but reclaims and glorifies it, restoring us to our created purpose.

HUMANITY'S HIGH CALLING

At the heart of this vision in Hebrews lies the cultural mandate. In Genesis 1:28, God blesses humanity and commands them to “be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion.” This is not merely a command about reproduction or farming, but a calling to develop, order, and cultivate the world in submission to God’s will. It defines the shape of human life under God: we were created to fill, form, and govern the earth as faithful stewards of his creation.

This vocation is grounded in a deeper truth about who we are. In Genesis 1:26–27, we are told that human beings were created in the image of God. This foundational reality means that we were made to reflect God’s character—his wisdom, righteousness, and care for creation. From this likeness flows our calling to exercise dominion. This is not as an excuse for domination, but a responsibility of stewardship. We are to cultivate and care for the world as vice-regents under God’s rule.

Psalm 8 picks up this vision of our creation calling and turns it into praise. The psalmist marvels that such seemingly small creatures as humans have been crowned with glory and honor. We were made just a little lower than the heavenly beings and entrusted with rule over the works of God’s hands.

But in a fallen world, Psalm 8 also takes on a tone of yearning. We were meant to govern creation in righteousness, but what we see instead is injustice, futility, and death. Our dominion has often degenerated into destruction. We were made to reflect God’s wisdom and goodness, but our lives are marred by sin, weakness, and limitation. In the context of the whole Bible, Psalm 8 is not only a song expressing wonder but also a longing for restoration.

JESUS: TRUE IMAGE AND FORERUNNER

The writer to the Hebrews picks up Psalm 8 and reframes it in light of Christ. He affirms the dignity of human vocation, but he also names the disconnect: “At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him” (2:8). The “him” in context refers back to the human being described in Psalm 8—humanity crowned with glory and honour. But that vision of glory is not realized in ordinary human experience. We don’t see humanity in glory. However, “we see Jesus” (2:9).

Jesus was made lower than the angels for a little while. He shared in our weakness, entered into our suffering, and died. But now, he is crowned with glory and honor. He is the true Man—the second Adam—who fulfills the human calling from which Adam fell. As our high priest and exalted king, he restores both the moral integrity and the royal dignity of humanity.

Christ does not fulfill this vocation in isolation. He brings “many sons to glory” (2:10). He goes ahead of us so that we might follow. In him, we are not only saved from sin; we are also re-established in our calling to rule and serve under God.

Still, the restoration is not yet complete. Hebrews 2 confronts us with that tension. The author has just quoted Psalm 8’s claim that all things have been put in subjection under human feet, but then he qualifies it: “At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.” This does not mean Christ’s reign is lacking. Rather, it means that the full extent of his rule is not yet apparent in the world. Evil still resists, creation still groans, and suffering remains. Christians still bury their dead. The church still faces hardship. But we do not lose heart, because already we see Jesus crowned.

This perspective guards us against both triumphalism and despair. We are not promised glory now, but we are promised that it is coming. We do not try to establish God’s kingdom by our own strength, nor do we give in to fatalism. Instead, we walk by faith: Christ reigns and his kingdom has come, though its fullness still lies ahead.

CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

This renewed vision of humanity has immediate implications for how we live. In Christ, the original cultural mandate is not set

aside, but reaffirmed and reoriented. We are still called to fill the earth, to steward and shape it—not for our own glory, but in joyful submission to Christ’s reign. In Christ, our cultural calling is restored. United to our risen Lord, we work not as autonomous builders of our own kingdoms, but as faithful servants within his.

Our work—whether in farming or finance, parenting or plumbing, science or song—is not secular. It belongs to our calling as image-bearers who are being renewed in Christ. We create, serve, labor, and cultivate the world as those who share in Christ’s humanity.

We must not expect too much. Our work in this age will remain partial, and there will be many frustrations and imperfections. But neither must we expect too little. Because Christ reigns, our labour is not in vain. Even the smallest acts of faithfulness carry eternal weight.

OUR FUTURE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 2 offers not a flight from the world but a future in it—renewed, restored, and glorified. Christ reigns over the “world to come,” and we are destined to reign with him. In the resurrection, believers will be fully conformed to Christ—not only in holiness but also in their royal calling. We will finally become all that we were created to be: priest-kings in a world made new.

The cultural mandate of Genesis 1 will not be abolished but fulfilled, transformed by Christ and brought to its true end in the new creation. God’s purpose for humanity will reach its goal—not in escape, but in glory.

CONCLUSION

Hebrews 2 draws a grand arc from the garden of creation to the throne room of glory. It reminds us that humanity matters. Our work matters. Our calling matters. Culture matters, because in Christ all things find their true meaning and purpose.

He has gone before us. He has borne our weakness, triumphed over death, and taken our place in heaven. Now he calls us to live as those who see him crowned—and to walk forward in hope toward the day when we too will be crowned with glory and honour in the presence of God. 



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NOT JUST HVAC – A GLIMPSE OF GLORY

Jason is 24. After high school, he earned his Red Seal certification as an HVAC technician. At first, the work just felt like a way to make a living—hot attics in the summer, cramped crawl spaces in the winter, the occasional grateful customer, but mostly tight schedules and aching knees.

Then one day, while reading Psalm 8, something clicked. He reflected on what it means to be crowned with “glory and honor”—not only as a future hope, but as a present calling. It transformed how he viewed his work.

Jason began to see that installing climate systems isn’t just about temperature—it’s about making homes livable for families, keeping food fresh, giving comfort to the elderly, and helping schools and hospitals function smoothly. He saw that his work was a way of serving God and his neighbor. The discipline of doing quality work, cleaning up after himself, and treating customers with honesty and respect took on a higher purpose. Though no heavenly fanfare accompanied him as he installed ductwork, Jason prayed that Christ would be honoured in all he did.

He still faces discouragement—botched installs, grumpy clients, weeks that feel like a blur. He knows this world won’t be fixed by HVAC systems. But because Christ is risen and reigning, he believes his labour is not in vain. One day, he’ll serve the Lord with perfect hands in a renewed creation. For now, he climbs back into the truck and does his work as unto the Lord.

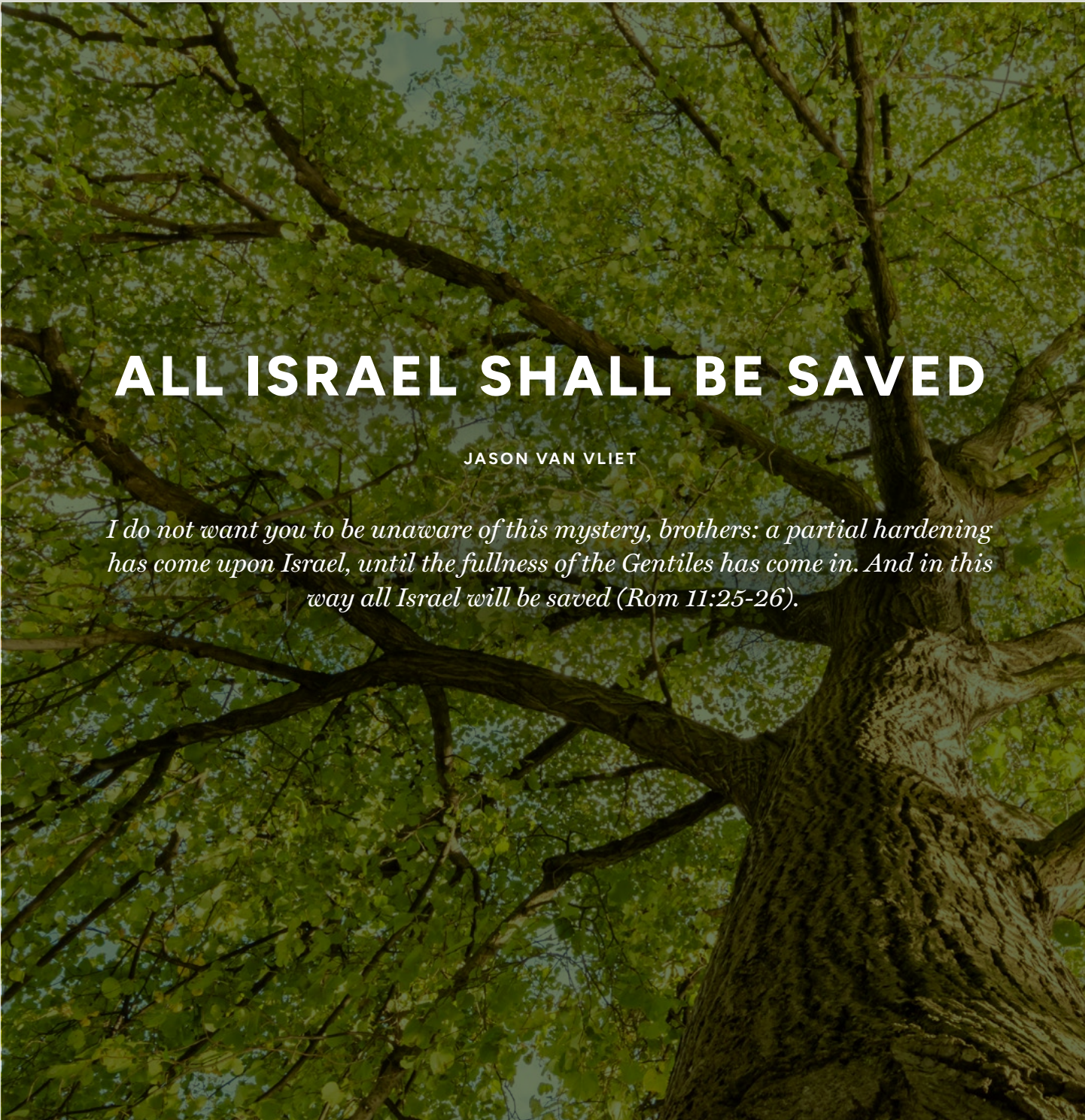
MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE – A MOTHER’S CALLING

Sarah is 31. She has three young children and a house that’s always bustling. Her days are filled with meals, laundry, school runs, sticky fingers, and countless small interruptions. She loves her children deeply and pours herself into them, but some days the work feels invisible and unending.

Once a teacher, Sarah sometimes wonders if she is still “doing something that matters.” But as she reflects on Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2, a deeper truth begins to sink in.

She remembers that being *destined* to be crowned with glory and honor doesn’t always mean being noticed or applauded now. Sometimes it means quietly shaping souls, patiently guiding little hearts, and offering up every routine act as service to the Lord. She sees her parenting not as background noise to real life but as cultural labour in the truest sense—building, nurturing, and planting seeds for the next generation.

Sarah’s days are demanding, and she is often stretched thin. Yet, through faith, she learns to offer each moment as worship. Christ is risen and reigning—and he sees. He blesses. And one day he will crown every faithful act, even those done in secret, with lasting glory.



ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED

JASON VAN VLIET

I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved (Rom 11:25-26).

The words “this mystery” do have a mysterious quality, don’t they? Several questions immediately come to mind when reading the passage above. First, does *all* Israel mean the entire Jewish population, head-for-head? If so, to which generation of Jews does this refer? Precisely when and exactly how will this mass conversion of Jews take place?

Second, is Israel’s hardening only *partial*? To be sure, some of Abraham’s offspring believe in Abraham’s greatest Son, Jesus

Christ. Some estimate that about 350,000 of the 25 million Jews worldwide consider themselves to be Messianic Jews. But that is just over one percent! It sounds more like a “nearly complete” hardening than a partial one, doesn’t it?

Third, the Holy Spirit establishes a strong connection between *the fullness of the Gentiles* and the salvation of *all Israel*. Somehow the Gentile fullness provides the way (i.e., “this way,” v. 26) for all Israel to be saved. But again, how?

With all this in mind, let's take a closer look at Romans 11:26, including its context, its precise meaning, and its message for us today.

GREAT SORROW AND UNCEASING ANGUISH

In Romans 9:1–2, the apostle Paul cries out in “great sorrow and unceasing anguish” over his fellow Israelites who refuse to believe in the long-awaited Messiah. Shockingly, he goes so far as to say, “I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers.” This apostolic anguish makes sense. This servant of Jesus Christ was also “of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5). No wonder he felt so strongly about the eternal salvation of his kinfolk!

But what about us? Many of us descend from Gentile—not Jewish—bloodlines. Does this soften our sorrow or diminish our anguish? By no means! If we are in Christ, then we too are “Abraham’s offspring” (Gal 3:29). In addition, Jesus was, and still is, Jewish according to his genealogy (Matt 1; Luke 3). So, if we love Jesus, we should also love *his* kinfolk, even though tragically so many of them reject him (John 1:11).

God’s Word in Romans 9 urges all Christians, regardless of ethnicity, to stand with the apostle Paul and long fervently for the salvation of the Jews. After all, “to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises,” and it is through their race that we have received “the Christ, who is God over all” (vv. 4–5).

DIFFERENT BRANCHES, ONE TREE

So, what holds us back from doing more extensive mission work among the Jews? Undoubtedly, numerous factors are involved. But part of it may be that we unintentionally latch onto the notion that, for the most part, our God has moved on from the Jews to focus his attention elsewhere. After all, is it not true that the era of the old covenant was for the Israelites but since so many Jews rejected the Messiah, God has now redirected his activity to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46)?

This idea that the multiethnic church has replaced the Jewish nation in God’s work of redemption contains an element of truth but remains fundamentally wrong. To be sure, our covenant God has opened a new chapter. Our Lord commissioned his apostles to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19), sending them out beyond Judea to “the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This transition marks a massive ethnic expansion in God’s work. But an expansion

is, by definition, different than a replacement. An expansion makes something bigger; a replacement gets rid of something.

Yes, many Jewish branches were broken off because of their unbelief (Rom 11:19). Thankfully and mercifully, the Lord did not leave empty gaps all over his beautifully cultivated olive tree (v. 24). On the contrary, he started filling in and filling out his tree by grafting in many wild olive shoots, Gentile branches like you and me (v. 17). Nevertheless, let us shun all pride. Since God can prune out natural, Jewish branches that shrivelled up in unbelief, he also has more than enough “power to graft them in again” (v. 24).

Please note that our Saviour does not replace an old *tree* with a new *tree*. In our yards we may cut down a diseased tree, grind out the stump, dig a hole, and plant a whole new tree. Out with the old, in with the new! But in Romans 11 God is busy pruning, grafting, and re-grafting *branches* on one and the same tree. He is not replacing trees.

All this to say, the LORD has not simply moved on from the Jewish people, leaving them as little more than a receding image in his rearview mirror. Far from it! Going forward, God still has a place in his plan for the physical descendants of Abraham. The Holy Spirit describes this with phrases such as “*full* inclusion” (v. 12) and “*all* Israel” (v. 26). Obviously, this is going to be a big blessing, not a small footnote. But how?

JEWS AND ISRAEL

We have now come full circle. What does it mean that “all Israel shall be saved” and how is this connected to “the fullness of the Gentiles” in the previous verse? Different commentators offer different explanations of this challenging passage. One common view holds that the Christian church—gathered from all ethnic groups, including Jews—is the new covenant “Israel of God” (Gal 6:16). Of course, this is true. All of God’s elect, regardless of genes or genealogies, will be saved (Rom 8:30). But does this truth exhaust the meaning of “all Israel shall be saved”? Does it adequately answer the apostles’ soul-rending cry for his kinfolk? It’s hard to shake the feeling that we are still missing some pieces of the puzzle here.

One scholar, Jason Staples, locates one of those pieces when he points out that the word “Israel” did not mean exactly the same thing as “Jews.”¹ In the original Greek, “Jews” sounds very much like our word “Judeans,” and predominantly that is who they are: descendants of the tribe of *Judah*. Staples explains that the terms *Jew* or *Judean* “refers to a person descended from the southern

¹ Staples, Jason A. 2011. “What Do the Gentiles Have to Do with ‘All Israel’?: A Fresh Look at Romans 11:25–27.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (2): 371–90

kingdom of Judah, *which is only a part of the larger historical entity called Israel*" (p. 375).

Carrying this thought further, the ten northern tribes, taken into exile by the Assyrians, never returned *en masse*. But the Lord dealt differently with the two southern tribes, Benjamin and Judah (and Simeon, which was absorbed into Judah). The Lord stirred the heart of Cyrus to send the two tribes back to *Judea* (Ezra 1:1-4). Not surprisingly, the tribes who returned were called *Judeans* or *Jews*, as we read in our English translations. By comparison, the term "Israel" often refers to the ten northern tribes (Jer 3:18) or simply all the descendants of Jacob regardless of their tribe (Hos 8:2-3; see also 1:1).

ISRAEL'S ANCESTRY WITHIN GENTILE NATIONS

But how does this help us understand Romans 11:26? Over time, the ten northern tribes intermarried with other ethnic groups in the Middle East and beyond. By now, more than twenty-five centuries later, their bloodlines can hardly be traced, even by the most astute genealogists. Not surprisingly, they are often called the "Lost Tribes"—lost to everyone, that is, except God who knows the name of each star (Ps 147:4) and the most distant ancestral lines of each person.

Among the nations, then, some persons have ancient ancestries reaching back into the tribes of Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Ephraim. Today, many generations later, they may call themselves Syrians, or Egyptians, or Ethiopians, or even Canadians—all *Gentile* nations. But if we had a perfectly comprehensive family tree for them, we would discover that one of their great-great-great-grandparents belonged to one of the ten tribes of *Israel*. Buried deep in the DNA, the Lost Tribes still exist today! In Paul's terms, then, as "the fullness of the Gentiles" comes in, some of them are people whom God knows to be genealogical remnants of his ten northern tribes of Israel!

Indeed, the LORD repeatedly prophesied that he would restore remnants of the house of Judah *and the house of Israel* unto himself. For example, we hear this in Jeremiah 3:18 and 30:3, as well as Ezekiel 37:15-24. In fact, already back in Genesis 48:19, Jacob prophetically blesses Ephraim and his descendants to become "a multitude of nations," a phrase that is nearly identical to the "fullness of the Gentiles" in Romans 11.

So now the Spirit of God pulls back the curtain and gives us a glimpse of *how* these prophecies are being fulfilled. The Lord always intended to bring "*all Israel*" unto salvation, and he never forgot about his ten tribes. No, this does not mean all the physical descendants of Abraham will be saved, head-for-head. Instead,

it means that God will redeem a remnant from *all twelve tribes* of Israel, not just the two southern ones. As the Gentiles—some with Israelite ancestry embedded within them—are converted, the Lord is doing exactly that.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his ways! (Rom 11:33)

STILL MISSION AMONG THE JEWS?

Does all this mean that we can forego mission work among the Jews, the descendants of the southern kingdom, whether they live in the country of Israel or in New York or Toronto? Should we delete "mission among the Jews" (the first in the list!) from Prayer 2 in our *Book of Praise* (p. 636)? After all, one might argue, if all Israel is being saved by the fullness of the Gentiles coming in, then the more we evangelize "the Muslims and the heathens" (also mentioned in Prayer 2), the more "all Israel" will inherit eternal life.

But that would be misguided thinking. Just as "all Israel" includes the ten northern tribes, not only the two southern ones, so it also includes the two southern ones, not only the ten northern ones. Let's not injure our mission work on the horns of an utterly false dilemma! When our God says "*all Israel*" he does not intend to leave any tribes behind; neither should we. Who knows? As the Gentile nations today reject Christ more and more, the God of Jacob may start regrafting more and more natural, Jewish branches back into his tree (Rom 11:24). If he so desires, the Lord may do so by the thousands, just like he did on Pentecost Day (compare Acts 2:5 with 2:41).

While preparing to write this article, I made some inquiries about what Reformed churches in Canada are doing to bring the gospel of the merciful Messiah to Jews in this country or elsewhere. To be honest, I could not find much. Why is that? More importantly, how can we change that?

The Jews have the God-given "shadows" in spades, yet the vast majority of them are still missing out on the "substance" (Col 2:17). Only the Spirit of the Messiah can remove the veil that lies over their hearts (2 Cor 3:15). But we can supply the Jews with the beautiful feet of those who preach the good news (Rom 10:15). Let's think about, pray for, and take action in mission among the Jews. Prayer 2 is as relevant today as it has ever been. 



Jason Van Vliet

Principal and Professor of Dogmatics

Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary

Jason Van Vliet

INTRODUCING THE JERUSALEM CATECHISM: A FAITH WORTH LIVING

RODRIGO QUEZADA REED

Augsburg, 1566. Frederick III of the Electoral Palatinate is summoned before Emperor Maximilian II. The reason? His patronage of the Heidelberg Catechism. At that time, the Heidelberg Catechism had no legal status. It had no place within the terms of freedom of religion agreed upon eleven years earlier by Lutherans and Roman Catholics.

Gently defiant of that limited tolerance agreement, Frederick chose to imitate Luther and declared his conscience bound to Scripture as presented in the Heidelberg Catechism. Asked about John Calvin, Frederick responded:

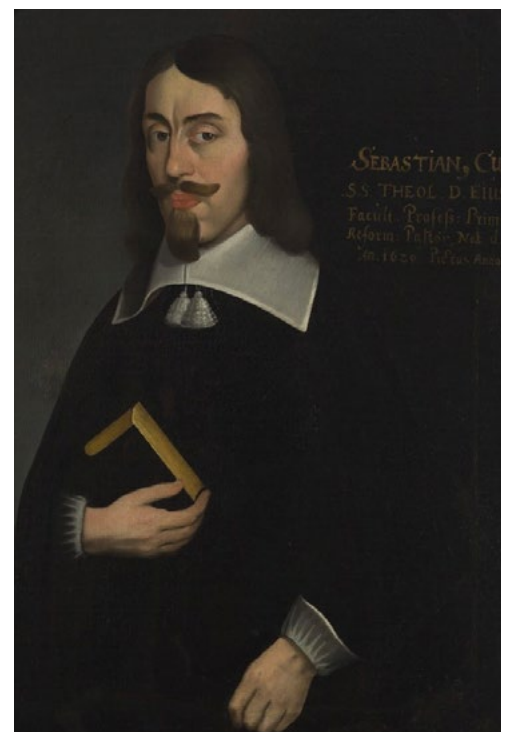
“If any one of whatever age, station or class he may be, even the humblest, can teach me something better from the Holy Scriptures, I will thank him from the bottom of my heart and be readily obedient to the divine truth.”¹

Today, those who share Frederick’s quiet resolve have an opportunity to benefit from scriptural insights offered not only by one but by many of God’s humble servants. The Jerusalem Catechism I introduce to you by way of this article is the ripe fruit of multiple Reformed efforts of evangelism over the centuries since the Reformation and has a unique story of endeavour, failure, and success across biographies of both high and low status.

AN EARLY CATECHISM FOR THE JEWS

It all seems to have begun with a German delegate to the Synod of Dort, Paul Stein. Stein joined Gomarus, the main opponent of Arminius, on a provisional press committee. After the synod, Stein returned to Germany and engaged in evangelism among Jews. He also helped consolidate Reformed churches and schools in the Hessian Palatinate, where Marburg had already become a Reformed stronghold, much like Heidelberg before its fall to Roman Catholic troops in 1622.

Then, as part of an evangelistic campaign to local Jews from 1647 to 1652, a Reformed professor of theology was tasked with writing a catechism. Sebastian Curtius, who grew up under the influence of Stein and other German delegates to



Sebastian Curtius

¹ James I. Good, *The Heidelberg Catechism in its Newest Light*, (Philadelphia: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1914), p. 194.

the Synod of Dort, was a specialist in Hebrew and logic. His goal was to compile the strongest scriptural evidence that Jesus is the true Messiah—zooming in, as it were, on question and answer nineteen of the Heidelberg Catechism:

Q. From where do you know this [the identity of the Mediator]?

A. From the holy gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise. Later, he had it proclaimed by the patriarchs and prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law. Finally, he had it fulfilled through his only Son.

Curtius's so-called Little Catechism for the Jews had ninety-two questions and answers and was published in 1650 in Kassel with the support of Landgrave William VI (great-grandson of William of Orange).

THE CATECHISM EXPANDS

Years passed, and not much is known about the use of the Little Catechism in this time. We only hear about it again in 1708 when someone printed an abridged version in both German and Yiddish. This updated version circulated among the Reformed churches of Berlin, and possibly among some Jews. What follows in the story of the source texts of the Jerusalem Catechism could easily be mistaken for historical fiction.

In 1714, a group of French “prophets” was driven out by a mob in Halle. A young Reformed pastor, Theodor Knauth, witnessed the violence and failed to coordinate with his supervisor before publicly defending them. As a result, Knauth was deposed and spent the next seventeen years of his life in denial and misery. Only in 1732 was he ordained again into the ministry, partially thanks to the Lutheran pietist August Hermann Francke. Francke had already tried to persuade Knauth in 1714 that the French prophets were wrong, and later even put in a word for Knauth before the Reformed King Frederick William I of Prussia.

In 1730, Knauth asserted his Reformed orthodoxy by expanding the well-known, anonymous 1708 version of the Little Catechism, now at ninety-eight questions and answers, to 229 questions and answers. That labour finally bore fruit. Just three years later, Christian Friderich August—formerly Rabbi Wolff Salomon—used it to make profession of faith on the occasion of his baptism at Berlin's Reformed Jerusalem Church.

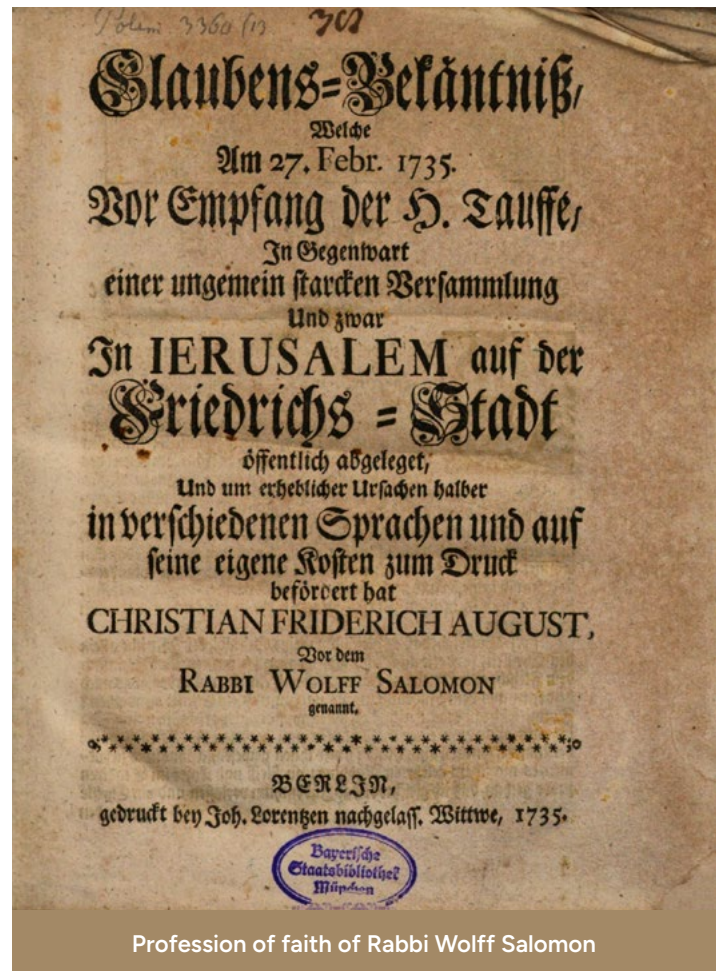
Arguably, Knauth's rough experience of removal from office and subsequent poverty gave him a certain sensitivity and tact regarding the situation of the Jews, many of whom lived on the

margins of society. From the former Rabbi, we learn that it was Knauth who catechized him and even hosted him in his house for a while. In doing so, Knauth displayed a set of standards and conduct different from some other Reformed ministers, who, back in 1647, approved of forcing Jews to attend sermons and receive a copy of the Little Catechism under penalty of a fine.

Following the shift from compulsion to compassion, the former Rabbi adopted Knauth's expanded version of the catechism as his own, began translating it into eight languages (Yiddish, Aramaic, Hebrew, Rabbinic-Polish, German, Latin, French, and Dutch), invited his fellow Jews to attend Reformed churches and to contact him, and even tried to build a shelter house for them to live, receive pastoral care, and learn a trade to access a dignified life within the Christian society.

THE HOUR IS LATE

In all these efforts there is a sense of urgency which continues still today. Through our Lord Jesus and his apostles we heard we are living in the last days—not the second-to-last days, but the last



days. Was this message an invitation to speculate about the exact timing of our Lord's second coming? In no way. It was rather a call to make God's perspective our own.

The Jerusalem Catechism is a reminder—both to Jews and non-Jews—that the hour is late, and we should stop gambling with time and get ready instead to welcome back our Lord Jesus, Israel's only true King and Protector. Hence, question and answer ninety-nine in the Jerusalem Catechism:

Q. What follows from all that the Holy Scriptures reveal about the Messiah?

A. Surely the Messiah has already come once since the Temple was destroyed long ago. He cannot be other than Jesus of Nazareth, for only in Him are the rest of the prophecies fulfilled. Israel's King is reigning and about to return. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

TODAY'S JERUSALEM CATECHISM

The immediate story leading to the current Jerusalem Catechism unfolded behind the scenes. It has become part of the city of Jerusalem's local history—not that of kings and queens, but of what some call silent history: the kind known only to a few, the one I share with you now.

It has become part of the city of Jerusalem's local history—not that of kings and queens, but of what some call silent history: the kind known only to a few, the one I share with you now.

The Jerusalem Catechism was written from September 2022 to October 2023 between east and west Jerusalem, in adjoining Arab and Jewish neighborhoods just north of the Old City walls. What began as a continuation of the former Rabbi Salomon's translation efforts turned into a full-scale re-writing in conversation with some local Israeli believers and scholars, who helped shape its language and adjust its tone. To ensure precision and harmony across languages, the "old-new" Jerusalem Catechism includes a fresh translation of all proof texts directly from the original languages. Unfamiliar renderings may raise questions—and rightly so—among readers. Yet each word has been weighed in detail, the result of an extensive, multilingual review to reflect the originals faithfully.

While working on the Jerusalem Catechism, the Lord granted me the opportunity to begin teaching spoken biblical Hebrew at a local institute and to join a team of Hebrew mentors serving Bible translators and translation consultants. Soon after, the dark events of October 7, 2023, unfolded. An ancient, demonic hatred—ultimately directed at King Jesus, the green wood—was once again projected onto his kinfolk: the dry wood of Luke 23:31. The war disrupted ongoing translations into Arabic, Ethiopian, and Indonesian, but accelerated the completion of the Jerusalem Catechism in Hebrew and English, which the Lord allowed to be published on October 17, 2023. Russian, German, Dutch, and Spanish translations followed soon after.

The Jerusalem Catechism has been in the public domain from the beginning, as it belongs to God's people. It finally came together during one of Israel's darkest hours as the fruit of a joint effort by over twenty brothers and sisters—both within and beyond Jerusalem—whom I had the privilege of meeting and informally coordinating (not counting the many authors of the source texts it builds upon, whose inclusion would only further enlarge the list). In Canada, I am particularly grateful to Dr. Jason Van Vliet, Rev. Peter Holtvliwer, and Dr. Cornelis Van Dam for their selective theological contributions to the 2025 revision.

The Jerusalem Catechism seeks to introduce unbelievers—particularly those of Middle East background—to the foundations of biblical history and faith while also refreshing these basics for believers. It offers both historical and prophetic context for every creed and confession we hold dear.

Therefore, let us walk together the Road to Emmaus! Let us rediscover the church forefathers: the patriarchs and the prophets. Let us be ready to give a reasoned testimony that Jesus is indeed Israel's true Messiah and sacrificial King. And let's remember that such faith is not only worth sharing—it is, first and foremost, worth living. 📖

The Jerusalem Catechism is available in digital form at www.jerusalemcatechism.com.



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WRATH AND LOVE

Christians ought to delight in pondering God. It ought to be our joy to think about him, what he's done, and who he is. When we do that, we'll find ourselves meditating on God's attributes, his essential characteristics.

Any attribute of God must be true of him eternally and at all times. This is necessarily true because the Bible teaches us that God is immutable—he doesn't change. God says in Malachi 3:6, "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed." This is why God's wrath isn't one of his attributes, but love is.

WHY WRATH IS NOT AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD

God's wrath hasn't been eternally expressed. God's wrath only exists in the face of sin. Prior to the sin of Satan and, subsequently, of Adam and Eve, there was no divine wrath. Yet the Bible speaks of God's wrath as something real—see Psalm 7, for example. So, if it's not an attribute, then what is it? God's wrath is an expression of his justice or righteousness towards sin. Justice or righteousness is the attribute existing eternally. Wrath is the way the just and righteous God responds to sin committed against him.

Someone might wonder about the use of the term "prior" in relation to God—as in the claim that prior to sin, there was no divine

wrath. After all, sins are committed by creatures in time. However, the Creator, God, exists above and outside of time. Both of those statements are true. But God also acts, reveals himself, and expresses himself *within* the time dimension in which his creatures live. Herman Bavinck expresses this well:

God pervades time and every moment of time with his eternity. Hence, God maintains a definite relation to time, entering into it with his eternity. Also, for him time is objective. In his eternal consciousness he knows time as a whole as well as the succession of all its moments. But this fact does not make him temporal, that is, subject to time, measure, or number. He remains eternal and inhabits eternity, but uses time with a view to manifesting his eternal thoughts and perfections. He makes time subservient to eternity and thus proves himself to be the King of the ages (1 Tim 1:17).¹

God uses time to manifest his justice or righteousness by expressing his wrath. Time, in which sin is committed, is the context for God's response to sins committed.

¹ Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 2, p. 164



WHY LOVE IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD

The apostle John famously tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8). God is defined by his loving disposition. However, for there to be love there must always be someone to be loved. Love always exists in the context of another. How can love then be an attribute of God? All of God's attributes must be true of him eternally. But in eternity past, before there was a creation, who did God love? The biblical answer is two-fold.

In John 17, in his high-priestly prayer, Jesus speaks about the relationship he has with God the Father. He says in John 17:24 that the Father loved him "before the foundation of the world." Before creation there was an eternal, perfect love not only between the Father and the Son, but also between the Father and the Holy Spirit and the Son and the Holy Spirit. There was and is and always will be an infinite and immaculate intra-Trinitarian love.

But there's another remarkable passage which speaks about love "before the foundation of the world." Ephesians 1:4–5 tells us that God's election of certain sinners was done in love. Before creation, God freely set his love upon certain individuals who didn't even yet exist in time and space. If you're a true Christian, you've been loved by God before the stars shone in the sky. God's love has always been there.

There's something comforting in knowing that God's love is an attribute, whereas his wrath is not. Love is who God is, essential to his identity. No human being can love like God does. Wrath is not who God is; unlike love, it is not essential to his identity. God expresses wrath against sin and sinners, but it is the necessary expression of his justice. It's human sin which draws this response from God, who would otherwise remain favourably disposed to his creatures. The cross was God's great plan to turn his wrath away and return loving favour.

At the cross, we see both wrath and love. Mysteriously, over three hours God's hellish wrath is poured out upon his beloved Son, the one bearing our sins. Christ did this out of love for us, revealing God's eternal love for sinners. Infinite wrath has now been turned away from us and infinite loving favour returned. God's wrath does not remain on believers, but his love surely does! 



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Taber Welcomes the Peters Family

THE JOURNEY

You could say they took the long way round. The Peters family began their journey to Taber from Neerlandia. Although these towns are separated by just a six-hour drive, it took them roughly eight years and seven thousand kilometers. The family's trip started with a four-year pit stop in Edmonton for Joshua to obtain his undergrad degree, followed by another four-year layover in Hamilton for his Master of Divinity. After a few solo trips back and forth to Alberta for exams and reconnaissance, Joshua packed up the family, now with five children, one more time. They travelled through the USA until they emerged in Alberta via the Coutts border crossing. From there it was an hour north to Taber, where Joshua, Debra, Alyssa, Jonah, Shannon, Hadassah, and Gideon could finally begin to settle down.

Josh was eager to begin preaching and the congregation joyfully drank in the words of life that he brought us. He had well warmed up our pulpit by the time he delivered his official first sermon as ordained minister of Taber Canadian Reformed Church.

ORDINATION

The morning service of May 25, 2025 was led by Rev. Veurink, who delivered a beautiful sermon to a church bursting with regular members and many out-of-town guests. We were reminded from Isaiah that a preacher is a gift from Christ himself, sent to gather, defend, and preserve the church with truth and comfort. He is therefore not a CEO, a counsellor, or a deliverer of TED talks, but a preacher. He brings comfort that is grounded in the very promises of God.



little about our town. They had already discovered the Purple Cow ice cream stand, and now they know we grow the sweetest corn in Canada and are prone to strange events such as the saga of the escaped ostriches! They also now know where to find a coach, an electrician, a french fry grower, a dairy farmer, a former man from the Dutch Navy, an international teacher, and a competitive ball team.

With this great comfort fresh in our hearts, the Taber congregation then witnessed, for the third time in its history, a man kneeling before the congregation to receive the laying on of hands. He looked steadily ahead in a brief but moving moment, and then ancient melodic words resounded as the congregation joyfully sang Psalm 134: “Come bless the LORD with one accord, you faithful servants of the LORD.”

That afternoon, Rev. Peters preached to us on Psalm 34. It is a call from an exiled, humiliated David for the covenant children to come, listen, and learn the fear of the Lord. This is not a fear of dread, but of reverence. It is a pastoral call: intimate, relational instruction, not from an ivory tower but from a fellow fugitive hiding in a cave. David prefigures Christ, who also called children and the broken to himself saying, “I will give you rest.” Today, Christ speaks through ordained preachers and still calls us to come and listen and fear. To not come is a hardening of the heart and will lead to anguish. To come is to have the Spirit open our ears and become aware of God’s majesty and justice and thus receive wisdom and joy. So, we were exhorted to come and to continue to walk in strength and joy and certainty.

WELCOME EVENING

This encouragement carried us into the week and on Friday we gathered for a formal welcome evening. There were letters expressing joy and hope for mutual support, a speech comparing a congregation to a choir, a men’s singing group who definitely had not practiced, skits that introduced the Peters clan to who we are, and, of course, gifts. The Peters family also learned a

Mr. Bos, the delegate from Calgary, artfully pointed out that “Reverend” is an honorific title that ought to be used, and that our particular Reverend also has a Red Seal ticket in carpentry. He suspects Taber has a double interest in this man, as we are making plans to construct a new church building! Perhaps we are hoping he would don a tool belt in addition to the belt of truth? He advised our “Reverend Carpenter” to be wise in his use of hammers. A small one is typically better than a sledgehammer, as the latter is usually used to destroy or force something where it does not belong.

A friendly challenge was presented where Rev. Peters and the chair of consistory had to remove their socks, stand on baking sheets, and chop a wood stump while blindfolded. Unbeknownst to them, their socks were placed on the block of wood and both men enthusiastically hacked their own socks to shreds.

Before we proceeded to dessert and mingling, Rev. Peters took the microphone. He took a moment to scan the crowd he is beginning to know, and told us how he already feels supported, prayed for, and loved. Then, still barefoot, he expressed the heartfelt desire that God would build us up and cause us to grow together.

Though the journey was long, we pray Rev. Peters and his family find that the destination was worth it, and that we have many fruitful years together. They may be colourful and surprising, but, grounded in the everlasting Word, they will also teach us the fear of the Lord. 🇨🇦

Anna Bareman
Taber, Alberta



GUIDO DE BRÈS

Commencement 2025

The Guido de Brès Christian High School graduation was a celebration of God's grace and goodness towards 111 students who completed four years of high school education and are about to embark on the path that God has put before each of them. From the beautiful music that welcomed us into the hall at the larger Hamilton Convention Centre to the procession at the end, the evening was marked with thankfulness and joy.

Mr. Bert Knol (chairman of the board) opened the evening by reflecting on the first thirteen verses of Philippians 4. He talked about the growth each graduand had gone through during their high school years, the perseverance they had to display, and the grace that God showed them. He ended by encouraging the students to "rejoice in the Lord always for in him you have everything."

The school's principal, Mr. Jason Heemskerk, continued the evening by comparing the students' lives to ships with a magnetic compass. The compasses of old were often slightly misguided—until the Flinders bar was invented. This invention ensured that every compass would point true north. God has given us his Word,

which guides us in the way we are to go, but sometimes we become misguided and go off course. So, God has placed many people in the graduands' lives—classmates, teachers, families, and friends—who can act as a Flinders bar, to point them to live their lives for Jesus.

Before the diplomas were handed out, Mr. Fred VanderVelde (a father of one of the graduands) spoke of the importance of godly contentment in our lives. As the students are about to embark on a new stage in their lives, they need to live with the joy and contentment that come from faith and gratitude.

It was then time to cheer each of the students across the stage as they received their diplomas. It was truly a celebration of hard work, perseverance, and grace shown by the Lord. There was also opportunity to make mention of the specific achievements of quite a few students. Eight students were acknowledged for exceptional academic achievements. Thirteen were acknowledged for their participation in extracurricular activities throughout their four years of high school.



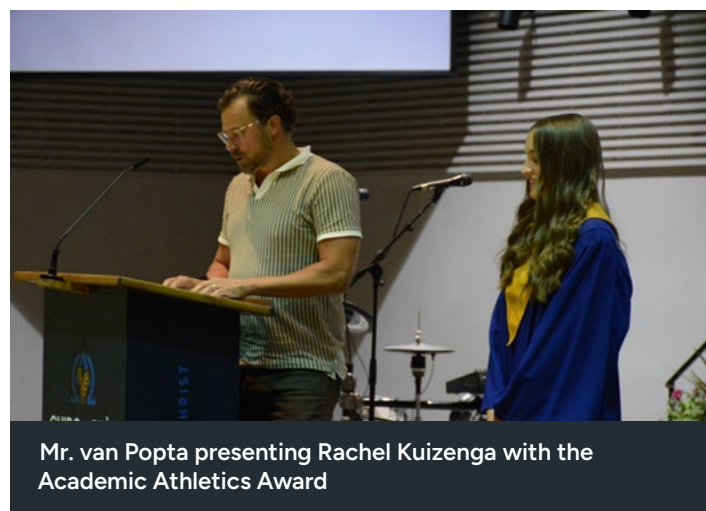
Principal Jason Heemskerk



Valedictorian Carter DeVries

A number of students were individually honoured for their exceptional work. Rachel Kuizenga earned the “Academic Athletics Award” for having participated in at least two varsity sports and having the highest academic average. Chloe Broersma was acknowledged for the incredible number of volunteer hours she had over her high school career (872 hours!) and received the Lieutenant Governor’s Community Volunteer Award for Students. The student with the highest overall average in the last two years of high school is awarded the Governor General’s Bronze Medal and this went to Chloe Versteeg (who managed to achieve 100% in two of her Gr. 12 classes!). Finally, the Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff Student-of-the-Year award is given to a student who clearly demonstrated both within and outside of the classroom what it means to live a life for Jesus Christ. Megan Bax was this year’s recipient.

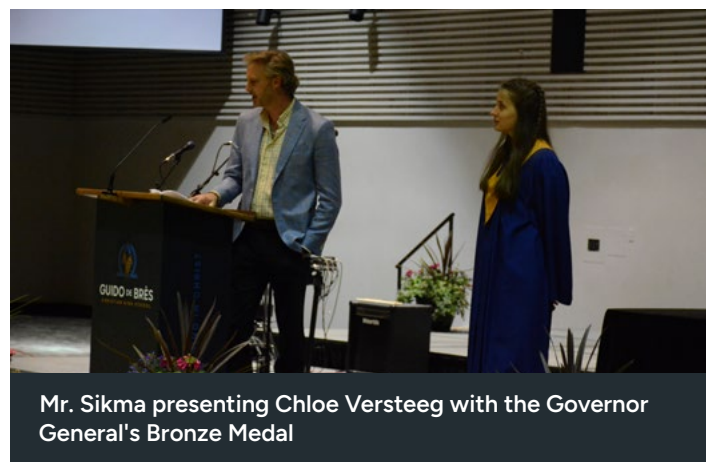
Following these presentations, it was time for Carter DeVries, the class valedictorian, to speak a few words on behalf of the graduating class. After some lighthearted reflections and reminiscing on highlights from the class’s experiences, Carter ended his speech by reflecting on the devotion the class discussed on the last day of classes. The graduates were encouraged with the words of Micah 6:8, where God reminds us what it means to be a Christian: “to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.”



Mr. van Popta presenting Rachel Kuizenga with the Academic Athletics Award

Before ending the ceremony with singing and prayer, three of the graduates performed the song “Cornerstone.” The voices of Violet Blokker, Madelyn DeBoer, and Nyansha Kasweka blended beautifully together in harmony. As the graduates exited the hall, they were congratulated by all of those who have been supporting them in their academic journeys over the past four years.

This evening marked the 50th graduating class to come from our school; a true testament to God’s grace and favour. I’m thankful to witness how God has been working faithfully in our school community; first as a student (just a few years ago . . .) and now as a teacher of many of these graduating students. All praise and glory to God! 🙏



Mr. Sikma presenting Chloe Versteeg with the Governor General's Bronze Medal

Melanie de Jonge
Hamilton, ON



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP DAY *in the Fraser Valley*

On the morning of June 6, 2025, a beautifully sunny day, more than 90 women from all over the Lower Mainland came together at Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church to have fellowship and dive into God's Word together. The sound of many voices filled the newly renovated hall and foyer, eagerly greeting each other and catching up. It was the 59th annual Women's Fellowship Day (formerly Women's League Day).

We started with singing "How Great Thou Art," followed by Hymn 53, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." It is always so wonderful to hear women's voices raised in song—truly music that lifts the heart. Yolanda Bos opened with reading Ecclesiastes 7 and prayer, followed by singing Psalm 1.

Marion VanderWel, a longtime member of Yarrow Canadian Reformed Church, spoke on the topic "Journey to Freedom: Genesis to Revelation." Marion started her speech asking everyone how they would describe themselves in 280 characters or less. She stated that she would put "follower of Jesus Christ"—what else could we say in that short space? We are all on a journey to a final destination. How does this change the way we live and how can we look to God's Word in this journey?

From Genesis to Revelation, Marion highlighted the journey that the people of God have always been on, starting with Adam and Eve, to Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Israelites, and many others. They needed a Saviour. We are travelling on the same journey, full of obstructions and potholes.

What does true freedom really mean? Marion pointed out that true freedom is the eternal rest we will find in God. We must continue on our journey and remember that God uses us in everything we do. How does what we are doing reflect the glory of God? She encouraged us to go on our journey with God—talk to him, pray to him, listen to him.

In closing, Marion shared an anecdote about one of her dogs, who loves to eagerly run ahead but sticks to the path. She doesn't take shortcuts because she knows where she is going. We were all reminded to stay on the path that God has given us. We know where this journey goes.

DISCUSSION & FELLOWSHIP

After the speech, we sang Hymn 72, "Behold the Amazing Gift of Love." The ladies were then divided into eight groups around the church building. Upbuilding and thoughtful discussion was had by all. The questions we worked through looked at some practical aspects of our walk as Christians, such as how we can share about our journey with unbelievers, what it means to be on the journey with your spouse, and how you can talk about this with your children and grandchildren.

Everyone headed back into the auditorium for lunch devotions, where Monica Sikma led in prayer. We then lined up for a delicious lunch that many hands had helped prepare. The foyer was set up with tables and decorations, beautiful bouquets and stickers with Bible verses. Lunch was followed by dessert, wonderful cakes and other treats. It truly was a good time for fellowship.

The afternoon began with singing the League Day Song, followed by entertainment from Sardis church. Kirstin Blom divided the audience into groups with colourful balloons and then proceeded to ask trivia questions. The first eight were Bible trivia, and everyone did very well with those. The next set was about the Reformed confessions, which everyone was also quick to answer. The final set about the Canadian Reformed churches and seminary had some trickier ones, such as how many Canadian and American Reformed churches there are now (70!), and which was the most recently instituted in the Fraser Valley and surrounding area (Pathway).

After a general question period to answer questions that had come up in the discussion groups, Marion closed in prayer. We ended the day by singing "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow" *a cappella*, with many voices singing harmony. We left feeling lifted up and encouraged, thankful for the fellowship we can have as women in the local churches in the Lower Mainland. 

Julia VanDelft
Abbotsford, BC

Marion Vanderwel, keynote speaker





IRTC

INTERNATIONAL REFORMED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

In-Person Gathering of IRTC Instructors: Fellowship and Gratitude

On February 24, the IRTC held a meaningful Faculty Gathering in São Paulo, bringing together part of its teaching staff for a time of fraternal fellowship, institutional alignment, and renewed purpose. The event took place at the JMC Seminary facilities, kindly made available by Rev. Ronaldo Bandeira, the seminary's director.

Despite the geographical distance that separates our more than 50 instructors across Brazil and abroad, we had the joy of welcoming several in person, including members of the IRTC Executive Committee. The gathering began with a brief institutional presentation led by President Rev. Fernando de Almeida, followed by a time of dialogue in which participants shared experiences, challenges, and perspectives for the future of the college.

The event concluded with a shared lunch, fostering a warm and relaxed atmosphere among the instructors and strengthening the bonds that sustain our mission.

This gathering was also part of the celebrations for the IRTC's 25th anniversary, commemorating God's faithfulness throughout its history and renewing our commitment to its original calling: to offer confessional, biblical, and accessible theological education for the edification of Christ's Church in Portuguese-speaking nations.

In the photo below, we see the instructors who attended the gathering (from left to right): Alexandre (Academic Vice-President), Wendell, Jônatas, Geimar (Academic Secretary), Welerson, Fernando (President), Jair, Ricardo, Allen, and David (Vice-President for Student Affairs).

This meeting symbolizes our ongoing commitment to theological training that is faithful to Scripture and the Reformed tradition. We praise God for each instructor who dedicates himself to teaching with excellence, and we pray that gatherings like this will promote unity, growth, and strength in the IRTC's academic and ministerial journey.



Growth With Purpose: The IRTC Reaches a New Record in 2025

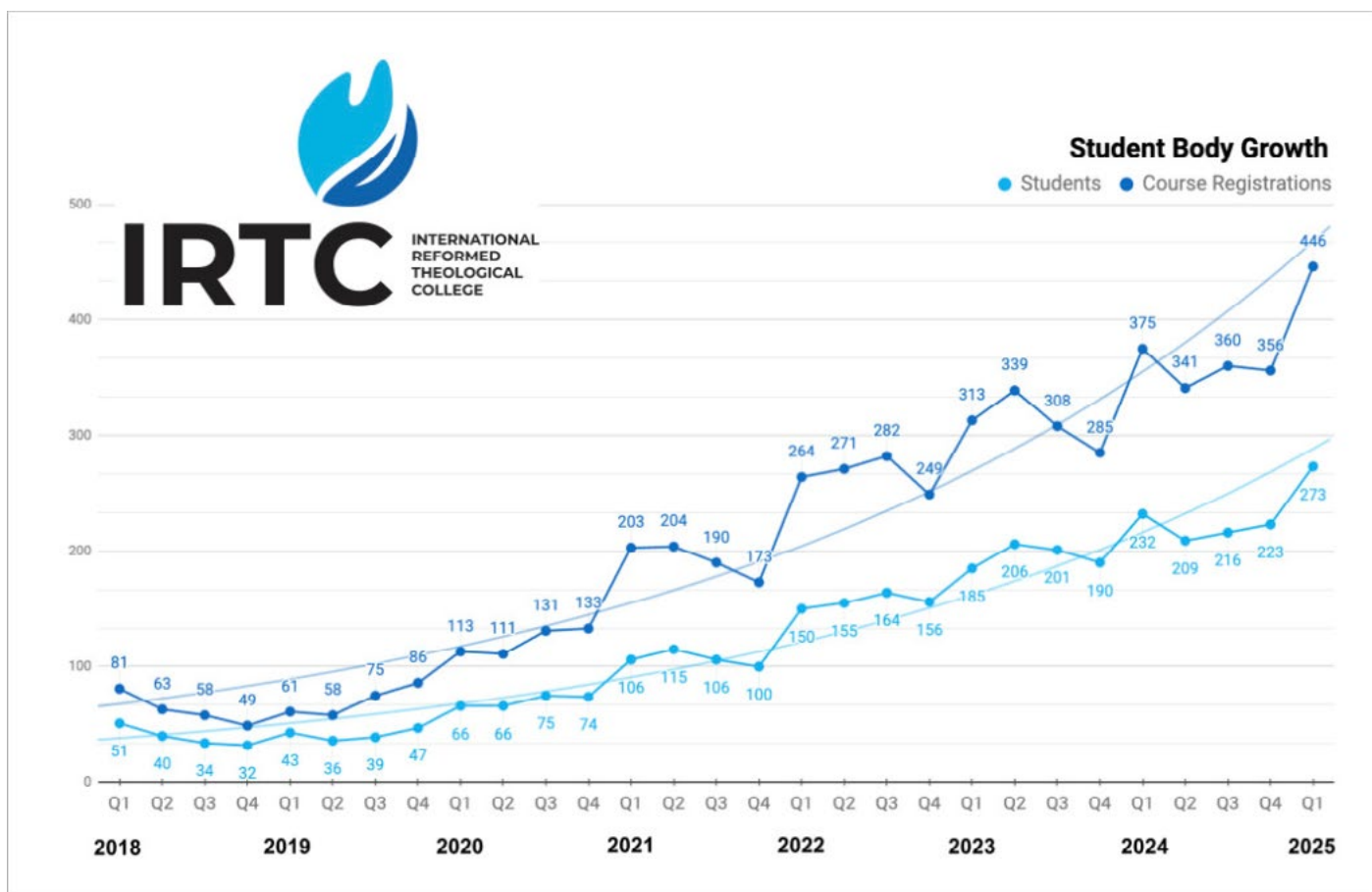
*"The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad."
(Psalm 126:3)*

With deep gratitude to God, we are pleased to report the results from the first term of 2025: the IRTC reached 273 active students enrolled in 446 courses — the highest figures ever recorded in the institution's history. A comparative chart from 2018 to 2025 reveals consistent growth. Since 2020, this growth has been especially marked, even amid challenging contexts such as the pandemic. This upward trajectory reflects a combination of doctrinal commitment, academic excellence, and accessibility — qualities that have made IRTC a reference point for pastors, missionaries, teachers, leaders, and members of local churches seeking solid biblical training.

More than just numbers, we celebrate lives being shaped, callings being confirmed, and churches being strengthened in the many countries where our students serve — from Brazil to the Middle East, from North America to Portuguese-speaking Africa

The IRTC remains steadfast in its purpose: to offer high-quality theological education that is faithful to Scripture, rooted in the Reformed tradition, and committed to the mission of Christ's Church. We ask for your prayers that, with humility and diligence, we may continue preparing men and women for the Lord's harvest.

Be part of this story. Pray, share, give. Our growth is not an end in itself, but a means for the glory of God and the edification of His people.



\$227,245
2025 Budget

56%

\$126,608
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FROM CLUNY TO CITEAUX TO CLAIRVAUX (PART II)

KEITH SIKKEMA

Editor's note: *This is the second of four articles sketching the history of certain monasteries in the Middle Ages. The author begins with a short historical explanation of events and moves on to tell more of this history by way of fictional stories based on known facts. These stories link to a previous series on Cluny and earlier monasteries by the same author (see Clarion Vol. 74, Issues 4 & 5).*

CLAIRVAUX THRIVES

Clairvaux spawned many daughter abbeys—by AD 1300 there were about seven hundred across Europe. The first Frisian Abbey started in 1165 as Klaarkamp in Rinsumageest, in the church diocese of Utrecht. It was close to Dokkum, where Boniface had been killed in 754. It was a coastal area of flat, flood-prone lands, man-made settlement mounds called terps or werts,¹ salt-marshes, and ever-shifting tidal channels. Klaarkamp founded further daughter monasteries, one of which was “Ad sanctum Bernardum” in Adewert.

Just like Bernard of Clairvaux had done, Klaarkamp's monk Siardus showed dedication, pastoral care, and leadership. Around 1190, following the Cistercian rules, Siardus's fellow monks elected him to be their abbot. The Frisian population had been growing and so had Klaarkamp. It had some fifty monks now, and well over one hundred lay brothers. It needed to establish daughter monasteries, because the rules said that monasteries should be small.

When Klaarkamp received its annual Cistercian visitation and inspection, Siardus asked the visiting abbot and his companion for advice. The visitors came from Heisterbach, in the diocese of



Saltmarsh with tidal channels.

Cologne (see map). At the next “synod” or general chapter meeting of all Cistercian abbots, the abbots advised Siardus to establish a new monastery east of the Lauwers, in the diocese of Münster.

Back at Klaarkamp, Siardus prepared a plan and sent some monks to explain it to the bishop of Utrecht. They asked Bishop Hermann II von Katzen-Elnbogen of Münster for his support, as he had to be involved in founding a new monastery in his diocese.

SEEKING TO EXPAND

One Monday, in the spring of 1191, Siardus sent two monks and two lay brothers on their way to find a good spot for a daughter abbey. They had started the regular “tides” or hours for meditation

¹ Frisian “terp” was called “wert” in eastern Frisia—now “wierde.”



and prayer while it was still dark. A few hours later, when the sun rose, they met for mass to be fed with the body of Christ² and to reflect on his resurrection. They also said prayers in preparation for work.

This week, their work was to explore. They did not know what they would run into, or where, or how long the journey would take, but they had vowed to keep Benedictine rules of devotion, chastity, silence, and obedience to the abbot. Siardus had laid his hands on them to dedicate them to this task. He had spoken about being a light outside the monastery's protection: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.' This light is God's light! Let it shine on your path, spread it humbly, and remember the seven tides of prayer and devotion. Then 'the Lord will bless you and keep you; he will make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; he will lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.'"³

THE JOURNEY

Siardus waved the four travelers off. "*Bene valete, fratres!* Goodbye, brothers! We will pray for God's face to shine upon you!" The monks, Wibrandus and Albertus, waved back. The lay brothers just nodded as they followed the monks on the path towards Dokkum, a rope holding their black scapular and white habit together. They kept their vows of silence. In a pack resting on two poles between them, the lay brothers carried supplies of food and beer, and two lavabos for ritual handwashing. They were looking for a spot east of the Lauwers Estuary, in the diocese of

Münster, with no monastery nearby; it needed to be near the sea, with access to fresh water, roads and rivers for transportation, and land for building material and to reclaim for farming. They trusted that God would direct their way to his chosen spot.

It was a fine day. The sun was shining, and it had not rained for days. Clay paths were dry and bumpy, sandy ones were soft, and peaty ones were spongy. Like life, the way was never smooth or perfect. Scattered through the grassy flat land to the north, they saw werts, some of them connected by low dikes. About 9 o'clock, near the narrow Ee Creek, they knelt to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide them to their unknown destination. Passersby respected and greeted them, stopping and crossing themselves.

DIKES

As the travelers walked on, they saw teams of men pushing two-wheeled carts with sod and dirt from pits and ditches to make low dikes along the creek. Their own path soon swerved onto the new dike, giving them a better view. The creek widened as they went. Its water was also rising with the incoming tide. Wibrandus briefly explained, "This land often floods. The sea may wash it away. Dikes must help protect it, like Klaarkamp protects us from sinful distractions."

One of the lay brothers asked in Frisian (he could not resist and did not speak Latin), "*Wannear binne de diken klear?*"⁴ Ignoring his vows of silence and Wibrandus' seniority, Albertus responded, "Sooner is better! In 1164, on Saint Juliana's new moon, God's wrath struck the Frisians. Rain poured down! Howling gales swept up

² Transubstantiation became official church doctrine in 1215.

³ Mat. 5:14; Ps. 119:164; Num. 6:24-26.

⁴ "When are the dikes ready?"



mountains of cold and salty sea water many feet above normal. It swallowed all in its way—lands, lands, and homes. The water stayed high. Twelve hours later, it rose further with the next tide. It ruined Frisia’s coast from the Elbe River in the east to the Vlie in the west. Twenty-thousand people and thousands of animals died. Helpless survivors cried out to the Lord in their distress and agony. Crops remained bad for years after.”

“Is that really the answer?” the lay brother asked. Albertus shook his head and continued, “Klaarkamp Abbey was founded the year after that flood. A rich widow, Lady Clara of Rinsumageest, donated the land. She sought the monks’ prayers to find rest for her soul. However, in 1170, the All-Saints Flood engulfed West Frisia. Dikes will protect Frisia! It may take long, and will always need improvements, but if we keep faith, pray, and work hard, the Lord will keep us safe. As St. Bernard said, ‘*Ora et labora*. We should always be praying and working hard!’”

Wibrandus shook his head, stopped, turned, looked at Albertus, and said, partly in Latin, “Well said, *sed loquere minus, frater*.⁵” Wibrandus said nothing about disrespect, but it was all Albertus needed to hear. He had broken his vows. He turned red.

WATER TROUBLE

At noon, they came close to where the Ee emptied in the Lauwers. They stopped and knelt to pray for continued strength,

and for their main meal for the day. The lay brothers opened the pack to take out some of their dark bread, herbs, vegetables, and prepared peas and beans. When passersby offered them fish, they received it as a gift from God. They drank some beer and then moved on, hoping to get east of the Lauwers before nightfall.

Wibrandus now led them on a clay path along the edge of a saltmarsh. There was no dike here. Albertus, still feeling guilty, looked at a lone sheep on the saltmarsh. Was it lost? There was no shepherd, and he wondered how it would find its way home. Preoccupied, he did not notice Wibrandus silently pointing to water flowing across the path. The water made the clay slippery as it ran toward a pool that overflowed into a tidal channel below. Albertus stepped on the wet spot, slipped, and, arms flailing, lost his balance. The others saw him slide into the pool. He screamed in Latin. It was not just a pool of freshwater he had fallen into.

To be continued... 



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⁵“But talk less, brother.”

(DIS)CONNECTION WITH THE PERSECUTED BODY

One day, when I was reading an issue from *Voice of the Martyrs*, I considered the contrasting levels of persecution across the global body of Christ. It made me recall a story a friend once shared with me. He lives his life confined to a wheelchair and with no feeling in the lower half of his body. He told me about a road trip he once took. Like many of us, he wanted a warm beverage to make the drive more pleasant. After a quick pit-stop at a Tim Horton's drive-through, he was on his way with his freshly steeped cup of tea. Later that night, as he got into bed, he noticed significant blistering and redness on one of his thighs. Only then did he recall that, when the scalding cup of tea was being passed to him, some of it spilled onto his lap. He drove down the highway enjoying the sunny day at exactly the same time as a different part of his body was being burned so badly that the scars are permanent.

Are we in North America driving down the road of life, unaware and unaffected by the pain inflicted on other members of the global body of Christ? To varying degrees I think the answer is 'yes' for all of us. This is partly due to the lack of coverage the mainstream media gives to persecution happening in Africa or the Middle East. Furthermore, life is perceived as busy and stressful as it is, never mind consuming depressing news.

HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU?

As living members of the body of Christ, we are taught by the gospel to familiarize ourselves with the needs of the body of Christ and to intercede on their behalf. Colossians 4 exhorts the saints to be steadfast in prayer. Ephesians 6 says we should be constant in making supplication for all the saints. Hebrews 13 challenges us to pray for those imprisoned for their faith, as if we ourselves were in prison. Clearly, to be intentional about praying for those who are persecuted is to align ourselves with the body of Christ.

I think one of the inevitable consequences of being a sinner in prosperous times is that our gratitude muscles undergo atrophy. The pattern of prosperity followed by complacency and reduced zeal is repeatedly shown in the Old Testament history of Israel. Could informing oneself of the persecuted church, of what our brothers and sisters endure because they follow Christ, increase the depths of our gratefulness to a level much more commensurate with the measure of our blessings?

Reading personal stories of persecution can be immensely encouraging. The strength of faith and courage in the face of mistreatment, imprisonment, torture and death gives us a glimpse of the power of the Holy Spirit in action. Hebrews 11 is just the beginning of a long list of heroes of the faith. God continues to add to the number of heroes of faith. Firsthand examples can strengthen our faith at the miraculous power of God, as shown through victims of abuse. Instead of praying for vindication and destruction of enemies, victims of attacks often pray that God would guard their soul from the toxic slurry of resentment and bitterness and instead forgive their oppressors in the same manner Stephen did in Acts 7.

SUPPORTING BROTHERS IN ARMS

Ephesians 6 teaches that the saints are in a war that transcends the physical. It's a war that extends to the "spiritual forces of evil." Children of God are in this war, albeit not necessarily at the frontlines. But just as those on the home front in past World Wars took their task to support the troops at the battle front seriously, so we in Canada can assume the task of praying for and supporting those living in areas where Satan's roar is the loudest.

Further, by regularly reading about and praying for the persecuted church, we are constantly preparing ourselves for a day when such persecution could come to Canada. Revelation 13 declares that this war on the saints will come to "every tribe and people and language and nation." In John 15, Jesus tells us that the world hates us and that if they persecuted him, they will also persecute us. To meditate on this reality is to challenge one's heart on what we're prepared to give up to maintain the honour and glory of God in our lives. Are we ready? 

To become more aware of the persecution of the global church and be more specific in your prayers, you can read web pages such as persecution.com, releaseinternational.org, or opendoorscanada.org.



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As Iron Sharpens Iron

If you are, or have been, an office bearer in one of our Canadian Reformed churches, you may have seen on the agenda for your meetings an item called *censura morum* or *censura fraternal*. Or, if your clerk doesn't do Latin, it may have been listed as mutual censure, Christian censure, brotherly censure, or censure as per Article 73 of the Church Order. Whatever happens when the meeting gets to that point may have little to do with what we have agreed to in Article 73. It is often more along the lines of Article 34, where it says that "at the close of major assemblies, censure shall be exercised over those who in the meeting have done something worthy of reproof." The chairman may ask at the close of a consistory meeting if anyone has something for Christian censure. This is used as an opportunity to address anything harsh or unbrotherly that was said in a heated debate during the meeting. That can happen. If no one says anything, the chairman will express his thankfulness that the brothers were able to work together in good harmony.

That's great, of course. However, the focus of Article 73 is different. It states that "Ministers, elders and deacons shall mutually exercise Christian censure and shall exhort and kindly admonish one another with regard to the execution of their office." Occasionally a consistory chairman will remember this and encourage elders by pointing out that some aspects of pastoral care might need a bit more attention. That's good, but I think we can do better when it comes to applying Article 73.

WHY? CARING FOR THE SHEEP

The Reformation of the 16th century did away with the hierarchical ecclesiastical structure where the lower ranks (priests) were supervised by the higher clergy (bishops). In Reformed churches, all office bearers have equal authority, confirmed by the fundamental rule we have in Article 74 CO: "No church shall in any way lord it over other churches, no office-bearer over other office-bearers."

At the same time, the churches did acknowledge the significance of regular evaluation, encouragement, and sometimes correction,

as ministers, elders, and deacons took up their offices. This kind of "mutual censure" was practiced already in the early years in Geneva. One by one, the names of office bearers were called, with the question if anyone had to say something concerning this brother's work as office bearer. Imagine you are a young elder in Geneva, and you're asked to evaluate the performance of a man like John Calvin. That's pretty intimidating! But Calvin insisted on it, for the well-being of the church, the flock of the great Shepherd Jesus Christ.

From the beginning, synods included this rule in what would eventually become the Reformed Church Order. Initially it was connected with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and it was more about the "doctrine and life" of office bearers, but the synod of 1586 formulated the stipulation as we still have it today: disconnected from the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and with the specific focus on improving the way the office bearers do their work.

Why has applying Article 73 CO become such a quick and more or less formal practice at the end of every consistory and council meeting as described above? Why is it so difficult for office bearers to "exhort and kindly [or, as it says in the pre-1983 edition, "in a friendly spirit"] admonish one another with regard to the execution of their office"?

Perhaps words like "censure" and "admonish" are a hindrance here. We usually connect censure with rebuke, criticism, finding fault, and expressing disapproval. It reminds us of what is dealt with in the articles 66–72 as sin that requires discipline. The word "admonish" falls into the same negative category. A minister might explain that, in the New Testament, the Greek verb translated as 'admonish' can also be translated as 'comfort' or 'encourage,' but today that's not how we hear it. Not many like the idea of criticizing a fellow elder for how he does his work as elder, in front of all the others, or being at the receiving end of such a rebuke in that setting.

WHAT? MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT

All of this makes it worthwhile to think a bit more about the purpose of the stipulation in Article 73 and how it can function in the churches as it was intended. To begin with, in this article

we have only agreed to *what* should be done, what the goal is of this exercise. All other aspects, like when, where, and how, are completely left open. Nowhere does it say that it must be done at the end of every meeting, or even that it should be done during a meeting. Every local church is free to regulate those things as it sees fit. That gives room for flexibility, for being creative, and for willingness to adjust the process and so learn what works best to appreciate this article.

So, what is the point of Article 73? When we look beyond the negative undertone of the terms used in this article, we should think of office bearers spending time together to evaluate the work they do in caring for the flock of Christ. What does Scripture say? What are the standards agreed upon in the Church Order (see Art. 16, 22, 23 CO)? What are the expectations outlined in the Forms for Ordination? How do we measure up? As a body, consistory or council, but also personally, as individual ministers, elders and deacons?

Yes, these questions can lead to critical reflection and self-reflection. There is nothing wrong with that. Office bearers are sinful men. They fall short, make mistakes, and sometimes make poor choices. They can adopt wrong or poor habits. A young elder will be eager to get to work, but he wonders how to handle certain issues. A minister or seasoned elder may develop blind spots for particular needs. And they all need each other to recognize such things. As the author of Proverbs puts it in Proverbs 27:17, “as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (NIV).

Driven by humility and by love for the congregation of Jesus Christ, office bearers should not be afraid to point out where things can be done better to God’s glory and for the benefit of the church.

Caring for the flock of Christ is a collective responsibility. It is not without reason that, in Acts 20:28, Paul urges the elders in Ephesus: “Pay careful attention to yourselves. . . .” The point of Article 73 CO is that office bearers are not just lone warriors. They have a mutual responsibility to encourage each other to do better, to grow and keep each other alert. There is always room

for improvement. Driven by humility and by love for the congregation of Jesus Christ, office bearers should not be afraid to point out where things can be done better to God’s glory and for the benefit of the church. As a wise elder said to me once, “We should not be afraid to hold each other’s feet to the fire.”

HOW? IN LOVE

It will be clear that a quick question period at the end of a council and/or consistory meeting does not do justice to this intention of Article 73. There should be a better way to reach the goal of this stipulation. As mentioned earlier, in our Church Order the how, when, and where are in the freedom of every church. In many of our churches, consistories are already aware of the need for office bearers to equip themselves continually for their task. Regional conferences are being held for ministers, as well as for elders and deacons. Also, at consistory and/or council meetings often time is set apart to study books or articles about the work of office bearers.¹ That’s a good start.

But Article 73 challenges consistories or councils to do more, to make it an activity that really focusses on how you function as ministers, elders, and deacons as you zero in on your specific local situation and circumstances. What about having a whole evening twice a year, or spending a whole Saturday perhaps once a year with that purpose? Have the format prepared internally, by a few office bearers. Whatever the “how to do this” is going to look like, it is crucial to remember that, as office bearers, your mutual trust is rooted in the fact that together you are accountable to the Chief Shepherd for doing all this in a spirit of Christian love.

Finally, as an office bearer, you might run into a situation that makes it unavoidable to kindly admonish a fellow office bearer for a clear failure in executing his office. It may be preferable to address such an issue in a setting with just him and you. Remember again: Article 73 of the Church Order does not require a consistory or council meeting. **C**



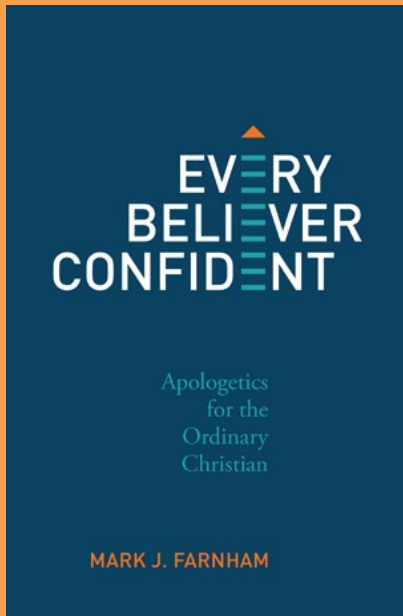
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¹ Classics for this exercise have been John R. Sittima, *With A Shepherd’s Heart* (1996), Michael Brown (ed), *Called to Serve* (2006), and more recently W. Boekestein & S. Swets (eds) *Faithful and Fruitful* (2019). Insightful for the specific offices are Cornelis Van Dam’s books *The Elder*, Philipsburg, 2009, and *The Deacon*, Grand Rapids, 2021. More research will no doubt produce other helpful study material.



An Easy Introduction **TO REFORMED APOLOGETICS**

Every Believer Confident: Apologetics for the Ordinary Christian, Mark J. Farnham.
Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2025. Softcover, 199 pages, \$24.83 CDN.

The Bible tells us in 1 Peter 3:15 that every believer should be prepared to give reasons for the hope they have in Jesus Christ. The problem is many believers don't feel prepared at all. When asked for reasons about why they believe what they do, they don't have the confidence to speak clearly, boldly, and biblically. That's a problem this book seeks to address. It's a book giving a basic introduction to apologetics, the defence and promotion of the Christian faith.

The author is the founder and director of Apologetics for the Church. This organization, according to its website, exists "to equip ordinary believers to effectively and confidently share the gospel." Farnham is also a professor of apologetics at Lancaster Bible College and Capital Seminary. He holds a Ph.D. from Westminster Theological Seminary, where he studied the Reformed apologetics method pioneered by Cornelius Van Til.

FRESH ELEMENTS

Many Reformed apologetics books have been published since Van Til's time, including some basic introductions. What makes this one worth our attention? For starters, it's up to date on the latest developments in the field. For example, when explaining different approaches to apologetics, Farnham includes Minimal Facts Apologetics. That one was new to me.

Each chapter concludes not only with "Questions to Ponder," but also a case study. For example, Chapter 5 provides a case study involving someone attracted to Wicca. What would you say to someone who says, "I started attending a gathering of witches to learn more about amplifying the voice of nature in my life. I am not a witch myself, but I love their connection to nature, their holistic treatments for all kinds of ailments, and their access to the latent power in the universe"?

Chapter 9 has a noteworthy approach to "Logical Mistakes to Avoid." Many apologetics books will address informal logical fallacies. They'll often provide examples of unbelievers using fallacious reasoning. Farnham goes one step further and gives examples of how *Christians* sometimes use such reasoning. He gives the example of begging the question: "I believe the Bible is the Word of God because I just know it to be so." To say that is just to assume it is true without proving it.

GROWING OUR CONFIDENCE

A final noteworthy feature is how Farnham reminds Christians that they know more than they think they do: "The truth is that the average mature Christian knows more about the ancient Near Eastern world of the Old Testament and the first-century world of the New Testament than the average unbeliever—simply from hearing sound, biblical preaching in church" (p 97). Combine that with the fact that many people have not thought too deeply about what they believe, and we should be encouraged to be more confident in sharing and defending our faith.

I can recommend this one to anyone interested in learning about apologetics. But specifically, *Every Believer Confident* would be a great resource for high school Bible classes or profession of faith classes. The next time I teach apologetics to a pre-confession class, Farnham will definitely be the textbook. Biblical, practical, and clear, it's ideal for teaching the next generation. 



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Podcast Review:

DIAL IN WITH JONNY ARDAVANIS

New podcasts are popping up all the time. There are so many to choose from that it can be overwhelming, making you want to quit listening altogether. Hopefully this issue's recommendation will help you navigate the vast array of options to add another podcast to your queue that is worth listening to. *Dial in with Jonny Ardavanis* is an enjoyable listen that provides a lot of value in a short amount of time.

A California native and a camp director at the time, Ardavanis began *Dial In* in the summer of 2020. Due to lockdown measures that made it impossible for him to provide in-person discipleship for teenage campers, Ardavanis pivoted and started *Dial In*, creating over fifty short daily devotionals walking through the book of John. His intention was to help followers of Christ “understand God’s Word and love him more.”

After a year’s break and having become the Dean of Campus Life at Master’s University, Ardavanis came back to the studio with the same intention and an increased burden to share the truth of God’s Word. Since 2021, Ardavanis has produced numerous series that explore books of the Bible and address difficult theological questions with notable guests such as John MacArthur, Alistair Begg, Paul Washer, and Joel Beeke. He also delves into topics like dating, the church, prayer, counselling, leadership, and more. Given the array of topics, *Dial In* strikes a helpful balance by providing answers that are both theoretical and practical, all rooted in Scripture.

Jonny has since moved on from Master’s University to serve as pastor in the Reformed Baptist Stonebridge Bible Church in Franklin, Tennessee. In each episode, you can hear Jonny’s heart for the church, especially as it pertains to the next generation. He truly believes in the power of God’s Word to renew our minds, give us joy, and transform us into the image of Christ. *Dial In* is a podcast for all ages because, young or old, we are all called to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

Ardavanis is an articulate host and teacher. Given his experience in reaching young audiences, he is able to communicate hard truths in simple ways that don’t make you feel small, but rather leave you thinking more deeply about a topic, issue, or book of the Bible. He commonly refers to the fact that “theology fuels doxology,” meaning that rightly knowing God and his Word will lead us to praise him and further magnify his name. If you want to tune into a weekly podcast that equips, convicts, but also deeply encourages you in your daily walk with Christ, then *Dial In with Jonny Ardavanis* might be for you. 

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God's Faithfulness Shall Never Be Undone

Hendrik Pierse, 1904
Tr. George van Popta, 2025

Christian Gregor, 1784

1. God's faith - ful - ness shall nev - er be un - done;
he calls his own, each cho - sen by his fa - vour.
He knows the pre - sent and what is to come;
no word of his shall fal - ter nor will wa - ver.
His works en - dure through eve - ry age and land, held in his hand.

The musical score is written for a single voice in 4/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The score ends with a double bar line.

2. The Lord is King! His kingdom stands secure;
his reign extends throughout all time's progression.
His mighty arm is steadfast, strong, and sure;
it wields the Spirit's sword o'er every nation.
The breath of his unchangeable decree
makes Satan flee.

3. The Holy Spirit told us what will be,
revealed God's plan, the secrets of salvation.
He leads the church in truth that sets her free.
His wisdom shines through gospel proclamation.
He guides his holy church from land to land
at his command.

