

*The Psalms:
A Brief Users'
Guide*

A Great Vision

*The Demise of
Youth Churches*



God has given us music



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The Psalms: A Brief Users' Guide

*God has given us music and He has also given us parts
of his Word which He explicitly meant to be set to music*

In case you hadn't noticed, we are psalm-singing churches. You've probably also noticed that we do not sing all the psalms; at least, there are a large number of psalms that we don't sing very often, if at all. Recently, a set of statistics on this point was compiled by somebody from our churches in Ontario and circulated around the Internet. These statistics provided empirical proof that there are significant numbers of psalms that are rarely or never sung in our churches.

Two reasons are often given for this phenomenon. First, it is argued that a number of our psalms are set to difficult tunes. I'm not a musical expert so I'm not going to discuss that point. Second, it is argued that certain psalms are simply not suitable for use in public worship. There are imprecatory psalms (cursing psalms), for instance. Most of the psalms are laments – do we really want to regularly incorporate lamenting into our worship services? Sometimes the argument is heard that our singing is to be characterized as praise to God – anything that doesn't fit that character doesn't belong on the lips of God's people as they're singing in public worship. That automatically excludes many of the psalms. It's this second point that I want to focus on in this article. Particularly, I want to advance the counter-point that we can and should sing all the psalms and also indicate the best manner in which to do so.

Singing all the psalms

There is little question that the Old Testament book of Psalms was the song book of God's people before the coming of Christ. After Christ's earthly ministry, the Christian church continued this usage and this is reflected in the New Testament. In Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, Paul encouraged believers to sing psalms. We find the same in James 5:13. The book of Psalms is the most quoted book in

the New Testament, reflecting the familiarity that comes with widespread usage. Furthermore, the quotes from the Psalter are not restricted to those psalms which are oriented to praise to God. This evidence suggests that, under inspired apostolic direction, the early New Testament church continued the practice of the Old Testament church in using the entire Psalter in its worship.

This is supported by what we know from church history. While psalms were not used exclusively, the entire Psalter has been the bulk of the song book of the historic Christian church. Even in the medieval Roman Catholic church, psalms (in Latin) were the primary material for singing or chanting and this included the entire Psalter. However, this began to slip in the early fourteenth century with the introduction of many Latin hymns.

During the sixteenth century, the Reformation introduced changes in three areas pertaining to singing in public worship. First, the psalms were translated into the vernacular languages (such as French) and set to metrical tunes. Second, they were to be sung by the entire congregation. Finally, there was a movement back towards the ancient church's primary emphasis on the psalms. However, in all this, there is no indication that John Calvin and the other reformers felt that certain psalms were inappropriate for Christian worship. If they had this sentiment, it would have been a waste of resources to translate those particular psalms and set them to music. As it is, the Genevan Reformation produced a complete metrical Psalter and for good reason – it was intended for usage, as it has been in the church from even before the time of Christ and the apostles.

We should also remember the well-known passage from 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (keeping in mind that this was originally written about the Old Testament), "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is

profitable for teaching, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." This includes every single one of the psalms. What makes the psalms special among all the other writings of the Bible is the fact that they were written to be sung and we all know the powerful effect of poetry set to music. Poetry expresses emotions and makes descriptions in a way to which simple prose can't compare. Poetry speaks to our hearts. Furthermore, music was the drug that sedated King Saul. Music can still have that sort of effect and others. God has given us music and He has also given us parts of his Word which He explicitly meant to be set to music. By the means of this inspired poetry set to music, we are led to praise, teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

Now it's true that some occasions are more suitable than others for certain psalms. It would be odd, for instance, to sing a lament on Easter Sunday morning. Nevertheless, the church does well to become familiar with the entire collection and not merely forty or fifty favourites. By doing this, when the moment is appropriate for a lament (for instance), the church doesn't struggle to find its bearings – she knows where to look and how to sing. The entire Psalter is part of God's Word and is designed to be sung by God's people.

How to sing the psalms

So let's grant the point that the Christian church can and should sing all the psalms. That brings us to the question of how. The first thing we have to do is reflect on the nature of the Psalter and of our singing in public worship.

As mentioned, some people have the idea that our singing is supposed to be about one thing and one thing only: praise for God. So, they say, if it's not a praise song, we shouldn't be singing it. What does God Himself say about this? In Colossians 3:16 we read, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." This passage speaks about teaching and admonishing *each other* with the singing of psalms. To be sure, it's also directed towards God, but yet there is an element in the singing of psalms where God is giving us his Word so that we can sing it to one another. Therefore, our singing is not just about praise, but also about teaching and reminding each other of what God says in his Word. When we make the singing of psalms to be exclusively doxological (praise-oriented) we actually restrict the purpose of the psalms more narrowly than God does Himself.



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
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The psalms are given by God also for a didactic or teaching purpose. When you flip through the psalms, you'll find this over and over again. The very first psalm, for instance, is not even directed to God. It's a wisdom psalm. When we sing it, we're singing to one another and reminding each other of the wisdom of God's Word. To take one more example, consider Psalm 134. This psalm too is more about believers speaking and singing to one another than it is about believers singing praise to God. To be sure, it is not *merely* believers speaking and singing to one another, but ultimately God speaking his Word *through* them.

So first of all we have to recognize the God-given diversity of the Psalter and embrace it. Second, we need to recognize the connection between Christ and the psalms. The Christian church has always acknowledged that these songs do not merely tell us about the religious life of Israel in the centuries leading up to the New Testament. Rather, the catholic church has recognized that these are songs of and about Christ. This recognition has been derived from what the Bible itself says in a number of places.

For instance, we have Luke 24:44. There Christ plainly says that the law of Moses, the prophets and *the psalms* were written about Him. Earlier in that same chapter, as he was walking along the road to Emmaus, the Lord revealed to the two disciples all that was in the Scriptures (the Old Testament) concerning Himself (Luke 24:27). Likewise, in John 5:39-40, Christ was speaking to the Jews and he said, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me." When He said "Scriptures," He was referring to the Old Testament and that includes the book of Psalms. The psalms testify about Christ. Throughout the New Testament writings, we see that the apostles understood this very plainly. They show time and time again how the psalms speak of Christ and thus provide us a framework for also understanding the psalms today as we read and sing them.

In connection with that there are two important qualifications to make. First of all, when we say this we don't mean to say that each and every word or verse of the psalms directly points us to Christ. Many times we have to take the psalm as *a whole* to understand how it speaks of our Saviour. At other times, such as with Psalm 119, we can work with stanzas or strophes of the psalm and can see and hear Christ also in these smaller passages.

The second qualification is there are different ways that different psalms point to the Lord Jesus. For instance, the words of Psalm 22, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" are taken directly upon the lips of Christ himself when He was on the cross. However, the author of Hebrews puts the words of Psalm 40 (and others) in the mouth of Christ. In other

psalms, David is acting and speaking as a type of Christ. In yet other psalms, like Psalm 88, we encounter a broken world in need of Christ. And so we could go on. The important thing to remember is that whenever we read and sing the psalms, we must *learn* to do so with our eyes fixed on Christ. Learning requires work and thought and so the psalms will challenge us. But doesn't God's Word do that more often? And is it a bad thing to be challenged by the Word of God? Or isn't it rather something that God gives us to help us to grow in grace and knowledge? I think we know the answer.

As an aside, one of the ways that our *Book of Praise* could be improved would be to add a little paragraph at the beginning of each psalm indicating the basic character of the psalm and suggesting the manner in which the psalm can be sung in a Christ-centred way. English psalters of previous generations have done that very thing. For example, I have a metrical Psalter from an eighteenth century Puritan named John Brown of Haddington. With each psalm, Brown wrote a little paragraph indicating the general drift of the psalm and, with many of them, how it pointed to Christ. Even if our *Book of Praise* were not to go in such a direction, our ministers can and should still from time to time make comments from the pulpit that will assist the congregation in singing these songs in a meaningful way, particularly if it might not be immediately obvious. But above all, it is our personal responsibility to give careful thought to what we are singing in public worship and to sing from our hearts.

Psalm singing is an essential aspect of our churches' Reformed character. The sixteenth century Reformers looked back at the early church for direction on how to worship God in Spirit and in truth. Taking their cue from the fathers, they had to teach a new generation to sing God's songs. Today, our challenge is to lead the next generation to appropriate God's covenant songbook for themselves. The church without psalm-singing is impoverished because it misses out on the regular use of a powerful, Christ-focussed part of God's Word given to us for praise, instruction, and admonition. Let's not take our psalm singing for granted, but embrace it and cherish it as a means by which God further reveals his Son to us.

Recommended resources:

The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship, Hughes Oliphant Old, Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 1975.

The Messiah and the Psalms, Richard P. Belcher, Mentor/Christian Focus, 2006.

War Psalms of the Prince of Peace, James E. Adams, P & R, 1991.

Our Reformed Church Service Book, G. VanRongen, Inheritance Publications, 1995.

The Ancient Love Song, Charles D. Drew, P & R, 1996.



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MATTHEW 13:52

A Great Vision

“So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless.”

Daniel 10:8

Did you know that there is more to this life than you can see with your eyes and touch with your hands? The vision that Daniel saw gives us a bigger perspective about life. Daniel 10 says that Daniel looked up and saw a man dressed in linen – around his waist was a belt of the finest gold – but his body . . . his body was like chrysolite – a bright gold-yellow colour. His face was even brighter, for it stood out as shining as lightning – almost too much to look at. In the middle of this lightning-like face were the piercing eyes like flaming torches. His arms and legs were gleaming like polished bronze. The voice of this angel is said to be like the sound of a multitude – that is, like the noise of a stadium of people all talking in unison. His voice was thunderous, echoing, and blasting forth. Take a moment while you are reading this to think about who Daniel saw and heard. In our passage we are lifted above the materialistic world and shown a reality that belongs to the exclusive perspective of Christians.

The passage makes it clear that not everybody is able to see this reality. There were other men with Daniel beside the Tigris River and they saw nothing. At the same time, even though they cannot see, they could still experience the reality of the presence of God’s messengers. Daniel 10:7 says:

“such terror overwhelmed them that [like good descendants of Adam and Eve after the fall into sin] they fled and hid themselves.” It is a fascinating description – the reality of God’s spiritual presence is able to affect what happens on the earth – their light can shine into our material reality! What exactly was the terror they were overwhelmed with? Daniel was made to face it all by himself. Not only did the other people leave him, but also *his strength* abandoned him. His face paled – that is, his mask left him and he realized he was helpless. All the status he gained as a human meant nothing before the holiness of God’s angel – and Daniel’s own sinfulness and powerlessness was exposed. Daniel was overcome by his frailty.

When the thunderous voice began speaking, Daniel crumpled with his face to the ground. When a hand touched him he had enough strength to go on his hands and knees on the ground, but his whole body was trembling. With some further encouragement and ongoing trembling, he made it up to the standing stage but then the angel began speaking again and Daniel dropped his face toward the ground – and found he was unable to speak. When the angel gave him speech Daniel could only speak about his weakness: “How can I,

your servant, talk with you my lord? . . . My strength [that is anything that empowered me in this world I live in] is gone before your holiness!” The burden of his own guilt and weakness even leaves him unable to breathe.

What do we make of all this? Although our sinful eyes so often focus only on the material reality so that we get discouraged in our trials of this life, we must not forget the spiritual reality around us. When Jesus was being arrested he said to his disciples: “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt 26:53) When God promised to care for us He does this with a powerful angelic force standing by. Before these angels, who reflect the holiness of God, every man is terrified and overcome as they grovel in their sinfulness – every man except Jesus Christ, who in his righteousness, power, and authority is superior even to the angels (Heb1:4). This Christ, our Saviour, has promised that these angels are sent to serve believers (Heb1:14). In Psalm 91:11 the Lord said that He will command his angels concerning us to guard us in our ways. Fight the good fight of faith with confidence for you have powerful heavenly allies – in Christ the angels are on our side.



Pornography, our Purity, and our Posterity (Part 2 of 2)

In the previous article we considered the following question: if so-called “faithful” men are living with the secret sin of pornography, what can we expect of the next generation, specifically our sons and theirs?

Now we need to address further questions: How are we, as fathers (and mothers), preparing our sons for this battle for purity? Are we carefully fitting – by the grace given us – their armour? How can we help them so that they too can stand up under Satan’s barrage of arrows filled with the sin of pornography and licentiousness?

We all know that we desperately need strong, faithful, spiritual men – men of integrity – to serve in Christ’s church now and in the future. This work of preparing for the future begins, as it were, in our homes. The work of equipping our children for the battle for purity is our homework. The home is, of course, more than just a roof and four walls. As someone once wrote, “it is an objective and visible kingdom.”¹ That is, it is a kingdom that must be a safe haven, with the object of serving Christ – a place where He can dwell richly in the hearts of all that dwell therein.

The “global village”

Arguably this may have been easier some thirty or forty years ago. It seems the once safe haven from the vileness of the devil has become his battlefield today. It is more and more difficult to find a

home that remains a spiritual bastion where Christ dwells richly. The home is constantly under attack by a growing perverse and global community (or global village) that seeks to replace all that is pure and holy with the impure and the profane. So, the statistic mentioned in the previous article: forty-seven percent of Christians admit that pornography is a major problem in their homes.² Satan’s domain is global.

Permit me to share a bit of an anecdote to this end. Recently I was standing near the open grave of one of our elderly church members here in Lae, Papua New Guinea. And in front of me I noticed a young boy wearing a black shirt with bright pink lettering. My eyes immediately gravitated to the bold disparity in colour. The shirt read: “Sexpo 2005, Brisbane, Australia” and then a host of licentious activities and attractions were listed below the title. Two things struck me as I looked at this young boy, who of course was most oblivious to the sins he was ostensibly supporting. First, there was a metaphor at work: before him stood an open grave, which as Scripture puts it, is the only end to the path of sin so proudly sponsored on the shirt. Secondly, he was living proof that we live in a global village and this village is proudly and shamelessly sponsoring its fornication. It is full of adultery, fornication, sodomy, and a host of other sins in such

events as sexpos, gay pride marches, and Mardi Gras. This so-called village, you could say, is run on the fuel of lust – scantily dressed women sell everything from beer to a bar of soap. Moreover, this village is at our door steps. And for the one lacking wisdom and unable to discern what is right and wrong, pure and profane, holy and impure, this village of licentiousness seems so captivating. The image of the young man in Proverbs 7 who being weak-willed fell prey to the prowess of the harlot down his street and enjoyed a banquet in the grave with her is lived out in many, many lives.

The “global village” and television

The sad reality is, however, that the village is alive and well in many homes. Its sensual wares, promiscuity, licentious prowess, and diabolic lies have fitted themselves into the newspapers, magazines, books, TV sets, and websites that appear in our homes. Obviously this makes the battle for the purity of our children and the maturity of their faith that much more difficult. Satan knows where to go to captivate the minds of God’s children; where they’re most vulnerable, in the security of their homes. His first *modus operandi* was the television. Arguably the TV became his tool of choice during the 70s and to the present. It captivates millions. Already in

1976 the voice of the late Malcolm Muggeridge, the English journalist and broadcaster, could be heard saying: "The media [he was particularly speaking of TV] have indeed provided the devil with perhaps the greatest opportunity accorded him since Adam and Eve were turned out of the Garden of Eden."³ However, since that day some thirty years ago, what is aired on television has grown in crudeness, has lowered the threshold for profanity and sexual impurity, has adopted homosexuality as near normal, adultery as a favoured past-time, and premarital sex as a healthy part of a teen life. So everyday countless followers of Christ "watch people undress, peek on people committing fornication and adultery, which our God calls an abomination. We've become voyeurs. . . entertained by sin."⁴

How are we preparing our sons for this battle for purity?

Allow me to share one story I heard on this point recently: Before we had Internet in the home, we had cable television. I don't think my parents knew how much pornography was on at night, or maybe they did, but thought that I wouldn't feed on it. Often, I would sneak down at night, maybe two or three in the morning and feast my eyes on the devil's wares and my lust for more continued to grow. I was engrossed and addicted. Full of shame, I would crawl back to bed, only to repeat the shameful act the next night. And to this Malcolm Muggeridge, who notably threw out his box in the early seventies, writes: "Future historians will. . . marvel that we should have so meekly subjected

ourselves to its destructive and often malign influence."⁵ Sadly, many are subjecting not only themselves, but their children to its profane influence without counting the cost on their souls!

The "global village" and the Internet

But if television is not a powerful enough tool in the hands of the enemy – and again one wonders if we really understand its power – the Internet has equally unprecedented power it seems. The devil has found another way to enter the home and wreak untold havoc. The global proliferation of pornographic material in the new global village is now available for constant viewing on the Internet. This may be good news for the kingdom of Satan, but as heirs of the kingdom of light, this is a battle cry. According to one study in 2002 by the London School of Economics, nine out of ten children between the ages of eight and sixteen had viewed Internet pornography. Even if the majority was unintentional, the reality is, it is accessible to them and their consciences are opened to it.⁶ To add to this, many families are broadening their bandwidth to high speed connection and access is near instantaneous. According to one study in 2005, there are some 4.2 million porn websites and attached to that some 372 million pornographic pages which is amply serving some 68 million daily pornographic search engine requests.⁷ This is a global pandemic and the cost is borne in the hearts of young men, boys, and sadly older men as well – both fathers and sons.

Another story:

My parents put a computer in my room. They thought it was a good idea as this would allow me to do my homework in a quiet place and if need be –

because I have Internet access – to communicate with my friends. Little did they know that it became the devil's playground and I became one of the players! I would often come home from school and surf the web and feast my eyes. I hated it, but too ashamed to tell my parents, I just kept going back for more. My heart and my mind are bursting with disgust. Images haunt me now that I am a bit older.

Satan knows where to go to captivate the minds of God's children

These parents allowed their child to run amuck in the kingdom of darkness and he became entangled. It was ignorance at its best and maybe a few years ago one might understand this short-sightedness. No longer. The battle lines are drawn; there is absolutely no excuse for your child to have that kind of access. None!

Satan knows that he doesn't need to serve hard-core porn to our children – though sadly he is quite willing to serve them that; he knows that he can slowly break down their defences, allow sexual impurity to incubate in their young minds, periodically feed it with another pop-up on the Internet, another seductive prime-time show, another movie, another X-box game with sensually dressed "players," another commercial, another questionable blog, and the list goes on. And he, of course, is patient. He just waits, oh so patiently, until this insatiable sin begins to rear its ugly head in their minds and the itch for more begins. The future is bleak if our youth are taking the path of the young man in Proverbs 7. Very bleak.

The power of the gospel

In all of this Scripture does not give us reason to despair. There might be reason for lament, even great concern, but not despair. In Christ we are called not to despair but be alert, be aware! So the Spirit of Christ through Paul writes in Ephesians 6:10-11, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." And he continues, "Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." That means a few things to us who are in Christ. First it means that we do not need to run and hide in the corner of the world where there is no access, no media, just you and the vegetation. For the record, those corners do not really exist. The global village is everywhere,

There is absolutely no excuse for your child to have that kind of access. None!

it seems. We, therefore, must fight, or better, "stand firm." Second, it means as Calvin writes in his commentary on Ephesians, "If the Lord aids us by *his mighty power* we have no reason to shrink from the combat."⁸ We have been given the arms, the armour, "for repelling every kind of attack."⁹ We need to know the enemy and then fight. It is up to us to begin suiting up and strive to help our children suit up as well. We can't leave the armour collecting dust in the closet by the front door.¹⁰ Thirdly, we need to realize the force against us. Satan is far too crafty and has thousands of years of practice; therefore no

human power can withstand him. We need to be armed with all that belongs from above – righteousness, truth, faith, the Word and the Spirit! And in that armour, as Calvin states it aptly, "there will be no danger which may not be successfully met by the power of God; nor will any who, with this assistance, fight against Satan, fail in the day of battle."¹¹ We serve a risen Christ. He is the king of kings who has broken the power of the devil, of sin, and the world. Therefore in Christ we are said to be "more than conquerors through him who loves us" (Rom 8:37).

And in that strength and knowledge we must fight. We must be engaged. The foremost work that Christ calls us to is the raising of our children, God's children, if we are so blessed. This begins in the home. Where else are we given unlimited access to their development, maturity of the faith, and growth in knowledge, save the home? Our homes are gifts to us from God to protect and foster spiritual development in our children. Our homes must be a spiritual safe haven for the offspring of the promise. Yes, the world is at our doorsteps and the winds of perversity waft through the walls, but there is still much we can do to protect, nurture, and raise our children in this place. This is our calling: to engage this battle of perversity and fornication for our sake and for the sake of our children's hearts and their salvation. . . and we begin in the home.

The home as a spiritual safe haven

The question that we need to address before signing off is this: how? How can we make our homes

a spiritual bastion, an abode of love and purity and holiness? What are we doing to make sure our children are prepared for the global village into which they have been born?

We need to be armed with all that belongs from above – righteousness, truth, faith, the Word and the Spirit!

King David by the grace given him addressed this question in Psalm 101:2-3. He writes, "I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile things. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me." David is contrasting his life in the public square with his life at home. There are things you can't change in the global village – though we must let our light shine before all men – but there are things you can secure in your home. This text touches on two elements that I wish to explore. First, David, as father and king is taking the lead here. Like Joshua who stated in full confidence of grace, "but as for me and my household we will serve the Lord" (Josh 24:15), so too David in Psalm 101 is saying the same thing. Charles Spurgeon elucidates on this text in his commentary on the Psalms and states the following: "Piety must begin at home. Our first duties are those within our own abode. We must have a perfect heart at home, or we cannot keep a perfect way abroad. Reader, how fares it with your family? Do you sing in the choir and sin in the chamber? Are you a

saint abroad and a devil at home? For shame! What we are at home, that we are indeed."¹² That piety must begin with the spiritual head of the home, the father, and equally lived out by the mother.

There is another element addressed here to assist us in preparing our homes for Christ. That is this: we have to protect our eyes. So David states, "I will set no vile thing before my eyes." That is, no evil, base, or worthless thing whatsoever will be established in my home. David is not merely commenting on his own life, no, he speaks for all who dwell in his home, or more likely, his palace. As the head of the home, he will ensure it is holy before the Lord. And so his son, Solomon, would later write, "The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him" (Prov 20:7). The result of living a blameless life before God and our children and protecting our eyes and theirs from the fornication that abounds around us is this: "Blessed are his children after him."

In this battle for the purity and preparedness of our children we need not only to have the words of Joshua etched on some plaque in our home, we need to embody them in our life. He said "as for me and my household we will serve the Lord." Those are bold words in a morally depraved world. But they must be ours and they must be lived for God's glory, our children's salvation.

Have we done what we can?

In the end, the question we as parent(s) will have to answer is this: have we done what we have been called to do for God's children? Have we taken strides to

secure our homes from the devils attack? This may mean: having passwords on the computer, keeping the computer in high traffic areas, downloading accountability software (K9, X3 Watch, Covenant Promise, etc) or software to screen websites, keeping the TV locked up and used on special occasions, or getting rid of cable, refusing certain magazines, books, in the home,

Our homes are gifts to us from God to protect and foster spiritual development in our children

even newspapers, etc. And at the heart of all of this is this question: do we really care about our children's hearts? Are we thinking, or even better, praying for them and then passing the baton of purity and integrity to them so they can pass it on to the next? Are we willing to bar no cost or convenience to ensure that their hearts are kept pure; that is, not being fed a diet of sensuality but a diet of salvation, the enduring promises of God? That is the radical call of the gospel and it begins in the home so that we can say with Joshua of old, "as for me and my household we will serve the Lord."

Only then will our children and grandchildren be ready to meet the barrage of arrows filled with the sin of fornication that will be shot at them, even unaware. Yes, the global village is growing in

perversity, but where sin abounds Christ's grace abounds even more. In that grace we can sing with the saints of old: "Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing; were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing. And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed His truth to triumph through us." So wrote Luther, so sing God's children today, and may our children continue to sing this until Christ returns!

¹ G.K. Chesterton, *What is Wrong with this World?* (Ignatius Press, 1994) 49.

² Mark Bergin, "Porn Again" in *World Magazine*, April 23, 2005, <http://worldmag.com/articles/10555>.

³ Malcolm Muggeridge, *Christ and the Media* (Regent College, 1976) 15.

⁴ Randy Alcorn, "Radical Path to Purity," at <http://afajournal.org/2003/september/903purity.asp>

⁵ Muggeridge, *Christ and the Media*, 23.

⁶ Bergin, "Porn Again" in *World Magazine*, (April 23, 2005)

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Calvin's Commentaries Volume XXI, "Epistle to the Ephesians,"* (Baker Books, 2003) 334.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Calvin shares this idea but he speaks of leaving the armour on the wall, where we might find it in our closets. (334).

¹¹ Ibid, 337.

¹² Charles Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, Vol. II. Ps LVIII to CX. (Hendrickson) 240.

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The Demise of Youth Churches

I really enjoyed the articles of Dr. Oosterhoff on the Dutch sister-churches situation and the discussion sparked by her articles. I was disappointed, though, that not younger people participated, because, after all, this is for a large part about the youth. This discussion was consummated mostly by retired or soon-to-be retired teachers, all persons well past their youthful prime. Sorry. I wondered: what do the young people think about the matters raised?

I was also happy to read that Dr. Oosterhoff finds it important to learn from the Dutch – from their positive accomplishments and from their errors. Bravo. Her purpose is also to better understand “our own members, including many younger ones.” The ultimate motive is the “desire to make [Christ’s] gospel of salvation known to outsiders – by means of mission, evangelism, and if necessary also by means of liturgical and worship-style adaptations.” Once again, bravo.

Personally, however, I could not find myself in Dr. Oosterhoff’s general description that “many of us find it much easier to talk about the church, about doctrine, about threatening apostasy than our hope in Christ.” Ouch, that was painful, and I hope the reticent felt it.

But I really do love to speak about my hope in Christ and I have done so at home and abroad. Mission and evangelism have always been very high on my list of priorities, and every Sunday evening you can still listen to “*What does the Bible Say*” on AM 900 CHML. I can understand it that not everyone is equipped and motivated to do exactly the same, but I do find among our members by and large a desire to speak about their hope in Christ. Our members certainly support all kinds of mission and evangelism activities.

If the idea is to really learn from the experiences of the Dutch churches, we had best not go down this path of youth churches or adapted youth services

I was not aware of the imbalance of which Dr. Oosterhoff writes that we have been hearing much about Dutch shortcomings. The articles published in *Clarion* on this matter were very careful and quite non-committal. Our last Synod, held at Smithers, did not

recognize the seceded churches in Holland but instead asked Deputies to help the Dutch promote unity. So, gimme a break. The only time when a multitude of letters and opinions hit our press was when Dr. Oosterhoff herself raised the matters in The Netherlands. But rest assured that I will be on guard now against all imbalances, although the “level of difficulty” is admittedly a bit high.

The youth of the church

I understand, then, that much of this is about the youth and the future of the church. It is for their sake that we may need to introduce “liturgical and worship-style adaptations.”

In *Nederlands Dagblad* of December 21, 2006, I read a report on the rapid demise of youth “churches” in Holland. For a while these youth churches were mushrooming. ND writes that these churches can be characterized as follows: a strong evangelizing character, contemporary music, young(!) speakers, and massive attendance. In various places these movements only organized alternative church services for the youth, but these services, too, are being terminated.

You may have heard of these services. What struck me is that these movements liked to use English names, e.g. “*Potter’s Hand*”

(Barneveld), "God Fashion" (Zwolle), "Heartbeat" (Amersfoort), and "Dimension 7" (Groningen). Who ever said the Dutch can't speak English? Nice names.

For a while these churches attracted thousands of adolescents and post-teens. They even had a national umbrella society called "Society (of) Youth Churches." But, alas, now the society has shut down and the movement appears to be dying out. So much for liturgical and worship-style adaptations. The attention span of the youth of the church does not appear to be very long, no matter how much you dress up the services. There is now a trend among youth to seek again the sincere simplicity of the traditional church service.

Reasons for the demise

Of course, no one will gloat over this development. It is sad that an enthusiastic initiative comes to a grinding halt. But, as Dr. Oosterhoff wrote, we can learn from this for our own situation. I am learning.

Why did this youth movement peter out? All kinds of reasons are given by the organizers and participants. The established local churches are now paying more attention to the youth. The real goal of the movement to reach non-church going youth was not being achieved. As an evangelism tool this modern-day method was an outright flop. The youth like the "party" (Dutch: "feest") but it did not really affect them deeply. Real spiritual change was hardly apparent.

The idea is now to become more involved in social and cultural work. Emphasis will be placed not so much on coming to faith but on growing in faith and in service. One organizer (quoted in ND)

stated that "We are constantly searching for new ways and manners to bring the Gospel. . . ." Fine and dandy, but this is a totally different matter.

I did not mention yet that this was an *interdenominational* movement. Boo-hoo. As such it could draw on a large pool of many churches and talents. There was no shortage of people and plans. Many new things were used to attract and keep the youth. In the end all this did not help. Even worship-style adaptations did not do the trick.

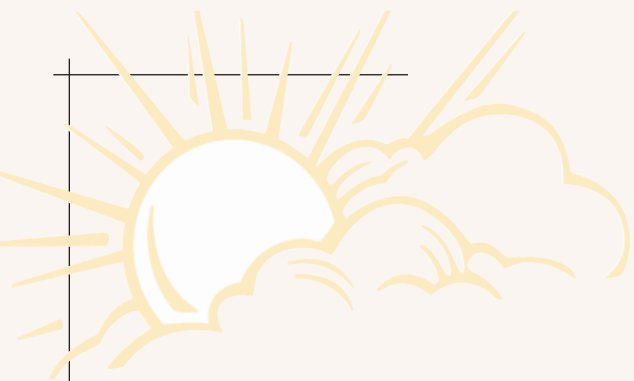
Now I have never denounced this youth movement and do not denounce it now. No imbalance permitted. But if the idea is to really learn from the experiences of the Dutch churches, we had best not go down this path of youth churches or adapted youth

services. We'd best tell the youth to continue faithfully coming to the church services where also the other members are.

Actually, I think that special youth services are unbiblical and contrary to our understanding of the church *as a body*. I have stated this sentiment decades ago and still abide by it. It is precisely in connection with *worship* that Paul reminds the Corinthians of the fact that the church is a body (1 Cor 12: 12-31). If you want, I will elaborate on that sometime, but only if you want.

Here we see that the seed fell in soil that had little depth. Growth was explosive, but the plant soon died. Remember the parable? (Matthew 13: 1-17.) I love learning from the Dutch. They are such excellent teachers.





Ray of Sunshine

By Mrs. Corinne Gelms and Mrs. Erna Nordeman

"Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God will bless us."
Psalm 67:6

As we begin this article, we would like to ask you to open your Bibles and read Psalm 65 and 67. These are psalms which describe God's love and blessings to those whom He has created.

We read how God ultimately takes care of the lands so there can be a plentiful harvest. Psalm 65:9, 10, and 11 so beautifully displays God's love: "You care for the land and water it, you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty and your carts overflow with abundance."

The soil can only yield its fruit when God works it through his almighty upholding power. The Israelites were also very aware of this. They knew that the Lord would promise his power when they would walk a faithful life in the covenant.

In Psalm 67 there was a gathering of people in the temple to worship the Lord at one of the feasts. This feast was in connection to harvesting and labour. Here we can also see how they were thankful for his blessings upon them.

When we pray, we too ask God for his blessings. We ask God's blessing on things, plants, people, and whatever and whomever we pray for. God's blessing is his favour. Of course it's right to ask for God's blessing, for on God's blessings all and everything depends; the opposite of God's blessing is his curse. Psalm 67 asks for God's blessing on Israel. "May God be gracious to us and bless us." But the purpose of the blessing is also mentioned: "...that your ways may be known on earth." Thus, if Israel is richly blessed by God, the whole earth will say: praise the God of Israel!

The purpose of God's blessings is not that we can have a prosperous and selfish life. Rather, it is for his glory. The psalmist's reason for asking is to make God's Name known. We see this reason in verse 3 of Psalm 67, "May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you."

To this end, let us then pray for one another, thank God for his goodness, his providential care, and his immeasurable blessings towards us. Yes, his blessings are showered upon us in so many, many ways. Take

time to actually reflect on how He has blessed you. Show your thankfulness in all you do, giving Him all honour and glory. Then we can celebrate Thanksgiving with truly thankful hearts, as a feast to his honour.

*O God, let every tribe and nation
Shout forth Thy praises far and wide.
Let all men come with jubilation:
The earth its harvest did provide.
God is good and gracious;
Richly did He bless us -
He, our God and King.
Let all the peoples fear Him,
All the earth revere Him,
Of His glory sing.*

Psalm 67:3

Birthdays in October:

- 3 **JANELL DEBOER** will be 17
6311 Silver Street, RR2 St. Ann's, ON LOR 1Y0
- 6 **HENRY VANDER VLIET** will be 40
Anchor Home
361 Thirty Road, RR2, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2
- 12 **LEONA BARENDREGT** will be 24
Box 2184, Smithers, BC VOJ 2N0
- 13 **NANCY SCHIPPER** will be 51
653 Broad Street West, Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8
- 17 **ALAN BREUKELMAN** will be 41
225-19th Street, Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4
- 22 **NELENA HOF SINK** will be 47
Bethesda Clearbrook Home
32553 Willingdon Cr., Clearbrook, BC V2T 1S2
- 28 **MARY ANN DE WIT** will be 51
31126 Kingfisher Drive, Abbotsford, BC V2T 5K4

Congratulations to you all who are celebrating a birthday in the month of October. May our heavenly Father richly bless you all in this new year. Have an enjoyable day together with family and friends.

Till next month,

Mrs. C. Gelms and Mrs. E. Nordeman
548 Kemp Road East, RR 2, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2
Phone: 905-563-0380
Email: jcorgelms@porchlight.ca



A New Congregation in the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches

On June 24, 2007, in the morning service at Ancaster Canadian Reformed Church, the first elders and deacons of the new Providence Canadian Reformed Church were ordained and so a new Canadian Reformed church came into being. The majority of the members are from the Ancaster congregation, with the rest coming from Cornerstone in Hamilton and from Trinity in Glanbrook.

The Rev. George van Popta led the service in his home congregation. His message that morning was based on Paul's final charge to the Ephesian church, as found in Acts 20:28, summarized under this theme: "The Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ Charges the Elders and Deacons to Keep Watch

over His Precious Church." We were reminded that Paul's first concern is that an office bearer keeps watch over himself, ensuring his own personal spiritual and physical health and that of his family. The council must also care for itself as a body. Without this strong foundation, it will be impossible to be examples of spiritual growth and leadership in the flock of God. The task of an office bearer is a daunting one, but we and they may be assured that they are appointees of the Holy Spirit who qualifies and equips them for their tasks. They make visible to the congregation the deep love Christ has for his church, for through them He takes care of her. They must work as loving shepherds, truly living among the sheep, getting to know them as unique individuals and guarding them against both internal and external heresies. God made a huge investment in his church when his only son's blood was shed for her salvation and that investment must be managed well. As members of this precious congregation, we were all exhorted to accept the office bearers as undershepherds, appointed for our benefit.

After the service, Br. Art Witten brought words of encouragement



and congratulations on behalf of both Cornerstone Church and Classis Ontario West. Making reference to Article 13 of the Belgic Confession ("The Providence of God"), Dr. Witten expressed the hope that we would "content ourselves that we are pupils of Christ, who have only to learn those things which He teaches in his Word. . . ."

That afternoon the first service of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church was held. It took place in the facilities of the Ancaster Church, with the members of the Ancaster congregation present as guests. Our guest preacher for this memorable occasion was none other than the Rev. George van Popta. The Scripture reading was from Revelation 21:1-10 and the



Photo courtesy Peter Scholten

Church News

Called by the church of Smithers, BC, to work as missionary in Prince George, BC:

Candidate J. Witteveen

Called by the church of Lincoln, Ontario:

Rev. A.J. Pol

of Carman (West), Manitoba.

Declined the call to Smithers, British Columbia:

Rev. R. Aasman

of Edmonton (Providence), AB.

Called by the church of Taber, Alberta:

Rev. M. Jagt

of Ottawa, Ontario.

Called by the Free Reformed Church of Pretoria (Maranata), SA to serve as missionary:

Rev. D.M. Boersma

of Denver, CO.

text of the sermon was Psalm 122: "The People of God Love the Jerusalem of God." On this day we were gathered as two tribes in joint worship, but the following Lord's Day we would be separate. However, we will all continue to be worshipping people, gathering each week in anticipation of the great, final, everlasting worship service, when we will be joined together again with each other and with all of God's people in perfect worship. There is great joy in worshipping with God's people and great security because the government of the church is still on the shoulders of Christ today. We are governed by the preaching and by the work of the office bearers, in keeping with the word and style of the great King. God is dwelling in our midst, so we must take care that we do not disturb the peace of his church. As a new congregation, we were encouraged to pray for, to speak

about, and to seek peace, so that we may be a blessing and a light for each other and for those around us.

So it was with gladness and joy that on this day we were able to witness God's work in increasing and preserving his church. In spite of some feelings of nostalgia for the congregations we were leaving behind, this day of the institution of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church was one of thankfulness and encouragement for its members. We look to the future with confidence that the same God who brought us to this point will continue to uphold us in his providence!

You are welcome to join us for worship! As of September 2, 2007, our services will be held at 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at St. Catherine of Siena Elementary School, located at 20 Gemini Drive on Hamilton's west mountain.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

It is with interest that I read the four-part series by Mr. Rick Ludwig on Christian response to bereavement. I examined what I experienced and saw around me in light of what I read in this article.

While much of what was written in these articles was more or less applied in our churches where a Christian loved one passed away, in other cases this description of loss often no longer applies. Not only do all of us experience bereavement in the sense that we all will lose a Christian loved one, we far too often experience the loss of a friend or family member in the sense that they no longer want to serve God. I would suggest that the anguish, sorrow, or pain that one would experience (or ought to) when a family member or friend chooses the way to

eternal death over God's way, the only way to life, is far greater than the loss of a family member or friend through death in this life only. However, as a church community, this great grief is far too often overlooked while sympathy and condolences are readily proffered when a Godly loved one dies.

I would hope that some of what we learned in these articles about grief can be applied to the agonizing situations where the loss is to the way of eternal death. We must pray that God work repentance in all straying hearts.

Henry Lanting



Keith Sikkema

Peregrine Survey

Mr. Keith Sikkema is principal of Dufferin Area Christian School in Orangeville, Ontario
ksikkema@istop.com



It's the start of a new school year and, by God's care, students around the country have faced their new (or old) teachers in their classroom on the first day of school. They are in this race together, in most cases, for a whole year. Just as boards may have had their anxieties to fill the vacancies caused by departing colleagues or by increased enrolment, or having to make difficult decisions about reducing staff due to decreased enrolment, students and teachers, or teachers and new principals, no doubt had their anxieties as they first faced each other on those first days. Parents undoubtedly had some of their own anxieties, especially if it was their first one heading off to school. What were the first days of school like? How did the passing of the baton go? No doubt, all had the moral and spiritual support of praying families at home and in church. It is good to remember this for all students, whether they run the race in a Reformed school or elsewhere, whether in a standard fashion or differently.

At the start of a new school year, issues pertaining to this race need to be considered by the community. This includes issues like financing, facilities, staffing, clothing, programming, teacher-training, and attendance. This survey will give examples of each.

Earlier this year, the principal of JCS, Yarrow, addressed student clothing.

Some parents enthusiastically support standardized clothing for school; others equally enthusiastically support "freedom of parental choice". . . You do not have to be a clairvoyant or a rocket scientist to see that choices of clothing are driven by the fashions advertised in the hundreds of fliers and newspaper advertisements that enter our homes. We also know that people in the fashion industry are often driven by a very different spirit than the Spirit who has embraced us in his grace. Consequently, we are frequently confronted with clothing choices that clearly challenge our Christian values of modesty and propriety. . . Parents (moms), please help us maintain the Christian atmosphere and culture so important at John Calvin School by insisting on student dress that does not challenge our values of modesty and propriety.

The JCS secretary noted certain trends in cancelling memberships and school attendance.

Nearing the end of the school year the board receives a small handful of letters from members

who wish to cancel their membership due to the fact that they "do not have children in school anymore" or "feel that we have supported long enough." It's always disheartening to receive these. We ask those that feel compelled to think this way to prayerfully consider what membership actually means in the context of our mandate to teach his covenant youth.

About attendance, he wrote:

Many choose to go on mini vacations with their families. Some have chosen to do this during the regular school schedule and in the past have asked for their children to be excused from regular classes to attend these. There is some cause for concern here. Not only does it disrupt the regular dynamic and flow of the classroom environment, but it also makes extra work for the teachers when asked to prepare additional "homework" while away. Please keep this in mind while considering your next holiday.

Regardless of our feelings, marital or family status, and age, it is not only perfectly okay for Christ's sake to joyfully support the upbringing and education of God's children with the gifts and means He gave each one of us, but He

expects it. We are in the race of loving our neighbour together, as Paul broadly implies, and perhaps we need to find a better way to get this across, perhaps in view of the intent of article 58 of our Church Order. For more on compulsory attendance, you may wish to check out <http://www.unb.ca/education/bezeau/eact/eact.html>.

A new principal has joined the ranks in Carman, Manitoba, as Mr. Andy Huisman was promoted from the vice-principalship. He will be forming the administrative team together with Mr. Len Lodder. May the Lord bless them as they give leadership to the common race at DCS.

Some twenty teachers in Ontario considered aspects of teaching about running the race Paul identifies in Galatians 2 and 5, and elsewhere. They participated in a course about Reformed Perspectives in Teaching Bible History, taught in Fergus by Rev. D.G.J. Agema. The course addressed teaching from a redemptive-historical perspective, the process of lesson outline preparation, basic Canonics, and the place of the Psalms and the confessions. It is one example of a locally initiated and renewed effort by Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers College to provide more in-service training for our teachers. Other locations and courses are being worked on across the country.

Parkland Immanuel Christian School in Edmonton has some new portables to temporarily cope with increased enrolment, especially in the lower grades. This year, it will have sixty-four students in grades 1-3 and also sixty-four in grades 4-9. The expectation is that total

enrolment will go up to 212 by 2009-2010. Guido de Brès Christian High in Hamilton has its highest enrolment ever, but other schools had to shrink their staff. The Fergus ad hoc committee has proposed that "The Guelph Group" will establish a local elementary school first, relieving pressure on the current building. The high school will move elsewhere a few years later and the elementary school will remain on the present site.

We do not all need to run the race the same way to receive the love, encouragement, and support of the communion of saints

Various Ontario schools reported on the biennial Redeemer University College Christian Science Fair. Between fifty and sixty Christian schools were represented at this fair and it was gratifying to see several Canadian Reformed schools rewarded with recognition for quality and thoughtfulness in their science projects. Your peregrine surveyor does not believe in doing one's best for the sake of getting a trophy, but is pleased that Timothy (Hamilton) received the honour of being the overall best performing school. An annually recurring Canadian Reformed event was the June Regional Track and Field Meet in Burlington, where hundreds of students competed in various races. Here, as elsewhere, it became tangibly clear that we do

not all need to run the race the same way to receive the love, encouragement, and support of the communion of saints.

The Reformed Curriculum Development Committee in the Fraser Valley has completed the Socials Curriculum it worked at for a few years, but has several other projects on the go. These include a new initiative for a K-12 science curriculum, ongoing work on the narration course at home and abroad, and the church history project. It has also approved the development of web-based and computer-based curriculum support and curriculum materials to enable Christian teachers to access (among others) professional distance education in narrative teaching. In Ontario, Miss Judy Kingma has been working hard for CARE to finish the remaining two Mission units for the grades 1-4 Church History program and the complete document has also been reviewed. Care's Bible History writing team has continued to work on developing a conceptual framework.

We entered another school year, another race. For all of us, this is part of the race of which Paul wrote. Shall we help each other and cheer each other on, no matter what our specific racing gifts or needs are, as Paul encourages us to do in Hebrews 12:1-3?

The Education Matters column is sponsored by the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association East. Anyone wishing to respond to an article written or willing to write an article is kindly asked to send materials to Clarion or to Otto Bouwman
obouwman@cornerstoneschool.us



**Press Release of Classis
Ontario-West, June 13, 2007 in
Hamilton, ON**

On behalf of the convening church at Hamilton, Br. Jeff Buist called the meeting to order and led the opening devotions. He welcomed all the guests, particularly Br. D. Kiselev, the first student to be examined. The delegates of the convening church reported that all the credentials were in order and that all the delegates were present. Classis was declared constituted. The appointed officers, as suggested by the previous classis, were Rev. J. Slaa (chairman), Rev. J. Ludwig (vice-chairman), and Rev. R. E. Pot (clerk). The chairman thanked the convening church for their preparations and made mention of several special circumstances: the vacancy of Hamilton, the ongoing health concerns of Rev. C. Stam, and the institution of the Providence West Hamilton Church on June 24, 2007. After some additions the agenda was adopted.

Br. Dmitry Kiselev of the church at Ancaster presented himself to Classis to be examined with a view to being declared eligible for call within the churches. After it was determined that the necessary documents were in order, Br. Kiselev delivered a sermon proposal on Deuteronomy 16:13-15. After discussing the proposal in closed session, Classis deemed it sufficient to continue with the rest of the examination. Br. Kiselev was examined in Old Testament exegesis, New Testament exegesis, and doctrine and creeds. After deliberating in closed session, Classis decided to declare him eligible for call. In open session the brother was informed of Classis' decision and he promised not to teach anything in conflict with the Word of God as summarized in the confessions. After the singing of Psalm 150:1,

Rev. G. van Popta led the assembly in a prayer of thanksgiving, after which opportunity was given to congratulate Br. Kiselev.

Rev. J. Ferguson and Rev. D. Collison, representing the Presbytery of Michigan -Ontarion of the OPC were welcomed to the meeting as fraternal delegates, as was Rev. D. Wynia, a fraternal delegate from the Wyoming URC, representing Classis Southern Ontario of the URCNA

Br. Dong Woo Oh of the church at Ancaster presented himself to Classis to be examined with a view to being declared eligible for call within the churches. After it was determined that the necessary documents were in order, Br. Oh delivered a sermon proposal on Joshua 1:1-9. After discussing the proposal in closed session, Classis deemed it sufficient to continue with the rest of the examination. Br. Oh was examined in Old Testament exegesis, New Testament exegesis, and doctrine and creeds. After deliberating in closed session, Classis decided to declare him eligible for call. In open session the brother was informed of Classis' decision and he promised not to teach anything in conflict with the Word of God as summarized in the confessions. After the singing of Psalm 1:1, 2, Rev. D. Vandeburgt led the assembly in a prayer of thanksgiving, after which opportunity was given to congratulate Br. Oh.

The fraternal delegates were given an opportunity to address the assembly. Rev. van Popta responded to Rev. Wynia. Rev. Pot responded to Rev. Ferguson.

Br. Jim Witteveen of the church at Ancaster presented himself to Classis to be examined with a view to being declared eligible for call within the churches. After it was determined that the necessary documents were in order, Br.

Witteveen delivered a sermon proposal on Philippians 2:12, 13. After discussing the proposal in closed session, Classis deemed it sufficient to continue with the rest of the examination. Br. Witteveen was examined in Old Testament exegesis, New Testament exegesis, and doctrine and creeds. After deliberating in closed session, Classis decided to declare him eligible for call. In open session the brother was informed of Classis' decision and he promised not to teach anything in conflict with the Word of God as summarized in the confessions. After the singing of Psalm 84:3, 5 Rev. H. Versteeg led the assembly in a prayer of thanksgiving, after which opportunity was given to congratulate Br. Witteveen.

Question period according to Art. 44 of the Church Order was held. The chairman asked the three questions contained in that article. All the churches answered that the ministry of the office bearers was being continued, that the decisions of the major assemblies were being honoured, and that they did not need the judgment or help of Classis for the proper government of their church. The church at Ancaster requested pulpit supply on behalf of the Providence Canadian Reformed Church commencing in July 2007. This request was granted.

The following reports were presented:

1. From the church at Chatham regarding the Fund for Needy Students
2. From Br. Brian Vanderhout, the classical treasurer
3. From the church at Hamilton an audit of the books of the classical treasurer for the period of June 1, 2006 - Dec.31, 2006 which were declared to be in good order

4. From the church at Kerwood regarding their work as contact for Ecumenical Relations
5. From the church at Kerwood regarding the inspection of the classical archives in London which was found to be complete and orderly
6. From the church at Ancaster an auditors' report of the financial records of the Fund for Needy Churches stating that everything had been appropriately recorded
7. Classis received with gratitude reports of church visitations to the churches at Ancaster, Chatham, Hamilton, Kerwood, London, Glanbrook, and Grand Rapids. These reports gave testimony to the desire and striving of the churches in this classical district to remain faithful to the Word of God, the confessions, and the adopted church order.

The following appointments were made:

1. Classis Treasurer - Br. Brian Vanderhout
2. Church to audit the books of the treasurer: Hamilton
3. Church for taking care of the classical archives - London
4. Church to inspect the classical archives: Kerwood
5. Church visitors: Rev. Ludwig and Rev. Versteeg (Rev. van Popta - alternate)
6. Committee of Examiners: Rev. Ludwig and Rev. Pot
7. Church for administering the Needy Student Fund: Chatham
8. Church for administering the Fund for Needy Churches: Ancaster
9. Church as contact for ecumenical relations: Kerwood
10. The convening church for the next classis is Kerwood. Suggested date is September 12, 2007 in Kerwood, Ontario. Suggested officers are Rev. Vandeburgt (chairman); Rev.

Slaa (clerk); Rev. Pot (vice-chairman).

Personal question period was held. Censure according to article 34 was deemed unnecessary. The Acts were adopted and the press release approved. The chairman led in closing devotions.

*For Classis,
Rev. J. Ludwig
(vice chairman, e.t.)*

Press Release of Classis Pacific East, held in Abbotsford on June 14, 2007

On behalf of the convening church of Aldergrove, R. Schouten called the meeting to order. Portions from Luke 7 and 8 were read and prayer was offered up, after which Psalm 103 stanzas 4 and 5 were sung. Some events and matters of interest among the churches were mentioned.

The delegates of the church at Abbotsford reported that the credentials were in order and that the churches were duly represented. Classis was declared constituted. The following officers were appointed to serve Classis: J. Moesker as chairman, B. Wielenga as vice-chairman, and C. Bouwman as clerk. The agenda was adopted.

The church at Chilliwack requested a colloquium (Article 5, CO) for Rev. Ijbema at the next classis. The committee for examinations was alerted to this in order to make the necessary preparations. In connection with the desire to install Rev. Ijbema at the earliest opportunity, the church at Chilliwack requested September 6 as the date for the next classis. Because of the absence of some examiners at that time, it was deemed not prudent to set that date for the next classis. The church at Chilliwack also requested further advice from Classis in a matter of church discipline. Advice was given.

A report was heard and received with thankfulness from the Classis treasurer and the treasurer was thanked for his work. The following church visitation reports were received thankfully: visits to the church at Yarrow (April 6, 2007), to the church at Lynden (June 5, 2007), to the church at Aldergrove (June 6, 2007), and to the church at Abbotsford (March 23, 2007). A report was heard of a visit made to the Classis Western Canada of the United Reformed Churches, held on June 13, 2007 – this in response to an invitation from the stated clerk of the URC classis sent to the ministers of Classis Pacific East to attend the classis. The report was received with thankfulness.

The chairman asked the questions stipulated in Article 44 of the Church Order. All the churches affirmed that the ministry of the office bearers is being continued and that the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured. No church requested the judgment and help of Classis for the proper government of the church.

Various appointments were made, among which the following: the convening church for next classis is the church at Chilliwack and the date for next classis is set for September 13, 2007 – with December 6, 2007 as the alternate date.

The chairman noted the good order in which the meeting could be conducted. The Acts were read and adopted; the press release was approved for publication. The church at Abbotsford was thanked for the use of its facilities. After the assembly sang Psalm 103 stanzas 7 and 8, the chairman led in prayer and thanksgiving. The meeting was closed.

*For Classis on June 14, 2007
Bill Wielenga*

