

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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*It is through thanksgiving and prayer
that man recognizes God's
goodness and creation*



Inside this issue

- Thanksgiving
- Giving Thanks is for the Future, Too!





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Thanksgiving

*Materialism and consumerism
are the order of the day*

Thanksgiving Day is celebrated primarily in Canada and the United States. In Canada it is celebrated on the second Monday of October which coincides with this issue of *Clarion*. In the United States it celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. The earliest known Thanksgiving celebration in North America was held in Florida in the year 1565. However, it is widely accepted that the traditional first Thanksgiving took place in Plymouth Colony (modern-day Plymouth, Massachusetts) in 1621. Today Thanksgiving is regarded by many as a secular holiday, but traditionally it is a religious celebration that gives thanks to God for the harvest and for his blessings in general. In Canada our churches tend to have a special sermon and prayer on the Sunday before Thanksgiving that gives thanks to God for the harvest and for all his blessings. On the Monday, families and friends gather together for a special Thanksgiving dinner. An appropriate Bible passage is selected and the prayer gives thanks to God.

Thanksgiving and prayer

The very fact that Thanksgiving celebration and prayer are closely associated reflects a long and beautiful tradition. It is something that the Apostle Paul teaches us in 1 Timothy 4:4-5: "For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer." The context of this statement is Paul's rebuttal of some form of asceticism. Paul mentions "hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron." Under the influence of demons, "They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods." Basically this ascetic heresy charges that material things are inherently evil. People who believe such things would be horrified by a Thanksgiving table groaning with good food and drink.

We might think that we have no need of any warnings about ascetic beliefs. Do you know of anyone

who would say that a Thanksgiving celebration is evil because of the food and drink? Maybe people think we are overeating and drinking, but they have no problem with food and drink as such. If anything, the pendulum has swung to the other side where we have a love affair with our material world. Materialism and consumerism are the order of the day. We need to keep in mind the warnings of Scripture. Our Lord Jesus Christ warned us not to divide the love of God between God and money. Similarly the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." I only need to think of myself to realize how dangerous it is in this age of plenty to fall in love with material things and to find your comfort in the things you possess.

Asceticism versus materialism

How does a Christian find his way between the Scylla and Charybdis of asceticism and materialism? (Scylla and Charybdis are two monsters in Greek mythology that lived on either side of a narrow channel of water threatening sailors passing through the narrow gap). Asceticism and materialism are two monsters that people have to pass between – both threatening to hurt us. First of all we need to have a proper understanding of material things. We saw that Paul writes, "For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." Paul reminds us that God created all material things and everything God created is good. God created food for human consumption: it is to be used and enjoyed by mankind. Because of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, the created things are still God's gift and blessing. The idea that material things are inherently evil is insulting to God.

The second thing we need to keep in mind, as Paul says, is that everything God created is good and is not to be rejected, provided "it is received with



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thanksgiving." Then Paul adds, "Because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer." The second statement reinforces the first. It almost sounds like Paul is saying that it is thanksgiving and prayer that makes things good. But Paul is not suggesting that prayer has this kind of magical power. Material things such as food are good by virtue of God's creative act. The gospel affirms that. It is through thanksgiving and prayer that man recognizes and confirms his faith in God's goodness and creation. Without this belief in the gospel, a belief that is confirmed in prayer, we cannot truly benefit from God's material blessings. Sure we can eat and drink and live, but it will not draw us into blessed fellowship with God. That can only happen through thankfulness and prayer. Think of Psalm 127 or 128: "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labour; blessings and prosperity will be yours."

True thanksgiving

Prayer before meals was a common practice in biblical times. We see a number of examples of this in the time of the Lord Jesus. For instance, at the miracle feeding of the 5000, we read what the Lord Jesus did: "Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all." We know that our Lord Jesus Christ firmly believed that all things came from the Father and it was not to be taken without his Father's blessing. That is why He prayed: He thanked God for the food that He and those with Him were about to eat. That gave praise to God and granted blessing to those who ate. That should be a pattern for us still today.

A true Thanksgiving Day this year will be a wonderful day for family and friends to gather together. There might be tough times in our global economy, but I imagine that most of us will have tables filled with good food and drink. Let's make it a true and proper thanksgiving. Let us remember that it is God who created everything and gave it to us and that our Lord Jesus Christ laid down his life for us so that we can continue to live in this world as children of God. Let us bow our heads and with grateful hearts give thanks to God. Then our food and drink, clothing and shelter, education and occupation, indeed everything that God gives us will bring us nearer to Him and allow us to live our lives to his praise and glory.



In This Issue

Editorial – Thanksgiving — R. Aasman	506
Treasures, New and Old – Giving Thanks is for the Future, Too! — R. Schouten	508
Canticles — G. van Popta.....	509
A Heart Aflame with Zeal (1) — W.L. Bredenhof	511
Dissertation Review – By This Our Subscription — C. Bouwman	514
Roadside Assistance — L. Pol	517
Farewell Rev. J.P. Van Vliet — M. Faber	519
Langley says Farewell to Rev. Wes Bredenhof and Family — G. VanderHorst	521
Press Releases – Classis Ontario West, Classis Central Ontario.....	522

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MATTHEW 13:52

Giving Thanks is for the Future, Too!

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

Romans 8:32

When we give thanks to the Lord, we tend to focus on God’s gifts in the past and the present. As we remember and dwell upon what God has already given, we can only rejoice in his loving care and faithfulness.

The Lord provides food and drink, clothing and shelter. He allows for the progress of science and technology and the enjoyment of human culture. Not only can we go to work, but we can also read books and enjoy music and film and sports. Then too, the Lord gives opportunity for school and college. And He gives so much more besides!

However, even with these gifts of God already in our hands, there can be a background concern. Today we have these gifts, but what about next week and next year? What if this economic downturn doesn’t improve but only gets worse? And how could we bear it, should we lose our freedom to worship and live openly Christian lives? There are many, many reasons for worry!

Remaining thankful despite uncertainty is possible only when we realize that God’s past grace is the guarantee of his future grace. The Apostle Paul fosters this thought in Romans 8, when he asks the question: “He who did not

spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (v. 32) The reasoning of the apostle is that since God has already done the hardest, the costliest, the most necessary thing for you to be saved, you don’t need to doubt that He will do all the rest, too.

Perhaps a simple analogy will help us to see the logic of our text. Suppose that a father is helping a son set up a business. To help reach this goal, Dad has already done the hardest part. He’s helped to create a business plan and – a crucial point – he’s put up the money.

Well, if Dad has already done what is the most difficult, his son can be sure that Dad will also do the things which by comparison are much smaller but are still needed to reach the goal. Surely Dad will be there to give advice, to provide guidance in the face of business obstacles, and to give support along the way. Dad’s past investment is the guarantee of his continued care and interest in the project – seeing it through to the end.

That’s the logic of Romans 8:32. God has a goal for us, that we who are sinners would live with Him in his eternal Kingdom. To achieve this goal, God has already done the hardest thing necessary: He’s

given up his only Son! Surely He’ll give us the remaining things needed to see us through to glory.

As Paul says in verse 32, God’s past acts provide assurance that He will “graciously give us all things” together with Christ. All things! Our future is one of unimaginable joy and pleasure with God. Reason for gratitude!

But perhaps you feel that it’s just too easy to say what Paul says. Does God really give us *all things*? Does this promise of future grace fit with our life experience? All of us know what it feels like when God withholds certain things from us. What then does Paul mean when he says that God will give us *all things* with Christ? The first part of the answer is that God will give us all the things we need in order to arrive safely in his kingdom. Those whom God elects, He also brings to glory! He will provide for our needs along the way.

But we can say even more. “All things” is another way of saying “the world.” Don’t we read in Scripture that when Christ ascended into heaven, God gave Him all the nations as his inheritance and the ends of the earth as his possession (see also Psalm 2)? The riches of the world are yours because they are Christ’s.

Christ the Bridegroom says to his Bride, "What's mine is yours."

Yes, the riches of the world really are yours – in Christ. We don't enjoy all of them right now. But Christ has given us a promise: "Blessed are the meek, for they

shall inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5). That's the prosperity we're going to enjoy one day as God's people.

And even now, we're getting the first taste of that coming prosperity. Every piece of bread you ate in the last year, every drink of water, every

pay cheque, every ton of harvest from the fields during the last month, every pound of milk, every kilogram of beef or chicken, it all came to us from the store-houses of Christ's wealth, who is the Heir of all things. Reason for gratitude!



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Canticles

A canticle is a hymn based on a passage of Scripture other than a Psalm. The hymn section of the *Book of Praise* contains many such canticles. Think, e.g., of "Give Ear, O Heavens!" (Hymn 8), and "Lord, I Have Heard the Tidings" (Hymn 10). The Songs of Mary, Zechariah, and Simeon are well known canticles that the church has been singing for hundreds of years.

We also have several such hymns based on the Book of Revelation. Hymn 23, "Hark How th' Adoring Hosts Above," is based on Revelation 5:9-11. Hymn 52, "Lord, Round the Throne a Glorious Band," is based on Revelation 5:9-10 and 7:13-15. Finally, Hymn 55, "Lo, What a Glorious Sight Appeared," comes from Revelation 21:1-8. Further, hints of Revelation

can be found in Hymns 4 ("Holy, Holy, Holy"), 22 ("Thee, Holy Lamb of God, We Bless") and 50 ("Come, Lord Jesus! Maranatha!").

One could say it is rather surprising that our church song-book contains so few hymns based on the Revelation. In fact, someone has said that.

In his publication, *The Book of Revelation and Congregational Singing*,¹ the late Rev. G. van Rongen bemoaned the fact that we have so few of the songs of the Revelation in our *Book of Praise*. In his twenty-six page booklet, Rev. Van Rongen showed how much of the Revelation is taken up by singing: then the church in heaven is singing; next the angels are singing; after them the church on earth sings. Everyone in heaven

and on earth, all creatures, are heard singing. The Revelation, in many ways, describes one grand worship service. All of creation is on its knees before the heavenly throne of God and of the Lamb, singing and worshipping in the Spirit.

Under the rubric "Canticles," several new hymns based upon the songs of the Revelation will be published.² As well, some canticles based upon the Prophecies of Isaiah will also be published. If the reader wishes, he can also find them online at www.28hymns.blogspot.com.

The first canticle is based on the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22. The tune is that of Psalm 84 in the *Book of Praise*.

Church News

Examined by Classis Ontario West on
September 16, 2009 and declared eligible for
ordination:

Candidate R. Vermeulen

The ordination took place on October 4, 2009, D.V.,
in Glanbrook, Ontario.

Examined by Classis Ontario North on
September 25, 2009 and declared eligible for call:

Candidate Ken Bergsma

There is a River

Revelation 22

Genevan 84 Geneva, 1562

1. There is a river flowing free,
a stream that runs abundantly
and gives new life to all God's city.
It pours from God and from the Lamb
and blesses all Jerusalem.
The tree of life is nourished richly
bearing a verdant fruitful yield
so that the nations may be healed.
2. The throne of God and of the Lamb
is founded in Jerusalem.
where all God's servants thank and praise Him.
They lift their eyes to see His face
as they adore Him from that place.
His Name is clearly written on them.
No more will there be gloomy night;
they'll reign forever in God's light.
3. "Look, I am coming very soon."
So said our Lord, the great Bridegroom.
"Blest is the one who stays obedient.
I'm coming soon with my reward
for those who kept my holy word."
They will fare well in the great judgment.
The Lord will save them from the strife
and give to them the tree of life.
4. Outside the gates are those who hate
all that is good, who contemplate
new ways to sin and to offend God.
They will to nether gloom be sent
for they on vile mischief are bent
and love and practise every falsehood.
Jesus will show Himself the King,
the Root of David, his Offspring.
5. The Spirit and the Bride say "Come."
Let him who hears sing this new song:
"Come one and all, come all you thirsty.
Come drink the water, crystal clear.
Come all who would, from far and near.
For all who drink will know the bounty
of Jesus Christ our King and Lord
the One who's faithful to His word."

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¹ Miniatures, No. 20; © Copyright 2004, Gerard van Rongen (1918-2006).

² Hymns published under this rubric may be used for any non-commercial purpose provided credit is given to George Ph. van Popta.



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A Heart Aflame with Zeal

(Part 1 of 2)

As we again celebrate God's wonderful work in the Protestant Reformation, it's good for us to remember the contribution of the many believers who gave up their lives for the faith. This was especially the case in the Low Countries, from which so many us find our roots. In these regions, the words of Tertullian were often repeated among Reformed believers: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Through persecution and martyrdom, the true gospel of Christ was effectively proclaimed and the Reformation went from strength to strength.

Among the martyrs was the author of our Belgic Confession, Guido de Brès. He served as a pastor in present-day Belgium during the Spanish Inquisition. Eventually he was captured by the authorities and spent a long time languishing in a dirty, sewage-filled dungeon in Valenciennes. Nevertheless, as he lived out his last days somehow he was able to find the strength and resources to write several letters. One of them was a letter to his mother. I am pleased to be able to share this letter with you, as it gives a personal glimpse of this brother and father in the faith.

Letter from Guido de Brès to his mother

The grace and mercy of God the Father, and the love of his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, be for your eternal salvation.

My dear and beloved mother, when I consider what a sorrow my imprisonment is to you, and how hard to bear because of the enormous maternal love you have always had for me, I cannot keep my heart from becoming sad nor from greatly trembling within me. And certainly I can say from experience that it is a hard parting that takes place between a mother and her child. But the parting would be much harder if a man would leave his God and give up eternal life. I am somewhat relieved of my sadness when I think of my calling and the cause of the Son of God which I have upheld before men.

It seems to me that I hear Jesus Christ, my Master, speaking with a loud voice and saying to me, "Whoever shall love his father and his mother more than me, he is not worthy to be one of mine" (Matt 10). Then He says to me, "Truly I say to you that every one who has given up home, or parents, or brothers or children for the kingdom of God shall receive much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life" (Matt 19). Such words cause me

to put all other things aside, and my heart leaps for joy. When I think of the certainty and truth of the one who has spoken thus, I can say with St. Paul, "I esteem all things as dung and consider them for loss, for the excellence of the knowledge of my Lord Jesus Christ."

You too, my beloved, must rise above your sorrows with the consideration of the good will of God, who wants to bring glory to Himself through this poor, fragile body. Restrain your grief remembering how it has pleased God to call me to his service against all human expectation. Recall how, before I was born, you were going through Mons to hear a certain Italian Jesuit, who was preaching in the streets. You said then, praying to God, "My God, if it could be that you could give me such a child, even maybe the child that I am carrying, to preach your Word." You said it and God heard your prayer. Because He is rich and merciful, and because He can do all things more abundantly than we dare to ask, He gave you more than you asked for. You asked that the child you were carrying could be like that Jesuit. He became a Jesuit alright – but not of the new sect that people call "Jesuit." In order to make me a true imitator of Jesus, the Son of God, I was called to the holy ministry, not to preach

the doctrines of men, but the pure and simple Word of Jesus and his apostles. This I have done up to the present with a good and pure conscience, seeking nothing else than the salvation of men, not my own glory nor my own profit.

Witness the zeal of God which has been in me, accompanied by many crosses, afflictions and sufferings, and not for a small number of days, but for many years. To all these things you ought to return for your comfort, and you should consider yourself fortunate that God has given you the honour to have carried, nurtured, and reared one of his servants – who will receive the crown and glory of martyrdom. Then it is not for you to object, if my God wants to now receive me as a pleasant-smelling sacrifice and strengthen the elect by my death.

I myself am joyful and I pray that you will join with me, knowing that all will be for my great good and salvation. I submit myself to what it pleases Him to do to me, knowing that He will not do anything that is not just and fair. He is my God and Father, having only good will toward me and the power to deliver me, if He finds it good to do so. Therefore, I rest in that knowledge. If He has found it pleasing to take me from this poor life now, I shall be taken in the prime of life, having laboured diligently and sowed in the church of his Son. He has already allowed me to see the fruit of my labours and trials, having blessed and made my ministry so fruitful that the church will feel the effects for many years after my death. I am happy to see that which my God has permitted me to see. There is yet much good seed that I sowed, which is still in the ground, but after being watered with my blood, it will grow and manifest itself amazingly. What more then should I now desire, since the will of my

God has been done, and I am ready to reap in heaven in glory and incorruption the fruit of that which I have sowed on earth with tears in my eyes? And I hope that the many people which I have won to my Lord Jesus through the gospel will be my glory and my crown in the last day.

I am going along the way where all the prophets passed, and the apostles, even the only Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and thousands of martyrs who shed their blood for the witness of the gospel. It is the voice of Christ who says, "Enter by the narrow way, for I say unto you that many will try to enter and will not be able." It is the narrow way of which Ezra speaks, which is not wide, and under which is a great river and a fire which devours those who stumble and fall. This road leads to a city filled with blessings, where the children of God have want of nothing. What should it profit me if I should travel with the world along the broad and spacious way, only to fall at the end into ruin and eternal perdition. I know well that if I should renounce my good Lord Jesus and return in my impurity and pollution to this life, the world would embrace me and respect my person. But it would not be pleasing to God to renounce my Saviour, to put idols in his place, and put profane things in the place of his precious blood. I have served Him for more than twenty years, and never has He failed me in anything, showing to me always a love which surpasses the understanding of men. Beyond this great benefit, He gave Himself to the inglorious death on the cross in order to give me eternal life. What then? Should I leave the living to find refuge among the dead? Should I give up heaven for the earth? Eternal things for temporal? Abandon the true life for bodily death?

He who alone is my strength and my rock will keep me from it,

and Himself will be my shield and defence and the strength of my life in my weakness and infirmity. I can say with St. Peter, when Christ asked him after many of his disciples had abandoned him, "And you," He said, "do you not also wish to go as the others?" Peter replied, "Lord, to whom should we go? For with you are the words of eternal life." The Lord my God will not permit me to leave with the world the fountains of living water, in order to dig cisterns which do not hold any water, as God so rightly said by his prophet Jeremiah of his people Israel. I believe with conviction that I am not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. I can say with Moses that I would rather be afflicted with the people of God, than to enjoy for a time the pleasures of sin. I would rather esteem the favour of Christ as greater riches than all the treasures of the world, for I look to the reward, and trust that the power of faith will not fail me in my need. For by it I have already overcome the world and all my adversaries. The Apostle has showed me how the faithful ones of the Old Testament, having the same faith, surmounted their afflictions. He speaks of some as being regarded as drums to be beaten, who refused to be delivered, hoping for a better resurrection, and of others who were mocked and battered. They were arrested and put in prison. They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were tempted. They were put to death with the sword. They wandered about dressed in the skins of sheep and goats. They were destitute, afflicted, and tormented, of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered about in the deserts, in mountains, and dens and caverns of the earth. All these holy people have overcome



Guido de Brès and Pérégrin de la Grange visited in prison by the Countess of Roeulx.

Artist and date unknown.

From: La Réformation en Belgique au XVIème Siècle by Robert Collinet.

the world through their faith at death, and stand as victors though people killed them.

What can I say then when God places before my eyes such a multitude of witnesses and valiant champions? I put as far from me as I can the burden of sin which encompasses me. I endeavour to be more cheerful and to undergo with patience that combat which is set before me. All the while, I endeavour to look to Jesus the author and perfecter of faith. When He could choose between glory and the cross, He chose the cross, scorning its shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Think and rethink of Him who suffered such opposition from sinners, so that I will not become weary and fail in my courage. I consider that I have not yet resisted against sin to the shedding of blood. It is enough (says Jesus Christ) that the servant is not greater than his lord. I have been richly blessed with great rejoicing when I see that my Master Jesus Christ has honoured me in allowing me to sit with Him at his table, letting me eat of his bread, and drink of his own cup and his pitcher. Is it a small thing to follow such a Lord? It is He who made the heavens and the earth from nothing by his mighty word.

It is He before whom the angels and archangels cover their faces and tremble. And here I am, a poor clay jar full of weakness, and it pleases Him to call me his friend and not his servant. O what an honour! He has not given the angels the honour of suffering for his name. And who am I to receive such an honour from my God? Seriously, I am enraptured when I consider these things.

(To be continued)

Some thoughts

What an incredible letter! There are several striking features. One is the way in which de Brès constantly works with the Word of God to encourage his mother. Scriptural quotes and allusions are found throughout and in the concluding instalment this will again be evident. Another striking feature is the fact that de Brès writes to his mother and from this it's clear that not only he, but also she used to be a Roman Catholic but was converted to the true Christian faith. He comforts her with the true gospel. Who was converted first? We do not know. The details of how de Brès became a Christian are not available to us – the only thing we know is that it happened in his twenties.

Finally, we also see something of the wit of de Brès. He mentions his mother hearing a Jesuit preacher. At first glance, there appears to be a problem here for De Brès was born in 1522, whereas the Jesuit order was not founded until 1540. How could de Brès' mother hear an Italian Jesuit in 1522 when there were no Jesuits yet? One of his biographers (E. M. Braekman) thought that de Brès was just playing with words, using a rhetorical device. De Brès knew full well that the Jesuits began in 1540, but he wanted to liven up his writing and so described the Italian priest in 1522 as being a Jesuit. This fits well with what we know about de Brès' writing style. He could be incisive at times, witty at others. For instance, in Article 34 of the Belgic Confession, de Brès speaks of how baptism "benefits us not only when the water is on us and when we receive it, throughout our whole life." In the first 1561 edition, de Brès added a witty line, "Otherwise we would always have to have our head in the water." The reference to the Italian Jesuit is just further evidence of the rhetorical wit of de Brès. Even as the raw sewage filled his prison cell, this Reformed martyr kept his sense of humour.

NOTE:

The text of the letter is found in *Procedures tenues a l'endroit de ceux la religion du pais bas* (Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1568), 367-388. There is an English translation available (*Procedures Held With Regard To Those of the Religion of the Netherlands*), but it is of poor quality. I have worked with that translation, correcting and improving from the original where necessary.



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By This Our Subscription

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Our sister church in Abbotsford recently received a new minister of the Word in the person of Rev. R.C. Janssen. His arrival in Abbotsford means that there's a new face within the Canadian Reformed Churches. What piques our interest is the fact that he successfully defended a dissertation in Kampen, The Netherlands, last June, so that he has the right to preface his name with the letters "Dr." His dissertation is an impressive 484 page book under the title *By This Our Subscription*, with the subtitle "Confessional Subscription in the Dutch Reformed Tradition since 1816" – and yes, it's written in English. It's available online at http://dspace.library.uu.nl:8080/bitstream/1874/34069/1/Dissertatie_R.C.Janssen.pdf. Since it's not often that a minister in our midst picks up a Doctor of Theology degree, it's worth our while to give some attention to Rev. Janssen's work.

Dissertation

I should first clarify what *subscription* is all about. "Subscription" catches the notion of placing your name under the confessions of the church (that's the Three Forms of Unity, i.e., the *Belgic Confession*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, and the *Canons of Dort*). Placing your name under the confessions boils down to affirming that you believe what's written in those confessions and so

you'll carry out the duties of your office (as minister, elder, or deacon) in accordance with those confessions. So subscription commits you to teaching and defending the contents of the confessions. Ever since the Great Reformation in the sixteenth century, Reformed churches have required such subscription because the church (that's the members) wanted reassurance that her office bearers, sinful as they were, would in fact tend the sheep of God in the way of his Word. In the course of years, the signing was moved from the confessions themselves to a Form of Subscription drafted for this purpose. (The 2008 edition of the *Book of Praise* prints the Form of Subscription currently used in the Canadian Reformed Churches on page 677; it's available also at <http://www.canrc.org/resources/bop/forms/BoP%20Subscription%20Forms.pdf>.)

Rev. Janssen's dissertation is actually an impressive piece of work. In a historical section of some 250 pages, Rev. Janssen tabulates how the Form of Subscription actually functioned in the Dutch churches in the two centuries following 1816. The author has obviously ploughed his way through vast stacks of literature, ranging from consistory minutes to classis and synod acts, as well as so much that's been written in the course of the years

when office bearers (were thought to have) deviated in their teaching (or lifestyle) from the confessions.

I found Rev. Janssen's 250 page overview of how the churches used the notion of subscription in the two centuries since 1816 rather tedious reading. Precisely that observation increases my appreciation for Janssen's work, for it speaks of grit and tenacity to research and tabulate who said what and why – especially if the "so what" doesn't jump into your face. Well, that's where the next section most definitely comes to the rescue. After the historical section, Janssen devoted another 150 pages or so to making some order out of the data of the 250 pages – and I found that a very worthwhile and stimulating read. Why, after all, are there confessions in the first place? If God's Word from heaven has authority, and the confessions in turn are our response to God's revelation, how much authority do confessions have? In fact, is every sentence in the confessions equally binding? Is the *Belgic Confession's* statement that Judas Iscariot and Simon the sorcerer received the Lord's Supper (see Article 35) as important as the confession's statement that the Lord gave the sacraments "to nourish and sustain those whom He has already regenerated"? Is it acceptable that you disagree with the confession's use of a particular

proof text even while you remain fully convinced of the correctness of the doctrine that's being confessed? Conversely, is what's written in the liturgical forms also binding? Can an office bearer disagree with what the marriage form says about the role of man and woman in marriage and yet not be said to have broken his subscription vow? These questions arise because, as Janssen has shown, questions as these (and so many more) were extensively discussed in the course of the years – with our fathers in some instances giving answers that would definitely surprise us today.

Janssen wonders whether such questions arose over the years, and diverse answers were given, because the matter of subscription hadn't been sufficiently thought through. Specifically, he wonders whether the *Belgic Confession* (just to stay with this confession for now) was even written with a view to office bearers subscribing to it. Had subscription been in the back of Guido de Bres' mind, would he have formulated some sentences differently? Janssen concludes that the confessions we currently have were not written for the purpose of a binding subscription and so when one does subscribe one gets questions as the ones I listed above: what does my subscription really mean? Can I disagree with a proof text? Is every sentence equally important?

Confessing

Further, Janssen notes that the confessions of the church are not to be seen simply as historical documents that the church chooses to carry along in its luggage. Rather, the church is called to confess *today*, in today's circumstances and world. One ought, then, not to speak so much

of a *confession* (a thing) as of *confessing*; the latter term, of course, is an ongoing activity, has movement in it. Then certainly, there may not be disagreement between what the church confesses today and what the church confessed hundreds of years ago, for there is one unchanging revelation from God and God's church is catholic, united by one faith. But confessing needs to be and feel *contemporary, up to date*. More, the confessing of the church (and hence her confessional documents) needs to be complete in the sense that there is no ambiguity on the world's part about what the church actually believes and teaches on a given point. So, he suggests, today's climate requires that the Lord's revelation on marriage ought to be specifically laid out in the church's official confessional documents.

New confession?

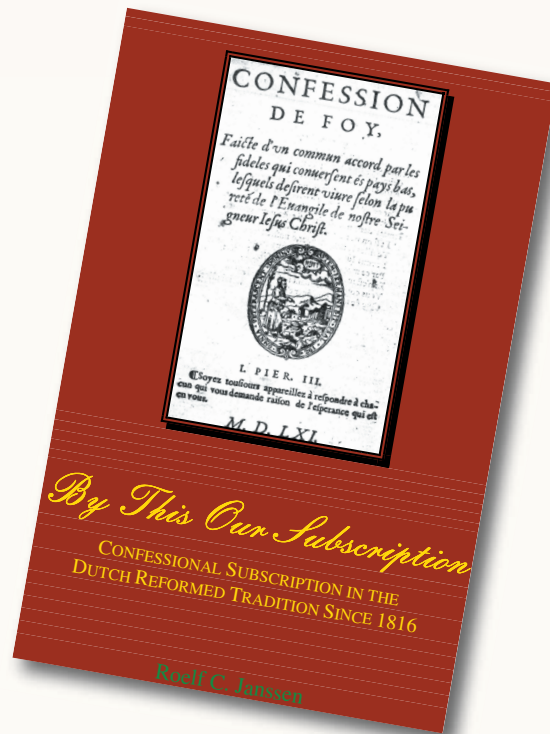
How, though, can one achieve such a goal? Should an addition or alteration be made to one of the existing confessions? Should a new confession be written? For various reasons Rev. Janssen

concludes that indeed a new confession should be prepared. Yet he would not wish a fourth Form of Unity. Instead, he suggests that we take our current confessions, liturgical forms, certain synodical decisions, and even the songs of the *Book of Praise* and pour all this material into a new product. He writes:

Given all the foregoing, it would probably be wisest for the church to write new confessional documents that absorb the old, are substantially equivalent to the old, and include issues that are relevant today. In view of the functions of confessions, it would be best to draw up three types of confessions that can serve in the three main functions (p. 370).

The "main functions" Janssen has in mind are doxological, declarative, and defining. He explains:

A *doxological confession* would be drawn up with a view to a liturgical setting. Practice makes clear that such a document is best created as poetry that can be set to



music.... The Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed have proven to work well in this way....

A *declarative confession* would be made for kerygmatic, instructional, and pastoral purposes. The field of pedagogy could guide the church in formulating the confession adequately. Besides the use of (brief) questions and answers, one might also use schemes and other pedagogical instruments. In fact, this would mean writing a new catechism that would absorb the Heidelberg Catechism and elements from the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort, and touch on relevant issues today....

A *defining confession* would be written for apologetic, uniting, and anti-heretical purposes.... It would consist of a series of articles. Each article would deal with a single topic....

How would these three types of confessions be interconnected?

Says Janssen:

The doxological and declarative confessions would not contain material that is not found in the defining confession. Positively stated, all doctrine confessed in doxological and declarative confessions is found in the defining confession. For that reason, it will not be necessary to subscribe all three confessions (just as Dort did not consider it necessary to subscribe the ecumenical creeds). The doxological and declarative confessions are instruments to allow the church to confess its faith in the many different ways it needs to. Subscription need only be limited to the defining confession.

Rev. Janssen himself asks the obvious question: "How might the church go about fixing its confessing in the format proposed above?" He proposes that the church (through Synod) create a "standing committee 'confessing'." This committee would be responsible for proposing to the churches how to confess God's Word clearly in today's circumstances. Once the confessing of the church on a given topic is *defined*, this article of faith is reformatted to suit the church's *declarative* needs (e.g., formulating a Question and Answer for Catechism instruction), and perhaps reformatted again for *doxological* purposes so that it can (if applicable) be sung in the worship services. Rev. Janssen proposed a detailed procedure of some fifteen steps involving committee, synod, consistory, classis, and even churches abroad in keeping everybody on board with the correct formulation.

Questions

It is, of course, here that questions arise. The whole matter of restructuring the format of the church's confessions arises because, as Rev. Janssen has noted, many questions have arisen over the decades and centuries of church history about the nature and authority of subscription. Rev. Janssen wants to tidy up the matter of subscription so that it is clear what exactly one is subscribing to (i.e., the defining confession) and what relative weight each sentence in the confession would have (always the same, since the confession is now built with one eye on subscription). This seems laudable enough to me. I do wonder, though, whether fixing the subscriptional hiccups of the confessions doesn't create other

problems. For example: would the standing committee "confessing" become the "think-tank" of the churches so that it determines the church's direction and colour? Does the habitual appearing of a new and/or revised article of faith not give repeated occasion for contention in the churches? How much energy needs to be expended, by committee and local churches alike, to obtain the support needed for ultimate adoption of the proposed article – be it in defining format, declarative, or doxological? In a word: will the generation of a new confession cost more energy and blood than fixing subscriptional weaknesses is worth?

Conclusion

But enough on that. Seeing risks is easy. Rev. Janssen recognizes the essential need of subscribing to the confessions of the church and so he readily signed the subscription forms laid before him when he entered the ministry of the Word in our federation. He has served the churches well by his study of how subscription to the confessions has worked through the centuries and his catalogue of wrong ways of understanding the subscription form will certainly help in subscriptional issues down the road. That he also took the step to propose a solution to weaknesses surrounding the subscription form is understandable. Agitating to implement such a solution, however, is a different matter – and I understand that Rev. Janssen is not inclined to do so.

We congratulate him warmly with the completion of his doctoral study and the generation of a solid piece of work. At the same time we join the church in Abbotsford in welcoming Rev. Dr. R.C. Janssen into our federation of churches.



roadside assistance

the magazine for Reformed young people

How can a young man keep his way pure?
By living according to your word. Ps 119:9

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Joy and Peace: How can we find them?

Lydia Pol

There is not a flicker of light in the darkness. She is trying to get to her room, but she has no light – and the blackness is something she can almost touch. She has not been in this house long enough to be able to walk confidently. She walks with her hands stretched out in front of her, bent at the elbows. She is almost flinching as she moves cautiously through the hallway. She knows that there is nothing there, but she cannot help cringing. The darkness is a living, breathing thing. It steals her confidence away. If she could only see, she could walk this with confidence – but there is not even a hint of light.

You have no idea of where you're going. All you know is that God wants you to go *somewhere* and you must follow Him. You don't know where He wants you. You don't know what He will want you to do when you get there. But you do know that He has told you to trust in Him. If you could only know

the future, you would be able to walk into it confidently – but there is not even a hint of what is going to happen.

And yet Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice!" A few phrases later he continues, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:4, 7).

How can you find peace and joy when you have no certainty of what is going to happen from day to day? How can you trust God when you know that next year you will have to find a job but may not be able to? How can you trust God when you want to get into university but you don't know what to take? You may need to move, or you might not be alive at all. . . how do you find peace with not knowing, and then rejoice in that peace?

I know that I have peace with God – He has forgiven my sins

through the blood of Jesus Christ. But how do I apply the peace that I know I have to my daily life? Finding contentment with where I am and learning not to be anxious about anything – those are difficult battles to fight. Worry seems like an inescapable enemy. The moment I take my eyes off of Jesus, worry is right there in front of me, as hard to ignore as a howler monkey in a library.

So what can you do? It's easy to say "trust in God." This is very true, but how can you apply it practically? Paul lays it out for us in his letter to the Philippians. He begins with, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all." He continues, "The Lord is near." Here is a promise. Think about it for a moment: the Lord is near. The Creator of the universe – who touches mountains and makes them smoke and knew your name before He made the stars – is coming back. Not only is He coming

back, but through his Spirit and the work of his Son, He is with you right now.

Paul's reference to God's nearness ties two ideas together. Rejoice and let your gentleness be evident to all because the Lord is near. The Lord is near, so do not be anxious about anything. Rejoice and don't be anxious. And just when we are about to ask, "How do we rejoice and not be anxious?" Paul becomes very specific: "In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." God is near and He is listening, so start praying. Tell Him everything you are afraid of. Tell Him what you hope for.

But in the middle of all this – *thank Him!* Here is the key to the directions. If you don't thank Him for what He is doing, what He has done, and what He will do, it becomes considerably more difficult to find peace with his plan for your life. Thank God for his guidance up to this point. Thank Him that you are facing this dilemma. Thank Him that you have no idea what you are doing. And thank Him that He does. In Romans God says that in all things He "works for the good of those who love Him" (Rom 8:28). That's a promise.

In the first letter to the Thessalonians God commands us to "be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess 5:16-18). Thank God, even for – especially for – the parts of your life that are troubling you most. It is here that God is working.

What happens when you "by prayer and petition, with



thanksgiving, present your requests to God"? Do you immediately find an answer to your questions? Do you instantly know that everything's going to be okay? Not necessarily. In fact, things may be just as uncertain as when you started, but there will be a difference. God promised it. He gives these instructions – pray and thank Him – and then He says, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." It's not a warm flowery feeling that fills you up. It's not a vision of a happy future. It's much stronger than that. It is God's presence in you.

Where do you take it from there? If you do pray in this way and God gives you peace, how do you keep from falling back into worrying? Nature hates a vacuum. If you empty your mind of worry and then leave it empty, something else is sure to take its place. Paul tells us to fill our minds with something completely different.

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about these things. Whatever you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, put it into practice, and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil 4:4-9).

It is a lot to think about. It is not a lesson learned in one night, and once you think you have learned it, it still takes a lifetime to practice. Thankfully God is patient with us. And He has never failed you yet. Look back on your own life. In your darkest times, God was there. Right now, He is near. That girl walking to her room in the dark is me. I may not know my way into the future. I may not be able to see anything around me. I may not understand anything of what is happening to me. But when I pray and stretch out my hand to Him, He is there. I can't see in the dark, but He can. And that is enough.



Farewell Rev. J.P. Van Vliet

Farewell sermon

It was with mixed emotions that the congregation of Surrey "Maranatha" gathered at the church the afternoon of June 5, 2009 to hear Rev. Van Vliet preach his farewell sermon. Although there was joy because God had chosen our minister to be appointed as instructor of Dogmatics at the Theological College, there was also sadness at having to say goodbye to a much-appreciated pastor and his wife and family.

Rev. Van Vliet based his sermon on 2 Corinthians 13:14. He mentioned there are times in life when there are changes. There will now be guest preachers, D.V. a new pastor, and different ways of doing things. However, we need not dwell

on changes but rather have the strength to deal with these changes, to go forward and focus on things that do not change. No matter what, the blessings of the Lord never change. Thus, the preaching of the Word emphasized the comforting words of the blessing of the Lord: our Triune God be with you all. Go forward now with the grace of the Son, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

To whichever congregation the Apostle Paul wrote his letters, regardless of what was happening in each place, still the blessing remained the same. God is eternally and steadfastly the same and it is on this God we must rely.

To give an example Rev. Van Vliet compared July 5, 2009 with

December 17, 1950. On that Sunday a few people came together for worship in a house. They relied on God and took a step forward. They heard the same blessing we hear every Sunday and this gave them the courage and the strength to go on.

Grace is what we so desperately need. When we gather together, we all equally need grace and we equally receive it. Having this grace will continue even when a pastor leaves. In addition, God gives us a love which is stronger than death. We are children of God and have to go through changes but the love of God is with us all. Then there is also the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; souls who worship together and who are in tune with each other. What is the bond of fellowship? It isn't history since that is always changing. It isn't ethnic similarity since it is more varied than it has ever been. No, it is the Holy Spirit who keeps it together with his power.

The Apostle Paul also came to that point where he has to say goodbye. But he says it by saying: "rejoice, be glad." The letter to the Corinthians doesn't end with farewell, but with the focus on God, Son, and Holy Spirit. So step forward, set eyes ahead because grace, love and fellowship has been, is, and will be with you.





Farewell evening

That same day, in the evening, the congregation came together again for a memorable time of fellowship and their turn to say farewell to Rev. Van Vliet and his family. Dr. John Vanderstoep opened the evening by remarking that we would not part with each other in a permanent sense since Rev. Van Vliet was joining an elite group among other former ministers of Surrey. He also read letters from Vernon, Yarrow, and the Mission Field.

Rev. Souman spoke on behalf of Classis Pacific West expressing thankfulness for the work Rev. Van Vliet had done and his contributions at classical meetings and wished the Lord's blessing on him in his new calling.

Representatives from the Mission Board, Home Mission, Women's Bible Study Group, and Young People's Society came forward to share memories, to thank the Van Vliets for their involvement, for their active visibility in evangelism, for their encouragement, and for their leadership. The organist, the choir,

and a recorder and piano recital provided musical presentations. A scrapbook consisting of contributions by members of the congregation, books about B.C., and a beautiful watercolour painting of the "Maranatha" church building were presented as gifts.

Rev. Van Vliet's father, as representative from the Aldergrove church, conveyed their good wishes, and, as a parent, thanked

Surrey for calling his son so they could establish a stronger bond with the family in B.C.

On behalf of the consistory, Dr. Vanderstoep expressed heartfelt thanks for the dedication and commitment Rev. Van Vliet showed in his task as minister. Emphasized was the fact that the consistory never voted on matters; all decisions were made by consensus.

At the end of the evening, Rev. Van Vliet responded by reading from Philippians 1:3-11. He said he and his family have Surrey in their hearts and appreciate all they could experience here. The words spoken this evening were humbling and he only passed on what was given by God; all glory to Him! He then repeated the blessing and led in closing prayer.

After a sister of the congregation sang a beautiful rendition of the Lord's Prayer, everyone was invited to have refreshment and to socialize in the fellowship hall.



Langley says Farewell to Rev. Wes Bredenhof and Family



Farewell sermon

Rev. Bredenhof preached his farewell sermon on June 28, 2009, using Hebrews 3:1, 2 as his text. His theme was "Fix your heart on Jesus: confessing who we are, but most importantly confessing the person and the work of the Saviour."

Rev. Bredenhof stressed that Jesus must never be taken for granted and we must be eager to hear Christ proclaimed, finding our only comfort in Him. We are part of God's family, called "holy brothers," adopted through Christ, inheriting salvation through Him who has claimed us as his own. We have a heavenly calling from heaven, a calling to heaven. This calling requires us to fix our eyes

on Jesus, who turns away God's wrath and intercedes for us. We can be confident that there remains no barrier between us and God. Look to him then in faith, for this life and for the life to come. Rev. Bredenhof reminded us that we never outgrow our need for the gospel. Our hearts should overflow with gratitude for the preaching and the word, gratitude that spills over into our lives. Live holy and godly lives to please Him.

Farewell barbecue

Our farewell event took place on Sunday, July 12, 2009. It started with an official gathering in the church sanctuary shortly after the afternoon worship service, purposely kept short due to the

attendance of so many of the congregation, including many, many young children. We came together to celebrate the work that Rev. W. Bredenhof could do together with the congregation in Langley. The gathering was opened with the singing of Psalm 119:39, 40, 42.

Br. (Uncle) Jake Bredenhof spoke on behalf of Cloverdale as well as Classis Pacific West, thanking Rev. (nephew) Wes Bredenhof for the work that he did in the classis, remembering his input in many aspects of the communion of saints among the churches in the Fraser Valley. He voiced the hope that Rev. Bredenhof's preaching and work in Hamilton could shine as a light on a hill in that area.



Rev. J. Visscher then spoke as co-pastor of Rev. Bredenhof. He remarked that singing only three stanzas of Psalm 119 was not "vintage Bredenhof" as he is known to be a psalm-singing enthusiast. Visscher expressed gratitude to his colleague for the fine cooperation and hard work that the two ministers could share in what could be seen as an experiment in the Canadian Reformed Churches, that of a two-pastor system. Looking back on the more than four years that they pastored effectively together, he would especially miss the weekly get-togethers with Rev. Bredenhof, discussing congregational needs. He wished him God's blessings on his new

challenges and blessings to the Bredenhof family in their new surroundings and congregation.

The Bredenhof family was presented with gifts for the children, also a memory album which contained photos, words of encouragement, poems, you name it, submitted by members of the church family, as well as a painting of a Langley scene, painted by a local artist

Rev. Bredenhof took the floor to express gratitude for the great turnout to the farewell barbecue. He reminded the congregation that when he first came to Langley, he spoke of ministers being only servants bringing the Word, the food prepared by God. He prayed

that the word he brought may have given the congregation of Langley spiritual nourishment, resulting in spiritual growth. He came to Langley wanting to be part of an effective team and experienced a truly wonderful time of cooperation and mutual support.

After the official part of the day was closed, the large crowd, made even larger by the attendance of many members of the Chinese Reformed Church, headed outdoors for the sumptuous barbecue that waited. Young and old ate, chatted, fellowshiped, lingered, enjoying each others company and the good food. Thus went Langley's fine and fond farewell to Rev. and Mrs. Bredenhof and family.



Press Releases

Press Release of Classis Ontario West, September 16, 2009

Classis Ontario West was convened by the Providence Canadian Reformed Church at the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church in Hamilton, ON the morning of September 16, 2009. Representing the convening church, Rev. Wes Bredenhof led opening devotions, welcomed delegates and guests, and recalled items of memorabilia – namely, the acceptance of calls by Rev. Reuben Bredenhof and Candidate Rodney Vermeulen to the churches of London and Glanbrook, respectively, the provision of pastors to Ancaster and Hamilton-Providence in the persons of Rev. John Ludwig and Rev. Wes Bredenhof, respectively, and the ongoing vacancies in the churches of Grand Rapids and Chatham.

After Rev. Cornelis Kleyn assumed the chair and made some

opening remarks, he invited Candidate Vermeulen to present his sermon proposal on 2 John 4-11, which Classis deemed sufficient to continue with the examination. Candidate Vermeulen was then examined in Old Testament, New Testament, doctrine and creeds, church history, Scripture knowledge, ethics, diaconology, and church polity. Classis judged that Candidate Vermeulen sustained his exam and, after his signing of the form of subscription, he and his wife were congratulated by the delegates and guests.

The assembly was greeted by Rev. Christo Heiburg on behalf of Classis Southern Ontario of the URCNA and by Rev. John Ferguson on behalf of the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario of the OPC. Classis approved the call of the Trinity Canadian Reformed Church of Glanbrook to Candidate Vermeulen. Classis denied a proposal from the Church of

Kerwood to adopt the guidelines of Classis Northern Ontario for Dealing with Appeals on the grounds that these guidelines assign responsibilities to a standing committee of classis which belong properly with local consistories. Classis adopted a revised overture from the church of Chatham for Regional Synod regarding a synodically appointed church for needy theological students. Classis adopted the church of Chatham's recommended assessment of \$20 per communicant member for 2010 for the needy student fund and the church of Ancaster's recommendation that, in view of the absence of requests for assistance, nothing be collected for the fund for needy churches.

The church of Kerwood is appointed the convening church of the next classis meeting to be held on December 16, 2009 and the following men were appointed as

officers: Rev. Bill DeJong as chairman; Rev. Wes Bredenhof as clerk; and Rev. John Ludwig as vice-chair. The following were delegated to Regional Synod: elders Bill Dokter and Keith Temple, with alternates Jack Lenting and M. Wieske, and ministers: Rev. John Ludwig and Rev. Wes Bredenhof, with alternates Rev. Bill DeJong and Rev. Cornelis Kleyn.

Rev. Cornelis Kleyn led the closing devotions.

*For Classis,
Rev. Bill DeJong, vice-chair*

Press Release Classis Central Ontario – September 18, 2009

The delegates of the convening church, Rehoboth, opened the meeting in the Christian manner, with prayer and a reading from Psalm 67. The assembly joined in singing this psalm. The delegates from Fellowship Church reported that all six churches of classis were duly represented. Classis was constituted. The suggested officers took their places with Rev. W. Den Hollander as chairman, Rev. J.L. van Popta as vice chairman, and Rev. Dr. G. Nederveen as clerk.

The chairman noted various items of memorabilia; Ottawa celebrated fifty years of blessing. Rev. Vandeburgt was welcomed, as he was present as delegate from Rehoboth church for the first time. Condolences were extended to Rev. Nederveen with the recent passing of his elderly mother. Rev. Versteeg was installed as missionary in Toronto, to work in Port Moresby where the Rev. S. 't Hart had worked until his repatriation to Australia. Rev. Versteeg's departure to the mission field is imminent. Bethel Church also hosted a farewell for the Togeretz family who have repatriated from working

in the mission field flying for MAF. The College celebrated forty years of blessing under God's grace preparing men for the ministry. Rev. Mulder is struggling with mobility issues. Rev. den Hollander declined a call to Chatham.

The provisional agenda was reviewed and the agenda was established.

The Rev. D. Vandeburgt, who was present for the first time since his installation as minister of the Word for Rehoboth the Church, signed the Form of Subscription.

A letter was received from the Theological College confirming that Br. Ryan Kampen has successfully completed his third year of study and thus fulfilled all the requirements for speaking an edifying word in the churches.

Church Visitation Reports were received for all the churches. The assembly notes with thankfulness that church life in all the churches is blessed by the Lord Jesus, head of the church.

Many reports were received from various committees as well as audit and inspection reports. The archives of Classis were reported as complete. The treasurer's report was received. The books the treasurer were reported to be accurate. The books of the treasurers of the committee for Financial Aid to Students and to churches were also reported to be accurate. The Church at Flamborough, as church for financial aid to Students reported that no requests for aid were received. The committee recommendation to increase the fund to 10,000,00 was approved. The Committee for Financial Aid to Churches reported on one request for aid for 2010. After a brief discussion, the committee's recommendations were approved. A delegate from the church receiving aid spoke words of appreciation for the financial

assistance that the churches continue to give. Rev. den Hollander reported on a visit he made to the Free Church of Scotland National Synod. All these reports were received with thankfulness.

Under Question Period Church Order Article 44, the churches reported that the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued, that the decisions of the broader assemblies are being honoured, and that there was no need for advice from Classis for the proper government of their churches. This was noted with thankfulness.

The following appointments were made:

- Convening church for the next classis: Flamborough Dec 11, 2009
- Suggested officers: Rev. J. de Gelder, chairman; Rev. W. den Hollander, vice chairman; Rev. J.L. van Popta, clerk
- Examiners coordinators: Rev. W. den Hollander and Rev. G.Ph. Van Popta
- Exegesis OT: Rev. G. Nederveen
- Exegesis NT: Rev. J.L. van Popta
- Knowledge of Scripture: Rev. J. L. van Popta
- Doctrine and Creeds: Rev. J. de Gelder
- Church History: Rev. W. den Hollander
- Ethics: Rev. D. Vandeburgt
- Church Polity: Rev. G. Nederveen
- Diaconology: Rev. G Ph. van Popta
- Church Visitors: Rev. J. de Gelder, Rev. W. den Hollander, Rev. G. Nederveen
- Church for taking care of the Archives: Burlington Ebenezer
- Church to inspect the archives: Burlington Fellowship
- Treasurer: H. J. Sloots
- Church for Financial Aid for students for the Ministry: Flamborough

- Committee for Needy Churches: H. J. Sloots (2010), L. Kampen (2012), E. Schouten (2011)
- Church for auditing the books of the Classical Treasurer, the Fund for Needy Churches, and the Fund for Financial aid for Students for the Ministry: Burlington-Waterdown
- Observer Free Church of Scotland: Rev. W. den Hollander.

Classis chose the following brothers as delegates to Regional Synod East, to be convened on November 11, 2008 in Grassie:
 Ministers: Revs. J. de Gelder, G. Nederveen
 Alternates: Revs. D. Vandeburgt, J.L. van Popta
 Elders: K. Veldkamp, H. Horsman
 Alternates: H. Vanderwel, R. Nordeman

The chairman judged that censure according to Art. 34 C.O. was not required. The Acts were read and adopted, after which the Press Release was read and approved. The chairman requested the singing of Hymn 58:1, 2, after which he led in thanksgiving prayer. The chairman then closed ssembly.

For Classis:
 J.L. van Popta



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1929 ~ October 27 ~ 2009

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Psalm 73:26

With thankfulness to the Lord for His love and faithfulness, we hope to celebrate the 80th birthday of our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

TINA KOBES (nee Poll)

Jake and Grace Kobes
 Syd and Jodi Kobes
 Keenan, Karleigh, Quentin, Kyle, Kirstyn
 Janina and Randy Dykstra
 Kathleen, Cameron, Andrew, Carissa
 Ed and Debbie Kobes
 Brooklyn
 Heidi
 Les
 John and Norine Kobes
 Daryn
 Brayden
 Craig
 Rylan
 Jane and Herman Driegen
 Lynn and John VanKammen
 Nadia
 Christina
 Cheryl
 Shannon
 Karen

375 Lamson Road, Abbotsford, BC V3G 1W2

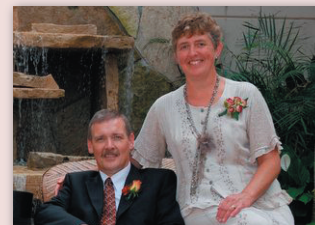
ANNIVERSARIES

September 16, 1984 ~ September 16, 2009

With joy and thanks to the LORD, the congregation of Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Fergus, Ontario congratulates

REVEREND D.G.J. AGEMA

who has served as minister of the Word for 25 years.



We give thanks for the years of faithful service Rev. Agema has provided the congregations at Hamilton, Attercliffe and Fergus, and also at the Covenant Canadian Reformed Teacher's College.

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you – guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. 2 Timothy 1:13 & 14

We also extend our congratulations to Rev. and Mrs. Agema on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary. May the LORD continue to bless and keep you, together with your family.

Reverend and Mrs. Agema's address:
 610 Belysde Avenue East, Fergus, ON N1M 2W5