

# Clarion

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## *A Newly Renovated Church Building for Grand Valley*

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- The Time is Short





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# Are You an Exclusionist?

*For many centuries the church has confessed the clarity of the Scriptures*

There is an interesting French saying, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." I will not bother you with the original French. This saying came to mind when I noticed once again a debate arising in our Dutch sister churches about the biblical grounds for infant baptism.

Every generation anew has to defend the teaching of *infant* baptism. In my day, too, there have been those who came to doubt the propriety of infant baptism, left the Canadian Reformed Churches, and (some) were even *baptised again*. Sometimes this reversal of position results from a lack of wisdom and insight in the Scriptures. Sometimes this decision is taken out of reaction to personal problems in life or generally because of dislike of the Reformed confessions. Whatever the case, the denial of infant baptism has profound implications. The Belgic Confession rightly states that "baptism should never be repeated, for we cannot be born twice" (Art 34).

Some refuse to understand that a rejection of infant baptism also means a denial of *sovereign grace*. You can say that "it ain't necessarily so," but it is! Often the denial of infant baptism goes together with a rejection of the Canons of Dort. This is logical. The Canons of Dort show clearly from Scripture that God saves whomever he wills, regardless of a person's own stance or position. At bottom this is always the issue. To battle heretics one needs to go back to basics, to scriptural principles.

And it begins with a spiritual acceptance of infant baptism and the joy that it brings.

## Is the Bible unclear?

Some months ago in *Nederlands Dagblad* there was another discussion about infant baptism. Besides the usual arguments pro and contra, there was a letter written by Rev. Johan vanderHoeven, a minister in our sister churches, in which the position is put forth and defended that the Bible is not clear about infant baptism. We, therefore, have to accept *both* positions, for *and* against infant baptism (*ND*, November 20, 2010, p. 13). It sounded like the "voice of reason."

To claim either position (for or against infant baptism) would mean that the position of the other(s) would be excluded. Any firm standpoint on biblically unclear matters is called *exclusivisionistic*. In other words, you have to allow room in the church for both positions. You may not *exclude* others who have a different but equally valid opinion.

The minister in question did not stop at (infant or adult) baptism. Of course not. He was just getting started. There are more issues about which the Bible is allegedly unclear. The next example noted by VanderHoeven is that of women in office. Since the Bible is not clear on this matter, we may not take an exclusivist position on this. I can add various items to this list for which (it may seem) there is not a clear, single proof text: the Holy Trinity, divine providence, inspiration, the deity of Christ, (the days of) creation, and homosexuality. There are many other topics, but you get my drift. It would appear from VanderHoeven's discoveries that the Bible is by and large rather ambiguous, a book that is more embarrassing than enlightening.

Wherever the Bible is unclear, we must give room and space to each other and to other churches. VanderHoeven puts it this way, "I can live with a statement and an approach opposite to the exclusivist, namely that the Bible does not demand or forbid infant baptism or adult baptism. Why do Christians want to be clearer that the Bible evidently is?" Klaas would like to ask why certain Christians keep telling us that the Bible is unclear on key points.

I hope you understand fully what vanderHoeven is saying. If something has not been *explicitly* stated in the Bible, it cannot be held as an established point of doctrine which everyone must accept. All exclusivist doctrines are to be removed. If a scroll is found somewhere in a cave in Palestine which expressly states that infants must be baptized, fine, but until then vanderHoeven reserves the right to allow and defend both opinions.



There is a curve-ball being thrown in. Who's on first? VanderHoeven writes, "Certainly, I have signed the Three Forms of Unity. I, too, go along with the *theological choice* for infant baptism. But I no longer feel obligated to go along with that in an exclusivist manner." Liberalism always likes to cloak itself with the mantle of magnanimous orthodoxy. Don't fall for it.

## The clarity of the Scriptures

Of course, no one likes to be labelled as an *exclusivist* or a fundamentalist. I do find it a bit childish that vanderHoeven wants a specific text that spells out a confessional matter *expressis verbis*. There is also the combined teaching of the Bible in many places. A confessional truth – adopted and defended by the church through the ages – is not the same as a fashionable theological construction. With respect to infant baptism, for example, there is a long-standing and time-tested position taken in by the churches through the ages. Our confession is ecumenical.

I am an *inclusionist*. Which means: I do not exclude clearly stated biblical positions, but work hard to *include* and defend the catholic teachings set forth in the ecumenical and Reformed creeds.

And we've seen all this before. "*Plus ça change. . .*" Once again someone comes along to inform us that the Bible is unclear on key matters. Humbug. For many centuries the church has confessed the clarity of the Scriptures. Also when it comes to infant baptism the teaching of Holy Writ is clear and concise.

I hope to elaborate on one aspect of this, the Lord willing, in another editorial, if time and circumstance permits.



## What's Inside

Issue 19 begins with an editorial from Rev. Klaas Stam. Using the example of infant baptism, Rev. Stam explains how some would argue that the Bible does not take a clear position and so we must accept both sides as valid and biblical. So what is scriptural and how should we approach this?

Continuing on the topic of infant baptism, we reprint an article from Dr. James Visscher that was written nearly twenty-five years ago. "Infant Baptism – Divine Demand or Human Invention?" provides readers with an in-depth look at the scriptural view of baptism.

Rev. Eric Kampen writes about knowing our roots – why studying church history is important. Readers can expect occasional articles of a church historical nature from Rev. Kampen on our pages in the future.

News from the federation comes in the form of the recently completed Grand Valley church building renovation.

Issue 19 also brings you the regular columns Treasures New and Old, Education Matters, and Ray of Sunshine. In addition we have a Mission News insert.

Laura Veenendaal



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**MATTHEW 13:52**

# The Time is Short

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*“What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short.”*  
1 Corinthians 7:29

Christians have to be in tune with the times in which they live. Paul makes the Corinthians aware of this. They had come to faith in Jesus Christ and it had changed their lives. It also led to many questions. Paul reacts to these questions by referring to the rules underlying the Christian life. Let your “calling” determine what you do, is one rule. Another rule is: Keep in mind the time. In verse 29 we read that the time is short. And in verse 31 Paul says that the world in the present form is passing away. Already in verse 26 he had spoken about the present crisis. All three verses highlight the element of the present time.

In this part of chapter 7, Paul is dealing with being single. He highlights that being single has some positives. Why? Because of the current crisis. What is this current crisis? Verse 29 gives the answer, for Paul explains: “What I mean is this. . . .” The present crisis is that the time is short. The word for “short” can also be translated as “compressed.” It was sometimes used to describe the sails of a ship as it came into the harbour. The sails would be rolled up and shortened because you cannot sail into harbour with the sails in place! So the time is short, in the sense that the end is in sight.

Or we read in verse 31 that the world in its present form is passing

away. The world in which we live currently, in which we marry, have grief, have joys, buy and sell, is passing away. We need to keep this in mind, says Paul. Again he takes examples from different areas of life to explain this. Those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn as if they did not; those who are happy as if they were not; those who buy, as if it is not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world as if not engrossed in them.

The time is short. Once again, let’s use the image of a ship with the sails being rolled up because the harbour is in sight. The end of the journey is near, and all those on the ship are focused on what is coming. That determines their work. This is totally different from when the ship is mid-ocean. Now all hands are on deck, all focused on this last part of the journey. That is the attitude Paul wants to convey, one of looking forward. As believers we know that more is coming soon.

Let’s go back to the things mentioned in verses 29-31 to work this out. Presently marriage is an important part of life, but keep in mind that one day it will be over; in eternal life there will be no marriage anymore. In the present time we meet grief, and that can be very difficult. But keep in mind that one day grief will be gone. Presently we can have joy, but keep

in mind that the things we now rejoice in will one day go. We buy and use the things of this world. That is not wrong in itself, but keep in mind that it is for the time being. That is the attitude of believers: live in this world, with its good and difficult things, but know that more is to come. The calling of the Lord opens up our horizon. That has to determine how we live in this present time.

Paul mentions this in the context of being single. When you keep in mind that the time is short, then you could say that the single person is ahead of the married person. No, Paul does not idealize being single. But the text teaches us not to regard those who are single as if they are coming behind. The single can focus more on what is ahead, whereas the married person has divided loyalties. It is not wrong to marry, but there is something more important: living in undivided devotion to the Lord. This is urgent because the time is short.

We all need to be in tune with the time, whether we deal with things that make us thankful or give us grief. More and greater things are coming. We need undivided devotion to the Lord. Keep focused on the Lord, in everything, in every situation. As believers we have to know the time of our God. Come, Lord Jesus, Amen!





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# Infant Baptism – Divine Demand or Human Invention?

*This article was first published in Clarion on February 6, 1987 (Vol 36, No 3).*

## A controversial issue

"We have looked well through the Bible and cannot find it, and do not believe it is there; nor do we believe that others can find infant baptism in the Scriptures, unless they themselves first put it there." So wrote that famous nineteenth-century preacher, Charles Spurgeon in his official autobiography. In many respects Spurgeon was a thoroughly Reformed man, but when it came to the matter of infant baptism, a parting of the ways became painfully evident. I say "painfully" because it is a fact that throughout the ages the question of who are the proper recipients of baptism has been hotly debated. And it continues to be so today.

On the one side, you have those churches which have their roots in the Roman Catholic, Reformed, and Presbyterian traditions insisting on the legitimacy of infant baptism, albeit for varying reasons. On the other side, you have those churches that have emerged out of the more radical wing of the Reformation which stress the validity of adult baptism alone. Both parties have their champions, their treatises, their pamphlets, their converts. Both are busy firing volley after volley at each other. And then it has to be admitted that in the process a lot of blanks are being fired as well. Not all of the arguments are sound; not all of the reasoning is rational.

Who is winning? That is hard to say at times. Although, at the moment it would appear that the advocates of infant baptism are mostly on the defensive. I say this because the number of people switching from a paedobaptist position to an adult one is larger than vice versa. Many people who were once Reformed or Presbyterian have become Pentecostal, Free Evangelical, Alliance, or have gone over to some other Anabaptist grouping. Usually the reasons for the altering of their allegiances are diverse, but if you talk to them then, more often than not infant baptism and their rejection of it figures prominently in the picture.

## Why become Baptist?

What kind of justifications for becoming Anabaptist are most frequently given? The first is that there is no text anywhere in the Bible which says that infants should be baptized. In this respect these people follow in the footsteps of Spurgeon, who encountered the same difficulty. However, there is another rationale as well, and it is even more basic. It can be captured in the following syllogism: faith is a condition for baptism, infants do not possess faith, therefore infants may not be baptized. In addition, they point to the so-called abuse of baptism in established churches where many people receive the sacrament, think that it works magic, and never bother to live up to it. Infant baptizers, they allege, have added far too much water to the biblical wine.

What has been the rejoinder to this from those who believe that baptism is also for infants? On a popular level it has often been one of consternation and weakness. The Anabaptists have always been good at spouting Bible verses at their opponents. The Reformed and others of an infant baptism affiliation have often reacted to this by citing vague and general biblical principles. They have chimed in that, of course, faith is a necessity, but they have run stuck when it comes to relating it to baptism. Yes, and as for the matter of abuse, there the paedobaptists have to confess that there are many churches that have and still do use infant baptism in a loose and superstitious manner.

## The Reformed view: inferior?

So where does that leave us as Reformed believers, except with an overdose of inferiority? People leave our fellowships claiming that they have found a better place to worship, a place where there is more warmth, more integrity, and more biblical faithfulness. But is that a proper reaction and is that a proper assessment of the historic Reformed position? Is tradition the only thing that Reformed confessors have going for them? Are all the pertinent biblical arguments on the side of the Anabaptists?



Hardly! On the matter of the baptism of our infants there is no need for Reformed believers to take even one step back. We dare to say that the teaching of the entire Scriptures is on our side, the great confessional documents of the church are on our side, the most able defenders of the faith are on our side. If we have left the field largely to the Anabaptists that is not because of defeat but due to default. We have failed to bring all of the truths of God's revelation to bear on the question in a clear, concise, and convincing manner.

What are those truths? By way of elaboration, first, a general remark, and it concerns the matter of there being no text in the Bible that commands infant baptism. Is this such a major lack? Not really! There are any number of practices current in the church which are not grounded in one or other text. Take the matter of worship on the first day of the week. Where is there a passage which says that Christians must worship on Sunday and not on Saturday? Is that not a matter of inference based on sound biblical principle? Or take the matter of women attending the Lord's Supper. Christ instituted this sacrament in the presence of men only. There is no command which enjoins us to accede the right of participation also to women. And yet who would dare to deny them? Not even the Anabaptists! So there are more practices and procedures which we follow which cannot be hung on one or other isolated Bible verse. They are the result of working out proper biblical principles, and that applies to the matter of infant baptism too.

To indicate that, let me proceed to develop my argument using five sets of contestants or antagonists. In each set the one position is that of the proponents of infant baptism, or better, the baptism of children of believers, and the other is that of the proponents of adult baptism.

### **a) Unity versus disunity**

The first set of contestants are dealt with under the heading of "unity and disunity." What is meant by that? It has to do with the fact that many Anabaptists approach the Bible in a divisive way. They drive a wedge dividing God's people and allege that there are really two peoples of God, two different seeds of Abraham. There is the church of Jesus Christ and there are the Jews. There is natural Israel and spiritual Israel.

This essentially dispensational scenario holds that there are the Jews who are the real and natural Israel, with special privileges, special promises, special covenants, and a special future. Included in that future is an earthly land of Canaan, an earthly city of Jerusalem, an earthly temple on Mount Zion, an earthly throne of David. Here is the real and true Israel forever. As for the believers of the new dispensation, they are only the figurative seed of Israel. Two sets of people,

two sets of blessings – that is the disuniting view of some Anabaptists.

Only it does not end there, for this element of disunity crops up not only when it comes to the people of God, but also when it comes to the book of God, the Bible. There are Anabaptists who place the Old Testament against the New Testament, the law against the gospel, OT Israel against the NT church. What applies in the one dispensation is not just in certain cases fulfilled or abolished in the other. No, it can even be contradicted.

Now it is important to realize in discussions with Anabaptists that there is this disconcerting tendency among them to fracture both the people and the Word of God. It is equally important that you counteract this position. As long as it prevails there is little or no room for discussion. And then we may say that it is not too difficult to dismantle this disuniting approach either.

Take the matter of the unity of the Bible. Careful study shows that there is a unity of purpose stretching across both testaments. Both stress the need for God's Name to be praised in all things. Both stress the fallenness of man. Both stress the need for redemption through the Messiah, Jesus Christ. In addition, there is also a unity of ethical demand. The moral law of the Ten Commandments retains its validity in both testaments (Exodus 20; Psalm 119; Matthew 5:17-19; 1 John 3:22). Also, there is a unity of future. What the prophet Isaiah predicts about the future of God's people dovetails perfectly with what the Apostle John is led to disclose in the book of Revelation. Indeed, this unity of the Bible is everywhere. Who can read and grasp the meaning of the book of Hebrews without an Old Testament constantly at his elbow? And so the arguments for unity go on and on.

And the same applies to the unity of God's people. They all have one father in Abraham; as Romans 4 reminds us, "He is the father of us all," (v. 16). They have all been called to faith and holiness. They have all been ingrafted into that one olive tree mentioned in Romans 11. There is not one tree for the Jews and another tree for the Christians. There is only one building of which Christ is the cornerstone (Eph 2:11-20).

In short, there is only one people of God, not two distinct peoples. There is only one Word of God, not two distinct books or testaments or dispensations that somehow contradict each other. There is unity that moves forward to either abolition or fulfillment, but never contradiction.

### **b) Generations versus individuals**

The second set of contestants has to do with that of "generations versus individuals." If one analyzes the Anabaptist position carefully, then one must come to the conclusion that here the emphasis is emphatically

individualistic. Faith is pictured in subjective, isolated, individual terms. At the same time there is little or no awareness that while the Bible speaks to persons, it also addresses itself to the generations, to one's posterity, to one's seed. God is so often described in the Bible as being the God of a people.

Any number of references can be made here. Take Genesis 3:15, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers." Or Genesis 9:9, where God establishes his covenant with Noah and says, "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you." You find it again in Genesis 17:7, "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you."

Why, if you look carefully in the OT you see that the Lord does not deal simply with individuals. No, from Adam to Seth, from Seth to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Israel, from Israel to Christ, from Christ to his people, it is abundantly evident that the Lord works through the line of the generations. And this does not stop in the NT either. No, on Pentecost day Peter again stresses this same truth when he says, "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39).

In light of such an emphasis, it should not surprise one at all to find that the book of Acts speaks about the baptism of "households." We will shortly touch on the matter of whether there were children in those households. For now it is sufficient to recognize that in Acts there is no tendency to separate believing adults from their children, or children from their parents. There is a stress on family solidarity, and that solidarity, it should be recognized, works both ways. In the second commandment mention is made of the benefits of this solidarity in terms of the future generations as well as the curses that may accrue to these generations.

The type of religious individualism which is so rampant today certainly cannot be said to take its cue from biblical revelation. That revelation takes an organic approach. It recognizes that God works through the generations. It recognizes that believers and their seed have special standing in the eyes of the Lord, a standing for either covenant weal or woe. It recognizes that the communal aspect of Christian living does not contradict or deny the personal aspect of confession and commitment. The Christian faith is personal, but not individualistic.

### **c) Infants versus adults**

We come now to a third set of antagonists, which falls under the heading "infants versus adults." In doing so, we are coming closer to the heart of the matter that

separates the Reformed confessor from the Anabaptist one. The latter recognizes only a baptism for adults or for mature children and dismisses as un-biblical a baptism also for infants. Because faith is the vital precondition for baptism and because of the absence of this precondition in infants, they are automatically disqualified.

However, that in turn raises the vexing question, "If infants of believers cannot be baptized, what is their standing before the Lord? Does he exclude them? Does he ignore them? Are they in limbo? Do they have no rights and no standing before the Lord?" The Anabaptist does not like to have the matter approached from this angle and queried so forcefully, but these questions must be asked. Also, if he is consequent, then he will have to admit that prior to faith a person has no standing before the Lord.

Only that in turn raises other questions. For look at the OT. There you will see that God does not exclude the infants among his people. They receive a certain standing in his eyes. Genesis 17 reveals that God makes his covenant not just with Abraham, but also with all those in his house, with his infants, and even with his servants. In Deuteronomy 29 Moses summons Israel to stand before the Lord, and he does so with the words, "All of you are standing today in the presence of the LORD your God – your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, together with your children and your wives ... in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, a covenant the LORD is making with you this day and sealing with an oath" (Deut 29:10-12). You will notice here that the Lord makes no distinction between adults and infants. They all enter into the covenant with him.

A little later, in Joshua 8:35, we are confronted with a ceremony of covenant renewal and we read, "There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them." Again infants are included.

In addition, they are also included at occasions of worship, fasting, and feasting. Think of 2 Chronicles 20:13, "All the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, stood there before the LORD." Think of Joel 2:15, 16, "Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast." Surely these words are sufficient to testify to the fact that children belonged to the people of God in the OT. God claims them, cares for them, protects them, promises himself to them. His fatherly heart embraces them. One of the gravest, most anguished indictments that he ever made against his people Israel is the one to be found in Ezekiel 16:20, 21, "And you took your sons and daughters

whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as food to the idols. . . You slaughtered my children." Need more be said about the Lord and his relationship to infants?

Still, the remark can be heard, "But that's the OT. In the NT it is a whole new state of affairs." But is it? Remember what has been said about the unity of God's Word and people. The teaching of the OT and NT do not contradict each other when it comes to the place of infants of believing, covenant-keeping parents. In the OT they belong; they belong no less in the NT. To assert anything less is to assert that as time goes on God's revelation to his people becomes poorer, less loving, more restrictive. Can you imagine a situation in which children belong in one testament but are bypassed in another? Does that speak of an enrichment of revelation or an impoverishment? In every other way God's revelation becomes fuller. His promises increase. The earthly Jerusalem will make way for the heavenly one. This earth will make way for a new earth. The promise of the Saviour becomes the reality of the Saviour. The shedding of the blood of bulls and goats makes way for the shedding of that one blood, at one time, by one person. God's revelation becomes fuller, richer, and deeper. To sever the tie artificially between the Lord and his covenant infants in that newer and fuller testament goes contrary to the whole flow of biblical revelation.

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*Throughout the ages the question of who are the proper recipients of baptism has been hotly debated*

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That is not all. For we do not need to take our refuge in logical deduction alone. Recall that episode in the NT where the Lord Jesus welcomes and blesses the children. The Son follows in the footsteps of the Father (Matt 19:13-14; Mark 9:36-37; Luke 18:15-17). Now, the Anabaptists take this passage and say that it refers to a childlike faith. We, adults, should believe in the simple and absolute way that children do. But such an interpretation misses the mark. The children that are brought to the Lord Jesus are not children who are old enough to believe and to serve as models of belief. No, they are infants. They are babes in their mothers' arms. That is what the original word means here. It is also noteworthy that the Saviour was angry with his disciples for trying to exclude these infants and their mothers as being beyond his concern, compassion, and interest. Also, the Matthew account does not even mention "childlike faith" at all. Finally, we are told that the Lord Jesus laid his hands upon them and blessed them. Does that sound like someone who leaves children in limbo until they come to faith? The Father's compassion is evident in the Son.

In addition, the Father's promises remain valid too. In Acts 2:39, which we touched on already, the Apostle Peter, harking back to the words of the Lord to Abraham, says to those who have come to faith in the risen, exalted Christ, "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call." There you meet it again. The promises of God belong to the believers and their children. Their status has not changed in the NT; if it had, Peter would never have spoken these words. He would have either left them out, contradicted them, or reinterpreted them. He chooses none of these options. He simply underlines and reemphasizes that OT commitment of the Lord to Abraham and his children.

We can even take this a step further. For in 1 Corinthians 7 Paul says that certain children are holy. Which children? Even the children that arise from a mixed marriage. Such a marriage does not give rise to polluted children who should be ostracized and scorned by the believing community. No, the fact that even one parent is a believer is sufficient to render the offspring "holy," special, unique in God's eyes.

It is in this light too that we should return for a moment to what we touched upon already, namely, the "household baptisms" in Acts. Did those households of Lydia, Stephanas, the jailer, include children? We cannot say with absolute certainty; however, we would say that the law of probability favours the affirmative. One childless household is possible, but three would be stretching both the limits of logic and the law of averages.

#### **d) Circumcision versus baptism**

And so it is that we come to the fourth set of contestants, which has to do with "circumcision versus baptism." The standard Anabaptist ploy when it comes to the relationship of circumcision and baptism is either to say that there is no connection whatsoever between them or else to qualify that relationship severely.

To those who insist that there is no connection between circumcision and baptism we say most emphatically that there is a connection, even a threefold one. In the first place, circumcision was a sign of union and communion with the Lord. Turn to Genesis 17:7 and 11. "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you ... You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you." Notice that the Lord expressly says, "I will be God to you and to your descendants." At the very heart of God's covenant there lies this concept of union and communion, a concept that comes back time and again in the Old and New Testament.



In the NT this communion is so often expressed in relation to baptism. "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom 6:4). Baptism is depicted here as that sacrament that unites us to Christ, that allows us to share in the fullness of him and of his redemptive work. Union and communion apply to both circumcision and baptism.

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*On the matter of the baptism of our infants there is no need for Reformed believers to take even one step back*

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Yes, and so does the matter of cleansing. In Deuteronomy 30:6 the Israelites are commanded to circumcise their hearts. Elsewhere they are told to remove the foreskins of their hearts (Jer 4:4). Clearly, the outward cutting off of the foreskin was symbolic of the need to remove drastically all defilement from the heart. And baptism urges us to do the same. In Acts 22:16 believers are told to "Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away." The water of baptism is symbolic of the need for cleansing as well as the ritual of cleansing.

Finally, circumcision was also the seal of the righteousness of faith. The Apostle Paul makes this plain in Romans 4:11, "He [Abraham] received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised." Circumcision was vitally related to faith. And so is baptism. As Peter says in Acts 2:38, "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

In summary, then, circumcision and baptism are closely related. There are any number of Baptist scholars who affirm this. Robert Kingdon in his book *Children of Abraham: A Reformed Baptist View of Baptism, the Covenant, and Children* says, "It is my considered opinion that Baptists must recognize the analogy between circumcision and baptism. It seems to me pointless to deny the existence of this analogy, yet it is often done" (p. 28). Or, "It can hardly be denied that baptism in the New Testament has much the same meaning and import" (p. 28). In the same vein, Paul K. Jewett in his book *Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace* says, "We have agreed that circumcision means essentially what baptism means in the New Testament" (p. 96).

## Inconsistencies?

In light of these admissions, as well as in light of Scripture, it would seem to be a futile exercise to drive a wedge between circumcision and baptism. But that does raise a further question with regard to those Baptists who, like Kingdon and Jewett, admit that these two ceremonies are similar. If you are a Baptist and yet agree that there is no difference between circumcision and baptism, have you not conceded your argument? You would think so. You would assume that if children received the sign of circumcision in the OT and if circumcision and baptism are the same, then children should be baptized. But both Kingdon and Jewett refuse to come to this conclusion. What they do is something very surprising and inconsistent.

Kingdon says that the covenant has dispensational and transdispensational, temporal and eternal, earthly and heavenly aspects to it. The fact that the children were circumcised in the OT belonged to the dispensational, temporal, and earthly elements in the Abrahamic covenant. Jewett travels essentially the same route when he says that circumcision belonged to the temporal, earthly aspects of the OT covenant. The covenant covered a single ethnic group who lived in a specific area. In this way they both try to picture circumcision as a purely national and racial sign of external, non-spiritual blessings and privileges of God's OT dealings with his people. Baptism has a spiritual dimension to it, circumcision does not.

What shall we say about this line of argument? It is contrived and artificial, to say the least. When God makes his covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17, then that covenant is not temporary but everlasting. It is still in effect today. Also, as we have seen when dealing with the similarities between circumcision and baptism, they mean the same thing. They picture for us not in the first place an ethnic reality, but a spiritual one. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant in its deepest spiritual meaning, and the same thing applies to baptism. Indeed, to say that the Abrahamic covenant was mainly concerned with earthly blessings and promises is to fall into the same pitfalls as the Israelites. They assumed that outward obedience was sufficient, but God judges it deficient. He wants their hearts to be circumcised as well. Circumcision is not just national or racial, it is firstly spiritual.

Thus, the conclusion can only be that because circumcision was administered as a spiritual rite to infants, and seeing that circumcision and baptism picture the same covenantal realities and promises, infants should be baptized.

## e) Normativism versus subjectivism

Yet all of this does in turn raise one more set of antagonists, namely, that of "normativism versus subjectivism." When the Anabaptist says that infants should not be baptized, on what basis does he make that assertion? It is on the basis that there is something missing in that child, namely faith. Only when faith is present can baptism take place. Now let us look closely at that assertion. What does it imply? It implies that the focus of the rite of baptism turns on the recipient and what is within him or her. Indeed, it grounds the rite in the person.

What it does is something which Reformed theology has always warned against. According to it, the focus of baptism must not be in the recipient but in the originator, in the Lord. Salvation is of the Lord. To ground the validity of an administration of baptism in something within the recipient is a departure from and a violation of the *solus Deo gloria* of Reformed theology. The infants of the believing parents in the OT received the sign and the seal of the covenant not upon the basis of something that the children had done or that had been supernaturally implanted within them, but solely on the basis of God's uninhibited command. Infants of believers are to receive baptism today for the very same reason.

### *The type of religious individualism which is so rampant today certainly cannot be said to take its cue from biblical revelation*

To put in the words of Dr. J. Douma, "God has called us and our children to his covenant. For that reason our children have a place in his covenant. God's call precedes all faith, all conversion, all regeneration in adults and infants. . . Therefore we baptize our children; not because something is present in them, but because something was expressed about them: the promise of the remission of sins and eternal life."

In baptism it is the Lord who comes and claims and promises. In his words of commitment we find comfort and strength as we seek to raise our children in an ungodly world. It is God who stands in the centre of this whole sacrament – not the child, nor the parents. Yet how little Anabaptists seem to understand of this. On the one hand, they deny the validity of infant baptism, but on the other hand, there are many of them who practice a kind of substitute baptism called "dedication." What happens then is that parents take their infant to a worship service and there they pledge to do their all to

raise this child in a Christian manner. They express the hope that some day the child will come to faith and then receive baptism. Yet here we stand amazed. Where is the biblical warrant for such a practice? What is this but a man-made invention, a creation of people who cannot live with the consequences of their own theology? How tragic that a child has to go through a procedure of dedication, a procedure in which the parents promise everything, but God is said to promise nothing. What a desperate and empty ritual!

What a richness we have then when we see that we are to baptize our children because of God's normative command. We do so not because we presume anything about them. We do not presume regeneration. We do not presume election. We do not speculate about our children. What we know is that these children have God's promises. They also are to be fully educated in God's requirements of faith and conversion. They are children of God and they must also come to live through his Word and Spirit, as his children.

In this regard, we deny emphatically that infant baptism leads necessarily to an undermining of the need for repentance and faith. Baptism conveys the promises of God, but it also conveys the demands of God. It calls on all those who have been baptized, when they reach their years of discretion, to cleave to the Lord in faith, hope, love, and obedience. Failure to do so does not nullify the covenant; it does something worse, it unleashes the curses of the covenant (cf. Deuteronomy 29).

In conclusion, we say about the Anabaptist position:

1. By excluding the children of believers from baptism it goes contrary to the whole character of God's progressive revelation;
2. It caters to individualism and refuses to recognize the biblical teaching of covenantal solidarity;
3. It undermines the unity of the Word of God and the people of God by either driving a wedge between circumcision and baptism or else by distorting the meaning of circumcision;
4. By implication it makes God a God of the strong, the mature, the able, the adult but places in question whether he is also the God of the very young, the mentally disabled, and all those who can for one reason or other not meet the pre-condition of faith;
5. It emphasizes the subjective by making something in man the sole pre-condition for baptism.

More can be said, much more, but suffice it to say that the weight of biblical teaching is on the side of those believers who believe that the Lord has established a covenant of grace with his children, a covenant that includes all believers and their seed.





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# Knowing Our Roots, or, Why Study Church History?

## Roots

It is one of the features of the plant world that all plants have roots. Plants cannot exist without roots. The nature of roots is that for most plants they are not visible. They only become visible when a tree, for example, grows very large and the roots bulge out of the soil. Or, they become visible when a plant is uprooted, perhaps by a powerful storm.

The same is true for each person. Each person has roots. It is interesting how some roots are visible immediately. For example, we get an initial impression about someone's ethnic background by their skin colour. We may need to know a person's last name in order to get a more precise sense of their background. Many other roots will not become exposed unless we know that person better. It is one of the realities of life that each has to have some sense of his or her own roots. At times there are accounts of adopted children who go in search of their birth parents. There is a desire to know those roots. Many others become very interested in their whole family history. There are interesting websites that help people research their genealogy.

### *The church has very deep roots*

This image of having roots is helpful in thinking about the church. The church has very deep roots. Some roots are visible immediately while others need to be uncovered to be seen.

## Reasons for studying one's spiritual roots

It was mentioned earlier that everyone has roots but some take particular interest in researching their roots. Many others seem quite content to live with a

basic knowledge of their own roots. The same seems to be true with respect to knowing the roots of the Christian church. Many Christians seem quite content to live with a very basic knowledge of their own roots. Sometimes that knowledge is so basic that it extends no further than their own life in their own congregation and even that knowledge may extend no further back than to the time that they joined it.

While it is possible to get by in life with this attitude, just like one can get by with knowing very little about his or her family's roots, it impoverishes one's spiritual life. There are a number of reasons for studying one's spiritual roots.

The Church historian Mark Noll, in his book *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*,<sup>1</sup> gives four reasons:

1. Church history shows the historical character of Christian faith. Christians don't simply hold to certain principles but are part of a people being gathered throughout history.
2. Church history provides perspective on the interpretation of Scripture. The Church has been busy with the Word for millennia. We do well to pay attention to how believers have handled it in the past, especially in the face of crises and attacks. It will alert us to the fact how interpretation can often be shaped by the circumstances and times in which we find ourselves.
3. History is a laboratory for examining Christian interaction with surrounding culture.
4. Study of history shows how God sustains the church despite the church's own frequent efforts to betray its Saviour. Saints often had considerable stains, yet God used them.

Various other reasons can be added to these. Consider the following:



5. The past has shaped the present. We can only understand ourselves by knowing where we have come from.
6. Knowledge of the past protects us in the present from repeating errors.
7. Knowledge of the past broadens our horizons. It protects us from being near-sighted in terms of looking at life only from our own, very limited, experiences.
8. Knowledge of the past keeps us humble. We are not the first to hear the gospel, nor the first ones to have certain insights.
9. As many believers today live in countries where there is opposition and even persecution, it will be encouraging to see how many believers in past ages have faced persecution and triumphed.
10. As the centuries progressed, there arose considerable diversity in both beliefs and practices within Christianity. The study of the roots of the church will enable one to make sense of the diversity within the Christian world today and evaluate which is most in accord with the Scriptures.
11. Historical awareness will also enable one to place contemporary developments in the context of history, often seeing that they are nothing but old errors in a new garment. This means that the Church today does not need to reinvent the tools to oppose these errors but has a spiritual armory from which to draw resources.

In sum, the study of the history of the roots of the Church will help believers today understand how beliefs and practices came about, encourage them as they face challenges and persecution, make sense of the bewildering variety within the Christian world, and give tools to evaluate contemporary movements within the Christian world.

### Limitations of church history

The study of the historical roots of the church does have a number of limitations. First, church history is not salvation history. Historical documents are not in the same category as the Word of God. We know God's hand controls all things, but as records were not inspired by the Spirit, there is more description rather than prescription. We can take note of the actions of people, but we should be careful not to ascribe to them God's approval. This is even true for many parts of Scripture where there is description of events without an

## Church News

Declined the calls extended by the Living Word Canadian Reformed Church of Guelph, Ontario and to Abbotsford Canadian Reformed Church:

### Candidate Ted VanSpronsen

Accepted the call to Busselton Free Reformed Church, Western Australia:

### Candidate Ted VanSpronsen

Declined the calls extended by the Barrhead Canadian Reformed Church and Armadale Free Reformed Church (Western Australia):

### Rev. J. Louwerse

of Neerlandia, Alberta

indication of whether God approved or not. We observe and desire to learn but we must always measure what was done against the Word of God. This means that while we learn from history, we can't really say "history teaches," as if it is authoritative.

### *The study of the history of the roots of the Church will help believers today*

Second, we are limited by the resources available. The printing press was not invented until the fifteenth century. The passage of many centuries and the social upheavals over those centuries make for a meager harvest of reliable documents.

### Getting to know our Catholic Roots

While recognizing the limitations, there is obvious benefit in getting to know the roots of the church. Normally, a study of one's roots works backwards from the present to the past. When it comes to the roots of the church, it is more fitting to move from the past to the present. To get the fullest picture, one could go back to before the foundation of the world, for all of history is rooted in the electing love of God in Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 1:4). A suitable starting point, however, is after Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit can be seen as the root of the New Testament church.

The Lord willing, in some subsequent articles, we will trace the roots of the Christian church from Pentecost toward the present.

<sup>1</sup> Mark Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House 2nd ed. 2001), 15-19.

# A Newly Renovated Church Building for Grand Valley

## Decisions, decisions, and to DACS we go

For the past few years, the congregation of Grand Valley has been blessed with much growth. There were talks of expansion and decisions to put it off. However, by early 2010, when our overflow of chairs in the front of the building began to change to an additional overflow of chairs in the entrance-way, the decision was made to begin construction on a new auditorium for our building.

In July, the construction process on the new building began and our church services moved to the temporary location of DACS (Dufferin Area Christian School) in Laurel. This meant an extra ten minutes of driving for most people, and additional work each week in setting up the chairs, stage, and nursery. During this time, our own church building in Grand Valley also remained a popular place to be on Sundays, as many people stopped on their way through to check out the week's progress.

## Back to our own building

On March 20 we all felt great joy, for this was the first Sunday that worship would be resumed in our own church building. Although there was still much work to be done, the building was ready for us to begin worshipping there, and so was everyone in the congregation! In light of the building going on within our congregation, Rev. Feenstra had been doing a series of sermons on the book of Nehemiah. This first Sunday, he preached on Nehemiah 8, with verse 10 as the text. The theme of the sermon was: "The people of God are summoned to know the joy of the Lord is their strength." 1. The Lord turns our weeping into rejoicing; 2. The Lord himself is the joy of our life.

We quickly noticed after witnessing the adult baptism of a member of our congregation, that not only did our new auditorium provide more than enough seating for every member of our congregation, but also



for many guests with room to spare! Our new fellowship hall was also a great blessing in that there was ample room for everyone to socialize following this and every service!

## June 4: open house and official opening

After much preparation, June 4, 2011 was set as the date of our official opening and open house. Prior to this time, much work was done to complete the final inside work, as well as the final laying of sod and landscaping around the church. A new sign was installed near the road, with the first message announcing our open house to the community. The words "For the joy of the Lord is your Strength" (from Nehemiah 8:10b) were placed on the wall above the entrance to the auditorium. Joy was the theme of the day and evening.

Our open house ran from 1:00 to 4:00 that afternoon. During that time we had many visitors from both the town of Grand Valley and from within our own federation. We had greeters ready to welcome all those who came through the doors and offered tours and information of the new facility as well as

information on the Canadian Reformed federation. During this time, our MPP Sylvia Jones also stopped by for a tour and brought along a framed letter of congratulations. There were chairs and tables set up in the fellowship hall and a variety of snacks and drinks available. During the open house and prior to the program Amanda Kapteyn played the harp, providing beautiful background music.

The feeling of joy continued into the evening at our program that began at 7:30. Our MC John VanderWoerd began the evening with a word of welcome, and we all sang "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing." Bible reading and prayer followed; then John presented us with a brief history of our congregation here in Grand Valley, reflecting also on the last building

project of our original building in 1990.

Rev. Feenstra presented a meditation entitled "Joy!" He reminded us that our joy does not come in physical buildings, but in the Lord who provides all things for us. We must never lose that focus and think that we have accomplished great things, but always remember that it is the Lord who guides and blesses all of our work! His meditation was followed by the adult choir of Fergus (with many Grand Valley members) singing two song selections in praise to the Lord for all that he has done for us.

After the audience sang Psalm 98, the children of the congregation came up and sang "Make a joyful noise to our God." Rev. Paul Aasman, our former pastor, came up next to offer a word of congratulations

in which he reflected on the times that he was pastor in Grand Valley, and the many changes that have happened here since he moved on to a new congregation. Our mayor John Oosterhof also came up to speak some words of congratulations on behalf of the town of Grand Valley. This was followed by a power point presentation, showing the various construction stages.

Before ending the evening, various presentations were made. Ed Groen (the building contractor) and his wife were presented with a picture of the new church building and a picture with a text. He was thanked for all the hard work that he and his crew have put in over the past few months. Keith Sikkema and Jelko Oosterhof accepted a picture on behalf of DACS to thank them for the use of the school for our church services over the past few months. Finally, the key was presented to Council from the building committee. After singing "Great is Thy Faithfulness," closing prayer, and "O Canada," all present were invited to the fellowship hall for refreshments.

Reflecting over the changes of the past few months, we can see that our God is indeed faithful. In a small town where many churches are closing their doors, the Lord has blessed our own church with expansion and a new building. We pray that we will be a light in our community, and continue to stand faithful, for the joy of the Lord is our strength!







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# Peregrine Survey Summer 2011

Construction (not just repair and maintenance) continues to be a refrain at several of our schools. A few years ago, Timothy Canadian Reformed School Society in Hamilton purchased and refurbished a large surplus public school building – too large for the student body at that time. The building soon became too small for the school's nearly 300 students, and expansion plans are well on the way. A "Building on Blessings" Fundraising Committee is actively doing what it was assigned, and a Building Committee is hoping to complete a detached four-pack modular unit before school starts in September.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Reformed Elementary School in Mussel, The Netherlands, is not growing but shrinking to just thirty-four students this fall – and it is going to cost them extra money. Government criteria determine that it would therefore have to operate with just two teachers. After a recent parent meeting where this was announced, parents spontaneously wondered what it would take to keep a third teacher on staff. An additional one-time fee of €300 (\$430 or so) per family would cover the additional expense – and even though the Regional TV station considered this a hefty fee, the school's principal was optimistic about the drive.

More fund raising was going on in Hamilton, when, on May 14, a Benefit Mass Choir Concert was had in Hamilton to help Ambassadors Christian School in Ottawa off to a good start in September. Details can be found at its website, <http://www.ambassadorschristianschool.ca/>. Around the theme of Songs of Heaven, the concert assembled some 325 voices from eleven choirs and included a number of solos and quartets, with instrumental contributions of trumpet, flute, violin, viola, cello, organ, and piano. The final song of the concert, Amazing Grace, was accompanied by the pipers of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (the Princess Louise's). At

the time of writing proceeds from tickets and CD sales netted \$26,000. May the Lord bless the Ottawa community with their school, and make it a blessing for those around them.

Owen Sound Canadian Reformed School is not building (yet?), but will now be known by another name. The community was looking for a shorter way to be used as a means of presenting themselves. They considered suggestions such as Dayspring, Harvest, Rockford, and Jubilee, took a vote, and initially opted for Jubilee. In the principal's mind, Jubilee personifies the joy of learning and celebrating the LORD's glorious word and works. A verse from Psalm 92 is being considered to round out the school's motto. The matter is under re-consideration, as confusion is now anticipated with "Jubilee Worship Centre," which is coming to town.

Timothy is one school that has an active IT (Information Technology) committee. Such committees help develop policies and procedures with which the students and teachers can safely and effectively benefit from online resources, and are often also charged with the technical aspects of making the whole system work. These committees frequently find that their work links to many areas of computer usage in the school that may never have been governed by policy. Ontario's CARE Committee (Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Education) now has plans to develop a Conceptual IT Framework for our schools as well, and the Fraser Valley's RCDC (Reformed Curriculum Development Committee) has looked at the issue previously. While schools need to embrace generic frameworks and perspectives developed by joint activities, they also must apply these documents, draw conclusions, and make investments commensurate with their local situation. The combination of studying and embracing a Conceptual Framework (along with the thoughtful development of its local application involving all those

who have to work with it) make for a commitment to make it work as intended. As for the technical aspects, here is another avenue for community members to volunteer their time and expertise.

Larger schools with double classes have an option of re-mixing the students every year. As a matter of policy, Timothy (Hamilton) first considers

what is best for the education of the children as a class. We think about those who receive extra support from the resource room and whether it is advantageous to have them together or not. We think about student ability levels so that we have a good mix of abilities in both classes. Then we consider personalities that work well together and split some that are better off not being together in the same class. We think of having an equal number of boys and girls in each class and we also try to pair each student with at least one other child of the same gender from the same congregation.

And finally, we consider special parental requests, but the reasons have to be very sound and fit within the other criteria.

Smaller schools don't have such options, and may not miss them, either.

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*It is also fitting that we, collectively  
with other Canadian Reformed Schools  
...collaborate to promote and develop  
Reformed curriculum*

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From time to time, as above, we make reference to RCDC of British Columbia. Its work is akin to that of CARE in Ontario. Even though these committees work with somewhat different expectations and in differing realities, some comments from Credo Elementary Christian School's chairman (Langley) apply to both and to all our schools:

The integration of Reformed worldviews and God's sovereignty over all into teaching at CCES is central to our identity as a school. It is also fitting that we, collectively with other Canadian Reformed Schools. . . . collaborate to promote and develop Reformed curriculum. . . . The RCDC is primarily a funding and administrative body. Projects approved by the RCDC are delegated

to, and delivered by, the Curriculum Cooperative Committee. Since being established in 1989, nearly ten curriculums have been developed, with the latest being social studies/history in 2006, and K-10 science in 2009. We are grateful for the efforts of those involved, including many teachers who work on these curriculums in rare spare moments throughout the school year, and during the summer break. A flagship of the RCDC efforts has been a church history curriculum named *The Flame of the Word*. The third and final volume has recently been completed, and the authors are presently completing the teacher's manual. . . . Personal copies can be purchased at [www.godutch.com](http://www.godutch.com).

If all progressed as intended, a crew of CARE writers completed the draft of a Bible Study teacher resource this summer. CARE's *Review and Editing Committee* will review and edit the completed drafts during the 2011-2012 school year and we look forward to its completion. Apart from the work of CARE and RCDC, it is good to see schools cooperate on and share in the development of curriculum and policy, as Covenant Christian School's principal (Flamborough) observes: "There are many benefits in schools working together on curriculum projects such as these (i.e., Jump Math); for example, uniformity in curriculum, sharing of resources, teachers of like grades working together and sharing ideas, bulk purchasing, etc."

In Burlington and Flamborough, the votes for amalgamating John Calvin Christian School and Covenant Christian School, respectively, did not quite carry as hoped. Yet, there remains "a strong sentiment to amalgamate." With the results of two ad hoc committees regarding specifics of costs and fund raising, it is expected that a focus on Christ-centred and affordable quality education will carry the day, and that amalgamation will happen. This would result in a school on the enlarged Flamborough property, and likely include Kindergarten. The schools work together intensively in such things as developing curriculum and purchasing textbooks and resources, so amalgamation will be greatly facilitated when it happens.

Schools are communities which only work when all do their part. CCES (Langley) found an interesting way to express that, "even though we are all individuals, we are all connected." A huge word search was designed

which included the names of all students and teachers. "It became the focus of attention for many days as all students went about finding their names." Perhaps more connections could be found than just the letters names had in common.

Most schools incorporate some form of outdoor education in their program, including subject-specific field trips and a year-end fun trip. One school's Education Committee discussed school trips and polled its membership on the number of, the academic and pleasure value the community perceived them to have for the children's "educational experience," and their financial ramifications – to "facilitate our discussions further." The responses did not warrant sweeping conclusions or changes.

As some other Christian schools close, and dissatisfaction with the public school grows, we occasionally get to entertain enrolment requests from outside our church community. When developing a policy to govern such requests, what should be included? One may think of logistics, such as transportation, class size, special needs, and

availability of space. Financial aspects also come to mind: Should fees be the same as for church members, or does the prospective member have to pay a fee based on total budget divided by the number of children in the school? What about the standard expectation of two years or so of "prepayment"? What consideration should be given to letting our light shine before men, and allowing the school to take on a bit of a mission approach? What happened in that regard to initially flourishing Christian Reformed Schools? We had good reasons to establish Canadian Reformed Schools and it is well to cherish and guard the blessings they provide. It is inevitable that the characteristics and markers of our schools, as reflected in a sound constitution, and as often summarized by "The Four Markers of Reformed Education" should play a significant role in the communications to prospective parents of students from outside our community. If and when such children attend, the school should not become any less covenantal or confessional. It should also maintain its integrated recognition of the antithesis, and the unity of purpose between home and school and the church of the founding community should not be watered down. It will be easy to maintain on paper that the school has not changed, but, in the presence of children from other religions, might the practice soften up on some bold perspectives about the only way of salvation?

Summer has come and gone, and around the country crews have been sprucing up the buildings. Maintenance committees, cleaners, and painting pals everywhere organized social events to get the facilities ready for teaching precious children for another year. May the facilities be as well prepared as the teachers, bus drivers, volunteers, and students are expected to be after a good summer vacation, ready for another year of teaching and learning, another year of growth in knowledge and wisdom and stature – and especially in the fear of the Lord.

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*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](mailto:obouwman@cornerstoneschool.us).*





# Ray of Sunshine

by Corinne Gelms and Patricia Gelms



Hi my name is Jerry Bontekoe, and I have been living at Anchor home for twenty-five years! Wow we just remembered that Anchor Home opened in 1986 and now being 2011 makes it twenty-five years! Congratulations!

I do a lot of things to keep busy; I enjoy going for walks in the hopes that a neighbour is outside so I can stop to say "Hi" as I like to talk. I also help keep the grass cut at Anchor, as well as volunteer at the Bibles for Mission store in Beamsville. I work at Anchor punching holes in small flower pots for a local greenhouse.

I enjoy going to visit my dad and talking to my family. I attend Vineyard Canadian Reformed Church in Lincoln and enjoy visiting with the other members from the church for lunch on Sundays. My hobbies are counting my pictures and playing on my computer. . . . I even beat the computer sometimes! I am thankful that we have our homes and for the staff that work in these homes, otherwise where would we be? Thank you to everyone for your support and prayers; we too remember you in our prayers.



## Birthdays in September:

- 8 **MARSHA MOESKER** will be 34  
6528 1st Line  
RR 3, Fergus, ON N1M 2W4
- 11 **MARY VANDE BURGT** will be 55  
34468 Eton Crescent  
Abbotsford, BC V2S 4W7
- 14 **JERRY BONTEKOE** will be 47  
c/o Anchor Home, 361 Thirty Road  
RR 2, Beamsville, ON LOR 1B2
- 22 **NICK PRINZEN** will be 39  
653 Broad Street West  
Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8
- 29 **PAUL DIELEMAN** will be 42  
653 Broad Street West  
Dunnville, ON N1A 1T8

Congratulations to everyone celebrating a birthday this month. We wish you all God's rich blessings for this new year, and we hope and pray that you will have an enjoyable day together with your family and friends.

### A note to all parents and caregivers

If there are any address or other changes that we need to be aware of please let us know as soon as possible.

You can contact us by the following means:

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Phone: 905-957-0380  
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