

# Clarion

Numbers 10:1-10

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*What does  
God's Word  
say about  
dancing?*

## **Inside this Issue**

- *May I Have This Dance?*
- *God is There When We Pray*





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# May I Have This Dance?

In no time, the tables and chairs are cleared away. The lights are suddenly turned down. Red, blue, and green strobe lights appear and start flashing across the room just as the music starts. A romantic song is cranked louder than most can talk. One couple glides onto the floor alone to initiate the night of dancing. Soon, many couples follow.

Sound familiar? Where are we – a bar down-town? A community centre's annual dance-a-thon? Have we poked our noses into a tent late one evening at the country fair? Or walked into a high-school prom? We might find just such a scene in any of those places, but more and more we are finding it at wedding receptions among our own church members.

## What's right with it?

Many will ask, "So, what's wrong with it?" A better question to ask is: "What is right with it?" If we profess to be Christians who live every moment of every day for the glory of God, then we should be able to say about any activity we undertake: I am doing this because it honours my Maker and here is how. If we can't do that then we have a problem. The onus is on us to demonstrate first to the Lord but then also to our fellow Christians that this or any activity serves to bring respect to the Name of God.

## Out of the closet

As the history of dancing shows (see elsewhere in this issue), there are many kinds of dancing from many different cultures. We can't possibly analyze each of them nor do we need to. There is also the godly dancing of upright Israelites as Dr. Van Dam explains (see his article in this issue). Our concern in this editorial is with how our young people want to dance at weddings (and elsewhere) here in our culture. The truth is, wedding dances are nothing more than scaled-down versions of what can be found in bars and night-clubs.

It is not much of a secret that Reformed young people have, for decades already, found their way on weekends into these establishments. The brave ones get up and dance. Drinking improves the "bravery." And now, tired

of hiding it, the pressure is growing among our young adults to bring this out of the closet into the open. Parents are sometimes simply and abruptly told: *Mom, Dad, we're going to have a dance at our wedding!*

It's good that clandestine activities come out into the open for then they can be seen for what they are. So long as dancing is a hidden activity, few are giving it much thought. "Outing it" also gives the forty-plus crowd an opportunity to re-visit the not-so-glory days of their youth and have an open conversation with their young adult children about their experiences with dance. But before we simply accept those old, previously underground practices (no questions asked!), and go along with the desires of today's youth, we need to analyze them. Questions do need to be asked and as Christians we start with a basic one: what does God's Word say about such dancing? Does it serve to honour the Name of our Saviour?

## Couple dancing

The basic kind of dancing that we're talking about is couple dancing, man-woman. Sure, there is the traditional father-daughter dance at weddings in our culture, but that isn't the main event. And I know that groups of girls will get up and dance together but, let's be honest, that's just because the boys haven't worked up the nerve to ask them yet, isn't it? What everyone really wants is to dance with a member of the opposite sex. Indeed, this is the very nature of the dancing done in bars (including country-western bars – witness the movie *Footloose*), night-clubs, and inherited from a long tradition of ballroom dancing through the waltz, the twist, the jitterbug, lambada, right up to the groove-any-which-way you like "free" dance of today's club scene. Both history and honest observation make it clear that the dancing we're keen on is boy-girl.

Consider the slow dance: a young man takes a young woman in his arms to sway in unison. Their bodies are close together, even pressing each other. For the faster songs, they step apart a foot or two but continue to face each other. Even if they turn away for a moment, they are dancing *with each other*, for each



other. Their eyes meet often. Hips and buttocks sway, bosoms bounce to the pulsating beat – can anyone deny that these dances are laden with sexual messages? It is as plain as day that these dances openly display sensuality and evoke sexual desire, even lust.

### The world's perspective

Is this an over-reaction? Maybe I've been cooped up in the study too long and have a bad case of "preacher's over-kill." Well, don't just take my word for it - what does the world say of such dances? They were invented by and perfected by the unbelieving world, so what do they think of them?

Writing of the considerably tamer (by today's standards) waltz, one source says, "The waltz not only made it possible for individuals to come together on an egalitarian basis, it also made possible a kind of 'escape' from reality through the thrilling dizziness of whirling one's way in a private world of sensuality."<sup>1</sup> Another writer comments, "The wag who said that dancing was the 'vertical expression of a horizontal thought' told part of the truth about social dancing. Its existence is an expression of sexual relations. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Still another dance historian sums it up this way: "By its very nature the act of dancing is exhibitionistic. The dancer seeks to become the object of attention. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

What kind of attention? Pete McMartin, a long-time columnist for the *Vancouver Sun*, makes it abundantly clear in a recent article. After taking his wife out for

### What's Inside

Dear readers, welcome to our special issue on the topic of dance. We start with an editorial from Rev. Peter Holtvlüwer on how to view dancing in our culture and time, particularly in the context of wedding celebrations.

Further into the issue, you can find an article from Dr. Cornelis Van Dam on dance in the Bible, the dance of joy and praise. Moving on, Erica Holtvlüwer brings the readers through the history of dance into the twentieth century. It is also our pleasure to reprint a Press Review by Prof. J. Geertsema on the topic of social dance.

Issue II also includes the second of three Pentecost articles by Dr. Van Dam that began in the last issue. This article discusses the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. We also continue the early Canadian church history series with part three of four from Dr. Leen Joosse and Dr. Wes Bredenhof.

In news from the federation, we have a Seminary Corner from Dr. Gerhard Visscher. Read on to find some interesting statistics on how many new ministers our federation will be needing in the coming years! Dr. Visscher also includes an introduction to David Winkel, a fourth year student who has just completed his studies at CRTS, as well as a devotion by Mr. Winkel.

Issue II is completed with the regular columns Treasures New and Old and Ray of Sunshine.

Laura Veenendaal



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an evening of ballroom type dancing, he decided to write about the experience. He frankly describes his perception of the dancing he observed: "It was sex of a kind, barely disguised yet courtly, with the men wanting control and the women – in this rare instance – happy to let them have it. It was the dance within the dance, the subtle wrestling between the genders, and it was vastly more sexy to watch than the hump and grind of hip hop."<sup>4</sup> Couple dancing is inherently sexual in nature.

## Sex and dance

What this sort of dancing does is to put on public display what God has ordained for the privacy of the bedroom – the bedroom of the *married*. Sensuality, seduction, sexual desire, and lust are given free rein in couple dancing, and most aren't married. How can single Christians dance in this manner with members of the opposite sex and be right in the Lord's eyes? And when a group of young ladies starts jiving on the dance floor, what sort of attention are they calling to themselves and what thoughts are going through the minds of the male observers? When girls groove, boys watch and desires build – does that fit with the command to avoid whatever may entice us to unchastity (LD 41)? Is that taking up our cross and following Jesus?

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### *Dances openly display sensuality*

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Would it be appropriate, then, for a married couple to go out dancing like this for an evening? Certainly, a husband and wife are free to be intimate with each other, to be sensual and evoke sexual desire within each other, but that is not for public consumption. The Lord has ordained that as the pleasure and honour of the marriage bed, not the dance floor! We need to consider the context of our actions as well as the actions themselves. We need to think of who is watching and how our actions may affect them. Let husbands and wives waltz together in their bedroom but don't profane God's gift by letting others ogle your sexual intimacy in the club!

## Not even a hint

Sexuality is a beautiful gift but also a powerful weapon of Satan's in the spiritual warfare. It's not for nothing that the Bible warns often against its abuse. The Bible never addresses couple dancing *per se* but it most certainly addresses the dishonouring of sexuality. Let's not forget that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit which leads Paul to call Christians to complete purity of sexual conduct (1 Corinthians 6:19 and context). He says it again in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way

that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God." Christians are to be so careful with our sexuality that among us, "there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity" (Eph 5:3) for this doesn't fit with being God's holy people. *Not even a hint* is strong language and speaks directly against swaying hips, bouncing breasts, and "come-hither" looks on a dance floor.

## Whom are we pleasing?

Space does not permit to speak about the nature of the music to which we dance a couple dance – ask the same questions of it that we asked of dancing above and see what you find. As the pressure mounts for couple dancing to become accepted at our weddings and among our youths on the weekend, we need to ask ourselves some further hard questions: what message are we sending to the world? If we take the dance of the bars, clubs, and streets into our church halls and reception rooms, what will the world think? "Oh good, they've become like us?" Likely they will be surprised that we've become like them because they at least are honest about what they do: dancing is sexual, dancing is part of a night out which, if a person gets "lucky," ends up with him or her going "all the way." Then our witness to the world has imploded and we are not shining a light pointing to salvation from sin in Jesus Christ but we are sharing with the world in the sins of the flesh.

Still more important to ask is: what does the Lord God think about our dancing? Is He pleased? Are we aiming to please God or to pleasure ourselves? By now we know the answer. There is true joy for a Christian only when his or her thoughts, words, and deeds are in accord with God's will. A dance which flaunts sensuality and sexuality in public simply cannot please the Lord.

But in all honesty, we knew this in our hearts already, didn't we? Isn't that why we kept it out of sight all those decades? And did it not strike you as odd and contradictory when the formal wedding reception was "closed" with thanksgiving prayer at 9:30 PM and then at 9:35 PM the beat was struck, the room went dark, and bodies started swaying to pop music? It should, because in truth the two have nothing to do with each other. Let's back away from a bad trend before it takes root and let's promote a truly Christian celebration of our marriages in the Lord.

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(Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Carol Wallace and Don McDonagh, Jean L. Druesdow, Laurence Libin and Constance Old, *Dance: A Very Social History* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> McDonagh in *ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>3</sup> John Lawrence Reynolds, *Ballroom Dancing: The Romance, Rhythm and Style* (Key Porter Books, Toronto, 1998) p.93.

<sup>4</sup> Pete McMartin, "May I Have the Pleasure of This Dance?" in the Vancouver Sun, January 17, 2012.





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**MATTHEW 13:52**

# God is There When We Pray

*"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen."*

(Matthew 6:6)

Have you ever felt like the prophets of Baal? Remember the story in 1 Kings 18? They prayed, calling out, "O Baal, hear us!" They kept it up from morning until lunch time. Lunch time came and went, and still they kept it up: dancing, shouting, and calling on the name of their god! "But," says 1 Kings 18:29, "there was no response, no one answered, no one paid attention." Have you ever felt like the prophets of Baal? You say, "Whoa, funny question." But have you?

You pray to God. You pray some more. But at times there seems to be no response. No one answers. No one seems to be paying attention. And sometimes we get to the point of thinking, "Why bother praying? It makes no difference in any way."

But here Matthew 6:6 is so wonderfully comforting: "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen." The word translated as "room" in this verse is a word that indicates a room in the interior of the house. When the disciples heard that word, they would have thought of the storage room in a house. In those days that was the only interior room that had a door. Jesus wants his disciples to go to such a private and quiet room, shut the door, and there commune with God.

Here is instruction for us as God's children. One of the first things to do when we struggle with our prayer life is to make a point of regularly going to our room or to some other place where we can quietly pray to God. Your Father in heaven wants to hear from you!

You know that many today scoff at the idea of regular quiet times for prayer. The thinking is that a genuine prayer must be spontaneous and on the spot. And to be sure, there is a time for such a prayer. But Jesus' instruction teaches us that there is to be something very deliberate and purposeful about prayer: "When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen."

There is something else we need to see in Matthew 6:6. Jesus is talking about prayer and he speaks of God as "Father." That is telling. God reveals himself in his Word not only as Almighty God, but also as our Father. That is why the Lord's Prayer begins the way it does. Inside that quiet, inner room when you begin to pray and say "Our Father in heaven," that address draws you close to him. It brings you into the presence of the God of heaven and earth.

Perhaps you read that and are saying to yourself: "But God doesn't feel like a Father. In fact,

when I go to pray, God doesn't even feel like he is there." Yet notice what the verse says, "When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen." Literally the words say, "And pray to your Father who is in the hidden."

What does this reveal to us about the Father? That when you go into your inner room, your quiet and private place to pray, then your Father isn't far away and unable to reach you or be with you. But he is there. Again, sometimes it doesn't feel like that, does it? You pray, and the words feel like they go nowhere. You pray, and it is as if the ceiling and walls are made of prayer-proof dry wall – the prayer just doesn't seem to go up to God. But Jesus says it very clearly: when you pray to your Father, he is in that secret or private place with you.

He hears our prayers when they are spoken in spontaneous joy. He hears them when they are just a groan coming from a heart heavy with worry. He hears them when they are barely audible whispers coming from lips that are dying. He hears them when they are thoughts that we struggle to put together in a coherent fashion. The Father is there with you when you pray. Jesus Christ said so!







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# Dancing for Joy

Since this issue of *Clarion* has an editorial on dancing, it was felt that an article on dancing in the Bible would be appropriate. Where does Scripture mention this activity and what did it entail? What were the occasions? The Bible makes no mention of the romantic, male-female dancing that is well-known in our contemporary western world. In the Old Testament dancing is an expression of great joy. It was the opposite of mourning and wailing (Ps 30:11; Eccl 3:4; Lam 5:15). Dancing was therefore associated with especially happy events. This article will therefore concentrate on this type of dancing and for the most part ignore the dancing influenced by or associated with pagan rites and practices (e.g. Judges 21: 19-23; 1 Kings 18:26; Matt 14:6).

## Dancing and praise

What event could bring more joy than to experience God's deliverance from evil? Small wonder that dancing is associated with the Lord's great deeds of deliverance. Here are some examples. After God's victory over the Egyptians whom he drowned in the sea, "Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea'" (Exod 15:20-21). When Jephthah's army returned victoriously after defeating the Ammonites, his daughter rejoiced by going out to meet him "dancing to the sound of tambourines" (Judg 11:34). After David's triumph over the Philistines, the women came out "with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang" (1 Sam 18:6-7). When David brought the ark of the Lord into Jerusalem he danced "with all his might. . . leaping and dancing before the Lord" in celebration of the Lord's favour to him (2 Sam 6:14-21). It is clear that dancing was not done for social amusement. It was to praise God for his

wondrous acts. The psalms therefore exhort, "Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp" (Ps 149:2-3; also Ps 150:4).

The fact that dancing and praise to God were related in Old Testament times did not prevent an abuse of dancing and sinful conduct. The prime example is the dancing that accompanied the worship of the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai. Under the guise of this being a festival to the LORD, they danced and "Aaron had let them get out of control" (Exod 32:25). They had indulged in revelry (Exod 32:6) which Moses subsequently condemned most severely. He ordered the Levites to kill the offenders. Three thousand died (Exod 32:25-28). The sin was so grievous that the Lord struck the people with a plague and refused to accompany them further (Exod 32:35; 33:3).

## A liturgical dance today?

Since the Old Testament speaks of dance in the context of praising God, some churches, including Reformed ones, are including a liturgical dance in their liturgy. Should we do so as well? When you think about this issue, it is really quite a leap of logic to go from the occurrences mentioned above to suggesting that these incidents justify incorporating a liturgical dance into our regular worship services.

## *Dancing was associated with especially happy events*

First, there is no evidence that regular Old Testament worship as mandated by the Lord God included dancing. Furthermore, there is no mention of dance in the context of worship in the New Testament. The response of dancing as a spontaneous token of gratitude to God was apparently widespread in

# Church News

## Change of worship location

As of May 6, the URC of PEI will be worshipping at 70 Royalty Junction Road in Winsloe, PE C1E 1Z2 (SDA Building)

To get to the new building, take Highway 2 (Malpeque Rd.) going north from the Charlottetown bypass past the Sears. In Winsloe, turn right on Winsloe Road (Rt. 223). Immediately turn right again on Royalty Junction Road.

Our new service times are 10:30am and 7:00pm. If you would like more information please contact Rev. Alons at [naalons@yahoo.com](mailto:naalons@yahoo.com) or [www.peiurc.org](http://www.peiurc.org)

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410 Crerar Drive, Hamilton, ON L9A 5K3

Declined the call to Barrhead, Alberta CanRC:

**Rev. R. Aasman**

of Edmonton-Providence CanRC

spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). It takes place in the congregation, God's dwelling place (2 Cor 6:16), and is focused on the Word. A liturgical dance, along with all the trappings that come with it, is a harsh and foreign intrusion into this milieu. In the sixteenth century, the Reformed churches rightly rejected the morality plays and other theatrical aids to worship and we do well to continue to follow suit.

## In conclusion

Dancing and leaping for joy were wonderful spontaneous expressions of gratitude to God for his wondrous acts of mercy and love. This is the type of positive dancing that the Old Testament deals with. We do well not to forget that child-like joy and exhilaration that makes children leap and jump out of sheer gladness. After all, do we not remain all through life little children of our great and awesome Father above who has given to us riches and blessings beyond our wildest imagination!?



Old Testament times. We may not be as exuberantly inclined as people from the (ancient) Middle East, but who does not sometimes wish to jump for joy because one is so happy and excited by the blessings God gives? Praise him with dancing (Ps 145:3)! Such spontaneous shows of joy can still be exhibited (cf. Acts 3:8). But to incorporate them into formal worship is an entirely different matter.

## *Dancing was not done for social amusement*

Second, if what I saw on YouTube is indicative (and I watched a number of movie clips), the type of liturgical dances currently presented in worship services are a far cry from what we read about dancing in praise to God in the Old Testament. Today carefully choreographed dances take centre stage and this performance, along with the talented and beautiful dancers or actors, very quickly become an important and possibly sensual focus for the service. The result is that the proclamation of the Word is no longer central. Unlike Old Testament worship which had many outward and physical elements in the elaborate temple service, our worship is to be in



Greek Lute

# A Brief Dance through History

Have you ever wondered where dancing comes from? The impulse to dance, to move one's body to the rhythm of a beat seems to be age-old. The earliest historical records of peoples dancing, whether individually or in groups, can be dated back to the ancient Mediterranean cultures of the Chaldeans, Sumerians, and the early Egyptian period. Whether for pagan worship, to celebrate military victory, or for communal entertainment, the different types of dances recorded throughout history are manifold, often dictated by cultural context, class distinction, as well as the specific occasion for the dance.

In this article we will focus on the history of three main-line dances which we still encounter in North American culture today: the *courtly ballroom dance*, *country dance*, and *modern social dancing*. While these three types of dances share some of the same origins, they have emerged as three popular styles of dance each in their own right.

## Courtly dance

The oldest of the three, ballroom dancing began as court dancing in the fifteenth century, so-named because it was largely performed in the royal courts of Europe. It had everything to do with social rank and class. If you were not part of the elite upper class of privileged nobility, you simply weren't invited or welcomed at the ball! Dance masters were employed, dance schools sprang up, and new dances were created and taught to the nobility according to set choreography and patterns.

In reality, though, the actual dances themselves were not new inventions but rather highly developed forms of simpler folk dances of the lower classes. The average "commoner" of medieval times engaged in the "round dance" which was performed by a long chain of dancers holding each other by the hand and moving

about in a circle or in a line. Similarly, most, if not all, of the court dancing at this time was done together in groups.

## Couple dance

However, as the Middle Ages gave way to the more worldly-minded spirit of the Renaissance, courtly dance began to change. The *couple dance* was introduced, an innovation that was initially considered quite scandalous! The *minuet* of the baroque period was one of the first couple dances to become popular, characterized by small steps set to  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, accompanied by bows and curtsies and graceful slides past the partner. The *waltz* took this type of dance a step further, changing from the heavy clogging of the slower *landler* dance found in Austria to the quicker, graceful, and intimate closed-couple dance that captured the hearts of the nobility during the nineteenth century Romantic Era.

The music of Johann Strauss only served to further popularize the waltz, capturing the growing European zest for romance and sensuality. Now couples routinely touched rather than remaining in groups dancing at arm's length from each other. One social dance historian notes, "Where logic and rules had dominated the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, now the power of individual emotions determined behavior. These emotions propelled men and women into each other's arms in public, with the closed couple constituting a private world in a public place" (McDonagh, p. 70).

## Courtly dance in the New World

Ballroom dancing did not catch on in early America, largely due to the very different context than that of Europe. Life was sparse and hard for early settlers, with little time or opportunity for entertainment. The Puritans had come to the New World in order to set up



a society based on a strict Calvinistic interpretation of the Bible. There were prohibitions against gambling, drama, certain forms of music, as well as dancing. In particular, the early Puritans forbade mixed dancing (between men and women), dancing in taverns, Maypole dancing, or dancing accompanied by feasting and drinking (Krauss, p. 98).

However, as affluence spread with the growth of the Colonies, leisure time became more of a reality. Dance began to be viewed as an acceptable form of recreation as well as a part of a proper education. By early nineteenth century, much as had occurred in Europe years before, dance masters and their schools began to flourish, especially in urban centres like New York.

### Growth in popularity

Dancing as a way of marking out social class was less in play in the New World, however, than in the centuries-old European society. The notion that this



type of dancing was only for "the court" (upper classes) did not take root in America, as there initially were even very few large homes which could host a ball in a proper ballroom! These events were hosted in larger public facilities and so became a venue for popular socializing.

In the New World, the ever-expanding middle class was gathering strength as well as access to these types of public entertainment. Unlike in Europe with its social entrenchment, in young America every "pauper" could (in theory) rise to the level where he could play as "prince." Still, resistance to the intimate character of the ballroom dance persisted. "In the 1830s. . . ministers preached vehemently against the 'abomination of permitting a man who was neither your lover nor your husband to encircle you with his arms, and slightly press the contours of your waist'" (Krauss, p.109).

### Country dance

Understandably, in the rough-and-tumble atmosphere of the frontier, court dancing with its formalities and open-couple formations did not remain unaffected. In many areas, it was quickly transformed into country dancing and the "caller" soon replaced the dance master. The movements of the German polka and the Viennese waltz from Europe joined and evolved into what was called *round* and *square* dancing.

Cowboys on the western frontier from the 1860s to the 1890s took these more traditional dance moves and assimilated them into the *country-western* style. In fact, by the middle of the nineteenth century, country & western dance was becoming popular from the mid-west of America all the way to the west coast. This folk dancing was usually carried out at country fairs, weddings, barn-raising bees, and quilting parties.

Some argue that the square dancing we know today evolved more directly from the old *contra* dances (also known as English Country dances) that were very popular in the New England States from the early 1800s. Two lines would form, men on one side, women on the other. The partners would join between the two lines and generally do their own routine down the middle. When they reached the end of the lines, they parted and moved back into their respective lines and the next couple would begin. There were many such "line" dances performed at this time but most of the country dancing was done by couples, coming to be popularly known as *square dancing*.

## Square dancing

Square dancing is performed by sets or squares made up of four couples whose movements are directed by a "caller" who chants, says, or sings the square dance calls. A wide variety of patterns are performed in sequence according to the calls. The "raw" folk dancing of the cowboy and his peers came to be standardized in the various steps and sets of the square dance. Original calls included phrases like "honour your lady" from the courtly Parisian quadrille dances of the late seventeenth century, but later calls included, "barbed wire fence and a great big gate, promenade eight 'til you get it straight" from the frontier era. Contemporary ones include, "spin chain the gears" and "slip the clutch." You can hear the undertones of sexual intimacy when the caller cries out, "Meet your honey, pat her on the head, if she don't like biscuit, give her cornbread!" *Cornbread* refers to an arm's length two-hand swing with your partner while the *biscuit* is an up close waist-swing.

The European roots of square dancing remain evident in calls such as, *allemande left* which harkens back to an early German folk dance where the man and lady at his left were to swing with the left arm. The same can be seen in the movement *do sa do* (from the French *dos à dos*, literally, *back to back*) which requires the dancers to move forward and pass around each other, back to back.

Renowned American caller and square dance instructor Betty Casey notes in the introduction to her square dancing instruction manual that, over time into the twentieth century, square dancing became synonymous with rowdiness and drinking. This in turn caused the quality of square dancing to degenerate. Nevertheless, following World War II, there was a re-emphasis by some of the "masters" on education of the standardized steps and sets of the dance. This had the desired effect of creating and sustaining square dancing as a recreational fad for middle-class couples, even leading some women to extol the virtues of learning the dance as a means to introduce temperance to their husbands (Casey, p.5)! Line dancing, which emerged in the 1990s thanks to country crooner Billy Ray Cyrus and his "Achy Breaky Heart," takes the square dance and opens up the formation once again into groups and lines performing synchronized steps.

## Modern social dancing

The post-World War II culture did not just make room for the "suburbanizing of square dancing" but it also gave rise to a youth culture which embraced the arrival of rock and roll and moved away from the "touch" dances of earlier decades. Beginning with the *twist*, the *stroll*, and the *bop*, a new dance craze developed, one that embraced the accentuated percussion beats of rock and roll.

In the *twist*, partners let go of each other, step apart, and proceed to twist, shake, undulate and wriggle on their own. Similar patterns emerged in subsequent dances like the *frog*, the *monkey*, and the *jerk*. Into the background went the comparatively tame *charleston* and *foxtrot* and out into the popular centre emerged Latin-influenced dances such as the *mambo*, the *meringue*, and the *cha-cha* with their pulsating music and sensual moves. This new kind of dancing meant liberation not only from the rules of leading and following but from rules of any kind, allowing the body to move freely, without restrictions or norms.

On the heels of this new dance fad followed the discotheque. In the mid-seventies, discos were known to be crowded, dark places that vibrated with deafening music and elaborate shows of moving coloured lights. One author describes it this way, ". . .do your own thing was the battle cry of the decade. . . department had definitely taken a backseat to the sheer pleasure of rhythmic movement" (McDonagh, p.78).

It is fair to suggest that in the second half of the twentieth century, dancing as a form of entertainment moved out of the ballrooms and country halls to the high school proms, the downtown bars, and the massive urban rock concerts. Aside from line-dancing, most popular dancing today remains couple dancing. And though choreographed couple dancing remains a fixture in some traditional quarters, what we largely have today is an "anything-goes" approach.

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# The Social Dance Issue

This Press Review was originally published in *Clarion*, Vol. 26, p. 472 in 1977.

In the previous "Press Review" I promised that I would bring the above-mentioned issue to the attention of the readers of *Clarion*. In the September issue of *The Outlook* the Rev. John Vander Ploeg writes an editorial about it. The Board of Calvin College in Grand Rapids made a decision with respect to "social dancing," declaring it to be acceptable in a certain way. The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church did not disapprove. We read:

The CRC Synod of '77 has something to say to all who still have ears to hear and eyes to see. This year's Synod is giving out signals – ominous signals – so loud and clear that he who runs may read.

Religious dullards, deliberate cop-outs, those whose chief concern is not to rock the boat, and those who want to be comfortable at any and all costs, may fail or refuse to take note of these signals. Liberals and the like (the foe within the gate) may tell us there is really no cause for concern as to the future of the Reformed faith. And, as the saying has it, "The devil is never too busy to rock the cradle of a sleeping saint."

Now, these signals – what are they? The following come to mind – Synod's decisions concerning:

– Social dancing at Calvin College. . . .

More issues follow, but we confine ourselves to this one. Rev. Vander Ploeg writes:

Well, as a CRC we have come a long, long way in these matters since 1928 and 1951. It is very urgent for us to take stock to know whether this has been for good or for evil. Specifically, how is so-called "social dancing" looked upon in the CRC today? The CRC Synod of '77 has left us with a number of highly important signals. . . .

Simply stated, the Calvin Board (composed largely of CRC ministers and a minority of laymen) decided to approve of and to introduce social dancing at Calvin College.

Shock-proof as one becomes in times like these, I'll admit that this still came across as a shocker to me. And when this matter was reported at Synod, and when Dr. Harry Holwerda (an M.D. from De Motte, Indiana and serving as a delegate from Classis Illiana) made a motion to *disapprove* of this decision of the Calvin Board, and when I naively expected that the CRC Synod would certainly endorse such disapproval, and when I heard instead that the motion to disapprove was soundly defeated – frankly, I could hardly believe my ears. Was that really the Synod of our CRC?

As stated above, the Calvin Board is largely made up of CRC ministers. Moreover, the CRC Synod has 76 ministers as delegates. However, the minutes of the Calvin Board meeting record that only one member (Mr. Berton Sevensma, a Grand Rapids attorney) requested that his *negative vote* on the social dancing decision be recorded. It seemed significant also that it was a young medical doctor at Synod who made the motion to *disapprove* of this action of the Calvin Board. To be sure, there were ministers who spoke in favour of the motion to *disapprove* but it is worthy of note and also of appreciative recognition that it was a lawyer and a medical doctor who spoke up as they did on this matter.

In the article the entire decision of the Board of Calvin College is then given. From it I take over the main part. It reads:

Whereas out of concern for the increasing practice of social dancing on the campus of Calvin College, the President of the College, on December 1, 1976, appointed an *ad hoc* (for this matter) Committee on Dancing, and said Committee reported its findings to the President and the Board of Trustees at its meeting of May 23, 1977 and days following.

The Board of Trustees states its position on this matter in the following way:

1. The Board instructs the Administration to implement immediately the development of social dancing in a Christian manner by:
  - a. instructing its art, music, drama, and physical education departments to provide leadership and direction in using the social dance in a Christian way, and
  - b. "All Christians, according to the talents God has given them, must work positively and constructively to fulfill the cultural mandate" (Acts of Synod, 1966, p. 34).
  - c. A policy allowing students the freedom to dance ought to be accompanied by instructions to those who guide these students to provide leadership in implementation, and by instructions, to the students themselves.
2. The Board accepts the recommendation included in the report of the *ad hoc* Committee on Dancing that Calvin College "allow for social dancing as an acceptable, and wholesome, on-campus, recreational activity for Calvin students and staff," as regulated by the guidelines given in the same report.

*Ground:*

The decision of Synod (1971) provides a sound basis for the College to authorize dancing within the above guidelines.

3. The Board instructs the Administration to delay implementation of this policy until September 1978.

*Grounds:*

- a. This will allow the Calvin College community the time needed to implement the development of social dancing in a Christian manner.
- b. This will allow the Calvin College constituency and the Christian Reformed churches and assemblies the time needed to express a collective mind on the position of the Board of Trustees.

I ask the reader's special attention for the motive of the Board of Calvin College to appoint a committee that had to deal with the matter of social dancing. In the consideration we read: "Whereas *out of concern for the increasing practice of social dancing on the campus of Calvin College. . .*" This means that social dancing is practically an accepted thing for many. I can understand that there was a reason for concern for the

Board at Calvin College. I read in this consideration that the Board wished that this dancing was not an accepted thing. But it is. At "Calvin" it is done, whether one agrees with it or not. Confronted with this situation, the Board decided to do whatever possible to make the best of it. And the only possibility left, as they saw it – I think – was to lead and instruct the "dancers" in such a way that they would learn to practice their social dancing in a "Christian way": "Christian" social dancing, so to speak.

Before I continue with my remarks I first will quote some more of what Rev. Vander Ploeg writes. He says that he sees signals flashing and hears bells ringing. Some of those signals I quote. We read:

When signals are flashing and bells are ringing at a railroad crossing to the danger of an oncoming, speeding train, a motorist or pedestrian must be blind, deaf, drunk, or bent upon suicide if he fails to take warning. The CRC constituents are no less to be pitied if they now refuse to pay attention.

Consider then a few of these signals:

1. Signal number one that should come through loud and clear to those who have long supported Calvin is that "onze school" and the CRC have changed radically. The social dance, by a synodical decision of 1928, was branded as being disreputable and a worldly amusement to be shunned. But now it is being advocated as something to be made "Christian" and as having a potential for the fulfilment of "the cultural mandate."

How unrealistic and naive can we get to be! There are other voices to which we do far better to listen. Writing in HIS MAGAZINE, Dwight Small in an article (Dec. 1962) on "Dating – with or without Dancing" writes:

"Even medical science clearly identifies dancing as a sex stimulant, going so far as to define it as an erotic exercise, as part of the sexual commerce itself. *Medical Review of Reviews* states: 'There can be scarcely any doubt that dancing came about as an adjunct of sexual stimulation.' Professor W.C. Wilkinson of the University of Chicago analyzed the modern dance as 'a system of means, contrived with more than human ingenuity, to excite the instinct of sex into action.' Roman Catholic Archbishop Spaulding of New York said that the confessional reveals the fact that nearly every known lapse of female virtue is traceable to the dance."



Are we really so gullible now as to think that the social dance can be made "Christian" and a fulfilment of the "cultural mandate"? To be sure, the signal says that times have changed and the CRC along with it – but definitely in the wrong direction! Rev. Piersma sees as a second signal that difficulties might arise for some to pay their contributions. The third signal is that many youth organizations and schools now can follow. However, I ask: How many adults have already accepted social dancing as a form of entertainment at their parties? I cannot imagine that the practice at "Calvin" is something entirely unknown and new. In signal 4 he speaks about the youth for whom this decision can become a stumbling block as spoken of in Matthew 18. Signal 5 I quote:

Another signal – number 5 – says something to the discerning student who is not misled by the Board's attempt to justify the social dance as they intend to have it at Calvin. A case in point is the following quote from a letter by Dirk Miedema of Phelpston, Ontario, published in *Calvinist-Contact* (July 15, 1977):

"Dear Sir: I am a 1977 graduate of Calvin College. I was somewhat disturbed to read that the Board of Trustees at Calvin College will be allowing social dancing at Calvin. However, I'm not as disturbed with their decision as I am with their means of justifying their decision. They justify dancing at Calvin by saying that it will be creative, educational and to the glory of God. This is a real joke for many of us who know that dancing is done for enjoyment, for entertainment and not for its creative or educational values. No matter how many good intentions the Board of Trustees has, dancing will always be just that, at Calvin, or anywhere else. . . ."

This is honest. It shows the way the "dancers" see things. "Christian, educational and creative" dancing? To speak that way is just a joke!!

In signal 6 "godly parents" are warned to "be aware of the wrong influence to which their sons and daughters will be exposed even when they entrust them to Calvin for their college education." Then we read:

Of course, we are still being given the coming year in which we may protest the Calvin Board's recent decision re the social dance. However, in view of the Synod's decision *not to disapprove* of this social-dancing decision, can we still believe that protests will now be anything more than another exercise in futility?

Signal seven – and that should suffice – we profess in our Heidelberg Catechism re the seventh commandment in Lord's Day 41 that

"God condemns all unchastity.

We should therefore thoroughly detest it and, married or single, live decent and chaste lives.

"We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul, and God wants both to be kept clean and holy.

That is why He forbids everything which incites unchastity, whether it be actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires."

Or has language like that now gotten to be for "squares" only?

I like to add a few more remarks. We read what Prof. Wilkinson of the University of Chicago said: the modern dance is "a system of means to excite the instinct of sex into action" Therefore, once again, I can understand the concern of the Board of "Calvin." I can also understand the concern of Rev. Piersma. He is quite excited in his way of writing, wanting to wake his readers up.

But is this not the way it often goes: first a certain thing is taken over from the world in the church, and then people say, "We do not like it but we have to live with the situation; we cannot reject it any longer since too many people have accepted it already; so the only thing left is to make the best of it." *And this is wrong.* I could even say: this is sin. It is sin against the third commandment. This third word of the Covenant says that we may not connect the Name of God with what is vanity. And vanity is everything that is the opposite of the Name of the LORD. The LORD is life; the LORD is holy; the LORD is reliable; and so on. So vanity is death, all that is unholy and unreliable, all that is sin and leads to sin. So we may not connect sin and what leads to sin with the Name of our God, and thus we may not give it a place in our lives.

And that is what is happening here: connecting the Name of Christ with this social dancing is connecting with the Name of Christ something that is the opposite of that Name. Christ redeems from sin. Social dancing is "a system of means to excite the instinct of sex into action." And "nearly every known lapse of female virtue is traceable to the dance," according to the archbishop of New York, who came to this conclusion on the basis of the Roman Catholic confessionals (*biecht*). So "Christian social dancing" is a *contradictio in terminis* (a contradiction in terms) already. Christ and this dancing do not go together. And therefore the Christian and this dancing cannot be connected either.

If Prof. Wilkinson and Archbishop Spaulding are right – and I do not doubt that they are – the Board of

"Calvin" and the Synod of the CRC, which must lead their people in speaking prophetically according to the truth, went badly wrong. They are following the modern liberal trend. There are "Christians" who claim that it is possible to have a homosexual "marriage" that is fully acceptable. A Christian homosexual relation? It's terrible. It's an abomination. Some maintain, even some "Christians," that, if the relation in a marriage is not good, and the husband and/or wife find more compatible partners whom they really "love," they may establish a relation with those "better" partners. We have to leave one another free in the name of "love." In other words: "Christian" adultery, and "Christian" homosexuality. Again I say: Is it not terrible? In the eyes of the LORD it must be an abomination: such a misuse of the holy Name of Christ.

And, please, let us not come with the remark that we dance only with our own husband or wife. Maybe that is so in the beginning, but the children see Mom and Dad going to a party and dance, and they hear them replying to objections: "What is wrong with it? We do it in a neat way!" (Does this mean: a Christian way? Is this out of faith? Is this according to God's will?) And the children, who are not married yet, also go to parties and go dancing. And they also reply to objections: What is wrong with it? It is nice entertainment. Dad and Mom do it, too. And the female (as well as the male) virtue is endangered. The world is in the church. What is wrong with it? This: that Christ is losing His people. Do we really need this form of entertainment? I would say: "We do not need more temptations. Without this dancing there are enough already. And the struggle to live a holy life for the Lord is difficult enough already without it."

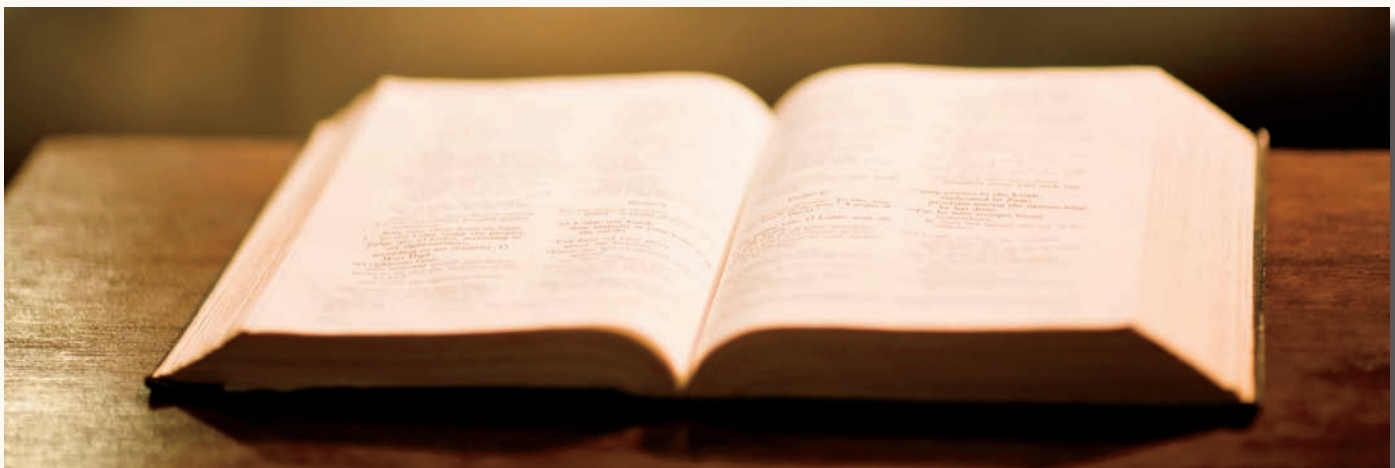
And, please, let us not come with the reply: "But we read in the Bible that also David danced." This reply

in defense of social dancing, even using the Word of God in this way, makes me angry and sad. It makes me angry, because it is a (forgive me the word: I hate to use it, but I have no better word to describe it) stupid reply, and because it is misusing God's Word. It also makes me sad, because it shows that insight in and understanding of the Word of our LORD is far gone.

Social dancing is a form of entertainment, "exciting sex into action," and, for many, leading to a "lapse of female virtue." And Christ said: "Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully (let alone "touch" her) has already committed adultery in his heart with her" (Matthew 5). We also read that no adulterer will enter the Kingdom of God. Must we, then, lead ourselves and/or our children to hell? Are we still taking Christ's words seriously? And are we aware of the cunning wiles of the deceiver of the whole world?

If we want to dance, let us, then, dance like David did. That was a totally different way of dancing. It was full of godly joy in the Lord and for the LORD. David danced when he brought the ark of the Lord to His city, Jerusalem. He danced when the Lord, so to speak, came "home." It was like a child that jumps up and down with shouts of joy, because mother comes home from the hospital after a long and serious illness. David's dancing is as far away from social dancing as entertainment, as a good Christian marriage is from adultery.

I am writing all this because I fear that this social dancing is being practiced also among us, and I want to open eyes. Let us have the wisdom and power to come back from and break with sliding in a wrong direction. The honour of the LORD's Name, and the salvation of us and our children, are at stake.







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# Pentecost: the Feast in the Light of the Old Testament (Part 2 of 3)

The question is often raised: what is the difference between the work of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament Israel and the people of God today, the new Israel of God, the church (Gal 6:16)? Is there a difference? Well, surely there must be. After all, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is signaled as the beginning of a new era. On that day, the Apostle Peter proclaimed:

This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:16-21).

A new era – the last days! And the work of the Holy Spirit figures prominently!

There is also another indication that a new era started. There is a striking passage in John 7:39 which literally reads that in the days Jesus walked on earth: "the Holy Spirit was not yet." Now since the Holy Spirit obviously existed in Old Testament times, this passage in full is usually translated: "Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified." So what exactly is the difference between the work of the Spirit in the Old and New Testaments?

In considering this question, let us briefly consider the continuity between the Old and New Testaments with respect to the work of the Spirit and how the Spirit worked in ancient Israel. In the next article, we will deal with the new elements of the work of the Holy Spirit in the last days in which we live and consider some of the consequences.

## The work of the Spirit and God's people in the Old Testament

Since we are dealing with the Spirit's work with respect to the people of God, we will not deal with his other work as in the creation of the world and related topics (cf. Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30).

In the Old Testament, as in the New, we may assume that God works faith and repentance (Acts 11:18; 16:14; 2 Tim. 2:25; John 6:44; Phil. 2:13) and that he used the Holy Spirit to do so (cf. Rom 2:29; 1 Cor 2:4; 6:11; 12:3; Gal 3:3). It is striking however that very little is said about the work of the Holy Spirit with respect to the believers as such and we simply acknowledge this as a reality.

## The Spirit and the special offices

However, the Spirit is specifically mentioned when it comes to special tasks and offices in God's service. Moses had the Spirit (cf. Neh 9:20) and God temporarily equipped the seventy elders who were to help Moses with the Holy Spirit so they could prophesy (Num 11:16-30). Obviously this gift of the Spirit was very special (cf. also 1 Sam 19:20-24). Moses cried out: "I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" (Num 11:29). Later on all the prophets were endowed with the Spirit. Micah as a prophet could say: "I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8). Indeed, a prophet is characterized as "the man of the Spirit" (Hos 9:7; NIV "inspired man;" cf. Neh 9:30; 2 Chron 15:1; 20:14; 24:20). As 2 Peter 1:21 puts it: "Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Coming to Israel's rulers, God raised up judges and equipped them by causing his Spirit to come upon them (Othniel – Judg 3:10; Gideon – 6:34; Jephthah – 11:29;

Samson – 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14; cf. also 1 Chron 12:18). Incidentally, the phrase indicating that the Spirit comes upon someone does not necessarily mean that one is regenerate. After all, the Spirit also came upon the pagan diviner Balaam (Num 24:2) whom God used to bless Israel, even though Balaam had wanted to curse God's people.

With respect to the office of king, we read that King Saul received "the Spirit of the Lord" who would equip him for the task of kingship (1 Sam 10:6, 10; 11:6). After Saul was rejected as king, the Spirit departed from Saul and came upon David (1 Sam 16:13-14; 2 Sam 23:2). With David's anointing, he received the Holy Spirit (1 Sam 16:13). David as anointed king was very conscious of the Holy Spirit's presence. When he fell into sin he prayed to God: "Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me" (Ps 51:11; also see Davidic Ps 143:10; cf. also 2 Sam 23:2; 1 Chron 28:12).

Other examples of exceptional people include the craftsman Bezalel who was charged with the awesome responsibility to make designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze for the tabernacle. Of him Lord said: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God" (Exod 31:3; 35:31)

So, to sum up, we read very little in the Old Testament about the work of the Spirit in the lives of God's people as a whole, although clearly lives of faith and obedience were the result of God's work by his Spirit (cf. John 3:3-6). The only time the Old Testament clearly speaks of the Spirit actually dwelling within a person is with respect to some of those with a special office or task as designated by God himself. The obvious emphasis in the Old Testament is not that God lives within his people but that God, the Holy Spirit, is with his people.

## God was *with* his people

And so even though some of those in special office appear to have had an indwelling Spirit, they were the exception. The overall emphasis is on the Spirit being *with* God's people rather than being inside each individual. To mention some highlights: he spoke directly to Adam and Eve even after the fall into sin (Gen 3:9-19), Enoch walked with him (Gen 5:22, 24), as did Noah (Gen 6:9). Abraham and Isaac walked before him (Gen 17:1; 24:40; 48:15). Indeed, throughout the patriarchal period we read of God accompanying his people rather than dwelling in them. When God led his people out of Egypt, Scripture characterizes the days of Moses as a time when God "set the Spirit *among* them," that is, among Israel, and guided and gave to his people rest by the Spirit (Isa 63:11, 14). This must refer to God's presence in the pillar of cloud (Exod 13:21-22) and later in the tabernacle (Exod 40:34-38).

And so, how was God with his people in Old Testament times? It was by living in their midst in a special building, first the tabernacle (Exod 40:34-38) and later the temple (1 Kings 6:13; 8:10-11; 2 Chron 5:13-14). This was God's dwelling place. His throne room was the Most Holy Place where he was enthroned on the Ark of the Covenant (Exod 40:34-38; Ps 80:1). This Most Holy Place was separated from the Holy Place by a heavy curtain (Exod 26:31-33; 36:35). Israel was shielded and protected from God's holiness by the sacrificial services administered by the Levitical priests. Israel would surely have been destroyed by God's holiness without that insulating wall of the service of reconciliation. This dwelling of God with his people in the old dispensation was a dwelling at a distance from them. He lived with Israel yes, but there was a distance and in the midst of much sin (Lev 16:16).

The temple Solomon built was eventually destroyed by the Babylonians as part of God's judgment on his people. When God's people returned to the land of Israel, the temple was rebuilt in the days of Haggai and Zechariah. While it was being rebuilt, God assured the people: "I am with you" (Hag 1:13) and "my Spirit remains among you [lit: in your midst]" (Hag 2:5). This can be understood in the context of the temple. And so in the old dispensation, the Holy Spirit worked in the lives of his people from God's dwelling place, the tabernacle or the temple (cf. Neh 9:19-20). Only the priest could enter the tabernacle or temple (Heb 9:7).

God did not want to leave it at this. It was not as it should be. There was something wrong (Heb 8:7-8). Indeed sin and the resulting punishment overwhelmed God's people. A new covenant was needed. There had to be a final solution for those sins for in the Old Testament times. God had simply passed over them (Rom 3:25). Juridically there was as yet therefore no lasting solution. And so God promised a new covenant.

The Lord God did not want to continue to live forever enclosed as it were within the Most Holy Place. He wanted to move right into the very hearts and lives of his people because he made them to be his temple and dwelling place. That is the significance of Pentecost! Of course this dramatic development did not happen overnight. After all, as mentioned, God's people are sinful and by nature depraved – with their debts not even paid! But Christ came, paid the debts, and opened the way for God to claim his people as his dwelling place, his temple here on earth!

This had enormous consequences as we will see in the next concluding article.



# Early Canadian Church History (Part 3)

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This series of articles is adapted from chapter 4 of Leendert Jan Joosse, *Geloof in de Nieuwe Wereld: Ontmoeting met Afrikanen en Indianen (1600-1700)* (Kampen: Kok, 2008)

In the previous instalment, we looked at developments in the St. Lawrence Valley. Let us now briefly turn to what happened in Acadia (or Nova Scotia as we know it today) from about 1603 onwards. Pierre Du Gua de Monts gathered about 120 people from France who were willing to migrate across the Atlantic. Eventually they came to Acadia and in 1605 built Port Royal, at the site of present-day Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia. They also established a friendly relationship with the Micmac nation. Following French policy, de Monts was accompanied by Roman Catholic priests. However, he and his colonists were also served by some Huguenot pastors.

While travelling overseas, one of the priests constantly debated a Reformed pastor about the true scriptural religion. Once they settled in Acadia, these debates dragged on. Sometimes the two men would even get into physical fights. When this happened, the victor would be supported by those who had been eagerly watching. The natives applauded these conflicts as well and would cheer for the victor, especially when he made an ostentatious display at the end. In the end, both church leaders died and colonists buried them in the same grave saying, "Let them have peace together now."

De Monts went back to France in 1606. He left Jean de Poutrincourt in command as governor of Port Royal. De Poutrincourt made more progress in the fur trade. In that same year, 1606, de Poutrincourt persuaded a notable Frenchman, Marc Lescarbot, to visit Acadia. Lescarbot was a well-educated lawyer, a politician, and appears to have been a Huguenot (though some have asserted otherwise). He would later publish a book about his experiences, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*. This book is significant because it includes extensive details about First Nations cultures

in the new world. Lescarbot was mandated to teach the colonists – men, women, and children – and also the local First Nations. As far as the colonists were concerned, there were only two Frenchmen left when Lescarbot's ship arrived at Port Royal. Nevertheless, Lescarbot intended to actively spread the gospel and it seems that he did. Every Sunday he conducted worship services at Port Royal. He taught the Bible and gave a Christian education to all who wanted to be taught in the fear of the Lord God. Lescarbot did not spend long in Acadia, however. In 1607, together with many others, he went back to France.

The efforts just outlined met with opposition from the Jesuits. The governor of the Port Royal settlement was obligated to not merely tolerate, but also accommodate the Jesuits and their activities. Here we must be aware of the situation back in France. The Reformed churches were divided into two parties at this time, particularly among those holding leadership positions in society. Some Huguenot noblemen argued that a Christian was to aggressively oppose the Roman Catholic government wherever and however possible, even by the sword if necessary. They became known as a Reformed party endorsing a politicized religion similar to the Roman Catholics. However, de Poutrincourt and other Huguenots in Canada belonged to what was known as the "prudent" party. They were more pragmatic in their approach to these issues. They were called "prudent Huguenots" because they rejected aggressive political opposition to the ruling authorities as being disobedience to the Fifth Commandment.

With that "prudence" in mind, the Huguenots allowed Jesuits to shape the religious culture of Acadia. At the same time, Lescarbot and others were encouraged to conduct Huguenot meetings. Huguenot chanteries (song-services) would be held with regular Bible preaching, the study of Scripture and, especially, the singing of Psalms. Yet when someone needed to be baptized, the Huguenots were required to make use of and attend the Roman Catholic Church. Their children had to be baptized by a priest. Because of





*Port Royal*

their moderate politics and theology, the Huguenots (in Acadia and elsewhere) recognized and accepted Roman Catholic baptism, just as many Reformed churches do today. Something similar happened with the mass. They received bread and wine out of the hands of the priests because they acknowledged them to be servants of Christ. The Huguenots recognized that the Roman Catholics also believed in the person of the Lord Jesus, his crucifixion, death, and resurrection. They argued that the strengthening of one's faith did not depend on the person administering the sacraments, but on the gospel and the working of the Holy Spirit – so long as they personally used the sacraments in faith. The Huguenots would go along with the Roman Catholics as long they could personally read the Bible and receive Bible teaching in their chanteries. After all, they reasoned, the pure teaching of the Word of God was more important than the administration of the sacraments. The Huguenot leaders in Acadia urged their people to accept the true teaching of the Bible and endorse the true religion (the Reformed faith) in their hearts.

So, from the outset the Reformed religion was spread in some limited way in Acadia. Yet, churches were not instituted and church buildings were not raised. Owing to a lack of pastors and to a conscious non-aggressive policy, the Huguenots laid a foundation for nominal Christianity in Canada both in the St. Lawrence Valley and in Acadia during the first period of 1598 to 1629.

### **A remarkable interim period**


In 1629 something remarkable happened. The Huguenots gained some authority in Canada. How did this come to pass?

Étienne Brûlé was a young Roman Catholic explorer in early Canada. He had lived among the Hurons for quite a while. This caused some consternation amongst the Jesuits and civil authorities

in New France. Consequently, in 1625, Samuel de Champlain had him expelled from Canada. He went back to France and ended up among the Huguenots in the Reformed stronghold of La Rochelle. The Scottish merchant family of Gervase Kirke had also settled in that area some years earlier. In 1627-1628, La Rochelle was besieged by Cardinal Richelieu and French royal troops. The siege was successful and La Rochelle fell to the Roman Catholic forces. Along with many Huguenots and Brûlé, the Kirke family was forced to flee. They went to England and there became involved with a plot to take Acadia and New France away from the French. Gervase Kirke and some others sent out three small armed ships – they were commanded by the Kirke sons, David, Lewis, and Thomas. They set sail with orders from the English king Charles I to take the French possessions in the name of England. With the navigational assistance of the disaffected Étienne Brûlé, Quebec and Acadia were successfully invaded by the Kirke brothers. David Kirke became the commander of Quebec. He was able to pacify the French in the area so that they did not flee New France. He arranged for a new Council in which Huguenots held the majority – his captain, Jacques Michel, became one of the councillors.

But then David Kirke became too friendly with the Roman Catholic clergy. The ardent Huguenot captain Jacques Michel protested, but there was no stopping the chain of events. Quebec was eventually lost due to conciliatory attitudes and actions. Also, the English made peace with the French in 1632 and this led to the English pulling out of New France. From that time forward, the star of Richelieu and de Champlain continued rising. The Huguenots hardly had any more opportunity to continue and maintain their religious education in Canada – the exception being in Acadia. This was a new era.

This era would continue until 1685. That was the year King Louis XIV prohibited any Huguenots from practicing their Reformed religion. As a result, a stream of refugees spread all over the world from France – many of them would eventually end up on the east coast of North America, especially in present day New York State and New Jersey. Later on (1755-1763), the British would begin deporting the Acadians. Many would end up in the thirteen American colonies. Some Acadians would also eventually make their way to French territory of Louisiana (named for Louis XIV) where they would come to be known as Cajuns.

In our last instalment, we'll look closer at the end of the Huguenot experience in New France and Acadia. 



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# Needed: Future Pastors!

It has become a custom at the end of an academic year at the seminary to familiarize the churches with those who have completed the M.Div. degree. Unfortunately, this time we have to be brief about this. The M.Div. degree will be conferred on two students at the September convocation but only one of them hopes to enter the ministry for the time being. Mr. Tim Schouten has taken up a teaching position in London, ON; while we wish Tim and Linnet well, we remain hopeful that at a future date Tim will seek to be eligible for call within the churches. Mr. David Winkel plans to become eligible for call but will put that on hold for a while as he has agreed to speak an edifying word throughout the fall of 2012 in the Guelph East church while the pastor there enjoys a sabbatical rest. Below David tells a bit about himself and his fiancée Lydia Pol. We are also pleased to provide you with some interesting food for thought – David’s final chapel address at the seminary.

Meanwhile at the seminary we have twelve other M.Div. students and one part-time B.Th. student. We are also looking forward to welcoming the largest freshman class ever this September: seven M.Div. students and one B.Th. student. It is truly wonderful that despite the pressures of our age, young men are willing to play such a servant leadership role among God’s people.

Does that mean that we have enough students now? Doubtful. Do you realize that over the next ten years, twenty of the seventy-seven ministers serving the Canadian Reformed and Free Reformed Churches of Australia will reach retirement age? Or that in the next three years ten of them will reach that age? And then there are new churches and new mission and outreach posts that will be created? Clearly, there is a task and a need for young men to consider whether their God-given abilities are not well suited for ministry within the churches. Young men who are considering this are invited to contact the Registrar a CRTS for information and consult the admissions page on the seminary

website ([www.canadianreformedseminary.ca](http://www.canadianreformedseminary.ca)). And of course, during the school year, such persons are also welcome to join us for a day! We have no doubt you will find CRTS to be a delightful place to be with its lively student body, and friendly, capable staff and faculty. A great learning environment provided by the churches for the churches!

*What follows is an introduction to David Winkel as well as a devotion written by him.*

## Introducing David and Lydia

Greetings brothers and sisters! I hope most of us are enjoying spring by now. Perhaps even my home province, Alberta, has only a foot of snow to melt yet ☺. I was born there to my parents Burt and Helena Winkel, the first of four boys, after which the Lord gave us a sister to practice our protective instincts on. Of course these events are simply trifling compared to what was going on in Holland at the time. Over there, Rev. and Mrs. Pol were blessed with a beautiful daughter named Lydia (my fiancée). As Lydia grew up in Indonesia in the context of mission work, my Dad, an engineer, moved us to Brampton, Ontario. Here we attended church in one of the oldest Canadian Reformed buildings, located in quiet rural Brampton (no longer so quiet). In the meantime, Lydia’s family moved from suburban Guelph to quiet and peaceful Carman. The Lord then organized that both Lydia and I would move to bustling Hamilton where I would landscape, take Hebrew, Greek, Classical History, and Philosophy at McMaster and then begin attending the seminary. Lydia would begin her teaching career at Timothy Christian School. Sometimes, when seminary was closed for a day, we would enjoy friends, soccer, squash, music, and fishing. If seminary was closed for more than a day, we would sometimes visit family or do something besides homework.

Seminary for me has been a wonderful place to continue to discover the treasures in God’s Word and Hamilton has been a wonderful place to discover my

sweetheart to marry July 7, DV. Another real treasure has been pastoral training with Rev. Slaa in Smithers, Dr. Bredenhof in Providence, Hamilton (home church), and more extensively with Rev. Aasman in Edmonton. I am also thankful to have had the opportunity to teach children at Streetlight Hamilton, to teach catechism to youth in Grassie, and to teach a group of Sudanese adults in Edmonton. More recently, the Lord has opened the door to fill in at Emmanuel Guelph while Rev. VanWoudenberg goes on a sabbatical in the fall of 2012. This will be an excellent opportunity to further hone pastoral, teaching, and preaching skills in the midst of the Guelph congregation before going to classis. We are grateful to know God is with us each step of the way and we would greatly appreciate your prayers. May the Lord bless and keep you as well.

## A Final Chapel

### *After the style of C.S. Lewis's Screwtape Letters*

By David Winkel

I want to begin leading this final devotion by looking backwards. If I rewind the clock four years ago to when I came through the doors for my admission interview, I remember Rev. R. Schouten conducting it. I remember him stressing the intense spiritual warfare one faces at seminary. I thought I knew what he meant and what I was getting into. I did not on both counts. God works in mysterious but wonderful ways. These were the worst four years of my life and the best four years of my life at the same time. Does that make sense? Probably not. Who promised life would always make sense though? God didn't. Anyhow, for all of you, I want your seminary years to be great years and in a small effort towards that, I composed a Screwtape letter for you as my swan song. For those unfamiliar with C. S. Lewis's Screwtape letters, I preface the letter with this explanatory remark: a Screwtape letter is a letter from a senior devil to a junior devil on how to do better what devils do. Realize that the author of this particular letter is very interested in improving the devilish activities at 110 West 27th St. That's our seminary.

Before beginning I steal a line from the preface of C.S. Lewis's Screwtape Letters: "Listeners are advised to remember that the devil is a liar. Not everything that Screwtape says should be assumed to be true even from his own angle."

### Dear Wormwood,

Wormwood, what has been possessing you lately? You do not encourage your man to toss a football or play Frisbee in the hopes of getting them distracted from their studies, because then they begin to discuss ideas with each other! Of all the things to encourage him to do! Very quickly the fresh air and exercise



means he might even begin to think clearly and lucidly and that is what we fear the most.

It is far better to keep him muddled on all the various doctrines with lots of questions up in the air and no conviction on any of them. Conviction is something we fear almost as much as we fear clear and lucid thought. Make everything incompatible inside your man's head. I hear from Slubgob that your man prides himself on being Reformed. Have you consulted our texts books on the Reformed breed? Make sure you do your homework carefully. I was once assigned to a Reformed seminary student myself and I can show you some of the ropes.

The number one thing to do is to make sure your man does not live up to his Reformed name because we only like deformation. Our Father down below says Reformation is almost as bad a word as Love. I will now have to wash out my mouth with soap having used two horrid words. Sorry for my vulgar language. We like men who are Reformed in name only. To ensure that they are Reformed in name only, you must keep them away from the words of the Enemy and from communicating with him.

You might wonder how in the world you are supposed to keep your man from the words of the Enemy when he basically swims in the Enemy's words at this disgusting place they call seminary. Do not be concerned about this and simply turn it to your advantage. Try to make him take the words of the Enemy for granted. This should be easy because of the hundreds of paper and electronic copies of the words of the Enemy all in one place. In previous centuries, when students of the Enemy's words used scrolls, it was much harder to convince them the Enemy's words were not precious. Encourage him to talk about the words of the Enemy as if he is speaking about the weather.

Also, make sure he always stays on the surface of the Enemy's words. His mind is allowed to go deep, but not his heart. If his heart starts to go deep into the Word, you need to do something very quickly. This is an emergency. Once he is deep in the Word, he will hardly



listen to you. Strategies to prevent him from going deep are to remind him of the deadline for his paper, or remind him to check his email for the third time that hour, or attempt to make him more interested in his marks than the Word itself. Whatever it takes, make sure he is never meditating on the word. The Enemy's word is dangerous! Always keep him distracted from meditation. Give meditation a bad rap. Stigmatize it. Let him associate it with yoga or something. Just make sure you distract him from it.

Distraction is also essential if your man becomes very earnest about discussing doctrinal issues. If these issues are discussed, and hell forbid, if he should try to resolve them for himself, make sure the words of the Enemy are closed at those times. Convince him that the solution lies primarily in the power of his reasoning. Also, quickly reframe the discussion, so that clarity of doctrine is no longer in focus, but the orthodoxy of the participants. At all costs, make the discussion seem trite and trivial, so that he and the others soon drop the topic and move onto more important topics like the weather.

If, however, your man simply is determined to get to the bottom of understanding the doctrines of the enemy, change your strategy. Isolate him in his pursuit of what he calls the truth. On a side note, the Enemy loves truth (whatever it means to love something), so try and make sure your man hangs out with people who are passionate about the truth, but are also rude, generally obnoxious, and if they suffer from inadvertent passing of gas, that is a bonus. By doing this, he will hopefully equate passion for the truth with bad manners, obscenities, and perhaps even a bad smell. But, back to the main point, isolate him in his pursuit of truth, by convincing him that conversing with his professors and fellow students uses up precious studying time that he cannot afford to waste.

Speaking of isolation, which is one of my favorite topics, I suggest you keep him as isolated as possible. Try not to let him share his deepest concerns with his wife or pastor, but instead keep reminding him that he has no time for family events, church life, and especially prayer, and if he feels guilty about not spending enough time with God, church, or family, be ready with some justification.

In fact, make sure he is justifying his actions lots and rarely understanding the treacherous doctrine of justification. I remember that horrid day back in the sixteenth century when I was encouraging a man named Martin to keep justifying himself, but one horrible day he stopped listening to me and went over to the Enemy who freely gave him some cheap form of justification. I hate free stuff by the way. After that, that man Luther only wanted to talk about whatever grace is. Lesson to learn, my Wormwood, is that grace

is another one of those bad words. It is okay when he talks about grace like the weather, but when he takes it too seriously, beware, grace is powerfully frightful stuff.

Why beware? It frees him from your control. It makes your job incredibly hard. Seminary increasingly becomes pure joy for him. He will increasingly be less sensitive to the criticism in sermon session and increasingly take it like what humans call a man. We hate real men by the way. They talk back too much. But, back to my point Wormwood, you will find that his focus intensifying and his excitement growing about spending his afternoons in the deep end of the Enemy's Word. Also, he grows less and less easy to distract from prayer and increasingly treats his wife and children in this sickening way known as "loving each other." What is worse is that complaining and whining grows less worthy of his attention because his mind is more and more preoccupied with what the Enemy has done for him. Our agents have never quite understood why they are so preoccupied with such foolishness. Wormwood, my poppet, my pignie, if he is constantly in contact with grace, I am warning you, and you know it, he will rarely be dreading classis, seminary will rarely feel like a dark tunnel, and he will be thinking sickening thoughts about the cause of the churches, the Enemy, and the Enemy's Kingdom. He may more and more develop a weird condition called a smile, and far too often there will be a twinkle in his eye and a skip in his step. How repulsive! Do your utmost to prevent it! Well Wormwood, get to it.

*Sincerely,  
Uncle Screwtape*

Well brothers, enough of the words of Uncle Screwtape, I end with some words from the Lord:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints (Eph 6:12-18, NIV).



# Ray of Sunshine

by Corinne Gelms and  
Patricia Gelms

We would like to welcome Devon Niezen to the Ray of Sunshine column. He will be celebrating his birthday this month; let us give him a grand welcome with lots of birthday mail. We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a wonderful birthday. May you all be richly blessed by our heavenly Father, and may all praise and thanks may be directed to Him alone!

## Devon Niezen



My name is Devon Niezen and I will be twelve years old on June 26. God has made me a special child. I have Emanuel Syndrome. It is a partial translocation of chromosome 11 and 22. This has caused lots of mental and physical delays. I started walking on my own in grade 1, before that I used a walker. . . and now. . . I can almost run!

I do not speak but I use a communication board with pictures and an iPad so I can decide what I would like to do or what I like to eat. I love being outside, swimming, and playing on the swing set and slides. I love music and instruments and if you see me you will often see me dancing to the music.

I am in Grade 6 in Maranatha Christian School in Fergus, Ontario. I have my own room, but I also join Grade K-3 in art, music, and phys. ed. I have a great teacher. There are three different therapists that come and help me and Miss Brittany Hutten with ideas to help me learn. I just learned how to feed myself a snack without help. What an accomplishment!!

I will be going to Anchor Camp in July with my Grandma Dykstra, it is a lot of fun. I have a brother, Michael, and he is fourteen. We like to play catch together.

## Birthdays in June

- 17 **JOAN KOERSELMAN** will be 55  
2113-16 Avenue, Coaldale, AB T1M 1J8
- 20 **LARS HUIJGEN** will be 21  
85950 Canborough Road  
RR 1, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1
- 26 **DEVON NIEZEN** will be 12  
454 St. George Street E  
Fergus, ON N1M 1K8
- 30 **BEVERLY BREUKELMAN** will be 50  
2225-19<sup>th</sup> Street, Coaldale, AB T1M 1G4

### 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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