

VOLUME 69 NUMBER 2 · FEBRUARY 2022 EDITION

# THE MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA



**02** MEDITATION:  
LIGHT IN  
OUR HOMES

**10** CHURCH HISTORY (14)  
ROGERS WILLIAMS & THE  
SEPARATION OF CHURCH & STATE

**14** BILL C-4:  
AND CHRIST'S CHURCH  
IN CANADA



# LIGHT IN OUR HOMES

“But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings” (Ex. 10:23b)

One of the top features people look for in buying a home is natural light. Studies reveal that homeowners wished they had more natural light in their home. After all, more exposure to daylight has been linked to improvements in well-being and mood. If we had a choice, most of us would want more light instead of more darkness. Israel experienced this in a special way during the 9<sup>th</sup> plague in Egypt. Light is what we need in our dark world; not just some natural light, but spiritual light; not just the light of the sun, but the light of the Sun of righteousness.

## **Egypt's judgment**

Egypt was completely ruined. Many of the livestock had died of disease. The crops had been devastated by a massive hailstorm. Locusts had invaded the land, devouring what little Egypt had left. But Pharaoh's heart remained hardened and darkened. He refused to submit before the will and word of God to let God's people go. Maybe he thought that after these 8 plagues he had nothing left to lose and that God had nothing more to take. Why then should he let his Hebrew slaves go? He needed them now more than ever to work and restore his devastated country.

Was there really nothing else that God could take from Egypt? He could still take away light from the land. In obedience to the Lord's command, Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky and suddenly there was darkness over the land of Egypt (Ex. 10:21-22). Darkness came unannounced. Sometimes we are warned of God's coming judgments; other times we are not. For three long days, the land of Egypt was smothered by a thick darkness. Some scholars have tried to explain this 9<sup>th</sup> plague in Egypt away by saying it was a solar eclipse or one of Arabia's sandstorms. Why was Pharaoh troubled then? The Bible says it was a plague of darkness. Can God not do this? He who brought light into our world on the first day, and on the fourth day created the sun, moon and stars, can He not bring darkness? In His judgments, may He not do with His creation what He will? “I am the LORD... I form the light, and create darkness” (Is. 45:5,7). Darkness covered the land of Egypt for three days.

The Egyptians could not see anyone or go anywhere. The darkness trapped and terrified them. Did Pharaoh maybe order his servants to light the lamps? Whatever his servants tried, still there was no light. Some have said that the darkness was so thick and so black that their feeble lights could not penetrate it. Others have suggested that the darkness was like a cold, wet, thick, black fog, a darkness that could be felt, a darkness that snuffed out every flame that tried to flicker

in it. Total darkness. Children and adults can be afraid of the dark, but there is usually some light coming from somewhere. Our eyes can adapt to the dark and we get night vision. But no matter how much time passed, the eyes of the Egyptians did not adjust to the darkness. It was no ordinary darkness, but an eerie, paralyzing darkness. The Egyptians were trapped in their homes and with their conscience. The next day dawned as black as the one before, three terrifying days. What a world to live in, a world of darkness! It is the kind of world we live in; not that it is physically dark in our world, but it is spiritually dark in our world.

**There is darkness around us.** Our world thinks it knows a lot. Many discoveries in science, biology, and medicine have been made. We can fly to the moon and send rovers to Mars. While people can do much, we live in a world that does not know God its Maker (Is. 1:3). People have no use for the Bible and ignore the calls of the Saviour. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn. 3:19). People grope around pursuing whatever their sinful hearts desire, not understanding why they stumble, missing peace in their lives (Prov. 4:19). When we push God aside, as Pharaoh did, we will find ourselves in darkness.

**There is darkness inside of us.** It is not just that there is darkness out there; there is darkness in here. By nature, church people too do not know God and are marked by spiritual darkness. “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:18). We might think that we know God and say that we have fellowship with Him, but walk in darkness. This is a real danger for professing Christians (1 Jn. 1:6). Have you ever felt this darkness yourself, not knowing how to live and die happily and without a personal acquaintance with Christ?

**There is darkness that awaits us.** God is coming to judge and He will judge with darkness. “Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him” (Job 18:5-6). Those who die in their sin will be cast into outer and eternal darkness (Matt. 8:12; 22:13). That is where hardening your heart will bring you. Is it not a terrible thing to live in darkness? Is there no way to come into the light?

### Israel's Blessing

“But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings” (Ex. 10:23). While there was darkness all around, at least Israel had lamps shining in the darkness. It is also possible that the children of Israel had light where they lived. The blackout only affected the Egyptians and the Israelites were not in the dark. God made the difference, just as He had done before (Ex. 8:22-23). Not that the children of Israel were any better and deserved light. But the Lord, in His good pleasure, ensured that they could enjoy light and warmth. I cannot explain how this happened, but the Lord would do that too when the Egyptian pursuers came after the people of Israel. Then, the Lord ensured that the cloud of fire for the people of Israel was a cloud of darkness for the people of Egypt (Ex. 14:20). For Him, nothing is impossible (Lk. 1:37).

While this was a unique event in the history of the people of Israel, the reality is still true for the people of God. They may have light in their dwellings. How is that to be enjoyed?

**First, because of the Light of the Lord.** He not only made light and gives light, but He is Light to His people. He is “a sun and shield,” “my light and my salvation” (Ps. 84:11; 27:1). He is light and there is no darkness in Him (1 Jn. 1:5). He shows this light in Christ, the Dayspring from on high, who reveals Himself as the Light of the World (Lk. 1:78; Jn. 1:5; 8:12). He shows us what God is like and what God has done. He comes to meet with us in the gospel to give light in our darkness by His grace and presence. Is that your prayer as the eventide falls and the darkness deepens? “Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.” Jesus hung on the cross and a deep darkness covered the land for three hours as the judgment of God fell on Him (Mat. 27:45). Through Him, we can have light in our life and homes, drawn out of the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light (1 Pet. 2:9).

**Secondly, by the Word of the Lord.** What do we need in this dark world of ours? We need

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 02

#### MEDITATION:

Light In Our Homes

### 06

#### EDITORIAL:

What Will God Do  
With His Name?

### 08

#### BOOK REVIEW:

A Little Book To Guide Us  
In The Christian Life

### 10

#### CHURCH HISTORY (14):

Roger Williams and The  
Separation of Church  
and State (2)

### 14

#### BILL C-4:

And Christ's Church In  
Canada

### 16

#### FALSE MODESTY

### 18

#### THE CHRISTELIJKE GEREFOMEERDE KERKEN

### 20

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS





**COME OVER & HELP** | **SENIOR CARE**  
IN EASTERN EUROPE

Large print Bibles for Romanian seniors

VISIT [www.coah.org](http://www.coah.org) | CALL 888-844-2624


## MEDITATION

**If we have the light of grace in our heart and home, then we should open the curtains too and reflect the light of Jesus in our dark world.**

God's Word, which is a lamp for our feet and a light upon our path shining in a dark place (Ps. 119:105; 2 Pet. 1:19). What would we do without His Word? What if there was no Bible? When we are ashamed of ourselves, needing pardon and peace, instruction and correction, encouragement and comfort, where would we turn for hope and comfort? Without God's Word, we live and walk in darkness, and our homes are in darkness. Let us not set the word of the Lord aside, for it gives light in our lives.

This results, **thirdly, in a life that shines for the Lord.** If we have the light of grace in our heart and home, then we should open the curtains too and reflect the light of Jesus in our dark world. It is a blessing to have light in our home, but we are to become a city set on a hill that cannot be hid and let our light shine before others that they may see our good works and glorify the heavenly Father (Matt. 5:14, 16). We have a task to bring light into the darkness and hopelessness of the world, to call people to the light. Our task is not to complain or grumble about the darkness, but to expose the darkness and to shine into the darkness. True, we do not have this light in and of ourselves. But just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the Christian reflects the light of Christ. As a result of union and communion with Christ, Christians shine in this dark world. Sometimes He puts His people in very dark places like Moses in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. Have you been hiding your light under the bushel? It does not take much for a Christian to quench the light of the Spirit and to grieve Him. Beware of those things that dim your light! Are others jealous of your life and witness? Maybe it has become dark in our hearts. Maybe sin has been snuffing out your light. Shall we not come back to the Lord Jesus with our darkened hearts? He can shine in our hearts (2 Cor. 4:6). There is hope for those in darkness at the foot of the cross.

Pharaoh became outraged, and that is how he squandered his last opportunity to leave the kingdom of darkness by refusing to listen and by sending God's servant away (Ex. 10:28). People think they can always come to the light later. But people do not always get another opportunity. Pharaoh did not. How dreadful to go to that place of eternal and outer darkness without the possibility of ever enjoying the light of God's favour and love! Today, you may leave the darkness and come to the Light of the world and know His grace and presence in your life.

While God's people sometimes find it dark in their lives, there is still the prospect of heaven, where there will be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light (Rev. 22:5). Then, the eternal day will dawn to the eternal praise of the Sun of Righteousness and the Light of the World. 

*Rev. L. J. Bilkes is the pastor of the Free Reformed Church of Oxford County, Ontario*

Walk by Faith: A Speaker Series for those in their 20's to early 30's

# GRACE ABOUNDING

Based on scenes from Pilgrims Progress  
"Fire in the Wall"

Maranatha Free Reformed Church  
1114 Old Mohawk Rd, Ancaster

December 3rd - Rev. Lipsy  
January 21st - Rev. MacLeod  
March 4th - Rev. Moerdyk

Speech begins at 8:00PM

Refreshments provided  
Freewill offering to cover the cost of the evening

Any Questions you can email  
[walkbyfaith.speakerevenings@gmail.com](mailto:walkbyfaith.speakerevenings@gmail.com)



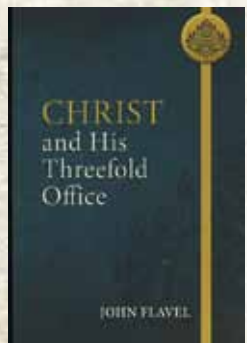


# ReformedBookServices

PROMOTING GODLINESS, REVIVAL & REFORMATION

**GREAT  
SELECTION  
OF CHRISTIAN  
NEW & USED  
BOOKS AT  
LOW PRICES**

## CLASSIC TITLES

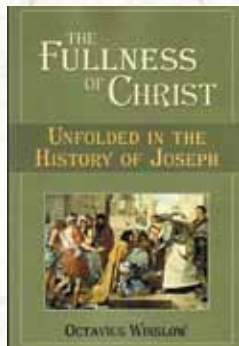


### **The Fountain of Life – Christ and His Threefold Office**

By John Flavel

To make the treatise The Fountain of Life, written by Puritan John Flavel (1628-1691), more accessible and profitable to a wider readership, Reformation Heritage Books has edited

the original work and published it in two volumes: Christ Humbled yet Exalted and Christ and His Threefold Office. "Salvation," says Flavel, "is revealed by Christ as a Prophet, procured by Him as a Priest, applied by Him as a King. In vain it is revealed, if not purchased; in vain revealed and purchased, if not applied." Softcover, 152 pages, Reformation Heritage Books. **RBS Price \$12.00**



### **The Fullness of Christ Unfolded in the History of Joseph**

By Octavius Winslow

This is a devotional treatment of the fascinating history of Joseph and his brothers by Octavius Winslow (1808-1878), a prolific author known for his warm devotional writings and Reformed, experiential convictions.

Writes Winslow: "It was necessary that by every possible human sensibility He [Christ] should be qualified to be the gracious, sympathizing Head of a suffering body; and no truth is brought out in the history of Joseph more luminously, or exquisitely touching and beautiful, as portraying the Lord Jesus Christ, than the deep sensibility of Joseph's nature."

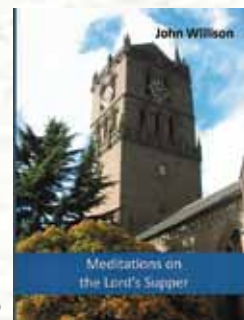
Softcover, 263 pages, Reformation Heritage Books. **RBS Price \$17.25**

### **Meditations on the Lord's Supper**

By John Willison

John Willison (1680-1750) was one of the most outstanding Scottish evangelical preachers during the eighteenth century. He was a minister of the Church of Scotland and, as an author of religious books, he also became famous for his devotional works. This book contains seventeen beautiful meditations on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; nine are intended for use before the sacrament and eight for reflection afterwards. The contents of this book provide communicants with a great deal of material for reflection and prayer.

Softcover, 72 pages, Reformation Press **RBS Price \$11.00**



## NEW TITLES

### **Stand Firm: Living in a Post-Christian Culture.**

By John MacArthur

The Christian life is a war for holiness. Our calling to be set apart lands us in the cross hairs of a culture that opposes God's truth.

To withstand the temptation to compromise in sin or retreat from suffering,

Christians must hold fast to God's Word. Only then can we live well for the Lord. God has revealed what kind of people we are to be in a hostile world, and, by His Word and Spirit, He supplies us with everything we need to persevere in holiness, humility, and love. Dr. John MacArthur is pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, where he has served for nearly fifty years. Hardcover, 152 pages, Reformation Trust. **RBS Price \$14.00**



### **Faith in the Time of Plague**

By Steven M. Coleman & Todd M. Rester

Introduced by Peter A. Lillback, Faith in the Time of Plague also includes a foreword from Mayo Clinic Virologist Dr. Gregory A. Poland. We often hear the Covid-19 pandemic described as "unprecedented," yet for Christians of earlier times, plague was nothing new. For generations, church leaders regularly faced

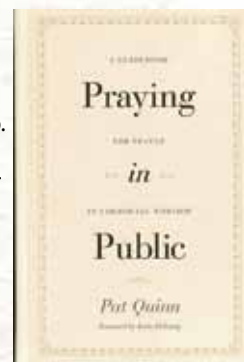
the sorts of ethical questions that still prove divisive today. Selecting from the great "plague writings" of the historic church, the authors have translated and assembled a one-of-a-kind anthology. Many of the works appearing in Faith in the Time of Plague have never been available in English until now. Included in this volume are the writings of Martin Luther, Theodore Beza, Ulrich Zwingli, Cyprian of Carthage, Zacharias Ursinus, Gijsbert Voetius, and many more. Hardcover, 361 pages, Westminster Press. **RBS Price \$28.00**



### **Reading the Bible and Praying in Public**

By Stuart Olyott

Bible reading and prayer are two elements in all evangelical church worship. These regular acts of worship are so familiar that many probably take them for granted and do not think too seriously about them. But what is the best way to read the Bible in public and what are the things we need to keep in mind if we are to lead others in public prayer? Pastor Stuart Olyott supplies us with wise practical advice on these vitally important acts of our corporate church worship. Booklet, 22 pages, Banner of Truth Trust. **RBS Price \$3.50**



## GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

### IN CANADA:

#### REFORMED BOOK SERVICES

230 Lynden Road, Unit 5A, Brantford, ON N3R 8A3

- T: 519.304.4709 • E: sales@reformedbookservices.ca • www.reformedbookservices.ca
- Store Hours: Mon-Wed 10-5 | Thurs 10-9 | Fri 10-5 | Sat 10-3

### USA CUSTOMERS:

#### REFORMATION HERITAGE BOOKS

3070 29th Street SE,

Grand Rapids, MI 49512

- T: 616.977.0889 • F: 616.285.3246
- E: orders@heritagebooks.org
- www.heritagebooks.org

Orders & Deliveries also at: \*Niagara Depot, 195 Victoria Ave., Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 • E: niagaradepotrbs@gmail.com



# WHAT WILL GOD DO WITH HIS NAME?

*As we see churches in the West under pressure to compromise God's truth, we may worry why God is allowing His Name to be trampled underfoot in many quarters. The Bible helps us understand more clearly what our calling to bear God's Name throughout the earth might involve in our own hearts, lives, and churches.*

Christ taught His people to have as their uppermost concern the sanctity of God's name. This was His ultimate focus, and He calls and enables believers to have this as their supreme preoccupation as well. Calvin famously wrote to Cardinal Sadoletto that "it is not very sound theology to confine a man's thoughts so much to himself, and not to set before him, as the prime motive of his existence, zeal to show forth the glory of God. For we are born first of all for God, and not for ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

There is not a time in which this vision is not needed. However, our materialistic and humanistic age certainly poses a formidable temptation to turn aside from this goal. Added to this temptation, there is increasing pressure from Western governments to recalibrate the mandate and basis of the church's existence in a way that does not call out the moral wasteland our societies are rushing towards at a breakneck speed. In fact, it is more than a moral wasteland we are already in; it is off a moral cliff that we are heading, with legislation like Bill C-4 in Canada and other like attempts at ideological tyranny across our Western world.

If these movements drive us to examine more carefully and undertake more resolutely the cost of being disciples of the One who was "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3), it will not have been all bad. We do well to remember that those who persecute disciples of Christ "have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:3). We ought to pray for them and learn with the early disciples to count it all joy when we suffer persecution (Matt 5:11-12; James 1:2). But let us, as always, make sure that we are not suffering as evil-doers or as busybodies (1 Pet. 4:15-16).

Let us also not become dour, self-pitying, or radiating a siege-mentality. Let us not embrace the latest conspiracy theory, imagining that if we had the right earthly "prince" at the helm, we would enter a new golden era of personal freedom. Instead, may the current pressures drive us rightly to prize and pray the first petition of the Lord's prayer: Hallowed be Thy Name. May we perform the duties of our earthly station in light of it, and live as pilgrims until at last the

glory of God rests forever upon God's redeemed people at Christ's second coming. In the meantime, may we bear God's Name throughout the world (see Acts 9:15), but let us hear from Scripture how God will sanctify His own Name through His church also in our time.

### Loving God's Name

We might mostly think of Joshua as a battle leader of the children of Israel as they took the land that God gave them to inherit in faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham. Yet, Joshua not only fought God's battles, he was concerned about God's name. This is apparent after the defeat at Ai, when God made His people turn back before their enemies. Joshua was obviously distraught by the loss of life, but more than that, he was in anguish of soul over God's reputation among the inhabitants of the land. The Canaanite nations knew that God had been fighting for Israel (see Josh. 2:10-11). God's name would be dragged through the mud. Joshua was in anguish of soul and cried to God: "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" (7:9b).

Like Joshua, we should have a concern that God's name is honored in our world. We should not give in to indifference as to how God's professing people fare in the court battles of this world. To bury our head in the sand like an ostrich is no virtue. In fact, as was mentioned, it should be our utmost concern to see God honored. Joshua's concern for the name of the Lord should stir us up to pray and ask in our day: "What wilt thou do unto thy name?"

To respect God's honor in the world is a work of grace in our hearts. By nature, we seek our own honor or at least man's honor. We are at best indifferent to the honor of God. However, when God works by His grace, we pray from our hearts as Christ taught us: "Hallowed be thy name." As the Catechism explains, we are saying: "Grant us first rightly to know Thee, and to sanctify, glorify, and praise Thee in all Thy works, in which Thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth, are clearly displayed; and further also, that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words, and actions, that Thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honoured and praised on our account" (LD 47, Q and A 122). In his commentary on Joshua 7:9, Matthew Henry says it well: "We cannot urge a better plea than this, Lord, *What wilt thou do for thy great name?* Let God in all be glorified, and then welcome his whole will."

To respect God's honor in the world is a work of grace in our hearts. By nature, we seek our own honor or at least man's honor.

### Welcoming God's Will

Though Joshua's concern for God's name is to be emulated, we also must learn from God's response to Joshua. In Joshua 7:10-13, God makes clear that Israel must look first within rather than without. Joshua was too focused on how the world would react to the name of God, when God will be sanctified in those who approach unto him (see Lev. 10:3). Joshua was to call for a spiritual and moral self-search among the name: "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant ... therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourself against to morrow ... O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." (vv. 10-13).

In the case of the defeat at Ai, there was the sin of Achan and the presumption of the people that of course the Lord was with them. They simply engaged in the warfare as they best saw fit without inquiring of the Lord and searching their own hearts and lives to see whether they were in a suitable state so to do. To us, the Lord likewise says: "Don't presume upon My help, blessing, and nearness when you yourselves are not living, walking, and warring in entire consecration to me." In the case of Israel, Achan's sin needed to be dealt with and the entire house of Achan disciplined in order that Israel as a whole would not suffer greater repercussions. If, as churches, our own moral and spiritual discipline is lax, then our concern with the name of God in our world is myopic and judgmental of others, while we fail to judge ourselves. If we are concerned about whether God's name is honored

**EDITOR:** Dr. Gerald M. Bilkes  
2692 Bridge Place NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
USA · T: 616.977.0599 ext.121  
E: jerry.bilkes@prts.edu

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:**  
Rev. David H. Kranendonk  
T: 616.290.4125 · E: kranendonk@frcna.org  
*The Editors report to the Synodical Publications Committee.*

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**  
· Mr. David Tamminga  
· Rev. Kenneth Hutton  
· Rev. Scott Dibbet  
· Mr. Hans VanDoodeward  
· Mr. Michael Driesse  
· Mr. John DenDekker, Treasurer

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE**  
Canada & U.S.A. - **\$33.00 ANNUALLY**  
**PER SUBSCRIPTION** The Messenger is published 11 times per year (July & August issues are combined).

**SUBSCRIPTIONS/REMITTANCES**  
Subscription requests, invoices, and payments should be addressed to:  
Janey Slingerland  
(Publications Administrator)  
18 Chapala Cres. S.E.  
Calgary, AB T2X 3M4 CANADA  
T: 403.254.6591 · E: bookorders@frcna.org

**SUBMISSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS/NOTICES:** All articles, notices for family announcements, obituaries, anniversaries, and non-commercial advertisements for the **MARCH 2022** issue should reach the editor no later than **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15T, 2022** and should be sent to:  
Mrs. Rhonda Kroesbergen  
(Messenger Administrator)  
E: messenger@frcna.org

**OPEN WINDOWS**  
This bi-monthly publication for children is under the direction of the Free Reformed Publications Committee:  
Rev. Jerrold Lewis, General Editor  
160 West Parkway  
Pompton Plains, NJ 07444  
E: jlewis@frcna.org

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MISSIONS AND OUTREACH CAUSES SHOULD BE DIRECTED AS FOLLOWS:**

**FOREIGN MISSIONS**  
Dietrich DeKruyff, Financial Administrator  
14 Southland Dr., London, ON. N6P 1C2  
E: dietrichdekruyff@gmail.com

Keep in contact with your missionaries online:

**RADIO EVANGELISM & HOME MISSIONS**  
Banner of Truth Radio Broadcast  
Mr. John denDekker, Treasurer  
16726 – 80th Avenue  
Surrey, BC V4N 0G8 CANADA  
T: 604.576.8935 · E: jdenDekker@telus.net

**REFUGEE FUND**  
James Van der Zwan, Treasurer  
26829 – 33B Ave., Aldergrave, BC V4W 3G8  
T: 604.818.3423 · E: jplumber@telus.net

**CHRISTIAN MINISTRY TO ISRAEL**  
Mr. John Wilbrink, Treasurer  
8 Weneil Drive, Freeleton, ON L8B 0Z6  
T: 905.659.7413 · E: john.wilbrink@gmail.com

Read *The Messenger* on the Free Reformed website: [www.frcna.org](http://www.frcna.org)



in the world at large, let us be all the more concerned with how it is honored in us and among us.

### Eyeing and Exalting God's Christ

Joshua asked: "What wilt thou do unto thy name" (Josh. 7:9b). Thanks be to God, there was a Greater than Joshua. His name was Joshua, though we know it in its Greek form as Jesus. Each and every day His heart and life was animated by the cry: "Hallowed be thy name."

Yet, for the sake of sinners He went even further. He knew our desperate condition. And so he prayed and performed all that was needed. We even read in John 17: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself" (John 17:19). If we were left to sanctify ourselves by ourselves, it would count for nothing. But He was all consumed with the glory of the Lord.

While Joshua prayed, "What wilt thou do to thy name?", Christ could say: "I have glorified thee on the earth" (John 17:4). On another occasion, He prayed: "Glorify thy name" (John 12:28a). Straight from heaven, there was a voice that said, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again" (John 12:28b). The Lord would glorify His name most supremely in the death, resurrection, and ascension of His Son for sinners like us. It is astounding that Christ came into the place Achan was brought, one of just judgment for dishonoring God, as our sin was laid upon Him.

Now, through Him and His Spirit, and by faith, we can have a preoccupation with the glory of God. We look out over our world and over the church and over our lives. We see how God's name is trodden underfoot as if God were the most blameworthy one in all the world. Yet, by grace, God's people glory in God. They hallow His name for Christ's sake. "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord" (Jer. 9:24). Here is our mission in our world.

We are not always in that place and therefore we need constantly to be taught. We need Christ, to rest in Him and His glorifying of His Father, especially in His death and resurrection. Though we discover that our heart is so like Achan, there is a Greater than Joshua who is our plea. There is no Name like His. Let us exalt His Name to the highest and bear it throughout the earth no matter the cost. <sup>1</sup>

1 John Calvin, *Theological Treatises* (ed. by J. K. S. Reid; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 228.

## A LITTLE BOOK TO GUIDE US IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

### A Little Book on the Christian Life by John Calvin.

Translated and edited by Aaron Clay Denlinger and Burke Parsons. Published by Reformation Trust, a division of Ligonier Ministries, Orlando, FL, 2017. Softcover, 126 pages.

If you have never read anything by the great Reformer, John Calvin (1509-1564), you will be surprised by his fresh and timeless perspectives in this book. You can even omit the somewhat lengthy, although helpful, introduction by the editors of this booklet, which explains how this latest translation came into being. What you do need to know is that this book on the Christian life is extracted from John Calvin's most famous theological work: the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Because of the considerable size and interest in what Calvin had to say about the Christian life, already very early on, a chapter was made available in French and later translated into English, Latin, German, and even Dutch, where it became known as Calvin's *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*. This latest translation is based on the "final and definitive Latin edition of Calvin's *Institutes*," using Calvin's own words as much as possible (p. xxiii).

Divided into five clearly defined chapters, the booklet does not start with regeneration or the new birth as one might expect, but the goal is to "construct in this work a model of the mature Christian life from various passages of Scripture, so that those who are truly repentant of heart will not lose their way on the path of greater conformity to God's image" (p. 3). This book is like a little manual, addressing the heart of believers who have experienced the new birth and have a repentant heart.

In the first chapter, entitled, "*Scripture's Call to Christian Living*," Calvin explains that the Christian life is a vast topic and many previous theologians have written large works on individual virtues, but "My goal here," he writes, "is simply to present to godly people a model for ordering their lives. I intend, that is, to identify a certain universal principle to guide Christians in their duties. By nature," he continues, "I love brevity" (p. 4), therefore, for now, "my purpose in this work is to present doctrine simply and concisely" (p. 5).

Scripture teaches that there are two parts to the Christian life. "The first part is that love of righteousness—to which we are not naturally prone—must be implanted and poured into our hearts. The second is that we need some model that will keep us from losing our way in our pursuit of righteousness" (p. 6). We are to be holy because God Himself is holy and He has given Jesus Christ as model to which we should conform our lives. As God's adopted children, our lives should mirror Christ, who is the bond of our adoption.

To make sure he is not misunderstood, Calvin addresses nominal Christians as well. "For true doctrine is not a matter of the tongue, but of life, neither is Christian doctrine grasped only by the intellect and memory, as truth is grasped in other fields of study. Rather, doctrine is rightly received when it takes possession of the entire soul and finds a dwelling place and shelter in the most intimate affections of the heart" (pp. 112-13). He is not saying that Christians can reach perfection. "If that were the case, everyone would be excluded from the church, since we do not find any in it who are close to being perfect. Indeed, we find many in the church who have progressed little toward perfection, but who, nevertheless, it would be unjust to reject as Christian" (p. 14). Indeed, many of us are weak and make little progress, "staggering, limping, and crawling on the ground" (p. 17). These quotes from this first chapter set the theme for the rest of the little book.

**ReformedBookServices** 

A CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORE

STORE HOURS: MON.-WED. 10-5 • THURS. 10-9 • FRI. 10-5 • SAT. 10-3

230 LYNDEN ROAD (BEHIND GALAXY CARWASH) BRANTFORD, ON N3R 8A3  
T: 519.304.4709 • E: SALES@REFORMEDBOOKSERVICES.CA

**NEW NIAGARA DEPOT**

195 VICTORIA AVE., FENWICK, ON L0S 1C0 • T: 905.714.6257



From here, Calvin spurs believers on, encouraging them to reach higher goals, but also recognizing that we are sinful and weak in our pursuits. He begins chapter 2, *‘Self-denial in the Christian Life,’* by positing that there is a duty that goes beyond keeping the precepts of the law. “It is the duty of believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God” (p. 21). This consists of genuine worship of Him and being transformed by the renewal of the mind, discerning the will of God for our lives. “Self-control, uprightness, and godliness—when they are joined together in an unbreakable bond—make us complete” (p. 29). “We will never achieve genuine meekness except by having our hearts saturated with self-denial and respect for others” (p. 35). Yet, “our very nature inclines us toward self-love. As a result, we don’t easily deny ourselves or our desires in order to seek the good of others” (p. 35). We are merely stewards of whatever gifts God has given us in order to help our neighbors. This is even true when provoked by injustice or injuries. All these obligations are to be performed not because of mere duty, but out of love and affection. Calvin goes into a lot of detail here, such as being patient and submissive in whatever our position in life. Constantly, references to Scripture are inserted as ‘call-outs’ to support his statements.

In Chapter 3, *‘Bearing our Cross Is a Part of Self-Denial,’* this is fleshed out in more detail. The Lord’s chosen ones must be prepared to experience a life of troubles and a variety of evils. There are various reasons why believers are tested. Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character (Rom. 5:3-4). But God has promised to be with believers when they suffer. “For they’re unable to endure such suffering in their own strength. Therefore, as saints endure suffering, they experience God’s providing of the strength He has promised to give in times of need” (pp. 62-63). God disciplines those whom He loves (Prov. 3:11-12). This does not mean that believers are stoics and hide grief and suffering. Actually, Scripture is full of examples of believer’s cries, laments, and prayers for relief. But the bitterness of the cross is tempered with spiritual joy, because we know suffering is for our good. In persecution, His promise is that such are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:10).

Chapter 4, *‘Meditation on our Future Life’* focusses on our attitude to our life in the world. Because God knows that we are greatly inclined to love this world by natural instinct, in whatever trouble comes our way, we should always set our eyes on God’s purpose to train us that this present life is temporary. Describing the troubles that come our way, Calvin men-

tions wars, robberies, injuries, poverty, low income, and fire, but he also refers to domestic trials, offenses of our spouse, wickedness of children, and loss of a child or a loved one. These trials are meant to humble us so that we do not become inflated with pride and self-confidence. This life has much to attract us, so the Lord has to pull us away from temptations lest we become too earth-bound.

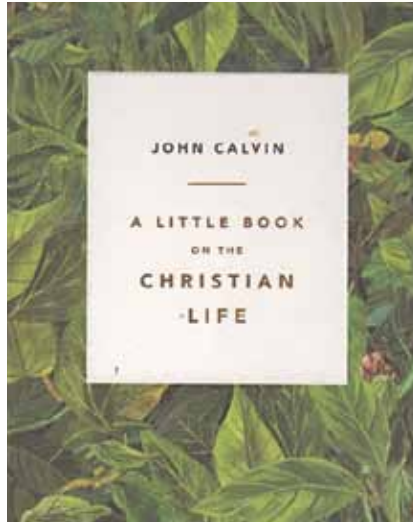
Even though this life is full of misery, there are many blessings and it would be ingratitude not to be thankful to God for blessings. “There’s much reason for gratitude and therein we receive a taste of God’s kindness. Earthly life, compared with heavenly life, must be despised, but never be hated. Our hatred should be toward sin, not toward life itself” (p. 99). “The cross of Christ finally triumphs in believers’ hearts—over the devil, the flesh, sin, and the wicked—when their eyes are turned to the power of the resurrection” (p. 108).

Constantly pointing to Scripture, Calvin reminds us that Scripture also fully teaches us “how we should use the good things of this earth rightly” (p. 111). This is explained in one short chapter, *‘How the Present Life and its Comforts Should be Used.’* God gives us many things to enjoy: food, clothing, and beauty in nature itself—even the senses of smell and color. “We must not let ourselves be robbed of lawful enjoyments of divine kindness. They ought to lead us in gratitude.” Yet we must “no less diligently oppose our fleshly desire that will rush forward without restraints if not kept in check” (p. 117). There are some wise words here also about overindulgence regarding food, drink, and clothing, without going into detail. Moderation, patience, and humility are to be exercised in all that God has given us, including our talents. Therefore, we are to consider what our calling is in all things. “Every work performed in obedience to one’s calling, no matter how ordinary and common, is radiant—most valuable in the eyes of the Lord” (p. 126).

Do you need a brief but comprehensive guide for instruction on the Christian life? A classic, solidly based on Scripture, this little book is a timeless treasure, pointing out the basic principles for a life lived for God’s glory with practical, encouraging comfort, as well as warnings.

Highly recommended by Christian leaders such as Joel Beeke, Sinclair Ferguson, Tim Challies, and Herman J. Selderhuis. 🙏

*This book may be purchased in Canada at Reformed Book Services in Brantford, Ontario, and at Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.*



Christian Ministry to Israel commits over \$105,000 CDN annually to support Ha-Gefen Publishing who’s mission is to translate solid Reformed literature and books into Hebrew for distribution to Jews around the world.



We are committed to spreading the Gospel of CHRIST JESUS among the people of Israel and Jews worldwide. Help us to spread the Gospel through your prayers and donations. Please donate by cheque or online at [www.cmisrael.org](http://www.cmisrael.org)



To donate by cheque, please mail your donation to: Christian Ministry to Israel, c/o John Wilbrink, 8 Weneil Drive, Freelon ON L8B 0Z6 Reg. Charity: 85123 0466 RR 0001

## PILGRIMS AND PURITANS IN AMERICA (14)

# ROGER WILLIAMS AND THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE - 2

Last time, we learned that Roger Williams left England because he feared for his life. Refusing to conform to the ecclesiastical rules set by the Anglican state church, he decided to emigrate to the Massachusetts Bay Colony and join fellow Puritans who had left England for similar reasons. His goal was to help them reorganize the church that had driven him and many others out. Being convinced that the Church of England needed to be reformed and restored to her original purity, he was anxious to undertake that task.

### Williams: Radical Separatist

Although all Puritans agreed that the church needed to be reformed, most of them proceeded cautiously. They were known as non-separatists. A smaller group, led by Williams and others, were called separatists because they wanted to go about rebuilding the church in a much more radical manner. Williams was convinced that the established church was spiritually dead and beyond repair. Accordingly, he called for a total separation from the Church of England while his fellow Puritans refused to break all ties with her.<sup>1</sup>

Williams devoted most of his life and energy to attempting to restore the church, even though he knew that he would never reach that goal. Church reform was his lifelong ambition. He believed that the New Testament church, instituted by the authority of Christ through His apostles, had come to an end with the death of the apostles and their immediate successors; thus, the necessary authority was lost. According to Williams, this led to a gradual decline of doctrinal and ethical purity, which reached its climax by the fourth century, when the Antichrist appeared in the person of the pope, who usurped the position of Head of the Church. With the ascendancy of the pope, the church had lost her right of existence. Therefore, none of the churches that resulted from the Protestant Reformation, including the English state church, could legitimately claim apostolic authority.

### Williams and the State-Church Relationship

What bothered Williams most was the role played by the government in the affairs of the church and the way the church used the government to promote and defend herself against dissenters.

Governor John Winthrop and other leaders of the Massachusetts Colony were convinced that the relationship between church and state was, and should be, close. They were very uncomfortable with Williams when they heard his radical views. They thought his ideas were heretical and seditious, threatening the peace and tranquility of the colony, and therefore decided to take action against him.

Matters got even worse when Williams accused the New England set-





tlers of tolerating the false teachings of the Anglican Church. He charged them for ignoring a great sin committed by King Charles I when he granted them a royal charter for settling in New England. The king had lied when he told them that he had authority to give them permission to take land that belonged to the native Indians without paying for it. Williams suggested that the right thing to do for the settlers was to abandon the Bay Colony and return to England.<sup>2</sup> This suggestion, of course, did not sit well with the people and their leaders.

Soon, Williams was summoned to appear before the General Counsel in Boston, which found him guilty of heresy and causing unrest in the settlement. They banished him to an area south of Massachusetts, later called Rhode Island, but through Winthrop's kindness, the banishment was postponed to the spring because weather conditions were inclement. Williams, however, chose to leave in October 1635 and arrived at Narragansett Bay after a brutal winter journey, kept alive by the kindness of the local Indians.<sup>3</sup> There, Williams, together with some supporters, established the town of Providence, Rhode Island.

Upon his visit to England in 1643, he gained an audience with the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell and received a charter to formally establish Rhode Island as another British colony. Interestingly, in contrast to the Massachusetts settlers, Williams purchased the land from the Indians for a reasonable price and began to implement his views on the separation of church and state.

### **William's Critique of Winthrop's *City Set on A Hill***

*City Set on a Hill* was the name of the farewell sermon John Winthrop preached on board the *Arbella* in the summer of 1630, prior to setting sail for the New World. This sermon outlines the Puritan vision for the New World. In the desire to flee religious oppression and re-establish the Church of Christ along biblical lines, Winthrop, New England's first governor, laid the foundation for what he believed to be a God-centered theocracy, i.e., a system of government under God's direct covenantal law.

Williams had a problem with the sermon. He thought Governor Winthrop and the people he led saw themselves as the New Testament Israel, with a system of government similar to that of the Old Testament, i.e., a system in which church and state were inseparably connected.

The Massachusetts settlers were not the only people who held this view. Most of the English and New England Puritans, the Scottish Covenanters, the French Huguenots, and the Dutch

Reformed also saw themselves as part of the "New Israel." They believed themselves to be in covenant with God, with the understanding that obedience to God's law would bring them blessings, while disobedience would expose them to His wrath. Most Puritans also believed God was on their side—evidenced by His divine intervention in special deliverances from oppressors, victories over their enemies, and survival in natural disasters.

Williams did not question God's providential care for His people, but he could not accept their claim that they enjoyed a special covenantal relationship with God. They were not like Israel, God's favoured nation. That special theocratic relationship came to an end when the Jewish nation was destroyed in AD 70 and was never restored in any other nation on earth. For that reason, Williams objected strenuously to what he thought was a blurring of the lines between church and state. They ought to be completely separate, he held.

### **Williams' Interpretation of the Unity of Scripture**

Williams' insistence on a clear separation of church and state was closely related to his rejection of the Puritan and Reformed concept of the unity of the Old and New Testament. The Puritans read and interpreted the Bible covenantally. They saw a strong

parallel between God's covenant with Israel and His covenant with the church of Christ. Nations like England, Holland, and America also saw themselves in covenant with God, based on His covenant with Israel.

Williams saw things differently. According to him, there was a clear distinction to be made between the way God dealt with Israel and the way He dealt with the Church. Throughout the Old Testament dispensation, God dealt with Israel covenantally as a nation collectively, with circumcision being a kind of national badge of identity. With the New Testament, this covenantal relationship changed to a more individual and spiritual relationship. This change in the character of the New Covenant is announced in passages such as Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36: 26-29, which point to a more spiritual and personal covenant relationship.

Williams, however, interprets the differences between the Old and New covenants as so profound and distinct that, since Christ's coming, nothing has ever remotely existed similar to Israel. If there is any continuity between the roles played by Christ in both Testaments, it is to be understood symbolically and figuratively. In fact, Williams largely interpreted the Old Testament allegorically, viewing Jesus Christ as an Antitype in various Old

**Williams' insistence on a clear separation of church and state was closely related to his rejection of the Puritan and Reformed concept of the unity of the Old and New Testament. The Puritans read and interpreted the Bible covenantally. They saw a strong parallel between God's covenant with Israel and His covenant with the church of Christ. Nations like England, Holland, and America also saw themselves in covenant with God, based on His covenant with Israel.**

## OXFORD REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Invites applications for the 2022-2023 school year:  
**Full-time Elementary and High-School teachers**

About us:

- An expanding student body of 350+ students from K to 12
- A dedicated, Reformed, parent-run school community
- New facilities in a rural setting in south-western ON (Mount Elgin)
- A unified, professional staff committed to a Christ-centered education

We are looking for enthusiastic, qualified teachers who have a passion for Christian education, and submit to the Holy Scriptures as summarized in the Reformed confessions. Seasoned veterans looking for a positive change, or young beginners looking to gain experience are both encouraged to apply.

Applications must include a resume, statement of faith, philosophy of Christian education, and references. Email applications to **Mr. William Van Brugge** (principal@orcschool.ca). Visit our website (orcschool.ca), or come and visit our school: 333182 Plank Line, Mount Elgin, Ontario.

## REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

COPE TOWN, ONTARIO

Invites applications for:

- **Secondary Teacher**
- **Secondary French Teacher**

We are looking for qualified individuals with a vision for Christian education to join our committed, vibrant community of learners. We are a K-12 parent-run school serving the families of four local Free Reformed Churches and beyond. Located in a beautiful rural setting between Hamilton and Brantford, RCS has been blessed with a strongly supportive community and, since our inception in 1978, have grown to an enrollment of 320 students. Please send a cover letter, resume, statement of faith, and references, including a pastoral reference (teacher applicants are also asked to include a philosophy of education) to the attention of:

**Adam Kloostra, Principal**

198 Inksetter Road P.O. Box 70, Copetown, ON L0R 1J0  
 t. 905.627.5977 e. principal@rehoboth.on.ca  
 w. www.rehoboth.on.ca

## CALL TO THE MINISTRY

Do you feel the Lord is calling you to the ministry in the Free Reformed Churches of North America? If you sense He is, the Free Reformed Theological Education Committee wishes to receive your application by March 1, 2022. Please contact the secretary of the committee for the most recent edition of the Handbook for Theological Education, which contains the application prerequisites and requirements.

**Rev. L. J. Bilkes, Secretary**

37 Graydon Drive,  
 Mt. Elgin, ON N0J 1N0  
 Cell: 289-683-4065 • E: ljbilkes@frcna.org

Testament narratives.

Although other Puritans and continental Reformed theologians did not deny the legitimacy of allegories and types in the Old Testament, they did not see this as a reason for denying the basic unity of Holy Scripture. They fully agreed with Calvin, who stresses the importance of recognizing the unity between the two testaments.<sup>4</sup> This helps us understand that God always maintains His covenant bond with believers and their children from generation to generation. The fact that Williams could not see the continuity of the covenant played a huge role in his view of separation of church and state.

### The Civil Government and the Law

Another issue that arose during the conflict between Williams and the Massachusetts authorities has to do with the role of the civil government in religious matters. Williams believed that the civil government had no business enforcing compliance with the first table of the Law, which covers the four commandments dealing with man's relationship to God. The government, he said, may not take disciplinary action against church members who fall away from the truth and practice heresy.

As for the second table of the law, Williams did allow the civil government to enforce laws that relate to man's relationships: theft, public drunkenness, murder and adultery, etc.<sup>5</sup> His main concern was that spiritual and religious issues, such as doctrine, faith, assurance and godliness, needed to be protected by the church in the interest of what he called "soul liberty." The magistrate should not use his power to control what people thought or believed.

For Williams, the true church is like "a magnificent garden," unsullied and pure, resonant of Eden. The world, on the other hand, is "the Wilderness." To open a gap in the hedge or wall of separation between the "Garden of the Church" and the "Wilderness of this World," he warned, will turn the Garden into a Wilderness. As John Barry explains:

Williams believed that preventing error in religion was impossible, for it required people to interpret God's law, and people would inevitably err. He therefore concluded that government must remove itself from anything that touched upon human beings' relationship with God. A society built on the principles Massachusetts espoused would lead at best to hypocrisy, because forced worship, he wrote, "stinks in God's nostrils." At worst, such a society would lead to a foul corruption—not of the state, which was already corrupt, but of the church.<sup>6</sup>

There were other practical implications for Williams' rejection of the covenant concept. He came to deny the validity of his baptism as an infant in the Church of England. He was re-baptized by sprinkling after his banishment to Rhode Island,




but then questioned the validity of that too, wondering about the credentials of the one who baptized him. He wondered if anyone had the authority of Christ to baptize. He also found very few in his church who, in his mind, were true believers in Christ and had been regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

As Paul Johnson explains:

Williams did not believe, as Winthrop's Anglicans held, and as even the Pilgrim Fathers had accepted, that God covenanted with a congregation or an entire society. God, he held, covenanted with each individual. The logic of this was not merely that each person was entitled to his own interpretation of the truth about religion, but that in order for civil society to exist there had to be an absolute separation between church and state. In religion, Williams was saying, every man had the right to his individual conscience guided by the inner light of his faith. In secular matters, however, he must submit to the will of the majority, determined through institutions shorn of any religious content. So, to the Massachusetts elders, Williams was not merely an antinomian, he was a secularist, almost an atheist.<sup>7</sup>

This does not mean he actually was an atheist. Far from it, he was actually a very godly person, be it with strange views which can easily be misinterpreted. Some have called him a maverick, and in a certain sense he was.

There is much more to be said about him. He was also a man of great intellect and importance. Americans view him as a great political giant, and his insights contributed to the passing of the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution regarding the separation of church and state, which guaranteed freedom of religion for the first time in the Western world.

But what does that really mean? Why did men like Jefferson and Hamilton and other signatories of the Constitution, who certainly were not Puritans, find such kinship with someone who, for all his weaknesses and excesses, was perhaps the sincerest Puritan of them all. We will try to answer these questions next time, DV. 

### (Endnotes)

- 1 Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma*, p. 117.
- 2 Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma*, pp. 121,123.
- 3 Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, p. 58.
- 4 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II, 10, p. 428.
- 5 Diane L. Olinger, "Roger Williams: Peacemaking, Soul Liberty, and the Public Good," article in *Ordained Servant*, February 2019; accessed on Internet.
- 6 John M. Barry, "God, Government and Roger Williams' Big Idea," article in *Smithsonian Magazine*. Jan. 12, 2012; accessed on Internet.
- 7 Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People*, pp. 47-48.

# Providence Christian School

is currently accepting applications  
for the 2022-2023 school year  
for a full-time principal.



*Providence Christian School is situated in a beautiful, southern Alberta rural community, minutes from Lethbridge. It has grades K-12 with about 170 students and 18 staff members. Our desire is to train our students to become responsible citizens who are true Christians and who will worthily occupy their places in society, church and state.*

### The principal at PCS will be called on to

- provide spiritual leadership
- engage in transparent, ethical and responsible decision making
- lead staff members in defining, developing and delivering learning for all students
- provide insightful stewardship of funds entrusted to the operation of the school
- be a spokesperson for the school to the community

### Qualifications

- Experienced teacher with training and understanding of the meaning and value of Christian based pedagogies and methodologies
- Having a Masters in Leadership or equivalent training is considered an asset
- Alberta principal certification or ability to obtain it
- Experience within the Reformed Christian school movement
- Rooted in the Reformed faith and by experience acquainted with the history, culture, doctrines, and practices of the Reformed churches and schools.

Find additional details at  
[www.pcsmonarch.com](http://www.pcsmonarch.com)

Please submit a resumé  
with a cover letter,  
statement of faith, and  
philosophy of Christian  
Leadership and  
Teaching.

Direct inquiries  
and/or applications  
to Mr. Bill Pas,  
Board president  
and chair of the  
Principal Search Committee:  
[recruitment@pcsmonarch.com](mailto:recruitment@pcsmonarch.com)

# BILL C-4 AND CHRIST'S CHURCH IN CANADA



Right before the Christmas break, the Canadian government passed a piece of legislation that had been in the works for a year—Bill C-4. The goal of the legislation was to protect the homosexual community from so-called “conversion therapy.” Admittedly, some of what the bill criminalizes deserves to be banned. For example, electroshock therapy is designed to electrocute the homosexual desires out of someone. However, this behavior was already illegal and punishable by law and was no longer taking place in Canada. Secular “reparative therapy” counselling had almost entirely ceased in Canada as well.

So, what is the point of the bill if much of what it targets is already illegal? I heard an activist openly describe it on the radio when promoting the bill with these words: “Let’s be honest, we have to combat what goes on in church basements.” The misleading but sophisticated propaganda in these words is immense—as if church leaders sneak off into the basement to do untoward things. The leaders of all the political parties conspired to suddenly reintroduce this bill right after an election and blindside the parliament with the goal of getting it unanimously passed and preventing any further social conservative resistance or attempted amendments.

The faithful churches in Canada protested this bill vigorously and asked for protections of religious liberty to be included, while praising the bill for banning coercive and secular reparative

therapy models. Despite the unprecedented levels of feedback from Canadians, every draft of the bill got progressively worse. The activists were able to persuade the lawmakers that the protests showed just how much protection the homosexual community still needs. The Canadian Supreme Court, some years ago, already declared in another case that when religious liberty and sexual liberty clash, sexual liberty always has priority. This creates an ominous climate in Canada for the faithful church of Jesus Christ.

The wording of the bill is vague and extremely broad, and it appears to aim for nothing less than the criminalization of any and every behavior that seeks to condemn, restrain, hinder, or reduce homosexual sexual attraction in any way. The only legal option the bill intends to leave is “non-judgmental” explorations of feelings, rather than giving direction about right and wrong. Some Christian watch groups are warning that this could criminalize conversations parents have with their children, preaching and teaching in the church, and faithful Christian counselling of any kind that calls upon someone to resist homosexual attractions. It could criminalize Bible class in Christian schools. It remains to be seen how the activists will seek to pressure law enforcement to wield this bill. They will probably seek to prosecute the more blatant examples of law-breaking first to establish precedents from which they can tighten the noose on anyone who dares to still hold to



biblical sexual ethics. Christian organizations are also seeking to find or create legal precedents protecting religious liberty.

This article began, of course, with human horizontal scheming. When one considers these developments, humanly speaking, it can appear as overwhelming as the statue of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. But we should see more going on—a spiritual battle raging not just in Canada, but in many western countries who have passed similar legislation. Where the pressure gets the highest, the Lord of the church also manifests His presence and grace to His saints. Though furnaces may flame, He will be with His people.

This is where soaking in the prison letters of the apostle Paul is so encouraging. In Philippians 1, Paul writes how his imprisonment has furthered the gospel and even emboldened the churches as they see God's grace in Paul's prison cell. "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:20-21).

So, how have the churches in Canada responded? Not always wisely or well. The church in North America needs to abandon the culture wars mentality of the last decades, in which the primary focus was the activists. We are assuming that we are still the 'moral majority' and that we just must get our voices heard. This has not been the case for a while now. We need to go back to the pre-Constantine approach of the early church, when the church was a despised criminalized minority who still, by loving proclamation of the truth, spread in the hostile Roman empire.

Some churches (including my own) read a letter with two parts the Sunday after the bill became law. The first part explained the bill and its threatening impacts. The second part explained that the greatest danger to the church is not persecution, but becoming unfaithful to God's Word. My pastoral prayer focused not on the activists, but the people in our pews. Some struggle with unwanted homosexual attractions and need the compassion and accountability of the church. Others have family members who are living a homosexual lifestyle. The culture wars approach would be to aim a flamethrower at the activists, to target this as the most heinous of sins, and to lose sight of the people in our pews.

Almost every Free Reformed congregation has grappled with how best to express pastoral care in these scenarios, how to blend truth and grace to the situation at hand. The activists are not in our pews and will not hear our sermons—our members will. Those who feel same sex attraction (SSA) often feel an irreparable sense of brokenness, shame, and guilt. The first response they usually need is not a call to repentance, but a kind, patient listening ear and encouragement. The church also needs to recover a biblical sense of the goodness of singleness—being called to celibacy is not a curse, but a blessing. In seeking to safeguard marriage in our culture, we have neglected the beauty of singleness.


Other congregations in the FRC have participated in the call of the Liberty Coalition to declare the 3rd Sunday in January "Bib-

lical Sexuality Sunday." Churches doing so were called upon to emphasize the sinfulness of a homosexual lifestyle and to call people to repentance, as well as to proclaim the gospel. Many of our congregations hesitated to take this approach and thought a more pastoral focus on the people in the pews was wiser.

The road to sinful compromise on this point is well traveled in North America. First, stop talking about biblical sexuality. Second, declare that it is complicated and hard to figure out. They would say that, since people are born this way (an argument that ignores original sin), then it is okay to live this way. Third, say that good Christians can have different perspectives on this matter and become apologetic about what Scripture clearly teaches about sexuality. Fourth, openly affirm homosexual marriages as pleasing to God. This danger is to neglect, water down, and eventually deny the truth of God's word.

While the church should be on vigilant guard against this slippery slope, there is another factor that is often neglected. If we take the culture wars approach and blister the air with strong rhetoric, singling this sin out in ways we do not for other sins, it presents a stumbling block to people in our pews. Majoring on law (as the culture wars strategy has done) can easily eclipse the grace and compassion of Christ for sinners. This leads others to react to the strong words by saying, but surely there must be love and grace for such sinners and strugglers? The temptation becomes to compromise truth for the sake of relationships when the main tone of the church is condemnation. The church need not and must not choose between truth and compassion. Both must be fully expressed as Scripture requires. Burk and Lambert write some heart-searching words on this point to the church:

Our churches have not always been the welcoming places that they should have been for sinners—especially for those struggling with same-sex attraction. Many same-sex-attracted youth growing up in churches have felt isolated, alone, and bewildered by their attractions and have found little help from their own churches. Instead, they have encountered much in the way of politics and stigma, but very little in the way of help and hope. This kind of ministry is unfaithful, and we need to do better. In short, we need to change too.<sup>1</sup>

Judgment begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17), and so a bill like C-4 should provoke soul searching in us, not merely resistance. Let us pray that we will be found faithful in every way—speaking truth in such a gospel way that sinners of whatever kind will gladly draw near to hear us (Luke 15:1). 

*Rev. E. Moerdyk is pastor of the Free Reformed Church of St. Thomas, Ontario*

<sup>1</sup> *Transforming Homosexuality: What the Bible says about Sexual Orientation and Change* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2015), 101. This is not the only resource I would recommend on this topic. Though there are ways it needs to be supplemented, this book is helpful in many ways.



# FALSE MODESTY

*Rev. Rob VanDoodewaard*

False modesty is a difficult sin to recognize because it comes cloaked in forms of piety. It can worm its way into our prayers and our manner of speaking. It might be the reason we deflect compliments rather than simply saying thank you. It could be why we are tempted to speak too much about our sacrifices or failures. Perhaps false modesty is even a motive for our self-deprecating humour. The challenge is that some of these patterns could also be rooted in natural character, culture, or customs. We ought to consider, however, whether our habits are rooted in genuine humility. The danger of false modesty is that it is deeply deceptive and ultimately fails to give glory to God.

The Bible warns that religious people may build a false front of counterfeit humility. The Lord Jesus spoke of hypocrites who fasted and put on a sad face to appear pious (Matt. 6:16). He exposed the pride of the Pharisee, who thought that fasting and tithing were accomplishments worthy of God's favour (Luke 18:12). These practices betrayed that they were interested not in honoring God but in honoring themselves. It is this kind of pharisaical false modesty that leads to several pitfalls.

First, false modesty is deceitful. It requires masked emotions, duplicitous thoughts, and misrepresented reality. It leads to living a lie by pretending to be poorer, sadder, less gifted, or more sacrificial than you are. These habits may have a certain appearance of religion, but they cannot help against indulgences of the

flesh (Col. 2:23). There is a danger that this deceit will lead to selfishness. Those who practice these habits may become misers, if not financially, then in other aspects of life. Their love for neighbors will be stunted; they will fail to share their talents. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

False modesty is also dangerously prideful. The Apostle Paul warns that those who delight in false humility are puffed up without reason by their sensuous minds (Col. 2:18). Make no mistake, false modesty is self-centered rather than God-centered. It forgets that we walk before the face of God and that He knows all the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Though this pride may be well hidden from others, it is still an "abomination" before the Lord (Prov. 16:5). God is not fooled by outward appearances.

Worst of all, false modesty robs God of His glory. God has given each of us various gifts, talents, circumstances, and possessions. A strong Christian ought to be able to enjoy even blessings of prosperity as a gift from His hand. Colossians 2:20-23 gives us a hint that habits of false modesty may lead to a sort of Gnosticism, the ancient heresy that taught that creation is intrinsically evil. If we engage in false modesty, somewhere at the root is a problem with our theology. We ought to praise God for the possessions, bodies, and abilities He has given us (Ps.





139:14). Like the publican, we ought to come before the Lord as humble sinners indeed. But that does not exclude also coming before Him in deep gratitude for all His gifts.

Finally, false modesty is a complicated sin to discern. This is a particularly dangerous area to try to identify in other Christians. You may read an article like this and think to yourself, “I know a person just like that; they could easily drive a Cadillac, and instead they drive a Corolla.” Or “I know a man who prays and talks just like that.” Be very careful with trying to read the hearts of others. You may not know their reasons, motives, or histories. It is genuinely modest to avoid boasting or blowing our own horn (Matt. 6:2). What may appear to be false modesty to you may say more about your own heart than theirs. The key to combating this sin is walking before the face of God and knowing that He knows your heart. If you see this sin in yourself, confess it before Him and look to the Lord Jesus Christ, who humbled Himself even to the point of death on the cross (Phil. 2:8). True humility begins at the cross of Christ and in confessing our faith in Him. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (James 4:10). ❶

*Rev. Robert VanDoodewaard is pastor of Hope Reformed Church in Powassan, Ontario. This article was originally published in the January 2022 issue of Tabletalk Magazine.*



Contact your deacon  
or Peace Haven  
Director, (SEE BELOW)

#### FREE REFORMED ASSOCIATION

PEACE HAVEN, a ministry of Free Reformed deacons, offers you and your family help with disabilities:

- a listening ear
- help accessing church and government resources
- meaningful day and evening programs
- respite or vacation care
- residential care

Margaret Heemskerck, [mheemskerck.peacehaven@gmail.com](mailto:mheemskerck.peacehaven@gmail.com) or 519.770.8816



PRAY for our partners  
SPONSOR a child  
JOIN a business group  
PARTICIPATE  
in a fundraiser



#### OUR MISSION

To help meet the spiritual and physical needs of people in the developing world in accordance with biblical principles for the glory of God.

[www.wordanddeed.org](http://www.wordanddeed.org)

**Don't discard used Christian literature or Bibles!**

#### CHRISTIAN SALVAGE MISSION

“Worldwide Distribution of Evangelical Literature”  
3 – 120 Lancing Drive, Hamilton, ON Canada L8W 3A1  
Phone/Fax: 905-574-3334 Email: [info@csmcanda.org](mailto:info@csmcanda.org)  
[www.csmcanda.org](http://www.csmcanda.org)

The mandate of Christian Salvage Mission is to gather Bibles and other evangelical Christian literature that is no longer needed from the shelves of people across Canada and ship it to Christians in third world countries who are less blessed than we are.

**“Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.”**  
John 6:12

# THE CHRISTELIJKE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN (CGK)



## Introduction

As most of you know, the CGK was our mother church during the early years of post-World War II immigration from The Netherlands. Once our fledgling denomination got somewhat established in the 1960s and 1970s, we viewed ourselves and were treated by the CGK as a sister church. Currently, the CGK has about 180 congregations and 70,000+ members. Many of our first, second, and third generation ministers hailed from the “old country.” They include the Revs. Tamminga, Overduin, Hamstra (s)<sup>1</sup>, Laman, and Noordegraaf, who all died in North America, but also many others who returned to their country of birth, such as the Revs. de Waal, Zijderveld, Smits, Bilkes<sup>2</sup>, Keuning, Stehouwer<sup>3</sup>, den Butter, Bos, Baars, Wüllschlegler, Hoefnagel, Procee<sup>4</sup>, and Klaver.

The CGK, which seceded from the national church in 1834, (and later the FRC) was known for its experiential and discriminating preaching and generally held a three-covenant view where all children in the congregation are treated as members of the Covenant of Grace, but are still in need of regeneration, faith, and repentance. These indispensable blessings are promised in baptism, which calls for the recipients to sincerely plead for their fulfillment through true conversion by the Holy Spirit.

Given our earlier ties to the CGK, which admittedly are fading with each passing decade, it should be interesting (and our concern, considering our full correspondence relationship!) to consider recent developments in the CGK. On the positive side, it may be noted that the Lord has granted the CGK many faithful, gifted preachers over its long history, right up to today. On the negative side, we see a drifting of sections within the CGK from its former biblical moorings.

## Difficulties

Specifically, the following matter ought to greatly concern us: the installation of women in the offices of elder and deacon, while this is clearly not allowed in its church order. The opposition of this view to Scripture has been confirmed by two major studies in recent years. The current, ongoing Synod meetings, which started in 2019, have to decide how to deal with several noncompliant congregations. Because of COVID-19, a decision has not yet been made. It is expected that this 2019 Synod will meet in April 2022 to make a final decision.

The CGK traditionally has often managed to find a “middle” position in difficult situations, driven by a strong desire to keep all congregations in its federation. Over the years, however, CGK congregations have grown far apart. Spiritual recognition of one another is gradually disappearing. The more progressive elements in the CGK argue that there has been a steady movement of the denomination to the (conservative) right<sup>5</sup> in the last 50 or so years. My take on this is that there has been a steady movement to the (progressive) left<sup>6</sup>. All this is raising the temperature in CGK, especially at the Synodical level. The decisions that will be made at their next Synod may well lead to a split.

Matters are further complicated by the decades-long practice of having combined worship services with other Reformed churches which historically have been the left of the CGK. One such denomination, the Gereformeerde Kerken (Vrijgemaakt)<sup>7</sup>, opened all offices to women in 2019. Any breach in the CGK will have complex ramifications with regard to theological education. Students for the ministry are trained at the Theological University of Apeldoorn (TUA). If numerous congregations leave the CGK (or are dismissed by Synod), it will undoubtedly





impact the TUA, and likely other areas as well, such as ministerial pensions.

A few months ago, about 60 men, mostly ministers, gathered in Amersfoort to discuss and pray about this grave situation. There seems to be little hope for a satisfactory solution. A parting of ways may be inevitable. By far, the best solution would be for the Lord to send a mighty revival, leading to genuine repentance, humility, and love.

Please pray for our sister church, specifically for wisdom and courage for Synod delegates to make God-honouring decisions.

Written by Connor J. Keuning

*(Former president and secretary of the Interchurch Relations Committee)*

### Endnotes

- 1 Rev. Jetze Hamstra immigrated in 1948 after serving as a teaching elder. He was installed as teaching elder in 1950 and ordained as minister in 1954. His son Rev. Gerald Hamstra was ordained in the Presbyterian Reformed Church, entered the FRCNA in 1972, then after serving two congregations in the Netherlands returned to the FRCNA in 1985.
- 2 Rev. G. Bilkes, father of Dr. L.W. Bilkes.
- 3 Rev. A. Stehouwer immigrated from The Netherlands and was the first student in the FRCNA.
- 4 Rev. G.R. Procee returned to the Netherlands after serving the Hamilton FRC for 22 years. In 2021 he returned to Canada as an emeritus pastor.
- 5 "Verrechtsing" in Dutch.
- 6 Progressive congregations in the CGK may be known by having music bands, one service per Sunday, female elders and deacons, the singing of hymns, practicing homosexuals attend the Lord's Supper, extensive cooperation with neo-calvinistic churches at the local level, etc.
- 7 Liberated Reformed Churches, until 2020 a sister church of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The CanRef has severed ties with its former mother church.



# Stillwaters

PS 23:2  
Christian Retirement Community

- Life lease independent living with a pathway to full care
- Maintenance-free living with many amenities
- Close to several Reformed churches




## A New Christian Retirement Development is Underway!

*In Beautiful Norwich Ontario*

**CONTACT US while suites are still available!**

*\*Rental units are also available*



Phone: 226-796-0250  
Email: email@stillwaters.info



## Free Reformed Historical Centre

### "What do I do with these things?"

**Contact the Free Reformed Historical Centre**

The Free Reformed Historical Centre is to gather and preserve materials relating to the Dutch roots and North American establishment, development, and ongoing life of our churches. Specific materials are classified as unrestricted access (available to all), restricted access (available only to approved persons), and/or time-specified access (available after a specified future date).

**The Historical Centre is looking for:**

- Printed materials from the churches.
- Audio recordings of worship services and speeches.
- Personal materials (letters, diaries, sermon notes, essays, etc).
- Publications from our 'mother' churches.
- Pictures of people and events.
- Interviews with 'founding' members.

If you or your (grand)parents have materials that may be of interest to the centre, please contact:

**Rev. D. Kranendonk (secretary)**  
Cell: 616-290-4125 • Email: kranendonk@frcna.org

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Kalamazoo Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, MI is planning a

## SPRING RETREAT

Spring Retreat for ages 19-29 from **May 26-May 28**, Lord willing. Scheduled speakers are **Dr. Jerry Bilkes and Rev. A. T. Vergunst.**

*Discounted registration is available through February 28.* Please find additional information, sign up, and pay at the Kalamazoo Reformed **website:**  
[www.kalamazooreformed.org/special-events](http://www.kalamazooreformed.org/special-events).

## Give the gift of reading with **Open Windows!**

Open children's minds to history, vocations, music, the Bible, creation, art, and countries around the world. With stories, a meditation, puzzles, colouring contests, and book reviews, it's a magazine for the home, school, libraries, and outreach. For ages 4-12.



**\$21.50 annually, 6 issues per year**  
Print subscription form at [openwindows.frcna.org](http://openwindows.frcna.org)  
or contact [administrator@frcna.org](mailto:administrator@frcna.org)

## OBITUARY



### GERRIT DEN BOER

March 9, 1936 - October 13, 2021

*"And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us." Psalm 90:17a*

Beloved husband of **Anneke** (nee Sterkenberg) for **64 years.**

Dear father of:  
**Bill and Jeanette den Boer**  
**Joanne**  
**Elsa Wierks**  
**Anita & Steve Van Wingerden**

Dad was blessed with 12 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

## FREE REFORMED PUBLICATIONS

**A Goodly Heritage: The Secession of 1834 and Its Impact on Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and North America**  
**Hardcover | 512 pages | \$28.00**

FREE REFORMED PUBLICATIONS  
18 CHAPALA CRESCENT S.E.  
CALGARY, AB T2X 3M4  
EMAIL: [BOOKORDERS@FRCNA.ORG](mailto:BOOKORDERS@FRCNA.ORG)  
TEL: 403-254-6591  
TO SEE OUR CATALOGUE VISIT US AT  
[HTTP://FRCNA.ORG/PUBLICATIONS](http://FRCNA.ORG/PUBLICATIONS)

## A GOODLY HERITAGE

The Secession of 1834 and Its Impact on Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and North America

CORNELIS PRONK

## CONFESSIONAL STUDIES

FREE REFORMED PUBLICATIONS  
18 CHAPALA CRESCENT S.E. CALGARY, AB T2X 3M4  
EMAIL: [BOOKORDERS@FRCNA.ORG](mailto:BOOKORDERS@FRCNA.ORG)  
TEL: 403-254-6591



*Simply, Faith! Expository Sermons on the Belgic Confession*

REV. C. SCHOOLS

Hardcover | 323 pages | \$19.50



*The Canons of Dort: Expository Sermons on the Canons of Dort*

REV. C. PRONK

Hardcover | 285 pages | \$15.00

To see our catalogue visit us @ <http://frcna.org/publications>