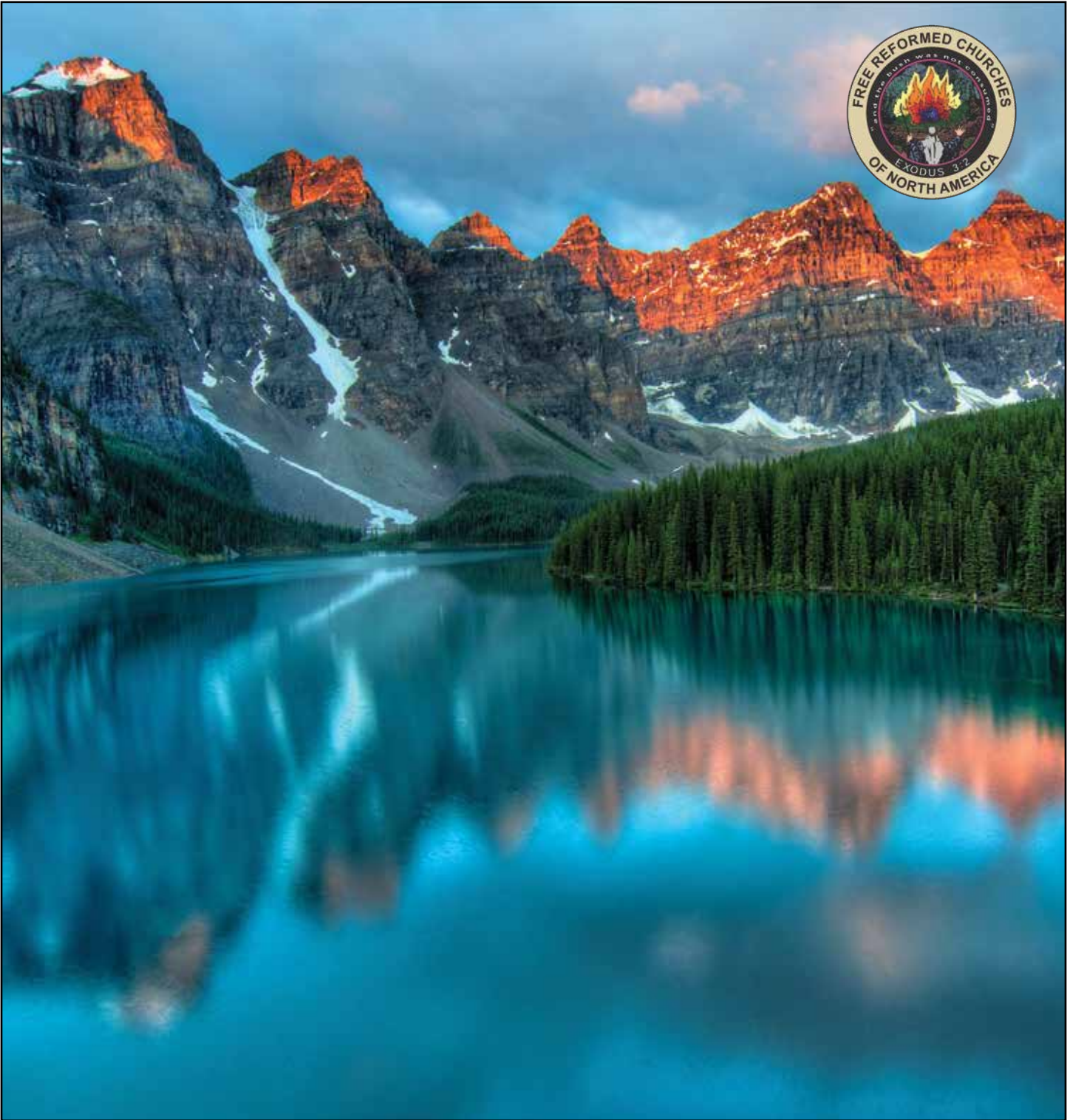


VOLUME 70 NUMBER 08 · SEPTEMBER 2023 EDITION

THE MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA



02 MEDITATION:
KEEP TRUSTING,
KEEP PREACHING

06 EDITORIAL:
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14 MISSIONS:
REPORT FROM THE
CANADIAN MISSION FIELD



KEEP TRUSTING, KEEP PREACHING

Revelation 10

The Lord gave the great vision and record of Revelation to the church to educate and encourage His people. It is possible and edifying to trace those purposes in every chapter, but this meditation will focus on chapter 10. Revelation 10 first comes to John, of course, and to the church of his day, and then to us. It comes in the context of trumpets blowing and great judgments falling upon the world (see chapters 8-9). How often we may be discouraged, when we see this world, when we see God's judgements all around, when we see so little evidence of His saving power, or when we see so many sinners carry on so resistant to the Lord and bent on rebellion. It is not always that way, and there are many highlights for sure, but sometimes we do not see them so clearly. However, in Revelation 10 the Lord gives great encouragement to His people.

The overall point of Revelation 10 is to stir John and all the church to keep trusting and keep preaching. We may summarize our Christian calling in terms of those two activities: trusting and preaching. The Lord commands us all to do those two things. To encourage those activities, this chapter shows that the Lord does three things.

See Jesus' Glory

First, God tells us to see Jesus' glory. The Lord shows Jesus' glory by way of an angel in verse 1. "I saw another mighty angel," says John, "come down from heaven." Some think this angel is Jesus Christ Himself. It could well be. Others say that in view of John describing an *angel*, and Jesus being more than a mere angel, it cannot be Jesus. But even if this one is only an angel, what an angel he is! Even if he may not be the Lord Jesus Christ, he certainly reflects the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of the way he's described. He is clothed with a cloud – in the Old Testament, clouds were said to be around God's throne. This angel also has a rainbow on his head – pointing to God's great faithfulness. With his face as the sun and his feet like pillars of fire, he reflects the unparalleled glory of Jesus Christ. Clearly this angel, if he is not Jesus, lives close to Him.

The angel comes. John sees him coming down from heaven, setting his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. What a picture of tremendous power, authority, and great majesty! All of creation belongs to the Lord. All of it. Then in verse 3, he cries with a loud voice, as a roaring lion. O, what a sound!

Right at that moment, something else happened. Seven thunders uttered their voices. Maybe that means there were seven great thunderclaps, seven crashes echoing and reechoing. Somehow these thundering noises were articulate. That means they

communicated truths and realities, including perhaps threats and judgements. John was able to understand them. Yet, he was not to write them down. Maybe the point is we should not expect to be told everything the Lord has in store.

As a whole, the message is clear: John sees this angel come from heaven reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ. Surely the aim is to impress and encourage John. Even as he has been seeing most imposing and terrifying sights of many great judgments falling, the breakup of creation, and the advance of Satan’s forces, yet one angel from Heaven - just one angel - is greater than all that threatens. Just one angel is so mighty and so majestic; just one angel highlights the ultimate and infinite glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us see, know, and live with understanding and awareness of that reality. See Jesus’ glory here.

Hear Jesus’ Guarantee

Second, hear Jesus’ guarantee. Verse 5 says, “The angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,” and then we are told how he swears an oath before the face of the everlasting Creator of heaven and earth and the sea. The Lord is so great and the angel swears by Him. We can be sure of what’s coming. What is that? What is the oath? Read verses 6-7: “There should be time no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.” No more time. That means really, no more *delay*. This seems to be an assurance to John and all God’s people that the Lord will indeed finish the work to which He has committed Himself. Yes, He will bring history to a climax and conclusion. He will finish building His church. He will destroy all His enemies. He will make His people triumph. The new day will dawn, and eternal joy and life and glory will begin.

How encouraging this is meant to be, as to us the day can seem to be so long, or rather the night of darkness can seem to be stretching out forever. We may sometimes wonder: will the Lord ever come? Will the new world ever appear? Will it happen? For various reasons, we can be tempted again and again to give up. Listen to Jesus’ guarantee. There shall be time no more; the end, or eternity, is coming. What an oath, what a guarantee is given to help the church to keep trusting and keep preaching.

Eat up Jesus’ Little Book

Next in this chapter, the Lord says to eat up a little book that is in the hand of the mighty angel (v. 8). What does that mean? John must eat a book and is told that “it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.” And so it is, for when John eats it, it tastes good but afterward his stomach hurts.

Our first question is: what is this little book? Some people think that for John that little book was the rest of Revelation, and that could be. But can’t we say now that, for all God’s people today, the little book represents the whole revelation of God, the whole Word of God. Today too, isn’t our calling to eat up God’s little book? In other words, we must be full of God’s word, ever studying and digesting it, and then proclaiming it. Here again remember the main point: keep trusting and keep preaching. So, eat up the little book, eat up the revelation of the Lord.

But what does it mean that it is sweet and then bitter? Sweet as honey in our mouth, but afterwards hurting our stomach? Back in Ezekiel 3, Ezekiel the prophet had to do something similar; he had to eat a scroll full of the words of the Lord, and for Ezekiel too it was sweet to eat. After all, don’t we confess that the Lord’s words are sweet? In Psalm 19:10, we confess the Word is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. We sing: “Sweeter are thy words to me than all other good can be....”

God’s Word is a sweet word, and yet how often it hurts, because it is a hard word. For example, the word reproves our sinful nature and waywardness, the word pronounces judgement for all who will not repent and believe. What believer has not felt the bitterness of that word at times?

How encouraging this is meant to be, as to us the day can seem to be so long, or rather the night of darkness can seem to be stretching out forever.

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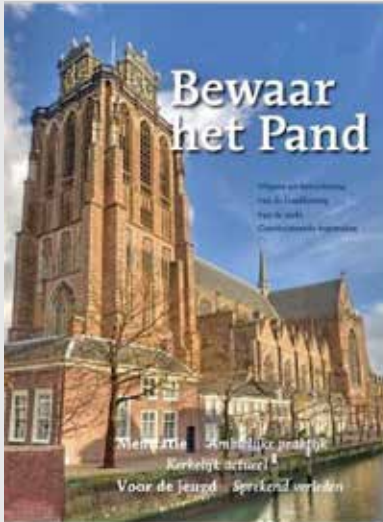
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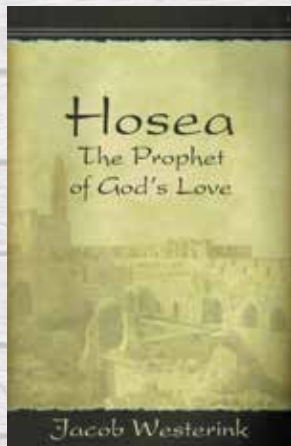
MEDITATION

Yet, don't let that make you hesitate. Remember the main point: we are to keep trusting and keep preaching. In the last verse, John is told "thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." John, just keep preaching.

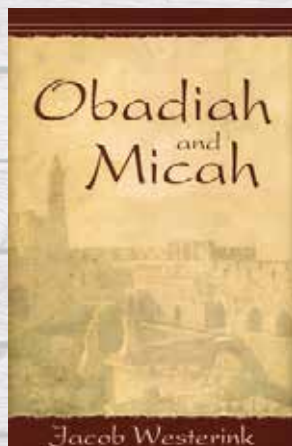
How encouraged we may be, in view of Jesus' glory as He shows it by way of this angel and with His guarantee through the oath of the angel that the end will come, the new and everlasting day will dawn. Till then, let every one of us be busy with the word and full of the word. Wherever the Lord has set us, let us eat up the Lord's little book, the precious word of God, and so also let us all press on in faith and being faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ. After all, He has bought with His blood all those of us who believe in Him. He will bring us safely home. ①

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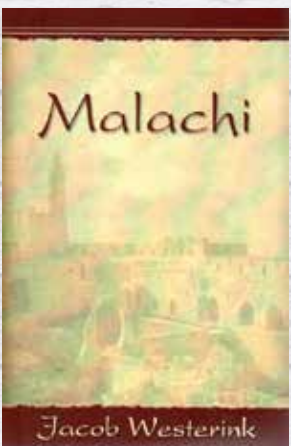
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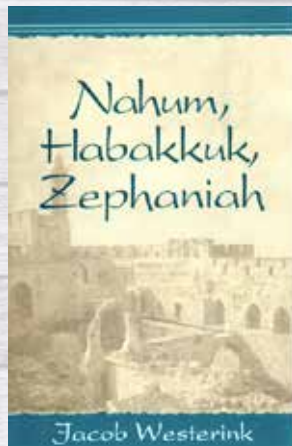
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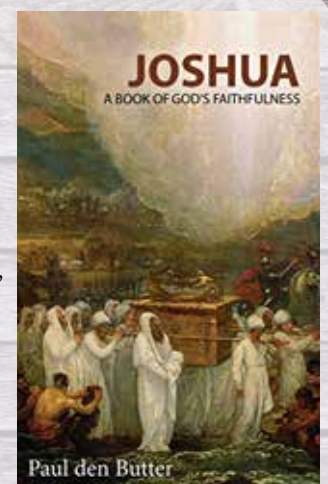


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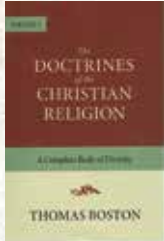
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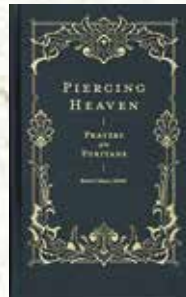
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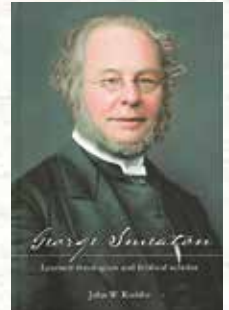
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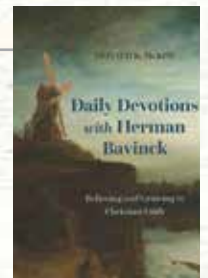
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DISCERNMENT

1 Thessalonians 5:21:

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

Imagine having gospel preaching for three weeks, and then your preacher has to flee persecution and you are left with the memory of those few weeks and little else. How are you to navigate life and deal with Satan, your calling, your old world, this new world, and persecution on top of it? After a little time passes, you get a letter from the preacher who had to leave in a rush. He must be brief: he comforts, explains, encourages, and warns. Then, as he is about to finish this letter, the Holy Spirit directs him to write just a few more short lines, including, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

As you will have figured out, this was the exact scenario of the early church in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9). In a matter of a few days, people were drawn out of darkness by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit, who applied to them the preaching of Paul. They had woken up to the realities of God, sin, salvation, the Holy Spirit, and sanctification. Among other important things, these Christians needed – as do we with them – discernment.

The Problem Requiring Discernment

Years ago, I remember asking an old Christian if there was anything specifically for which I could pray on his behalf. He had been an elder for many years and was seriously ill. He only lived three more weeks after we talked. He looked at me and answered: “Pray that I would be kept from the hidden snare.” I was in my thirties, and he was in his eighties. I wondered why this man I greatly respected would be focused on “hidden snares.” Wasn’t life simpler at 80? Didn’t he know all there was to know at that age? Hadn’t he learned enough in life, especially being an elder? Later I realized: Exactly, he *had* learned enough about life and himself to be concerned about “hidden snares.”

The Bible speaks often of snares, and specifically the hidden snare (see Ps. 142:3). The picture is drawn from the world of hunting or poaching. At times all a hunter needs to do is hide a snare on some narrow trail, and an unsuspecting animal will step in it. The poacher doesn’t even need to be there; the prey essentially traps itself in the hidden snare.

No one likes the feeling of walking into a trap. Maybe you have had people at work set a trap for you. We know Satan certainly does (see 2 Tim. 2:26). Our wily heart can so easily let itself be snared. This is what gave concern to my elderly friend. I wish I had asked him about experiences he had had with hidden snares. I didn’t think to then, but I have thought about it quite a bit since.

The Bible gives us many warnings about snares. Moses forewarned Israel that coming into the promised land they might be ensnared by the idols of the nations. This would be so especially if

they desired the silver and gold which they saw among them (Deut. 7:25). When the Gibeonites pretended to have come from a far place with designs of peace, Israel and Joshua walked into a snare (Ex. 34:12; Josh 9:4). The godly judge, Gideon, made an ephod, which “became a snare” (Judg. 8:27). Proverbs warns against monetary agreements with strangers, so as not to be snared (Prov. 6:1-2).

As I think about it now, my dying friend was asking for prayer for discernment, which he would need for only a few weeks, but I would need for decades.

The Place of Discernment

Discernment is the ability to detect the difference between right and wrong, the good and the best, the primary and secondary, the true and false. In modern warfare, they speak of “counterintelligence.” After all, one of the great principles of war is to make your enemy think one thing and then catch him in another. We should not be ignorant of our enemies’ stratagems (2 Cor. 2:11).

Even in everyday life, discernment is important. Which calling does not require discerning the important from the less important, the true from the counterfeit? Discernment of spiritual things is infinitely more important. What is the true gospel and what is an addition or subtraction that poisons the gospel? What distinguishes true believers from seeming believers? What is of primary importance in this situation and what is of secondary importance? What approach is needed in this situation and what tact should be taken when confronting this problem? To know the right time for something also takes discernment. Solomon says: “A wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment” (Eccl. 8:5b). These and other questions make clear that discernment is vital.

The Bible speaks frequently about discernment. Solomon prayed for a “understanding heart ... that I may discern between good and bad” (1 Kings 3:9). Discernment is a grace which the Holy Spirit gives (Eph. 5:9-10). Discernment is a mark of Christian maturity (Heb 5:14). We are expected to discern the signs of the times (Luke 12:56). We are called to discern the Lord’s body in the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:29). If there are wolves in sheep’s clothing, I need discernment (Matt. 10:16). If Satan can appear as an angel of light, I need discernment (2 Cor. 11:14).

A Plan for Discernment

Though discernment is a gift of the Spirit, it must be exercised or it will not function well. Hebrews 5 says that those who have discernment have it because “by reason of use [they] have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” A plan for discernment involves at least the following seven things.

1. We must have the principle of new life, Christ in us. This brings about the renewing of our mind, which calls us away from conformity to the old structures and sins, and enables an inner transformation after the likeness of Christ. Thomas a Kempis called this “The Imitation of Christ;” Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian;” Calvin, “The Golden Booklet of the Christian Life;” Whitefield, “The Life of God in the Soul of Man;” Wilhelmus a Brakel, “The Christian’s Reasonable Service;” Bonhoeffer, “The Cost of Discipleship.” This will enable us to “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2).
2. Study the Word of God diligently, prayerfully, comprehensively, consistently, and practice what you read by faith through the Spirit.
3. Learn your own sinfulness, the subtlety of your own heart, and repent of it daily and fully, whenever you find evidence of it. Sobriety is necessary for discernment
4. Pray for a discerning spirit (1 Kings 3:9-11), and lean on the Holy Spirit, of whom we read: “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Subject everything to appropriate testing and hold fast what

Even in everyday life, discernment is important. Which calling does not require discerning the important from the less important, the true from the counterfeit?

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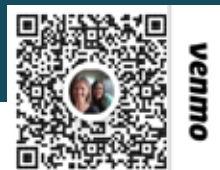
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EDITORIAL

is good. Some people just question everything and become a doubter or a cynic. The Bible is all for critiquing, but it calls at the same time for curating what is good. In other words, let our work not just be negative, but positive, and hold on to the positive.

5. Keep company with discerning people, from the past through reading, and in the present through spiritual fellowship. Use your pastors to this end, and if you are a pastor, be useful to others to this end. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15 gives a charter of how to use the gospel ministry and gospel ministers that are among you, and how they should be useful to those around them.
6. Listen to preaching with a Berean spirit, not as a consumer, but as someone who must be made wise unto salvation. Preaching not only informs, but preaching, when it is right, conveys the Spirit, and through the gospel and the truth preached, we grow in discernment. Ezekiel foresaw a time when God's officers would "teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments; and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths" (Ezek. 44:24).
7. Keeping the Lord's Day and having the right balance of work and rest both daily and weekly will help make you a discerning person, especially when you use the Lord's Day as a means to rest in Jesus as prophet, priest, and king, through the preaching of the Word.

After three weeks of preaching, the Thessalonians whom I mentioned above did not have much. But they had the Spirit by the preaching through faith, and through that Spirit they could prove all things and hold fast that which was good. What they needed after three weeks, my friend needed three weeks before dying. However young or old we are, may God give us all discernment, and may we "prove all things" and "hold fast to that which is good." Let us especially cling to Christ, and to God through Him. ①

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On Discerning Who Belongs to the True Church

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all,” etc. (Gal 4:26-31).



Paul warns us here to seek for that church which upholds pure doctrine, for it is by this means alone that we are adopted as God’s children. As we have seen before, the most important thing is to be grafted into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Firstly, we need to recognise that we are accursed by nature and that all our works are filthy rags; we are under the tyrannical rule of the devil, and the only escape is for God, in mercy and compassion, to rescue us. We can only enter the household of God through this one door, that is, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is how the church bears us as her children, through the incorruptible seed we have been speaking about.

However, in order really to profit from this passage, there are two further points to bear in mind. Firstly, we are not to be like those who claim to be believers without ever reading or listening to the preached Word. They imagine that the Holy Spirit will reveal all to them in a vision or some such thing! In fact, the truth is, they despise doctrine and regard it as they would an alphabet for the instruction of little children. Be careful not to allow yourselves to be led astray by Satan and his wiles in this way. If we desire to be children of God, and to bear the true marks of a believer; if we desire to be acknowledged as such even by angels, we need to be teachable and, with all reverence and humility, thus to maintain order in the church. Even the greatest amongst us, and those who have been raised to honourable status, must recognise that the highest dignity men could have, be they kings or princes, is to be children of God. If a man wishes to exempt himself from this condition, he is rejecting God completely and cutting himself off from all hope of salvation. This, then, is the first point, that while we are in this world, we must make it our business to profit from the Word of God. Herein lies the key to spiritual life; for if God has granted us regeneration, we are to nourish ourselves with the teaching of Scripture for the rest of our lives. Indeed, it is the only food for our souls. Let us never proudly or presumptuously despise doctrine, as if we no longer needed to be students of the Word, for we are to accept what we are taught daily, and by this means become true children of the true church. This is the first point.

Secondly, we need to be discerning, and not like animals who are led by the reins across the fields. We need to be aware of what constitutes the true church; for God has left certain signs within it which will not fail as a means of discerning His true people. Wherever His Word is preached faithfully without any human additions, His own people will be found. This will occur where the gospel is unadulterated, and where people are led directly to God to seek in Him all that they lack. They will follow the Lord Jesus Christ as the Way set before them. Ridding themselves of all pride and arrogance, they will eagerly clothe themselves with the spiritual qualities belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ. All their glory and all their teaching will proceed from the house and sanctuary of God, the true church which is our mother. They can then be sure that God accepts and receives them as His children. This, I say, is a certain and infallible means of discernment unless, of course, our minds are dull and clouded. There are many people who close their eyes and shut their ears, believing that

they are justified simply because they say they belong to the church. In reality, they are hiding the fact that they follow Satan, together with all his deceptions, lies, and abuses. May we not be like animals, led by our appetites, but may we be brought to the place where we are born again through the seed of His Word, and fed in the only true pasture for souls. . . .

There is another point, and that is that, when we see the doctrines of God twisted in this way, we should be cut to the quick with anguish. By nature, we flee anything that will harm us, or afflict the body. Yet, we should not be so wrapped up in this world that we prefer what seems desirable here below to our heavenly inheritance. Whenever the name of God is blasphemed, or whenever a person seeks to wipe out the doctrines that bring life, we should feel such anguish that we cannot overlook the matter, even more than if we were afflicted in our bodies. If we were to be threatened with having our throats slit, or with enduring all the torments imaginable (the enemies of the gospel today can only satisfy their rage against our poor brothers by torturing, burning, cutting off tongues and the like, as we know)—if this were to happen to us, I say, we are not to take it so hard as when the name of God is ripped to shreds, and attacked by wicked men. But why should they do such things? Well, if they slit our throats, it is not only to deprive us of this fleeting and transitory life, but also to cut us off from the kingdom of heaven. By corrupting the true doctrine, they are turning meat into poison, life into death, light into darkness. This passage is Paul’s exhortation and warning to us not to give ourselves over to the things of this world. Our thoughts and affections should be raised heavenward, and centred on the priceless gift which has been offered to us through the gospel. We must fight for this cause more than for our own lives. For truly, a million lives upon this earth cannot be compared to that eternity in heaven which the Lord Jesus Christ has promised. . . . We need to stand firm with unshakeable faithfulness, that however despised or criticised we are, we might persevere in the holy calling of our God, knowing that we will not be disappointed if we lean upon the doctrines of the gospel. Let us remain grounded therein, until the day that God reveals that which is presently hidden. On that day, we will be truly gathered to His side, knowing that we have not been taught His precious Word in vain. Nor will it be in vain for us to have renounced the foolish inventions of man, and to have sought life only through that pure seed that brings regeneration. This pasture alone can feed and nourish us to the end.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our great God, acknowledging our faults, and praying that he would make us more conscious of them, so that we are led to true repentance. May we continue to tremble before His throne, and be confounded within ourselves; yet still assured that He accepts us in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The remission of our sins is guaranteed if we seek it in true faith, without stepping aside to the right hand or to the left. We must follow the way that He has shown us, and we cannot go astray if the Sun of Righteousness lights our path. May He show this grace, not only to us, but to all peoples and nations on earth, etc. 11

THE ORDER OF SALVATION (12)

JUSTIFICATION

So far we have covered calling (general and effectual), regeneration, conversion, repentance, and faith. The next aspect of the order of salvation is justification. Here we come to what may be called the key doctrine of Scripture. The others, of course, are also very important links in the chain of salvation and contributors to what it means to be an authentic biblical Christian and member of the true church of God. But, well-known is Martin Luther's assessment of the doctrine of justification: It is the doctrine by which the church stands or falls. He meant that when this doctrine is understood, believed, and experienced as it was in New Testament times, the church stands in the grace of God and is alive in Christ; but where it is neglected or denied, the church falls from grace and its life ebbs away, leaving it in darkness and death.

How we need a clear grasp of this all-important truth. Every generation must learn what it means to be justified or declared righteous by God, the Judge of heaven and earth. "What does it profit you now to believe all this?" the Heidelberg Catechism asks in Q 59. The "all this" refers to Lord's Days 7-22, which expound the Twelve Articles of our Christian Faith. Well then, the Catechism asks: What benefit or profit do you gain from believing in this triune God? The answer is both positive and clear: "that I am righteous in Christ, before God, and an heir to eternal life."

What is "Righteousness"?

"I am righteous." That is quite a claim the Christian is making here. What is righteousness? It is usually defined as being upright or doing what is right morally and socially. That is correct as far as it goes, but there is more to it than behaving ourselves according to social norms and living by standards set by our present relativistic culture. The biblical concept of righteousness is much broader and specific. It is always seen in terms of God's will or law. A person is righteous when his life and conduct is in harmony with the divine standard.

Another important aspect is that righteousness is closely related to God's covenant with man. According to Scripture, all divine-human relationships are based on the covenants which God has made with man in history. By these covenants, God placed man in a special relationship that called for strict obedience. When God made His covenant with man in Paradise, He placed him within a threefold relationship. Man was related to God his Creator, to his fellow man, and to the rest of creation. As God's image bearer, he was placed over the entire created order and given the mandate to cultivate it for God's glory and his own wellbeing. Adam was such a true, i.e., righteous man. He was rightly related to God, to his fellow man, and to the natural environment, including the animal world (Gen. 1:26; Prov. 12:10). Had Adam not sinned, he, his wife, and his descendants

would have continued to live in this harmonious relationship of righteousness.

However, Adam did sin. He broke that first covenant that God had made with man by eating the forbidden fruit. At once his sin affected his relationship with God, his fellow man, and the whole created order, which was placed under a curse. But God made another covenant with man, the covenant of grace, first revealing it to our first parents with the announcement of a coming Deliverer, later officially establishing it with Abraham and his descendants, and still later, with Israel as a nation. Even though this covenant was one of grace, it included the divine requirement that man must obey God's law. In other words, righteousness was still defined in terms of living in harmony with the demands of the covenant.

To Abraham, God said: "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1). At mount Sinai, Israel was given the Law of Ten Commandments as well as many additional precepts relative to worship and civic life. Moses reminded them that these were to be kept very strictly saying: "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us" (Deut. 6:25).

Throughout the Old Testament dispensation, righteousness was always defined in terms of conformity to the will of God revealed in His Law. In Psalm 15, David asks, "Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" The answer is, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart."

Of Zacharias and Elisabeth, who were still members of the Old Testament dispensation, we read that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke 1:6). Clearly, from passages like these we can only conclude that there is no salvation apart from righteousness, meaning living under divine approval.

We must not suppose that the New Testament presents another and easier condition of salvation. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reiterates the Old Testament demand for righteousness this way: "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

Jesus did not accuse them of setting the standards for entering the kingdom of heaven too high, but that they should have a better understanding of God's law than their teachers. The scribes and pharisees had adjusted God's standards to their own level of thinking -- that as long as their good deeds would outweigh their bad ones their salvation was secure. But what God requires, Jesus said, is perfect obedience, not only to outward laws, but also to precepts dealing with inward and secret desires and lusts of the flesh.

It is true that the apostle Paul says that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. 3:20), but Scripture also insists that what God requires of us is perfect obedience. His justice demands this. His holiness insists on it. God is committed to saving both sinners and His honour. So, unless we understand this and take this requirement with the utmost seriousness, we will never be saved.

Who Can Meet this Requirement?

No one! As our Catechism says, "God made man capable of performing it, but man, by the instigation of the devil, and his own wilful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts" (L.D. 4, A.9). So, it is our own fault that we cannot fulfil our sacred obligations. It is our depravity. This we must confess. The Holy Spirit's mission is to bring us to the point where we ask with the same Catechism, "Since then by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment and be again received into favour? Answer: God will have his justice satisfied and therefore we must make this full satisfaction, either by ourselves, or by another" (L.D. 5, Q. & A. 12). Here we are introduced to God's solution to man's problem to come up with a righteousness that will satisfy Him: Christ will take man's place

in the judgment of God. He will suffer and die for sinners and produce the righteousness which God demands from them.

Earlier in this article, we learned from Scripture that righteousness is being rightly related to God, to our fellow man, and the creation order. When man sinned and broke the covenant of works, he could no longer be perfectly righteous. None of his efforts to keep the law can have any saving value with God, because they no longer serve man's proper relationship with his Creator. Prior to the fall, Adam pleased God by obeying Him from a heart filled with love. This fellowship of love ended with the fall. All human efforts to do good became tainted with sin. God's verdict after man's first transgression became, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). What people like to call good works are at best products of God's common grace, but they contribute nothing toward a saving relationship with Him.

The Only Solution

What then is fallen man to do? He must confess his sin of breaking the covenant of works and turn his eyes to the covenant of grace in which God gave us and our children a place and a promise of salvation. In that covenant, the Lord comes again with His demands. Indeed, the same obedience to divine law is required. But this is the difference between the first covenant and the second one. In the latter covenant, God shows us the same requirements and demands of His law, but with this difference: that

What then is fallen man to do? He must confess his sin of breaking the covenant of works and turn his eyes to the covenant of grace in which God gave us and our children a place and a promise of salvation.

these have all been met by Christ, His Son, and that we can only become righteous by faith in Christ.

This truth was pictured in the Old Testament by the ceremonies that took place in the tabernacle and temple where the blood of animals was shed to atone for Israel's sin. These sacrifices pointed believers to the coming of the Messiah who would lay down His life as the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world and restore the broken relationship between God and man.

Christ's death, in other words, reinstated sinners into a fellowship rooted in covenantal righteousness. True Israelites lived in harmony with Jehovah their covenant God, keeping His commandments, not to earn salvation thereby, but solely out of gratitude to God for salvation. Righteousness, therefore, meant trusting the Lord, relying on His provisions for salvation – the sacrificial system resulting in forgiveness and loving the divine precepts.

We must remember that God is the one who established this covenant relationship with Israel. Her obedience to the law, therefore, was something that sprang from that relationship, and not the other way around. Remember how the Ten Commandments was introduced in Exodus 20:2, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."



The point is that no amount of law-keeping could establish Israel's privileged covenant relationship with Jehovah. This relationship was entirely due to God's initiative. He had chosen Israel to be His special people, not because she was better or more numerous than other nations, but only because God had set His love upon them (Deut. 7:7-8).

The relationship with God, then, was not earned by their obedience. It was a gracious gift from God. Israel could only respond to her election by a grateful and loving obedience.

The tragedy of many Jews is that they completely misunderstood the gracious character of God's covenant with Israel. The Jews, misled by their teachers, came to think that their strict and outward observance of the law could help them earn a saving relationship with Him and secure their acquittal on the day of judgment. With few exceptions, Israel as a nation failed to understand that God accepted only an obedience that flows from a heart that is broken under a sense of sin as David lamented in Psalm 51. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (vv. 5,10,17).

Others in Israel kept the outward form of the law but never understood that God's commandments are exceedingly broad. Their worst mistake was that they did not rely on God's grace displayed in the sacrifices brought for sin. They rejected the righteousness which God Himself provided and instead tried to produce a righteousness of their own. Even when Christ came and offered Himself as their Messiah and Redeemer, they saw no need for Him. As Paul says in Romans 9:31,32: "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone." This is basically what every sinner does who bypasses God's provision in Christ.

How do we expect to attain righteousness? By our own efforts? By our good works or orthodox religion? It will not work. Only by living out of the covenant of grace, which speaks of God providing a Saviour who took our place, lived a righteous life, obeyed God's law perfectly, and died for our transgressions of that law.

Righteousness — yes, God demands it of us. But the Gospel says He not only demands it of us, but He also gives it to us. The righteousness, which Christ has obtained, He offers to us, so that we might believe on him and trust Him for it. Even the faith whereby we obtain righteousness, He first gives us. If we admit our total inability to save ourselves and look to Christ as the poisoned Israelites in the desert looked to the serpent of brass, we shall be healed. We shall say with Christian in Lord's Day 23 of our Catechism: "I am righteous in Christ before God."

How does that go into effect? What is involved in this amazing transaction? What does justification by faith and imputation of righteousness mean? We shall try to explain these key terms next time, D.V. ①

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Graciousness: Tempering Truth With Love by John Crotts. Published by Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2018. Softcover, 137 pages.

This is a convicting book – probably because it is on a subject we do not often think about: being gracious, especially in our speech. This book is about the *way* we say things and *how* we convey the truth. In his opening chapter, the author explains what he means: “God cares about more than just the words you say. He also cares about how you say these words. It is not enough always to say the truth: you must also say the truth in love” (p. 2).

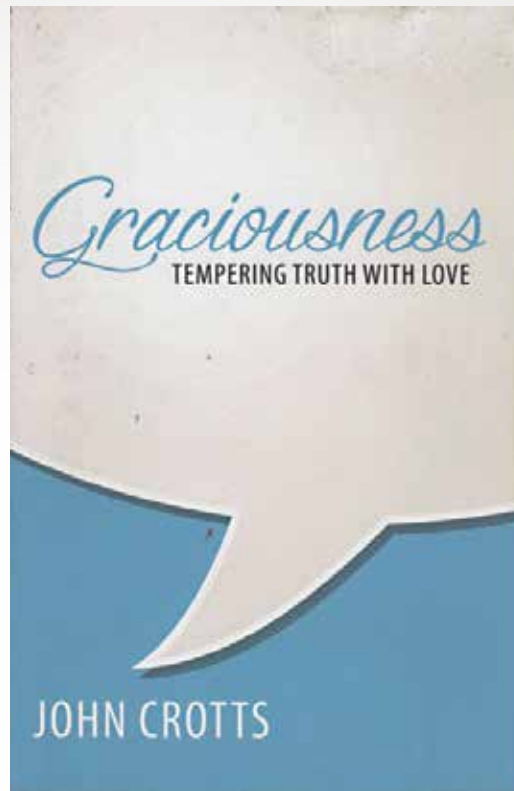
The author sets before us the Lord Jesus as our primary Model. The apostle John describes Jesus as “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The Lord Jesus corrected and admonished those who needed it, but His corrections came with love, gentleness, and kindness, which the author sums up as graciousness. He points out that sometimes in zealotry to be faithful to the truths of Scripture, especially new converts easily express the truth with more zeal than love. Citing Scripture, such as love being one of the chief fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23, 1 Cor. 13:1-3, and other passages), the author explains these in detail in chapter 3: Learning from the Gracious Example of Jesus Christ and chapter 4: Learning from Paul.

In Chapter 2: The Graciousness You Need, Crotts draws from various quotes and examples of the inspired Bible writers to show the importance of expressing, gentleness, kindness, and “speaking the truth in love, thereby “ministering grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:15, 29). This is also exemplified in the virtues of a “gracious woman” (Prov 11:16-17- see also the book, *The Law of Kindness* by Mary Beeke). The apostle Paul also admonished the Corinthian church for their sins, naming them, yet was gentle in rebuking the perpetrators (cf. 2 Cor. 7-8). For example, he says, “I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live for you” (2 Cor. 7:3) and, “Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you” (v. 12). Another example: “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men... In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:24-25).

After setting forth many examples from Scripture about speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), the author points out that “Gracious Speech Begins in the Heart.” The examples quoted are further fleshed out in chapter 4: Learning from Paul, and chapter 6: Cultivating Graciousness in Your Heart.

A whole chapter focusses on “Learning from the Gracious Example of Jesus Christ” and illustrates instances of Jesus’ love to especially those who were suffering and ignorant of the way of salvation (e.g. the Samaritan woman at the well). He met the needs of undeserving people as only He could do – in His suffering, especially on the cross.

Chapter 6: Cultivating Graciousness in Your Heart focusses on the



central theme of this book and points to the progress in sanctification to which believers should attain. “Although the Lord has renewed the heart of Christians, they have remaining sin inside them. Christians are admonished to ‘grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’ To Him be glory both now and for ever (2 Peter 3:18).” Specific sins are identified but help is also given in overcoming these sins and shortcomings in our behaviour and inward attitude. The first response should be repentance and reflecting on God’s graciousness in offering forgiveness of all our sins. We cannot always see what motivates people, neither do we know how the Lord directs lives. Some examples of God working in mysterious ways to achieve the outcome He intended are displayed in Samson and the apostle Paul. The Lord can transform the hardest heart and change the most misguided motivations. Often a gentle answer does more good than harsh and angry words.

Additional chapters have helpful advice such as thinking before speaking, becoming a better listener, and knowing when to refrain from speaking and when to speak out.

The author acknowledges that there are examples in Scripture of directness such as exemplified by the prophets and the Lord Jesus Himself in His responses to the Pharisees.

A chapter on “Cultivating Graciousness in Community” has many practical helps. We should promote unity in the church by the way we speak and act towards one another. Do we fail? Yes, and we should acknowledge this, examining our hearts. Do we love God and our neighbour as we ought? How do we show this?

The book ends with a quote from a letter John Newton sent to a friend who was engaged in a controversy. Newton wrote: “It seems laudable service to defend the faith once delivered to the saints; we are commanded to contend earnestly for it, and to convince gainsayers. If ever such defences were seasonable and expedient, they appear to be so in our day, when errors abound on all sides, and every truth of the Gospel is either directly denied, or grossly misrepresented.” But he had a strong warning: “If our zeal is embittered by expressions of anger, invective, or scorn, we may think we are doing services to the cause of truth, when in reality we shall only bring it into discredit” (pp.133-4).

Several book reviewers in conservative publications commented that this is an “unusual book” (Rev. K. Macdonald in “Free Church Witness”). One reviewer wrote: “Crotts nowhere seeks to curtail [prevent]... the impulse to help truth-champions communicate in such a way that their convictions will be heard, and by God’s grace, believed (J. Payne, *Books at a Glance* online).

Conclusion: A convicting book that is very helpful for our personal sanctification.

Mrs. Ricky (Frederika) Pronk

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.



REPORT FROM THE CANADIAN MISSION FIELD

When it comes to global missions, churches in the global south send almost as many missionaries to Europe and North America as they receive from those continents. The United States sends approximately 25% of the 400,000 Christian missionaries in the world and receives about 8% of them.¹ While the exact numbers are difficult to determine (definitions vary widely for missionary, evangelist, church planter, etc.), the trend is widely acknowledged. Even the *Economist*, the prestigious British current affairs journal, observed this trend in an article entitled “Missionaries from the Global South try to save the Godless West.”²

Many members of Free Reformed Churches in Canada are descendants of post-Second World War immigrants from the Netherlands. FRC congregations have generally been shaped by our Dutch roots which have been adapted for a North American setting.³ It is now almost seven decades since the peak of that immigration, yet within our churches, there are still occasional references to “Canadians” regarding those who are not of Dutch ancestry. (This is ironic in a country of immigrants when many of us have roots that extend to almost half of Canada’s 156 years, but

that is a topic for another day.)

Concerning religion in Canada, the common view from the pew is that most of our neighbours who do not attend church are either immigrants who follow other faiths or “lapsed Christians.” Canadians are understood as having Christian roots, though they have left those roots behind as part of the liberalizing and secularizing trends of recent decades. Especially in the more rural settings in which many of our churches are located, that perspective remains valid. But when we look at Canada as a whole, the assumption that secular Canadians had a Christian upbringing is not valid.

Church Attendance

To help wrap our minds around other countries sending missionaries to Canada, let us imagine that we are in Nigeria⁴, listening in on a church presentation by their sponsored missionaries to Canada.

The PowerPoint presentation begins with a few slides to give the Nigerian congregation a sense of the Canadian mission field.

Canada ranks second in the world measured by land mass, but with 40 million residents, it ranks 39th in population. The next slide would almost certainly show a Canadian map of population density, highlighting that 95% of Canadians live within a two-hour drive of the United States border and that over 80% live in a few large cities. Canada would be presented as a wealthy country (it typically ranks between 10th and 15th in wealth globally) with a standard of living that ranks near the top of most global standards.

“Economically rich, but spiritually poor” is a theme our Nigerian missionaries are likely to highlight next, especially considering the average Nigerian earns about 4% of what the average Canadian does. But what would surprise Nigerians, whose country has the highest rate of weekly attendance at religious services in the world, is that only about 12% of Canadians attend a place of worship weekly. True, when you ask Canadians to “check the box that best describes your religion,” just over half will check “Christian.” “No religious affiliation” takes second place, claiming approximately one-third of Canadians, which leaves just over 10% of the population identifying with a religion other than Christian. Muslims come in at 5%, although only about half of them would be considered devout.⁵

Overall Canadian weekly attendance at religious services is at about 12%, with almost half of that being attendance at Catholic mass. Five percent of Canadians attend other Christian services – mostly Protestant but also Eastern Orthodox. Attendance at weekly worship for all non-Christian faiths combined is actually only about 1% of the population. More telling than the overall numbers, however, are the demographic breakdowns. The majority of baby boomers remember going to church as a child. However, for those born after 1965—now almost 75% of the population—less than one-third have ever attended a church service apart from a wedding or a funeral, even as a child.⁶ So when you think of your neighbours as having a lapsed Christian background, consider this: two-thirds of Canadians are about as familiar with Christian worship services as most FRC members would be about worship in a Sikh gurdwara. However, what is encouraging is that those who are attending services are disproportionately younger, with 20% of those under the age of 35 attending weekly compared to only 13% of those older than 35.⁷

FRC members eavesdropping on this presentation would want to dig deeper: how many of the churches being attended are Reformed or Presbyterian? The Nigerian audience would have a similar interest in digging deeper, although they would more likely want to know about Anglican or Pentecostal churches. As an aside, Nigerian Anglicanism is generally much more orthodox than the Anglicanism FRC members are familiar with. Since the overall numbers of “faithful confessional Christians” in Canada

is so small, nuance is required to make sense of them. The 2021 Census shows 409,830 Canadians (just over 1%) indicating an affiliation with a Reformed or Presbyterian church, about 80,000 of which belong to the mainline Presbyterian Church in Canada. The numbers of Canadians identifying as “evangelical” are harder to reliably summarize.

I have extrapolated and made some educated assumptions based on various datasets available to conclude that about 2.4 million Canadians (approximately 6% of the population) are broadly evangelical (including in this percentage Reformed and Presbyterian Christians). To put the number differently, almost 95% of Canadians are not affiliated with a Protestant church in which an orthodox understanding of the Scriptures and the necessity of a living relationship with Jesus are taught. To put it more starkly: If we consider that those born outside of Canada are almost twice as likely to be church-attenders as those born here, the numbers of regular church attendance among those born in Canada is very low. In Quebec, the number would be less than 1%. A Presbyterian church planter in Quebec recently told me that the province has less than one Protestant church per 100,000 of people.

Two-thirds of Canadians are about as familiar with Christian worship services as most FRC members would be about worship in a Sikh gurdwara.

Religious Practice

Perhaps some of the most telling insights about the role of faith in Canada come from a recent study Cardus conducted for the Canadian Bible Society.⁸ While 93% of evangelicals have a physical Bible in their homes (remember evangelicals are only about 5% of Canadians), only 72% of mainline Protestants and 52% of Roman Catholics possess a physical copy of the Bible. The even more important question is how often they read their Bibles. Only 22% of evangelicals report reading the Bible daily (20% said several times per week, 10% weekly.) However, 32% of self-identified evangelicals say they never or hardly ever read it. (70% of mainstream Protestants and 76% of Roman Catholics indicated never or hardly ever reading the Bible.) Only 65% of evangelicals believe that the Bible “is ageless in its truth and relevance to modern life” with the balance preferring options that described the Bible as “offering good suggestions” and 7% indicating the Bible “is outdated and irrelevant, reflecting the views of a more primitive community.”

Given the above, it will be of little surprise that when we tested Bible knowledge, only 33% of self-identified Christians could name the first book of the New Testament, or the author of Romans, Ephesians, and Corinthians. Only 37% could correctly identify that Pentecost marked the descent of the Holy Spirit in a four-option, multiple-choice question. It is hard to know for sure, but it seems reasonable to say that less than 1% of Canadians open their Scriptures daily.



A Mission Field

“Canada is a mission field.” This conclusion is not only relevant for relatively low-income Nigerian churches doing their best to support missionaries spreading the gospel to the significant majority of Canadians who have never opened a Bible or attended a worship service; it ought to be of concern to FRC members in Canada too.

Fully expanding on that would require much more space than we have, but let me conclude with a few consequent observations for further reflection, discussion, and prayer:

- While those born before 1965 seem hostile toward religion, Canada’s younger generation seems more faith-illiterate than hostile. They have been educated with a scientific-materialist framework, which reserves reality only for material things that can be confirmed with the scientific method. “Values” are personal, which means they’re all considered equally valid (it’s “your truth” versus “my truth”), except, of course, for absolute claims of truth (which are by definition intolerant.) When they hear the word “god”, they do not have a conception of what that might mean. To what extent have we learned the language of our own culture? Just as missionaries to other cultures have to learn the local language, we need to carefully consider how to effectively proclaim Jesus as the only way, truth, and life in such a context. Much of our internal conversation about faith, the Bible, and God sounds like a foreign language to our unchurched neighbours.
- In a western society in which “closed secularism”⁹ has replaced religion as the primary culture-shaping force, it is especially important for us to have a global perception of the church. Not only abroad but even in Canada, many of the most vibrant Christ-centered churches are made up of immigrants (who are twice as likely to be religiously devout as those who are

born in Canada).¹⁰ While many immigrants are unchurched, there is often an openness among immigrant communities to the gospel. Given that Canada aims to receive 500,000 immigrants per year, most of them selected according to economic criteria¹¹, are there ways for our local churches to connect more vitally to these communities and focus our evangelization efforts on them? Are there ways for our refugee support programs to become more effective?

- One consequence of our changing context is increased polarization in which ethnic, political, and socio-economic differences become barriers for communication. Our churches

are, for the most part, comparatively wealthy, somewhat isolated from the communities in which we live, and seen to comport themselves as morally superior to their neighbours. Whether that perception is fair or unfair, that perception is a barrier to sharing the gospel with our neighbours. What can we do to overcome this barrier? How can we be ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5: 20), living in a land that does not know our King?

- When Barnabas was sent by the Jerusalem church to Antioch to investigate reports of Gentiles increasingly joining what was originally a church with primarily a Jewish background, the Scriptures tell us that when he had seen the grace of God, he was glad (Acts 11:22). There is little doubt that the church in Antioch looked quite different than the church in Jerusalem. Concern about that difference prompted the Jerusalem church to send Barnabas to investigate (vs 21). But when Barnabas came, what he saw first of all were not the differences. Rather, he saw their common faith in God, received by grace. A significant portion of faithful, Christ-centered churches in Canada are rooted in various diaspora communities or are multi-ethnic churches. Being able to communicate and work alongside these fellow followers of the same God, with the same passion to see the gospel spread in our country, becomes very significant.
- Do we need to think more deeply about why there are few FRC congregations in our major cities? In the New Testament, many of the early established congregations were in the major political and economic centres. Certainly, this was part of God’s providential provision that the gospel would spread along trade routes and within the major culture-influencing centres. Does this have implications for us today?

In Lord's Day 21, we confess that the Son of God, "out of the whole human race from the beginning to the end of the world.... [which certainly includes 21st century Canada] gathers, defends and preserves for Himself...a church chosen to everlasting life." This confession comes with a calling and a promise. God will have His church even in places where humanly speaking it seems difficult. For those providentially placed in Canada, which is among the most desirable places to live while also being a mission field full of neighbours who have not heard the gospel, our weekly confession of "one holy catholic church" should prompt careful consideration of our individual and collective calling in this regard. ①

Endnotes

1. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-u-s-sends-and-receives-more-christian-missionaries-than-any-other-count/>
2. <https://www.economist.com/international/2019/01/12/missionaries-from-the-global-south-try-to-save-the-godless-west>
3. In this article, I will reference primarily Canadian data understanding that the United States context is quite different. However, in the northern states especially, it seems the general trends are somewhat similar to Canada although the general response to these trends are quite different given the very different history of American civil religion. American readers will need to discern what and how this might apply in their setting.
4. I have chosen Nigeria as the example since there is a diaspora connection to over 100,000 Canadians, most of them having arrived in the past few decades. It should be noted that not unlike Reformed Churches in the Netherlands sponsoring field officers and pastors to help post-World War II Dutch immigrants establish Reformed churches in Canada, many churches around the globe direct missionary resources to countries in which their nation has a significant diaspora.
5. <https://angusreid.org/canada-religion-interfaith-holy-week/>
6. <https://www.faithtoday.ca/Magazines/2020-Jan-Feb/Not-Christian-anymore#:~:text=RELIGIOUS%20ATTENDANCE,traditions%2C%20not%20just%20Christians.>
7. <https://www.cardus.ca/research/faith-communities/reports/the-shifting-landscape-of-faith-in-canada/#fj-of-nc>
8. <https://www.cardus.ca/research/faith-communities/reports/the-bible-and-us-canadians-and-their-relationship-with-scripture/>
9. This term comes from Charles Taylor's work on secularism which is being increasingly referenced in discussions of these issues. Taylor distinguishing between the term "secular" used as a sociological descriptor (secular is different than sacred); a term for neutrality (the secular state ensures fairness between but does not pick a religion); and closed secularism (a term that means secularism has a set of values of its own and is effectively competing with religion.)
10. <https://www.cardus.ca/research/faith-communities/research-brief/religion-and-belief-among-immigrants-to-canada/>
11. <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/canada-plans-to-welcome-500000-immigrants-per-year-by-2025> Out of 40 million people, this represents 2.5% of the population being new each year which, in relatively short order, will significantly change the composition of our population.

Ray Pennings is a member of St. George FRC, a licensed exhorter in Combined Consistories East of our federation and the co-founder of Cardus, a faith-based think-tank operating in Canada and the United States.



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Banner of Truth Radio Broadcast

Writing and reading reports is an important part of church life. Most of our annual synod meetings are taken up with discussion on reports from various committees – as is most of the agenda. These reports provide the churches with a detailed account of the activities of each committee over the past year along with a list of recommendations.

The early New Testament church also received reports. In Acts 14: 27, we read that after completing their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas returned to the church at Antioch and “when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they **rehearsed** all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

Paul and Barnabas had preached the gospel in many places and the Lord had blessed their efforts. Now it was time to report.

Notice what the text says. It does not say that Paul and Barnabas reported on what THEY had done. It says they reported “all that GOD had done WITH them.” Paul and Barnabas did the work, but they did it only by the power and grace of God. As such, to Him belonged all the glory.

Like Paul and Barnabas, it is part of my task as radio pastor to report on what GOD has been doing through our weekly denominational radio ministry. Currently we are broadcasting on 27 radio stations across Canada at different times every Sunday as well as on one station in Grand Rapids, MI and another in Detroit, MI. (For a complete listing of the radio stations and their associated cities as well as the time of the broadcast for each station, please see the chart elsewhere in this issue of the Messenger).

Our radio ministry, however, is more than just a radio ministry. It is a Word ministry. Like the sower in the parable, we sow the Word of God on the radio, but in other formats as well: on our website, through sermonaudio, and on our podcast. That means the radio messages are available to people around the entire world, 24 hours a day, seven days of the week, 365 days per year.

Sometimes the question is asked: in our digital and internet age, is radio ministry still effective? As a denomination, we spend more than \$125,000 (CAD) per year on radio ministry. Is it worth it?

That is a good question. Recently I read an article entitled “Is Radio Still Relevant? The article cited a survey that was conducted in January 2022 that showed (among other things) that:

1. While listening to radio in the home is steadily decreasing, 73% of Americans 18 years of age and over who have been in a car in the last month use AM/FM radio as an audio source, far outpacing the next closest audio source, which is owned digital music (used by 53%).
2. 73% of Americans 12 years of age and over have listened to online audio in the last month, up from 68% in 2021
3. 43% of those 35 to 54 are now monthly podcast listeners, up from 39% in 2021. What this means is that although online audio and podcasting's reach is wider than ever before, radio still remains an effective way to reach people.

So how can we tell if we are reaching people? There is no way of knowing this for sure. What I can say is that the number of "hits" on our website is steadily increasing and a growing number of people are returning on a regular basis. We also average between 200-300 downloads of our sermons usually within a few weeks of posting them to our website.

But perhaps an even better barometer of the response to our radio broadcast is the letters we receive from people all across Canada. Here is a sample of some of these letters:

"It's a blessing to hear Pastor Schoeman preaching God's Word. Thank you." (Stratford, ON)

"Dear Rev. Jack. Always look forward to your messages on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. on CFAM." (Winnipeg, MB)

"Dear Sir, I listened to your sermon every Sunday morning and am blessed by the Scriptural truths you teach. I pray you can continue to do so. God bless!" (Winnipeg, MB)

"Rev. Schoeman, each Sunday morning I listened to your broadcasts over CKNX 920 AM radio Wingham, ON. I hope and pray that you and your coworkers can continue to remain on the air, for the messages help us as listeners to gain more knowledge of the scriptures. Some pastors have mentioned - and you do too - the Canons of Dort....Could you provide me some information about that?...It would be greatly appreciated... Included with this card and letter is a donation. Thank you for your time as I realize preparing your sermons and ministerial work are very time consuming. May God richly bless you and those of the staff." (Wingham, ON)

"Although I have been listening for only a few weeks, you continue to help me grow in understanding along with the Holy Spirit. It is truly a great blessing to have been led to your radio program and website. Thank you!" (Albion, NY)

"Dear Pastor Schoeman, we very much appreciate your



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CALLED TO THE MINISTRY?

Is the Lord calling you to the ministry in the Free Reformed Churches of North America? If you sense He is, please contact your consistory for more information about admission requirements and procedures. Application deadlines are Oct 1 and Mar 1. The Theological Education Committee of the Free Reformed Churches of North America



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

ministry on the banner of truth broadcast which we hear on CKNX, Wingham, Ontario. May the Lord grant you many encouragements as you prepare, meditate on and pray over your texts and sermons. May you receive strength and comfort for your ministry and your daily life.” (Chesley, ON)

“Thank you for your Sunday morning messages. I have listened for 4-5 years. May the Lord bless the message to many hearts.” (Iron Springs, AB)

“On July 11 I heard your program on the Champlain (USA) radio station. It was a blessing to hear your message. It was on the second coming of Christ. This is Biblical truth. Keep on preaching it. God bless you. I have been a pastor of French churches in Quebec for 70 years. We have seen many hundreds of French Canadians come to Christ.” (Dorval, QC)

“It’s Sunday, 6:15 pm. Just listened to your program. Very good.” (Richmond, BC)

“I wanted to say thank you for your wonderful expository preaching and teaching. I was blessed to have tuned in to WDCX out of Buffalo, New York, last Sunday and I’ve been gleaned from your website all week since. Many thanks in Christ.” (Albion, NY)

“Dear Pastor, thank you for the message on Uzzah and the experience of his death. I’ve been having a new Canadian read the Bible to me and this passage puzzled me. I had skipped the details of the Tabernacle care when reading because they were so tedious, but your reference to Numbers 4 was so helpful.” (Winnipeg, MB)

“Dear Rev. Schoeman. I am a practicing Catholic, but I love to hear your preaching every Sunday at our local radio station 920 CKNX. I wanted to truly THANK YOU SOOOO MUCH! for your message last Sunday the 22nd...Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart!” (West Lorne, ON)

“During COVID your program had so much interference on my house radio that I had to go out in the truck to listen. I went out and caught only 5 minutes of your sermon because the station had put you on 10:30 instead of 11 o’clock and it was on Heaven, and I just cried because I had missed your sermon.... I hope you don’t mind, but I made a photo copy of the confession of faith and sent it to NYC and one to a friend in Illinois... I have gained a lot of inspiration from your weekly sermons. They are very good and I look forward to hearing them. Thanks for your courage to speak on controversial things..” (\$200.00 cheque enclosed)

BROADCAST SCHEDULE FOR THE BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO MINISTRY			
PROGRAMMING		DIAL POSITION	WEEKEND
BRITISH COLUMBIA			
Vancouver	KARI - AM	Word Radio 550	Sunday 6:00 pm
Vancouver	KARI - FM	Word Radio 95.7	Sunday 6:00 pm
ALBERTA			
Calgary	CHRB - AM	AM 1140	Sunday 9:00 am
Edmonton	CJCA - AM	AM 930 The Light	Sunday 11:00 am
Red Deer	CKRD - FM	90.5 ShineFM	Sunday 9:30 am
SASKATCHEWAN			
Swift Current	CKSW - AM	570 CKSW	Sunday 8:30 am
Shaunavon	CJSN - AM	1490 CJSN	Sunday 8:30 am
MANITOBA			
Altona		CFAM - AM Altona 950	Sunday 10:00 am
ONTARIO			
Kitchener	CJTW - FM	93.7 Faith FM Kitchener	Sunday 9:00 am
London	CHJX - FM	99.9 Faith FM London	Sunday 7:00 am
Toronto	CJYE - AM	JOY Radio 1250	Sunday 12:30 pm
Toronto	WDCX - FM	Truth 99.5	Sunday 3:00 pm
Toronto	WDCZ - AM	WDCX Radio 970	Sunday 3:00 pm
Windsor	WMUZ - AM	The Salt	Sunday 7:30 am
Wingham	CKNX - AM	Country 920	Sunday 9:30 am
QUEBEC			
Montréal	WCHP - AM	WCHP 760	Sunday 9:30 am
ATLANTIC			
Halifax, NS	CJLU - FM	Ride the Waves 93.9	Sunday 6:30 pm
Annapolis Valley, NS	CJLU - FM	Ride the Waves 88.3	Sunday 6:30 pm
Moncton, NB	CITA - FM	Christ Is The Answer 105.1	Sunday 6:30 pm
Amherst, NS	CITA - FM	Christ Is The Answer 91.1	Sunday 6:30 pm
Bouctouche, NB	CITA - FM	Christ Is The Answer 107.7	Sunday 6:30 pm
Sussex, NB	CITA - FM	Christ Is The Answer 107.3	Sunday 6:30 pm
Charlottetown, PE	CIOG - FM	Christ Is Our God 91.3	Sunday 6:30 pm
Summerside, PE	CIOG - FM	Christ Is Our God 92.5	Sunday 6:30 pm
Fredericton, NB	CJRI - FM	CJRI - FM 104.5	Sunday 9:00 am
Miramichi, NB	CJRI - FM	CJRI - FM 99.7	Sunday 9:00 am
St. Stephen, NB	CJRI - FM	CJRI - FM 99.9	Sunday 9:00 am
Woodstock, NB	CJRI - FM	CJRI - FM 101.1	Sunday 9:00 am

"I am writing for a sermon I heard on your program...It was on Philippians 2 where Paul advised on obeying God's words not only in my presence but much more in my absence. That's the most edifying sermon I've heard in a long time. Could I please get a copy of it? It would be appreciated. In fact, I don't always listen, but when I do they're all wonderful." (From a Hutterite in Baldur, MB)

"I would appreciate it if you could mail me a copy of the Belgic Confession. Thank you for all your good work." (Calgary, AB)

"Dear Rev. Schoeman, greetings in the name of our Lord Saviour Jesus Christ. The reason for me writing is because I have enclosed a gift for the ministry. These teachings on the Belgic Confession are a huge help to me. I am studying for ministry to be a senior or lead pastor in either the Pentecostal or Evangelical Missionary Alliance churches - wherever I will be used of God. Before attending church, we listen to the program. In the letter dated July 5, you suggested that I contact Reformed Book Services. Is it possible that they have a mailing address? Please provide. Thank you ever so much." (Cargill, ON)

"Dear Sir, I listened to your sermon every Sunday morning and am blessed by the Scriptural truths you teach. I pray you can continue to do so. God bless!"
(WINNIPEG, MB)

"Thank you very much for an excellent sermon today all about our Lord's suffering and betrayal. I needed to hear that text of scripture, and to examine my life to ensure that I love and obey Christ. Keep preaching God's word faithfully with conviction, compassion, and love. Grace be with you all" (Swift Current, SK)

"Dear Pastor, just a note to let you know how much I appreciated last Sunday's sermon and preceding ones. I am of Mennonite brethren background, but find your messages inspirational." (Winnipeg, MB)

"I do really enjoy your sermons. Would it be possible to get CD copies of your talks on the Belgic Confession of Faith?" (Lac La Biche, AB).

As you can see, our radio ministry is being blessed to the hearts of many. Who knows how many others have not been brought to Christ over the years through the radio ministry of our churches? To God be all the glory.


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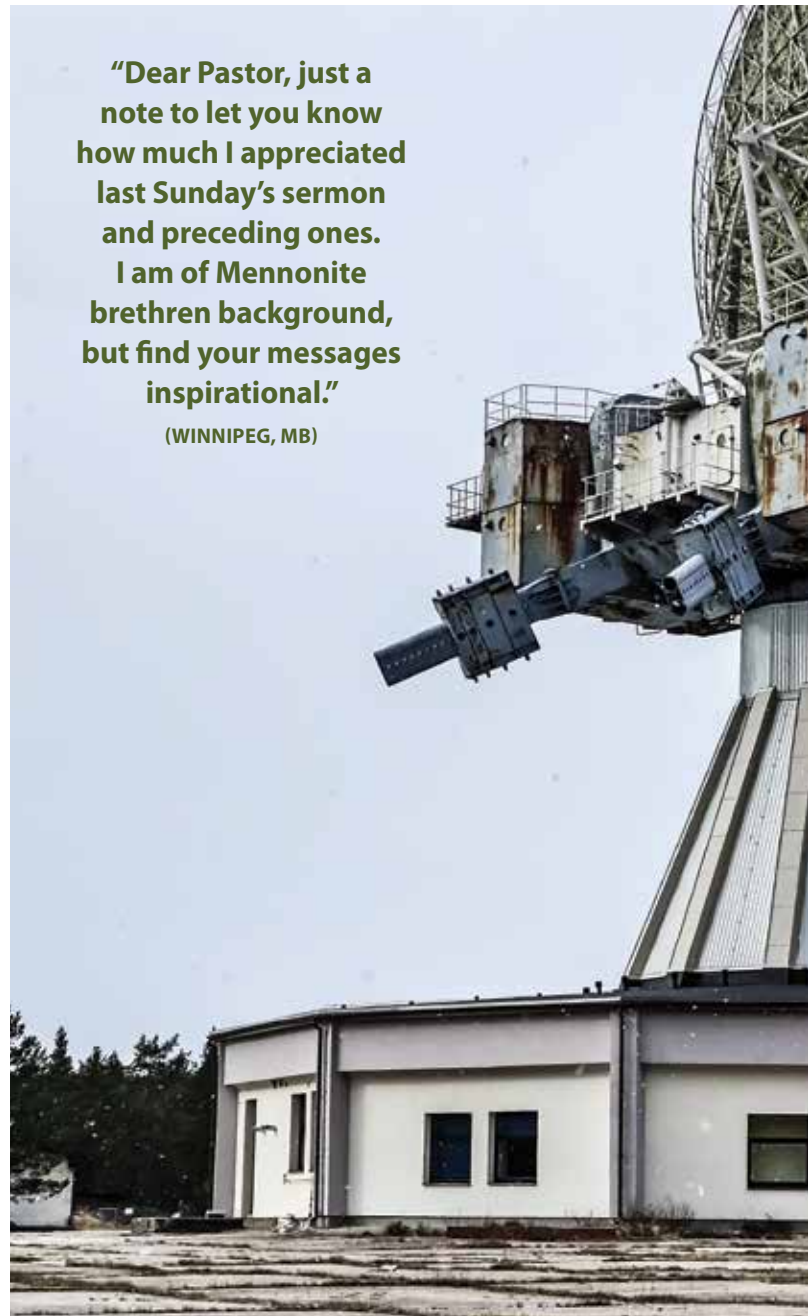
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Education Committee Chair Marjorie Bergsma edcomm@ccslondon.org	or Board Chair Rob Lenting board@ccslondon.org
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“Dear Pastor, just a note to let you know how much I appreciated last Sunday’s sermon and preceding ones. I am of Mennonite brethren background, but find your messages inspirational!”

(WINNIPEG, MB)

1. Tell others about it – especially your neighbours, family members and coworkers who might never come into a church, but might be willing to listen to a broadcast. Also, advertise the radio program and the local station and times it can be heard in your church bulletins, websites, church signs, local newspaper, local radio station, and evangelistic materials.
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Chapel at PRTS, and
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Preaching evening service at the Free Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, and

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offerings. Please remember this cause in your giving to the Lord's work.

3. Pray. Remember the work of the radio broadcast in your personal, family, and congregational prayers. Pray that the Lord would give me grace to prepare messages that are faithful to God's Word. Pray too that many may tune in and hear and be blessed and that through this means, many may come to know Christ for the first time or in a deeper way. ①

Pastor Schoeman is the radio pastor for the Banner of Truth Radio Broadcast. He is also the pastor of the Emmanuel Free Reformed Church in Abbotsford, BC.

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