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THE MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA



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"...AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR"?

06 EDITORIAL:
DISCERNING A
TRUE CHURCH

16 CARE FOR THE AGED:
NAVIGATING THE
JOURNEY OF AGING



"...AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR"?

These final words appended to the rather vacuous thrice-repeated line, “We wish you a merry Christmas,” really do not deserve capital letters, even though the Royal Choral Society of Britain has done a “smashing” fine job recording it as sung with full symphony orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic, at London’s Royal Albert Hall every Christmas for many years. Here is a royal orchestra, a royal music hall named after a royal prince, and a highly favoured Christmas “carol” wishing us not only a “merry” Christmas but also a “happy new year.” In earlier days, this was sung by English carolers as they wandered from one stately south English home to another. We can make it all acceptable if we allow for the fact that “merry” (originally the Old English *myrge*) meant “short-lasting,” with the current sense arising from the notion of something so pleasant that it makes the time fly. Shallow, but innocent, is it not? And the “. . . happy new year” likely was a wish sung to the wealthy by the wandering transients huddled in the cold at the front door, expecting some kind of reward to warm their hearts and, if possible, also their bodies.

We have had Christmas. By the time you read this, we will also have passed the new year mark of January 1. The questions may be asked, “Was your Christmas ‘merry’? Does that not depend largely on what life is like in this world? Will your new year be ‘happy’?” As this is a magazine with a very small target audience of mainly “ordinary” people, should we now tackle the big questions of the world? Certainly not – especially when the would-be questioner is an ordinary, elderly, “retired” minister of the gospel whose expertise, if ever he had any, would be limited to a rather narrow slice of theological truth as lived in various tones in a small section of the worldwide church of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the reality of our church in this world. Nevertheless, that truth is the anchor of millions of Christ believers who have found their life and knowledge in the atoning sacrifice of Him whose birth is widely marked, but ignorantly and hence, falsely, celebrated. Consequently, such “merrymakers” cannot know the depth and breadth of the expectation of a Happy New Year, for their Christmas was devoid of heavenly joy.

So then, are Christians the only ones who can have joy? Is a “Happy New Year” laid away for them only? These are questions to which positive answers may lead some to say, “What gall, what nerve to say such a thing! Are you saying that no one can be happy in this life but Christians? They don’t look happy to me! I find most of them to be opinionated, bigoted, narrow-minded hypocrites!”

What can we say about this? Two broad statements: 1. All who claim to be Christians should carefully test the impact of their image, realizing that the smallest defect (in their own eyes) may fatally mar the image to others; 2. True joy comes only to those who have experienced the beginning of the life-renewing, image-rebuilding of the wreck they were – and it comes in stages! Perfection? Not until in His blessed presence

Think about it: in addition to this grace, is there much to be happy about? Perhaps there is in the peace of our homes, in the joy of our children and their children. When you reach the great-grandparent stage, as we have been given, joy is abundant. But that is limited by the very fact that we are, at most, pilgrims “on the way”: physically, we cannot romp and play with the littlest ones as we did a few years ago with their parents.

But moving from the personal, spiritual level to the practical: is this world able to give us happiness of even the shallowest kind? Can there be “merry” and “happy” people? Is it possible in this world?

What do we see? We do not have to be highly educated to know that this world is not in good condition. If we have some smatterings of historical knowledge, we see how dangerously fast we are sliding along a well-worn path. It has been said (by George Santayana, an American philosopher) that people who do not know their history are bound to repeat it, while another (Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain) quipped, “History doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme.”

The Bible speaks clearly of the various signs of the times, some of which seem to be appearing before our eyes, but it also warns us: “Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thess. 2: 3-4). Various other Bible passages show the same thing. The government of the universe, which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, and all creatures, great and small, lead us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely, his power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20, and leave us without excuse. Note well, this is the first means given by which we may know God. How often is this seriously considered within the Church? Rather than digging deeply into remote historical sources for answers, should we not note the obvious: World War II came about after the defeated German nation was crushed by the demands of its victors and tumbled into a social and economic chaos which hungered for a strong man to lead them out and give them hope? He came, in a whirlwind of evil. Twenty years after that *first* war, the battle was resumed, with renewed vigor and a few changes amongst the participants. The USA, with its booming industrial base bursting forth from the aftermath of the Great Depression, led to victory by an energized techno upper class, now seems to be in danger of losing its bearings, following a painfully disruptive election period. It seemed that for a while the major countries of the 50’s and 60’s were struggling to settle down again. Can they still do that? Putin has openly stated that Moldova will be his next victim; Ukraine, tenaciously resisting Moscow’s embrace, is a global explosion about to happen.

WWII did not start in September 1939 nor in May 1940; in fact, it started in 1931 when Japan invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria, seeking raw materials to fuel its growing industries. By 1937, Japan controlled large sections of China, and war crimes against the Chinese became commonplace. It did not burst wide open until December 7, 1941, with Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor, and “The rest is history.”

Can we not see the dark shadows stalking across the world stage? Are the rumors of war so common that we do not even notice them? Must the same not be said about plagues, pestilences, and famines? The pestilence of Covid killed millions and tore churches apart

But moving from the personal, spiritual level to the practical: is this world able to give us happiness of even the shallowest kind?

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MEDITATION

because people stood on one side or another, in many cases without full knowledge of the science involved.

Perhaps the greatest current danger lies in the very land in which the almighty God led His chosen people, the tribes of Israel – or what was left of them- and caused His Son to be born in human flesh of the virgin Mary. For the most part, the sons of Abraham rejected Him, crying for His blood to come on them and their children. Their subsequent ejection from the Promised Land which caused them to be spread amongst many nations and their later return (although never did they all leave – there always was a sizable presence of Jews in Israel and only a relatively small number of the “exiles” returned) has been the rather slowly burning but never extinguished fuse to the current conflict in which Hamas has literally emerged from the lower earth and bit painfully into a sleeping Israel. Startled into furious reaction, with a re-energized “Never Again” war cry making clear this Israel will not submit to a replay of the Nazi furor, the Judean lion has sunk its teeth into the emerging subterranean enemy. With shock, we saw the reaction of the world: widespread protest denouncing the State of Israel and supporting its enemies. Somewhat bewildered, we ask, “What’s going on?”

Although we cannot (and may not) make any predictive conclusions, we may take note of certain events or trends:

1. Israel will be in the midst of it all, though we cannot consider that the *nation* of Israel is still God’s people as it was before the Lord’s incarnation. They rejected the Saviour. Does this mean God has no longer any plan for the current nation of Israel?
2. The Muslim world is huge and powerful: they number around 1.8 billion. Muslims are the majority in 49 countries, they speak hundreds of languages and come from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
3. Iran seems to be deeply involved in this current crisis but in the background. The enmity of the Iranians (about 90% of whom are Shia Muslim) seems to be easily enflamed when directed at the “Christian” West. For the most part, they are descendants of the ancient Persians.
4. Israel is the only “Western” country in the Middle East, the envy of most of its neighbors.

The struggles taking place on the broad field of human existence picture also the battle for the individual soul and mind. Christ Jesus has already won the victory. Is *He* our leader? Humanly speaking, the world’s unrest is an extremely toxic mixture that may explode at any time – perhaps it did on Saturday, October 7, 2023. It was the Sabbath, but Psalm 2 has not been deleted from the Word of God. The Lord God Yahweh is still on the throne, therefore, still: A Happy New Year to All! 🕊

Rev. C.A. Schouls is an emeritus Free Reformed pastor.

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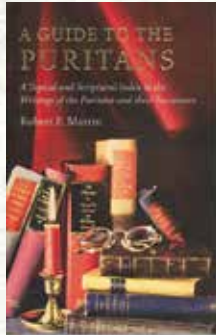
CLASSIC TITLES

A Guide to the Puritans: A Topical and Scriptural Index to the Writings of the Puritans and their Successors

By Robert P. Martin

Martin's Guide is available for the first time in hardback. His indexing work extends not merely to those in the 16th and 17th centuries who might properly be called 'Puritans,' but also to figures of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries who have stood in the Reformed, evangelical tradition of the Puritans, both feeding on and developing their approach.

This is a helpful orientation to a tradition, and a guide for those with an appetite to read the Puritans and their successors more, and to read them better. Those in search of what the Puritans had to say on specific topics and texts, and those eager for some direction in their reading, will be well served by the indexing labours of the late Robert P. Martin. Hardcover, 532 pages, Banner of Truth Trust **RBS Price \$42.00**



A Discourse Concerning Conscience: Heaven or Hell Upon Earth

By Nathaniel Vincent

"The precipitous decline of faith, morality, civility, and common sense in our day has been accelerated by society's refusal to heed the voice of the conscience. The book you hold in your hands is one of the most meticulous and interesting Puritan works on the conscience I have ever read. I know that it will spur you toward greater Christlikeness."

--From the Foreword by John MacArthur. Hardcover, 265 pages, Northampton Press **RBS Price \$32.00**



Evangelical Heroes – 2 Volume Set **By Joel Beeke and Douglas Bond**

What does it mean to be "evangelical?" In *Evangelical Heroes*, Joel

Beeke and Douglas Bond present thirty biographical sketches of faithful evangelical leaders from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. From George Whitfield to Charles Spurgeon to R.C. Sproul, these men and women held firm to the authority of Scripture and the reality of Christ's death and resurrection in the face of rising liberalism in the Church. 2 Hardcover Volumes, 392 pages, Reformation Heritage Books **RBS Price \$45.00**



RECENT BOOKS

A Christian's Guide to Mental Illness: Answers to 30 Common Questions

By David Murray & Tom Karel Jr.

After the fall, the world was disordered from structure to chaos--negatively altering the nature of human emotions.

Today, we witness its impact as mental health concerns surge and people continue to suffer. How should Christians approach the topic of mental health? What is the most Christlike way to care for those who suffer? *A Christian's Guide to Mental Illness* answers 30 commonly asked questions about mental health from a Christian perspective. Intended for caregivers, this accessible resource will equip family, friends, and churches with wisdom for caring for individuals with mental health illnesses.

Authors David Murray and Tom Karel use a holistic approach as they share personal stories, professional expertise, and biblical wisdom to tackle difficult questions--ultimately providing hope for the hopeless and rest for the weary. This book is written for everyday people. It is concise and easy to understand. David Murray and Tom Karel share stories about their own mental health battles as well as those of others.

Softcover, 244 pages, Crossway **RBS Price \$20.00**



5 Puritan Women: Portraits of Faith and Love **By Jenny-Lyn de Klerk**

In *5 Puritan Women: Portraits of Faith and Love*, Jenny-Lyn de Klerk shows how the lives and writings of Christian women encourage the beauty of holy living and provide practical wisdom for the home and the church. Each chapter portrays a different Puritan woman--Agnes Beaumont, Lucy Hutchinson, Mary Rich, Anne Bradstreet, and Lady Brilliana Harley--telling their stories of devotion, lament, and family. By studying their faith journeys, modern readers can learn more about their roles in church history and glean insights into the Christian life.

Softcover, 155 pages, Crossway **RBS Price \$16.00**



Glorifying and Enjoying God: 52 Devotions through the Westminster Shorter Catechism

By William Boekestein and others

For centuries, the Westminster Shorter Catechism has helped Christians young and old to know their "chief end." Authors William Boekestein, Jonathan Landry Cruse, and Andrew J. Miller value this venerable catechism and winsomely introduce a new generation to its powerful message. Dividing the catechism into 52 brief devotions, they explain and apply each question and answer in a year's worth of Lord's Days. This valuable new resource is great for individual and family use for all who desire to "glorify and enjoy God forever." Hardcover, 229 pages, Reformation Heritage Books

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DISCERNING A TRUE CHURCH

In a recent editorial, we looked at the importance of discernment. We need discernment when it comes to truth and error, for the Lord tells us false prophets must arise. If we do not discern truth from error, we will be deceived.

A related topic is how to discern a true church from a false one. Many do not think much about this. They take everyone at their word and see the true church as very wide and broad. The opposite opinion is far less common today; yet, there are some who might define the true church as (pretty much) restricted to their own denomination. Is the topic of a true church something worth considering, worth debating, worth gaining clarity on?

Discerning the true church should be a truly important and practical exercise for every Christian. Young people should consider this before they make confession of faith and vows before God regarding their membership in a church. Parents should consider this as they raise children in a particular church. Any member of a church, old or young, needs to pray that their church would be kept true. Elders ought to prayerfully labour that the preaching, the administration of the sacraments, and the discipline of the church be faithful to Scripture. Since the church needs continual Reformation, we need all to be reforming closer to Scripture. If the Lord has entrusted you with special responsibility in the church, as an office-bearer, you need to seek continually to be in line with Scripture, and our confessions, which are based upon it. We need to train up a younger generation so that they may walk in the ways of the Lord and, in dependence upon the Lord, stand fast in evil days. Discerning what marks a true church is of utmost importance.

The Biblical Doctrine of the Church

We ought to be joined not just to the Lord Himself, but to His body, the Church. Anyone who loves the Lord will love His teaching, and the Bible teaches much about the church. The doctrine of the church is one of the most basic truths we confess every Lord's day: "I believe one, holy, catholic church." Concerning the church, we walk by faith and not sight. We believe its existence not so much by what we see, but on the basis of what the Word of God teaches concerning the church. Christ tells us that He will build His church (Matt. 16:18). The church has a rule, an order, a discipline, and within her the keys of the kingdom, namely, preaching and the sacraments (Matt. 16:19). The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who adds to the church, whose members are bound together by true doctrine, fellowship, and prayer (Acts 2:42, 47). Christ's church is all over the world, elected by the Father, redeemed by Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:5,7,13). The church will be persecuted by Satan and the world, and much tyranny will rise against the church (Acts 8:3; 12:1; Rev. 2:9-10; 11:4-11; 12:15). The church

has a mission of making the name of God great in the earth and spreading the gospel far and wide (Matt. 28:18-20).

The Heidelberg Catechism gives a magnificent description of the church, based on the Word of God. It confesses “that the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to Himself, by His Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith” (Heidelberg Catechism, LD 21; A 54). This church is a gathering from every tribe, tongue, and nation. It spans all of time. It agrees in true doctrine, and the Lord Himself is over it, and joined to it as a Head is to its body.

Care for the Church

Sadly, many, even professing Christians, care little about the Church. We may be thankful for a retrieval of Reformed soteriology and reading of books expounding Reformed soteriology, that is, the doctrine of salvation. However, we fear that in many cases, this retrieval may not have long-term consequences, for if we are unconcerned about being in a biblical church, we have disconnected what the Reformers and the true Reformed church has always held together, namely, soteriology (doctrine of salvation) and the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology). Predictably, there are others that so react against a general loss or depreciation of ecclesiology that they (begin to) advocate for an ecclesiology that is more Roman or Anglican than Reformed. The human mind is sadly given to extremes, and often “tossed to and fro” (Eph. 4). How important it is to be rooted and grounded in the faith, also regarding the truth and the place of the doctrine of the church. We are called to love the church as the bride of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and vineyard of the Father.

This care for the church begins with joining ourselves to a thoroughly biblical church. Such a church confesses, preaches, and lives the Reformed faith. I heard of a man who was converted by reading the Bible and had never been to a church. Immediately after he was converted, he went to find a church that would look like what the Bible said. Not knowing anything about churches, he went to a mainline Protestant church in town. After one service, he knew that this was not like the Bible he had begun to love. So he continued his search until he found a Reformed church and readily and thankfully was able to conclude that this was a place shaped by the very Bible that transformed him.

Bound to Join the True Church

In our Belgic Confession, we confess: “We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and that out of it there is no salvation, that no person of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw himself, to live in a separate state from it; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it; maintaining the unity of the Church; submitting themselves to the doctrine and discipline thereof; bowing their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ; and as mutual members of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them” (Art. 28). In other words, binding ourselves to the church is an expression of maintaining the unity of the church (Eph. 4:3-6).

But amid all the denominations today, how do we know which are true churches and which are false churches? Again, the Belgic Confession helps summarize Scriptural teaching in a few brief and precious sentences: “The marks, by which the true Church is known, are there: if the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin; in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself” (Art. 29).

In other words, join a church that has pure preaching, pure administration of the two sacra-

This care for the church begins with joining ourselves to a thoroughly biblical church. Such a church confesses, preaches, and lives the Reformed faith.

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EDITORIAL

ments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and where church discipline is used to punish sin, not godliness. Faithfulness to such a church is lauded by the Bible, necessary for a Christian, and a blessing to the gospel cause throughout the world.

Practically Speaking

It is not enough to look at a church and find their definition of conversion to be biblical and necessary for you. Neither is it right to join a church that is generally Reformed in its doctrine, zealous in spreading the gospel, robust in its generosity, but the administration of the sacraments or discipline has no regard for distinguishing true believers from false, sin from godliness.

We must admit that every church has failings in the execution of its task and calling. We need humility of heart and readiness to repent of sins of omission as well as sins of commission. What is the church if she is proud and unwilling to acknowledge her failings? She certainly is not a church that is reckoning with the reality of church life as the King of the church pictures it in Revelation 2 and 3. Days of solemn assembly (Joel 2:12-18) and public humiliation should not simply be a thing of the past. Pastors, elders, and deacons ought to occupy the office with the requirements for fidelity in the church and in personal life continually in minds and in prayer. We ought to continually humble ourselves, not thinking ourselves immune to the traps and snares all around us. We ought to hearken diligently to what the Spirit says in His Word, reforming and correcting where we fail and go astray.

May God give us to belong to faithful churches, and pray that we would be kept faithful for generations to come.

VI

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THE PRACTICE OF JOURNALING

God's Knitting – A Devotional Journal for Expectant Mothers based on Psalm 139 by Johanna Campbell. Published by JesseTree Publications, 2023, Hardcover, 91 pages.

Writing a personal journal was a practice the Lord wanted Moses to include in His final instructions concerning Israel's future kings (Deut. 17:14-18). Leading men and women in history often kept journals or had secretaries record important events and reflections in their lives. The practice of journaling has become popular again, and one can purchase beautifully designed journals in various formats, even from Costco. Some include only blank lined pages, with or without dates or other information. The *Mark 17:18* series, called *Journibles*, published by Reformation Heritage Books, is organized by separate volumes of one or more Bible books, depending on the Bible book's size. The intention is to write out each verse on the indicated blank, lined page. There are also Bibles with blank spaces for writing notes. Fairly new is the publishing of devotionals with spaces for writing in personal notes.

This review focuses on a devotional designed especially for expectant mothers. Because it is based on Psalm 139, the book opens by quoting the full text of the Psalm that David composed for the director of music. The title of this devotional is derived from verse 13 of this psalm, where the Bible translation quoted uses the expression "knit" to describe how God is "knitting" together new life in the womb.

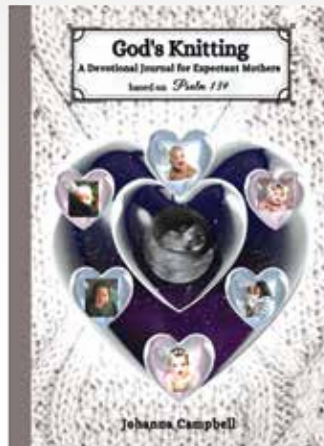
In Part I, The Introduction, the author points to the very personal aspect of this psalm and encourages the reader to "pray for your unborn child that God would bless your baby and watch over every detail of its formation to make this child's life fruitful for His kingdom" (p. vi). These remarks, with instructions on how to use the devotional, focus on God as the Creator. Part II, which deals with God's Omnipotence (vv. 13-18) is divided into ten chapters. These ten chapters are followed by Part III, God's Omnipresence (vv. 7-12) and Part IV, God's Omniscience (vv.1-6). This part has several concluding chapters with an emphasis on God's greatness.

Part II is the largest and has ten chapters, each dealing with one of the nine months of pregnancy. Each chapter is laid out in the same format as the Introduction of Part II: a brief but thorough exposition, a summary of other relevant Scriptures, questions for reflection, as well as ample space for notes. The ninth month has a space for baby pictures.

You may ask, why ten chapters when there are nine months of pregnancy? The reason is that in chapter 10 Johanna deals with "Miscarriages, Birth Defects and Still Births" (p. 52). She writes: "Every parent wants to receive a well-formed child, one without disabilities. I remember my husband and I often praying together before we went to bed for a strong and healthy baby after we had had several miscarriages" (p. 52). Although the Lord did give them four healthy children, He also gave them five miscarriages (p. 53).

Johanna cites the hope parents may have who have prayed for their children who did not live. She quotes several examples in the Bible, including Psalm 139 itself (v. 5). She points out that the child born from David and Bathsheba after David's terrible sin as an example. She refers to Christ Himself, who invites little children to come to Him (Mark 10:13-16; cf. Matt.18:6) and the apostle Paul in the New Testament calling children of believers "holy" (1 Cor. 7:14).

This chapter is followed by hopeful testimonials of Christian parents who have lost a child through miscarriage and a couple who were



disappointed when a child was born with deformities (pp. 63-66). The testimonials include loss through IVF and a baby born with Down Syndrome.

Part III, God's Omnipresence in Psalm 139:7-12 is comprised of thoughts that God is present everywhere and always. God is not only present in the womb, "but in all of creation. We cannot hide from God" (p. 67). "God is everywhere all the Time" is the title of Chapter 11. The history related in Scripture affirms that God was at no time absent from men and women in the Old Testament. Isaiah declared that God guided Israel to the promised land. He saw Hagar when she was pregnant and destitute in the desert. Jonah could not flee from God's presence. "God's Spirit is the Creator of life, and He also makes life abound" (Ps.104:24-30). All of creation looks to

Him for food. God is present in the darkness and in the light, also today! "God is omnipresent, everywhere present at the same time" (p. 69). How great is our God! "We don't have words enough to describe, honour and glorify our great God..." (p. 78).

Psalm 139:19-24 closes with a prayer that seems contradictory with God's great goodness. David calls down curses on His enemies and those who hate God. How can that be? Aren't we to love our enemies? Yet David rhetorically asks a wishful question: If God would only slay the wicked who are his adversaries! "Do I not hate them, O LORD, that hate thee?" (v. 21). What kind of hatred is this?

The author's answer is that we must begin by acknowledging that everything written in the Bible is God's Word to us and these words are not said or sung haphazardly (pp. 82-83). These verses have the same language as other imprecatory psalms, such as Psalm, 5:4-6, 11:6, 7:11, and Psalm 26:5. The righteous are to love their enemies. God is a God of love, but He is also a consuming fire. God will judge the wicked! (p. 84). It should be noted that these psalms are said as prayers. In light of God's omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, David, in his zeal, prays that all those who oppose such a God be sent to ruin. God says: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay" (Rom. 12:19).

In summing up, Psalm 139 directs us personally to "Search me, O God and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (v. 24). David's prayer is the same as Psalm 19 which ends with: "O LORD, my strength, and my Redeemer" (v. 19). Just as God can redeem us, He can also redeem our children. "This child you are carrying must also come to repentance from its sin and flee to the Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ... Your child must be born a second time into the kingdom of God. Jesus, our Redeemer, offers forgiveness to all who come to Him in faith... When we are born again and surrender our lives to Jesus, He enables each one of us, mother and child, by the power of His Holy Spirit, to live our lives to His glory and afterward inherit eternal life. Praise be to God for His unspeakable gift!" (p. 85).

This devotional journal is primarily written for expectant mothers and will make a great gift for them. But others will benefit from journaling too. It has been said that regular journaling can help individuals gain clarity and perspective on their lives, work through emotional challenges, and develop a deeper understanding of their thoughts and feelings. Apparently, that is why God directed this practice to be kept by the kings of Israel also. Journaling prayerfully will remind us of Who God is and lead to a closer walk with Him. ①

Mrs. Frederika (Ricky) Pronk is a member of the Grace Free Reformed Church of Brantford, Ontario.

THE ORDER OF SALVATION (15)

SANCTIFICATION (1)

Sanctification

In the previous three instalments, we examined the doctrine of justification and learned that its basic importance is that sinners are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ. By putting our trust in His finished work, we are declared righteous by God. This means that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us and charged to our account. Justification does not change our moral condition but our legal status before God's law. God no longer condemns us for breaking His law because Christ paid for all our transgressions, past, present and future. While sin's guilt is permanently removed by Christ's one-time sacrifice, sin remains a lifelong problem for believers. God is "ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon [Him]" (Ps. 86:5), but He is also holy and warns His people through Moses, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God is holy" (Lev. 19:2).

God's holiness is a very real factor in the life of sinners, including justified and forgiven sinners. They no longer sin the same way as they did before embracing Christ as their Saviour. They know that Christ died for their sins and that God cast all their sins behind His back (Isa. 38:17) for which they are eternally grateful. But though forgiven, justified, and rejoicing, they still sin, sometimes grievously. What then is the difference? Before their conversion, they sinned without grief, often with delight. Justified sinners sin with grief and godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10). They understand that God promises to take them to glory the moment they die, but also that they must serve God from the moment they are saved. Salvation means restoration into the service of God. Believers in Christ no longer serve Satan, the world, and sin, but serve God, their rightful Sovereign. This brings us to sanctification.

Sanctification Defined

Sanctification is closely related to regeneration. In fact, Article 24 of our *Confession of Faith* identifies these two phases in the Order of Salvation when it says: "We believe that this true faith being wrought in man by the hearing of the Word of God and the operation of the Holy Ghost, doth regenerate and make him a new man, causing him to live a new life, and freeing him from the bondage of sin."

Some think that our Confession here teaches that regeneration is a product or result of faith. This is how Arminians interpret this phrase. Just believe the gospel, they say, and you will be born again. Put your trust in Jesus and the Holy Spirit will come into your life. But this is not what our Reformed fathers meant by this statement. In its restricted sense, regeneration refers to the implanting of the new nature by the Holy Spirit. Here man is completely passive (cf.

John 3:8). But regeneration can also be taken in its broader sense to designate our subsequent and lifelong spiritual renewal. This is how our Confession uses the term regeneration; it describes not the initial work of the Spirit in creating eternal life in dead sinners' hearts, but the new creature's emerging life of faith or sanctification.

The point of Article 24 is that justifying faith always leads to holy living. As it goes on to say: "Without [this justifying faith] they would never do anything out of love to God, but only out of self-love or fear of damnation." The *Heidelberg Catechism* concurs with this statement when it affirms "it is impossible that those who are implanted into Christ by a true faith, should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness" (L.D. 24, A. 64).

Good works, then, are the inevitable fruits of the new life. Our sanctification is the evidence of our justification. Doing good works, therefore, is not an option, the specialty of super Christians, but something God both works in and demands from all who believe in His Son.

Sanctification is the Believer's Duty

In Philippians 2:12, the apostle Paul urges his readers to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. He is referring to sanctification as the duty of all true believers.

He is addressing the body of true believers who obeyed the Gospel call. They had embraced Christ and started to walk in the ways of the Lord. But they had a long way to go in sanctification. So, the apostle exhorts them to work out their salvation.

By saying this, Paul does not mean they must earn their salvation by their works. There are two parts to our salvation. The first part consists of a work done **for** us; the second is a work being done **in** us. The work Christ has done for us is perfect or finished; nothing needs to be added to it. We don't have to "work it out," but simply receive it as God's gift *to* us. But the second part of our salvation consists of a work *in* us by the Holy Spirit. At our regeneration, the seed of the new life is implanted in us. That seed needs to grow into a tree. The babe in Christ must develop into a mature Christian. In this process, the believer takes an active part. As Paul says, he must work out his own salvation. Something can only be worked **out** if it has first been worked **in**. That was true of the Philippians. God had worked in their hearts, and Paul reminded them that he was confident that "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

Here the emphasis had been on God's activity in perfecting His work in His people. But in 2:12, the apostle shows that the Christian is also to be actively involved in this work. He must work out his own salvation or sanctification. We are to work out what God works in us. The good work the Holy Spirit has begun

in us will by His grace be fully done.

When Christ died on the cross, He delivered us from the guilt and punishment of sin, so that by faith we receive a full and free pardon of all our sins, yet we still face the reality of sin in our life. Sin no longer has dominion over us (Rom. 6:14), but that does not mean it never bothers us again after we come to faith.

Just as Israel conquered Canaan in the time of Joshua, so it is with us who are on our pilgrimage to the heavenly Canaan. After the initial conquest of Canaan whereby the main enemy

force was broken, there remained the long and arduous task of eliminating the pockets of resistance all over the country. The promised land was conquered but gradually, little by little (Josh. 13:1). We are saved by grace through faith and enjoy the fruits of Christ's victory over sin and Satan. We are righteous in Christ before God. Yet we must still fight against the native inhabitants of the land: indwelling sins and corruptions will rear up their ugly heads again and again. Character faults remain to be subdued. Besetting sins and lusts of the flesh must be rooted out. Whatever our bosom sins and areas of weakness may be, there is much to be done to conquer these enemies of our soul.

That is why the apostle tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. How do we square that with what Paul says later in his letter about rejoicing in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4)? By fear and trembling Paul does not mean the kind of fear slaves have for their master. Christians fear God differently. They practice a child-like fear. Because they love God, they are afraid to offend Him. They aim to please the Lord. Because they know God is holy, they also tremble when they see their sins and shortcomings. They not only tremble at sin, but also before God. Our God is a consuming fire, the apostle to the Hebrews writes (Heb. 12:29). Whatever God in Christ has graciously worked in us will not be consumed, of course. But whatever is of the flesh in us must go. He shall purify the sons of Levi for He is like a refiner's fire (Mal. 3:2-3).

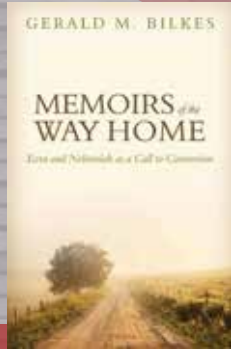
This is the God with whom we have to do. While purifying His people, this God involves them in this work. They must work out their salvation with fear and trembling, but not in their own strength. The reason they work out their salvation is: "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). God's work in sanctification begins with our wills. He first works in us to will and then to do. Willing always comes before doing. But the problem is that by nature none of us are willing to do what God wills. It takes a miracle to change our rebellious wills to conform to God's will. That miracle takes place every time a sinner is saved. It

When Christ died on the cross, He delivered us from the guilt and punishment of sin, so that by faith we receive a full and free pardon of all our sins, yet we still face the reality of sin in our life. Sin no longer has dominion over us (Rom. 6:14), but that does not mean it never bothers us again after we come to faith.



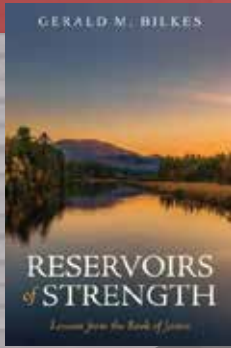
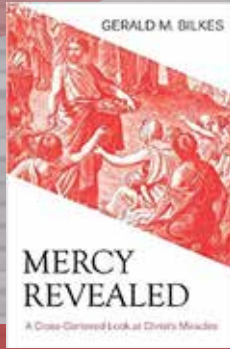
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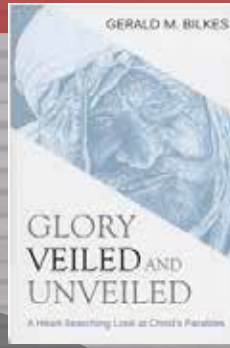
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The sinner who believes in Christ is also the man who is made a new creation. Justification is never without sanctification and sanctification never without justification...

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

is a miracle that begins with regeneration or the new birth. As the *Canons of Dort* explain:

The Holy Spirit pervades the innermost recesses of the [elect] man; he opens the closed and softens the hardened heart and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, infuses new qualities into the will, which though heretofore dead, he quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and pliable, actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions (III/IV.11).

Here we see our total dependence on God for both the willing and the doing.

This should be of great comfort to us. For even if we have been made willing in the day of God's power, we often experience with Paul that, while the desire is there to do what is good, we cannot carry it out. The old nature in us throws up roadblocks at every turn. Yet, as hopeless as it sometimes seems, what both Scripture and the Reformed Confessions teach us can really encourage us. For here we see that our gracious Father works in us to work also. We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, let alone do anything that is good, but our sufficiency is of God (2 Cor. 3:5). If we are open to the Lord's guidance and direction, we shall find His working in us and through us to do what pleases Him. God is pleased to see His people grow in grace and holiness. His delight is to see us die to sin and self and live to His praise.

May this also be your desire, dear reader. Are you willing to let God work in you what pleases Him? Maybe your faith is weak and small like a mustard seed. But if it is true faith in Christ, it will grow. God will cause it to grow. Whatever the degree of your faith, work it out in dependence on Him. Become what you are, a new creature in Christ Jesus. Seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of your Saviour. Live for Him, but always remember what He has said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). This is the way to work out our salvation, with fear and trembling. Work it out not as slaves or even strangers, but as children who seek to please our heavenly Father whom we love because He first loved us. ①

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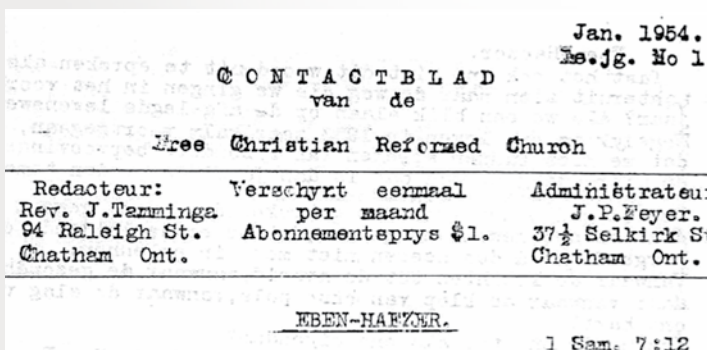
EBENEZER

*Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.
1 Samuel 7:12*

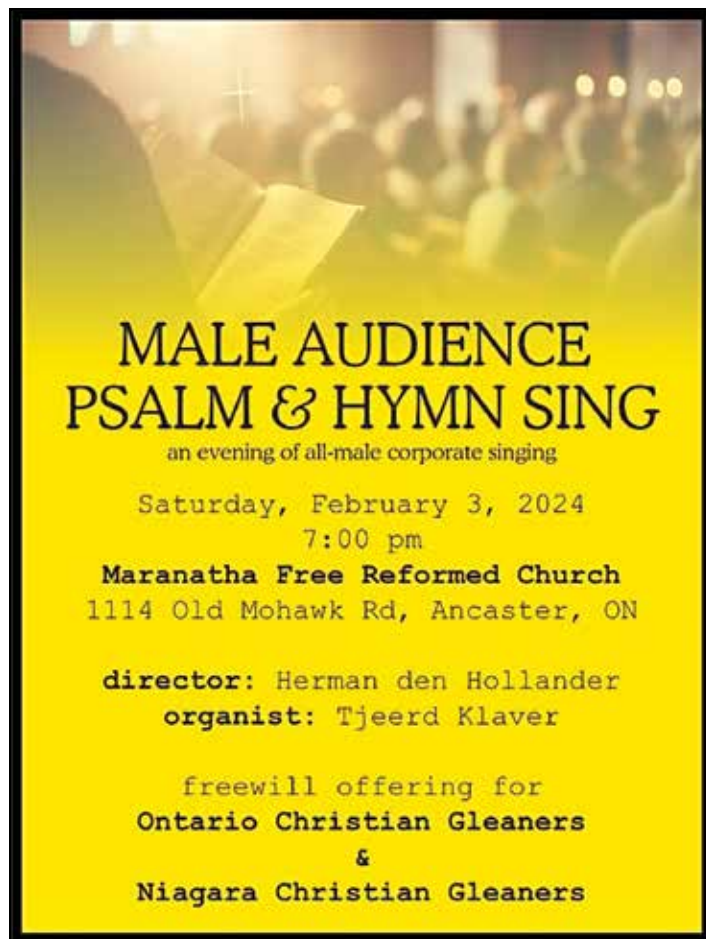
The very first edition of the Messenger was published 70 years ago, in January 1954. The editor was Rev. J. Tamminga, the minister of Chatham, Ontario (and later father-in-law of the Rev. C. A. Schouls, who provided the meditation for the current issue). The administrator was Mr. J. P. Feyer, who had a job earning 50 cents per hour at a printer in Chatham. The subscription cost for the Messenger was \$1.00 per year. Mr. & Mrs. J. D. Tamminga of our Hamilton congregation remember going with his father once a month in the 1950s to the Feijer home to prepare the magazines for mailing. The Messenger was established at the request of consistories to serve the welfare of the churches as they were forming, especially in Canada, with the wave of post-World War II immigrants coming into Canada. Below is the meditation that was published in that first issue – in Dutch. We are thankful for all those who have contributed to The Messenger over the past seventy years.

This text is not the first time that we read of a stone that is set up and given a name. We read of Jacob taking the stone that served as his pillow and setting it up as a sign, calling the name of that place “Bethel.” We also read of Johua setting up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan River. Such stones were to proclaim the great deeds of the Lord to generations to come. They did not speak of this or that deed of man, but pointed above, to the dwelling place of God.

Also, Samuel set up such a witness, and not without reason. Israel had sighed for forty years under the enmity of the Philistines. That hostile yoke had become heavier and heavier, so that Israel began to faint under it. Out of these depths a cry to God was born, a supplication to God. “All the house of Israel,” we read, “lamented after the Lord”



Ebenezer: First Page



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FRC HISTORY

(v.2). When the people came to acknowledge their guilt and confess their sin at the word of Samuel, the Lord delivered them out of the hand of their enemies. The Philistines were defeated. Samuel then set up this stone in remembrance of this victory.

Does it not befit us to confess this word if we look back on the way that we went in the year past? If we look at our life's pathway? Maybe our life in 1953 proceeded very calmly, so that we cannot speak of special trials and deliverances. Yet, that is then exactly the more reason to end in the Lord. One of our greatest failures is that we become used to the "normal," so used to it that we no longer recognize the providing hand of the Lord in it. From where did our strength to labour come? From where did our health come? From where did our pulse and heartbeat come? Do we own and control these things? We know better. All these things are from the hand of Him who rules all things in his providence.

In church life, we have not been spared from difficulties. We have had to struggle with concerns and sins; we have not escaped bitter fruits. Yet, if we look back, amid the many shadows, has there not also been much light? Amid much pain, has there not also been much joy? Amid much sin, has there not been much grace, or better said, despite much sin, much grace? Surely, there has been.

O, how many have gone through the past year without thinking or recognizing God's hand? Who have you been before God and what has the Lord been for you? From your side, has there not been nothing but sin and unrighteousness? And from God's side,....?

Maybe your way went through thorns; maybe your path descended into the depths. Was that worse than what you deserved? Maybe you could speak of rich blessing. Did you deserve that? God's mercy still glories against a well-deserved judgment. Where has this brought us? Has it led us to humble repentance?

Does it not suit us all to erect an Ebenezer?

Did you know that the tear of grief over sin is already

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Ebenezer: Immigratie-Vereniging

the seeking of that stone? Did you realize that a broken heart under God's benefits is the establishment of such a stone of remembrance?

Ebenezer. This is also a word for the year into which we have entered. This stone of remembrance at Mizpah speaks not only of what the Lord has done, but also of what he will do. The God of the covenant is not only the God of the past, but also of the future.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." The Lord is the "I am that I am," the unchangeable God. Was the Lord not the Mighty one to continue to give deliverance?

What this new year will bring we do not know. The year behind us was full of labour and sorrow and also testified of rich blessings of God. The new year will be no different. Life continues. Death will gain more of its spoils. Graves will be dug. We will have to grapple with sorrow and loss, disappointments and concerns. Suffering will not end with the beginning of a new year. It will continue, even as sin will continue.

As the end of the ages comes nearer, so the sin will increase, unrighteousness will grow, concerns will multiply, and life will become more difficult.

But the Lord remains the same. He is the unchangeable God. What need we worry then, if our eye may look to Him? His dominion endures even to eternity. His reign continues through the flight of the years.

Forever trusting in the Lord,


Take heed to do His will;

So shalt thou dwell within the land,

So shalt thou dwell within the land,

And He thy needs shall fill. (Psalm 37; Psalter 100:1)¹

Ebenezer – the Lord has helped and shall also help, for His great name's sake.

Rev. J. Tamminga (1907-1984, pastor of Harderwijk, Enschede, and Rotterdam and then Chatham, Toronto, Grand Rapids, and as emeritus London congregations) 

1. Geen ijd'le zorg doe u van 't heilspoor dwalen; Houd in uw weg het oog op God gericht, Vertrouw op Hem, en d' uitkomst zal niet falen:

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NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY OF AGING: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO RESPONSIBLE PLANNING



Introduction:

As we journey through life, the passage of time unfolds unexpected chapters, revealing both challenges and blessings. I have been blessed and privileged to forge a unique and profound bond with my father-in-law, particularly as I've stood by his side during his battle with Alzheimer's. This experience will forever hold a special place in my heart. I have recently taken on a new role as a board member at Compassion Care, recognizing the vital importance of this ministry within the Free Reformed churches in Ontario. Through God's Providence, this has led me to share my experience to help provide a deeper understanding of the importance of responsible planning as we age.

The Growing Need for Senior Care:

Presently as of 2023, there are 40,000 seniors on a waiting list for Long Term Care in Ontario. They are predicting that will increase to around 48,000 by 2029. And by 2035, just 12 years from now, 1 in 4 Canadians will be over the age of 65.

Passion for Elderly Care:

I am passionate about caring for the elderly from both professional and personal experience. Already as a teenager, I learned to care for the elderly. This instilled within me a genuine sense of empathy and a deep-seated desire to serve and support those in need.

I pursued a field of study in recreation leadership, with a focus on seniors. I have gained valuable experience in various facets of senior living, ranging from independent retirement communities to assisted living and long-term care facilities. However, no amount of formal education or practical experience could adequately prepare me for the formidable challenges I encountered when it became necessary for me to step in and help provide care for my own family. The lack of planning and communication led to

mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual stress and heartache that we all experienced in one way or another.

Compassion Care: A Lifeline in the Journey

Perhaps you can relate to the responsibility of taking care of your parents or you know someone who has. Maybe you are at a stage in life where your parents are entering their senior years and you are worried because, like in my case, nothing was ever discussed. You may be reaching an age where contemplating your own future care has been a concern. Or you may be at the stage of having to care more and more for your spouse. The reason I am telling you this is because when it comes to planning for senior care, early and clear communication can significantly alleviate stress for everyone involved.

This is where **Compassion Care** comes in. I could no longer continue doing everything without some sort of help. I was facing the real possibility of burnout. We did not trust the government assistance program available to us because we knew how vulnerable Dad could be and how easily he could be taken advantage of. We urgently needed help, and we wanted it to come from the Christian community if possible. So, through the church, I was put in touch with Tanya Kleinjan, a member of the Hamilton FRC, and the director of Compassion Care. I can say from personal experience that Compassion Care is a ministry that not only cares for those in need but is also such a blessing to those caring for their loved ones. This ministry is living out what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Legal Aspects of Aging:

There are two types of Power of Attorney (POA); Personal Care and Property. A **Personal Care POA** allows a designated person

or persons of your choosing to make decisions for you regarding health matters, such as, medical treatments, nutrition, housing, clothing, hygiene, and safety. When selecting a family member or loved one, it is important to consider several factors. First, you should choose someone you trust and who is reliable. They should be willing to take on the responsibility of making medical decisions on your behalf. Your POA should have a good understanding of your healthcare wishes and be able to follow through with them in difficult situations or circumstances. Also, consider if they would be able to communicate effectively with medical professionals and your other family members. It is important to choose someone who is close by and readily available when needed, particularly in an emergency.

A **Property POA** grants a designated person or persons the authority to manage your financial affairs and property, including your home and possessions. This should be someone you completely trust, and someone who has the skills and knowledge to manage your financial affairs and can make decisions in YOUR best interest. It is important to remember your POA does not become the owner of any of your money or property. They only have the authority to manage it on your behalf. Your POA cannot make a will for you, change your existing will, change a beneficiary on a life insurance plan, or give new power of attorney to someone else on your behalf. You need to discuss your expectations clearly with your designated POAs, and ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities.

A **will** serves as a critical tool for ensuring that your assets are distributed according to your wishes and can help alleviate potential disputes among family members after your passing. By investing in proper estate planning, you can provide clarity, protection, and peace of mind for yourself and your loved ones.

One of the most important aspects of your **will** is the appointment of an executor, who is responsible for carrying out the instructions outlined in your will. The role of an **executor** can be complex and time-consuming. It requires a high level of organization, attention to detail, and financial literacy. The executor is responsible for managing your estate, including collecting and managing assets, paying any debts owed by your estate, filing estate tax returns, and distributing the remaining assets to the beneficiaries named in the will after your passing. Think of it like this. You are not only responsible for everything that someone else owns but you are liable if something goes wrong. Given the complexity of the executor's role, some people may choose to hire a professional. This can help alleviate the burden on family members or friends who may not have the necessary skills or experience to serve as an executor. This is something you might carefully and prayerfully consider when appointing an executor.

Another important legal concept related to healthcare and medical decision-making if you so choose is a **“Do Not Resuscitate” (DNR)** order. This is a legal order that tells medical professionals not to perform CPR or other life sustaining treatments in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest. It is important to note

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that a DNR order is not a blanket order to withhold all medical interventions. Think of it in terms of allowing natural death with comfort measures. This is a very personal decision to consider, and it is crucial to have open and honest conversations with your loved ones about your end-of-life wishes. This can be a difficult and emotional topic to discuss, but it can provide peace of mind for both you and your loved ones in the event of an emergency. This is also why it is so important to choose a healthcare proxy or power of attorney who understands and supports your wishes and can advocate for you if necessary.

Capacity Assessments and Long-Term Care:

Capacity assessments focus on evaluating a loved one's ability to understand and make decisions as well as have a clear understanding of the consequences of those decisions.

A private capacity assessor is a licensed professional authorized by law to evaluate individuals' abilities in specific areas such as financial management and personal care. The assessor is usually an independent professional who is not employed by the government. Their services are typically priced within the range of \$2,000 to \$3,000. If an individual or their family member is determined to lack capacity by the assessor, the Power of Attorney (POA) will take effective immediately.

In contrast, if you require Long Term Care placement, you must contact home and community care to request a **home health care assessment**. **Home and Community Care** is a government funded program responsible for making decisions about who receives care and the level of care needed. A nurse or social worker solely for decision-making or capacity for shelter in a long-term care setting performs these assessments. This is to determine if you have the ability to make an informed decision, have an understanding and appreciation of the consequences, and safety risks if you stay in your home or go to a LTCH.

Financial Planning and Investment in the Future:

Open and honest communication with your family members and loved ones is vital when it comes to dealing with financial matters as you age. It is also essential to consider various **investments** such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate, RRIFs, RRSPs, TFSA's etc. and whether the right people can access them if or when necessary. On the other hand, could you work towards consolidating your assets to make managing your affairs more simplified? I recommend seeking the counsel of a financial advisor to see what is in you and your families' best interests.

It is imperative to involve your children in keeping track of or taking over **paperwork** if things are becoming too much to handle or there is sudden incapacity. This can help ensure that your home and financial affairs continue to be managed properly.

It is important to ensure that the right people are listed as **beneficiaries** to your assets. Failure to do so could result in unintended consequences. Do you have bills that you could



set up for automatic payment each month so you can have less things to worry about? Have you considered the option of having children or loved ones listed on your **bank accounts** and bills to help ensure timely payments and proper management of your financial affairs? This can provide peace of mind and reduce the risk of financial difficulties arising due to missed payments or mismanagement of your finances. It is important to consider all these factors and implications as you age and make the necessary arrangements to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Prioritizing Health Matters:

It is imperative to keep your children or loved ones informed about your health concerns and **medications**. This does not mean they need to take over, but it just makes sure that everyone is on the same page for your well-being and can confidently help if needed. Share **pharmacy** information; including the name, location, and contact information of your preferred pharmacy, as this can be helpful in the case of an emergency. Having a list of your medications or health concerns in your wallet with you when you are away from home can be very helpful. It is also worth considering transferring your care to a geriatrician or geriatric psychiatrist. These doctors specialize in providing comprehensive care for older adults. A **medical bracelet**, as well as **government safety programs** like Project Lifesaver and the Vulnerable Person Registry, are excellent resources to ensure the safety and security of those who may have cognitive impairments or are at risk of falling. It is important to be aware of and research different options and find one that suits you and your family's needs and preferences. By taking these steps, you can help ensure that you receive the care and support you need, while also giving your loved ones' peace of mind.

God's Calling and Initiating Difficult Conversations:

1 Timothy 5:8 "But if any provide not for his own, and

specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

As you age, it is important to take proactive steps to ensure that your loved ones are not overwhelmed with the responsibility of caring for you. This involves listening to your children and loved ones as they may see things from a different perspective or initiating these conversations as children can feel incredibly daunted without knowing how their parents will react. Waiting until there is no other choice but to step in and take over is overwhelming for everyone involved. Do not be stubborn or resistant to accepting the help that is offered. Remember that accepting help does not make you weak or incapable, but rather shows strength in recognizing your limitations and taking steps to address them.

When parents take the initiative, it not only alleviates the burden on their children but also fosters an environment of open communication and understanding, ultimately leading to a smoother and more collaborative planning process. Remember your children want to support you in living your life with love, honour, dignity, and respect. By working together, you can ensure that your needs are met while also preserving your quality of life.


There is a “My Wishes” booklet that has been created by Rev. Droger of the Netherlands. Dr. L. W. Bilkes of the Free Reformed Church of Grand Rapids saw how valuable this book could be to his congregation due to personal and pastoral experience. It has since been translated to English and expanded for our denomination. This booklet is intended to help you in respect to “setting our funeral in order.” It not only goes through the events of your funeral in detail but also has very practical insight on where to locate your will, how to contact your lawyer, executor, Doctor, etc. Through these efforts, it is now available from Reformed Books Services online or in store for \$5.50.

Types of Planning for the Future:

Did you know that 1 in 5 seniors over the age of 80 have complex needs that require long term care? **Long-term care** provides services and accommodation to people who require the availability of 24 hour nursing care, supervision in a secure setting, or frequent assistance with activities of daily living due to physical and cognitive limitations. **Assisted Living** facilities provide residents with the confidence to be more independent while living in a safe environment. Alternatively, downsizing to an **independent retirement community** may be an option to reduce stress and eliminate home maintenance while fostering a sense of community. Another avenue to explore is the potential of an in-law suite, however, be sure to have thorough discussions to assess its impact with all those involved. Being able to **stay at home** in the future is also a viable plan. But it requires careful consideration and planning to ensure its feasibility, such as essential home improvements like adding ramps for accessibility, installing stair lifts and handrails, widening doorways to accommodate mobility aids, and creating a safe and fully accessible bathroom. Additionally, we hope you will consider the potential involvement of Compassion Care to facilitate in home care for peace of mind.

Conclusion:

It is essential to prioritize open communication with your loved ones about your future plans. We are not promised tomorrow, but we are called to be responsible and have our affairs in order. Whether it is regarding financial matters, healthcare directives, or any significant life choices, involving your loved ones in the conversation promotes transparency, minimizes misunderstandings, and provides peace of mind for everyone involved. It is an act of love that can bring comfort to both you and your family as you finish the race God has set before you.

Mrs. Vanessa Terlouw is a member of the Vineland Free Reformed Church and a board member of Compassion Care. 



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Introducing Compassion Care Free Reformed Association

We are a non-profit organization serving the Southern Ontario Reformed community. We provide in home/institution nursing services, PSW care, companion care and respite to families who are caring for elderly (or not so elderly) family members. This is a paid service. We also plan to hold education sessions directed towards the elderly and their families – to help them prepare for the future while navigating the sometimes difficult stages of aging. We have been in operation for just over one year now and have recently been formally incorporated. We are currently serving Southern Ontario with a view to expanding as we get more caregivers.

If you have a heart for service and align with our mission of wishing to fulfill the mandate of Galatians 6:2 “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”, we welcome you to apply for a part-time position as a caregiver. A PSW certificate or nursing license is optimal but there is also a need for Companion Care which requires no formal education. If you have a need in your family, don’t hesitate to reach out & inquire about our services. All inquiries may be directed towards our Director of Services, Tanya Kleinjan (905)-519-2829 or compassioncarefr@gmail.com.

Our goal is to keep our clients’ fees low while paying our caregivers a fair wage. In this regard, we gratefully accept donations of any size to help realize this goal. Do note that we do not have charitable status at this time and so cannot issue tax receipts. Donations may be sent to our treasurer: Tracey Gritter 11 Baker Rd. N. Grimsby, ON L3M 2W9. E-transfers also accepted at: compassioncarefr@gmail.com.

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