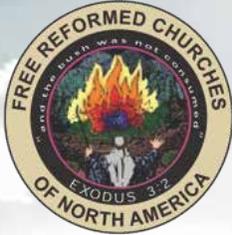


VOLUME 73 NUMBER 01 · JANUARY 2026 EDITION

# THE MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF NORTH AMERICA



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# GODLY RESOLVE IN THE NEW YEAR

*Psalm 119:112*

As this is the first Messenger meditation for the new year, 2026, consider this Scripture testimony of a godly believer long ago, Psalm 119:112. “I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, *even unto* the end.” Is this your and my conviction and confession of faith as we begin this new year?

Let’s think about this godly resolve and how it gives an example of someone so devoted, dependent, and blessed in God’s ways! How can we know if the psalmist with his resolve in Psalm 119:112 is very devoted to keeping this resolve? “I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, *even unto* the end.” Let us just look at the words of the text that brings this out most clearly.

## **Devoted Resolve**

Observe, first, how he tells us he inclined his *heart* about this resolve. The *heart* refers to the center of our being or the core of our being. In other words, the psalmist is not being superficial about this, just thinking outwardly. No, he goes to the heart of the matter, for as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Prov. 23:7a). Note that he has to *incline* his heart, that is, to remind his inner being and correct himself in his inner being time and again in God’s Word and way. That tells us too about our natural sinful heart, not inclined at all in God’s ways. Left to ourselves, ever since our fall into sin, we are inclined not to live by God’s Word and will, but by our own thinking and sinful and lustful desires. Don’t you have to admit this as well? We want to live only for ourselves and to please our sinful, selfish selves.

But when we are born again by God’s Spirit, we learn otherwise. We begin to think God’s thoughts after Him and we then treasure God’s Word as the word of salvation and wisdom and promise for us, in all our ways and in all our needs. Yet even for the most mature child of God, their life continues to be a battle on this side of heaven. Think here of what is honestly confessed by God’s people in Q&A 114 of the Heidelberg Catechism: “But can those who are converted to God perfectly keep these [God’s ten] commandments? Answer: No, but even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this

obedience, yet so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God.”

In this regard, observe with me how determined the believing psalmist is in his resolve to live by God’s Word every step of his way forward. He testifies, “I have inclined my heart to *perform* thy statutes.” Isn’t that phrase, “to perform,” noteworthy here too? *Not just to hear or to learn about or to read about or to discuss* with others, no, but to *perform* God’s Word, meaning to live accordingly in word and deed; to do all that it teaches us! Are you and I such resolved doers of God’s Word?

We can’t miss either, can we, how diligent and sincerely resolved the believing psalmist is about this matter. Notice, he is not just out to perform and do what God’s Word says *on occasion*, when he feels like it, or when others are watching; or some days, yes, and other days no; or when it seems most to his advantage. No, no. He writes: “I inclined my heart to perform thy statutes *always*, even unto *the end*.” Those last two expressions suggest the psalmist wants both to live by and do God’s Word for his whole lifetime. He desires to do so not barely, but completely, to the end! As C.H. Spurgeon put it, “[The psalmist’s] whole heart was bent on practical, persevering godliness.” Then Spurgeon adds the following prayer to his commentary: “Lord, send us such a heavenly inclination of heart as this: then shall we show that Thou hast quickened and taught us. To this end create in us a clean heart, and daily renew a right spirit within us, for only so shall we incline in the right direction.”

Can we all agree and identify with what Spurgeon says about our text, and how it led him to pray that so God might incline all our hearts to this hearty devotion in God’s ways according to all His statutes?! Again, ask yourself, as you begin this new year: Will I too take up this godly resolve of Psalm 119:112 with such devotion of heart and lip sincere? “I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes *always*, *even unto* the end.” Will you, with me, resolve by God’s grace and Spirit, so to live – in the home, and in the church family, and in society this coming year? Yes, God helping us every step of the way?

**Dependent Resolve**

Here we come to our second thought in meditation on Psalm 119:112. In this verse we have not only a *devoted resolve* but surely also a *dependent resolve*. In other words, the psalmist here is not depending on himself to live always performing all God’s statutes. No, he knows better, and you do too, don’t you? How hopeless it is if we have to depend on ourselves in living for God and goodness! Doesn’t the whole psalm of Psalm 119 prove this also beyond any doubt? In verse after verse the whole of Psalm 119 is like a hearty prayer to God to help the psalmist to know God’s Word and to keep God’s Word, to live by it faithfully, and to perform it practically, day by day. Interestingly, in Psalm 119:36, the same psalmist petitions the LORD saying, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.” The psalmist knows, you see, something of his natural waywardness and sinfulness. Clearly and dearly he then resolves what he does in verse 112, in hearty, humble dependency on the LORD! The humbling truth is that never ever can you or I make any progress in holiness and faithful and fruitful obedience to the Lord except God Triune enables us and empowers us and so blesses us by His Spirit and Word every day anew. Without Him, we can do nothing (John 15)!

Therefore, surely how good it is for us to daily read God’s Word and call on the LORD to be our Saviour and Helper, our Guard and our Strength, moving forward every step of the way. How good to be resolved then also to be diligent regarding Sunday worship services and to make priorities that reflect Christian fellowship and study together of God’s Word of utmost importance to us, to you and to me. Is this what will describe you and me in this new year, 2026?

What a glorious gospel this shines on the first and second advents of our Lord Jesus! He reveals to us who God really is in a world of violence and evil.

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What so very much should spur us on in so living is the tremendous gospel fact that God’s Word from beginning to end tells us about the gracious and glorious Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation! Did you know that what verse 112 of Psalm 119 confesses is exactly how the Lord Jesus lived when here on earth? In infinite measure, perfectly so, this is what describes Jesus’ life here on earth: “I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, *even unto* the end.” In Psalm 40:8, we hear the Saviour’s testimony even from the Old Testament Scriptures: “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

Yet, wonder of wonders, while living that perfect God-obedient and God-honoring life, the gospel message is that Jesus, on the cross of Calvary, hung as the crucified, cursed one, as if He were the worst of sinners. He hung there as Sin-bearer in the sinner’s place! He was nailed to the cursed tree and made a curse as Substitute for sinners like us – we vile transgressors, unholy, disobedient ones by nature. As Saviour of sinners, Jesus suffered and endured all the righteous wrath of God against sin that we deserve and will face if left to ourselves. In this way, by Jesus’ righteous once for all sacrifice, with the shedding of His

blood on sinner’s behalf, He has become the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The ever-precious gospel message is that in and with Christ Jesus, the all-sufficient Saviour of sinners, you and I may receive complete cleansing from sin, and daily renewal in grace and godliness by grace through faith in Him. By the promise and power of this Saviour, in line with all His Word, the psalmist lived with this godly resolve: “I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, *even unto* the end.” When you read through the whole of Psalm 119, you discover too that the more the believing psalmist read and meditated on God’s *gospel* word, the more he became enthused and resolved, God helping him, to live by God’s Word with heart and lip sincere, in word and deed, without making sinful exceptions in any way for himself. Again, how good and right when the same may be true for you and me in our lives; yes, also in the year ahead of us, 2026! In fact, isn’t this the only way to have a blessed and happy new year, with Psalm 119:112 thus as a lamp to our feet and a light upon our path day by day?

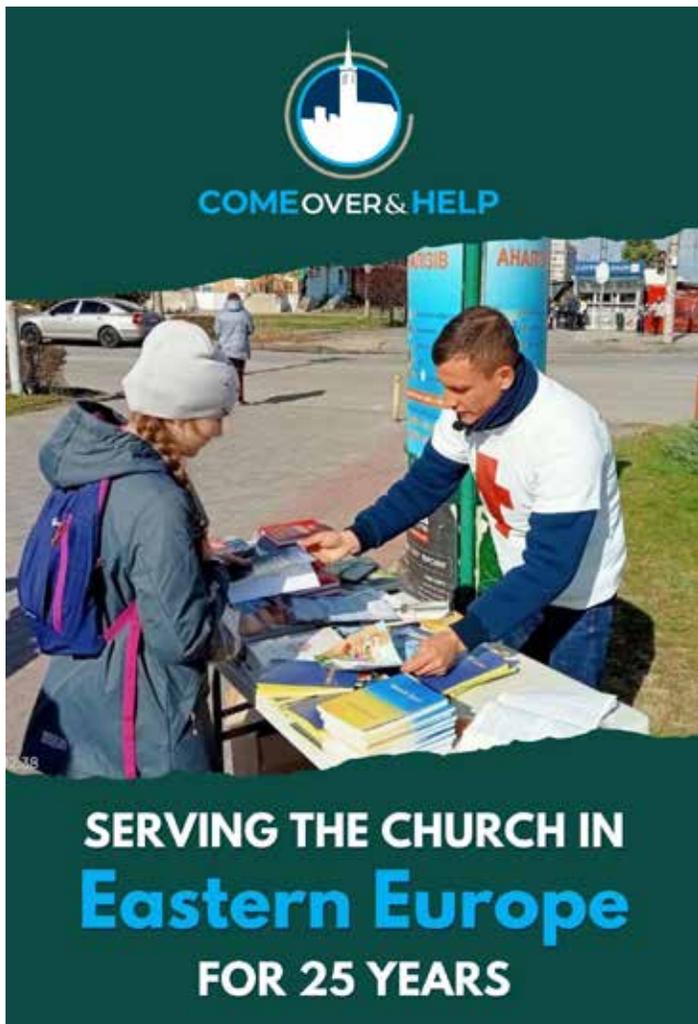
**A Blessed Resolve**

On that note, we also conclude this brief meditation. Just think how blessed we are and what a blessing we become when walking in God’s ways according to all His Word. Alternatively, who won’t admit, when honest, how all departure from God’s Word and will only lands us in deep trouble and woe, sooner or later, and without repentance, even eternally so?! While all who, by God’s grace, love and obey and honour God’s Word in spirit and truth, without willful hypocrisy and inconsistency, God helping them, oh, what a force for God and good they become! What a help in all God’s church and kingdom here on earth they are! Plus, just think of the eternal glory to come hereafter! Isn’t this glory what the LORD promises all His repentant and believing people who trust and follow Him?

In view of all this, with 2026 before us, will you and I live in the year ahead remembering and reflecting, by God’s grace and Spirit, Psalm 119:112? “I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, *even unto* the end.” O God Triune, please grant this gospel resolve to be lived by us, one and all, and help us humbly and heartily to encourage each other much in this gospel way of grace and godliness and gladness beyond measure! Help us so to live ever testifying to God’s praise:

Thy precepts are my heritage,  
 For daily they my heart rejoice;  
 To keep Thy statutes faithfully  
 Shall ever be my willing choice. (Psalter 334:4)  
 Even so, and only so, right?  
 A blessed and happy new year to you all! ①

*Pastor Hans Overduin is an emeritus Free Reformed pastor and member of the Free Reformed Church of Calgary, Alberta.*





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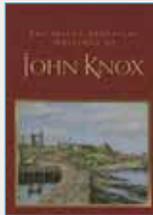
William Tyndale is best remembered as a Bible translator. During the last eleven years of his short life, he published three editions of the complete New Testament, the Pentateuch, the book of Jonah, and a few other parts of the Old Testament. There is little doubt that Tyndale could have translated the whole of the Bible into English if he had given himself exclusively to that work. But alongside the work of translation, he felt it was necessary to contend earnestly for the Reformed faith, and so he threw himself into several of the key theological controversies of the times. For this "Apostle of England," the Bible must not only be translated, but its teachings also must be expounded and applied in a practical way. To such work of exposition and application Tyndale gave himself with a passion. In doing so, he not only proved himself a master of true biblical interpretation but has left to posterity works of lasting value. Hardcover, 1012 pages, Banner of Truth Trust. **RBS Price \$79.00**



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By John Knox

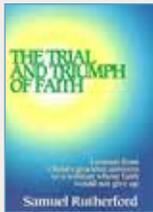
The Works of John Knox, preserved in six large volumes, are virtually closed to all but the most scholarly students of history. However, thanks to the endeavours of the Rev. Thomas Thomson and the Free Church of Scotland Board of Publications, this book was compiled so that Knox might be put back into the hands of the people. Unabridged and unaltered, except for the updating of the "antiquated orthography," one can read some of the most enduring of Knox's practical writings. These include such works as his treatise on prayer, his 'Fort for the Afflicted' — an exposition of the Sixth Psalm, his sermon on Christ's temptation in the wilderness, and his notorious sermon on Isaiah 26:13-20. Fifteen of Knox's letters are also included at the end of the volume, twelve of which were addressed to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Elizabeth Bowes. In them, the temper and character of Knox, the pastor, are clearly exhibited. Knox was born in Haddington, near Edinburgh, around 1514. In 1536, he graduated from St. Andrews University and was ordained a priest. He became a notary and tutor, but in 1543 was converted to Christ and embraced the Reformed faith. He was much influenced by the preacher George Wishart and became his bodyguard. Hardcover, 295 pages, Banner of Truth Trust **RBS Price \$32.00**



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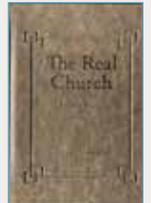
### The Real Church: A Commentary on 1 Corinthians

By Gordon J. Keddie

The church at Corinth was a *real* church, struggling with many of the same issues of your average congregation today—family concerns, disputes, liberty of conscience issues, immorality and discipline cases, head coverings, and questions about giving to name a few. Beloved Bible teacher Gordon Keddie brings to life the wisdom and practical counsel of Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church. Keddie shows that the epistle's advice is down-to-earth yet is offered in the heavenly context of our hope of the gospel, our unity in Christ, and our expectation of the resurrection. Read 1 Corinthians with fresh eyes. See what a difference its teachings can make in your life and the life of the real church. Gordon J. Keddie is the author of many commentaries on Bible books and books on biblical themes. He pastored four Reformed Presbyterian churches for over forty years, from Indiana to Scotland.

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# BEHOLDING THE GRACE OF THE LORD:

## REFORMING OUR VIEW OF SYNOD (PART 2)

*This is a two-part series on comparing our customs at synod (and other church meetings such as consistory and combined consistory meetings) with what we see in the Scriptures. In other words, how are we to eye and adore the grace of God manifest in the assemblies of His church? This was initially delivered at the October 2025 retreat of the FRC ministers, London, ON.*

*In the first installment, we saw two lessons from Acts 15. First, the thrill of synod is owing to the living Christ through the Spirit. Secondly, the thrill of synod is the thrill of the power of grace on display. - ed.*

### **The Thrills of Synod**

#### **3. The thrill of serving the living Word of God, which binds us together.**

When we look at how the synod in Jerusalem unfolds, we see how the Word of God, centred on the gospel of grace, manifested its power and authority over the whole assembly. In the record, Peter relates the dealings of God: “God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Though he didn’t refer to Scripture, he had preached Scripture to the Gentiles (Acts 10:36), and so Peter is here summarizing Scripture. Next at the synod, Peter spoke with reference to the gospel of Jesus Christ, certainly summarizing the message of Scripture: “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:11). He knew this personally in his own life, also after his denial of Christ and Christ’s visit to him and restoration of him. In other words – and this is the universal testimony of Scripture – Jews no less than Gentiles needed the coming, the life, the death, and the resurrection of Christ.

Finally, Paul and Barnabas magnify the grace of God in the miracles and wonders that God had done among the Gentiles. In other words, through His Son, the Lord was showing His power over the nations, wondrously bringing people under the sway of His exalted and enthroned Priest and King, Jesus Christ.

Yet, James is the one who explicitly, aptly, and splendidly

opened up Scripture. Without this, the narrative of the synod would read and feel so very different. James brings the Spirit-inspired Scripture clearly in view, quoting, expounding, and applying Amos 9 concerning the tabernacle of David, which was broken down, but now raised up in Christ (Acts 15:16). At this point we read, “then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church...” (Acts 15:22). In other words, nothing short of the express exposition and application of the Word of God will do to unite delegates and further the cause of the Lord.

In that vein, at Emden in 1571, the first Dutch Reformed Synod began with a whole day of prayer and mutual exhortation before addressing any business. This was to give shape to the prominence that the Word of the Lord should have. Living under the Word of God with respect, submission, obedience, and reliance is of absolute necessity in order to see the grace of the Lord in the church.

#### 4. The thrill of listening to what the Lord is doing.

To listen is a grace that ministers need in abundant measure. We ought to be “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19). Note well how in Acts 15 the works and mind of the Spirit were on display with such clarity that the apostles could say: “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us” so to do. “Fare ye well” (Acts 15:28-29). However, to get to that point, the church’s leaders “kept silence and gave audience” (v. 12). In other words, a grace-filled synod is not one where everyone gets the floor, but where the Spirit through His Word and the application of it receives or, better yet, takes the room. “I will hear what God the Lord will speak.”

In that light, at the synod of Middelburg in 1581, churches were still forming amid persecution. Yet, they ruled that: “No minister shall speak twice on the same question until all others have spoken once.” This wise rule curbed domination and enforced listening. Our view of the functioning of the office should consider the parity principle. All officers, whether at the consistory, classis, or synodical level, should ask this question: If everyone would speak as long as I do, would the meeting be done in its allotted time, or would it last for weeks? Obviously, the officers appointed by the synod must speak much more in order that all would be done decently and in order.

How much time is spent on the Word of God quoted, explained, and applied in an edifying way? At the Synod of Dort (1618–19), they began each session with prayer and Scripture reading, not in a perfunctory way to satisfy their consciences that they had checked off that box, but to hear what God the Lord speaks through His Spirit-inspired Word. Though synod is not to be simply a string of Bible readings or quotations, much more prominence should be given to the exposition and application of Scripture. At Dort, when debates grew heated, the chair, Johannes Bogerman, would sometimes say, “Let us sing a psalm.” The Lord is enthroned upon the praises of His people, and therein He rules and shows that rule.

#### 5. The thrill of open doors.

We may meet under the clouds of persecution, division, worldly plots, and internal strife. To none of these things was the early church of Acts a stranger. However, always, straight through all of these things, the Spirit was opening doors, whether in Samaria, Damascus, Gaza, Antioch, and even in Rome, where the prisoner Paul would arrive, bound, yet knowing the Word could never be bound. There will always be open doors and we do well to look for them and go through them. How much of our synod time is looking proactively and strategically at how to aid the cause of the preaching of the gospel among us and abroad?

These open doors and some of the challenges surrounding them were ultimately the reasons behind the visit of Barnabas to Antioch and the synod in Jerusalem. How are we to go through the open doors which God sets before us? Paul mentions: “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Cor. 16:9). This element of “adversaries” along with “open doors” raises the question what these adversaries were trying to do around the door and how the Lord might use the adversaries to have the church go through the open doors that the Lord places before the church. For example, when persecution overtook Jerusalem, “they were all scattered abroad” and “they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:1,4).

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The enemies served to spread the Word the more!

**Concluding Suggestions**

In conclusion, I wish to give, for discussion’s sake, a few suggestions as to how we might behold better the grace of the Lord in our broader assemblies.

**1. Let us give greater attention to the local and regional principle of church government.**

We need to reappraise the local church as the primary manifestation of Christ’s body and from there the regional principle. Article 30 of Dort’s Church Order enshrined the principle of subsidiarity: “In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in minor assemblies.” Is this sufficiently in our view?

Voetius wrote that “The classis is the nerve of the whole body of the churches; if it is weak, the synod will limp.” When the local congregations and then also the primary broader assembly (classis) function biblically, marked by prayer, grace, and the Lord’s Word, and have the right Scriptural focus as outlined above, the grace of God will come into clearer view for us in our synods. Matters reach the synodical level only when necessary. Often by that time they are already spiritually ripened for consensus. “He who neglects the classis burdens the synod.” Is it not time to move to a full-blown classis system?

**When the local congregations and then also the primary broader assembly (classis) function biblically, marked by prayer, grace, and the Lord’s Word, and have the right Scriptural focus as outlined above, the grace of God will come into clearer view for us in our synods.**

**2. Let us give greater focus to the explanation and applications of the Word of God in our assemblies.**

Should the balance of preaching and discussion be realigned to give much more prominence to the Word in our gathering? Should our agendas not be handled and administered in such a way that prayer, the Word, preaching, and grace are much more prominent? Is an extensive, ongoing debate in which there is a lot of vacillation not a sign that we are not ready to decide

a matter? Could a start be to have a worship service not just Monday, but each evening, so Tuesday and Wednesday, to which the congregations are welcome to come or tune in, with one minister leading in prayer, and another leading in preaching? This might re-energize the whole body from the weariness of the day and might pull the synod somewhat in the direction of a retreat, or conference, along with all the other aspects of the “care of the churches.”

**3. Let us give greater attention to the outward-facing work of the church.**

The Lord has set before His church open doors. Going through those doors involves enemies, obvious ones and subtle ones, external and internal ones. We are thankful for the Refugee, Missions, Theological Education, Youth and Education, Outreach, and Unity Committees. These, and our church planters and missionaries, need to be profiled. Perhaps they can formulate their reports in more of a strategic direction and outward-facing direction, rather than an administrative or business direction. Some of the great synods (Emden, Middelburg, Dort) in our background were deeply preoccupied with church planting, refugee congregations, and helping the churches with church order, Bible translation, confessions, schools, seminaries, etc. Would a focus on the grace of open doors not invigorate our synods and our churches?

**4. Let us give attention to the principle of speaking less.**

We need to weigh our words. We need people who will tell us the truth when we talk too much. Indeed, there is “a time to speak” (Eccl. 3:7), but notice that it comes after “a time to keep silence.” Solomon says elsewhere: “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise” (Prov. 10:19). Whenever there was a work of God, there came silence to register the reality God, His Word, His truth, and His grace. We need to wonder at the grace of God, which may come as we look for God to fulfill His promises among us as a small portion of His vineyard. If we spoke less, perhaps we would see more.

In closing, I think those immigrant elders talked too much and many of them, now in glory, will understand that better now than we ever will here on earth. However, one thing I think they instinctively understood and I hope we increasingly do as well: God **grows His church through His Word**, through the faithful preaching of the Word, by His grace. Let us rejoice when we behold that grace. 11

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## BOOK REVIEW

# WHAT WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ISLAM

**ULTIMATE FRONTIER: Meeting the Challenge of Islamic Dawā** (With Special Focus on Africa)

By Christo Heiberg, FriesenPress, One Printers  
Way, Altena, MB R0G 0B013, 2023.  
Softcover, 297 pages.

Until the Twin World Trade Towers in New York City were destroyed in September 2001, most people were unaware of the radicalism inherent in the Muslim religion, except for what they knew from early church history or barely heard mentioned on the news. The 9/11 attack was minutely planned and carried out by a militant Islamist organization, Al-Qaeda, led by Sunni Islamist jihadists, who are engaged in a “revolutionary struggle” against the present world order to unite the Muslim world under Islamic law. It has been designated a terrorist organization by the United Nations and many countries all over the world.<sup>1</sup>

This book has two parts: Part I describes the Islamic strategy for world domination, and Part II gives answers on how we shall overcome. In this book, pastor Christo Heiberg wants to alert especially the Christian church to *dawā*, “the Muslim strategy for world domination” (p. 3). Surely, one will ask, do all Muslims have this in mind? Aren’t most of them moderate and law-abiding? True, explains Heiberg, but *dawā* is at the heart of Islamic theory. “*Dawā* is a divine command based on the teachings of the Quran and the *hadith*... *Dawā* is an all-encompassing program since it uses everything from literature, education, and television to building mosques, infiltrating finances, the democratic process, social media, and even jihad to further its agenda” (p. 17). The strategic goal of the leading, radical Sunni Islamists, including the influential Muslim Brotherhood and like-minded organizations, “is to ‘re-establish the caliphate, a totalitarian theocratic imperial regime’ to maintain political power and expand it worldwide” and “place the entire world under Islamic totalitarian rule” (p. 18). Heiberg quotes extensively from various organizations that promote radical Islam as Muslims migrate to various countries all over the world (Chapter 3: History and Agents of Dawā).

Islam is growing in various targeted countries, especially among the poor in African countries, for material reasons. Converts are bought by free education, housing, healthcare, political and historical reasons, the assurance of a proper funeral and burial, and male-dominated marriage and sex. These things appeal to Africans who are used to polygamous marriages and are open to bribes to join a mosque. “Nothing less than the Islamization of civilization is the goal,” and Islam is optimistic that the weakening of Western civilization is opening opportunities for Islam to move from a relatively passive period in history to act in a “more revolutionary role, seeking to completely transform society” (p. 37). Examples

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“For thou hast  
possessed my reins:  
thou hast covered me  
in my mother's womb.”  
*Psalms 139:13*

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of success can already be seen in European cities such as Rotterdam, Amsterdam, the Hague, Antwerp, and Utrecht, the population of which is between 13 and 25 percent Muslim (p. 41).

Heiberg gives American and Canadian examples of inroads being made as well. Muslims have indicated that they would like to practice *sharia* law, which sets out punishments for apostates, marriage dissolution, loss of custody of children, loss of inheritance rights, etc., the worst one being “honour killings” to restore Muslim family pride (p. 112). A high Muslim birthrate and declining European and North American birthrates are in their favour. Islamic influence in finance and banking, especially in the UK and South Africa, is growing rapidly. *Halal* foods are used as a promoter in grocery stores where I live.<sup>2</sup> Schools and universities are sanitizing their textbooks and adding to their subjects of study to accommodate Muslims, while banning the Bible and curbing freedom of speech.

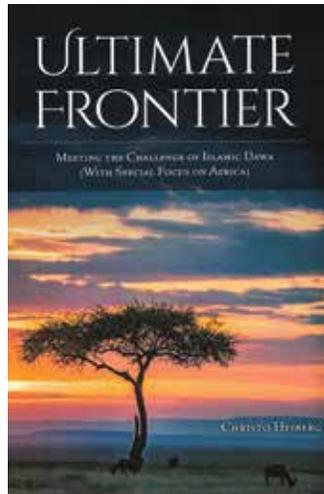
Some church leaders engage in dialogue with Muslims, thinking they can persuade Muslims to abandon their religion this way. Heiberg is uneasy about all this because of the deceptive nature of Islam and gives examples and statistics. A strategy Muslims often use is that of victimhood. The European Christian colonization of non-Christian countries is an example of how “victimhood” is propagated. Heiberg claims: “Many Western observers, unfamiliar with the victimhood syndrome, have fallen prey to its plots and schemes. They [Muslims] use the past to ‘justify violence in the present and to weaken the moral resolve of their foes to respond with courage’” (p. 85).

Fear is another method to weaken the opposition of non-Muslims. Heiberg gives examples in Canada and European countries. This tool is also especially effective when Muslim dissidents leave their faith. Right now, the world is becoming aware of what is happening in Nigeria, inspiring fear by sudden “flash” attacks, burnings, abductions and other atrocities. These are happening under the tolerance of weak governments, sometimes receiving financial aid from Western organizations and governments, either out of ignorance or indifference.

The chapter of “Dawa Through Jihad” is a difficult chapter to read because there are graphic accounts of religious persecution in the history of Islam, which are still being practiced in the name of *jihad* in countries where Islam is dominant, and by terrorists. *Jihad* is an inherent part of Islam and can be interpreted in various ways: a personal attempt to correct wrongs or a military war against non-Muslims and all who resist Islam. Due to the defeat of ISIL in northern Syria and Iraq, active militancy has subsided (pp. 18-19) but has never been revoked. However, religious cleansing is spreading in African countries, such as Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Mozambique, and at a high rate in Nigeria, where as many as 43,000 Christians have lost their lives during the last decade, often by means of the most gruesome, unimaginable attacks, especially on women. This news is finally reaching the ears of the Western world (pp. 171ff.).

While painting a dismal and ominous picture, Heiberg also presents examples where the Gospel of Christ is effective and is turning Muslims

to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many Muslims want to live peacefully with their neighbours. Muslim youth are especially having their eyes opened to the oppressive culture of Islam. Writes Heiberg: “We are faced with a bleak picture, but thanks to God, that is not the end of the story. Extremist Islam has a way of not only playing perfectly into



the hands of the devil but also into the hands of Almighty God. One of the core reasons why many Muslims get ‘fed up’ with Islam is because of what is being done and said in the name of Allah.”

This leads into Part Two, “How Shall We Overcome?” Heiberg’s premise is that he has tried to show in Part One that, “There can be no doubt that the free world is facing an unprecedented challenge in multi-faceted Islamization, ... a challenge that won’t go away or be won by military force” (p. 141). Because it is not a war of ideas but of theology (p. 146), only true, compassionate Christianity is effective. Part Two is mainly an apologetic to draw attention to the “Surpassing Beauty of Christianity” against the cruel theology of Islam. Especially their treatment of women alone is enough to frighten

us. At the same time, the very cruelty of Muslims, contrasted with the Christian religion, has led to the conversion of Muslims.

Characteristic of Heiberg’s thoroughness, he dedicates this last part of the book to calling Christians to have courage and a sacrificial mindset, implying that this is missing in much of current Christianity. One may argue with some of his views or specific comments, but not with his observation that our eyes often are closed to the onslaughts of Satan and that we are often infected by the worldwide indifference or naivete toward the plight of persecuted Christians.

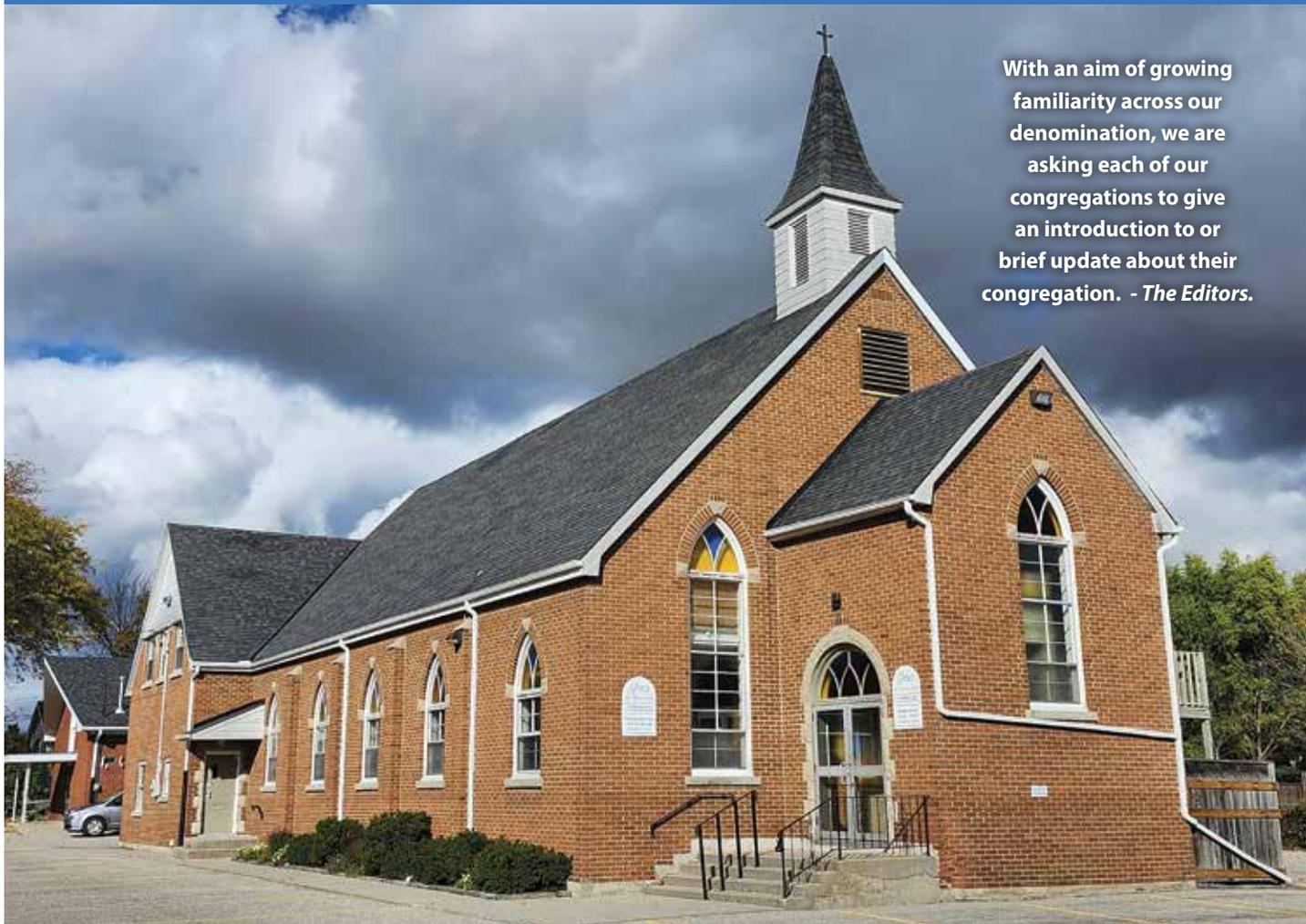
As a native of South Africa, familiar with that country’s ongoing struggles, as a former pastor in a Reformed church in southern Ontario, Canada, and now in the position of missionary to the Muslims, Heiberg is passionately concerned that Christians are aware of the current inroads of Islam worldwide. This book has been widely distributed by *Open Doors*, an organization which serves persecuted Christians around the world, providing vital support and training. This edition of the book omits the author’s name to protect him from possible harm.

Heiberg writes passionately, providing much documented information and challenges Christians - as those who know the author personally would expect. Disclaimer: The edition of the book being reviewed does not include some of the latest developments, such as Hamas and Israel. It mainly steers away from making political statements or names, except that it is the author’s view that Christians should be courageous and be politically involved. <sup>1</sup>

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

1. Wikipedia, November 25, 2025.
2. A new, large sign was placed over the meat section in the large grocery store where I shopped today (November 28, 2025). I haven’t noticed any difference in quality or taste.

# INTRODUCING THE GRACE FREE REFORMED CHURCH OF BRANTFORD, ONTARIO



With an aim of growing familiarity across our denomination, we are asking each of our congregations to give an introduction to or brief update about their congregation. - *The Editors.*

It is my pleasure to introduce you to Grace Free Reformed Church in Brantford, Ontario. As the corresponding clerk of the consistory, the task is mine, but it is a delight for me as well, as I was privileged to be one of the founding members of Grace Church some thirty-three years ago. With a grateful heart I recall how God has richly blessed us throughout the years.

Brantford is a mid-sized city in southwestern Ontario, located just west of the Golden Horseshoe, which wraps around the western end of Lake Ontario. It's a growing city with a population of approximately 110,000 people. Settled in an older residential part of Brantford is a warm and vibrant Reformed Christian community known as Grace Free Reformed Church.

## History

The idea to plant a Free Reformed Church in the Brantford area dates to the late 1980s when several families from the

Dundas and Hamilton Free Reformed congregations saw the need and the potential for a Free Reformed Church in the Brantford area. The Hamilton consistory assumed the work in May of 1991 and placed the following bulletin announcement in the Hamilton church bulletin:

The consistory decided at its meeting on May 2 to begin worship services of a preaching station in Brantford.

- a) The preaching station will be under the supervision of the Hamilton Consistory.
- b) We hope to commence services on Sunday, September 1, 1991, D.V.
- c) There will be one service per Sunday at 2:30 p.m.
- d) There will be a six-month trial period, after which the consistory will again review the viability of this station.
- e) All the collections held at the preaching station will

be kept separate and will be channeled through the Hamilton church.

- f) Br. Dennis De Vries is appointed to be the contact person to find a suitable location for worship services.

May the Lord in His grace and mercy bless this decision to the extension of His Kingdom, to the glorification of His most holy Name

In October of 1992, Brother John Brink was elected as an elder in the Hamilton consistory with his focus on the Brantford Preaching Station. Hamilton's request to institute the Brantford congregation was approved by Synod in 1993. In June of that year, Dennis De Vries was voted in as an additional elder, and brothers Kim Hamstra and Bill Brunsveld Jr. were elected as deacons. Grace Free Reformed Church was officially instituted at the installation service on Monday, June 21, 1993.

Rev. Cornelis Pronk became Brantford's first minister in 1994 and served as their full-time pastor until his retirement in 2006. Worship at the current facilities at 17 Patterson Avenue began in April 1997, and the facilities were purchased in 1998.

During her early years, Grace FRC grew quickly from 190 members in 1992 to 449 members in 2003. The consistory initiated a church plant in St. George in September 2004. 157 members formed the St. George congregation at its institution on September 23, 2005

Rev. Carl Schouls served as Brantford's second pastor from September 2007 until his retirement from full-time ministry in 2011. Following a vacancy of seven years, Rev. David Van Brugge served the congregation from January 2018 until January 2025. We are currently vacant, but the consistory is actively working to call a man who is suited to minister among us.

### Engaging our Community

While many of our current members can still recall those early days, a whole new generation has arisen, and the congregation

now has well-established roots in the community of Brantford. The church currently has about 325 members which are represented by every age demographic, with a particular prominence of young families.

The Brantford congregation is intentional about its presence in the local community, engaging in a variety of outreach initiatives. Several are carried out in cooperation with other churches in Brantford. We participate in the annual city-wide OneChurch Food Drive, which collects items in support of our local Food Bank. Several of our members are involved in the work of the Brantford chapter of Safe Families, which assists families in the community who are experiencing crisis situations which often leave children vulnerable to neglect or abuse. Others are involved in the work of the Brantford Blessing Centre, which provides meals and encouragement for the homeless and needy in the city.

We also support Brantford's Hope Pregnancy and Family Support Centre, as well as the WhyNot City Missions, which engages the youth in Brantford through its drop-in centre, its youth housing initiative, and Supportive Housing for Young Parents, which provides vital assistance to needy new parents in our community. We also have our own outreach initiatives which include a four-day Vacation Bible School program each summer, as well as a Kidz Klub program which engages community children on a more regular basis through Bible stories, crafts, and other activities. Our nursing home ministry reaches out to residents of a nursing home in our neighbourhood.

Over the last several years, our worship services have seen a marked increase in regular attendees from our community who are either new Canadians or new to the Reformed faith and who desire to become part of our congregation. This is a blessed opportunity that comes with new challenges. Several members of the congregation have been involved in discipling these regular visitors and the consistory is working to implement a new members course as well.



### Church Programs

We also are busy with various programs that we conduct for our church family such as weekly Catechism and Confession of Faith classes, Sunday School classes for our children, regular Adult Sunday School sessions, Cadets and Kingdom Seekers, Men's Bible study and Ladies' fellowship, various small group Bible Studies, Young Adults, Senior Youth Group, and Junior Youth Group. We pray that the Lord will richly bless these opportunities for education and fellowship.

### Reformed Book Services

Brantford FRC is also involved, along with other churches in the area, in supporting the growth and development of Reformed Book Services. The bookstore is operating out of a beautiful new facility in the west end of the city. Inventory and sales are constantly growing. It now has its own coffee shop called Café 1517, which provides a cozy setting to meet as well as a quiet study space.

RBS recently launched the Learning Centre Ontario, which hosts a series of on-site classes on Thursday evenings. Our former pastor, Dr. D. Van Brugge, serves as the director of the learning centre. Video lectures are presented from Transform@PRTS ([transform.prts.edu](http://transform.prts.edu)), followed by facilitated discussions. These courses are designed to help local Christians deepen their

theological knowledge. The Learning Centre Ontario also hosts live events including author meet-and-greets, story time for little ones, guest speaker lectures, and mini-conferences. It also now offers online courses through Transform@PRTS, which also provides students with access to mentors, study space, and library resources. It is exciting to see how, by God's hand, RBS is making an impact, both locally and abroad.

### Conclusion

Grace FRC is privileged to interact with our community in these ways. In these days, we are seeing indications of a greater hunger for God in our community, a greater level of interest in the worship of God, and increased interest in Reformed theology, more than we have ever seen before. Despite all the concerns we may have about what is happening in the world, these are exciting times, and we have a great opportunity as a local church to witness for Christ. May our gracious God continue to shepherd us and enable us to be faithful witnesses, boldly proclaiming the truth of God to all who will hear, and showing forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into his marvellous light. 

*Mr. Jerry Benjamins is an elder of Grace Free Reformed Church.*



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These two women will share their journey, wrestling with the loss of a spouse, the ongoing burden of raising their children after their husbands, the fathers to their children, were called home. Speaking from a position of broken heartedness yet rooted in God's enduring grace, they detail their continuous experience of His strength. They recognize themselves as sailors in the storm of grief and single parenthood. And that while the storm is not removed, God gives strength to the brokenhearted to weather the storm.

Discover how the church family can come alongside those brokenhearted and crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18) to practically minister and provide the steadfast support needed for this long journey of healing and hope.

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When: Thursday, March 26 2025 at 7:00 pm

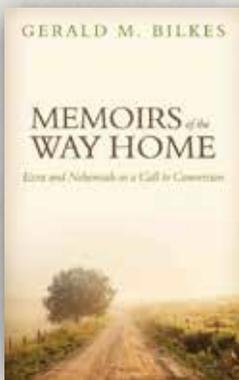
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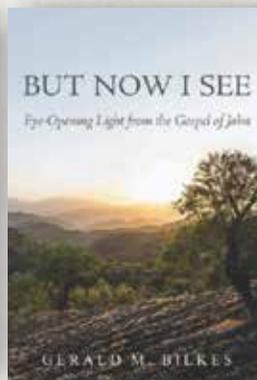
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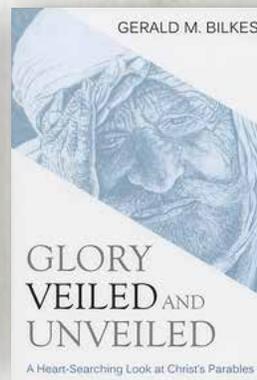
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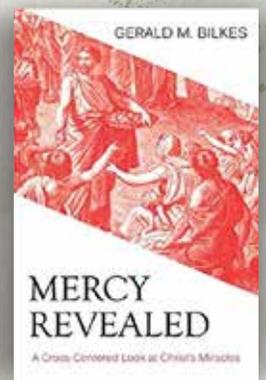
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# A RICH CHRIST FOR POOR SINNERS: THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF REV. J. TAMMINGA (1)



The Consistory of the Harderwijk Congregation.

There is no shortage of writings on many famous and well-known ministers like John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon, or Jonathan Edwards, among others – and rightfully so. There is much that can be learned from the preaching of these faithful men, whether academically or devotionally. However, we can also learn much from those who we might call our direct spiritual predecessors – those ministers who have come before us and shaped our churches as we now know them.

Rev. Jacob Tamminga is just such a man. As one of the founding ministers in our denomination, he was not one who desired to be in the spotlight or sought popularity, but rather sought to serve faithfully wherever the Lord called him – be that a large, prominent church in the Netherlands or a small, immigrant congregation in Canada. In fact, he repeatedly asked his children that, upon his death, they would “destroy all his manuscripts.”<sup>1</sup> While they did not heed this request in entirety, very few sermons ever made it into print format. So, what few sermons we do have are a gift to the church and are a blessing to the hearts of those who read them.

The goal of these articles is to present the life and ministry of

Rev. Tamminga, examining the key element of his preaching and teaching. While a number of aspects of his preaching could be examined – the role of the covenant, the free offer of the gospel, the use of the means of grace – one aspect stands out among them all. The foremost emphasis from which all these other aspects flowed was the *proclamation of a rich Christ for poor sinners*. The desire of his heart for his preaching was that sinners would know that they are nothing before God and that the only way they may be saved is through Jesus Christ alone. They are nothing, but *He* is everything.

This first article will look at his life and ministry more generally. The next two articles will focus on this central aspect of his preaching, first, by showing how he brought sinners low, then, by revealing how he brought a rich Christ to meet the needs of such lowly sinners.

## **Rev. Jacob Tamminga (1907-1984): His Life and Ministry**

Jacob Tamminga was born on June 10, 1907, in Franeker, the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup> He felt the call to ministry during his teenage

years. In 1928, he was accepted as a student to the ministry and went on to study at the Theological University of Apeldoorn. During this time, he was deeply aware that as a student he still had much to learn.

He married Geertje Salverda on November 5, 1931 – three days before his ordination. She was a faithful helper to her husband during his ministry and he leaned on her very much. Pastor C.A. Schouls (a son-in-law to Rev. Tamminga) wrote, “She had a powerfully positive effect upon his ministry.”<sup>3</sup>

Rev. Tamminga was ordained on November 8, 1931, aged 24, in the congregation at Harderwijk, where he served for eight years. Here he learned the necessity of prayer for the ministry. In 1939, he received a call to Enschede, where he served during World War II. Here he “learned to deal with all sorts of people.”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, amid the bombings of this town on the border with Germany, he experienced the frailty of man and the brevity of life. After the war, he served in Rotterdam-Centre for a few years, ministering in many churches there due to a lack of ministers. These two places prepared him for his future service in North America.

Rev. Tamminga returned to Enschede in 1948 before taking a call to a newly formed congregation in Chatham, Ontario, Canada in 1951. He had already visited immigrants in Canada and “felt a burden for their spiritual welfare.”<sup>5</sup> He was influential in the humble beginnings of a new denomination of Scriptural, confessional, Reformed churches which would eventually be known as the Free Reformed Churches.

While ministering in Chatham, he also served other immigrant churches, including St. Thomas, Ontario. In 1957, he was installed in a small church in Toronto, Ontario, and then



Pastor J. Tamminga and Pastor W. Heerma on bicycles.

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accepted a call to the Grand Rapids, Michigan congregation a few years later. This would be his last congregation. He ministered here for twelve years.

Rev. Tamminga retired from active ministry in 1972. However, due to needs within the denomination and vacancies, he spent much time serving congregations in British Columbia, Ontario, and New Jersey. He would eventually serve as a pulpit supply minister in London, Ontario. After this time, he and his wife lived with, Johan and Corrie Tamminga (his son) in Burlington, ON.

On October 9, 1984, after a long battle with cancer, he entered glory at the age of 77. Even in his final moments, he still needed to learn. Pastor Pronk wrote that his deathbed was not easy, and that “he had to learn experimentally that a minister is not saved as a minister, but as a sinner, and by grace alone!”<sup>6</sup> He testified on the day of his death that “there was peace in his heart.”<sup>7</sup>

### The Preaching of Rev. Jacob Tamminga

Rev. Tamminga embodied Free Reformed preaching, serving faithfully in the *Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (CGK)* in the Netherlands and the Free Reformed Churches of North America for 53 years. His ministry was based upon the authority and sufficiency of the Scriptures. The Word of God as the only foundation for doctrine and life is a dominant theme throughout his articles and writings.<sup>8</sup> This is what governed his preaching: he was bringing the *Word* of God as a *messenger* of God. To him, this was no easy task. He was a man who understood his own insufficiency for the office which he held.<sup>9</sup>

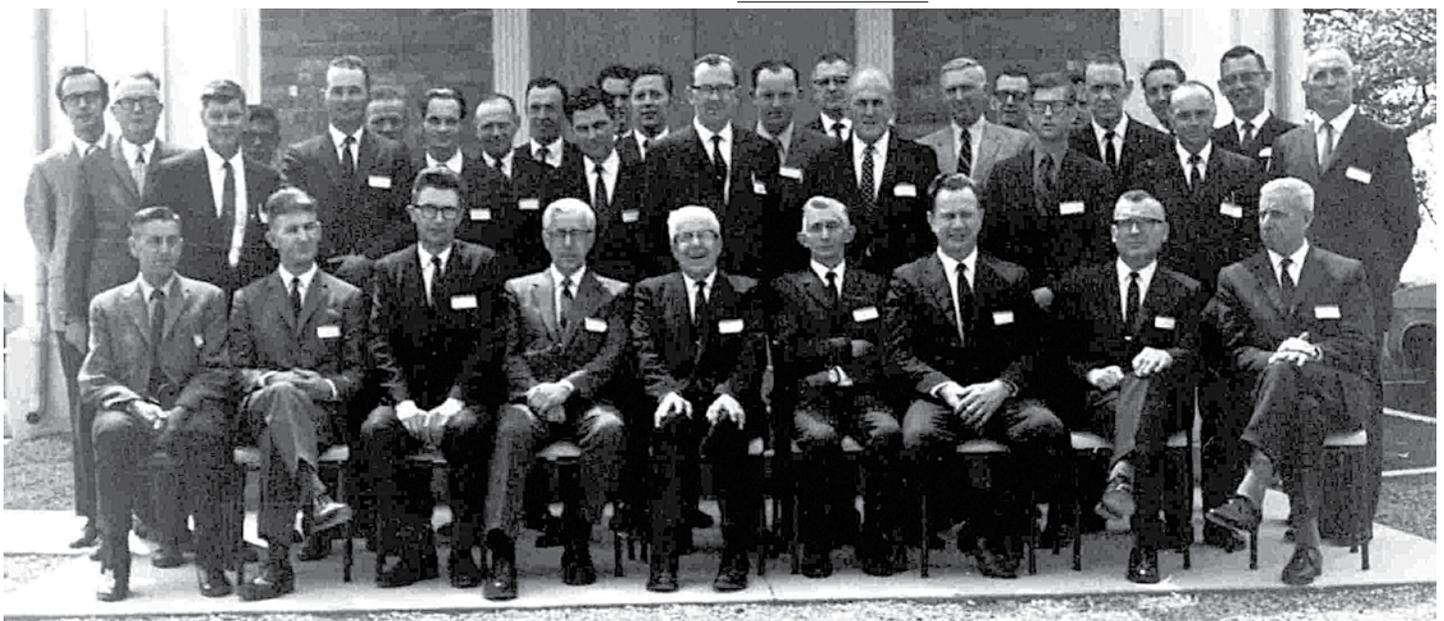
Regarding his preaching, Pastor Schouls writes, “From a formal point of view, his sermons did not fit the usual pattern of homiletic standards. He was more concerned with content than style.”<sup>10</sup> While this is the case, this should not distract from the message he brought. Pronk writes, “His preaching and teaching

was powerful. Preaching was his real strength. He loved to be in the pulpit. His preaching was doctrinal and yet practical, Scriptural and experimental. He was a covenantal preacher in the best sense of that word.”<sup>11</sup> His preaching was one which set forth “the objective facts of the gospel; extolling the sovereign grace of God in giving Christ freely; pressing upon the hearers the necessity to receive this Christ as Mediator and Surety in the way of faith and repentance.”<sup>12</sup>

This dynamic between the objective facts of the gospel and the subjective application to the hearers is what Rev. Tamminga called, ‘Evangelical Balance.’<sup>13</sup> He would have learned of this “vital balance” from his professors, J.J. van der Schuit and G. Wisse, among others.<sup>14</sup> This balance is achieved, not by being “reactionary in all kinds of situations,” but by humbly and submissively listening to the Word of God.<sup>15</sup> This balance has become the hallmark of Free Reformed preaching, largely due to his influence and the influence of his professors.

Rev. Tamminga noted a deficiency in preaching that was only objective. In his own words, “The preacher must not only portray the truth of salvation objectively, but he must do his utmost to cause it to be applied subjectively.”<sup>16</sup> He goes on to illustrate it in this way:

The man who preaches objectively is as one who tries to give information about the city. He tries to portray the beauty of the city, but that is all! We can portray the beauties of the kingdom of God as lively as possible; we may display the riches of salvation, but who tells me, who assures me that it is also for me? How do I know that I may stretch out my hand towards it and grasp it? Certainly, God has given His promises, and I may and must be active with them. I may and must speak of Christ. But I must also tell the people how the Holy Spirit applies [these] riches to my soul. I must inform



Elders and Deacons conference. Pastor Tamminga on back row, second from the far left.

my hearers that by nature they do not know the power of God's promises and Word, and that God's gracious work must penetrate into the heart.<sup>17</sup>

### Conclusion

In his evangelical balance, Rev. Tamminga never lost sight of the reality that Christ was at the centre. He stressed the need to preach Christ's work in the past – His sufferings, death, resurrection, and satisfaction – as well as His work in the present by His Spirit – His intercession, application of His benefits, and the sanctifying of believers.<sup>18</sup> This was the rich Christ that he needed to proclaim to poor sinners. **M**

### Endnotes

1. From the foreword in Jacob Tamminga, *Selected Writings and Sermons of Rev. J. Tamminga*, ed by. Carl A. Schouls (Publications Committee of the Free Reformed Church of North America, 1989), ix.
2. The information from this biographical sketch was drawn from the introductory material from Pastors C.A. Schouls and C. Pronk in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, xi–xv; D.H. Kranendonk, ed., *Voices from Our Heritage: Select Sermons of Early Free Reformed Ministers* (Brantford, ON: Free Reformed Publications, 2005), 38–45.
3. Schouls, in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, x.
4. Pronk, in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, xii.
5. Pronk, in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, xiii.
6. Pronk, in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, xiv.
7. Pronk, in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, xiv.
8. Jacob Tamminga, "What About Preaching?" in *Selected Writings*, 39–40; Tamminga, "An Evangelical Balance," in *Selected Writings*, 47–48.
9. Pronk, in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, xi.
10. Schouls, in the foreword to Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, ix.
11. Pronk, in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, xv.
12. Schouls, in Tamminga, *Selected Writings*, ix.
13. See Tamminga, "An Evangelical Balance," 47–49.
14. Kranendonk, *Voices from Our Heritage*, 39; see also D.H. Kranendonk, *Vital Balance: The Pursuit of Professors J.J. van der Schuit, G. Wisse, and L.H. van der Meiden* (Brantford, ON: Free Reformed Publications, 2006).
15. Tamminga, "An Evangelical Balance," 48–49.
16. Tamminga, "What About Preaching?," 42; Jacob Tamminga, "A Farewell," in *Selected*

Writings, 149.

17. Tamminga, "What About Preaching?," 43.

18. Tamminga, "What About Preaching?," 43.

*Student Carsten Koopman is a third year student in the MDiv program at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary and under the care of the Free Reformed Theological Education Committee.*



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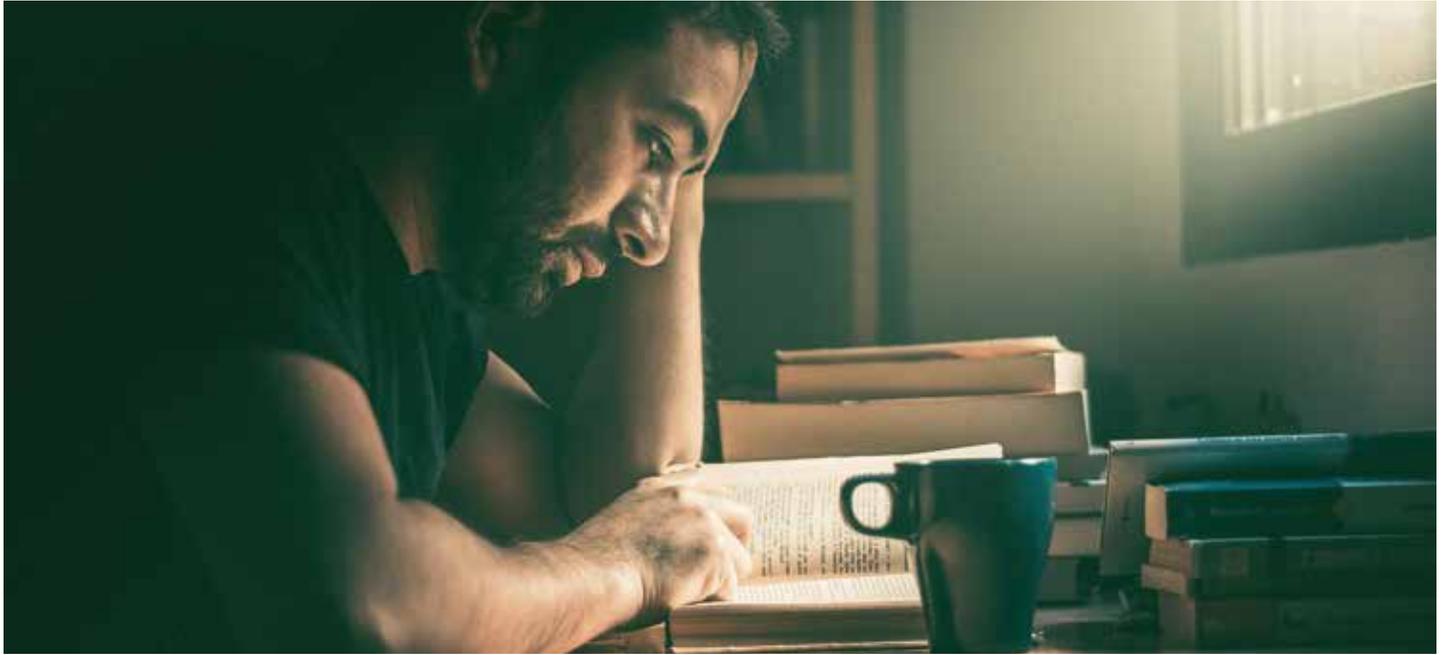
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# ADVICE TO A YOUNG CONVERT

*Jonathan Edwards' seventy resolutions which he wrote while a nineteen year old in college are very well known and very detailed. During the Great Awakening a young teenage girl named Deborah Hatheway wrote Edwards for advice on how to live the Christian life and he responded on June 3, 1741 with the following letter. This letter published below in slightly updated and condensed form is worth reading at the beginning of a year, whether you are a young or old convert, or not converted at all.*



My dear young friend,

As you desired me to send you, in writing, some directions how to conduct yourself in your Christian course, I would now answer your request. The sweet remembrance of the great things I have lately seen at your church, inclines me to do anything in my power, to contribute to the spiritual joy and prosperity of God's people there.

1. I would advise you to keep up as **great an earnestness in religion**, as if you knew yourself to be in a state of nature, and were seeking conversion. We advise people under conviction, to be earnest and violent for the kingdom of heaven; but when they have attained to conversion, they ought not to be the less watchful, laborious, and earnest, in the whole work of religion, but the more so; for they are under infinitely greater obligations. For lack of this, many people, in a few months after their conversion, have begun to lose their sweet and lively sense of spiritual things, and to grow cold and dark, and have "pierced themselves through with many sorrows;" whereas, if they had done as the apostle did, (Phil. 3:12-14.) their path would have been "as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day."
2. Do not leave off **seeking, striving, and praying** for the very same things that we exhort unconverted people to strive for, and a degree of which you have had already in conversion. Pray that your eyes may be opened, that you may

receive sight, that you may know yourself, and be brought to God's footstool; and that you may see the glory of God and Christ, and may be raised from the dead, and have the love of Christ shed abroad in your heart. Those who have most of these things, have need still to pray for them; for there is so much blindness and hardness, pride and death remaining, that they still need to have that work of God wrought upon them, further to enlighten and enliven them, that shall be bringing them out of darkness into God's marvelous light, and be a kind of new conversion and resurrection from the dead. There are very few requests that are proper for an impenitent man, that are not also, in some sense, proper for the godly.

3. When you hear a sermon, **hear for yourself**. Though what is spoken may be more especially directed to the unconverted, or to those that, in other respects, are in different circumstances from yourself; yet, let the chief intent of your mind be to consider, "In what respect is this applicable to me? and what improvement ought I to make of this, for my own soul's good?"
4. Though God has forgiven and forgotten your past sins, yet **do not forget them** yourself: often remember, what a wretched bond-slave you were in the land of Egypt. Often bring to mind your particular acts of sin before conversion;

as the blessed apostle Paul is often mentioning his old blaspheming, persecuting spirit, and his injuriousness to the renewed; humbling his heart, and acknowledging that he was “the least of the apostles,” and not worthy “to be called an apostle,” and the “least of all saints,” and the “chief of sinners;” and be often confessing your old sins to God, and let that text be often in your mind, (Ezekiel 16:63.) “that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more, because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, says the Lord God.”

5. Remember, that you have more cause, on some accounts, a thousand times, to lament and **humble yourself for sins** that have been committed since conversion, than before, because of the infinitely greater obligations that are upon you to live to God, and to look upon the faithfulness of Christ, in unchangeably continuing his loving-kindness, notwithstanding all your great unworthiness since your conversion.
6. Be **always greatly abased** for your remaining sin, and never think that you lie low enough for it; but yet be not discouraged or disheartened by it; for, though we are exceeding sinful, yet we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; the preciousness of whose blood, the merit of whose righteousness, and the greatness of whose love and faithfulness, infinitely overtop the highest mountains of our sins.
7. When you engage in the duty of prayer, or come to the Lord’s supper, or attend any other duty of divine worship, come to Christ as Mary Magdalene did; (Luke 7:37, 38.) come, and **cast yourself at his feet**, and kiss them, and pour forth upon him the sweet perfumed ointment of divine love, out of a pure and broken heart, as she poured the precious ointment out of her pure broken alabaster box.
8. Remember, that **pride is the worst viper** that is in the heart, the greatest disturber of the soul’s peace, and of sweet communion with Christ: it was the first sin committed, and lies lowest in the foundation of Satan’s whole building, and is with the greatest difficulty rooted out, and is the most hidden, secret, and deceitful of all lusts, and often creeps insensibly into the midst of religion, even, sometimes, under the disguise of humility itself.
9. That you may pass a correct judgment concerning yourself, always look upon those as **the best discoveries**, and the best comforts, that have most of these two effects: those that make you least and lowest, and most like a child; and those that most engage and fix your heart, in a full and firm disposition to deny yourself for God, and to spend and be spent for him.
10. If at any time you **fall into doubts** about the state of



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Ps 78: 4, 7



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## MENTORING

your soul, in dark and dull frames of mind, it is proper to review your past experience; but do not consume too much time and strength in this way: rather apply yourself, with all your might, to a pledge of pursuit after renewed experience, new light, and new lively acts of faith and love. One new discovery of the glory of Christ's face, will do more toward scattering clouds of darkness in one minute, than examining old experience, by the best marks that can be given, through a whole year.

- When the exercise of grace is low, and corruption prevails, and by that means **fear prevails**; do not desire to have fear cast out any other way, than by the reviving and prevailing of love in the heart. For when love is asleep, the saints need fear to restrain them from sin and therefore it is so ordered, that as love sinks, fear comes upon them. By love reviving, fear will be effectually expelled, as darkness in a room vanishes away, when the pleasant beams of the sun are let into it.
- You should be often **counselling and warning others**, especially equals and children (Heb. 10:25). When you exhort men, do not do so publicly before other adults.
- Exhort earnestly**, and affectionately, and thoroughly; and when you are speaking to your equals, let your warnings be intermixed with expressions of your sense of your own unworthiness, and of the sovereign grace that makes you differ.
- If you would set up **religious meetings** of young women by yourselves, to be attended once in a while, besides the other meetings that you attend, I should think it would be very proper and profitable.
- Under special difficulties, or when in great need of, or great longings after, any particular mercy, for yourself or others, set apart a day for secret **prayer and fasting** by yourself alone; and let the day be spent, not only in petitions for the mercies you desire, but in searching your heart, and in looking over your past life, and confessing your sins before God, not as is accustomed to be done in public prayer, but by a very particular rehearsal before God of the sins of your past life, from your childhood hitherto, before and after conversion,

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with the circumstances and aggravations attending them, and spreading all the abominations of your heart very particularly, and fully as possible, before him.

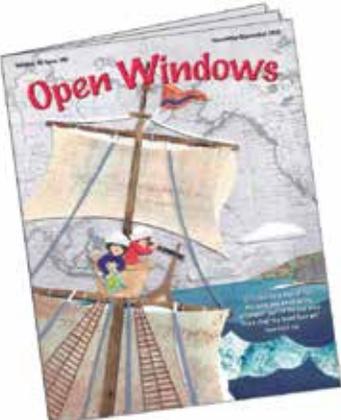
16. Do not let the adversaries of the religion have occasion to reproach religion on your account (Matt. 5:47). **How holily** should the children of God, the redeemed and the beloved of the Son of God, behave themselves. Therefore, “walk as children of the light, and of the day,” and “adorn the doctrine of God your Savior;” and especially, abound in what are called the Christian virtues, and make you like the Lamb of God: be meek and lowly of heart, and full of pure, heavenly, and humble love to all; abound in deeds of love to others, and self-denial for others; and let there be in you a disposition to account others better than yourself.
17. Don’t talk of things of religion and matters of experience with an **air of lightness** and laughter which is too much the manner in many places.
18. In all your course, **walk with God**, and follow Christ, as a little, poor, helpless child, taking hold of Christ’s hand, keeping your eye on the marks of the wounds in his hands and side, whence came the blood that cleanses you from sin, and hiding your nakedness under the skirt of the white shining robes of his righteousness.
19. Pray much for the **ministers and the church** of God; especially, that he would carry on his glorious work which he has now begun, until the world shall be full of his glory.”

Particularly I would beg a special interest in your prayers and the prayers of your Christian companions, both when you are alone and when you are together, for your affectionate friend, who rejoices over you and desires to be your servant.

In Jesus Christ,  
**Jonathan Edwards**

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In connection with its **75th anniversary** as a congregation, the Dundas FRC has produced at **366 day devotional**. The meditations were written by living former pastors of the congregation (when the project was launched) as well as two pastors who previously were members of the congregation, the writers include *Pastors A. Baars, K. Hoefnagel, L.J. Bilkes, G.R Procee, C. Pronk & J.G Procee*. The wives of these pastors also provide reflections of their time in the congregation and beyond.



Copies are available for purchase for **\$25 EACH**. To obtain a copy, contact **Herman den Hollander** at [hdenhollander@yahoo.com](mailto:hdenhollander@yahoo.com).

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

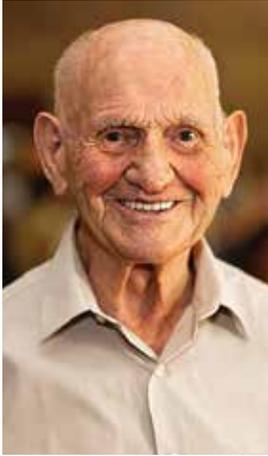
## OBITUARY

### JACOB HOEK

10/18/1925 –  
10/16/2025

Psalm 103:17

Jacob Hoek went home to be with his Lord and Saviour on the eve of his **100th birthday**. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife *Johanna*.



He is survived by his children:

**Mary & Jim VanderGraaf**

**Alice & John Maas**

**Jack & Anita Hoek**

**Anthony & Tina Hoek**

*14 grandchildren, 36 great grandchildren,  
and 1 great-great grandchild.*

His funeral was held at  
**Hamilton Free Reformed Church**  
on Tuesday, October 21, 2025.

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