

faith in  
**focus**

Magazine of the  
Reformed Churches  
of New Zealand

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Fearfully and wonderfully made

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All correspondence regarding editorial content and advertising should be sent to:

### The Editor:

Walter Walraven  
7 Winchester Avenue, Pinehaven  
Upper Hutt 5019  
Email: fnf@rcnz.org.nz  
Reformed Churches Home Page  
<http://www.rcnz.org.nz>

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Email: ricwhare@paradise.net.nz

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## Editorial

This first issue of 2013 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> year of Faith in Focus. Quite a milestone for a small denomination. Forty years for any magazine is no small feat. We recognise the Lord's blessing as we produce this first magazine for this fortieth year.

In this issue we are going to focus on people in our churches who need the constant loving care of their parents, family and friends. These are children of the covenant, born with some disability which makes it quite improbable that they will be able to ever look after themselves, especially when they grow to maturity and are of an age when most would be fending for themselves.

Mrs Jackie Wierenga, a member of the RCNZ Care Services, requested that *Faith in Focus* highlight the existence of the Care Services and the needs of parents and their children who have some form of disability, and who will need care in the future.

Our contributors write from their experiences. They live day-to-day with someone with a disability. They have struggles and needs that most of us are not aware of, nor could we contemplate the anxiety that some parents may suffer as a result of the constant difficulties/trials of having a disabled child.

Our churches are now in their third generation and it is certainly evident that we now see occasions where someone may need to go into care, because their spouse, or child or even a parent needs help to provide the care that they can no longer manage.

The contributors write from the heart and lay their everyday experiences bare to us all. I hope you take the time to read and ask whether you can be of help in the care of some special covenant people. See the advert on p4.

Mr Peter Kloosterman considers God's method of mercy.

Mrs Michelle Kloosterman writes about her daughter Janelle.

Miss Grace Knol tells us a bit about herself and her family.

Mr Harry Landkroon gives us some insight into the life of Johann, who has Down Syndrome.

Mrs Carolyn de Vries shares a story, "Welcome to Holland" by Emily Pearl Kingsley.

There is an interesting excerpt from the North Shore bulletin about Mr Peter Kloosterman's visit to the Select Committee in Parliament, in regard to the Marriage Amendment Act.

Mrs Sally Davey writes about industriousness.

Mrs Harriet Haverland provides us with news of events in our churches.

Mrs Jackie Wierenga gets us up to date on the RCNZ Care Services meeting.

Mr Jack Sawyer reviews *Presbyterian and Reformed Churches; A Global History*, by James E. McGoldrick

Cover images: Mrs Michelle Kloosterman (top left), Miss Hendrika Datema (bottom left), Mr Harry Landkroon (right).

Images: p2 Mrs Michelle Kloosterman; p8-9 Mr Harry Landkroon; 7,22-24 Miss Hendrika Datema.

## Apology

Miss Anna Buter's name was incorrect in the biographical note at the conclusion of her article in the December issue 2012. My sincerest apologies to her for any embarrassment caused.

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not to be considered the official position of the Reformed Churches of NZ unless they expound the Biblical system of doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, or reflect the successive Acts of Synod of the Reformed Churches of NZ. On the other hand, care is taken to ensure that articles and opinions do not directly contradict the official position of the Reformed Churches as contained in the above sources without attention being called to that fact.

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# Fearfully and wonderfully made (1)

## God's method of mercy

### Peter Kloosterman

We are all familiar with God's message of mercy. That is the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. But have you thought about God's method of mercy? How does God show His mercy? The gospel accounts reveal this method. It appears in Christ touching the leprous man; His talking to the Samaritan woman; His taking to Himself a human nature. These actions teach us the how of mercy. Think for a moment of Jesus touching the leprous man; an act forbidden because that would make the person touching unclean also. Imagine being afflicted with a disease that cuts you off from the community and prohibits your being touched. Now imagine what it means when Christ draws near and touches you for the first time. Or think of Bartimaeus, a blind beggar whom everyone would rather bypass, until Christ stops and pays attention to him and heals him. What a profound method of mercy revealed by Christ.

### The spirit of mercy

Christ has ascended on high. He is no longer physically present. What is His method of mercy now? How does He touch, pay attention to, administer mercy to those in need? It is through you, a Christian, as a member of the body of Christ, that He administers mercy to those who are in need. What is God's method of mercy, today? As we consider this method of mercy, rather than look at the service of mercy, I want to focus this article on the spirit of mercy. Every Christian is endowed with the Spirit of Christ. That means we must be conforming our thinking and our attitude to the thinking and attitude of Christ (Rms. 12:2; Phps. 2:5). It is for this purpose that we need to appreciate what God is doing in giving us children and members with disabilities. This spirit of mercy is vital for ministering to those with (recognisable) disabilities, and also vital for serving all of God's people. God has a way of magnifying His mercy in the weakness of His people. What I will be

addressing regarding people with disabilities also applies to every Christian who is going through trials.

### What is a meaningful life?

The disabled expose our perception of what is meaningful in life. When our children are born we all have ideals and dreams on their behalf. We look forward to the stages of life they will go through. These goals and accomplishments are what we hope will give them a meaningful life. Beyond the infant stage of crawling, walking, and talking, we envision study, driving, working, marriage and much more.

express their faith accurately, or behave in a controlled manner? Will they have a meaningful relationship with Christ?

Those with disabilities challenge our understanding of what is meaningful. We need those who are disabled so that we will grapple with what we regard as "normal." We need to know and love those who are disabled so that we can begin to understand how God demonstrates His method of mercy in our lives. We will see the mercy we have received and minister in the same Christ-like way to others. We wrongly presume that life becomes more meaningful through the achievement of goals. But what happens

“ Jesus taught His disciples and us that greatness in the kingdom of God is not in being served but in serving. Sacrificial service is the goal; giving of ourselves just for the sake of giving in the name of the Christ. That is mercy. ”

Here is the challenge of a disability. It exposes our fear of the loss of function. Talk with someone who has lost a particular ability and you will hear the struggles of accepting that they are unable to perform. They can't function as they would like. Grief sets in because of this inability or loss of function. This directly challenges the goals we set and the hopes we have. If my child, can't accomplish X will they have a meaningful life? What happens when X is a moral or spiritual target? What if they can't

when those goals are always out of reach? I am not saying that we shouldn't have goals or dreams, hopes or wishes. Rather, we should realise that the spirit of mercy is more readily apparent not in achievement but in the struggle of inability to achieve. Often God's Word shows us the struggle that His children face, but He withholds the reasons for their struggle. Job wrestled with that. He demanded to know the reason. He wanted God to give an account to him. In the end, he came to realise that God is not

accountable to us but we are to Him. Habakkuk was confused by the reasons God gave. They didn't make sense, but then God reveals that the just shall live by his faith. Not by the solutions, not by attaining goals, but by clinging to God in faith. Paul is the one who provides us with what is the closest thing to an answer, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9)." In the performance culture that we live in today, this answer rings hollow, and we twist it to think, I am weak so that I can get more grace, achieve more sanctification. God says, His power is perfected (it has reached its goal, it is complete) in our weakness. The point of life is the struggle not the overcoming, nor arriving at the perfect understanding of the struggle. Suffering

has a way of refining our faith to show us that our acceptance with God comes completely for the sake of Jesus Christ.

#### **From getting to giving**

This means our outlook on life needs to change. Change from making our ideals according to what we hope to get, accomplish, or perform; to making our ideals what we have to give, surrender, and accept. Jesus taught His disciples and us that greatness in the kingdom of God is not in being served but in serving. Sacrificial service is the goal; giving of ourselves just for the sake of giving in the name of the Christ. That is mercy. When we think of great people what is our criteria of greatness? John Calvin, Martin Luther, the apostle Paul. Don't we often regard them as great because

of their accomplishments? I have learned to see another form of greatness. It is in my daughter with Down syndrome. She, like her other siblings, is teased and upset and sometimes angered by the teasing, but when the person who has done the teasing gets hurt, she will be the first to go and give a cuddle. She has something to give, unconditionally. That is great. How profound a lesson she has to teach us!!!

Jesus blesses the little children and says the kingdom belongs to such as these. Not in their innocence, nor in their potential. The kingdom belongs to such because of what He gives them. The disciples didn't see this. Their Lord was too busy and they shooed the children away. The children would hinder His accomplishment. We need to heed Jesus' rebuke. Wait a minute, those in need are not a hindrance to the kingdom, children such as these are an example of what it means to enter God's kingdom. God is the best giver of all. When man had corrupted His world through sin, God gave more, He gave His promised Son. That is how we are received by Him. Not because of what we have to contribute, but because of what He has given us in His Son. That is the spirit of mercy that energises the service of mercy. Often our service wears thin because it doesn't accomplish anything. But is that really the point of mercy? Have we lost the spirit of mercy?

That's why we need people with disabilities: to present us with the need. To help us understand what Christ-like-mercy really is. It is giving. Not to get, but to see the need and use our strength to serve those who are in need. Not because we hope they will accomplish something, but just because they are created in God's image, and placed in our life. That is Christ's method of mercy. This method will need the Spirit of Christ to perform that mercy, mercy extended for His sake only. So read this *Faith in Focus* and consider those with disabilities among us. Read it not because of what you can get out of it; not only so that you can understand their accomplishments; but so that you can see what you have to give to them and others solely for the sake of Christ. That's the spirit of His mercy.

*Mr Peter Kloosterman is the minister of the Word and Sacraments in the Reformed Church of Masterton.*

## **DO YOU**

have a special needs child or adult?

## **ARE YOU**

interested in helping special needs people within the RCNZ?

## **DO YOU**

have expertise in the area of disability or special needs?

## **CAN YOU**

commit to financially supporting a Home for special needs adults?

## **ARE YOU**

able to provide some form of employment for Christian special needs adults?

**If you can answer "YES" to any of the above questions, we would like to hear from YOU!**

The RCNZ Care Services Committee has commenced planning for the future care of members of the RCNZ who have special needs and who are no longer able to be cared for by their parents or family.

Please contact the Secretary of the Committee, Herman de Jonge via email – [dejonge@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dejonge@xtra.co.nz) if you are able to assist in any way.

## Fearfully and wonderfully made (2)

# “Janelle?” “Janelle!”

### Michelle Kloosterman

I hear water running. I'm headed to the toilet.

“Janelle, what are you doing?”

Janelle is holding her teddy's paws in the water. She looks at me and points to the toilet.

“Did you put your teddy on the toilet?” She nods her head yes and gives me a big smile.

She had put her teddy on, or maybe in, the toilet and was now washing its hands. After all, isn't that what we have taught her to do? One very wet teddy is now in the washing machine.

Life with Janelle has been full of surprises, starting with her birth. Actually, we need to start a few months before this. After a series of ultrasound scans the doctors informed us that our baby would need surgery immediately after birth. This was due to a blockage in a part of her intestine called the duodenum. We were also told that this is one of several indications of Down syndrome. Janelle was born on January 12, 2007. She was a beautiful baby girl. We thought she looked like our other children. When the paediatrician came he showed us all the signs that suggested she had Down syndrome even though this could only be confirmed by a blood test. The results took a week. In the meantime, we were more concerned about the operation she needed, as she could not process food until the blockage had been corrected. Seeing your newborn baby full of tubes and hooked up to machines in the neo-natal unit is a heart-rending experience. The surgery, which had to take place within 24 hours of birth, went well. A week later we had the results of the blood test. It came back positive. Janelle had Down syndrome. We were not surprised since we had had time to see and understand what the paediatrician had told us. The recovery from surgery took 4 weeks. It was an emotional drain and being away from family took its toll. This was the

beginning of our journey with Janelle.

We have been blessed to be a part of this precious little girl's life. People often think that a child with disabilities is only about disappointment and bearing burdens. We have found out it is also about the things we have to learn, about how to better serve and about the love she has to share with us.

### What we have to learn

When a child does not develop in the same ways as other children we very quickly realise that we have taken God's gift in child development for granted.

Physically, children with Down syndrome have hypotonia or low muscle tone. Their brain does not tell their muscles to work when they should. As a baby she was like a rag doll in our arms. Hypotonia affects the gross motor skills (i.e. rolling, crawling, walking) and the fine motor skills (i.e. holding a pencil, eating with utensils). This can be frustrating at times; especially when dealing with speech and bladder control which are delayed by years. But the reverse is also true. The excitement and joy when Janelle first rolled over, or more recently when she taught herself to peddle a tri-



Janelle Kloosterman

cycle, is overwhelming. We have come to appreciate the things that we took for granted in the development of our other children.

Mentally, Janelle is also developing more slowly than other children. It takes her time to process information and to be able to respond. Often when Janelle has her mind set on doing something, she is deep in thought and doesn't hear us calling her name. After calling her 3 or 4 times, she suddenly stops. She looks up, exclaims, "Oh!" and waits for us to say something. Another example is when Janelle gets hurt. When something

children with Down syndrome struggle with. In all this we have learned that disability requires patience with her development and to appreciate the milestones as they come; not in our time, or "normal" time, but in God's time.

#### **How can you serve?**

We have also been amazed at how others love Janelle for who she is. We have been humbled by this. One often wonders how to serve those with disabilities. Sometimes, it is the small things that make the biggest difference. Throughout Janelle's life we have had people ask us

“ We have also been amazed at how others love Janelle for who she is. We have been humbled by this. One often wonders how to serve those with disabilities. Sometimes, it is the small things that make the biggest difference. ”

happens, she stands as if stunned, looks at where she got hurt, grimaces and then starts to cry. Sometimes the reaction is delayed by as much as a minute from the initial incident. This slower mental process does not, however, mean that she is unable to learn.

Children with Down syndrome show great skill in imitating others but they struggle with comprehending the meaning behind the action. What Janelle sees others do she will copy. This is great when she learns how to set the table by watching her siblings. But what happens when she sees Mum take cookies out of the oven? Janelle has tried to do that with exact replication: turning off the timer, putting on the oven mitts and opening the oven door. Just like the teddy incident above; Janelle knows she *can* do it but explaining to her why she *may* not is difficult.

These are a few of the difficulties that

how she is doing. They were interested in hearing about the trials and the blessings. Questions like these are a great way to find out if there is anything you can do to help. Knowing that people are concerned for her reassures us as parents that we aren't alone.

Serving is also accepting the oddities that come with disabilities. Janelle loves to say "hello" to people, but sometimes this greeting comes with a good smack on the back. Except that Janelle is too short to reach your back, so you will get it on the backside. This is socially awkward when she exuberantly greets strangers in a shop or a passerby on the footpath. We are quick to tell her "no" and to apologise although most people smile and tell us not to worry.

Accepting that Janelle will learn things more slowly also means that she will unlearn things slowly. Being patient when Janelle is naughty and not expect-

ing quick fixes can relieve a lot of stress and anxiety. Accepting simple inconveniences for her well-being is helpful for us as parents. When Janelle learned how to open car doors she tried every car in the church parking lot that was near ours. We had to ask those who park by us to lock the doors if they didn't want Janelle in their car. Yes, this is a discipline and supervision issue. If you accept her for who she is, you will realise that her unlearning this behaviour will take time.

Some of the differences in a child with disabilities may try our patience. It is best to be gracious before judging something you may not fully understand. Knowing the child's idiosyncrasies and struggles will help you relate to them and assist their parents or caregiver.

#### **Unreserved love**

We do not want you to think that having a child with Down syndrome is only about differences and difficulties. These are day to day realities but do not define Janelle as a person. To us, Janelle is our six year old daughter with a cheeky smile and precious giggle. She is the first to greet you at the door and is diligent to wave good-bye. When you are hurt she comes to give you a hug. If you cry, she may cry with you. If you have done something to annoy her, she is quick to forget. She loves to sing, play Duplos and jump on the trampoline. If you need help she will do her best to give it. Janelle is a special gift from God.

We do not know what God's plans are for Janelle. Further trials and disappointments are sure to come, but not without the Father's loving hand sustaining her and guiding us. One thing is for sure; our life has been richly blessed by the birth and life of Janelle.

*Michelle Kloosterman is a member of the Reformed Church of Masterton and is married to Mr Peter Kloosterman who is the pastor of that congregation.*

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“I thirst for the knowledge of the Word, but most of all for Jesus himself, the true Word.”

*Robert Murray M'Cheyne*

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# Fearfully and wonderfully made (3)

## Grace Knol

Hello, I'm Grace, I'm 27 years old and I have been living at home all these years with my family. I'm the only person in the family with a disability, which is Asperger's.

In the past I had a bedroom with my sister Laura, but when Dorcas was born and when she got bigger, I had to move out and got my own bedroom which was the caravan so I could become independent and do things on my own. Mum and dad wanted me to try to have breakfast and lunch on my own, but it didn't work out, so now I have breakfast inside the house with the rest of the family.

Because I have been living at home all these years, I am looking forward to having the opportunity to move out of the family home and to take care of myself. Sometimes I go away from home for weekends or a week to stay with family friends.

I have been working for many years, and it is good for me to be away from home for some part of the day during the week. I work Monday-Friday from

9-2 at the Buttercup Bakery in Upper Hutt. I ride to work on my bike, I have been doing this for some years now so I know my way really well.

I had a change in sleeping arrangements when I moved from the caravan to the sleep out. It is a lot warmer than the caravan and I have more space to put things away. I have a kitchen, bedroom and living area and I like to keep it clean and tidy. If I keep it dirty and don't tidy up things and leave it for a long time, then I have a lot more work to do in cleaning up.

I can do work really well. But many times I forget to put things away, or don't put things in the right place, and then my mum checks to see if I did it properly and didn't forget anything.

I don't talk a lot, or talk about things that have happened during my day.

Sometimes I think about myself too much, and not about others, or I don't get along with my brothers and sisters. I know I should work on thinking about others and getting along with them in my life.



I read my Bible as often as I can so that I will know more about God and what He has done for all His children who believe in Him, and that we can come closer to God in every step that we make and that we can be with Him for eternal life.

**Grace Knol, Silverstream**

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## Johann Landkroon

Born Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1992, with Down syndrome, and "fearfully and wonderfully made"!

Johann came into the world in the usual way, (just before lunch time, actually), I was present at his birth. It was a little bit of a wait for my wife Peggy, but, finally he appeared. I say HE, but I did not know beforehand of course. But it turned out to be a HE. I was ecstatic, I had a son, a brother to his sisters, Simona and Angelina!! But wait, just a moment ... (as I was observing him), why did he have such a thick short neck, and a rather odd looking body?? A thought shot into my brain, a Dutch thought,

a Dutch word (Mongooltje), but then I quickly pushed that aside and got into the spirit of the moment. Although my wife of course had other thoughts, after having given birth to a heavy baby (10 and a half pounds!), she was extremely relieved, she was having a most difficult time during and after the birth while the doctors and nurses attended to her.

Thinking back to that time in the birthing room, I had the distinct impression that the atmosphere had changed in the room, as a kind of darkness descended into the room. This was due to the fact that the people attending, that is the doctor and nurses, knew that this baby

had Down syndrome, BUT they were not allowed to verbalise their thoughts to parents, because there is a possibility that they could be mistaken. In this case they were right in their thinking.

The next day, excitedly, I phoned everybody about OUR new arrival, Johann, but, alas, after a few days I would be calling the same people with the sad conclusion after Johann's tests.

So in the days after the birth, I would come to the hospital like any proud dad, and I would be intently looking at Johann and observing his strange little misshapen ears, and then there was that neck again. I would consult with the nurses

coming and going in the room about my observations, I would ask them what they thought about his ears and his neck (they knew). The nurses would just remark “what a beautiful boy I had.”

In the meantime tests were being carried out on Johann to determine whether he had Down syndrome. They do this with a simple blood test.

A few days after Johann came into the world, the specialist determined that he actually had Down syndrome.

Then came the time when I myself was told. Peggy already knew!!

We were all called into the room, and there the doctor informed us that Johann had Down syndrome.

I became deaf for a moment, as I searched for the meaning of this statement I recall having seen Down syndrome children in the streets, they

seemed to be always with their mothers, as I noted in my mind.

Another thought came: “what on earth is Down syndrome?”

Here is a brief explanation as to how Down syndrome occurs:

**Down syndrome occurs because of an abnormality characterized by an extra copy of genetic material on all or part of the 21st chromosome. Every cell in the body contains genes that are grouped along chromosomes in the cell’s nucleus or centre. There are normally 46 chromosomes in each cell, 23 inherited from your mother and 23 from your father. When some or all of a person’s cells have an extra full or partial copy of chromosome 21, the result is Down syndrome.**

The most common form of Down syndrome is known as Trisomy 21, a

condition where individuals have 47 chromosomes in each cell instead of 46. This is caused by an error in cell division called nondisjunction, which leaves a sperm or egg cell with an extra copy of chromosome 21 before or at conception. Trisomy 21 accounts for 95% of Down syndrome cases, with 88% originating from nondisjunction of the mother’s egg cell.

The remaining 5% of Down syndrome cases are due to conditions called mosaicism and translocation. Mosaic Down syndrome results when some cells in the body are normal while others have Trisomy 21. Robertsonian translocation occurs when part of chromosome 21 breaks off during cell division and attaches to another chromosome (usually chromosome 14). The presence of this extra part of chromosome 21 causes Down syndrome characteristics. Although a person with a translocation may appear physically normal, he or she has a greater risk of producing a child with an extra 21st chromosome.

Down syndrome is named after [John Langdon Down](#), the British [physician](#) who described the syndrome in 1866.

I remember being in a kind of dizzy unknown dimension, in the days after the results. A day or two later the Rev. Jack Sawyer was visiting and he took me aside. In a quiet corner of the room, I remember leaning against a pillar, hand



Johann Landkroon, enthusiastic about Taekwondo.



in face and sobbing. Jack then prayed with me, and a very serene peace came over me, while he was praying, a peace that is hard to describe, it was a feeling that "all will be well; be at peace," this helped me tremendously.

Also around the time of Johann's birth I was dealing with my alcoholism, which ONLY by God's grace was dealt with. If anyone wishes to contact me, if you or someone in your family, has this or drug addiction, please don't hesitate to contact me or my wife.

Four months after his birth, the doctors were checking Johann's eyes for cataracts, and discovered his vision impairment. This was such that he became a member of The NZ Foundation of The Blind, so before he was one, he was fitted with glasses, tiny plastic frames, which were imported from Italy. This made all the difference to his world, which opened up in front of him, as he was able to see and touch toys and objects around him.

So time rolls on. We joined Johann up with Riding For The Disabled. Before he was one year old he was on a horse. The volunteers would lay Johann across the horse, on his tummy, this was really effective for his lack of muscle tone. A lot of Down syndrome children have this problem. Johann's muscle tone was exceptionally low! Johann did not like this at all, as the muscles were being worked, so every muscle in his body needed to be worked and exercised, even with the swallowing process. Johann did not walk until he was three!

When he was old enough to go to school he attended the Hastings Christian School. Peggy, my wife, reluctantly, after a lot of praying and soul searching on her part, became his teacher aide.

Peggy taught Johann to read and write, and to speak. She was his teacher aide for ten years. When you see Johann today, and the progress he has made, this is due to THE HUGE EFFORT my wife has put into Johann's progress. She has done a marvellous job, thank you dear, and more importantly praise be to God.

Johann joined up with Speech and Drama classes, which he enjoyed. This helped him with his speech, and he loved the plays. He very much enjoyed being on the stage by himself, with his one-man plays.

Johann also learned to play the piano. He received lessons from a professional teacher. He was able to read the notes, and after a lot of practice was able to play tunes. I still have a recording of



*Johann Landkroon, an avid pilot.*

Johann playing and singing. These later years he has gone from the piano. We got Johann a violin, a guitar, and ukelele.

A number of years ago, Johann professed his faith in His Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which was a marvellous occasion. You know, that we in the Reformed Churches are generally reserved. Well on this occasion, after Johann professed his faith, and was about to go back to his seat, the congregation spontaneously burst into applause, a wonderful day, thank you Lord!

He enjoys playing on his computer, he is able to load games and he can find his way around the computer.

We also joined him up with a local Taekwondo class which a young man, a coach, here in Hastings, was putting together for Special Needs people. Johann has been involved with Taekwondo for 5 years now.

In November 2011 we were blessed to be able to go to North Korea, where the Taekwondo World Championships took place in the capital Pyong Yang. Johann's coach wanted Johann to attend and demonstrate to the world, what Special Needs people are capable of. The championships came to a halt and Johann and his coach, Ben, were given the floor. You can watch the demonstration on You Tube. Type Johann Landkroon.

Johann very much enjoys basketball, he shoots hoops in the backyard often. And he enjoys attending the local regional games, and is a fan of the Hawkes Bay Hawks. For a time Johann was able

to practice and train with the Hawkes at a local gym.

A few years ago a friend gave Johann a Flight Simulator for his computer. He loaded this and became really proficient. So then the friend suggested that Johann might like to actually learn to fly a REAL PLANE. We thought this was a preposterous idea. But then we thought about it, so Peggy contacted the local flying school at Bridge Pa, just a few minutes from our place, in Hastings. So far Johann has had about 25 flying lessons. He will never be a pilot, but he very much enjoys this activity. Johann is able to taxi out to the runway, then line the plane up, and take off, and for half-an-hour at a time, he flies above Hastings, or as an exercise, follows a local river, for navigation purposes. Then it comes time to land, and sometimes he needs a little bit of a hand with this – apparently landing is the most difficult part of flying.

Johann is also involved with Sailability NZ, which has groups throughout NZ. In Napier a young couple teach Special Needs children and adults to sail, the sailors are towed out of the Napier port out to sea, and are taught to sail. One of the couple stays close by in a rescue boat. Johann really enjoys sailing by himself. They sail for an hour and are towed back into port.

And so we come to the present time, where we have to decide over the next few years where Johann will be placed. We want Johann to stay with us for as

long as he can, and we are able. We would like to see him in a flat situation, possibly a flat in our own backyard, where he can learn to be more independent. We do not know what the future holds, I don't think anybody does. We will have to look to the Lord God, The Creator of heaven and earth.

We thank the Lord for the committee looking into setting up a Special Needs Reformed House, may the Lord bless these plans.

Over the years there have been challenges in dealing with Johann's special needs. As with any child, there are challenges and problems growing up in his or her family. But we must take one day at a time.

So there you have a very brief history of our experience with disability (or should I say Special Needs). Our Special Needs children are not DISabled, but ABLE to do many things, and often they get involved with activities that us

"normal" folks never get a look into. May the Lord God who is rich in mercy, and the provider of everything, even our children, bless us as parents to bring up our children in the fear of the Lord, and to teach them to follow the ways of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Johann is "fearfully and wonderfully made."

**Dad, Harry Landkroon**

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## Welcome to Holland

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability – to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it to imagine how it would feel.

It's like this...

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make wonderful plans. The Colosseum. Michelangelo's David. The gondolas in Venice. You may even learn

some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says "Welcome to Holland."

"HOLLAND?" You say. "What do you mean, Holland? I signed up for Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change of flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay. The important thing

is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy a new set of guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met in Italy.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around



[http://www.diplomatic-corporate-services.si/uploads/diplomatic-corporate-services.si\\_dev/netherlands](http://www.diplomatic-corporate-services.si/uploads/diplomatic-corporate-services.si_dev/netherlands)

and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills. Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever go away; because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.

But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special – and the very lovely – things about Holland.

**By Emily Pearl Kingsley**

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## The Excellency of knowing Christ\*

What gift  
To have a lucid mind  
clearly to know and find  
keen to explore  
keeping in store  
aiming at more  
at higher score.....

And yet,  
our innate knowledge  
has its bounds  
as Pascal well propounds

Besides,  
living, cool computers, we  
failing though profound to be  
with living "heart" dimension.

Of all our knowing  
simple and profound  
What's worthy most  
what tops the host  
of subjects  
objects  
great and small?  
What's vital above all?

It's doubtlessly  
the excellency  
of knowing Christ my Lord;  
for it surpasses  
all sorts of classes  
of knowledge I've explored!

*Wellington, September, 2007*

\* *Philippians 3:8*

## From the North Shore bulletin

# A visit to the Select Committee at Parliament

... from the Rev Peter Kloosterman

This past week I was asked to appear before the select committee of Parliament to give evidence regarding the Session's submission opposing the Definition of Marriage Amendment Bill 2012. I arrived early so I could hear the committee's interaction with others who spoke. The committee asked pointed questions of those who spoke to their submissions. From what I observed of the select committee's questioning, the main points in favour of this bill followed these lines:

- Regarding the fact that marriage is an institution established by God – the response of the committee is to question why the state should promote one religion's view of marriage when there is supposed to be a separation of church and state. They suggest that a possible way forward is to offer two types of marriage, one civil and one religious.
- Regarding the possibility of legal prosecution of those unwilling to marry same-sex couples – there are two responses – the committee offers its assurance that this will not happen. Besides, according to the current reading of the Marriage Act, churches haven't been forced to marry an atheist whose views we don't share, why would they be forced to marry a same-sex couple? (Both of these are rather naïve but they do fluster people when they are put on the spot). Comment: atheists, by defi-

inition, would not request marriage in a church, but with this present move, we are faced with a group which aggressively wants to legitimise its deviant practice, some of whom also want to claim it is perfectly in line with Scripture. But I think it is also important to note that one should not have a law one does not indeed to uphold, otherwise, ipso facto, the lawmakers themselves make the law an ass. Further, once a law is on the books, it can be used. And lo and behold, what did we see this week? On Thursday the High Court, on the basis of an old law most of us never knew existed, ordered the Anglican Church to cease demolition work on the Christchurch Cathedral. (If it's on the books, it will be used, as it should be. JR)

- Regarding one's overall view of marriage and the propriety of it being heterosexual – the questions are asked in such a way to suggest that this really stems from someone's innate objection to homosexuals (yes, they do make it personal).
- I would assume that these responses are representative of the ideas of most in support of this bill and perhaps many Kiwis. These are responses that you will hear from those around us. It is good to think through how you will respond, so "that you might always be ready to make a defence to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pt. 3:15). The Church most desperately needs to pray for God's intervention, because it is more apparent to me that the stemming of immorality in this land will not occur politically. We are far removed from discourse based on principled moral standards. May the Lord bless the proclamation of the Word, to call sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. May this faith be the full-orbed worldview which loves Christ by living in accord with His law.

**Pastor Kloosterman.**

# The feminine virtue of industriousness

Famously, these days, women are the great multi-taskers. We juggle jobs, housework, homework, school runs, church activities – and occasionally sleep! Moreover, we often take pride in our ability to do several things at once – like cooking, phoning, child-supervising and note-writing. However, while I may sound a little sceptical that all those things get done properly (and I am!) it is nevertheless the case that the world around us admires productivity. Superwoman – no matter how unattainable we find her – is highly esteemed. No one wants to appear lazy or a low-achiever. All of us sense embarrassment when asked “what have you been doing lately?” but find ourselves racking our brains for a respect-worthy list of recent activities.

But before we sigh and agree with Solomon about the futility of much of the work of this world<sup>1</sup>; mentally switching off from superwoman and all her worldly boasting, we need to remember that the Scriptures themselves commend productivity. In fact, one of the most famous biblical passages of all on womanhood – Proverbs 31 – is a poem portraying phenomenal output. (So much so that many of us feel intimidated by it). It is well worth reflecting on this passage, and trying to isolate the key attributes of this striking woman’s character. How could we define them? I tried out several adjectives in the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, and found that “industrious” probably fits her best:

*Showing intelligent or skilful work; skilful, clever, ingenious... Showing application, endeavour or effort; painstaking, zealous, attentive... Showing assiduous or steady work; diligent, hard-working...*

Industriousness is, without doubt, a desirable character quality; one worth striving for. A woman who is industrious is strong, commendable, and worthy of praise. She is a contributor, a giver; one who leaves her family, her church and her community the better for her pres-

ence. When her husband praises her and her children “rise up and bless her” it is fitting that they do so. God did not create us to be passive, helpless takers without initiative. So let’s take a look at the Proverbs 31 woman’s industrious life – not to be daunted and discouraged by her; but to be motivated by her.

Australian writer Claire Smith has been very helpful to me in understanding what kind of text we find in this last chapter of Proverbs<sup>2</sup>. She reminds us that Proverbs is wisdom literature. It offers wise sayings about life in “absolute” terms – in black and white, as it were. Thus while we could easily get the impression from Proverbs that all sluggards will go hungry, most of us know some rich person who can get away with being quite lazy. Proverbs offers us general principles with timeless truth – but which may have exceptions. In similar fashion, this Proverbs 31 portrait is of an ideal wife. She is the epitome of a wise woman, set up as a complete contrast to the foolish women we meet in other passages of Proverbs. The others have been sexually immoral, lazy, indiscreet and careless with their tongues. She, however, is an ideal for us to aim at; a potential, perhaps – even if none of us have ever achieved it, and even though the details of her life are not a blow-by-blow account from a real woman’s daily diary.

The main thing to notice about this woman is her fear of God: that is what motivates her every action; and is the real reason she is so praiseworthy. Her busyness would be nothing without it. Notice how the poem ends: the ideal wife “fears the Lord” with faith that outlasts her charm and beauty. It is this woman’s faith, surely, that informs all her choices; and makes all her actions effective.

And she is surely active! The one overall impression you get when you read this poem is the enormous number of activities she is busy with. Look at the sheer number of verbs used: she *does* him good; she *seeks* wool and flax; she *brings* her food from afar; she *rises* while

it is yet night; she *provides* food; she *considers* a field and *buys* it; she *plants* a vineyard; she *dresses* herself; she *makes* her arms strong; she *spins*; she *opens her hands* to the poor; she *reaches* out her hands to the needy; *makes* bed coverings; she *makes* and *sells* linen garments and *delivers* sashes to merchants; she *looks well* to the ways of her household [i.e. she manages it well]. In all this activity I notice two main things: she works with skill, and she works hard. In other words, she is *industrious*.

### Skills

Skills are very important in the Proverbs 31 woman’s work. Without skill she could not perform it well – and it is clear she does. For one thing, you get the impression she is a discerning purchaser of supplies. She “seeks” wool and flax – suggesting she does not just phone the local agent and tell him to send out whatever he has in stock. Presumably, she knows what good quality wool and flax look like, what its properties are, and doesn’t buy until she has found what meets her needs, and at a good price. Likewise, she isn’t simply buying whatever food happens to be available at the local market or is grown by the next-door market gardener – she brings it “from afar”. Presumably that is because it is better quality, or maybe less expensive, from distant fields. All of this suggests skill as a buyer. She is also a careful purchaser of land – she “considers” a field and then buys it. This tells us she does not buy on a whim, before researching it thoroughly. No “buyer’s regret” for her! Then, with the money she has made from her own work she plants a vineyard. Again, she either knows how to do this, or is able to employ someone else who has this expertise.

Her skills also extend to dressmaking; and without a stretch too far, it would be fair to say she has style and good taste. It’s obvious she takes care with her personal appearance; since this is one of the ways any wife brings honour

to her husband. We have already noted that she is not superficial and vain; that her fear of God is more important to her than her beauty. She is serene and dignified (verse 25). Her appearance is fitting for one of her position, and that of her husband. Her clothes are of good quality – “fine linen and purple”. They are *not* budget-line cheap imports. They probably fit well, and are chosen with an eye to what suits her person and her position. That all requires skill.

But perhaps more importantly yet, this lady has management skills. She has business concerns to oversee, and a household to maintain. She has to supervise both staff and children. She needs a wise understanding of human nature, the ability to manage finances and the capacity to organise an efficient workplace. Choosing the right maidservants, and then keeping them working productively and happily means that you have to be good at personal relationships, and to be a wise leader of others. She needs to set a good example – and she does this by the way she works herself. As a good employer, she also serves those who work for her. She provides for them, with food and “portions” (presumably wages, or the other necessities of life – verse 15). She also dresses them – not with thin or poor-quality clothing, but with “scarlet” – which, given the context in verse 21, suggests it was warm clothing suitable for winter; probably wool. Such a manager provides a very good model for her staff. They can learn a lot from her; especially if she speaks, as this lady does, “with wisdom” and with “the teaching of kindness” (verse 26). She is a blessing to them.

### Diligence

The other obvious truth about the ideal wife’s activities is that she works *hard*. She gets up before daylight (verse 15); she performs household work herself (verse 19); she makes her own bed-coverings (verse 22) and linen garments for sale (verse 24); and “does not eat the bread of idleness” (verse 27). It is clear that she works long hours (“her lamp does not go out at night” – verse 18); and that she works hard enough to become physically strong (verse 17). It would be reasonable to suggest that she also sees projects through to completion. Her cottage industries are clearly profitable (verses 18; 18). She has worked at her projects consistently enough and long enough to have developed her considerable skills. The kinds of things she is

involved in overseeing cannot be done well without significant experience.

### Are you daunted?

If you feel overwhelmed as you read through this lady’s schedule, don’t be. Remember that this is a poem of praise for the kind of wife a man should be seeking. While such a woman has to be seen as a historical possibility, the writer stresses that she is “far more precious than jewels”; and that she is very hard to find (verse 10). She is rare! We should see her as a picture of the kinds of qualities worth striving for. She was good in ways we can all aim for. Now, you might have been thinking – this was a poem dreamed up by a man, King Lemuel. Was he idealising the woman of his dreams, someone he wishes he could find, rather than the type who actually exist? Claire Smith has helpfully noted that this was advice coming from a *woman*!<sup>3</sup> While written by King Lemuel it was “an oracle his mother taught him” (verse 1). Oh well, you might respond,

could be said here. We could examine the whole question of whether women should work outside the home; and if so, in what ways. We could consider the ways her good management honours her husband. Both would be interesting and helpful. However, since our focus has been on her industriousness, I would like to make a couple of applications relating to that.

First, as we have noted, she was a woman of skill. That fact is important; and it is good for us to put effort into honing our skills. It is probably true to say we can never have too many! To be fair, some people are naturally inclined to excel at fewer things, while others can quickly and easily become proficient at many. Nevertheless, it is always good to be learning what we can, while we can. While we still live at home, there is a lot to be learned from our mothers – and fathers. We learn all kinds of things – from cleaning tips and cooking techniques to dealing with other people; from Bible study habits

“ The main thing to notice about this woman is her fear of God: ... ”

no mother ever thinks any woman is good enough for her son – and she’s setting him an impossible task to find one! But I think Mrs Lemuel (snr.) knew a thing or two – and the kinds of qualities Lemuel remembers her talking about were the ones she knew would make her son’s future life one of “gain”. She would win him respect because of the wise way she would manage his household. You can imagine her saying “Listen, my son, she *will* be hard to find – but be patient. Don’t just marry the first pretty face who catches your eye. Wait for the real deal.”

So, if not daunted, how should we respond to the Proverbs 31 woman? We can’t simply dismiss her by saying she belongs to the ancient world, she was the wife of a king, she was wealthy, she had servants, and she had the resources to run businesses – her activities don’t apply to *my* situation. As always with Scripture, there are principles behind the detail – and if the detail doesn’t match your own, then there will always be a way the principles do.

There are a number of things that

to general attitudes to trials. Our school days are also a valuable provision from God: there is never an easier time of life to be learning new things – make the most of it! All sorts of useful things, both practical and academic, are on offer – what a blessing God has given us in those prime-time years from 5-18 and perhaps onwards. But then skills can also be learned in informal ways – from friends, older people around church, in clubs and from books. Those who are teachable, with open eyes and ears and minds, are the big winners.

Secondly, the work ethic of this ideal wife brought credit to her, and was a blessing to those she supervised. She clearly worked efficiently, and for long hours. She finished off tasks and projects. She ran a tight ship in and around her home. And she set a good example to those in her sphere of influence, her maidservants (and other employees), her customers, no doubt, and her children. She was a great role model. Think of the results: not only in the satisfaction of seeing the fruit of your labour, that your “merchandise is profitable” (verse

18), but also that the young and impressive, those who look to you as a role model, are picking up good habits from you. The way you work, and the *example* you set, can have spin-off effects that reach far beyond your own circle of contacts, and long beyond your own life's span.

We have noticed that most of all,

she was a woman who feared the Lord. This was the key to her life. In the end, she was not simply industrious because it made her husband and children and servants happy. It was not because it made her cottage industries hum. She worked as she did because it pleased God. In whose eyes did she want to excel? The eyes of the one who

would say "Well done, good and faithful servant."

## Notes

- 1 See Ecclesiastes 2:17-26
- 2 Claire Smith, *God's Good Design: What the Bible Really Says about Men and Women* (Matthias Media, Kingsford, NSW, 2012)
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 196

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## Focus on home

Harriet Haverland

# Gleanings from our bulletins...

A big thank you to all the bulletin editors and ministers who sent me the information required to let this go to print. I hope and pray that this column encourages you as we see God at work through his people in the different congregations. In Him, Harriet Haverland.

## BIRTHS

**de Vries, Hannah Katelyn** – a daughter born to Andrew and Christina – December 15<sup>th</sup> (Bishopdale)

**De Vries, Hugo** – a son born to Sam and Dalena de Vries – November (Silverstream)

**Jefferies, Caleb Paul** – a son born to Glenn and Sarah – October 31<sup>st</sup> (Avondale)

**Jochem, Arie Timothy** – a son born to Tim and Jodie – November 6<sup>th</sup> (Pukekohe)

**McCracken, Peyton Sophia** – a daughter born to Tim and Suzy McCracken – November 12<sup>th</sup> (Bishopdale)

**Minnee, Ella Rose** – a daughter born to Sarah and Freddy Minnee – (Buckland's Beach)

**Posthuma, Adam Michael** – a son born to Jeremy and Louise – November 5<sup>th</sup> (Pukekohe)

**Rin, Emily Malie** – a daughter born to Verak and Janelle – December 2<sup>nd</sup> (Christchurch)

**Vorster, Benjamin Nicolaas** – a son born to Jacob and Sonja – November 8<sup>th</sup> (Pukekohe)

## PROFESSIONS OF FAITH

**Bishopdale:** Lucinda Starink, Tim Heeringa

**Buckland's Beach:** Haina Lee and Kwak Seung Won (Andrew); POF and Baptism – Kim Jin Hee (Jenny), Jimin Kim, Mei Sheng (Jennifer), Lin Zhen (Lily)

**Hamilton:** Jordan Bos, Rosalie ten Hove, Paul Keast, Dimitri Mucznik, Michael Willemse

**Hastings:** POF and Baptism – Melanie Gjaltema

**Hukanui:** Ruth Willemse, Briar van Woerden

**Masterton:** Alice Gysbertsen, Gareth van Dalen, Michael Snoek

**Oamaru:** Rhoda Newton

**Palmerston North:** Reaffirmation of Faith – Murray and Pam Gray

**Pukekohe:** Ben Craddock

**Silverstream:** Julie Kleinjan; Celeste Lepann; Jordan Heersping; POF and Baptism – Jennifer Turner

**Wainuiomata:** Joel de Vries

**Wellington:** Anton Oosterbaan; POF & Baptism – Audi Putra

## WEDDINGS

November 9<sup>th</sup> – Edward Oosterbaan and Sarah-K Flinn were married in Melbourne

November 10<sup>th</sup> – Stuart Vandenberg and Erica Clementson were married in Linton

December 1<sup>st</sup> – Stan Leenders and Anne-Marie de Vos were married in Wainuiomata

December 8<sup>th</sup> – Stephen Alistair McDonald and Sjoukje Sarah de Vries were married in Palmerston North

December 12<sup>th</sup> – Ben Craddock and Jody Kerkhoven were married in Pukekohe

December 17<sup>th</sup> – Rowan Nugteren and

Jess Collingwood were married in New Brighton, Christchurch

## MILESTONE EVENTS

**Bryant, Allan** – 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 17<sup>th</sup> (Palmerston North)

**Hill, David and Waltraud** – 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on November 2<sup>nd</sup> (Pukekohe)

**Jochem, Marietje** – 98<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 26<sup>th</sup> (Palmerston North)

**Mulder, Peter and Gre** – 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on December 19<sup>th</sup> (Christchurch)

**Racke, Henk and Gerda** – 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on December 10<sup>th</sup> (Bishopdale)

## DEATHS

**Beavis, Helen** – on November 30<sup>th</sup> (Bishopdale)

**Hoekstra, Gre** – aged 90 on December 6<sup>th</sup> (Hamilton)

**Kroon, Elizabeth** – aged 95 on December 6<sup>th</sup> (Buckland's Beach)

**ten Heuw, Gerrit** – on November 9<sup>th</sup> (Hamilton)

## CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

The Reformed Church of Christchurch will celebrate 60 years as a congregation, Lord willing, on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

## MINISTERS AND CHURCH WORKERS

**Susan Larsen**, who has been involved for the past 3 years at the Bethesda Disability Training and Support Centre in the Solomon Islands has had her contract extended. She has spoken in various churches about her work there.

**Rev David Waldron** declined the call extended to him by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Buckland's Beach.

**Buckland's Beach:** We were privileged to celebrate this milestone with our dear brother **Pastor Dirk van Garderen and Gonny** for his 40 years service in the ministry. The Lord has been good and has blessed our brother with many gifts that he has used throughout his ministry, and has shown His mercy and grace to our brother and sister over the past 40 years! Thank you brother and may the Lord continue to bless you and your family in the coming years.

**Rev. Bill Wiersma** has retired from the ministry. The farewell service was held on Sunday 6 January. Bill and Betty have gone on two months long service leave during which they will have to decide where they will live in the retirement. They would like it to be known that they very much enjoyed the many years they spent in New Zealand.

## CHURCH BUILDINGS

**Bishopdale:** Roof Shout! The building project has reached a milestone with the roof now on and it's a long held tradition that a roof shout be held to celebrate the achievement. The Building Committee therefore warmly invites the congregation to join us for a BBQ lunch at the church. Come along for a hearty feed and a chance to look through the new building. The roof is on, the windows are in, the stairs are in, the air-conditioning system is being installed, the electrical wiring is underway. It was great to see the progress made and the quality of the work being done. You now get a real sense of what it is going to be like when it is finished.

**Dovedale:** The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) requires all public buildings to have a Detailed Engineering Evaluation (DEE) carried out. The COM has recently received the DEE for our church building. After the Feb 11 quake, building earthquake standards were increased and are now known as 'new building standards' (NBS). A building is considered 'earthquake prone' if the assessed seismic strength is less than 34% NBS. The good news is that our church building has been assessed as having seismic strength of 85% NBS in the longitudinal direction and 100% (the blue steel portal frames above you!) in the transverse direction; this gives an overall rating of 85% NBS. The report also detailed where repairs are required since we do have some minor damage. Our insurance company agrees with the recommended repairs.

**Palmerston North:** Building update: The foundation poles are now in place and quotes have been received for the building process, for the carpets and flooring, and for the kitchen. Applications have also been submitted to two community trusts for assistance. Please continue to uphold this project in prayer and continue to support it financially as the Lord enables.

## MISSIONS

**Dovedale:** **Wayne Brauning** and **Leonard Stewart** are in Europe on a missions trip. Please pray for wisdom, safe travel, and many opportunities to speak for Christ. Pray that the Lord will be honoured in all that they attempt to do, and that His kingdom may increase, and also pray for their wives and families as they are away.

**Hastings:** **Andrea** has had the privilege of being invited to an orphanage 30 minutes outside of Entebbe. The Cherish orphanage is home to 44 orphans with a further 125 children attending the onsite Hope Academy (a school run by the orphanage). She has been screening all the children as well as the staff and house mums (who care for the children). Andrea then plans to have glasses made up for the children back at the eye hospital as well as complete individual management plans and have them sent to the orphanage. Andrea is thankful for your prayers and the opportunity to be of use here in Africa. For more information on the Cherish orphanage the website is – <http://www.cherishuganda.org>

**Hastings:** In Colombia guerrillas have been waging war against village leaders, pastors and businessman. Christians have been delivering Christian literature to guerrillas to change their hearts and minds. They use airplanes to drop bibles, and short wave radios, set to Christian broadcast, deep in the jungle. The Voice of the Martyrs are in need of tens of thousands more parachutes. We need four sewing machines, good scissors and white cotton sheets. If you can't be there to help make the parachute please consider donating some money.

## ACTS OF SERVICE & DIACONAL

**Bishopdale:** Our annual Carwash in the Carpark is not far away! This is a great outreach opportunity and a bunch of fun. If you don't like washing cars we also need people to chat – you don't have to be a hard core evangelist to do this.

**Hastings:** Ladies Fellowship – We had a very enjoyable morning with a small group of willing helpers. We got 31 parachutes made, a great effort.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

**Hastings:** GIG's!!! – We all have a friend, neighbour, work colleague or associate that we would so love to share the gospel with. Well, GIG's may help you! 'Groups Investigating God' is small group gatherings where Christians can teach the Bible to their non-Christian friends; non-Christians who could otherwise feel uncomfort-



*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."*  
Prov 1:7

## Teaching Principal and/or Teacher

The Silverstream Christian School is a Christian school set up to provide Christian education to our covenant children. Our aim is to develop a biblically consistent world and life view in our students based on the Reformed faith. We believe this Reformed faith to be the most accurate expression of biblical Christianity. Applicants must be committed to the Reformed faith and to Reformed Christian education. This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a vibrant covenant community, and we look forward to your application. If you have any questions or would like more information please do not hesitate to contact us. Please forward your C.V. with 3 referees to:

### Contact details:

**Dirk den Harder**  
Email: [dirk39@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dirk39@xtra.co.nz) Ph +64 4 528 8066

able in a more formal religious context. You would become involved in the group teaching aspect, showing leadership and care in the lives of your friends.

**North Shore: Mainly Music Family Night** – We had another very successful family night which was attended by 92 people, most of whom were our mm families. Our mm kids brought their Dads, Grandparents and siblings, it was a very special evening. The place looked stunning and our families were delighted. We are thankful that the Lord has blessed this outreach to the extent that we now have a waiting list. It is hard to turn people away, but with too many it becomes unmanageable and very crowded. We thank you, the congregation, for upholding us in prayer this year, for without your prayerful support, it would not be possible.

**Wellington:** We plan to have a Vietnamese Evening for overseas fellow students of Hyojung. This is an outreach function for which we would ask your prayers. We plan to have a meal and a time of cross-cultural interaction afterwards. If some folk wish to join us, welcome! Kindly bring a plate, if you also wish to join in for the meal.

## CAMPS & CONFERENCES

**Wellington:** Church camp is next weekend and it looks like we have a good turn out! If you are keen to come and haven't put your name down, the 'sign up sheet' is still in the vestibule, the more that come the more fun we'll

all have. We'll be enjoying sports and other activities during the weekend. For those that are unable to come to camp, we will be having a shared lunch after the morning service at camp, and we look forward to seeing you all there.

## FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

**Silverstream:** Fishing for the mission competition. This is a competition we are organising to fundraise for the cadets and gems mission. The date for this event is Saturday the 24th of February, and it would be gladly appreciated if you would be able to attend this fun filled day. Regards, the Silverstream Cadets and Gems.

## ACTIVITIES

**Auckland Ladies Presbyterial 2013:** Hukanui will host the Ladies Presbyterial in 2013, and it will be held on Saturday, 13 April 2013. Our guest speaker will be Mrs Jenny Waldron, who will be speaking on "How to Practically do A Stranger Love." Our collection will be for Hamilton Christian Combined Foodbank, so the contribution can be either cans of food, or cash (or both).

**Pukekohe: Ladies', Fellowship Evening:** Ladies now's your chance to prove you are Pukekohe's Hottest Home Baker!! Never mind if you can't bake, you can judge. RSVP and register your baking.

**Wainuiomata:** All ladies were warmly invited to attend the annual end of year Ladies Fellowship Evening. They were

treated to an evening of fun and fellowship, chocolate, singing and a demonstration of some simple creative ideas for "turning your boring dinner table into a piece of art that everyone's budget can stretch to!

**Wanganui: Social Evening** – On 31 October 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg. We celebrated and learnt about the significance of this event with games, quizzes, recitations and singing. People were asked to dress up in keeping with the time period and/or theme of Reformation Day.

**Women's Presbyterial 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013:** Hastings have organised an exciting, thought-provoking Ladies Presbyterial in sunny Hawke's Bay on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013. The invitation is to all women, from teenagers, to twenty somethings, middle aged and the 'young at heart'. Come along and be fed spiritually. The topic is 'Women mentoring Women: – A Biblical Approach'. Jenny Waldron is our speaker for the morning. In the afternoon we will have 2 special guests. During lunch time you will have an opportunity to visit an Op shop, Christian bookstall and a hands-on baby CPR demonstration. As an option we have included a Friday night time of fellowship which will include sharing dinner together and then a time of pampering with dessert and coffee. Billets will be provided. Leave your children behind, (apart from nursing babies) and come and enjoy fellowship with other women of all ages.

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## Short Report of the Wellington Presbytery, 3 November 2012

The Wellington Presbytery met on Saturday 3 November 2012 at the Reformed Church of Silverstream. The moderator was the Rev. Peter Kloosterman.

The meeting went from 9 a.m. till 2.30 p.m. and the gist of it consists of the following seven items:

Youth Liaison Report: Rev. Leo de Vos reported on meeting with the Youth Committee who is preparing for the National Youth Camp. The Rev. David Waldron will be the main speaker at camp Te Aute, 4-11 January, and Sessions were asked to encourage their youth to

attend. As half of the committee will be stepping down after this camp, Sessions were asked to recommend to the WRYC the names of suitable replacements.

OMB Liaison Report: Rev. Peter Kloosterman briefed the meeting on the current desire of the OMB: the merits and benefits of having a home-end mission worker to assist in co-ordinating and promoting the work of the OMB and enthuse others about missions. This will be in line with practices in the OPC and ARP and with the mandate of Synod 1998. At this stage the OMB desires feedback from the sessions re the concept of having a home-end mission worker.

After some discussion, Presbytery approved the changes which the Synodical Committee made to the following forms and confessions for provisional use: the three Forms for Baptism, the Form for the

Baptism of Adults, the Apostles' Creed, and the Nicene Creed.

Presbytery adopted the motion from the Reformed Church of Foxton that Presbytery meetings in future be held in the various congregations which make up the Wellington Presbytery.

Prompted by an overture from the Reformed Church of Palmerston North, Presbytery adopted the following motion: **to change the Standing Rules Article IV, section 3 to read as follows: In between the stated meetings the Moderator and the Clerk shall serve Presbytery as the Interim Committee. In consultation with the Sessions they may make decisions and appointments. If in their opinion there is not sufficient business for a meeting, they may, after having received the agreement of at least 2/3 of the Sessions,**

**postpone or cancel the meeting.**

At request of the Reformed Church of Wellington, the Presbytery approved the song "By Grace Alone" (Words by Martin Luther and David Ward).

The next Presbytery meeting is scheduled to be held in Hastings. However, due to Hastings also hosting the Women's Presbyterial, the date of this Presbytery meeting has been shifted to 9 March 2013.

The Moderator closed in prayer and the meeting concluded at 2.30 pm.

**Pieter van Huyssteen**

**Short Report of the OMB Meeting 3 August 2012 at Masterton**

In this quarterly meeting of the RCNZ Overseas Mission Board we continued with the work of reviewing, updating and clarifying the missions policy handbook; completing revisions to sections four to six. These sections have to do with the encouragement of missions awareness among the churches, selection of missionary candidates and missionary training policy guidelines.

Quarterly reports to the board from our missionaries on the field were received. A Memorandum of Understanding between the RCNZ OMB and The Reformed Church of Hamilton for the support of Janice Reid was approved by the OMB and sent to the Hamilton session. The Memorandum sets out the framework within which Janice will be working including supervision, pastoral care, job description with the organisation Janice works for (HCJB Global [New Zealand] Trust), furlough, deputation arrangements and financial arrangements.

A detailed application was received from the Reformed Churches Bible College in PNG for funding to replace their photocopier. It was agreed to put this matter to the churches as a special project.

There is still a need for a theology teacher to work at the Presbyterian Theological College in Mbale Uganda, a mission post of the OPC. Silverstream Reformed Church has sent the Rev. and Mrs. James to the field for this a number of times. Their local missions committee will monitor the situation and notify the OMB of any developments.

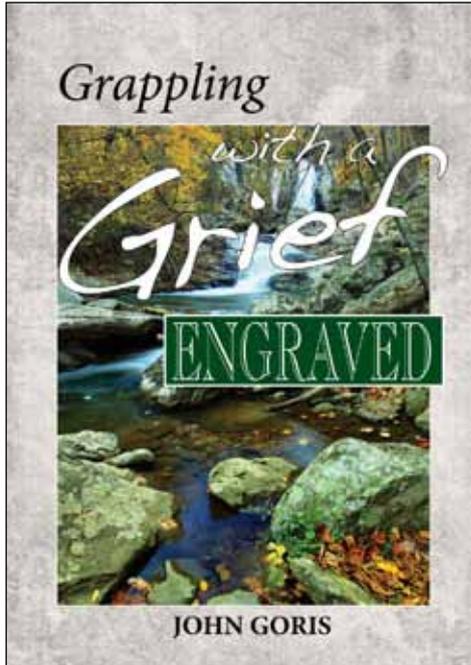
There was further discussion by the board about a denominational Home End Mission Worker to promote the work of the OMB throughout our denomination. The concept was agreed to in principle at the 1998 synod but as yet has not been implemented. At this stage of discussions, the OMB have agreed to table the concept until further consultation at presbytery level in each presbytery.

Mr Robert Van Wichen attended this

meeting on behalf of the South Island Presbytery. His presence was integral to a process which may see the Board shift to the South Island Presbytery after the next synod.

**Hans Vaatstra**

*This report was sent to me in August of 2012, but was not picked up for inclusion until now. My apologies to the reporter for the delay. ed.*



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# Recovering preachers and preaching

## Alan D. Strange

We live in a day in which many regard preaching, at best, as sharing, not proclamation, and in which the therapist has replaced the preacher. We need to recover both the preaching office and a high view of preaching.

Historically, there was in Protestantism a high view of both the preacher and preaching. It is striking what E. Brooks Holifield says in *Theology in America* regarding the place of pastor/theologians before the American Civil War. There was a real appetite then for serious theological teaching and preaching, and it was met in the pulpits and in the writings of ministers in parish service. In those earlier years, the theologian was not so much

audience who were becoming increasingly impatient with the moral failures and cultural unsophistication of their clergy. At some point, perhaps one that can never be determined with historical accuracy, Western society came to believe that it should look elsewhere than to its clergy for guidance. Instead, they turned to the intellectuals, who were able to portray their clerical opponents as lazy fools who could do no more than unthinkingly repeat the slogans and nostrums of an increasingly distant past. A new future lay ahead, and society needed brave new thinkers to lead them to its lush Promethean pastures. (p. 49)

The modernism that developed after the Enlightenment witnessed the en-

is the need of the hour, but would also argue that any committed Christian is called to and competent for such a task. Such a denial of the preaching office flows in part out of both Great Awakenings, but far more out of the Second. It denied man's inability and also tended to minimise the preaching office in the church, which properly derives from the gifts and callings that God bestows according to his good pleasure.

Jacksonian democracy, Restorationism, and the whole American ethos of self-reliance contributed to the lowering of the office of preacher. It is not only the intellectual and the expert (the scientist, the philosopher, the psychiatrist, etc.) who shove aside the minister, but also, on the other end of the spectrum, the anti-intellectual who senses no need for the minister, being in the grip of a "Jesus, my Bible, and me" mentality. This is, as Mark Noll puts it, "the scandal of the evangelical mind." And the needed recovery of preachers and preaching will not come about through manipulative techniques (drama in worship, musical productions, etc.). It will only come about through the church recognising men who fit the bill of 1 Timothy 3, giving them solid theological training, placing them in office, and receiving with meekness and joy the Word of God from their lips.

The cure for our spiritual ills can never be anything other than what God himself has prescribed. If our postmodern situation is rightly understood, we have come full circle in our neo-paganism, back to the premodern paganism of Paul's world, the world of Acts 17, to which the apostles, and those who followed them in the ministerial office, preached. Preaching is not passé, as so many would have it, but needed more now than ever.

### The preached word of God

A recovery of the office of preacher will do us no good if we do not receive the preached word as did the Thessalonians: "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but

“ The cure for our spiritual ills can never be anything other than what God himself has prescribed. ”

of an "academic" as he was to become in subsequent years, when biblical higher criticism, having ravaged Germany and England, took hold in America and the "academic theologian" replaced the pastor as the leading theological voice.

We have experienced, over the course of time, a downgrading of the preaching office and of theological instruction in preaching. (Bible reading has become increasingly focused on the reader's response, and preaching has become increasingly seeker-sensitive.) This downgrade began with the rise of the intellectual, which occurred earlier in Europe than America. Alister McGrath explains, in *The Twilight of Atheism*:

The emergence of the intellectual as a recognised social type is one of the most remarkable developments of recent centuries. Intellectuals became a secular priesthood, unfettered by the dogmas of the religious past, addressing a growing

throning of naturalism and the secularisation of the sciences. Then the postmodernism that arose in the wake of the evident failures of modernism saw the rejection of propositional truth and the embracing of scepticism. Both of these post-Enlightenment developments meant further marginalisation of the office of minister and the replacement of that office with the scientist, therapist, or spiritualist, with the laboratory and the couch shoving aside the pulpit. The response of the church and the ministry has varied, ranging from a call to return to premodernist rationalism to the embrace of postmodernism in movements like the Emergent Church.

What is needed is a recovery both of preaching and of the office of preacher. The democratisation of American Christianity (as Nathan Hatch has termed it) tends to separate preaching from preachers. Some would agree that preaching

as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Thess. 2:13). Some may think that what the Thessalonians welcomed from Paul as the word of God was exclusively the divinely inspired word that he delivered as an apostle, but that interpretation is open to challenge.

To be sure, the apostle Paul did occasionally speak divinely inspired words, but not always. More often than not, he preached. Certainly the vast majority of his teaching is not inscripturated. The office of apostle, while extraordinary, had to it an ordinary, repeatable element. As an apostle, Paul was also an evangelist, a pastor, an elder, and a deacon. Much of what he did in ministry is to be associated with the ordinary preaching office that we find described first in the Old Testament in the Levitical priesthood and then as modified in the New Testament in the office of evangelist or pastor (see "Pastors" in Westminster's Form of Presbyterian Church-Government).

Important commentators, including Luther and Calvin, have recognized that the word of God that the Thessalonians heard from Paul and that they received as such was his preaching. The Westminster divines accordingly cite 1 Thessalonians 2:13 as a proof text for the teaching that we are to "receive the truth [preached] ... as the Word of God" (Larger Catechism, 160). According to the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, there is a sense in which, derivatively, "the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God."

Another piece of evidence that

preaching is a divine activity is found in Romans 10:14, which may be literally translated, "How shall they believe him whom they have not heard?" This is immediately followed by another question: "And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Paul teaches here that men hear Christ when they hear – receive in faith – the one who truly preaches. We hear Christ representatively when we hear the preacher: Christ, not merely the man preaching, is the true gospel preacher.

In the church lately, though, there seems to be a low view of preaching and a lust for "more exciting" means of bringing the lost to Christ. When we hear folk in the church opine that we need to do something (that we are presumably not doing) to get people in the door, the subtext of such sentiments is often, "The last thing that we need here is more of that boring preaching that drives prospects away." And, too often, they are right. Such preaching as we have – even in Reformed churches – is often just that: boring, dry, academic, lacking in heart, tending to repel rather than draw needy sinners to Christ.

All this is to say that preachers cannot blame parishioners and prospects entirely for the lack of interest in preaching that is too frequently manifested in our churches. To be sure, many people want their ears tickled. They want to hear smooth things and not to be confronted with their sin and responsibility. Yet how often do we as preachers fail to preach in a way that is calculated to engage the hearts and lives of our

hearers? How much "Reformed" preaching is passionless, droning, and disconnected from the congregation? Is a lack of good preaching part of the reason why there is so little taste for preaching?

The kind of preaching that we need is Spirit-filled and Spirit-blessed. We need preaching that is Christ-centered, that comes from a brokenhearted preacher, and that opens up the heart of the people and applies the only balm that can cure sin-sick souls. Laughing revivals may bring people through the doors, but only preaching blessed by the unction of the Holy Spirit will, to paraphrase the Larger Catechism (Q. 155), cause sinners to see their misery, despair of themselves utterly, and flee to Christ alone for salvation.

As T. David Gordon laments in his latest book, Johnny often cannot preach. Even artless preaching, however, that is faithful is an administration of the Word of God. Perhaps then it is not simply that Johnny (in the pulpit) cannot preach, but also that Johnny (in the pew) does not know how to receive faithful preaching as the word of the Lord. It may be, as George Schultz once opined, that we have not only a crisis of leadership, but of followership, and that we need to learn both to preach faithfully and to receive the preached Word in faith.

*The author is associate pastor of New Covenant Community Church in New Lenox, Ill., and teaches at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Reprinted from New Horizons, June 2009.*

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## Well-chosen words

Matthew Henry's influence has been potent for three centuries.

### Allan Harman

The year of Matthew Henry's birth, 1662, was not a good one for his family. His father, Philip Henry, had lost his position as an Anglican minister and the family had been put out of the minister's residence. Like more than 2000 other Anglican ministers, Philip Henry would not conform to the new requirement compelling them to use the Book

of Common Prayer, and to be ordained by a bishop. They were forced to leave their parishes and were deprived of regular income.

The Henry family were somewhat better off than many others. Philip Henry had been an excellent student at Oxford University, where he studied under the great Dr John Owen. He had come to Worthenbury in Shropshire and married Katherine Matthews, an only daughter,

whose parents owned a farm, Broad Oak, that was just over five miles away.

The Henry family moved to her family home, and ultimately the property was owned and worked by Philip and Katherine. He never had the privilege of being a minister of a congregation again, though he continued to expound the Scripture in his own and other family residences.

Matthew was a precocious child, starting Greek and Latin early. He had a tutor

for a time, but his father was his main teacher. In spiritual things he listened to his father explain Scripture and teach the Westminster Shorter Catechism. At the age of 11, he came to personal faith in the Lord Jesus, and seems to have set himself the goal of becoming a pastor. Apart from a period of about 18 months in London, studying mainly law, his father's instruction and example prepared him for pastoral ministry.

The dissenters or non-conformists were forbidden to meet together publicly, but in the late 1680s it became clear that a change was coming. Groups of people were starting to meet openly for worship, and one of these in Chester invited Matthew Henry to become their pastor.

He was ordained in London by a small group of Presbyterian pastors, and began his ministry in June 1687. The congregation grew, and the meeting place had to be enlarged. By 1700 the congregation realised they had become too big for the premises they were using, and so bought land in Crook's Lane in the centre of Chester.

The new chapel was opened almost free of debt, though it is interesting and significant that Matthew Henry's own donation of £20 was the largest contribution to the building fund. Within a few years he had 350 communicant members connected with his congregation, and the chapel had to be enlarged by the addition of a gallery.

Soon after starting at Chester, Matthew

Henry married, but his wife died after giving birth to their first child. He married again, and six children survived that marriage. In addition, he and his wife took into their home one of his sister's children, when both she and her husband died.

Several things mark out Henry's life as important. First of all, he was a diligent pastor. Every week he had two services on the Lord's Day, at which he both expounded chapters of Scripture in sequence, but also preached. He was very systematic in his selection of passages for sermons, and a record exists of his schedule for the whole of his ministry at Chester. He was plain and simple in his style, with almost no illustrations, but with many memorable sayings and references.

In addition to preaching and catechising in his own congregation, he preached to the prisoners in Chester Castle. Neighbouring centres around Chester were often favoured by his preaching on weekdays, and even congregations in London heard him with pleasure, and some tried to get him to become their pastor.

Out of his parish preaching and teaching came his commentary on the Bible. He started to write in 1704, and by 1706 he had completed the section on the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. The reception was exceptional from the outset, and so he continued to work away, day by day, on his task. By the time he moved to Hackney near London in 1712 he had

completed the whole of the Old Testament. Just before his death in 1714 he finished up to the end of Acts, and left notes on considerable parts of the rest of the New Testament, especially the book of Revelation. Other pastors completed the remaining New Testament books.

This was one of the first commentaries aimed not at pastors but at the ordinary Christian people. Its style was unpretentious, and much of it had the characteristics that marked out his preaching, such as abundant references to Scripture, the use of alliteration for his headings, and practical application.

Amidst all his other activities Matthew Henry wrote many books. He was the author of a large biography of his father, who died in 1696, and this passed through three editions in his lifetime. He produced songs for congregational singing, many of them Psalms but including other passages such as Mary's song (Luke 1) and parts of Revelation. More than once, he defended the position of the dissenters over and against the Church of England, rejecting claims that they were schismatics. The area of spiritual life was his main focus. In particular, his writings on prayer have been often reprinted.

His personal ministry and writings brought blessing to many in his own lifetime, but his works have continued to bless for three centuries. Jonathan Edwards in New England knew and used Matthew Henry's books. The Wesleys were well-acquainted with them, and even though John Wesley did not agree with his Reformed position, he still utilised parts of his writing in his notes on Scripture. Charles Wesley was more sympathetic, and many of his hymns were sayings of Matthew Henry that he incorporated into Christian poetry. The words of his hymn "A charge to keep have I, a God to glorify" are taken exactly from Matthew Henry's commentary. George Whitefield, when short of time for sermon preparation, would kneel on the floor with his Greek New Testament, Cruden's concordance, and Matthew Henry's commentary open before him. The structure and outline of his sermons often betray the influence of Henry.

Many others, ever since his time, have testified to the blessing of his writing. No other commentary has been kept in print for 300 years as has happened with his. Now it is available in many editions, sometimes with newer English translations replacing the Authorised Version. His collected works are available in two

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Our guest speaker this year is  
**Dr Phillip Scheepers**  
*Lecturer in Missions and Church History at the Reformed Theological College in Geelong, Victoria*

Phillip joined the College in 2010 bringing a wealth of experience in missions and church-based training. He is originally from South Africa where he studied for the ministry and obtained his DTh. from the University of the Free State. After initial mission work in South Africa he moved to London where he worked for Veritas College for 8 years, establishing training ministries for local church leaders in the Arab world. That work eventually led him to Australia in 2007 to secure accreditation for the Veritas training in the Australian vocational training sector. This makes him ideally suitable for the tasks to which he is called as a lecturer in missions and church history; and as coordinator of the RTC's ministry training pathway, TASK3, that interfaces campus study with church-based training. Phillip is married to Chanel and they have two young boys.

**Inquiries**  
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volumes, his biography of his father has been reprinted, and his writings on spiritual and family life have reprinted many times and are currently available.

Of course, we have much other Christian literature available to us, both from the past and from the present, but still Matthew Henry's commentary sets a pattern. It was an attempt to explain the meaning of the Bible, book by book, verse by verse. He knew what others had written, but his aim was to faithfully expound what he believed the text meant.

Reluctantly, Matthew Henry left Chester in 1712 for Hackney, believing

that God was calling him to minister there. The near proximity to his publisher was clearly an attraction. Though not well in health, he made the move, and entered into a very busy period of ministry. However, ill-health was starting to take its toll. He suffered from kidney stones, and he had developed diabetes. On leaving Chester after a final visit in 1714, he fell from his horse, continued on to Nantwich, preached in the evening, and died the following morning. At the age of 52 he had completed his ministry.

As he himself had said shortly before returning to Chester for his final visit, "a

holy, heavenly life, spent in the service of God and communion with him, is the most pleasant and comfortable life that any one can live in this world".

*Mr Allan Harman is an Australian Presbyterian theologian, Old Testament scholar, author and former Moderator-General. He has just written a biography of Matthew Henry, published by Christian Focus.*

*Reproduced from AP (formerly Australian Presbyterian) Australia's reformed evangelical periodical, Spring 2012*

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## Book in focus

### ***Presbyterian and Reformed Churches; A Global History***

by James E. McGoldrick  
Reformation Heritage Books, 2012  
Reviewed by Jack Sawyer

Professor James McGoldrick, of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, has served our Presbyterian and Reformed community well in the production of this volume. *Presbyterian and Reformed Churches* provides a helpful tool for anyone interested in or involved with the ecumenical calling of the church. It is a work on Church History, to be sure, but the breadth of the survey, and the historical details recounted, provide the ecumenist, mindful of the prayer of our Lord Jesus, "that they may all be one," with a sweeping handbook of Reformed Christianity.

I say production because as McGoldrick himself acknowledges he is deeply indebted to Richard Clark Reed, late church historian at Columbia Theological Seminary, and the unpublished manuscript of Thomas Hugh Spence, one time director of the Presbyterian Historical Foundation in Montreat, North Carolina. Reed's 1905 *History of the Presbyterian Churches of the World* was published by Westminster Press. Spence's unpublished manuscript covers much of the same ground as Reed.

While McGoldrick has correctly acknowledged Reed and Spence as co-authors, one should not minimize his own excellent contributions to the volume. The portion on the twentieth century is his, as well as the helpful suggested

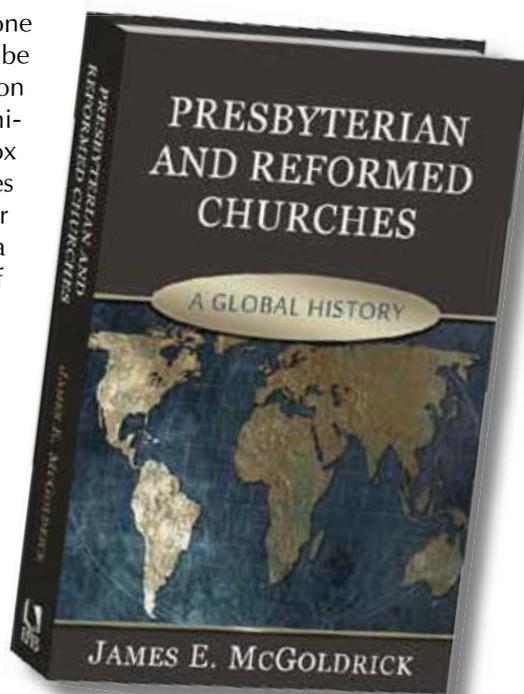
reading list at the end of each chapter. The book is chronological and geographical in its scope. Beginning with the ancient church and the extinction of Presbyterianism, the narrative moves to the Reformation in Europe and then unfolds the spread, development, theological and historical distinctives of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches worldwide.

The present reviewer was favorably reminded of the style of Kenneth Scott Latourette's magisterial *History of Christianity*. That being said, surveys are naturally selective and hard editorial choices concerning space and material forbid being exhaustive. Still, McGoldrick manages to put the literary finger on much that is central in each church. However, one may question, what might be seen as an overemphasis on the author's own denomination. Our own Orthodox Presbyterian Church receives notice, as well as our sister churches in North America and around the world. If for no other reason this will prove helpful for readers interested to find out about the personnel, history and character of other churches with whom the OPC has fraternal relations.

There are at least several minor mistakes: on page 283 the Reformed Churches of New Zealand are said

to be associated with the defunct Reformed Ecumenical Council. Further, the RCNZ left that body along with the OPC in the late 1980's. On page 288, the RCNZ are said to have initiated a missionary work in Taiwan. It would have been more accurate to say that the OPC initiated that work, and that the RCNZ accepted the invitation of the OPC to participate.

These are minor matters, which serve to illustrate the encyclopedic range of information that McGoldrick has attempted to draw together in *Presbyterian and Reformed Churches*, and the success with which he has done it.



# RCNZ Care Services

## Plans for the future care of members of the RCNZ who have special needs

In March this year, the Reformed Churches of NZ Care Services organized a Get Together Day, where five young special needs people together with their parents, all members of the Reformed Churches of NZ Wellington Presbytery, met together for a day of fun and getting to know each other. This day was a great success, so to continue to support and encourage the parents and facilitate the continued friendship between young people, it was decided to meet twice per year. A recent Get Together Day was held in November in Foxton. The young people were taken out in the morning to learn some basic flower arranging, and they returned two hours later proudly showing their artistic displays. Following lunch they visited the Foxton Windmill and played a round of mini-golf.

While the young people were out having fun and enjoying each other's company, the morning session for the parents and Committee was led by the Rev. Peter Kloosterman who reflected on "God's Method of Mercy". The Rev. Kloosterman has included a summary of his talk in this edition of *Faith in Focus*.

In the afternoon, parents were encouraged to think about appointing an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPOA) for their special needs children. An EPOA allows a person to arrange in advance authority to handle his or her affairs if, at a later date, that person becomes incapable of doing so.

Further discussion centred on the development of a Disability Strategy to be used as a framework within the RCNZ to support parents and their special needs children, and to provide education and direction for church leaders and congregations. A Disability Strategy could cover:

- The needs of the parents
- The needs of the special needs persons
- The needs of Church leaders
- The needs of congregations where special needs people worship

The Disability Strategy is a work in progress, and we will continue the development of this at future meetings.

Discussion was soon directed toward the ultimate goal of establishing a Christian home for special needs people.

Several possible locations were discussed, with one location being the most favoured option among the parents. However, much work needs to be done before such a home can be established, including practical, financial and spiritual support from the local Reformed Church.

While our efforts thus far have been directed to the five young people with special needs within the Wellington Presbytery, the Committee is aware that there may be interest from others outside the Presbytery. We would encourage anyone interested in supporting a potential Christian home for special needs adults to contact the Secretary of the Committee, Herman de Jonge via email – [dejonge@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dejonge@xtra.co.nz). This support can be in the form of practical help and expertise, financial support, or expressions of interest from other special needs people or their families from other presbyteries seeking accommodation within a potential home. Most importantly the committee covets your prayers.

**Jackie Wierenga**

*On behalf of RCNZ Care Services*



*A time for serious discussion.*



*A natural talent at work!!*



*Mrs. Dijkstra teaching us about flower arrangements.*



*Hennie showing her creation.*



*Johann contemplating his next move as Stephanie look on.*



*All of our creations together.*



*Grace shows her results.*



*The greatest Florists are Men!!.*



*Mini Putt – Grace keeping score.*



*Hennie's turn.*



*Johan waiting for his turn.*



*Top floor of the Windmill in Foxton. (From left:) Miss Stephanie Donk, Grace Knol, Mrs Dina & Hennie Dykstra and Johann Landkroon.*