



# Lux Mundi

41:1 February 2022

*Jesus said: "I am the light of the world."* John 8:12



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Floods in British Columbia

Updating Confessional Language

Magazine published by the  
International Conference of  
Reformed Churches



**Author: Rev. Dr. Karlo Janssen**

*Karlo Janssen serves as a minister with the Canadian Reformed Churches.*

## Varied Works

Language is fluid. The word “cancel” has taken on a new meaning in our time. Preaching through Luke 6, I at one time noted how the Pharisees and scribes sought to cancel Rabbi Jesus. Indeed – and here’s a new word – they wanted to deplatform Him. (The term is so new that my word processor does not yet recognize this as a proper English word.) In the past, the term was “censorship”. In the end, they crucified Him. However, through the cross God raised a banner for His people. The Word went out, the Kingdom expanded, and it covers the globe. The Lord Jesus will not be canceled.

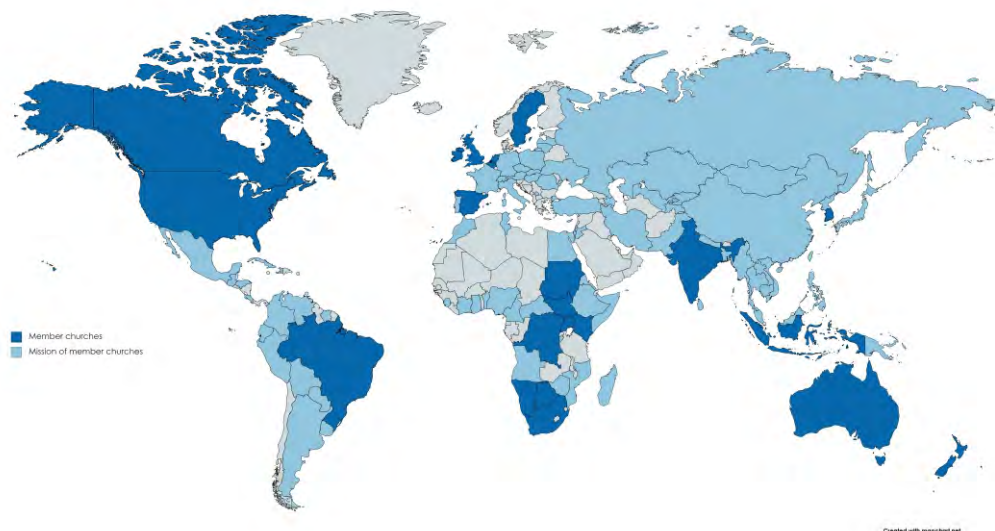
The message went out but the peoples of the earth seem to be ignoring it. The devotional in this issue of *Lux Mundi* reflects on a prophet of Isaiah which speaks of how God humbles people with a view to His Day. As you read on, you will skip across the globe to see the varied works of God among His people.

You can read a report of churches in North America meeting with one another in NAPARC. There’s a tribute to Dr. Helen

McGregor Ramsay, who laboured with the Free Church of Central India on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Australia. As you read on you’ll become acquainted with CARDUS, an organization in Canada that recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary; CARDUS involves members from several ICRC member churches. An article recounts the flooding that happened in Canada’s south-western province of British Columbia and the USA’s north-western state of Washington. The farmers impacted included members of the Free Reformed, United Reformed, and Canadian Reformed Churches. Next you’ll find an interim report of the very careful endeavour of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to update the language of the church’s confession.

And in closing a review of a recent publication by Dr. Reuben Bredenhof (Free Reformed Churches of Australia) on the apostle Paul and his Sender, Jesus the Christ.

Enjoy the read and be blessed during what continue to be difficult times.



*Nations where ICRC member churches and their mission projects are located*



The logo combines the ICRC logo with the Lux Mundi monogram, an early Christian symbol combining the initials of Jesus Christ (in Greek I and X), referring to Him as the Light of the World (Lux Mundi).



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## Humbled

One of the first prophecies found in the book of Isaiah speaks of the coming Day of the LORD. It includes a passages that is bookended by a prophecy of the humbling of humanity, the humbling of God's own people. For the people of God looked to the wealth of the nations for prosperity and strength, instead of looking to the LORD their God.

Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled as Assyria overran the north western portion of what we today know as the Middle East. Judah, ruled by King Hezekiah, was shown grace. However, Judah's return to the LORD during Hezekiah's time did not run deep. Thus the Chaldeans, also known as Babylonians, took also Judah into exile.

There have been more "Days of the LORD" since then. When people turn away from God to the idols, the securities created by humans, God comes with vengeance. To mind comes the year 70 AD, when Jerusalem and God's temple were destroyed. To mind comes the Final Day, when our Lord Jesus Christ will come to judge the living and the dead.

In the course of history God has repeatedly humbled His people and the world. As we survey our world, we are going through a time of humbling. Almighty God is confronting humanity with the reality that we are not in control. We are not in control of this world, we are not in control of our destiny. Humanity looks to progress and science for salvation. It is in vain.

The pandemic is proving how limited our scientific endeavours are. The crisis on the eastern border of Europe (the Ukraine) reveals how deep down the passions that drove the mighty men of old, beginning with Nimrod, remain in our world. The floods a few months ago in southern British Columbia have shown how vulnerable we are.

The LORD is humbling this world. The question is, will humanity open its eyes and see? Will the peoples of this earth see that the earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world and all who dwell in it? (Ps. 24:1). Will kings and rules serve the LORD with fear, rejoice with trembling, and kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish in the way (Ps. 2:11-12)?

May we all learn to humble ourselves before the LORD, for only He can provide us with security and exalt us.

*The haughty looks of man shall be brought low,  
and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled,  
and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.*

*For the Lord of hosts has a day  
against all that is proud and lofty,  
against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;  
against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and  
against all the oaks of Bashan;  
against all the lofty mountains, and  
against all the uplifted hills;  
against every high tower, and  
against every fortified wall;  
against all the ships of Tarshish, and  
against all the beautiful craft.*

*And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled,  
and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low,  
and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.*

*Isaiah 2:11-17*



*Water pouring underneath the railway*

## NAPARC 2021

**Author: Rev. Ralph Pontier**

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The 46th annual meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) convened on Tuesday afternoon, November 9, 2021, at the Shiloh Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, a congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The outgoing Chairman, Rev. Dr. L Anthony Curto, led the opening devotions.

NAPARC is composed of 13-Member Churches which include the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC), the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC), the Reformed Church of Quebec (Église réformée du Québec) (ERQ), the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA), the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC), the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), the Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Presbyterian Reformed Church (PresRC), the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). Representatives of the Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC) and the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRCA) attended as invited observers. No representatives of the ERQ were able to attend this year but they hope to return next year.

The basis of NAPARC's fellowship is "Confessing Jesus Christ as the only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, we affirm the basis of the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches to be full commitment to the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God written, without error in all its parts, and to its teaching as set forth in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms." [1]

One of the first orders of business was the election of new officers. Elected as Chairman was Dr. Bryan Chapell of the PCA. Elected as Vice-chairman was Rev. Michael Ives of the PresRC. Rev. Ralph Pontier was elected to a fourth term as Secretary, and Rev. Todd De Rooy was elected to a third term as Treasurer. The chairmanship and vice-chairmanship rotate annually among the 13-Member Churches following an alphabetical listing. The Vice-chairman this year is slated to serve as Chairman next year, and his denomination is asked to host the following year.

The bulk of the work at NAPARC is to hear from the Member Churches about what the Lord is doing in their midst, and to pray for one another after each report. Reports were heard of God's spiritual blessings, of unity in the churches, and of new mission works. There is a lot of cooperation among the Member Churches on the mission field, in conferences, and even youth conferences. There was also discouraging news of mission works being forced to close in China, of minister burnout, of vacant pulpits, and of the various complications and hardships over the last two years with burdensome government restrictions. At the devotional service on Tuesday evening, the message by Rev. Matthew Holst summed up many of these joys and challenges with a stirring reminder from Psalm 93 that "the Lord reigns." Singing was from the Trinity Psalter Hymnal, a joint work of two Member Churches, now in its fourth year and fifth printing, and which is being used beyond the two groups for which it was developed.

NAPARC's business was concluded by late Wednesday afternoon. Wednesday evening included a dinner of good food and fellowship at a local bistro, followed by an encouraging address by Dr. Jonathan Master, the new president of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He spoke on praying publicly in the ministry for the glory of God and the benefit of God's people. He showed from Scripture that prayer, together with preaching, are the two great works of the ministry and that prayer is equally worthy of careful attention and preparation.

The NAPARC schedule runs from Tuesday afternoon to Thursday noon and provides time slots for bi-lateral meetings between the inter-church or ecumenical committees of the Member Churches. These smaller meetings have proven fruitful for Member Churches to grow closer together and manifest more fully their oneness in Christ.

In addition to the annual meeting of the Council, NAPARC sponsors consultations where representatives of Member Churches gather to discuss cooperation in a specific area of ministry. For more than thirty years, there have been annual world mission consultations in September of each year. This year representatives from nine NAPARC Member Church world mission agencies (ARPC, CanRC, HRC, KAPC, OPC, PCA, RCUS, RPCNA, and URCNA) met together for their annual consultation in the OPC's administration offices in



Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. Joining with them were representatives from four NAPARC Member Church diaconal ministries agencies/ministries (CanRC, HRC, OPC, and URCNA). The sessions were fruitful, and the fellowship was heartening. Mr. Mark T. Bube served as the chairman; the Rev. Douglas B. Clawson served as the secretary. The next such NAPARC Joint Consultation is scheduled for September 20-23, 2022, concurrently with the ICRC World Mission Agency Consultation with Mr. Bube as the chairman and the Rev. Douglas B. Clawson as the secretary for the world mission agencies, and Mr. David P. Nakhla as the chairman for the diaconal mission agencies.

The Council enjoyed the gracious and generous hospitality of the Shiloh Orthodox Presbyterian Church and experienced warm and joyous fellowship with fellow delegates, observers, and other guests.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for November 8-10, 2022, to be hosted by the Presbyterian Church in America in Atlanta, Georgia.

Rev. Ralph A. Pontier  
NAPARC Secretary

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## ***The Christian Heart for Mission***

### ***Dr. Helen McGregor Ramsay***

### ***13-Jan-1928 - 12-Oct-2021***

Helen's great grandparents in the paternal line, John Ramsay from Ireland and Margaret Lyall from Scotland, arrived in New South Wales as newlyweds in 1840. Their son John (1852-1926) was born on the Paterson River, spent early years on the Manning and moved to the Macleay about 1885. Living on the Macleay provided limited opportunity to receive regular ministry, but John taught his children well, so that three of his sons became highly regarded ministers – Herbert, John, and the youngest, Malcolm.

Malcolm (or 'MC' as he was widely known) married his Scottish fiancée, Helen McGregor, in December 1921 when she arrived from Scotland a few weeks after MC had been ordained and inducted to Hastings River PCEA. Dr Helen was the third of their four children.

MC had wanted to go to Russia as a missionary, but apart from anything else, home needs were too pressing.

His missionary interests did not flag. He moved at the annual meeting in 1922: "that this Assembly deeply deplores the fact that we have no Foreign Missionaries of our own, and that we urge upon all young men and women of our church to seriously consider the claims of Foreign Missions..." Rev. Dr J. Campbell Andrews (1909-94), was the first and Helen was the second overseas missionary of the PCEA.

MC moved to the Manning River PCEA in 1937. Helen was very close to her father, and he was a great influence on her. She never knew a time when she did not trust Christ and considered herself a proof of the truth that 'we love God because he first loved us'.

Not only spiritually minded and active in the Taree Youth Fellowship, she had from early years wanted to be a medical missionary.

Helen's engagement to Norman Christie was announced in March 1949. This was a few days before Norman was received as a student for the PCEA ministry and Helen accepted as a candidate for the foreign field.

But Norman soon had a change of heart, and without consulting the Committee, accepted employment in order to follow a career in civil engineering.

This was a potentially devastating challenge to Helen's loyalty to God's call on her life and to her church. But she passed the test. The engagement was broken off. Helen

remained unmarried, but had peace with God and was given a family in other ways, as we will see.

Helen wasn't a super-hero. She was a cheerful and attractive young Christian woman who was so thankful for her Saviour and wished to please him in all things with the gifts and graces she had been given.

#### **The New Doctor**

Helen graduated MBBS in 1952. After a period as a Hospital Resident (intern) in NSW, Helen continued post graduate studies in Inverness, Scotland, near her mother's relatives, leaving Australia at the end of July 1953.

After such preparation, Helen arrived in India about the end of September 1955 at age 27. For two years she was based at the Free Church of Scotland mission in Lakhnadon where Hindi language school occupied all her time for the first year. In October 1956 she spent time with Dr Annie Mackay, learning, as she wrote in her Report dated 1 April 1957: "not only methods of dealing with disease in this country but also methods of dealing with the patients, frequently the more important of the two. Visualise if you can some of the following scenes occurring in a surgery at home. As I am carefully drawing up 1cc into a syringe there's a hurt voice remonstrating in my ear: 'No, no, Dr! That's only a small injection. Give her a big one!' When I state the number of tablets in one day to be given for an acute disorder: 'Please give me half that number of tablets and double the amount of drinking medicine.' The mother who didn't bring her baby back after the first penicillin injection: 'His temperature was too high, but you can give him some now his fever is better.' And so I learn."

And with wisdom and grace Helen won her way into Indian hearts.

#### **Chhapara 1957-68, Lakhnadon 1968-70, Chhapara 1976-85**

Chhapara was a town of about 7,000 in 1960 and Lakhnadon, 27km further north, a little less. Both have grown since.

The dispensary in Chhapara flourished under Helen's direction, a fine basis having been laid by Nurse Nan Dunlop from Ireland.

In 1956 there were 1,871 new patients, but in 1961 the number reached 3,875.

Sister Mrs Taramoni Lall was Helen's 'right hand man' and a fine Christian witness, as was her husband Panna. An elder in





the church, he gave Bible lessons in the primary school and spoke to patients about Christ. Helen was sad that there was so little response to the Good News.

In December 1958, a young couple were near to the date when the wife would give birth for the first time. She was very sick, but they refused to stay overnight at the dispensary. Their twin daughters were born at home, but the mother died. The father could not look after them. Despite a policy directive from Scotland, Helen took in Kamala and Vimala, and so became a mother, and later a grandmother.

In 1961 she wrote, '...the twins now keep excellent health after their first two stormy years, and are pampered by so many people that I wage a losing battle for discipline. But they are so lovable and loving that I often give in gracefully.' Kamala trained as a midwife and served in Chhapara, while Vimala trained as a Biblewoman.

On return in May 1961 from a spell of furlough, Helen encountered the after-effects of a serious small-pox epidemic. She wrote: "Usually we are not called to treat the disease itself as Hindus consider this will further annoy the goddess who has caused the illness."

In 1962 Helen did a course in Ophthalmology at the Christian Medical College at Vellore. To overcome prejudice, Professor Roy Ebenezer, under whom Helen had studied, led the first eye camp in September 1963. Two hundred out-patients were treated, and 44 operations were performed on 37 in-patients. Chhapara thus gained a name for eye work.

Helen found such work particularly satisfying. "To watch a recent patient's face as she saw for the first time in 3 years the face of her 5 year old son, to see patients leave hospital walking alone after they have been led around for years, impresses on us our privilege in being able to help those in desperate need.... We pray that some of these may say, as did the blind man whose eyes were opened by Christ, 'Lord, I believe', and worship Him."

Helen was behind plans to improve the Lakhnadon Hospital, which was brought about in 1966. The only trained staff in Lakhnadon in 1968 were Helen and Nurse Heather Beaton, also from the PCEA. The statistics for the year showed 4,078 new out-patients, 576 new in-patients, 29 major eye operations and 97 minor operations.

Back in Chhapara, after being in Taree from 1970-76, looking after her parents and practising as a GP, Helen found government and private medical facilities had improved. So she developed a Community Health Centre in Chhapara, with special emphasis on Maternal and Child Health.

## Conclusion

Helen was sent by a small church to a small mission in a rural India. She was not famous except to those who knew and loved her. She sought no power and glory for herself.

Was it worth it? Of course. Labour in the Lord is never in vain.

There were very minimal visible results in Christian conversions in her time, but more recent times saw the prayers of Helen and others answered, and she rejoiced.

Dr Andrews and Dr Ramsay provide examples of true Christian character: generosity of heart with a love of people of other cultures who need Christ. They exemplify the best of the PCEA tradition.

Helen could see the faults of her church very well, such as its preoccupation with secondary things to the neglect of outreach. But she loved the Church's Lord and was an encourager of many, despite the MS that gradually took over her body in her last decades.

She was well-cared for and died peacefully in her sleep. And in Bunyan's memorable words, "all the trumpets sounded on the other side" for this faithful pilgrim.

Perhaps some who read this will also be encouraged to consecrate or reconsecrate their all to Christ as the only proper response to the love of God in Christ Jesus. May it be so.



## A Tribute to Dr. Helen Ramsay

Dr. Helen Ramsay, a kind Doctor mama (doctor mother) and generous Dadi (grandmother) was a living testimony of Christian service in Chhapara. Her bright face, shining eyes and wide smile were reflections of her Christ-like heart – always generous, kind, patient and forgiving. She didn't talk much about the irritating things happening around her. However, once she did comment on anything, her comment was accepted as the final word, as it was always filled with godly wisdom and God-like care.

Besides her many years of health service in Chhapara and Lakhnadon, she is well remembered for her love and care of the children. The well-being of Christian children was always her concern, she wouldn't delay any call for service to them at any time. She was always available, never tired of attending to their needs and providing for them.

One of the things that she enjoyed was to take the children to the nearby river and hillsides after Sunday evening service. All the children used to walk around her, talking, laughing, and playing with her, as they approached the destination. She would distribute special candies and cookies and spend quality time with the children on Sunday evenings. It seemed that as much as children liked to be with her on Sunday evening, she too looked forward to this time. It was more than a scheduled activity for her, it was a time to let children experience Christ's care and love. The famous gospel and covenantal invitation of Christ, "Let the children come to me..." was personified in her time with the children.

Remembering her life and service as a community is always a joy for us. We are thankful to the Lord for sending her in our midst and enabling her to serve faithfully and joyfully, despite the lack of many comforts and privileges of her homeland. She was a perfect demonstration of the gospel. In fact, it was her service that still makes our proclamation of the gospel much easier and accepted in many villages.

Hearing the news of her departure to the heavenly abode was sad news for all of us. However, at the same time, we rejoice over the fact that she is in the best place, near to her Lord and Saviour, admiring His face and experiencing eternal peace and joy.

Here on earth, we mourn with hope and cry with certainty

of meeting her in heaven. The day of resurrection is not far away; when the Lord will come with the trumpet sound and we will be again united with her and other saints in heaven. What a day it will be.

May God strengthen all of you and give us all His grace to earnestly long for the day of our reunion, our everlasting fellowship with Him and His beloved.

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Source Acknowledgement: Republished with permission from *The Presbyterian Banner*, November 2021.



*Pradeep and Samit visiting Helen in 2015*

## Thinking, Doing and Influencing: Cardus at 20

A social policy “think tank” undergirded by Christian principles has been operating in Canada for 20 years now and its influence and reach is growing exponentially among political and business leaders.

Its recent anniversary celebration in Ottawa featured a number of prominent Canadians and at least one American, including former Governor General of Canada David Johnston, well-known pollster Angus Reid, Shachi Kurl (who moderated the English language debate during the recent federal election), the President of the Trinity Forum, Cherie Harder, head of a similar organization in the U.S. with whom Cardus is now connected, and Canada's Clerk of the Privy Council Ian Shugart, who advises federal governments concerning policy and law, who appeared for an interview via livestream.

It might be interesting to survey Canadians to see how many are familiar with the name – Cardus – and its reason for being. Surveying Canadians, and Americans, for that matter, is a big part of what Cardus does. The “why” of its existence is the interesting question.

At its 20th anniversary in November, Cardus invited some of its supporters to a three-day celebration to highlight this organization, its development and progress, and what it has accomplished in a relatively short period of time, and what it hopes to do in the future.



Former Governor General David Johnston.

**Author: John Van Dyk**

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(L to R) Michael Van Pelt; Andreae Sennyah; Shachi Kurl; Ray Pennings.

President and CEO and co-founder of Cardus Michael Van Pelt provided a basic resume and overview of the Cardus brand for the guests who attended an evening gala, which included a keynote address by Canada's Governor General from 2010-2018, the Honorable David Johnston.

Van Pelt said in part, “We want to see our parents empowered as the lead educators of our children from early childhood towards a pluralistic educational system. We want to see stable marriages and stable families. We want to see religious freedom for everyone, not just for our homes. We want to see end of life care that sees each soul as masterfully created by the Creator. Every human person bears the image of God and no person should be lonely or marginalized.” It's a big ticket agenda for a small yet growing organization serving perhaps as the yeast in the dough.

Cardus is growing in size and influence and is currently a team of over 30 researchers and staff working in downtown Ottawa near Parliament Hill, in Hamilton, Ontario and in other parts of Canada and the U.S., to help dissect, measure and understand the civic pulse with a view to its social health and prospects for future wellness. A significant aspect of this is Canada's tolerance of religion and faith. It's a tolerance that is trending downwards, according to a series of surveys Cardus and the Angus Reid Polling company have been conducting regularly.





*Michael Van Pelt toasts the 20th anniversary of Cardus.*

The three day event was held in Cardus's recently expanded offices, now encompassing two floors of an eight floor building in downtown Ottawa. It included a good deal of discussion, both in a formal setting with policy talks on subjects of great significance including the need for affordable housing in Canada, along with a discussion of a Covid Exit for the country and a look at how the social fabric has or is changing as a result.

Also woven into the agenda were a series of brief "Research Highlights" in which CEO Van Pelt lobbed questions at his research staffers who did the investigation work on subjects such as education, both private and public; social issues such as loneliness and gambling; religious freedom; child care; assisted suicide and palliative care – taking a hard look at trends, proposed government policies and analyzing them to determine effects and potential results to serve as guides to the powers that be in their ultimate decision making or as valuable fodder for the Opposition. The interviews and roundtable discussions with various experts provided an open window on what Cardus does on a daily basis – hash out issues and ideas and work toward the development of possible solutions for the better flourishing of society. The session on affordable housing was particularly fascinating in terms of what is being done as four experts in business addressed the problems while offering practical solutions along with the work they are currently involved in to address immediate needs.

Cardus – for Common Ground and Common Good – was essentially founded by both Michael Van Pelt and Ray Pennings, two talented men with Reformed faith roots. The two have been long-time friends. Both are making the

most of their desire to contribute to the public square through their common curiosity, intellectual prowess and gifted communication skills to not only ask the right questions, develop connections, and also to motivate and drive the Cardus team to greater professionalism and excellence for both Canada's and America's political and social well-being. Unlike ARPA (Association of Reformed Political Action), which draws on members of Reformed churches, Cardus crosses ecumenical lines to bring in experts from many faith backgrounds with the expertise and commitment to tackle the questions of the day and the problems on tomorrow's horizon.

While many in Canada may not have heard of Cardus, references to its name and its research are popping up more frequently as its work gains increasing credibility and trust among the movers and shakers in positions of influence. Given the mess our nations are in, both politically and socially, and ultimately spiritually, every bit of help and every nudge toward the right paths is substantial and a blessing.

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Source Acknowledgement: Republished with permission from *Christian Renewal*, January 1, 2022. Photos by Mike Pinder.



*Lounge space in the new office space in Ottawa.*

## ***“Be Still, and Know That I Am God”***

It's only fitting to start in this manner. When words fail, we turn to our Father in deep humiliation and confess that he alone is Lord and Majesty over everything. That includes the devastation many of us here in the Fraser Valley and our friends south of the low-lying 49th encountered in a forty-eight-hour period several weeks ago, as an “atmospheric river” emptied itself and the swollen rivers overflowed into our peaceful lives.

On Sunday, November 14, many gathered for worship, not unlike any other Sunday really, save for the fact it was under sodden skies and a steady downpour. But hey, this is part of Cascadia and we're accustomed to the occasional sprinkle, aren't we? Ah yes, we are a hearty bunch! At that time none of us felt that we were in any imminent danger.

But the rain never stopped. The Lord brought more, and for forty-eight long hours the lands were drenched, and the flood threats became very real.

Each one of us has a story to tell.

There's a story of a hasty evacuation, leaving livestock and precious belongings behind. A text from a local farmer in our circles to his daughter in law, “We turned the hydro off. We lost.” They could only stand by and watch as their livelihood and belongings were engulfed by raging waters within thirty minutes of a breach in one of the many dikes that are supposed to keep the old ghosts of Sumas Lake from reappearing.

There's a story of narrow escape and bravery while helping others. Some stayed a little longer than they were supposed to. And who can blame them. While determinedly struggling to save their own homes and farms, many resolutely



*Aerial view of “Sumas Lake Bottom”*

**Author: Martin VanderWel**

*Martin VanderWel serves as an elder in the Canadian Reformed Churches.*



*Saving calves by boat*

abandoned their efforts in defeat, only to navigate across the rising waters to help a neighbour to possibly save their properties and possessions. Some succeeded, others did not, as they could only stand by and watch in horror.

There's a story of opening homes to those displaced. Within hours, the communion of saints sprang to life. Facebook groups lit up with offers of refuge for as many nights needed. Driveways became plugged with borrowed trailers and motorhomes, and several families put out extra plates for the evening meal. Some of the evacuees, who were never really “churched,” respectfully sat through family devotions with hands folded, but were moved to tears to see those around the table worship God and sing praises. They could also witness true family communion in the “breaking of bread,” something they obviously were not accustomed to, or perhaps lost along the way. The Lord works through his Spirit in these trying times!





*Submerged farms*

There's a story about Credo Christian High School, who held a food and supply drive. It started with some flyers distributed in the neighbourhood with a notice for the drive. The response was overwhelming, and as result newspaper and TV exposure led to a long school hallway packed with needful things for those that lost it all. (OK, that one caught me in the feels, I'm fine thanks.)

And then there's a story of midnight heroics sandbagging to save a pump station. The call came out at the midnight hour. This pump station is vital to our flood relief. It was already being overtaxed in its efforts to propel waters into the Fraser River. If it failed or became submerged, the disaster area could potentially have been much larger. Hundreds of volunteers, most of them whom had, just a day or two prior, sat in warm pews, immobilized themselves to become part of a sandbagging crew. We affectionately call them "Sandbaggers." Sounds like a Hockey team. Go Sandbaggers Go! And they did. Tirelessly, for multiple hours, singing songs and offering encouragement during times when the bag brigade showed signs of fatigue. God is the author of all of this. He brought the water, but he also brought the relief, and we confess he will also restore his people through it all. A text in one of the following Sundays, "Then Job arose and tore his

robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Blessed be the name of the Lord? Really? All this damage, all this loss, all this sadness and sorrow; blessed be the Lord? A resounding yes!

The book of Job is a story about God and who he is (even though Job appears to be the focus throughout the narrative), it is the Lord and his grace that shine. And so it is in our lives, although visited by recent tragedy; he continues to be our rock and salvation. Our prayers continue to go up for all those afflicted in so many ways and who, Lord willing, may go back home to pick up the pieces and continue on. We give thanks for those who stand beside our needy brothers and sisters showing the fruits of the Spirit. Thank you, Sandbaggers, thank you bakers and home makers, and for all the prayers offered up at this time.

When we acknowledged that God's hand was in the events of these past weeks, we confess that it was God working in us with his Holy Spirit to acknowledge him in adversity. After the forty-eight-hour deluge, the sun peaked out for a brief moment and several could witness a rainbow in the sky, a sign of his faithfulness and promises to his people. Our prayer each day is that all of us, whether in prosperity or adversity, will be able to say that God be praised for his goodness and wisdom. All glory to him on high!

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*Rising waters*

## Updating The Language of the Doctrinal Standards

**Author: David C. Noe**

*Rev. David C. Noe is a minister serving with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.*

At the Eighty-Fifth (2018) General Assembly of the OPC, held in Wheaton, Illinois, the commissioners elected a Special Committee on Updating the Language of the Doctrinal Standards. This committee was constituted of four ruling elders and three ministers. The ministers are Glen Clary, John Fesko, and Alan Strange; and the four ruling elders are Mark Bube, Jim Gidley, John Muether, and myself (since ordained as a teacher of the Word). The assembly also elected two alternates, ministers Tony Curto and Ryan McGraw.

The assembly gave us this mandate: “To propose specific linguistic changes to the doctrinal standards of the OPC. The committee is authorized to propose only such changes as do not change the doctrine or meaning of the standards.”

In addition, the assembly authorized us to consider only four kinds of changes: “1. morphological (e.g., 'hath' to 'has'); 2. replacing archaic pronouns (e.g., 'thou' to 'you'); 3. replacing obsolete and/or archaic words (e.g., 'stews', LC139); 4. substituting a modern Bible translation for the text of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.” We were also tasked “. . . to strive to propose changes that preserve the cadence, memorability, and dignified style of the standards.”

### The Work Thus Far

In order to fulfill this mandate, we have worked both online and, before COVID, during an extended viva voce session in Oviedo, Florida, in February 2020. My responsibility as chairman (with Mark Bube as vice-chairman) has been to shepherd a lively and complicated discussion about how to meet the expectations of our mandate. We have found this to be very challenging, but thus far God has granted us a salutary consensus. Despite some natural disagreements among us about particular points, a spirit of preservation—that is, an unwillingness to risk losing anything of theological or literary significance—has characterized all of our discussions. And the task of Mr. Muether as the clerk of our committee has been to keep track of the very numerous proposals, motions, amendments, amendments to the amendments, and so forth, that render presbyterianism both a joy and a challenge.

Of the four tasks, proposing “morphological changes” has been the easiest thus far and entirely without controversy.

We soon formed three subcommittees (one for each of the confessional documents) and finished this portion without much difficulty. The second element of our mandate, the replacement of archaic pronouns, was similarly uncontroversial. We have so far completed work on the Confession of Faith as well as the majority of the Shorter Catechism (through Q/A 75). Quite predictably, the third item of our assignment, “replacing or substituting archaic words,” has occupied the majority of our time.

Here are some examples of our tentative work, taken from our report to the Eighty-Seventh General Assembly (GA) this past summer. Please note that none of these have been approved, or even discussed, by GA, nor are they our final report.

In Confession of Faith 1.8, we suggest substituting *common* for *vulgar* in the phrase “[the Scriptures] are to be translated into the vulgar language.” This decision was reached after some debate, in which we weighed whether the connotations of *vulgar* in the seventeenth century included something low, base, or indecent (as the word does today). And, does the proposed word *common* capture the necessary meanings of *vulgar*? We concluded that it is the best available alternative.

A second example is found in Confession of Faith 1.10. There we suggest substituting *verdict* for *sentence* in this portion: “The supreme judge . . . in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.” We decided this captures well the joint propositional and juridical meaning of “sentence” (Latin *sententia*). Today, the word *sentence* conveys to the reader either a simple grammatical construction or to the more learned a juridical meaning, while *verdict* captures both meanings better.

A third example is taken from Confession of Faith 3.8. Here the word “vocation” (Latin *vocatio*) is better represented in the twenty-first century by calling, as vocation in common parlance now only refers to one's job. And we decided that this is not a term of theological art (like predestination or consanguinity) that should be maintained despite the potential for contemporary confusion. After all, the Shorter Catechism uses the phrase effectual calling in two Q&As (30 and 31). This strongly argues that vocation and effectual



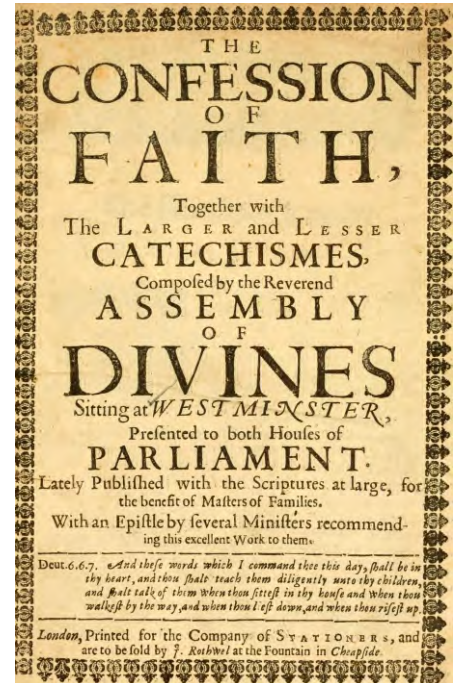
calling were synonymous terms in the minds of the Divines. It is worth noting that we are suggesting no changes at all for Chapter 4, and only morphological changes for Chapters 7–9, 11–12, 14–15, 17, 21, 25, and 32.

#### Looking Ahead

The work that remains for us is to finish making suggestions for the Shorter Catechism, including the difficult task of choosing an alternative, more contemporary Scripture translation for the Lord's Prayer, and doing the same for all of the Larger Catechism. God willing, we will have this done for the Eighty-Eighth GA in 2022.

The process thereafter, should the church decide to update the language of the secondary standards, is much more involved. First, the GA's advisory committee for our committee would need to bring our report to the whole GA with recommendations. GA would then need to decide what to do with it (which could include simply receiving the report as information, which would end the process). If the Eighty-Eighth GA decides to accept and act upon it, it is our view that another committee would need to be erected to make recommendations based upon our suggestions. If that committee's work is adopted by a subsequent GA with a two-thirds majority, its decisions would then be submitted to all presbyteries. And two-thirds of the presbyteries would need to ratify the GA's decisions before any changes would be made to the standards. The wheels of presbyterianism grind slowly. Why is this? Perhaps because, in the words of John Calvin, "all changes are dangerous, and sometimes even harmful."

We as a committee humbly ask the churches to pray for our work, that we would be wise and judicious in our choice of words, endeavoring to fulfill the GA's mandate faithfully without exceeding it in any direction. We all are blessed to belong to a church governed by Christ and no mere man, a church whose worship and life are regulated by the Scriptures with the standards as a fallible but reliable source of wisdom to instruct us.



*Title page of a 1658 edition of the Westminster Standards*

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**The Lord willing**  
 the next  
**General Meeting**  
 of  
**the International Conference of Reformed Churches**  
 hosted by  
**the Reformed Churches in Namibia and South Africa**  
 will take place in  
**Windhoek, Namibia**  
 in  
**October 2022**



## Weak Pastor, Strong Christ



Book Author: Dr. Reuben Bredenhof

Developing a Christ-Shaped Gospel Ministry, by Reuben Bredenhof. Reformation Heritage, 2021. Paperback, 144 pages, \$9.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Michael F. Grasso.

Bredenhof's *Weak Pastor, Strong Christ* is a popularization of his ThM thesis on Paul's pastoral relationship to the Corinthian church (ix). His goal is to provide a model for pastoral ministry based on Paul's example. He notes that often people go

to the pastoral epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) for such guidance, but Bredenhof argues that there is much that can be gleaned from 2 Corinthians that is fruitful for understanding the role and function of pastors in the church (2). This is because there is a "basic continuity between Paul's relationship with the Corinthians and the modern-day pastor's relationship with a congregation" (5). I personally found this book to be very helpful. Bredenhof has a great grasp of 2 Corinthians, and his insights and organization of the material are helpful for understanding what it means to be a pastor.

According to Bredenhof the first thing a pastor needs to understand is what a pastor is. In chapters 2 and 3, Bredenhof analyzes the terms used by Paul to describe his role as a pastor. He notes three in chapter 2: apostle, ambassador, and slave. Though pastors are not apostles in the sense Paul was, Bredenhof notes that when Paul emphasizes his apostleship, it is not to lord it over the Corinthians, but rather to highlight his sufferings for them (21). In the same way, pastors must be willing to suffer for their people.

In chapter 3, he highlights the fatherly care pastors are to have for their people. This means that pastors must be highly invested in the faith of individual members. Bredenhof writes, "He [Paul] identifies so closely with the Corinthians that their weaknesses and strengths, struggles and labors, become his own . . . while their progress is a sure

reason for his delight" (39). Such descriptions in 2 Corinthians remind ministers of the need to cultivate genuine love for members in the congregation, even though such love may often lead to great suffering (46).

Bredenhof then discusses preaching (ch. 4) and facing criticism (ch. 5). He reminds us of the need to preach Christ rather than ourselves (57). This was balanced in Paul's situation by a need to defend his own personal ministry against criticism. Sometimes pastors are called to defend themselves, nor for their own sake, but rather that there might be no obstacle to faith for others (64).

Bredenhof also touches on practical questions concerning the use of money, pulling from 2 Corinthians 8–9 (ch. 6) and reminds pastors to labor for the kingdom of God in light of the glorious return of Christ (ch. 8).

Overall, this book is very helpful. Bredenhof's treatment of Paul's pastoral ministry is both challenging and encouraging. May it be that God would raise up many pastors like Paul, who will preach Christ, love their congregations, be above reproach, and labor to present all complete in Christ.

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Source Acknowledgement: Republished with permission from *New Horizons*, January 2022, pp. 23-24.

