

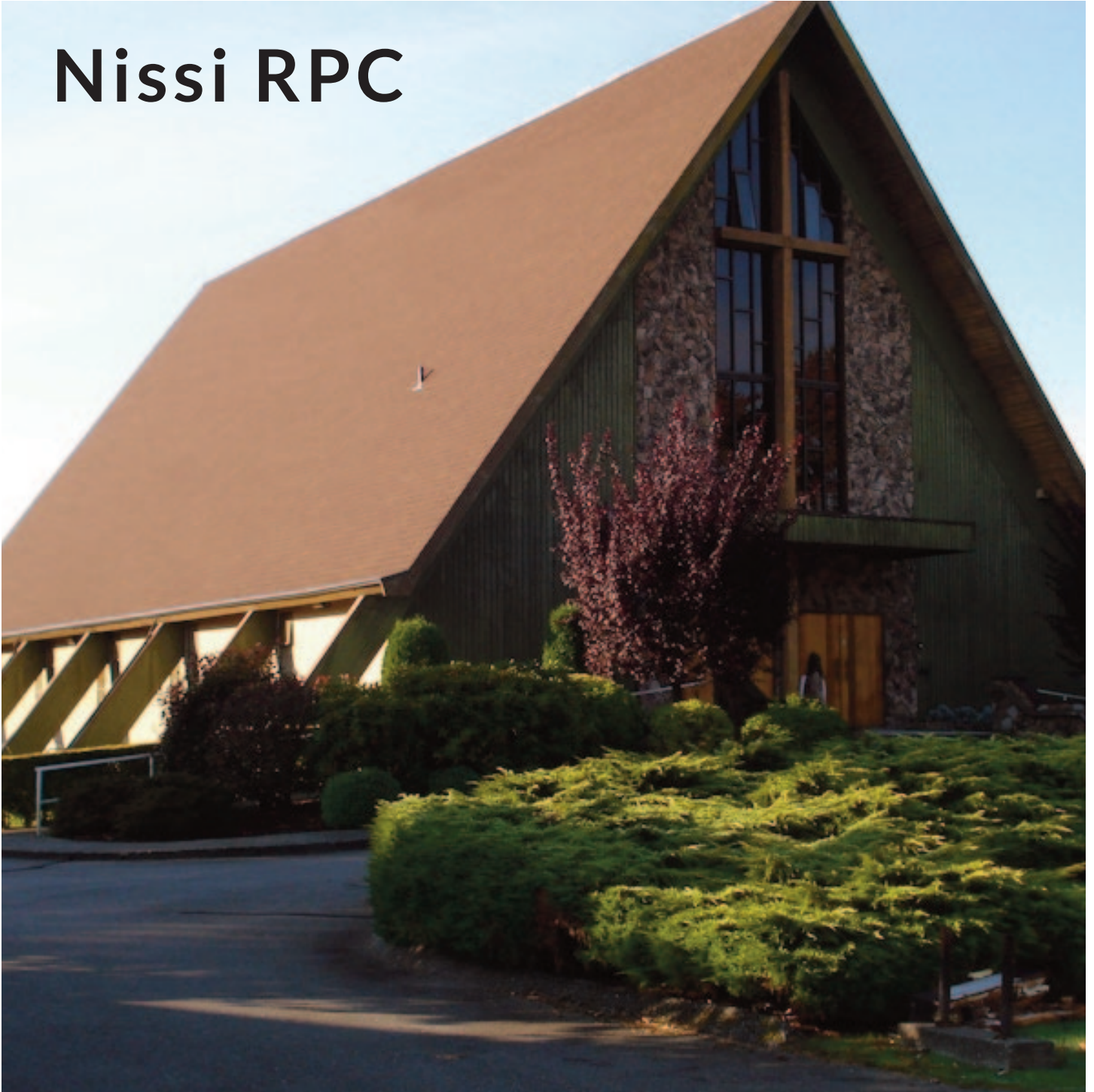


JULY 2024 | ISSUE 7

# SEA TO SEA

Canadian RP News

## Nissi RPC



The Person and Work  
of the Lord Jesus

p. 4

Interview:  
Rev. Allan MacLeod

p. 6

Profile:  
Nissi RPC

p. 14

Profile: Pacific Coast  
Presbytery (RPCNA)

p. 11

# EDITORIAL

Many Reformed Presbyterians from around the world just enjoyed the 2024 RP International Conference in Marion, Indiana. Worshipping and fellowshiping together with thousands of other Christians, as was the case in the three annual Old Testament feasts in Jerusalem, is what Sinclair Ferguson has called experiencing “big Church.” These special occasions are pointers to Heaven. One day, the Church throughout the ages will be fully and forever gathered and glorified in the perfected family reunion of God’s people, as John sees in Revelation 7:9. Of course, the “center” of heavenly experience will be Jesus, the Lamb on the Throne. Samuel Rutherford said it poetically, “O my Lord Jesus Christ, if I could be in heaven without thee, it would be a hell; and if I could be in hell, and have thee still, it would be a heaven to me, for thou art all the heaven I want.” The apostle Paul put it more simply, but no less strongly, “My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.”, Philippians 1:23. But the fellowship we will have in Heaven, being united to Jesus, will also be with everyone else united to Jesus. Part of the blessing of glory will be the sinless communion of the saints. Genesis 25:8 describes the death of Abraham by saying, “... and [he] was gathered to his people.” We should love the saints, and long to spend eternity with them. But we are not in Heaven yet! Until then, God has kindly commanded a one-day-in-seven day of worship and fellowship for God’s people. Looking back to the resurrection of Jesus and forward to his coming again, Lord’s Day blessings are to be a foretaste of glory and a stepping-stone to the saints’ everlasting rest. If, for now, your local congregation seems small, even perhaps just two or three gathered in his name, it is still a glimpse, faint perhaps, but real, of what will be. Don’t despise the day of small things (Zechariah 4:10). We want to see the Church grow, but in a fallen world in which sin still hampers our physical frame and our spiritual fellowship, there are pastoral and practical advantages to ‘little flocks’. Even if you missed the International Conference, enjoy the weekly Lord’s Day ‘conferences’ God gives to you!



BY REV. MATT KINGSWOOD  
Minister of the Russell RPC

# CONTENTS

3 NEWS: New Minister and a New Church

4 Person and Work of The Lord Jesus: Justification

5 NEWS: New Deacon for Hillside RPC

6 An Interview with Rev. Allan MacLeod

8 NEWS: Spring Presbytery Meeting

10 A Role for the Government?

11 Profile: Pacific Coast Presbytery of the RPCNA

12 Biblical Anthropology: Man is a Living Being

14 Profile: Nissi RPC

15 Book Review: Heaven and Hell by Edward Donnelly

General Editor: Rev. Matt Kingswood  
Features Editor: Mr. Jim Hughes  
News Editor: Mrs. Karin Foster

[magazine@rpccanada.org](mailto:magazine@rpccanada.org)

All Bible quotations are from the ESV



# NEWS: A NEW MINISTER FOR VANCOUVER RPC

---

Over the past couple years, the Vancouver congregation has been actively looking for a new pastor. Last year Rev. David Matthess visited the Vancouver RPC congregation in November. He, his wife Sharon, and infant son Isaac visited the church again in March 2024.

On April 17th, 2024 the Vancouver RPC congregation called Rev. Matthess to be their minister. Since he is not a minister in the RPCC, David travelled to Canada to preach to and be interviewed by the Presbytery about his beliefs and Christian character at the Spring Presbytery meeting. The Presbytery unanimously agreed that he should be given the call. In mid-May the congregation was informed of the good news that the call had been accepted.

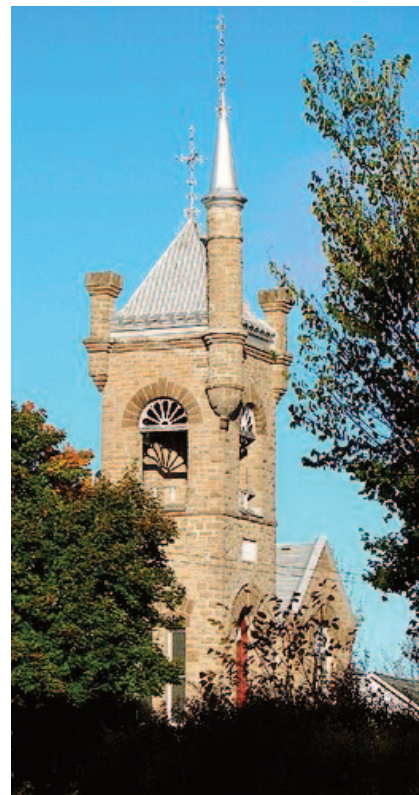
We rejoice and give praise to God for answering our prayers. Although there are many challenges ahead for the small Vancouver congregation, God is faithful, “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)



# NEWS: BECKWITH RPC

---

With the Lord's blessing, the Ottawa RP congregation has grown to the point where it can no longer be sustained within its current facilities. Recognizing this, the Ottawa Session petitioned the RPCC Presbytery for permission to establish a new congregation comprising ten families (forty-five people) from the Ottawa RP Church, 40 minutes west of the city in Beckwith Township. This petition was granted at the Presbytery meeting in May, with the Presbytery appointing a provisional session to oversee the establishment of the new Beckwith congregation. The members of the provisional session are Mr. Cory van der Meer, who will serve as session clerk and Rev. Vince Ward as moderator. Cory and Vince are currently elders in the Ottawa congregation. They will be joined in the provisional session by Mr. Peter Chan, an elder from Hillside RPC (Almonte). Two Ottawa RPC deacons, Mr. Jason Braden and Mr. Vince Giroux, will work with the provisional session to see the Beckwith congregation formed. The Presbytery also agreed to organize formally the new Beckwith RP congregation on October 29, 2024, God willing. Please give thanks to God for this development and pray for the establishment of this new congregation to His glory. Please also pray for the Ottawa congregation who are rejoicing at what God is doing but also know that, in due course, they will feel the 'loss' of these brothers and sisters deeply, as will the Ottawa Session and Deacons for their four fellow office bearers, when the Beckwith RP Church is formally organized.







# THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE LORD JESUS

## Words used to describe the work of Jesus: Justification

In considering some of the words used by the biblical writers to describe the work of Christ upon the cross we've found ourselves in the temple precincts (propitiation) and in the marketplace/ mall (redemption).

With the next word, *justification*, we find ourselves in the courtroom. Justification answers the question as to how a sinner can be made right, or "justified" before and with a Holy God. The question and answer we give is of such crucial importance for the believer and the church that Martin Luther said, justification by faith alone is *"the article by which the church stands or falls."*

So, what does justification mean?

In a courtroom, at the end of a trial a judge will pronounce an accused person either guilty or not guilty. If the pronouncement is guilty then the accused is condemned. Scripture teaches that before a person exercises faith in Christ, he or she is condemned. All mankind are law breakers.

But justification is the verdict and pronouncement of the Great Judge in which he declares repentant sinners,

who have broken his law, to no longer be guilty and condemned, but to be justified. Not only so, but the justified sinner has bestowed on him a righteousness that is not his own.

To be justified is not only to be forgiven, but also to be accounted as righteous in God's sight.

As one writer puts it:

*"Forgiveness remits our debts and cancels our liability to punishment; justification bestows on us a righteous standing before God."*

How is this so?

One answer is given by the short definition of justification found in Question #33 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism:

*"Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone."*

To be justified is to have your sins forgiven and to be accepted as just in the holy presence of God. Romans 5:1 states:

*"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace*

*with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

The Heidelberg Catechism answers the question, 'How are you righteous before God?' as follows:

*"...God, without any merit of my own, out of mere grace, imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ. He grants these to me as if I had never had nor committed any sin, and as if I myself had accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me, if only I accept this gift with a believing heart."*

This wonderful, liberating truth is something we often need to think upon and give God thanks for. Why? Because for sinners like us, justification by faith alone is something that at times, we find hard to accept. Not only so but we also find it hard to hold onto.

In his commentary on Galatians, Martin Luther writes,

*"This doctrine cannot be beaten into our ears too much. Yes, though we learn it and understand it well, yet there is no one who takes hold of it perfectly, or believes it with all his heart, so frail a thing is our flesh and disobedient to the Spirit."*

We need to listen to Luther. We might sincerely agree with the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone, but we know by our own experience that we often find it extremely difficult to gain the comfort, strength and support that is ours in this great truth. The reason for this is that one of the deepest impulses of the fallen human heart is self-justification. We, foolishly, deeply desire, and delude ourselves at times, that we can save ourselves.

If you quibble with what has just been said, then take yourself to what is probably the first of the New Testament letters, Paul's letter to the Galatians. His letter reveals

not only the fact of our mentality of blind self-justification, but his letter is endlessly relevant to us as believers. Certainly, justification by our own righteousness is not a Galatian problem only. It is a Christian problem. You and I are always, at best, an inch away from its dark powers. Indeed, it is possible to preach and defend the doctrine of justification but do it out of motives of self-justification. This is frightening and damaging to us as God's people.

We need to realize the great resource God has given to us in declaring us justified in his sight.

In conclusion, the good news of the gospel is that God has not left us in the state of sin and condemnation. In his mercy, God has provided a way for sinners to be justified by sending his Son to satisfy the just demands of the law.



BY REV. ALLAN MACLEOD  
Minister of the Toronto RPC

---

# NEWS: A NEW DEACON FOR HILLSIDE RP CHURCH



The congregation of the Hillside RP Church of Almonte praise God for the recent Ordination and Installation of Mr. Bruce Wickware to the position of Deacon in our fellowship on June 2, 2024.

Our Deacon board has been actively involved in many mercy ministries in our community at large and continue to be a blessing to the many they interact with in carrying out their faithful service when needs arise.

The Session recognized the need for an additional Deacon some time ago and are pleased that Bruce after carefully discerning God's call to the role and its requirements allowed his name to stand for election. He was elected unanimously by the congregation at a recent general meeting.

We are grateful for the blessing that both Bruce and his wife Sandy are to our congregation and thank God for their desire to serve Him here at Hillside and in our community.

To God be the Glory as we maintain His lampstand here in Almonte.



# THE INTERVIEW

Rev. Allan MacLeod  
Pastor of Toronto RPC in  
Toronto, Ontario

## Give us a brief life history (where were you born, early family life, etc.)

I was born in 1959 and raised in the City of Glasgow. My mother and father were from the Islands of Skye and North Uist. Like many Highlanders they had to come to the cities to find work. Their church background was the Free Church of Scotland. At that point they were not professing Christians, but they made sure, as a family, we were at the church services every Lord's Day. Therefore, from my earliest days, I heard the Gospel and was attending Sunday School. I was an only child until I was 10 years old when my sister was born. When I was 14, I came under conviction of sin and knew that as I was, I would not be going to Heaven. But sadly, I found the world and what it had to offer more attractive and appealing than what the Gospel offered. When I was 17, I left school and started my apprenticeship as a mechanical engineer. It was during this period that I met the girl (Alison) who would become my wife. We both came to faith in Christ when we were 19 and got married when we were 21.

## What is your current situation (location, job, family etc.)?

After my apprenticeship I worked as a Design Draughtsman ["draftsman" for



non-UK readers! – editor] The company I worked for built trucks and buses. From 1983 to 1989 I attended Glasgow University and then the Free Church College (seminary) in Edinburgh. In 1989 I was ordained and inducted to the Dunblane Free Church congregation. This was an outreach work. We had no church building and all meetings apart for the Lord's Day services were held in the manse. By this time, we had 4 children, a boy and three girls. With this situation the Lord knew what he had been doing in giving Alison to me as my wife. Even with the busyness associated with four young children and how often the manse was being used for different meetings she was a blessing to me and to the work in Dunblane. While in Dunblane we had to deal with the massacre that took place when a gunman shot fourteen elementary school children and a teacher in the school where

we held our Sunday Services. In fact, we held our services in the classroom of the teacher who was killed. This was a very difficult time for many. Two of the Church of Scotland ministers in the area lost children from their congregations. For a long time, our manse was a place where they and others would be found weeping and trying, with God's help, to bear one another burdens.

In 1997 I accepted the call to become the Pastor of the Toronto Free Church congregation (now the Toronto congregation in the RPCC). We arrived in August of that year and have been in Toronto ever since. We are now grandparents. God has blessed us with 7 grandchildren. One thing that increasingly strikes me is how quickly the years have gone by. When you are younger, you want time to speed up. Now, I'm wanting time to slow down. The truth of what James wrote speaks to me



more powerfully than ever before: James 4:14 "What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes." Thanks be to the eternal God who gives us eternal life in Jesus Christ!

### **What has been the greatest influence in your life for Christ?**

One influence was my maternal grandfather. He was a godly man. He spoke to me from my youngest days of my need of salvation. He spoke, not only in word, but deed as well. I thank God for the memories I have of him and the teaching I received from him. I look forward to meeting him again in Glory. Allied with this was the influence of being brought up in a family circle where Christ was known and loved. As a rebellious teenager, I used to hate the 'type' of family I was brought up in. Oh, how foolish I was. I am now so thankful for the family God in his providence had me born into. A family where I could see and hear many who lived for and with Jesus. If as a young person you are reading this and are not happy with the fact you were born into a situation like mine, please know you are so richly blessed to be living in this environment. Don't reject what you see and hear. I did for a long while and still to this day regret those times in which I was like a 'brute beast'.

### **What has been the biggest challenge in getting where you are today?**

In one word: ME! If it were not for the fact that God has

promised in Christ, He will not leave me nor forsake me; that, the good work he began in me he will bring it on to the day of completion at the day of Jesus Christ, then I would have no hope. I fail, have failed and will continue to fail him often over the years, but he has never failed me. One thing I notice as I've gotten older is that my memory is not as good as it once was. But I am thankful that, along with John Newton, I can say "Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Saviour."

### **What advice would you give to someone 10 years younger than you?**

Don't presume you will be given the next 10 years. 3,650 days seem a long period of time, but they are nothing compared to eternity. Now is the day of salvation, not tomorrow or next year. Now! If you are a Christian, ask yourself if you know Jesus better than you did 10 years ago. Also ask, will you know him even better in 10 years' time if God gives you those 10 years. With God's help see your life, whatever age you are, in the light of eternity. Also, be humbled by the truth that we came from the dust and to the dust one day we must return.

### **If the Lord continues to bless, what would you like to see happen in the RP Church in Canada?**

That God would bless the RPCC, so it in turn would be a blessing to all of Canada, from the highest to the lowest of our

land. So, on that glorious day when there is "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7: 9 - 10) that part of that great multitude would be from Canada because God blessed and used the RPCC in the furtherance of his Kingdom.



BY REV. ALLAN MACLEOD  
Minister of the Toronto RPC

Find us on 

**The RP Church of Canada facebook page is where you can find up to date news and information about events happening in the churches across Canada.**

**Like, and follow our page to stay informed.**

[@rpchurchofcanada](https://www.facebook.com/rpchurchofcanada)



# NEWS: PRESBYTERY MEETS

The Canadian Presbytery met for its Spring gathering on April 29th and May 1st in the Ottawa RPC building. Almost all the elders in the denomination were present either in person or online for the meetings. During the meetings, written reports were received from each congregation and the Church's committees. The key decisions made at the meetings are listed below. Please be in prayer for the life of the church in Canada.

- Beckwith RPC – a new work in the Ottawa Area (see page 9 for more details)
- Rev. David Matthes – examined in relation to the call to be the minister in Vancouver (see page 2 for more details)
- Training of Men – two men were taken under care and the seminary in Canada will re-commence in September of 2025 (see page 9 for more details)
- Chinese Mission Churches in B.C. – It was noted at Presbytery that the two RPCC Chinese Mission Churches in BC face a number of challenges. So, the Presbytery appointed a Special Committee of Rev. Matt Dyck, Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley, and Rev. Vince Ward to visit and undertake an in-depth review of both these mission churches and report back to the October 2024 meeting of the Presbytery. Please pray for our Chinese brothers and sisters in these small congregations that the Lord will bless them and the labours of their ministers, Rev. Kevin Jia in Nissi RPC (Surrey) and Rev. James Zhou in West Vancouver RPC.
- Moderator – Rev. Scott Wilkinson who served as Moderator of the numerous pre-formation RPCC 'Gathering' meetings when the Constitution was being agreed upon and then for the eight Presbytery meetings, four of the Canadian Presbytery of the RPCNA and four of the RPCC Presbytery. At Scott's request, the Presbytery relieved him of this responsibility with appreciation for his work.

Although the RPCC has only existed for a year, the Lord has enabled the Presbytery to do a lot of work, which is a cause for genuine thanksgiving.

The Presbytery meetings don't just happen; work goes into organizing and running them. Mrs. Karin Foster, the RPCC Administrative Secretary, booked flights and accommodation for men who travel from BC and southern Ontario, Mr. Norm Fry organized the set-up and catering for the two days. Mr. Spencer Clifton cooked and was helped in the kitchen by Norm, Mr. Rick McIver, Mr. Eric Cai, Amos Dohms, and Natalie Dohms. Mrs. Heather Quigley cleaned the facility after the Presbytery was finished. Without the work of these folk Presbytery would be a very different experience for the elders.



---

# REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY OF CANADA



One of the key signs of Christ's blessing his Bride is his giving to her what he calls the 'gift' of ministers (Ephesians 4:8-16). We are thankful to the Lord that he is doing this for us. The Presbytery meeting had the privilege and joy of interviewing two men, Mr. Ezra Wilkinson and Mr. Marco Tochijara. Both men came to the Presbytery with the approval and support of the

New Creation RPC Session, (Kitchener, Ontario). Having interviewed Ezra and Marco, following the process set out in the RPCC Constitution, the Presbytery unanimously agreed that the RPCC should train them for the gospel ministry. Each of them was then granted a 'Licence to Preach,' meaning they are now permitted to preach in RPCC congregations to develop their gifts. Please thank God for giving us Ezra and Marco to train for the ministry and pray for them and their respective wives, Natalie and Keturah, as they prepare for this.

The Presbytery agreed that the new Reformed Presbyterian Seminary of Canada will commence training men for ministry in September 2025. Please pray that the Lord will give all the help needed to get the RPCC established and that he will call more men to join Ezra and Marco to be trained for the ministry in Canada.

---

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

**RP Family Camp 2024** - [www.rpfamilycamp.org](http://www.rpfamilycamp.org)

Location - Wesley Acres Campground

Dates - September 6-9, 2024

Speaker - Rev. Allan MacLeod (Toronto RPC)

Theme - Christ in the Psalms

Registration closes August 1

**Men's Eastern Ontario Retreat**

Fall of 2024

Speaker - Rev. Scott Wilkinson (New Creation RPC)

**Women's Eastern Ontario Retreat**

Fall of 2024 or in the spring of 2025.

Details of location, etc., will be shared

**BC Day Conference**

September 28, 2024

Speaker - Rev. Matt Dyck (Hillside RPC)



# CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

## Curbing Children's Access to Evil: A Role for Government?

The issue of children and young people's access to social media, smartphones, and other digital devices is gaining attention, prompting responses from governments, parents, and advocacy groups. The concern centers on the social pressures minors face to get access to a smartphone and the connected negative impacts, through sustained use, on their mental health and safety.

Recent studies are showing increased rates of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues correlated with the use of these devices by children. The intrusion of smartphones into every aspect of life means that children are susceptible to influences their parents can't even imagine. Worse, smartphones and social media provide potential predators with direct access to children.

To their credit, and in response to growing community campaigns, governments at various levels are beginning to act. For example, Florida recently passed legislation banning access to social media for those under age 14 and requiring parental consent for those aged 15-16. In Ontario, the education minister has banned cell phones and social media in classrooms. These kinds of policies are gaining popularity in North America and Europe.

One major concern is the availability of sexually explicit material online and thus the access minors have to it. Canada, unfortunately, has a significant stake in this area due to the presence of the world's largest producer of this material, based in Montreal. Our country's lax regulations have made it a haven for companies fleeing stricter European laws. This situation poses a severe threat to children who increasingly encounter such content online.

Legislation has been introduced in Canada to tackle some of these concerns. Bill S-210, also known as the *Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act*, is one such initiative. Having passed the Senate, it is currently under review in the House of Commons. This bill aims to restrict minors' access to sexually explicit material on the internet by placing it behind a 'wall' that requires adults to provide age-verifying ID to access it.

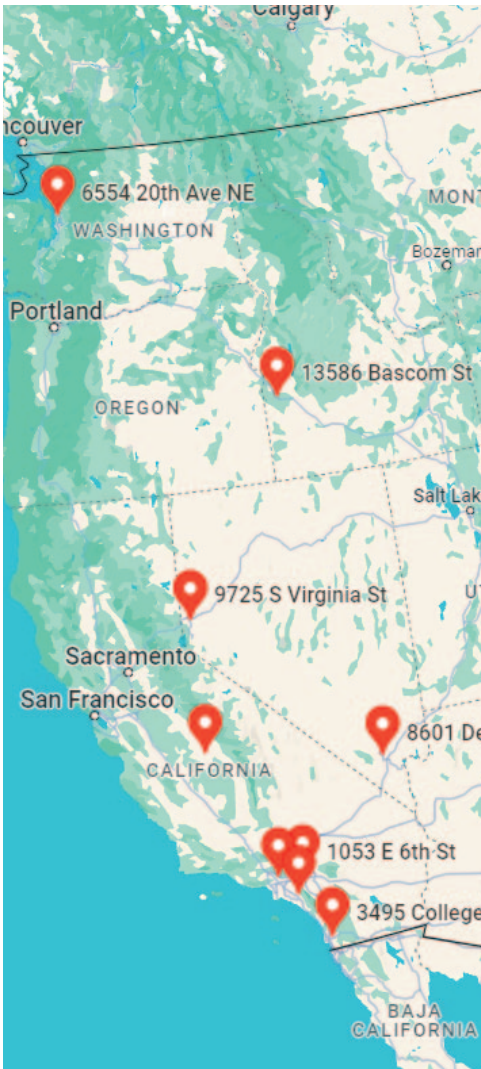
Critics of these measures often cite concerns over privacy and free speech. One secular Ottawa-based professor argues that restricting access to this material infringes on free speech rights. Christians who agree with this perspective overlook the fact that the law of God puts limits on speech. Psalm 34:13,

"Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies." Likewise, we should be glad that our governments have laws against perjury (i.e. lying under oath), and defamation, which Scripture speaks strongly against, and which destroy lives. By extension, the creation and distribution of this kind of sexually immoral content should be banned entirely.

While secular governments have fallen far from a Biblical understanding of morality, this does not diminish the importance of advocating for these kinds of restrictions. Certainly, parents have the first duty and must remain vigilant and take responsibility for guiding and protecting their children. While it is certainly not perfect, we can support legislation like Bill S-210 as a small step towards ensuring that children grow up in an environment where this material is actively being suppressed and forbidden by our government.



BY MR. COLIN POSTMA  
Ruling Elder  
in Ottawa RPC



## Pacific Coast PRESBYTERY

The RP Church in the United States is divided into six presbyteries based on geography. In the previous issues we have looked at the presbyteries of the Alleghenies, Atlantic, Great Lakes Gulf, and Midwest. Now we come to the **Pacific Coast Presbytery**.

This Presbytery is made up of 5 organised congregations, 4 church plants and 1 preaching station along the west coast of the United States. One of the church plants is a Mandarin speaking congregation. The Presbytery is also responsible for the Central Valley Prison Mission which is a unique ministry to inmates at a local prison.

Pray for ...

God to raise up men to serve as elders and deacons.

The evangelism efforts being undertaken by the churches.

The student under care, Bi Hong as he serves in Irvine, CA.



The Pacific Coast Presbytery has existed since 1911.

They organize a summer family conference each year and a winter youth conference.

The oldest RP congregation in this Presbytery is found in the city of Seattle. It was organized in 1892.

The newest work is the church plant in Treasure Valley close to Boise, Idaho.



# ANTH NUMBER 7 IN THE SERIES ROPO MALE AND FEMALE LOGY



## Biblical Anthropology – Man is a Living Being

In Genesis 1:26-27 we are informed that God created man in his image and as two sexes. Later, in Genesis 2:7, we are told that man was created with two components—body and spirit. God used dust from the ground, not an already existing form of life, when he created man's body.

We take God at his word and believe that the Biblical account provides a direct record of what happened. This means that God did not use the body of an animal into which he breathed intelligence or a human spirit; nor is man descended from some ape-like creature. No rationalization can explain how man can be both the product of a unique creative act of God and the result of an evolutionary process. One or the other claim must be false. Nor will we relegate this statement to myth or moral allegory because some supposed scientists do not happen to agree with it. God tells us plainly how he created man's body from the substance of the earth—forming it as a potter does a clay pot.

A common logical fallacy is to infer that what is true of a part is true of the whole. Because man has an animal-like body does not mean that he is an animal. Man's body is animal-like because we have been designed to live in the same natural realm as animals. God could have made man's body with some other composition. For example, some science fiction writers explore the idea of physical life being based on silicon rather than on carbon. However, then we would not be able to use carbon-based plant and animal material for food. God also re-used his brilliant component designs when he made man—for example, we have legs and hands because they are more versatile than wheels and calipers. But, neither the fact that our bodies are carbon-based nor the fact that they have similar design elements to animals, makes man an animal.

While our bodies are similar to those of animals, our spirits are not. It is true that animals have a 'breath of life' animating them—they, however, were not created in the image of God. Man's spirit is similar to that of the angels—for example, it is immortal (once created, human spirits do not cease to exist), rational, and able to experience emotions such as joy. However, angels were not created in the image of God, only man was—so it is probable that our spirits are in some ways different from angelic spirits (one aspect of the difference may be that our spirits were specifically designed by God to be associated with our physical bodies). Some writers (e.g., Augustine) suggest that man is body and spirit to be the mean between the angels and the beasts. Others suggest that man is body and spirit at the same time to humble him (by reminding him he is of the earth) and to exalt him ("to distinguish him by a mark of excellence from the brute beasts"). We must be careful what we propose with respect to man's body and spirit, or we might be caught in a trap that considers the body of man to be inferior to his spiritual dimension, and sees the spirit as more admirable than the body. This could lead to invalid (Gnostic) thinking, which views the body as not only inferior but also evil. At creation, Adam, body and spirit, was very good, a delight to the Creator, and an honour to be cherished. Man is more than the parts that make him up. He is neither animal nor angel—he is man, the pinnacle of God's creative work.

Some writers state that man was not created in an instant but formed by God in stages, as he took special care to shape him for a place of honour—thus distinguishing him from the animals, which were created instantaneously. Some even claim that the process had three steps: creation of an inanimate body, animation with a principle of life, and endowment with rational faculties. Others (e.g., Berkhof) object to the idea that God is describing a process in which the body was created earlier than the spirit. They believe that in an instant, as the body of man arose from the dust, God brought it to life by supplying it with breath. However, the account appears to present a temporal sequence. The Hebrew text supports this conclusion. Throughout the creation account (starting at Genesis 1:2), the ‘waw-consecutive’ is used—i.e., the word ‘and’ (waw) appears many times and can be translated as ‘then’ (as it is in the first word of Genesis 7:1, in the ESV). Reading the account in a straightforward way, we see that God first formed the body of man, and then at the end of the process he breathed into man a spirit of life—some suggest ‘kissed’ man into life, since the word ‘breathed’ is warmly personal (compare with John 20:22).

Man does not consist of three parts (as many wrongly interpret 1 Thessalonians 5:23): spirit, soul, and body. Those who hold to this view consider the soul and spirit to be separate components of man requiring differentiation—for example, one is the animating principle and the other the rational dimension. The Hebrew

word (*nephesh*) used here (often translated as ‘soul’), can be translated as ‘being’ (as in the NIV) or ‘person’. We can think of the soul (sometimes used as a synonym for ‘spirit’) as a reference to man’s entire being—the combination of body and spirit making up a living being.

Man does not possess a body or a spirit, as he possesses a pair of shoes; he is not a spirit that has a body or a body with a spirit. Man is a unity of physical and spiritual components, which can only exist to their fullest when they are united. Thus, death, which is a separation of two things that should not be separated (God and man, body and spirit), destroys this unity. This is one of the reasons why we, as believers in Jesus, look forward to the resurrection. It is only then that we will be the living beings that God intended for mankind to be—possessing eternal life that is both physical and spiritual.



BY MR. JIM HUGHES  
Ruling Elder in the RP  
Congregation in Toronto, ON

RP CHURCH OF CANADA [www.rpccanada.org](http://www.rpccanada.org)

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A collection of news items from the RP Congregations across Canada

Subscribe online: [rpccanada.org/contact](http://rpccanada.org/contact)



CURRENT  
WORSHIP  
LOCATION

# NISSIRP MISSION CHURCH

## ***When was your congregation organized?***

Nissi Reformed Presbyterian Church (Mission) was organized in July 2021. However, preparation began in late 2019 when Pastor Jia's family returned from Pittsburgh. Since then, several people had been gathering at Pastor Jia's house, studying the Bible together. In February 2020 the congregation began meeting on Sundays. A month later the COVID 19 pandemic began and the meetings moved to online. In the summer of 2021, the status of the pandemic eased, and the church resumed physical meetings and was formally organized on July 21st with the approval of the Pacific Coast Presbytery. In 2022 Nissi RPC joined with other Canadian RP Churches in the St. Lawrence Presbytery, and in 2023 together they separated from the RPCNA to form the RPCC.

## ***Who are the Elders?***

Rev. Kevin Jia is the pastor of the church and currently the only elder. In addition, the Presbytery has appointed Rev. Matt Dyck, Rev. Patrick McNeely, Rev. James Zhou, and Mr. Hugh Fraser to serve as provisional elders to the church.

## ***How many people participate in Morning and in Evening worship?***

About 10-15 people participate in Sunday worship services. Communion is currently served 4 times a year.

## ***What is your local community like?***

The Greater Vancouver area is full of immigrants from all over the world. Many Chinese are settling in the area. The city of Surrey, where the church is located, is the fastest growing city in Metro Vancouver, with many Chinese people relocating from neighboring cities or overseas. There are also many Chinese communities within a half hour's drive of Surrey.

## ***What does a typical Lord's Day look like for your congregation?***

Morning Service 9:45am; Sunday School 11:30am; Lunch: 12:30pm; Afternoon Service: 1:30pm.

## ***What are the other regular weekly congregational activities?***

Reading Club: Wednesday 7:00 p.m.

Prayer Meeting: Wednesday at 8:00 p.m.

Bible Study: Friday 7:30 p.m.

## ***What specific challenges are confronting the congregation?***

Pray for more people to be prepared for ministry. Pray for the provision of elders and deacons.

The high cost of living in Metro Vancouver is a great challenge to the survival of both the church and the congregants. Cultural differences are a hindrance to the English-speaking second generation who grew up in Chinese-speaking churches.



# BOOK REVIEW

By Mr. Paul Hrkach  
Member of  
Russell RPC



In this 127-page book, Edward Donnelly takes us on a theological journey that, by the grace of God, will help to shape our entire lives and perspectives toward our great and sovereign God; the God who deserves all of our praise for all of his glorious creation.

The book is broken up into two sections - why Hell matters and why Heaven matters. Donnelly clearly presents how a consideration of these realities lead directly to Jesus Christ, and why it is impossible to believe in one without belief in the other. For, if we only believe in Heaven, what do we think our Saviour is saving us from? Is Hell just an expression of pain and suffering in this temporal life? Is Hell disproportionately severe? Donnelly does an exceptional job at navigating questions like these raised by the secular world. He clarifies that the Lord has revealed his truths about his just, righteous, and good creation in his Word, including everlasting life and everlasting damnation. The doctrine of Hell found in God's Word, as Donnelly says, "is to be permanently profitable for us, designed to promote our growth as Christians" (2001, p. 48). And to that I say amen!

Hell is not always an easy topic to discuss. However, we are introduced to the doctrine of Hell in such a manner that allows us to approach the subject more easily. Donnelly's accessible vocabulary, evocative illustrations, and warm-hearted demeanour are invaluable, especially when approaching the doctrines of Heaven and Hell. What is most convicting about the book is the priority in handling the subject matter, i.e., God's Word comes first. We read about the abundance of Scriptural testimonies of Heaven and Hell and how God speaks more often about his wrath than his love. Furthermore, Donnelly reveals the deeper problem at hand--the man-centeredness of our nature and our pull toward sin, even as believers. Conviction of sin is crucial in believing, understanding, and embracing God with respect to these eschatological doctrines as taught in Scripture. Indeed, Donnelly makes us feel welcome throughout what he writes, but he does not shy away from expressing, rather tactfully, a genuine concern for our souls. He reminds us that judgement is fast approaching, and our lives here on earth will soon pass away. Rest assured, there will be no theological exam before we enter into the presence of God. Nonetheless, as we prepare to meet with him at the end of our lives, let us continue to grow daily in the nourishment that is his Word, and by studying the doctrines he has laid forth therein.

At times, our finite minds may find it difficult to ponder these doctrines. Nevertheless, ask God for patience, understanding, and wisdom as you study this book, for he "gives generously to all without reproach" (James 1:5c). May we not become puffed up by our knowledge, rather let us bask in the ineffable grace of our everlasting God, who "is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). May the Lord bless you as you venture into this remarkable little book, a true theological gem for ages to come.

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36)

Book reviewed:

Donnelly, E. (2001). Biblical teaching on the doctrines of Heaven and Hell. Versa Press, Inc., East Peoria, IL.

**REGISTRATION  
CLOSES  
AUGUST 1**

[rpfamilycamp.org](http://rpfamilycamp.org)

**RP**



Family Camp, Wesley Acres, Prince Edward County

**September 6-9, 2024**



**Rev. Allan Macleod**  
Minister of Toronto RPC  
**"Christ in the Psalms"**

Come and stir one another up to love and good deeds!