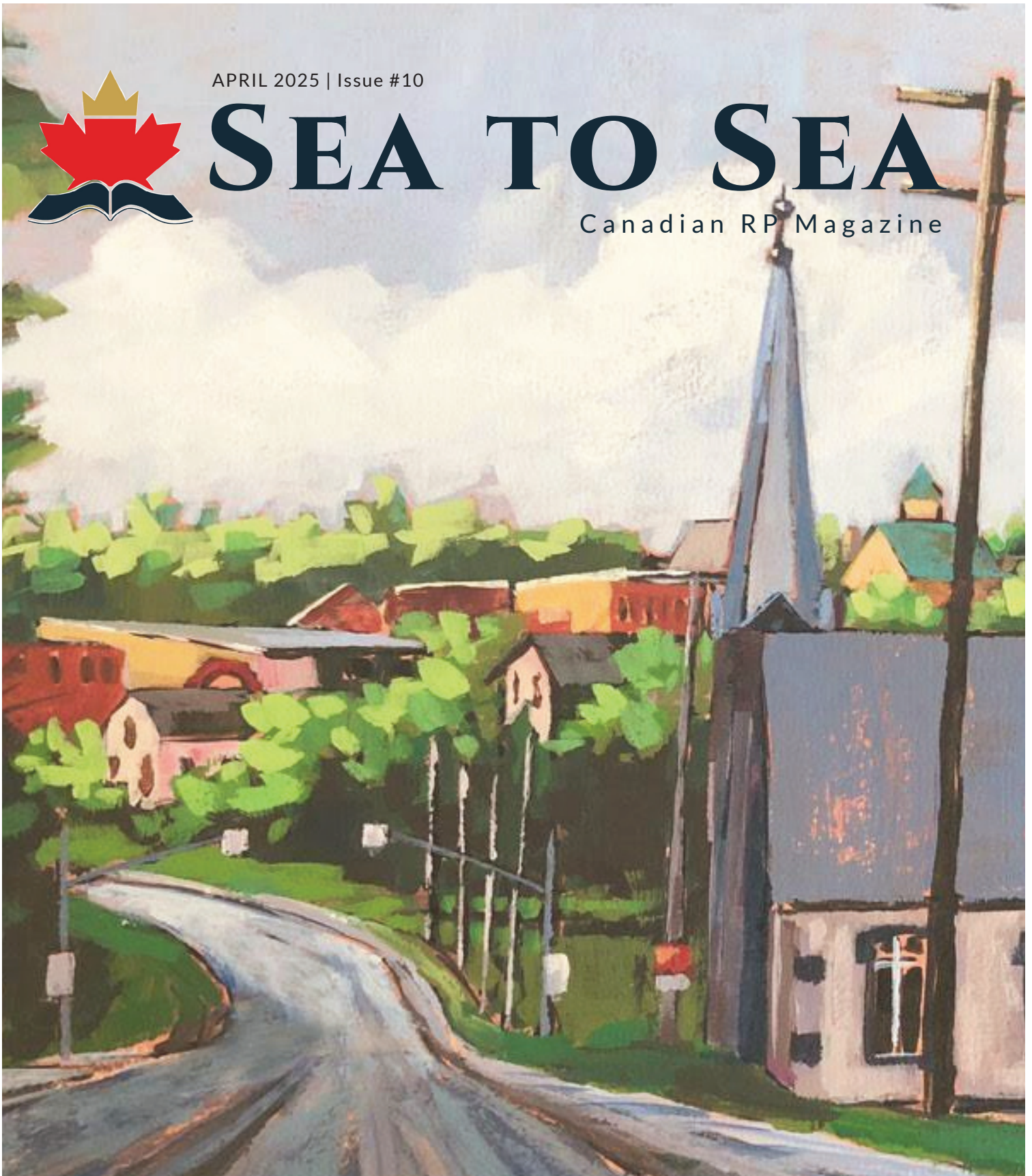




APRIL 2025 | Issue #10

SEA TO SEA

Canadian RP Magazine



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They're All About Me

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EDITORIAL

A couple of months ago, a church in Ottawa hosted the annual “Canadian Religious Freedom Summit” with this year’s theme being “Christ & Identity in a Strange New World.” From several angles, the question “What is Man?” was probed and presented from a biblical perspective. This doctrine is arguably the most attacked and so the most salient in our generation. In this light, Sea to Sea has featured an ongoing column on “Anthropology.” The “Contemporary Issues” segment in this edition echoes the topic.

Our anthropology must be biblical if we are to speak truthfully and helpfully to our culture. But we must always go a step further. “What is Man?” must lead to Jesus’ own question, “Who do you say that I am?” An accurate doctrine of Man must always include a biblical doctrine of sin. Our world has been a “strange new world” ever since the first man, Adam, fell into sin. The outworking of sin is staggering in the rebellious confusion we see today. But the only hope is still the same—the God-Man Jesus Christ, the second Man from Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:47). Adam failed as God’s vice-regent on earth. But now we see Jesus (Hebrews 2:9ff.), the perfect Man, the prophet, priest and king of our salvation. His Word as our Prophet, His sacrifice and prayers as our Priest, and His sovereign rule as our King, are our glorious hope and comfort. Human ignorance, guilt, and impotence are graciously remedied in Jesus the Redeemer. So, listen to him (Matthew 17:5). Come to him (Matthew 11:28). Submit to him (Philippians 2:10). Political, medical, or educational gospels are no gospels at all (Galatians 1:6-7). A Man hung on a cross, and a Man was raised from the dead. That Man now sits at the right hand of the Father in glory. Scottish theologian John “Rabbi” Duncan said, “The dust of the earth now sits on the throne of the universe.” Listen to the apostle Paul, “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5). Any anthropology is death without Christ. His “freedom” is the only freedom that ultimately matters (John 8:36).



BY REV. MATT KINGSWOOD
Minister of the Russell RPC

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All Bible quotations are from the ESV



Cover: Painting of Hillside RP by Eileen Hennemann (entitled *Bay Hill*)

NEWS: INSTALLATION OF REV. DAVID MATTHESS

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." Isaiah 9:2

This is just one of the verses that has come to mind since the installation of our new pastor the Reverend David Mattheß. When arriving at the church, the surrounding streets and the church building were in complete darkness. With the power out due to a power failure, those first through the doors turned on phone flashlights and worked to setup tables, sound system, pulpit, and the Zoom meeting. More visitors arrived, and it was hard to identify those around you apart from their voices.

Over the past couple years, the Vancouver congregation has been small but have continued to regularly gather for worship. With Reverend David Mattheß accepting the call to Vancouver, the congregants are further encouraged to see the Lord building his church here and continuing to bring the gospel light to our land.

On Wednesday December 4th the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada - Vancouver congregation met at 7 p.m. for worship and the installation of the new pastor. The service was led by the Reverend Matt Dyck, along with the Reverends Andrew Quigley, Matt Kingswood and Vince Ward from Ontario. The service commenced with the singing of Psalm 67 and prayer constituting the Presbytery, during which time the lights came on.



Rev. Andrew Quigley provided a narration of the events leading to the call of Rev. Mattheß. Noted in particular was the unanimous call from the Vancouver congregation on April 17th 2024. Rev. Mattheß met with the presbytery in early May, where he



preached and answered the members' questions satisfactorily. Rev. Mattheß was presented with the call and after his prayerful consideration it was accepted on May 12th. The Rev. Mattheß, his wife Sharon, and baby Isaac moved to Vancouver on November 26th, 2024.

The installation service proceeded to the statement of subscription which was read by Rev. Dyck. This was assented to by the Rev. Mattheß, and he then signed the statement. Rev. Ward led the prayer of installation, and the right hand of fellowship was extended to him by Presbytery members present. Rev. Quigley presented David with his Certificate of Installation and he signed the Presbytery Pastoral roll.

The Rev. Kingswood then preached, following readings from John 17 and Psalm 133, the sermon title being "Unity is Good". His sermon emphasized the Goodness of Unity, that Unity is a Gift from God and that Unity is Glorious. The service concluded with the singing of Psalm 133 and the Rev. Mattheß pronouncing the benediction. Mr. Fraser, an Elder in the congregation, provided a short account of how the Lord providentially opened the way for the Mattheßes to come Vancouver. A time of refreshments and fellowship was enjoyed by all after the service. We are thankful for your prayers and that all went well. For those interested, a video of the installation service can be found on Sermon Audio at <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermons/12524192302446>

By Kayla Fraser (Vancouver RPC)

CHRIST IN THE PSALMS THEY ARE ALL ABOUT ME

PART II

A vital component in promoting and producing a vibrant, robust spiritual witness and well-being is, I believe, found in the theology of the Psalms.

The Psalms no longer have the place and function in the life of the Church they once had. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that much of the Western church, in life and liturgy, has lost the Psalms.

Why?

1) Many Protestant denominations and churches rarely sing them.

2) Even contemporary choruses and praise songs adapted from Psalms feature only snippets dislocated from their rich contexts.

3) In many cases, Protestant denominations that do sing them, sing them without vigour and vitality, no longer valuing them, nor giving vital thought as to what they are singing, and why they are singing what they are singing.

Why is this so?

One writer answered:

1) The Psalms can confound us with their robust and realistic spirituality.

2) The Psalms may discomfort us with their sharp denunciations and imprecations.

The result according to one writer is:

Our theology is effeminate by comparison. Our theology is not robust.

Thomas Scott, a friend of John Newton, writes:

There is nothing in true religion – doctrinal, experimental, and practical – but will present itself to our attention whilst we meditate upon the psalms. The Christian's use of them in the closet, and the ministers' in the pulpit, will generally increase with the growing experience of the power of true religion in their own hearts.

Why then do we face an uphill struggle in seeking to restore the Psalms to the rightful position and place they should have in the life of the Church, corporately and individually?

Some reasons for consideration are as follows:

1. DISTORTION

For some, to read the Psalms in the light of Christ, and through

the lens of the New Testament, results in distortion.

That is, we are told we are reading Christ into them and what has taken place is *eisegesis* (i.e., “reading into the text”) rather than *exegesis* (i.e., “reading out from the text”)

If that is what we are doing (and actually we are not) we are only standing in the footsteps of the New Testament writers, as well as earlier Christians, who understood the Psalms to be essentially about Christ.

They understood the Psalms to reveal his person and work, divinity and ministry, incarnation and resurrection, humiliation and glorification.

Those who fault us, then also must fault Jesus who declared:

“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” (Luke 24:44).

2. DISPLEASURE

One of the criticisms made of promoting the use of the Psalter only

in worship is that we never sing the personal name of Jesus Christ.

This claimed requirement that we sing the name of Jesus when we sing to God, publicly or privately, is nowhere found in the Bible.

One location, where you might expect that the name Jesus would be sung, is in Heaven. But what is striking is, that the heavenly songs of Revelation (as found in chapters 4, 5, 7, 11, and 15) do not use the name Jesus.

If it is of such importance that the name "Jesus" be sung in public worship, surely one or more of these heavenly songs would include his name.

Furthermore, the song that was sung after the celebration of the first Supper was a psalm and, therefore, did not contain the name "Jesus" (Matthew 26:30).

Other examples could be presented, but it is hoped that those used would allay any doubt as to the propriety of using only the Psalter in public worship.

Not to use Jesus' name in public praise does in no way invalidate the sincerity of the worship, or of the worshipper.

3. DEMONSTRATION

There is ample evidence from the Psalter itself that, when used as a manual of praise, we do sing of

Jesus. This can be demonstrated as follows.

We often sing of 'salvation' in the psalms. What is simple, but significant about this is that the Hebrew word for salvation is Yeshua, which, transliterated into Greek, is Ἰησοῦς, or 'Jesus'.

Not only so but Yeshua (Jesus) can also be translated as 'deliverance', 'rescue', 'safety', 'welfare', 'victory'. So, we sing Jesus' name, translated into English, from these terms 43 times in the Psalms.

Others have noted that when the verbal form of the name Jesus (Yasha) is used in the Psalter it can be translated as 'to save', 'give victory to', 'to deliver' and 'to make wide, spacious'.

One example of this is in Psalm 18:3:

I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

Another is in Psalm 106:21:

They forgot God, their Saviour, who had done great things in Egypt.

One writer notes that the verbal form of the name "Jesus" is found 57 times in the Psalter.

4. DISCLOSE

The Psalms disclose the work of God and the Person of Jesus. As

such, the Psalter is a most suitable means of introducing Jesus to the people of our day. We live at a time when, for many, spiritual experiences are valued above all else. As one writer said of the people of our day:

They disdain the didactic and prefer the poetic. They distrust propositions but warm to story.

The Psalms offer objective truth through subjective experience. The psalmists' joys and sorrows provide resources for true, deep spirituality sought by many today. As one has written:

So, it is no wonder that, in addition to the New Testament's writers finding our Lord Jesus Christ's person and work, his divinity and ministry, his incarnation and resurrection, and his humiliation and glorification in the Psalms, we also find unique intimations of our Savior's heart in them.

In other words, the Psalms are all about Jesus!



BY REV. ALLAN MACLEOD
Minister of the Toronto RPC

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RP CHURCH OF CANADA

www.rpccanada.org

**MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER**

A collection of news items from the RP Congregations across Canada



RP SEMINARY OF CANADA

A STRONG LINEAGE

While the new RP Seminary of Canada will, God willing, commence in August 2025, it will be part of a strong lineage of training men which began in the RP Theological Hall in Stirling, Scotland (1802), and continues through the RP Seminary in Pittsburgh (1810), and RP Theological College Belfast, Ireland (1854).

More recently, in the autumn of 1982, the Ottawa Theological Hall was formed under the auspices of the St. Lawrence Presbytery of the RPCNA. Having served as the acting president, Dr. Rich Ganz was formally elected as President on March 1st, 1990. With the support of visiting professors from the RP Churches of North America, Ireland and Scotland, OTH continued to train men until 2018, when it was placed in a state of abeyance. It is a testament to the work done at OTH that several of its graduates, Rev. Matt Dyck, Rev. Matt Kingswood, and Rev. Vince Ward, will be teachers in our new Seminary.

NOT AN INDEPENDENT INSTITUTION

The RP Seminary of Canada will serve the church under the over-

sight and governance of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada. It will not be an independent institution, and care will be taken to ensure that that does not happen in the future.



This is important because the seminary's success will depend on its willingness to serve under the church's leadership.

THE ASSIGNED TASK

The RPCC Presbytery has assigned the seminary the task of training men to be faithful and fruitful ministers of God's Word and prayer. Those involved count it a privilege to be involved in training men for this purpose. God tells us that 'righteousness exalts a nation' (Proverbs 14:34) and that righteousness is revealed in the gospel (Romans 1:17), so this work, by the grace of God, will bring blessing to Canada.

2025 STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

In May 2024, the Presbytery accepted Marco Tochijara and Ezra Wilkinson as students to be trained by the church. In October 2024, Ethan Van Hoffen was also accepted. All three men are members of the New Creation RPC, Kitchener, and a wonderful blessing to the church. God willing, these men, their wives, and their children will be moving to the Ottawa area this summer to prepare for the commencement of their training in August.

THE 'LIVING GRANT'

At its October 2024 meeting, the RPCC Presbytery agreed that the church would provide a living allowance for each RPCC student. This allowance means the students will not have to get paid employment to support their wives and children or incur debt during their training.

This 'living grant' will be means assessed, with each student submitting their financial situation to a Presbytery working group, which will produce a personalized 'living grant'. Students who benefit from free accommodation will receive a 'living grant' of a maximum of \$2,500 per month.

Students who incur rental costs will receive an additional amount.

Given the significance of this investment by the church, RPCC students will be offered the opportunity to enter a contract with the Presbytery that states that their 'living grants' will be forgiven if they remain a minister in the RPCC for at least 10 years. If the time spent in the RPCC is less than 10 years, the amount forgiven would be prorated on a 10% basis per year. (In exceptional circumstances, the Presbytery may decide to forgive the living grant debt at any point.)

'TRAINING OF MEN FOR MINISTRY FUND'

Based on three students, the estimated cost of these living grants will be between \$150,000 and \$180,000 per annum. In October 2024, the Presbytery asked that sessions and deacons include the 'Training of Men for Ministry Fund' as a statutory line item in their 2025 congregational budget. The date of March 10, 2025 has been set for congregations to respond to this request. God willing, we will have the three men begin training in mid-August, and we need to know that we can provide for them as we have committed.

This is an important need for the church. Hence, the request, that if the Lord has blessed you financially, you may wish to contribute above your current tithe and offering to this fund. Please note - you are NOT being asked to divert your current tithe or offering to this. Instead, if you wish to give an additional amount, please indicate to the office bearers in your congregation that you would like the money to be directed to the 'Training of Men for Ministry Fund.'



BY REV. DR. ANDREW QUIGLEY
President of the RP Seminary of
Canada

RP CHURCH OF CANADA

Women's RETREAT

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

April 11-12, 2025

Melissa Murray

Camp Iawah in Godfrey, ON

For details please speak with:

Jen Dyck (Almonte)

Julie Ward (Beckwith)

Karin Foster (Ottawa)

Tara Kingswood (Russell)

or send an email to
admin@rpccanada.org





"If you abide in my Word then you are truly my disciples. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

From February 7-9, 65 youth from Ontario, Alberta, New York and Pennsylvania gathered at the Ottawa RPC for the annual Winterlude Youth Retreat. It was a weekend filled with fun, fellowship and laughter, and a time to be strengthened in our relationship with Christ and with each other.

Rev. Garrett Mann, from the Lisbon RPC in New York, brought us three impactful messages on "Vital Truths for Spiritual Vitality." The reminders of God's holiness and the seriousness of sin, as well as the assurance that,

if we are in Christ, we are accepted by God made a lasting impact on me by inspiring and giving me a greater zeal to pursue spiritual vitality and to grow in my relationship with Christ.

A highlight of the retreat for many was on Saturday afternoon when we were loaded onto a bus and into vans to travel to downtown Ottawa for the Winterlude Festival. A fun memory of the afternoon was the impromptu Psalm Sing on the bus ride to the festival. It was a blessing to be able to lift up our voices together in praise to God, as well as a wonderful opportunity to witness to the bus driver! Skating on the world-famous Rideau Canal (the largest skating rink in

the world!), enjoying mouth-watering Beaver Tails, and a photo scavenger hunt around the canal and downtown Ottawa made for a fun-filled afternoon, and a traditional Canadian experience.

The annual Psalm Sing and Kahoot! Trivia game on Saturday night were other highlights of the weekend. Hearing so many beautiful voices singing the Word of God together was encouraging and refreshing, and the trivia game was a fun way to end the retreat! Being able to fellowship with like-minded youth from other congregations who have a love and passion for Christ is also an encouragement and blessing for me every year.



Thank you so much to all the volunteers who gave their time and energy to make this retreat possible. A big thank you as well to all the host families. Your hospitality was such a blessing! We look forward to seeing you next year, Lord willing!

By Olivia Neudorf (Russell RPC)

My favorite part was definitely getting to skate on the canal! The atmosphere was so much fun and actually getting to skate was such a unique experience.” Carter Tonchen, Binghamton, NY

“Being able to worship with like-minded youth was one of my favorite experiences of the weekend. It was so inspiring and joyful to meet and strengthen my relationships with these people that also have God's glory in mind.” Bronwyn Pavier, Calgary, AB

“My favorite part was the outdoor activity; [...] I enjoyed it very much and had lots of fun! I certainly would like to come next year and would recommend it to others.” Timothé Massicotte, Russell, ON

"I have to highlight the canal skate time as my favorite part. Several of the youth taught me to skate, and we had a scintillating discussion about American politics." Henry O'Brien, Rochester, NY



CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

What Is Man?

At this year's Canadian Religious Freedom Summit, Dr. Carl Trueman shared what he believes is the key question of our day: what is man? While thinkers of previous centuries focused on other theological issues, the modern dilemma is "anthropological", i.e. what it means to be human. Dr. Trueman outlined four aspects of our culture's treatment of human nature which have had devastating effects on public policy.

First, human nature has been dismantled. Society has rejected the purpose for which we were created: to glorify God and enjoy him forever (Shorter Catechism Q&A 1). Instead, we are instructed to create our own "ends" and find a self-serving purpose apart from God. In a song written for the Barbie (2023) soundtrack, pop singer Billie Eilish repeats the refrain "What was I made for?", expressing the emptiness and anxiety of a life lived without knowing God.

Human nature also has been disenchanted. Rather than as image-bearers of God, people are perceived as things that can be traded for money, resulting in the exploitation of women and children through pornogra-

phy and human trafficking. Bill S-210, which aimed to restrict minors' access to pornography, was terminated by the prorogation of Parliament. Pray that a similar bill would be introduced and passed when Parliament resumes.

Next, human nature has been disembodied. Social media interactions are inherently disembodied, and as a result tend to be more vitriolic than face-to-face conversations. Our bodies are considered separate from who we truly are. If biology doesn't dictate identity, it's possible, so some say, to be a man trapped in a woman's body. Women's capacity to bear children is viewed as oppressive and problematic, and one resulting "solution" is the death of nearly 100,000 unborn babies in Canada each year.

Finally, human nature has been desecrated. Dr. Trueman reflected that disenchantment of human nature is not sufficient to explain the evils of our world; they have theological significance. The call to "shout your abortion" reveals a desire to trample on the sacred and holy, and euthanasia desecrates and commodifies death. A recent Health Canada report on Medi-

cal Assistance in Dying revealed that between 2016 and 2023, over 60,000 Canadians were euthanized. Tragically, more and more Canadians (21.1% of all cases in 2023) are requesting euthanasia due to loneliness or the feeling that they are a burden to their families.

Amidst all of this confusion and suffering, Christians can be at peace. We know who we are, and we know what we are made for. We can take comfort that God is mindful of man (Psalm 8:4) and that He is not bewildered by these distortions of human nature. Pray that people would recognize that they have exchanged the truth about God - and about themselves - for a lie. Pray for policies that value, rather than desecrate, human life.



BY MRS. LYDIA HRKACH
Member of the Russell RPC

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland traces its descent back to the Scottish Reformation of 1560. The RP Church of Scotland is the only Presbyterian Church in Scotland which didn't begin her existence by separating from the Church of Scotland.

Although still much smaller than sister RP denominations in America (100 congregations) and Ireland (40 congregations), the RP Church of Scotland is now growing again after a long period of decline. We have 3 congregations in the Central Belt (Airdrie, Glasgow, & North Edinburgh), one on the Outer Hebrides (Stornoway) and one in the Southwest (Stranraer). We also have a church in Brikama, The Gambia.

The oldest continuous congregation is located in Airdrie. They celebrated the 200th anniversary of the ordination of their first minister in October of 2024.

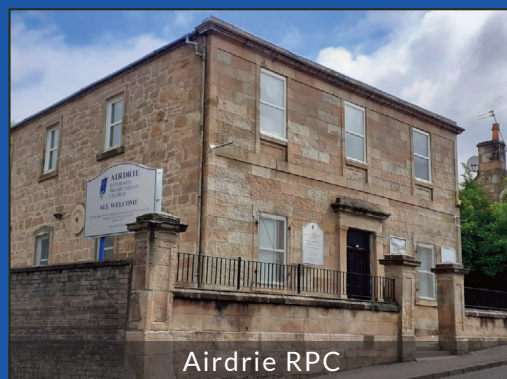
The newest congregation is the one in Brikama, The Gambia. It was organized in May of 2023, with Rev. Sylvester Konteh as their minister.

What are GO Teams?

GO Teams are short term mission teams that work alongside congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Scotland. They provide opportunities for team members to help spread the good news of Jesus Christ and to meet other believers.

Reformation Tours

This is a ministry operated by the Scottish RP Church whereby we offer tours of Reformation and Covenanting sites specifically designed to cater for the needs of those participating.



Airdrie RPC



Brikama, The Gambia

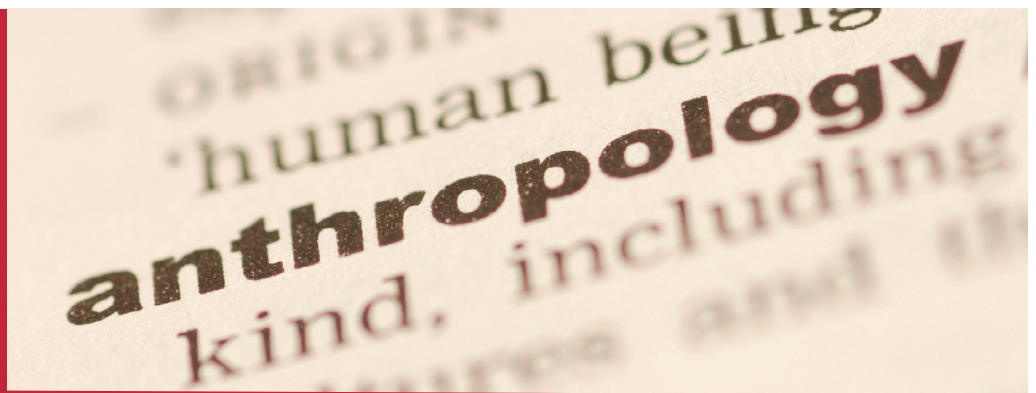


GO Team



ANTH ROPO LOGY

NUMBER 10 IN THE SERIES
MALE AND FEMALE



Biblical Anthropology – The Creation of Man’s Partner

Some commentators refer to the account of the creation of Eve from one of Adam’s ribs (Genesis 2:21-22) with words such as “a charming tale”. Or they suggest that it was influenced by Middle Eastern creation myths, rather than accepting it as the original, and that Sumerian and Babylonian myths are

perverse derivatives of the Biblical record. Without question, there are many people who think that this account is ridiculous. However, those today who dismiss it as merely a story are often the same ones who would suggest that man (and all of life on the earth) evolved by chance from a ‘chemical soup’ in a warm, ancient ocean. Their rejection of this historical record, from the mouth of God, and their acceptance of the myths of evolution reinforces our belief that God had an explicit purpose for creating the woman from Adam’s rib and for ensuring that we would know about his creative act.

The account uses the word ‘built’ (see, Genesis 4:17) in the original, which has been translated as ‘made’ (ESV, NIV) and ‘fashioned’ (NASB). The creation of Eve was the uniquely special final act of God’s creative work. And, her origination from the rib of Adam has profound biological, moral, and spiritual significance. The biological unity of mankind relates to our derived moral accountability before God. Mankind was not created as mul-

tiple distinct entities as were the angels and animals. Nor was mankind created with both sexes at one time, as were the animals. Mankind was created first as a man, from which was derived a woman (1 Timothy 2:13), thus establishing the unity of mankind. The woman had to be created from the man in order for there to be moral accountability in Adam, who represented all mankind. In the same way, Jesus had to be born of Adam’s line (Luke 3:23-38), and could not be created as a unique man-like creature. In Adam’s sin all whom he represented died, and in Christ all whom he represents are made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22).

It is interesting that evolutionists speak of a ‘primordial Eve’. They generally mean the most recent common ancestor of all humans alive today. They assume that an ‘Eve’ must have come first. However, the chromosomes (called X and Y) which determine sex in humans are derived from the male. Chromosomes are aggregates of genes that provide coded information which can be

inherited. They are composed of DNA strings and proteins and are located in the nucleus of our cells. Females have XX chromosomes and males have XY chromosomes. A mother contributes an X chromosome to every child. However, the father may contribute an X or a Y chromosome. Therefore, it is the father that determines the sex of a child. The nature of mankind’s genetic makeup indicates that the male had to come first, otherwise there could not be a female human being; thus, reinforcing the truth of the Biblical account.

God’s forming the woman from a part of the man focuses on the constitution of men and women—they are of one essence, in terms of their physical (Eve was a modified genetic clone of Adam) and spiritual personhood. Thus, men and women maintain a unity that is unique among all of God’s creatures. Regardless of their physical differences and the different roles which they are assigned by God, nothing can change this essential equality before God.

God used one of man's ribs to provide the basic genetic material from which he formed the woman. The fact that he used a rib rather than some other part has been the subject of speculation and debate. For example, some ancient Jewish commentators gave various fanciful reasons for why God didn't use an ear or other part of the man's body. The best explanation may be along the lines that God chose something near the heart of man, which man could live without, so that he could replace it with something the man could love and hold close to his heart; thus implying the essence of the institution of marriage that he will now introduce.

God removed Adam's rib while he slept. Some have suggested that he was actually in a trance and watched what God did, and so could immediately respond with full understanding about Eve's nature—derived from his bone (Genesis 2:23). However,

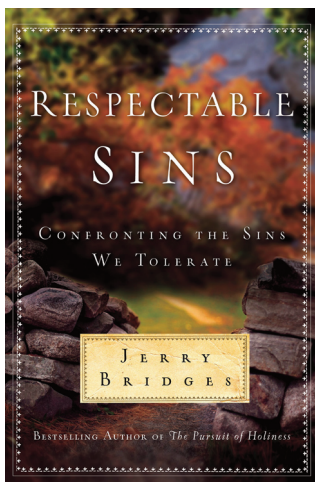
the word used for 'sleep' means a 'deep sleep' in which all consciousness is lost. It may be that God put Adam into a state equivalent to being under a full anaesthetic so that he would not feel any pain. However, God could have removed the rib without causing pain—that would be far less of a miracle from our viewpoint than creating a woman. It seems, rather, that God induced sleep to remind Adam that the creation of the woman was fully God's initiative—man played no part in it and was not even a spectator of the undertaking. This may have served multiple purposes—to: 1) teach man to trust the word of God, by accepting the reality that the woman was derived from himself, 2) maintain an element of mystery about God's creative powers, and 3) provide Adam with a gracious and gloriously surprising gift.

As her father, God brought the woman to her husband to give

her in marriage. Adam did not take the woman of his own will but received what was offered to him by God. Despite modern ideas about choosing a marriage partner, this transaction emphasizes the truth that marriage is a gift from God, not a human invention, and that ultimately whom one marries should be in the will of God—the Lord graciously provides the marriage partner that is right for each one of us. It is, therefore, not surprising that Paul uses marriage as an analogy for the relationship between Christ and his Church (Ephesians 5:32).



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



REVIEWED

Respectable Sins by Jerry Bridges

BY MR. EZRA WILKINSON
Member of the New Creation RPC

Respectable Sins, by Jerry Bridges, is an excellent book for encouragement in our daily walk. The book covers a variety of particular sins with an emphasis on those that can often fly under the radar. Bridges does an admirable job in identifying common deficiencies in thinking about sin – how easy it is to divide sin up into things that are “pretty serious” and sins that “aren’t that bad”. His manner and insight are enormously beneficial in identifying the mindsets, attitudes, and patterns we have in our day to day lives, and how we can deal with them.

The potential difficulty for any book of this nature, is that it be-

comes pure moralizing – helpful in one sense, but ultimately doing nothing more than pointing out things to be ashamed of, and making readers feel farther away from Christ than ever, unless they just work harder. This is not the case here. The excellence of *Respectable Sins* is its Gospel focus, in which Jerry Bridges envelopes everything. The book wonderfully balances the awful reality of what the “smallest” sin deserves with the perfect freedom from sin we have in Christ. Through reading it, there is simultaneous conviction, encouragement, and guidance for any and all Christians.

HILLSIDE RPC - ALMONTE, ON

Minister & Elders: Rev. Matt Dyck, Mr. Bill Lowry, Mr. Gerry deHaan, Mr. Peter Chan

Deacons: Mr. Bill Lowry Sr., Mr. Stephen Lowry, Mr. Chris Swallow, Mr. Tony Welk, Mr. Bruce Wickware

Members: 73 Communicant & 21 Baptized

Worship Times: 10 AM & 5 PM

Describe the demographics in your congregation.

Hillside is blessed with a growing congregation. Members live throughout the Lanark country region. With a number of descendants of the original covenanters who settled this area, Hillside has a spectrum of young adults, young families and godly seniors. In the past few years, we have seen a move from agriculturally based families, to Ottawa commuters, and back to more home-based employment. While we have a significant number of people who have grown up in the church, we are excited to see more visitors from our community.

Tell us about any changes to the congregation over the past 2 years, baptisms? New members? New leadership?

With 5 infant baptisms and a few adult baptisms, we have seen the Lord contribute to our fellowship with 5 new members and a new membership class starting up again. Bruce Wickware was added to the diaconate this past year.

An interesting anecdote (brief story) about the congregation or its activities or about someone (or a group) in the congregation.

Among the many places the Lord is moving at Hillside, we have been encouraged to see his grace poured out through our women's

ministry. Lead by Jennifer Dyck, Sandy Wickware and Melanie Bursey, it has not only grown in its fellowship within the Hillside congregation but has seen a number of woman bringing friends who are coming to faith in Christ.

Tell us about your building.

Early in the 1820's RP settlers from Scotland came to the area and "praying societies" were started in homes. On Sept. 9, 1830, Rev. James Milligan organized a congregation, conducting the first RP communion in Canada and baptized many children. People met in various areas of the county depending on where they lived, and the minister travelled to them. In 1870, the various county churches consolidated and the church in Almonte was built in 1891. While it has its challenges of age and space to accommodate some of our needs, we are so grateful to be able to worship in this historic Reformed Presbyterian church building.

Have there been any changes to your meeting location over the past two years?

As the Lord has blessed us with growth, the older facilities have proven a challenge with parking and accessibility. We have almost no Sunday school classrooms or office space. This has pushed us into conversations with our town leadership and community stakeholders to help us consider a possible new home.

Tell us about how your congregation engages with the local community.

We continue to try to bring the gospel to where our community is. The most consistent has been long term Gospel-filled relationships, opening our homes and lives to our neighbours. But we try to make use of other doors to the Gospel such as a yearly Sports' Camp and having various extra-church events during holiday seasons. We hope to return to our practice of neighbourhood prayer-walking when the weather gets 'nice'. On coordinated days we go out in pairs praying for our neighbours and, when given the chance, introducing ourselves and the church. Our deacons lead us to take opportunities to serve our community when needs arise. We also have a team of men who lead services in the local nursing homes.



CHURCH UPDATE

Are there any particular challenges facing your community?

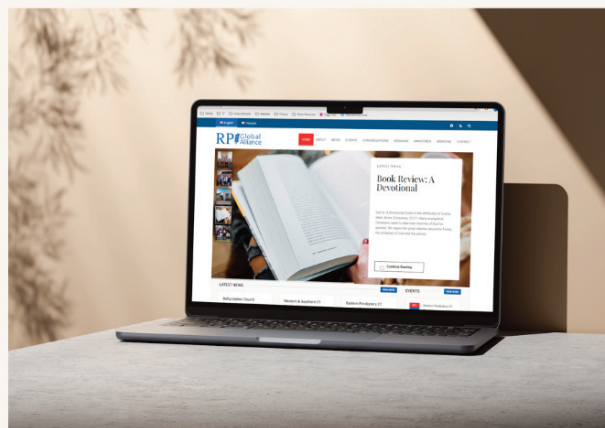
Almonte and Lanark County are fairly representative of most small towns that surround the large urban centres in Ontario. Young families are finding it a challenge to afford the small-town experience as our community's popularity is driving up the cost of living. Almonte is a very "Hallmark-y" town attracting large numbers of professionals and retirees. While the original members place a high value on community, a growing new demographic is settling here for leisure and comfort. That later group being increasingly post-Christian, it is a challenge to reach them with the gospel. Lanark County is full of people who are not a lot different than most Canadians; a friendly people who shy away from getting "too spiritual" but are still very hungry for meaning after struggling to be satisfied with all their affluence.

How can we pray for your congregation?

- Cathy Appleyard as she mourns the passing of her husband Craig
- Erin Kennedy as she mourns the passing of her brother Brian
- Deacon Tony Welk and his stem cell treatment for leukaemia
- Our need for leadership help (especially the deacons)
- Health of our seniors: Pauline Grant, Cindy (eyes), Suzanne Markham's knee, Anne Bowes, Lori Kerr
- Micheal VanDam cancer surgery recovery
- Our neighbours who do not know Jesus
- Our young families and newborns
- Our community
- Our building (facility) needs



BY REV. MATT DYCK
Minister of the Hillside RPC



RP FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT Global Alliance

The RP Global Alliance website
www.rpglobalalliance.org
is the place to find news, information
and prayer points about the RP
Church around the world.

The RPGA Team also sends out weekly
prayer emails and a monthly newsletter
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Wesley Acres Campground



September 5-8, 2025



Rev. Matt Dyck
Minister of Hillside RPC (Almonte)

"The Beatitudes: Life in the Kingdom"
Matthew 5:1-11