

Northern Lights

Scholarship Fund Extended to MFCA Candidates

By Cor Kors

The Rev. Jelle Van Kuiken Memorial Scholarship Fund, created in 2001 in the memory of Jelle Van Kuiken, is now available to candidates enrolled in the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency (MFCA). The scholarship fund has been provided by Eleonora Van Kuiken, Jelle Van Kuiken's daughter, and is specifically meant for candidates who are confessing members of RCA churches in Canada and who are willing to commit to at least seven years as a minister of Word and sacrament serving the RCA in Canada.

The scholarship, which has been available to Canadian students studying at New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary since 2001, will now be available to MFCA candidates as well. The fund will be administered by the executive committee of the Regional Synod of Canada

Cor Kors is minister for candidate care and certification for the Ministerial Formation Certification Agency.



Eleanora Van Kuiken with John Kapteyn (left) and Cor Kors.

and the RCA Foundation Canada. Candidates will be asked to sign a covenant agreement that indicates commitment to the Reformed tradition and RCA pastoral ministry.

The scholarship fund now provides assistance for committed RCA students who remain in Canada.

that more than 50 percent of pastors serving RCA congregations in Canada have earned the Certificate of Fitness for Ministry through the Theological Education Agency, now MFCA. For many of the individuals called to prepare for ministry in Canada, it is either unaffordable or impractical to

move to the United States for their seminary training. The scholarship fund now gives students access to the two RCA seminaries as well as providing financial assistance for students who remain in Canada but stay committed to the RCA.

Candidates interested in more information on the scholarship and applying can contact John Kapteyn, executive secretary for the Regional Synod of Canada, at jkapteyn@reformed-church.com. Applications are to be received by May 15 for the upcoming academic year.

Mobilizing for Mission

Mobilizing for Mission 2010 contributions through July were approximately \$20,000. Total campaign contributions and pledges to date are \$157,855.

We thank you for your financial support. If you have not contributed to MFM, we ask you to prayerfully consider making a gift at this time. We are in urgent need of monies to fulfill our obligations to One Body Ministries and Calling Lake Ministries.

Regional Synod of Canada Inc., national denominational office in Canada for the Reformed Church in America
201 Paradise Road, North • Hamilton, Ontario L8S 3T3 • Phone: (905) 527-8764 • Fax: (905) 527-8973

www.reformed-church.com



News from the 2010 RSC Annual Meeting

By John Kapteyn

The Regional Synod of Canada (RSC) meets annually with delegates from each of our three classes. Between meetings we also meet by conference call.

The RSC's annual general meeting was hosted in the spring by Emmanuel Reformed Church in Woodstock, Ontario. We thank the folks at Emmanuel for taking good care of us during our meetings.

Your delegates, appointed by the classes for two-year renewable terms, were Dan Williams and Doug Waymark (Classis British Columbia), Marc Konynenberg and Bill Spaans (Classis Canadian Prairies), and Pete Burrill, Teresa Dekker, Doug Nieuwstraten and Klaas Slagter (Classis Ontario). Stated clerk Henry Bruines, treasurer Carson Culp, staff, and representatives from various ministries also attended.

We received exciting reports about what God is doing in our churches and made a number of decisions.

A missional task force was set up to "prepare a report with recommendations to the RSC as to how we can promote a missional mindset and missional ministries within the synod." It would consider (but is not limited to) the areas of communication, potential leadership retreats,

John Kapteyn is executive secretary for the Regional Synod of Canada.

resourcing materials, and providing missional experience opportunities. (This task force has met, and their report is on the RSC website, www.reformed-church.com. Minutes from the annual meeting are also posted there.)



We approved a partnership agreement between the Northern Synod of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and the Regional Synod of Canada to support HIV/AIDS initiatives of the Namakgale URC in the Mashishimale and Namakgale communities, subject to approval by RCA Global Mission, a more detailed budget, and availability of funds. This includes the ongoing work of a feeding station, HIV/AIDS prevention training, a day care centre and home-based health care, and an addition/renovations to the feeding station.

In October, Efraim Oppelt, an RCA missionary and director of the South Africa Diaconal Ministry, will share this ministry at our classis meetings and be available for preaching.

We approved the reorganization of the RCA Foundation Canada in order to coordinate their work and meetings with those of the RSC annual general meeting.

We approved amendments to the Rev. Jelle Van Kuiken Memorial Scholarship Fund (see p. 21).

We elected and installed Marc Konynenberg as president and Pete Burrill as vice president.

We affirmed the work of the executive secretary and affirmed that his call/contract is in effect until at least when he reaches 65 years of age on October 1, 2010.

We thanked God for the opportunity to serve this corner of his kingdom. ●

News

Jack Van Holst retired from serving Arbutus Grove Church in Parksville, British Columbia, on July 31. We thank Jack and Jean for 38 years of faithful service in ministry and pray for God's blessing on this new chapter in their lives.

We also thank Bart Keefer (Calgary Community Reformed Church, Alberta) and Norm McCallum (Calling Lake Ministries, Alberta) for their now completed service.

Conflict Seminar Helpful for Leaders

By Al Plat

On May 8, approximately 25 leaders from Reformed churches throughout Ontario met at Westdale Reformed Church in Hamilton for a conflict seminar. It was an informative and interesting day facilitated by Alan Simpson from Outreach Canada.

Simpson presented surprising facts about conflict. The cost of negative conflict in churches in the United States alone is staggering: \$20 to 40 billion worth of lawsuits; 19,000 churches with major scarring due to conflict each year (an average of 50 each day); and 1,500 pastors who leave the ministry each month because of conflict or burnout (50 percent of these pastors never return to pastoral ministry).

In spite of this, Simpson made it clear to the participants that conflict in a church is not a bad thing. In fact, a church experiencing no conflict at all is growing stagnant and stale. He made a clever analogy, comparing conflict in a church with an elastic band: if there is no tension at all, an elastic band is useless. But if an elastic band is pulled too tightly, it snaps.

Participants learned of the five different ways people can respond to conflict, and it was pointed out to them that everyone has a preferred personal response—ranging from avoiding at all costs to attacking the problem head on, and anything in between. Through the use of case studies, participants discovered the wisdom in stepping back from an issue of serious contention, and determining the best response style to employ in that situation, as opposed to just responding with their preferred style (which could be less than ideal at best, or totally inappropriate at worst).

Simpson also told of actual church conflicts that he has mediated during the course of his career, and made it clear that he didn't always have the answers. That's the thing about conflict in the church—there is not just one easy answer to every problem.

In the end, it was good to learn that, interestingly enough, conflict existed in the Bible before man fell into sin, and that the presence of conflict in a church can be a sign of life in the congregation. We can use conflicts within the church as an opportunity to build the church. ●

Al Plat is an elder at Drayton Reformed Church in Ontario.

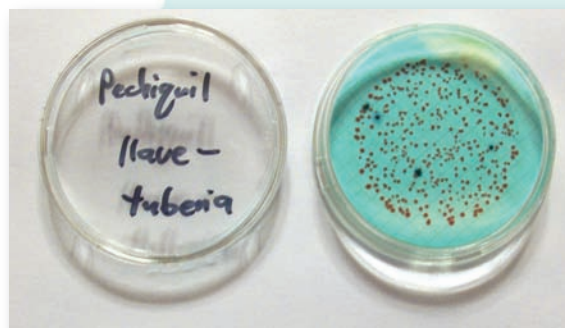
Sharing God's Water

By Jose Angel Lopez Dominguez

The first mission trip we led to Chiapas started out from curiosity, and then was moved by love to serve our brothers and sisters.

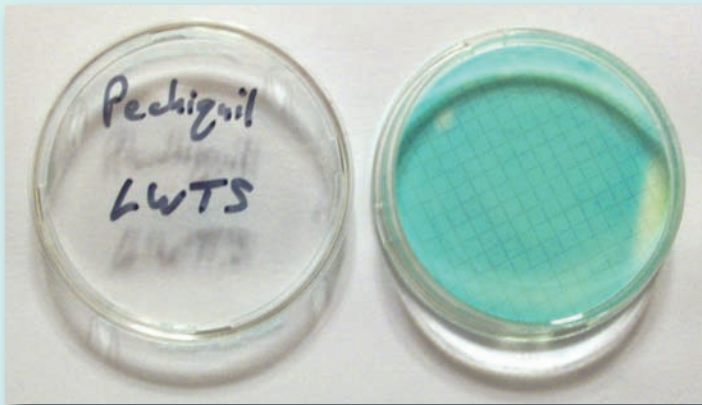
We went with a team of people from our church, Emmaus Christian Fellowship in Langley, British Columbia. When my wife and I asked our team why they had come on the trip, lots of them said that it was because they wanted to see where I come from and have the experience of a mission trip.

However, after the first trip, our group changed their attitude. It became more than a trip to Chiapas; they soon realized that it was a necessity that came from their heart. They felt compelled to serve the people that they met, and so the vision was born for second trip. For this endeavour we contacted our friend Jeff Feenstra, who works for Water Mission International in Chiapas. This organization has a purpose of providing clean water to the community in need, especially to supply potable water after a natural disaster or when the only source of water is contaminated.



A sample of water taken before the purification system was installed shows contamination.

We fell in love with this project right away. We were excited that Jeff was already working there, and he was pleased to invite us to collaborate on the installation of three water purification systems.



Clean water after the purification system is installed.

We were amazed to see the communities fully involved. They provide a secure place for the equipment, handle basic maintenance, and manage appropriate distribution of the water among the community, to believers and non-believers alike.

We felt humbled to be part of this blessing, not only for them but for ourselves as well. As we watched the finished product—cups of drinkable water being served to all—together we prayed and thanked God for this opportunity of sharing his water with others. ●

Jose Angel Lopez Dominguez attends Emmaus Christian Fellowship.

Profile: Barb Laidlaw

By Liz Groen

Barb Laidlaw, the administration manager for the Synod of Canada, has always enjoyed working in ministry.

With 12 years of experience in the synod office, her responsibilities are varied: she serves as the plan administrator for the benefits program, which includes all RCA pastors covered under the Canadian insurance plan; takes care of travel arrangements for the synod; and coordinates leadership conferences. She also receives and tracks donations from all over Canada designated for RCA missions, disaster relief, or other RCA programs.

Laidlaw has a bachelor's degree in business administration and mass communications from Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. After university, she went right into ministry, accepting a job as a church secretary. "That's where I learned I had more creative skills than I thought I had," she says. "I'd make props for [the pastor to use] as he talked about his sermon."

Laidlaw and her husband, Tim, a construction supervisor

in Brantford, have been married for 13 years. "We've known each other since we were children," she says, "but

we never connected the dots until we were young adults." They live in Drumbo, Ontario, with a golden retriever, Brody, and a yellow lab, Levi. They moved out to the country two years ago, and are in the process of completely renovating their house.



The Laidlaws love boating and snowmobiling, and anything relating to winter and snow. Barb also enjoys leading the creative planning team at her church,

Cedar Creek Community in Cambridge, Ontario. "We put together Sunday services based on different topics that the minister is preaching on," she says. The team comes up with congregational songs, special music, various media, and visuals to help illustrate the message. "We try to create innovative, culturally relevant services to help the congregation grow." ●