

Northern Lights

Summer 2008

God Moments

By John Kapteyn, synod executive

Klaas Detmar (Westdale Reformed, Hamilton, Ontario) shared with me how he and his son had no work for their framing businesses for the winter. They decided to go and check out some construction sites, but before they set out they prayed and committed their search to God. They also planned to pick up Klaas's van, which was parked at Redeemer College.

Before they got to Redeemer, about a block away, they noticed two lots with house foundations already laid. They found the builder there and asked if he was looking for framers for the houses. The builder recognized Klaas as the person who had framed a friend's house. He had been impressed with the work Klaas had done. He not only contracted their companies to frame these two houses, but Klaas was now hired to oversee all the framing for a subdivision the builder was starting. Klaas now has enough work for himself and is in charge of contracting other framers as well. I'd say that their prayer was answered and more than answered.



Please share with us how you have experienced God's presence and grace for future issues of *Northern Lights*.

John Kapteyn
Synod executive

Thinking about Discipleship

by Janine Dekker, pastor,
Maitland Community Reformed
Church, Maitland, Ontario

On February 23, church leaders responsible for adult and youth discipleship from churches in Ontario and British Columbia gathered at Forestview Community Church in

Grimsby, Ontario, to consider how we do discipleship in our churches. Randy Reese, a representative from VantagePoint3, challenged us first of all to pay attention to how we disciple people in our churches, particularly when it comes to developing Christian leaders. More importantly, he challenged us to pay attention to the voice of Jesus and to our own stories to call us to a deeper dimension of discipleship in our own lives.

VantagePoint3 is a three-year development process that deals with discipleship and character formation, learning the skills associated with the work of leadership and learning to move beyond leading to the development of others as leaders. VantagePoint3 is used in churches in several denominations across Canada and the United States.

We were also invited to think about intentionally discipling and training youth in our churches and developing their leadership skills as well; Leaders on the Horizon is a two-year youth-oriented development process based on the principles of VantagePoint3. Bob Clevringa, director of youth ministry in the Regional Synod of the Heartland, shared with the youth leaders how this process works and helps youth thrive as disciples of Christ. The discipleship committee of Ontario Classis will be training two people to be trainers of Leaders on the Horizon for Canada.

For more information on VantagePoint3 go to www.vantagepoint3.org or call (605) 362-1165. For more information on Leaders on the Horizon, visit www.leadersonthehorizon.com or contact Bob at (712) 737-4959. ●

2008 Annual General Meeting

The 2008 Annual General Meeting of the Regional Synod of Canada was held at Ebenezer Reformed Church in Stoney Creek, Ontario, on April 23 and 24.

In his president's report, Case Koolhaas said, "If we are to be faithful to our calling to be the church of Jesus Christ, then

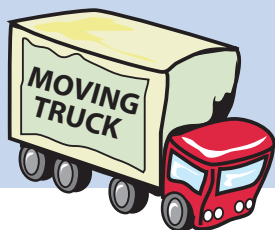
we need a cultural makeover.” We discussed and reviewed the Natural Church Development composite profile for the Regional Synod of Canada (RSC) churches. This showed areas of growth and the barriers which were preventing us from being more healthy. We will process our strategies through the three church planting and development teams.

Other meeting news:

- RSC will contribute \$2,500 to Western Theological Seminary’s Commissioned Pastor Distance Learning Program start-up costs.
- We agreed to explore new ways to fund Mobilizing for Mission.
- *Northern Lights* is part of the new *RCAToday* and we will issue one additional newsletter each year, the cost of which will be borne by RSC.
- The recommended minimum salary guidelines for pastors were increased by 1.8 percent and the mileage reimbursement amount was recommended to be 48 cents per kilometer.
- The 2009 budget was approved and assessments were increased by \$1 to \$40 per member, mainly for the increase in costs for *Northern Lights* and travel.
- We elected and installed Bill Zwiep as our new president and Doug Nieuwstraten as our new vice president.

It was an excellent meeting and we thank God that all decisions were unanimous. To God be the glory! ●

The synod office has moved!
Now you can contact us at:
201 Paradise Rd. N.,
Hamilton, ON L8S 3T3



News from Christ Community Church in Welland, Ontario

The Spirit of the Lord is having an effect on the revitalization work at Christ Community Church and Seven C’s Day Care in Welland, Ontario! Christ Community and Seven C’s have struggled for several years and have been the recipient of many grace gifts from the Classis of Ontario, the Regional Synod of Canada, supporting churches, private donors, and even personal loans.

Christ Community Church is located where poverty statistics are the highest in the entire region of Niagara. In the fall of 2007 the board of di-



rectors and staff of Seven C’s met all of the requirements necessary to become an approved subsidized provider of services to low-income families, and enrollment reached a new high of 18 children at the end of April 2008. The center is licensed for 31 children and we are praying to be at capacity by year end.

Weekly attendance at Christ Community is up to sixty or more. Many building maintenance projects have been completed thanks to a loan from the RCA Church Growth Fund for a new roof (co-signed by the Classis of Ontario), private donations, a team of volunteers from First Reformed Church in

St. Catharines, and the consistent dedication of able church members.

Children’s ministry at CCC is leading the charge in terms of community outreach. The “Heifer Project” initiative led by Carolyn Fast (director of children’s ministry) has impacted four local schools and attracted the interest of United Way and other community



agencies interested in seeing children learn to read while benefiting needy families in the Third World.

Carson W. Culp has been the pastor of CCC since June 2006. The church is strategically located across the street from Elisha House, a pregnancy and family support centre in the neediest area of Niagara. Support for CCC is appreciated and needed as they work to help a city grow beyond brokenness. ●

The Archives of the Regional Synod of Canada
by John P. Drost, archivist

“One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.” —Psalm 145:4, NIV

Most churches in the Regional Synod of Canada have existed for more than 50 years. Some of their history is being preserved in the Regional Synod of Canada Archives, a storehouse of records and documents related to our

history. The initiative for a synodical archives in Canada was taken around the year 2000 under the authority of the RCA (denominational) Archives, located in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where Russell Gasero is archivist. Interest in the Canadian project was sparked by a small group of RCA members, including Peggy Humby. She researched the history of our churches and eventually published a book entitled *The History of the Reformed Church in Canada*.

There are several good reasons for keeping a church archives:

- Preserving the church's historical records
- Preserving the faith history of the church, echoing the gratitude of God's people for what he has done, and making that story known to future generations
- Helping people who wish to research any part or aspect of the church's history (i.e., when Maple Leaf Drive Reformed Church in Toronto closed her doors the group submitted a sizable collection of their historical materials to the synod archives. These materials provide ample documentation for a study of the growth and decline of that congregation.)
- Facilitating the recovery of documents that are otherwise no longer available (i.e., someone from the Netherlands who had served RCA congregations in Canada requested a document of some importance that dated back to 1961. The document was submitted to the archives in 1999 and could be



found without difficulty in 2008, to the delight of the inquirer.)

The synod's archives are limited in size but house a large variety of records. Among these are the minutes of the RCA General Synods (the "orange books"), the minutes of the Regional Synod of Canada, and the minutes of the Classis of Ontario. Classis committees store their reports with the archives and congregations send their anniversary booklets and bulletins of special events. Individuals have sent us their memorabilia from "the early days." An invaluable resource to the archives is the nearly complete collection of *Pioneer Christian Monthly*, which is stored in a fire-proof filing cabinet.

We have few records from the classes or congregations in the western provinces and wish to encourage them to contribute their records, remembering that "the church cannot go forward while remaining ignorant of what has already been accomplished."

Mobilizing for Mission at Work

- Every week, Jose Garretton and his wife, Arlette, minister to 100 youth, mostly Jamaican, many of whom have led troubled lives. Many, through a newfound relationship with Christ, have started to live new lives that reflect the character of Christ. Parents are now contacting Jose to ask him what he is doing with their children. Jose has applied to be taken under care of classis as a student and has applied to have his ministry received as a church plant. He hopes to work full-time with One Body Ministries but will need Mobilizing for Mission support. Will you partner with us so that more lives will be changed?
- MFM has received a \$3,000 donation to support individuals who wish to go on short-term mission projects. Grants up to \$1,000 will be awarded. The projects should include RCA in-

dividuals as a group, whether from a church, a classis, or on a synod-wide basis. Individuals will be required to raise at least 50 percent of their total financial need.

- "After reviewing the Mobilizing for Mission goals and projects I am excited about its potential for moving many of us from a largely self-serving ministry model to a God-serving model. I believe this program formalizes our objectives and directs our resources outward in a way that pleases God and gives the Reformed churches in Canada a mission and an identity that they can be proud of."

—Bart Strong, elder, Westdale Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ontario

Pastor Profile: Marc Konynenberg



My wife, Florence, and I moved back to Canada after a two-and-a-half year pastorate in Michigan

City, Indiana. The church in Indiana was a non-denominational church that had begun as a split from the United Church of Christ. I found that being a separate entity caused more problems than it solved in terms of accountability. For example, in case of a disagreement there was no one to intervene as a go-

Mobilizing for Mission

Mobilizing for Mission Update

Donations received: \$28,858.15
Grants awarded: \$5,000

Please help us mobilize God's people. For more information or to donate, go to
[www.reformed-church.com/
MobilizingMission.pdf](http://www.reformed-church.com/MobilizingMission.pdf)

between. When the board is the authority, it can take the congregation any way it likes. The fact that I was only an ex-officio member meant that I had to abide by the decisions of the board, even if they were not biblically based. The only recourse I had was to hand in my resignation.

While in Indiana I also pursued studies toward a doctorate degree at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, focusing on small-group ministry. While I was reading about the church's small groups I really felt God leading me more and more towards church planting. It was my love for the church that eventually led me to consider planting a church. The only question was where.

We ended up in Edmonton, Alberta, where we had grown up. Our immediate family, including three of our children, also lived there. Through much prayer and conversation we felt God leading us to begin an Alpha course in the south part of Edmonton.

We began this course on Sunday evenings with nine friends and relatives in the basement of my son's townhouse. I believe that every one of our participants felt a deep desire to get to know each other and to experience God anew. We became like a family, caring and sharing our struggles and mountain-top experiences, growing deeper in our faith and with each other. At the conclusion of the course we all decided that we needed to continue meeting together, not just in the evenings but for regular Sunday morning worship. We found a small community hall that was just perfect and we began holding regular Sunday services in September 2002.

Those early days were precious. Looking back on them now we can really see how God used us and led us to become the body he created us to be. At that time we held regular core group meetings to determine how, when, and where we ought to go as a church.

At one particular meeting we came together and formed a non-profit society with the name of Life Saver Fellowship. We registered our name and received our status from the Alberta government. It was official—we were a church!

During the ensuing months we grew to more than 20 for regular Sunday morning fellowship, and we explored the desire that some of us had to join or become part of a denomination. By now everyone knew of my previous experience in a non-denominational setting and how I felt about it. Since I had been ordained in the RCA it was natural for us to pursue coming under the care of that denomination.

We finally became an official church plant in 2005 under the care of the Classis of Canadian Prairies. Since that time we have moved into bigger facilities and have grown in numbers. We are still a family, a body shaped and molded by God to be the very presence of Christ in our area of ministry. ●

Drayton Reformed Church

by Marlene Ottens

In 1952, Drayton, Ontario, was a small bustling village with more churches per capita than many Ontario towns—but another one was yet to come.

A large group of Reformed Church members had settled in the Drayton area after emigrating from Holland. Initially, they attended Harriston Reformed Church, but the 20-mile commute was a challenge and they decided to plant a new church in Drayton.

In 1952, 75 members began meeting in a member's living room. The congregation grew and moved to the town hall,

now the thriving Drayton Festival Theatre.

Land was purchased on the edge of town and a new church building was dedicated in 1957. Over the years, there have been several additions to the building. The biggest undertaking was in 1999, when a new sanctuary was constructed with a library, classrooms, a nursery, and meeting rooms below.

A vibrant Sunday school program and active youth ministry—with as many as 30 percent of participants from outside of the church—add to the vitality and future of the church.

Because of the building's location and user-friendly design, it has become a hub for community activities: mom and tot clubs, Girl Guides, and other groups routinely use Drayton Reformed as their meeting place.

Drayton Reformed Church is one of nine churches in a community of 1,400 people, yet many do not have a church home. Reaching out has been an ongoing challenge and opportunity at DRC.

By remaining open and available to both members of the church and the community at large, by offering Bible study and fellowship opportunities year round, by focusing on mission

opportunities around the corner and around the world, and by hosting everything from choir cantatas and a '50s musical dinner theatre to men's breakfasts, mid-week Coffee Break and Story Hour, and inclusive social opportunities for all ages—by

doing these things and more, and with the blessings of our heavenly Father, the congregation of Drayton Reformed prays for a long and fruitful future. ●

