

The Standard Bearer

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Our Reasonable Service

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
Romans 12:1

The inspired apostle Paul spent much of the first chapters in Romans establishing the depravity of mankind and God's wrath against sin. He made it clear that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Rom. 3:20). He taught us that salvation is "of faith, that it might be by grace" (Rom. 4:16). But then he turned and began to give commands to God's redeemed people: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Rom. 12:2).

Why must we do these things if salvation is all of grace? Because this is our reasonable service. This is part of the thankfulness we owe to God.

Our service is our worship and praise of God. In the Old Testament, the priests would go into the tabernacle accomplishing the service of God. They brought the offerings and sacrifices that God required of them. They performed a certain outward worship that was meant to bring honor and glory to God. In the New Testament, in-

stead of having us bring blood sacrifices to the tabernacle, God would have us bring spiritual sacrifices of thankfulness. The apostle calls these sacrifices "reasonable" because they involve a thoughtful devotion that arises within a mind transformed by God's grace. "Reasonable" worship is that which is rendered by our rational souls.

The inspired apostle beseeches us to offer a reasonable service to God in which we do good works according to His good and acceptable and perfect will. Not only must we know what that will is through God's inspired Word; God would have us perform His will. But we need to be careful that we maintain a proper perspective regarding good works, lest the devil and our own sinful flesh lead us astray.

On the one hand, we might become proud: "Look at *my* good works that *I* have done." Or, "My life is going smoothly because of *my* obedience to God." We imagine that our good works have earned something with God. On the other hand, when we think about our good works, we might become dejected. "Good works?" we ask, "What good works? I don't see any good works. Is God going to punish me now because of my many sins of omission?" We might imagine that our lack of good works puts us back under God's cursing wrath because we have failed to earn God's favor. In light of these pitfalls, some have suggested that it would be better not to talk about good works at all.

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The solution to these dangers, however, is not to strike good works out of our Christian vocabulary. If we do that, we will find ourselves criticizing the inspired words of Paul, who tells us we ought to be “careful to maintain good works” (Tit. 3:8). Indeed, we would find fault with Jesus Himself for talking about our good works (cf. Matt. 5:16). The solution is not to avoid discussing good works. The solution is to have a proper biblical perspective regarding our reasonable service of good works.



The first thing we need to know concerning our reasonable service is that it arises out of God’s mercies toward us.

The inspired apostle began this section of Romans by saying, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God.” It is important to note that the brethren are those who are already partakers of God’s mercies, which mercies Paul has described in the first eleven chapters. God shows mercy to whom He will show mercy; and He has compassion on whom He will have compassion. “So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Rom. 9:16). Salvation is not due to anything in ourselves. Our salvation is all of God’s mercy.

God’s mercy is His deep-seated tender love towards His people that desires to deliver us from our misery. According to His mercy, He chose us even when we in ourselves deserved His wrath. He sent His only begotten Son to die as our substitute. He blotted out the record of debt that was against us. He has regenerated us by the Holy Spirit and adopted us into His covenant family. In His mercy, God holds us so that nothing in heaven or in earth can ever separate us from His love. “It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not” (Lam.3:22). His mercies are new every morning.

Our good works, then, are not the cause of God’s mercy; indeed, before God had mercy upon us, we could do no good works. Rather, God’s mercy is the cause of our good works. Only those who have been redeemed and regenerated by God can ever do good works. God’s mercy is the source of the Spirit’s renewing and transforming of our minds, of which the apostle speaks in Romans 12:2. Any “service” that an unbeliever might perform is only

outward and hypocritical. It is not “reasonable.” It does not arise out of a thoughtful mind transformed by the Spirit’s power.



Such an abundant mercy of God towards us calls us to thankfulness. The mercies of God call us to present our bodies a living sacrifice. Deliverance commands obedience. Mercy calls for a response.

An unbeliever could never show thankfulness to God because he has not been delivered from his sins and misery. That is why the inspired apostle says, “I beseech you...brethren...” This urgent call comes to brothers and sisters of the apostle, who have been purchased with the same precious blood that was poured out by our elder Brother, Jesus Christ. Beseeching comes to us who have been adopted into the same family of God.

How must we express our thankfulness? By presenting our bodies. Our thankfulness does not stop when we merely recognize God’s mercies towards us. It does not even stop when we thank God with our mouths. God wants us to thank Him with all the members of our physical bodies. That echoes the words of the apostle earlier in the book: “Neither *yield* ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but *yield* yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom 6:13). “Yield” is the same word used in our text, translated “present.” If we present the members of our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness, that would be unthankful. God would have us present our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto Him.

To present our bodies to God is to subject ourselves in the whole of our conduct toward showing our gratitude to God. We need to examine ourselves in this regard. God calls us to be at peace with others; are we showing gratitude to God when we speak angrily? God calls us to be faithful stewards; are we showing gratitude when we spend our time or money unwisely? God has forgiven us much; are we showing gratitude to God when we fail to forgive others? Our gratitude should extend even to our eating and drinking (I Cor. 10:31).

A thankful child of God will not say, “Don’t tell me how to show my thankfulness.” A thankful child of God will say, “What shall I render to the LORD, for all his ben-

efits to me" (Ps. 116:12). A thankful child of God will say, "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways" (Ps. 119:15).

When God gives us such thankful hearts, we will also want to glorify Him. The apostle makes that connection when he says, "I beseech you *therefore*...", which connects our text to the last verse of chapter 11, where the apostle has just proclaimed, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36). Christ deserves all the glory; *therefore*, the inspired apostle calls us to present our bodies as living sacrifices of obedience to God.

If we do works in order to bring attention and glory to ourselves, they are not good works. Good works are only those that have the glory of God as their motive, as well as proceeding from a true faith, and being done according to the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. When we seek the glory of God, we will find ourselves being more careful not to advertise our works, seeking glory for ourselves. Seeking the glory of God means we will not seek to impress others with our outward displays of piety. Seeking the glory of God means we will not need to win arguments so that others recognize our wisdom. The great motive of our reasonable service is the glory of God.



When we want to express our thankfulness to God and to glorify His name for His mercies toward us, that will lead to fruitfulness in other areas.

Then our bodies will be living sacrifices. God would have us bring the whole of our lives and set them on His altar. Every moment of every day of our lives God would have us devote ourselves to Him.

Such reasonable service must be more than just outward show. God wants our sacrifices to be "holy and acceptable." He wants our works to be devoted to Him. He wants us to keep His commandments from the heart, serving Him readily and cheerfully. When we offer such thankful service to God, those works are acceptable to

Him. True, sin will be always be mixed with our living sacrifices; God is surely not pleased with that sinful portion. With gratitude to our God, we know that the guilt of our sin is covered in the blood of Jesus Christ. But our reasonable service is acceptable to God because of the good part that remains, which good work God Himself has worked in us. Holy sacrifices are truly acceptable to God. He delights in His own work.

Thankfulness to God and a desire to glorify Him go hand in hand with not wanting to be conformed to the sinful pattern of this world. Instead, by God's grace, we will give ourselves to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.


To be conformed to this world means to be molded and guided by the opinions and practices of the wicked around us. We are influenced by the world far more than we imagine. The idols of the world too often become

our idols: sports figures, how we spend our leisure time, how we spend our money, what we deem to be acceptable behavior, the language we use that cuts down instead of builds up.

Our reasonable service is to renounce that conformity with the world. Do not invite the world into your living rooms. Do not allow yourselves to be guided by their opinions. Do

not walk in their wicked lusts. Instead, God calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. God has already regenerated us by the Spirit of Christ. He has translated us out of the kingdom of darkness. As His children, He would have us grow into something radically different than we were. He would have us grow into spiritual adults by the renewing of our minds.

Rendering our reasonable service will manifest to us that we are children of God united to Christ. The good fruit can only be there because God has made the tree good. Rendering our reasonable service will be a witness to our neighbor, who might also by God's grace be drawn into the kingdom. But, ultimately, rendering our reasonable service will redound to the glory of God.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, live out your reasonable service. 

*The great motive
of our reasonable service
is the glory of God.*

It has been several years since the *Standard Bearer* has undergone significant design changes. While the contents of the *Standard Bearer* will always take precedence to its appearance, the two must work together. Over the last few years, the Reformed Free Publishing Association's Membership and Marketing Committee has been discussing the idea of a complete redesign of the magazine. The goals were to have a periodical that is pleasing to the eye, easy to read, and still maintains the previous standards in regards to the content.

This new design will be revealed starting with the October 1, 2017 issue. The biggest change is that the magazine will now be full color, which will require a subscription rate increase. However, the Reformed Free Publishing Association is subsidizing half of this increase for the first year, so that subscribers will pay just an additional \$3. The new subscription rate will still be reasonable for the oldest continuously published Reformed periodical in North America! —BLG

A CRC Committee Proposal for Approval of Same-sex Marriage

It comes as no surprise, of course.

A Christian Reformed study committee (this one rising out of a classis) recommends approving same-sex marriage, which proposal its classis adopts with a view to bringing it as an overture to Synod.

In light of all the other unbiblical positions the CRC has adopted over the last several decades, it was only a matter of time for one of its broader assemblies to decide that the time had come to revisit this issue too.

What has governed the CRC assemblies over the last number of decades has been their extreme sensitivity to social pressure, and conforming to it.

As stated in a previous *SB* article, it is called 'the fear of men.'

What does ungodly society object to? What does our society find objectionable about the historic Christian faith and its practices? What will earn their approval? And what will they curse and ridicule?

This was what prompted the

leading lights of the CRC to adopt the notorious "Report 44" in 1972, which gave approval to 'reinterpreting' Genesis 1-3 and its 'primitive' creation account. The report, based on the new (liberal) hermeneutic, in essence assured scientific society that the theory of evolution was acceptable to CRC scholars and its more educated members.

This was behind the CRC's decisions of the 1980s and 90s to open its church offices to women. God forbid that the denomination should incur the wrath of the feminist movement and be charged with discrimination.

Today the great social issue is recognizing the homosexual population in the interests of granting its practitioners equal rights in all human practices and relationships.

And if one opposes such 'inalienable rights,' one is to be numbered with the haters and bigots. Such 'Christianity' is reviled.

In this context comes the report of a CRC classical committee ex-

pressing its support for same-sex marriage.

In 2014, in response to a consistory's overture, Classis Grand Rapids (GR) East appointed a study committee, giving it the mandate "to examine and summarize the biblical/theological support currently offered by Christian proponents of same-sex marriage."

This the committee did, returning to Classis GR East with a report some 140-pages long, which in turn was adopted by the classis with a view to sending it on to synod. We can find no record of the CRC synod acting on it as yet.

What is of interest is that this report was drawn up in Classis GR East while a study committee appointed by the 2013 Synod was working to "Provide Pastoral Guidelines re: Same-sex Marriage." That committee came to the 2015 Synod with a majority and a minority report. The majority report favored toleration of same-sex marriages and CRC members participating in such

ceremonies, basing it on the freedom of the individual conscience. The minority report, on the basis of Scripture, expressed disapproval of CRC members or officebearers having the freedom to show approval of same-sex marriages.

Another committee was chosen to study those reports and come with advice to the 2016 Synod. That committee advised the 2016 Synod to recommend to the churches the minority report. The committee viewed the minority report as “providing a needed balance” to the difficult issue as it called for “sensitivity to the conscience of others [in the denomination]” who would be offended by same-sex marriages (cf. *CRC Acts 2016*, p. 915; available online).

Synod went on record as favoring the direction proposed by the minority report.

However, that decision is not the end of the matter. Synod 2016 then appointed another study committee, giving them five years to research and report on human sexuality. In addition to being instructed to study the biblical foundations of human sexuality, the committee was mandated to take into consideration “conclusions arising from scientific and social scientific studies” (*Acts*, p. 916).

The issue of approval of same-sex marriage is not dead in the CRC, not by a long shot. The denomination’s liberal leadership will not allow it to be.

Which brings us back to the Classis GR East report.

While the *SB* could, as a matter of information, just briefly note that

there is now this report loose in the CRC favoring same-sex marriages, and then with grief and dismay simply dismiss it as unbiblical and shameful, we think it worthwhile to acquaint our readers with the report and some of its arguments that seek to justify same-sex marriages (and, by necessary inference, an openly homosexual lifestyle).

Worthwhile, first, because this report presents a fascinating insight into how the unbelieving apostate mind works against revealed truth, and yet for all that, wants to retain the name ‘Christian.’

And second, because in the near future we may well face these arguments in courts of law when we attempt, on the basis of religious convictions, to retain the right to condemn the homosexual lifestyle, teach our children such, and refuse to have our buildings rented for same-sex marriages.

The counter-argument of courts of law sympathetic to gay-rights may well be that our appeal to religious convictions based on scriptural condemnation of such a life-style and with its practices is without substance.

Why?

Because, they will argue, other Reformed communities have capably demonstrated that the Bible actually does not condemn the homosexual lifestyle as alleged. So, opposition to the homosexual lifestyle and practices cannot be viewed as a matter of religious conviction, but simply one of discrimination and hate.

That said, we proceed to give a brief overview of the report.

Referring back to the mandate quoted above that Classis GR East gave its committee, take note of the wording. Note, not “examine... the biblical/theological *teaching* concerning homosexuality and marriage,” but examine the “*support* currently offered” by those who approve of (the “Christian proponents of”) same-sex marriages.

In what direction Classis GR East intended its committee to go is transparent. Having reviewed its mandate, the report offers a brief background of the CRC’s dealing with the homosexual issue over the past few decades.

The report points out that, in accordance with a decision taken by the CRC Synod in 1973,

The official position of the...CRC is that any homosexual practice—even with life-long committed relationships—is incompatible with Scripture and in all cases to be considered sin. The CRC calls same-sex attracted individuals to life-long celibacy (p. 5).

It is this position that the committee wants the CRC to reverse.

The report quotes three pastoral guidelines adopted by its 1973 Synod, the third of which states:

Homosexuality—as explicit homosexual practice—must be condemned as incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Holy Scripture.

The CRC’s present official position, namely, the condemnation of homosexual practice, is clear and, shall we say, straight-forward.

What we find curious is the explicit reference (in the first of the quotations above) to “even...life-long committed relationships” being disapproved. The impression left is that already back in 1973 some at synod argued that this should be allowed as an exception.

The report goes on to point out,

The CRC’s latest official statement regarding biblical teachings on this issue is now more than forty years old. Classis Grand Rapids East has on two recent occasions unsuccessfully asked Synod for a re-examination of the biblical/theological arguments in the Synod 1973 report.

So, unhappy with synod’s two previous refusals, Classis GR East decided to push its agenda once again, appointing a study committee. Its rationale was threefold:

There has been significant theological consideration of these issues since 1973, both in the Reformed tradition and in the wider Christian church. Scientific understanding of same-sex attraction has grown during that time. [And] [i]n recent years, the social and legal landscape has changed considerably....

This perspective gave rise to the mandate for a committee to examine “support currently offered by Christian proponents of same-sex marriage.”

Fleshing the mandate out, the report states that the committee was asked

...to summarize how and where

this [current] biblical/theological understanding agrees with, and differs from, the Synod 1973 report. The committee was also asked to summarize recent scientific literature on sexual orientation, and to recommend pastoral approaches and available resources for dealing with same-sex unions within our congregations and communities.

Note the reference to “recommending pastoral approaches...for dealing with same-sex unions within our congregations.” Clearly, the classis assumes it will be but a matter of time before the CRC approves of such unions within its congregations.

The committee is crafty. This is apparent from the opening paragraph in its “Summary of Arguments” page. It writes,

...it can seem like Christians face an over-simplified [!] choice between obedience to God’s law versus compassion for individuals with same-sex attraction. This is a false choice. Individuals on each side can be compassionate. Individuals on each side believe that their position is biblically sound and obedient to God’s will (p. 6).

What the committee wants to avoid at all costs is a debate on the issue based solely on scriptural evidence written black on white. That would be ‘over-simplified,’ they argue. It would become apparent that those in the denomination who oppose same-sex marriage have Scripture on their side, while all that those in favor of same-sex marriage have is compassion, a being governed simply by their feelings,

a sympathy for the LGBT in their community who speak of suffering so much due to discrimination and rejection.

The ‘feeling-compassion’ crowd would be at a distinct disadvantage in a debate in a church court based solely on Scripture the committee realizes.

So, this must be avoided.

The committee points the classis (and denomination) in a different direction.

It informs the CRC,

The most convincing arguments made by Christian proponents of same-sex marriage come from weaving together multiple strands [emphasis theirs]. The strength of the overall argument comes from how these different strands reinforce each other. Ten such strands are summarized in this Report...and [then] discussed in greater length.... The final section of this report provides advice on maintaining unity within churches.

One cannot help shaking his head over that last sentence.

Knowing full well that what it is proposing is going to stir-up strife and division, the committee assures the denomination it has advice available on maintaining unity.

“Let truth be taken to the gallows, but understand that we as Christians are the ones interested in unity!”

So, a multi-strand approach, an approach with frequent reference to Scripture, but the various passages are now to be subjected to the new insights and ‘wisdom’ of our scientific age.

This becomes plain from a quick perusal of the sections into which the report is divided.

The report comes divided into eleven sections (providing the “ten strands”). Of the eleven sections, five incorporate reference to the Bible and hermeneutics, indicating the committee’s intention to manufacture biblical support for its position, no matter what Scripture actually says about the homosexual lifestyle. The ‘new’ hermeneutic to which so many leaders of the CRC are committed is the key.

One section is titled “Interpretations of Biblical Passages Referring to Gender Differentiation and Same-sex [Relationships].” Another is titled “Advances in Scientific Understandings of Sex and Gender, Intersex and Transgender.”

These are the advances that are to be applied to the biblical passages on the issue.

And a brief study (and reapplication) of the biblical truth and definition of marriage is offered in the section entitled “Historical, Biblical, and Theological Foundations for Marriage.”

How can the creation ordinance of marriage, which speaks of God making women for man and joining them as one flesh, be applied to a union between a male and a male?

The committee has its answer—why, this too is ‘good.’

But the section that caught our eye is the first section. It is titled: “Guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Reinterpretation of Scripture.”

This, mind you, in the context of the CRC’s present position that it based on Scripture, namely, the homosexual lifestyle is disobedience to God and His Word.

And now a committee with its classis calls for a repeal of that position

in the name of the Holy Spirit, relying on His guidance.

The HOLY Spirit!


The audacity staggers one, to say the least.

But this is what Classis GR East is prepared to do. And all in the name of Christ, love, biblical truth, and the Spirit.

It is irony, is it not, that this report with its proposal comes out of Classis GR East, the same one that insisted on deposing a certain consistory and its minister for their stand against the theory of common grace.

That classis has come a long way since 1924.

And once again its way is contrary to all truth and righteousness, sad to say.

Next article we intend to offer a brief critique of some of the arguments used to justify this anti-Christian proposal. 

GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

REV. WILBUR BRUINSMA

Protestant Reformed Missions

The Depression Years: Mission Methods Developed (1932-1939) [3]

The June 1932 meeting of Classis was filled with matters of missions. Not only had the special study committee defined the task of the Home Classical Committee as presented in our last article, but a couple of other matters were brought to the Classis’ attention as well.

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Previous article in this series: December 15, 2016, p. 136.

First of all, the Mission Committee announced the organization of Creston Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, MI, consisting of 19 families. Further, Rev. H. Hoeksema reported of his visit to Redlands, CA, where he helped organize a church with 44 families. It was a time of rejoicing and much excitement for our churches. Rev. Hoeksema expressed his opinion regarding further labor in the West. “The far West is a large, ripe field for us, since God’s people are starving and look

with longing for the preaching of the Word as we enjoy it.”¹ That same year in October a small congregation was organized in Los Angeles, CA. From the outset, however, this congregation was in financial straits. Its demand for a large amount of subsidy could not be met by our churches and by June of 1937 this struggling congregation disbanded.

In the second place, the new method of creating contacts by means of pamphlet distribution continued to develop. The Mission Committee recommended,

In connection with the distribution of the “Triple Breach,” which is just begun, we are of the opinion that this work should be followed up with other publications. This can be done by pamphlets, brochures, or both. We suggest that the classis consider the following: ...Classis should give us authority to gather the material already in print. For example: our most recent ecclesiastical struggle, a catechism concerning our Protestant Reformed Churches, of even the texts that are used to support the Three Points, and as these texts have been treated under exegetical studies in the *Standard Bearer*.²

Most of us do not recognize in this quote a description of a book published about four years later (“a catechism concerning our Protestant Reformed Churches”). In 1936 the book, *The Protestant Reformed Churches in America* appeared in print in a limited quantity. In the book the author, Rev. Herman Hoeksema, gratefully acknowledged the receipt of \$350 from the Sunday School of First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. With this money 200 copies of this book were made available to the public. Why not more? It was the time of the Depression. In 1947 a second edition was published and more widely distributed. In 1933 another pamphlet was added to those being published and distributed in Dutch and English by the Mission Committee. It was entitled, “The Gospel,” authored by Rev. Hoeksema.

The Mission Committee gave one more piece of advice to the June 1932 Classis that is worthy of note:

That Classis express whether it is desirable, if the expenses involved are not too great, to make use of one of

¹ *Minutes of the Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches*, June 1, 1932, Article 24.

² *Minutes*, 1932, Supplement 3 (Report of the Mission Committee).

the radio stations, preferably from a city from which both the east and the west can be reached, and that during the winter months.

Grounds are the following:

- 1) We can reach by radio practically all those churches among which we must do mission work.
- 2) We can also advertise our writing through the means of radio.
- 3) By this same means, under the blessing of the Lord, an extremely large field can be opened to us.³

That Classis made the following decision in Article 23, Point 4 regarding the use of radio: “Decided to reject this advice.” As we have noted already in other instances, no grounds for this decision were supplied. But it is not difficult for us to surmise what probably were the underlying causes for a negative vote on this advice. First, the expense of radio was indeed too great for the hard times the church was now experiencing financially. But there may have been another reason for this decision too. Radio was fairly new. Although daily radio broadcasting had begun already in 1921, it was only by means of AM frequency, which was not all that clear or reliable. It was not until the 1930s that FM was invented by amateur radio operators and patented in 1933. FM drastically reduced static and interference. But it was not until 1940 that FM was used in commercial modes. No doubt, therefore, all of this came into consideration too. Did the use of radio warrant the high expenditure when it really was not that reliable?

But the point is, already then the Mission Committee was exploring other methods of exposing others to the truth of God’s Word. In order to stimulate interest in the truth of sovereign grace, pamphlet distribution was developing and radio was being examined closely.

In June 1934 it was announced at Classis that, under the labors of Rev. Hoeksema, another congregation was organized, this time in Orange City, IA, with 11 families. This came with only a total of three weeks of labor in the area. In June 1935, through the labors of Redlands and Los Angeles, CA churches, another congregation was organized, in Bellflower, CA. Labors by area ministers that began in January 1935 in the Muskegon/Spring Lake/Grand Haven, Michigan area finally resulted in the formation of a congregation consisting of 9 families in Grand Haven, Michigan in June of 1936.

³ *Minutes*, 1932.

Despite the addition of these congregations to our denomination, the demand for a missionary was pressing itself upon the churches. In 1932 Rev. Hoeksema was given ten weeks off by First Church to travel to the far western United States for mission work. We noted already that he assisted in the organization of Redlands, CA PRC. He also preached in the Lynden, Washington area. But it was really with the proposal that first came from the consistory of South Holland PRC in 1933 that the need for a full-time missionary revealed itself. It was the desire of South Holland to have Rev. Hoeksema labor in the Chicago area for an extended period of time. This request, of course, failed to take into consideration Hoeksema's work in the seminary and in his own congregation of First Church of Grand Rapids. Being totally convinced that Chicago ought to be the next great mission field of our churches, since it contained "the largest center of the Christian Reformed Church, with the possible exclusion of Grand Rapids," South Holland PRC requested the following of the Classis of February 1, 1933:

The consistory requests your committee to try, if possible, to obtain Rev. H. Hoeksema for this work for as long as possible.

a. Since we are of the opinion that as yet under the providence of God (in him) can be seen the greatest gifts and talents for that work in one person, and it is our conviction that we must make as much of this great blessing of God as possible, especially during the first part of our labors in Chicago.

b. That Rev. Hoeksema is the proper person historically, dogmatically, and church politically, besides being the most powerful figure in this struggle.

c. That it is very likely, should your committee decide to grant our request, that the opposition in Chicago will be of such a nature that the best talents will be demanded to labor there fruitfully.⁴

The decision of the Classis did not quite reflect the zeal toward work in Chicagoland that South Holland expected. It was decided that the request to labor in Englewood (a suburb of Chicago) ought to come from the local area itself and, therefore, South Holland consistory ought to do more

⁴ *Minutes of the Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches*, February 1, 1933 (Supplement 7b, Appendix to Mission Committee Report).

preliminary work in this neighborhood before the Mission Committee send Rev. Hoeksema to labor there. In June of 1933 Classis again decided not to consider this request. In January 1934 the Classis decided a third time not to send Rev. Hoeksema for an extended period of time, until more work would be done in the area by South Holland. Understandably, there was some tension over the issue at Classis. Rev. P. DeBoer, minister in South Holland at the time, asked that his negative vote not to send Rev. Hoeksema be registered in Classis' minutes.

In June 1935 the Mission Committee reported to Classis that six lectures were held in Roseland of Chicago. "The attendance was not very encouraging." South Holland insisted that the reason for such poor attendance was the failure to make personal contact with people there. Nevertheless, the Mission Committee decided to discontinue labors in Roseland until the next Fall, then to reconsider the matter of working there. The Classis received this for information. At that same Classis, however, South Holland responded with its own perceptive and, evidently, convincing advice.

All our churches realize with the Mission Committee that, even though we strongly desire that Rev. Hoeksema be released to labor for a time in a certain field, there must be definite reasons to take him away from his labor.

With all praise for the work that has been accomplished by our "part-time" missionary [Rev. Hoeksema], the consistory of South Holland is of the conviction that we must not be satisfied with a "part-time" missionary, but must proceed to call a "full-time" missionary. Therefore, we advise Classis to carry this out even as decided in the June Classis of '32. The specific part of the report that we have in mind reads as follows: "The question arises, in which manner and by what means should this Classical Home Mission work be carried out. To this we answer, in the first place, that it is more desirable that one or more missionaries be called, and that as soon as possible. These missionaries would labor in the field, personally seek out the dispersed, bring the wanderers back, and by God's grace be instrumental to establish a church as the body of Christ in its purest form." Our churches have need of this. The committee therefore also advises, that steps should be taken to call one or more such missionaries.... The consistory of South Holland requests the Classis to proceed to carry out the above-mentioned advice and presents the following grounds:

1. That it is the calling of the church to proclaim

and spread the pure truth of the gospel to the utmost of its power, not only where this is requested but also in other areas. We cannot say that until now this has been done to the utmost of our power, and if this is to happen we will need a full time missionary.

2. That history has shown that mission work, which is an extremely difficult task, brings forth the most fruit only then when a person is called and separated for that work with all his gifts and talents devoted to it.

3. That in various places there are members of the church who, because of their conviction and knowledge of Scriptures and the truth of the Confessions, actually belong to our denomination. Now because of various circumstances they are not very well acquainted with the history of recent years or for some other reason do not join us. According to our conviction this could be prevented and remedied in many cases by personal contacts and private discussions, which are virtually impossible for our Mission Committee and for a “part-time” missionary in ten weeks of the year. A “full-time” missionary could make these personal contacts with individuals and families, in order to establish churches in those areas where there are enough present for this purpose.


4. Especially in connection with the last mentioned, it is necessary for the expansion of our churches, if at all possible, to continue to work as systematically and consis-

tently wherever there is a favorable beginning. At present this is very difficult. After a few weeks our “part-time” missionary must return home and his mission efforts are discontinued for at least a year.

5. We also have a calling in regard to the young men who by God’s providence are studying at our school in the hope of being sent out into God’s vineyard. If under the blessing of the Lord our denomination is to grow, more mission work must be done and at least one “full-time” missionary must be sent out.

6. And finally, the work of a “part-time” missionary has been greatly blessed; are we then expecting too much if we look for even more fruit in the future if a “full-time” missionary is sent out?

For all these reasons the consistory of South Holland advises that right now we proceed to carry out the decision of the June Classis of 1932, and that by first calling one missionary. God will certainly not put us to shame in this respect, brethren, but will certainly bestow His blessing on such efforts.⁵

The following year the first missionary of the PRC was called. We will finish the history of missions through the rest of the decade of the 1930s in the next article. 

⁵ *Minutes of the Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches*, June 5 and 6, 1935 (Supplement 13).

Legalism: Another Heresy Within

You have probably heard the accusation, “You are so legalistic!” or “Your church is full of legalists!” How do you respond to that label? To such a stinging stigma, you may want to respond defensively, “No, I am not! No, we are not!” Yet, however truthful or untruthful that retort might be, I plead in love for you young people of our beloved churches—that you think before repeating that answer. Examine yourself for this heresy within.

For good reason, this article closely follows a previous one about the heresy of antinomianism. Antinomianism is one ditch; legalism is the other. In avoiding one error,

we must be careful not to overreact to another extreme. We must side-step the antinomian perspective that states that good works in obedience to the law are not a necessary part of the salvation that Jesus works in us. But in doing so, we must not fall into the legalistic mindset that declares that works in some way contribute to the earning of our salvation. Having warned about antinomianism, I now warn about his evil twin brother, legalism.

Antinomianism and legalism are two extremes, but not true opposites. Instead, they are like conjoined twins with the same evil heart. At times, they may sound different and even speak in opposition to one another (if it helps their cause), but the arguments of each heresy come from the same anti-Christian old man in us—the one that despises Christ Jesus. Out of unbelief, the antinomian

Rev. Mahtani is pastor of the Cornerstone Protestant Reformed Church in Dyer, Indiana.

centers the attack on Christ and His work of sanctification, while the legalist concentrates on Christ and His work of justification. These are their foci, but the end goal is the same—to destroy the gospel of Christ’s saving work for us and in us.

Legalism attacks the gospel of grace by teaching that our *obedience to the law in some way adds to Christ’s completed work*. There are various forms of this heresy, but all kinds of legalism somehow try to take credit for some aspect of salvation that Jesus has done. In doing so, legalism gives man something in himself to boast about or take glory in.

The most obvious kind of legalism is the self-righteousness of the Jewish leaders like the Pharisees and Judaizers in Jesus’ day and in Paul’s day. They depended on their own obedience for justification. They looked to their own works (at least in part) for forgiveness, peace, and favor with God. Well catechized, Reformed young people will quickly dismiss this error as obvious. But what is clearly wrong for our intellects is still a temptation for our hearts to fall for. As soon as anyone, whether it is spoken explicitly or believed quietly, imagines himself to be righteous in the sight of God because of even one good work, he has fallen into this legalism. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal. 2:16). By His perfect life, suffering, and death Jesus has finished earning our justification. Reliance upon any of our works would be legalism that intrudes upon Christ’s complete righteousness and attempts to usurp some of His glory.

A second related form of legalism is the imposition of man-made laws as though they are part of the inspired word of Christ, the Pharisees again being well known for doing this. Jesus exposed their legalism this way: “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9). The Pharisees made extra, external “dos and don’ts” concerning the Sabbath day, offerings, fasting, and outward washings, teaching the people either implicitly or explicitly that they were required to obey these made-up rules.

What was their inner motivation for creating man-

made rules? It is important to understand that their intention was historically pure to begin with. The Pharisees were the early Separatists (their name means “separated ones”) or Puritans who sought to remain unspotted from the world of Greek and Roman religion and entertainment. If we had known the first Pharisees, we would probably have commended them for antithetical living. With godly zeal, many of the early Pharisees applied the principles of God’s law to their lives, thereby setting up rules for themselves as “helps” to obedience. This was holiness. Saints today who are dedicated to holy living in thankfulness to God and who make rules for themselves and families under their authority ought not to be accused of legalism! That is a slanderous stigma, a libelous label. Strict application of God’s law to one’s life is godliness rather than legalism.

Yet, what happened to the Pharisees must be a warning to every lover of God’s law. Pride led these men to begin to see their outward conformity to the law as the cause of their righteous standing before God. Their outward obedience to God’s law and their extra rules were seen as going “over and above” the righteousness required of them. They became blind to their desperate need for a *righteous* Savior, for they felt quite *alright* in themselves. Pride morphed religion into legalism. As a result, their legalism evolved quickly. Christ describes what they began to do. “For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders” (Matt. 23:4a). The rules that they had once made for themselves as helps to piety, now became imposed on others as a standard of righteousness. In addition to this, their obedience to God’s law and man-made rules became merely external. Jesus uncovered their hearts with these words, “Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Matt. 23:28).

Young people, do not misunderstand the rebuke of Jesus here. He is not condemning external obedience itself. In fact, outward adherence to traditions and rules is beneficial and, therefore, with respect to God’s law and doctrines in Scripture, emphatically required. However, this external obedience among the Pharisees had become empty, without true and heartfelt love for God. Legalism embraces the letter of the law but kills the heart of obedience.

In fact, legalism becomes so much about the external code that legalists end up using their outward compliance to that code of conduct in order to circumvent true obedience to God's law. The legalist constructs for himself an outward standard for the very purpose of excusing private sin. This is where the conjoined twins of legalism and antinomianism meet. Legalism at heart is as much against obedience to the law as is antinomianism. The masquerade of an external obedience is much easier and, therefore, becomes a cover-up of the heart's love of sin rather than a love for God and the neighbor. Legalism is simply a round-about way to antinomianism.

This legalism of the Pharisees is a heresy within. I refuse to believe that Jesus includes so much ire against the legalists of His day just so that we have more ammunition to fire at others. The numerous passages in the Bible against legalism are not meant for accusation but for self-evaluation. Remember that we can find every heresy within our own souls. In my last article, I warned about practical antinomianism, and here I warn about *practical legalism*, a second ugly head of our sinful natures. While we may not be officially teaching legalism in our circles, we must beware of practical legalism within our hearts.

Let us maintain piety in the PRC! Let not accusations of legalism drive us to give up our inward convictions and outward stances about the law. For example, let us continue to strive to obey the first four commandments of God, worshiping Him only in the manner as is commanded in His Word, frequently on the Sabbath with both fear and reverence. Let us seek to honor all authority (which includes avoidance of affiliation with labor unions). Let us keep from sexual sin (which includes upholding our stance against unbiblical divorce and remarriage and homosexual sin). Let us not steal (which includes giving of our offerings in support of the budget of our church). Let us love the truth rather than the lie (which includes holding to true doctrines and having membership in a church that holds to truth). Let us not covet any sin (which includes not enjoying the sin found in movies, music, and such entertainment of the world). Let us be a holy church in this way.

Let us even make rules for ourselves. It is proper for me to decide for myself that although Scripture does not demand it, I will not drink any alcohol besides communion wine. I may decide for myself that I will not watch


television because of the temptations that come with it. It is proper for a father to decide that those in his home will not engage in certain liberties on Sunday. It might be beneficial for me to decide to get rid of my smartphone or limit my usage of it, so that such a rule helps me against addiction to it. With a love for God's law, we may make rules for ourselves as helps to obedience.

But beware of pride that often warps piety. *Pride is practical legalism*. As soon as your heart or mine feels the swelling of our egos, we should be conscious of that legalistic old man whispering, "At least some of this obedience makes me righteous before God, right? Especially since others do not obey like I do, this holiness must make me better than them and better before God, right? My membership in a church with right doctrine and my ability to explain right doctrine makes me righteous before God, right?" Remember that this mindset is an attack on righteousness in Christ alone. Silence that old man! Chop off his ugly head of pride!

Subtle as it is, this practical legalism will only mutate into worse forms, as it did for the Pharisees. When pride creeps up, we quickly begin to impose our rules upon others, sometimes even unconsciously. A rule we make for ourselves against a certain kind of entertainment, we force upon others as though it is God's Word. Sabbath rules not stated in Scripture but made for the benefit of a home, we begin to use in condemnation of others. The good decision to be a member of the Protestant Reformed Churches becomes a law used to attack anyone in a different true church. Good traditions and well-intentioned habits in our worship services and devotional life are used to criticize anyone who worships or prays with the slightest difference (for example, praying with different pronouns).

This proud legalism continues to morph. Pride comes before a fall often in our generations. Our outward conformity to God's law and rules not only becomes part of our righteousness before God, but less and less is the outward accompanied by inward obedience. The pride of practical legalism kills inward love for God and the neighbor. We keep the Sabbath by coming to a church with the correct outward form of worship but, while we go through the motions, our hearts are distracted or half-asleep. We give the budgeted amount for collection, but we splurge selfishly and covet quietly because of our love for money.

We do not join a labor union, but our hearts rebel against the authority of parents, elders, and employers. We criticize those who are divorced and remarried, but we have no problem with stirring up lust in our dating relationships. We are members of a church that holds to true doctrines, but there is no real loving meditation on truth through prayer and reading of Scripture day and night. We do not go to the movie theater, but we enjoy all kinds of sinful entertainment behind closed doors. All of this becomes acceptable to the practical legalist because he feels that his own outward orthodoxy is his righteousness before God. But you see, young people, this formal obedience is not accompanied by internal love. The legalist quickly becomes a hypocrite, and a hypocrite is nothing but an antinomian acting like a legalist.

Legalism and antinomianism are twins with the same anti-Christian heart that attacks both Christ's justifying and sanctifying work. You and I need to recognize both as part of our old man. Acknowledging both of these heresies as sins in our heart is the first step of repentance. When others accuse us of legalism, let our response be self-examination and repentance rather than stubborn denial. Let us go back to Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14) and see ourselves in both. The Pharisee points to the legalist within, while the publican points to the antinomian within. Let us conclude not with the seemingly pious phrase: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." Rather, let us conclude with a repentant and believing heart: "God be merciful to me a sinner." 

PERTAINING TO THE CHURCHES...IN COMMON

PRC SEMINARY

News from the Seminary

Welcome Professor-Elect Rev. Douglas Kuiper!

On September 20, God willing, a few short days after this issue appears, Rev. Douglas Kuiper will be installed as the tenth professor in the history of the Protestant Reformed Seminary. Elected by the 2017 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in June, he will be replacing Prof. Russell Dykstra as Professor of Church History and New Testament Studies, a position Prof. Dykstra has held since 1996. Prof. Dykstra will preach at the installation service, to be held in Faith PRC in Jenison, MI.

According to the rules of the seminary, the transition process begins when a professor reaches age 65, and can take as much as five years—a great benefit for the new professor to take on his work *gradually* and carefully as the retiring professor assists him. Most of you probably already know that the three current professors are so close in age that to replace them all according to the current rules would have them all replaced within possibly 4 or 5 years. Thus, synod decided to spread out

their retirements—Prof. Dykstra's and Prof. Cammenga's 'process' beginning a little earlier than the rules call for. If all goes according to plan, Prof. Cammenga's replacement will be called in 2019 and Prof. Gritters' in 2021. In this way, we hope that the seminary retains what is sometimes called "institutional memory," perhaps better called "ecclesiastical precedent."

Professor-elect Kuiper began his ministry in 1995 and served in Byron Center, MI, Randolph, WI, and Edgerton, MN. Rev. Kuiper brings to the seminary, therefore, a wealth of experience in the pastorate, something we judge essential for a professor to bring to the classroom, especially in a seminary with only three professors. It takes an *experienced* minister to train ministers. For the first few years, most of Rev. Kuiper's time will be spent preparing to teach—obtaining another degree in some area of church history, and creating lectures for the fifteen or more classes he must teach.

Rev. Kuiper and his wife Teresa have four children.

We look forward to working with the brother!

Faculty Activities

The summer months are usually busy for the professors. Writing projects, course development, meeting

Prof. Gritters is professor of Practical Theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

with current or prospective students, as well as denominational work, keeps them occupied. On behalf of the Contact Committee, Prof. Dykstra spent four weeks in Australia and Singapore, and Prof. Cammenga will be travelling to South Korea in September. Other work of the Contact Committee takes a great deal of time for the two faculty members on that committee. The professors preach for various churches, often twice each Sunday, both locally and out-of-state. They lecture on mission fields or in sister churches during Christmas or summer 'breaks.' Vacant churches ask for help teaching catechism and sometimes ask advice of the faculty. The professors write for the *Standard Bearer*, produce the *PR Theological Journal*, and at times write for the *Beacon Lights* or sister churches' causes. The faculty is also busy planning a conference commemorating the 500th anniversary of the sixteenth-century Reformation, in October; and another conference for next year celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Great Synod of Dordt. Please pray for strength for all four professors.

Candidates

The seminary has changed dramatically with the departure of the seven graduates, now candidates for the ministry of the Word. We are thankful to God to see them being placed on trios and receiving calls. As I write, three of the seven have already accepted calls. We trust that the Lord has an important place for each of them... in His own time.

This summer these brothers have been busy preaching across the USA and Canada. Two will squeeze in a wedding before a call and ordination. All of them have been approached by churches for various kinds of work—especially teaching catechism and preaching. Please pray for these brothers.

Our need for students

The four current students have been busy this summer as well. They work to support themselves, and those who are licensed to preach do so quite regularly. Please keep in your prayers third-year students Mr. Matt Kortus, Mr. Jacob Maatman, and Mr. Darren Vink, as well as second-year student from Singapore, Mr. Josiah Tan.

There are no first-year students coming into the seminary this Fall—a cause for fervent and regular prayers and

for carefully laying before the young men in the churches the need for pastors.

The churches need more students. I keep a list for myself of names of men who have expressed some interest in the ministry. The list has several names, from young men of high-school age through older young men who are currently working in other occupations. They include PRCA members and members of sister churches. This is good! Two or three of them are so serious that they plan to take pre-seminary Greek beginning late August, able we hope to begin seminary itself in a few years. Of course, not all of the others will begin training for the ministry. But it is good to know that young men are taking seriously the duty they have to consider whether they have the gifts for this work. You will notice that I do not give names of these brothers. We keep the names to ourselves, so as not to put undue pressure on them by making public their thoughts. If any young (or older) men want to talk about what the ministry involves and what seminary requires, please feel free to contact any of us professors, or speak to our registrar, Mr. Charles Terpstra.

Special Missions Training

PRCA members (and others!) ought to be aware of a wonderful opportunity made available to our students who have finished two years of seminary. About twenty years ago, an older lady in our churches left to the seminary at her death a significant sum of money. She attached to it a request that it be used for "further training in missions." This money has been used over the years both for the missions professor and for students who would like experience on the mission field. This summer, Seminarian Matthew Kortus and his wife Sarah spent two months in the Philippines with our missionaries there. All their expenses were paid out of this special "Missions Training" fund. Some of you have read brother Kortus' reports and are aware of how profitable such a time can be for a student, as well as for the missionaries he assists and for the field itself. The seminary is very grateful for such bequests to the seminary. Were it not for these donations, such experience would not likely be gained by the men. This is good for the churches!

Classes Begin!

Classes began here "on the hill" on August 28 when

Prof. Gritters, the newly appointed rector, gave the opening chapel address. Classes are held Tuesday through Friday, always only in the mornings. Afternoons and nights are reserved for studies, and Mondays for practice preaching and catechism instruction, which will begin by the end of September.

I would imagine that some of the area schools will again send their children on “field trips” to visit the semi-

nary for a morning. Both grade schools and Covenant Christian High School have sent groups for several years. We are thankful for such interest in the churches that even many children and young people can see what we do here at seminary.

For the faculty,
Prof. B. Gritters, Rector

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

Trivia Question

Rev. John Flores is the pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Bulacan in the Manila area of the Philippines. When Pastor Flores attended the Grace Ministerial Academy (Reformed Baptist seminary) in 2005, what book did he find in the library there that proved very helpful to him? Answer later in this column.

Congregational Activities

The congregation of Peace PRC in Lansing, IL made a big decision on July 31. The decision was made to purchase the New Hope Community Church Campus in Dyer, IN. This includes almost five acres of land quite near to the PR School. There are plans for extensive remodeling and intentions also to sell the current property owned by the Peace congregation. If things go that way with God's blessing, there will be a second PR church in Indiana, with Peace staying in Classis West. An exciting time for the Peace congregation!

Members of the Wingham PRC in Ontario, Canada often gather on summer Friday evenings to play baseball. Young and old are invited to play, and the games become spirited

and competitive. A fun way to spend some time together!

A recent remodeling was completed in the parsonage at Southwest, MI PRC, with a cleaning bee taking place soon after.

Young People's Activities

The annual Young People's Convention was held in early August in central Michigan with 461 conventioners and about 60 chaperones making the trip to Michindoh Camp near Hillsdale. We are told it was a great success! One first-time conventioner, when asked what was best about the convention, replied, “Pretty much everything.” Others indicated the slip-n-slide and team games were a big hit. Many are already looking forward to the 2018 convention hosted by the Siouxland churches of Classis West, to take place at the Lake Geneva Christian Center in Alexandria, MN (located in Central Minnesota). The 2019 convention will once again be held at Michindoh Camp, D.V.

Minister and Candidate Activities

On July 23, Edgerton PRC called Candidate Matt De Boer; on August 27 he accepted this call. On July 16, Southwest PRC called Candidate Justin Smidstra; on August 27 he declined this call. Immanuel PRC (Lacombe, AB) called Rev. E. Guiche-

laar; a call he declined on August 27. On July 30, First Holland called Candidate J. Smidstra, and on August 27 he accepted the call. Rev. A. Spriensma has accepted the call to serve as domestic missionary, and Byron Center PRC formed the trio of Revs. C. Griess, B. Huizinga, and A. Lanning to fill his place. Rev. B. Huizinga received the call to Byron Center on August 20. Rev. Spriensma's farewell is scheduled for September 17 and his installation as home missionary is scheduled the same day, in the second service. Doon (Philippines) called Rev. C. Spronk (Faith PRC), who declined this call on August 20. Zion PRC called Candidate Joe Holstege to be their first pastor and God has led him to accept their call, his first charge. May God continue to be with and bless all the ministers of our denomination, young and older!

Rev. Thomas Miersma preached his farewell sermon in Immanuel PRC of Lacombe on August 27. The service was followed with a farewell supper, singing, and fellowship. We are thankful to our heavenly Father for using Rev. Miersma for the good of our churches through these many years. Rev. Miersma was ordained in 1982.

Denominational Activities

Prof. R. Dykstra and Rev. J. Engelsma, along with their wives spent

Mr. Van Egdome is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Doon, Iowa.

a few weeks in Australia participating in a conference there. They also had the opportunity to preach and attend the meeting of the Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. This small denomination is made up of four congregations, two in the cities of Brisbane and Penrith on mainland Australia, and two in Launceston and Winnaleah on the island of Tasmania. The visit went well and was believed to be profitable. We are thankful for safety in travel and for the return of the delegation to their homes and congregations.

The Protestant Reformed Seminary is sponsoring a conference commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The conference theme is: "Here We Stand!" It will be held at Faith Protestant Reformed Church on October 27 and 28 of 2017. There will be six speeches given by the three professors and Rev. S. Key (Loveland PRC), Rev. M. McGeown (Limerick Reformed Fellowship), and Rev. D. Torlach from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

of Australia, D.V. Be sure to make plans to attend.

School Activities

Heritage Christian School invited all to their full-service restaurant at the Hudsonville Fairgrounds. They served breakfast, lunch, and supper, as well as desserts and snacks in the white building just inside the north pedestrian gates all 6 days of the fair, opening at 6:30 A.M. to serve early-bird breakfast customers. Included were expanded and improved menu options including a new specialty chicken sandwich. Grandmas' homemade pies were back, as well as gourmet desserts! Sounds like the place to be during the fair!

There were announcements on the bulletin of Immanuel PRC of Lacombe, AB about their Genesis school...a number of announcements. They concerned the annual society meeting, the PTA meeting, the annual school cleaning, and a golf tournament fundraiser. Lots of activities centered around the schools of our denomination during the late summer and fall months!

Missionary Activities

During his furlough to the USA in August, Missionary-pastor Daniel Kleyn spoke at the annual Young People's Convention, and he gave three presentations in the churches about the work in the Philippines.

Trivia Answer

The book that surprisingly appeared on the shelves of the seminary library in the vast city of Manila on the other "side of the world" was indeed *Reformed Dogmatics* by Herman Hoeksema! Pastor Flores used the book extensively and as "my number one reference for every report and assignment that we had." When the professor and also the president of the seminary noticed how much the book was being used, it was moved to the top of the shelves in the library and eventually it disappeared completely. Today Pastor Flores has his own copy.

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1. ☞

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Grandville PRC express our Christian sympathy to Doc and Jan Kuiper in the death of Doc's brother,

JOHN SIDNEY KUIPER.

May they find comfort in the words of I Corinthians 2:9: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him."

Rev. Kenneth Koole, President
Herm DeVries, Assistant Clerk

Wedding Anniversary

■ With gratitude to our heavenly Father, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of our parents,

ADRIAN and GERTRUDE LENTING,

who were united in marriage August 4, 1967. "For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

- ❖ Jeffrey Lenting (in glory)
- ❖ Rockford and Andrea Wigger
Olivia, Calvin, Nadia
- ❖ Bradley and Patricia Lenting
Collin, Ian, Gavin, Mason

- ❖ Patrick and Jennifer Lenting
Brooke, Conner, Tressa, Wyatt
- ❖ Phillip and Stacy Lenting
Hannah, Nickolas, Brendan

South Holland, Illinois

Wedding Anniversary

■ With gratitude to our faithful, heavenly Father, we give thanks to God that on September 15, 2017,

MART and ANN DALING

will celebrate 50 years of marriage in the Lord. We are thankful for their godly example to us and it is our prayer that God will continue to bless their marriage now and in the years to come. Psalm 145:2, 3: "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."

- ❖ Ed and Chris VanDenTop
Kevin and Jill Koole
Triston, Jayden, Miriam, Emma
Steve, Amy, Trent and fiancé Shelbi Kruithoff
- ❖ Jim and Karen Daling
Nathan, Brandon and Stephanie, Leanna, Jeremy

- ❖ Daryl and Cathy Brands
James, Kelsi, Evan
- ❖ Carrie Ream

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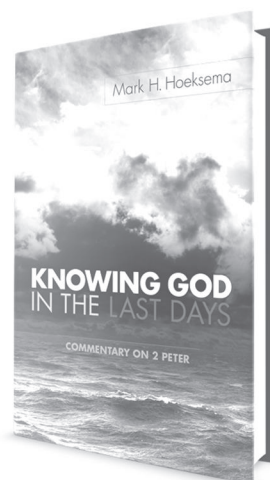
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Wedding Anniversary

■ We praise God for His unending love and faithfulness as we look back at the 50 years of marriage He has given to our parents,

DUANE and SHIRLEY GUNNINK.

On September 22, 2017, they will celebrate this memorable day. We are thankful for the godly example and biblical instruction they have shown their children and grandchildren. We pray for God's continued blessings in the years to come. "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" (Psalm 103:1).

- ❖ Dan and Shelley Van Dyke
 - ❖ Kevin and Pam Gunnink
 - ❖ John and Tracy Heys
 - ❖ Jason and Jodi Gunnink
 - ❖ Aaron and Erin Gunnink
 - ❖ Steve and Carrie Huizinga
 - ❖ Justin and Heidi Griess
 - ❖ David and Rebecca Dijkstra
- 32 grandchildren

Caledonia, Michigan

Notice

New bulletin clerk for Immanuel PRC is: Mrs. Kristi Kalsbeek (eandkkalsbeek@outlook.com).

Bound Volumes

■ With the September 15th issue of the *Standard Bearer*, volume 93 is completed. If you would like your own issues bound, please deliver them to the **RFPA office** before the end of October. For additional orders, call Paula at (616) 457-5970.

Men, women, young people—you are all cordially
invited to attend the

Reformed Free Publishing Association's ANNUAL MEETING

Prof. David J. Engelsma will speak on:

"After 500 Years:
What about James on Justification?"

September 28, 2017 at 7:30pm
Southwest Protestant Reformed Church

(This meeting provides the opportunity for men to join the Association.)