

# The Standard Bearer

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# The Mind of Christ

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

**T**he mind of Christ! These verses, together with verses 9-11, constitute the classic proof text for the doctrine of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. And following hard on the heels of verses 1-4, they are also the great example of what the church of all ages needs to remember in order to walk in lowliness of mind and esteem others better than themselves. But most of all, these verses are some of the most beautiful and wonderful verses in the Bible because they showcase our blessed Savior, Jesus Christ—His wonderful character as well as His wonderful gospel of grace and salvation. In particular, they showcase the sheer greatness of the humility of our Savior! And in so doing, they also remind us of our calling as members of His church to be imitators and implementers of that humility.

*Rev. Lee is pastor of Bethel Protestant Reformed Church in Roselle, Illinois.*



What an astounding fact it is that the mind of Christ was such that it made Him of *no* reputation! To appreciate that, let us begin by understanding what the apostle means by telling us that he was “in the form of God” (v. 6a). The word “form” here does not speak of a mere external shape or semblance, but is used in a much more comprehensive way. For example, when we say that a tennis player is in good “form,” we refer to the whole person and the way he affects his actions; we mean that his mental, physical and emotional abilities all work together to accomplish great results. So here, the apostle is saying that Christ possessed the very essential attributes and virtues of God Himself: His righteousness, holiness, mercy, and love! Indeed Christ, in His preincarnate state, was very God Himself! He, being in the form of God, is fully divine! In His divine nature and being, Jesus Christ is the Almighty Creator of all things in heaven and on earth! He is the Law-giver who stands above the law. He is *rich*, in closest relationship with the Father (John 1:18), and has all the blessings of perfect communion, exalted authority, and divine privilege. He is all-glorious in heaven above!

But what did He do? He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and made Himself of no reputation. Literally, in the original, He *emptied* Himself! This does

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not mean that He gave up His divinity in any way. Rather, the profound meaning is that His status of being equal with God was not something He would keep holding on to, but was willing to let it go, and did indeed do so for our sake! To illustrate this, think of a jewelry box filled with precious gems. Now suppose someone comes and hides all of the gems in a secret compartment of the box. When we look at that jewelry box, we cannot see anything valuable anymore even though the jewels are still in it. This is what is meant here when the Holy Spirit tells us that Jesus “emptied” Himself. In His human nature, Christ emptied Himself of the reputation of being God. He seemed to be just like one of us, an ordinary man. He emptied Himself! He who is rich made Himself poor for our sake (II Cor. 8:9). He gave up everything, including His life! While still being the sovereign Law-giver, He humbled Himself to submit to the law. So poor was He that He did not even have a decent place of birth; He had to borrow an animal to ride on, a room in which to institute the Lord’s Supper, and finally a tomb to be buried in! He gave up His heavenly glory!

“He took the form of a servant,” Paul tells us in verse 7. Servant? “Slave” would be more accurate. And He, as a slave, had no rights! He served not His own interests, but the interest of others. He did not serve Himself but lived as a slave in service to God and, therefore, to that part of the race of man He would redeem!

Further, we are told that Christ was “made in the likeness of men” (v. 7). This speaks of His birth. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, as inspired John puts it! God became a man! Who can understand the depths of the sheer humility to which Jesus gave Himself?!

And yet there is more. We read in verse 8: “But being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” In His humiliation, He took upon Himself the curse that was due us. And that, of course, meant death for Him. And no ordinary death, but an *accursed* death: the curse and wrath of God against sinners on the cross. There on the cross, Jesus was left hanging between heaven and earth—rejected by both! There on the cross, Jesus cried that awful cry that came at the end of those three terrifying hours of darkness, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Who can understand fully the depths of suffering, humiliation, and hellish agony into which the

all-glorious Son of God descended, especially during those three hours?

Such is the humiliation of Christ. Such is Christ emptying of Himself. Such is the mind of Christ.

Such an astounding fact this is! Astounding because of the dizzying heights Christ came from and the unfathomable depths into which He descended! Astounding because He made Himself not just a creature, but a slave—and one who subjected Himself unto accursed death! Astounding because He did it for the sake of sinners: helpless, unworthy, totally depraved sinners!



What is the explanation for such humiliation?

We could start by saying that it was *necessary*. It was necessary that God become a man and be the representative of those given to Him to redeem. There was simply no other way to satisfy the justice of God. He had to be man, sinless man, in order for man to be saved. He had to be God, because no creature could sustain the infinite wrath of God for sin.

And we could certainly say it was a *duty* for Jesus to do so. For God had appointed Christ to be the Servant of Jehovah. As that Servant, Christ served as the Mediator of God and His covenant for sinners given to Him by God from all eternity. Thus, it would be right to say that Christ was performing His duty by emptying Himself.

And yet, those two explanations do not do justice to the point of the apostle and the message of the text, do they? Indeed, they do not do justice to the message of the entire Bible! For what is the *one outstanding explanation* and *motive* for Christ emptying Himself but this: love! Love for His sheep! Love for His friends! Greatest love! For there is no greater love than that a man lay down his life for his friends! (John 15:13). And His friends were not such wonderful people, but sinners! “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). The explanation is *love*. A necessity of love! A duty of love!! The explanation is Jesus performing the necessity and duty of love for sinners such as you and me!!!




Finally, for the application, we go back to verse 5: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” The application is this: by the grace of God, behold, imitate,

and display the mind of Christ! *Behold* the example of Christ's loving, self-emptying humility. *Imitate* it. And finally, *display* it. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Phil. 2:3-4).

Put on the mind of Christ. Put on the attitude of His sheer humility and great love. Put on the sacrificial spirit

of Christ! Put off the ego and the empty pride. Put off the quarrelsome spirit, the in-fighting, and all strife! Rather, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves—in every relationship, in every area and sphere of life—in marriage and singlehood, in the home and family, in the church and denomination to which we belong.

May the mind of Christ dwell richly in us and show itself among us all! 

EDITORIAL

REV. KENNETH KOOLE

## Book Analysis: *Ten Myths About Calvinism (concl.)*

Asking the readers' forbearance, we have decided to devote one more editorial to Kenneth Stewart's book, *Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011).

We do this first of all because Stewart's book has received good reviews in various Reformed Journals (a review by Alan Strange in the *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, vol. 22, 2011, pp. 223-28 is a case in point). This is troubling because, as we stated in our April 15 editorial, what is clear from Stewart's book is that he wants to retain the right to be called a 'Calvinist' while calling into question the very doctrines that were central to Calvin himself—in fact, doctrines that are fundamental to any theology that has the right to call itself 'historically Reformed.' In particular, the doctrines that have to do with sovereign predestination, God's particular,

irresistible grace, and especially the scope of Christ's atonement.

This we fear is becoming the 'Calvinism' of our day, and this as the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canons of Dordt approaches. It is our judgment that if Stewart's perspective prevails among those being introduced to Calvinism and the Reformed faith, the very clarity of the Canons themselves as regards the doctrines of grace and their sharp rejection of Arminian errors will be 'nuanced' into uncertainty and obscurity.

Secondly, we have decided on one more article in response to Stewart's book and suggested redefinition of historic Calvinism because we are convinced, on reflection, that something must be said about Calvinism and the doctrine of "limited atonement."

If there is one doctrine that even many with a reputation for being Calvinists would uproot and discard it is *limited* atonement. The reality is, uproot this part of the flower of truth and the whole of the Reformed truth embodied in TULIP withers with it.

As you may recall, Stewart's

book is divided into two sections; the first labeled: "Four Myths Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)"; the second labeled: "Six Myths Non-Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)." As previously stated, our focus is on Stewart's first section, the "Four Myths Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)."

In our last article we offered a brief critique of what Stewart labels as the third issue Calvinists should treat as a myth, namely, that "TULIP is the Yardstick of the Truly Reformed." Having responded (due to space constraints) only to Stewart's criticism of the adjective "total" as applied to fallen man's depravity, and the word "irresistible" when describing God's saving grace, we turn to Stewart's objection to the word "limited" as applied to the atoning work of Christ.

We judge Stewart's objection not only to be without merit, but worse, in the end, to be an attempt to make allowances for the very unbiblical views about Christ's atoning work that the Canons were written to

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*Previous article in this series: April 15, 2017, p. 317.*



refute, namely, a Christ dying for everyone in some sense of the word and yet failing to secure their salvation. And this in turn is exactly what would become the emphasis (marrow?) of the preaching when it comes to the call of the gospel. To all and sundry the proclamation, "Christ is dead for you!"

What else does Stewart imagine the Arminians were preaching prior to Dordt?

Stewart's aversion to the word "limited" as applied to Christ's atoning death is simple to explain. It would mean Christ died representing only the elect, to save them and no others.

Stewart writes with approval of some who "show a heightened awareness that the doctrines summarized under the rubric of TULIP are capable of being grossly misunderstood" (77). Then having listed "limited atonement" as one of the "items most often admitted to be problematic," Stewart goes on to say:

The Calvinistic writers I term *apologetic* [and approve of] are ready both to restate the doctrines summarized in TULIP and to alter that acronym, as necessary, to more effectively communicate what they consider to be the actual meaning of the points (77).

What meaning Stewart himself would apply to Christ's atonement becomes plain.

While asserting that he can live with the words "definite" and "particular" when applied to Christ's atonement (evidently because at least they are not the word "limited") the phrase Stewart commends for the readers' approval is that of a

certain Anglican theologian by the name of Thomas Scott, who "like the Anglican delegates to Dordt, preferred [the phrase] 'general redemption'" (83).

General redemption!

And that in the name of Calvinism and the Reformed confession of Dordt, which document was written precisely to distinguish itself from and to refute Arminianism, to keep that deadly virus from infecting Reformed preaching. And since the heart of preaching focuses on the cross of Christ and those sinners for whom He died, preaching a general atonement (Christ dying on behalf of far more than are actually saved) Calvinistic preaching is going to be distinct from Arminian preaching how?

Allow for preaching the atonement in that fashion and, as the saying goes, "You have given away the store," that is, you have given the pulpit back to Arminianism.

What Stewart pleads for are Calvinistic writers who "show [a] generous [!] interest in defining and articulating their Calvinism" (89).

Why? Because such a noble, broad-hearted spirit will allow for "room at the cross" (89).

Room for whom?

Evidently, for those whose theology has little use for unconditional election and limited atonement. Stewart has praise for "older writers" who in his estimation "often took pains to spell out the senses in which there were *universal* [emphasis Stewart's] benefits in that particular redemption won by Christ" (89).

"Universal" in the sense of Christ dying in some sense for everyone of the human race.

Where does Stewart get the notion that this can be labeled "Reformed"? Supposedly from the Canons of Dordt itself as he interprets Head II, Article 3!

This universal atonement notion Stewart posits is "...in keeping with Dordt's original insistence that, as to the sheer value of Christ's dying, his death was 'abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world'" (89).

The old canard repeated by so many 'Calvinists-who-cannot-shake-their-Arminian-sentiments' dug up once again. As if, when the astute fathers of Dordt spoke (in the Second Head) of Christ's sacrifice as being of "infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world," they were not really focused on its *value* (in response to Arminian charges that the Reformed *limited the value* of Christ's blood), but were actually conceding that, yes, there was a sense in which Christ did die for more than the elect given Him of the Father, and that this should be proclaimed from their pulpits to the world.

So, a gracious atonement made for all men after all, though it was precisely to refute this teaching troubling their Reformed churches that men like Gomarus and Bogerman sought a General Synod in the Netherlands to begin with.

What nonsense!

Article 3 of the Second Head (having to do with Christ's redemption) is written simply to make plain that Calvinism's 'limiting' of Christ's atonement to the elect had nothing to do with its limiting of the value

of Christ's death. The atonement of the Son of God was valuable enough to save this world and ten thousand worlds besides, *if that had been God's will*.

The point is, that was not the issue. The issue was, who was it that Christ represented (and whose guilt He carried) when He suffered God's wrath for sin and sinners? All mankind in general, or only the elect of all mankind?

To which issue the truly Reformed Synod gave answer in the Canons:

For this was the sovereign counsel and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son *should extend to all the elect* [!] for the bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation; that is, it was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language all those, and *those only* [!] who were from eternity chosen to salvation and given to Him by the Father... (II, 8, emphasis added).

The extent of Christ's atonement, those on whose behalf Christ sacrificed Himself, is, according to the Canons, limited to the elect. And this means that all those for whom Christ gave Himself are surely, infallibly saved.

A general atonement means that for the majority of those for whom He died, Christ ended up securing nothing. The majority of those

whom God in the cross yearned to save, perish anyway.

Not such good news, however generous sounding, after all.

The Calvinistic delegates of the Synod of Dordt did not write the Canons to show the Arminians how much they had in common when it came to the gospel of grace. "There is room at the cross for your interpretation of it, and of ours. Let's make allowances for each other's views, shall we?" The Canons are of the sharpest polemical spirit. To the fathers of Dordt the doctrine of a universal redemption was unscriptural and destructive of the gospel.

J. I. Packer in his magisterial "Introductory Essay" to John Owen's *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* has it precisely right when he states,

These five points are conveniently denoted by the mnemonic TULIP.... The difference between them [Calvinism and Arminianism] is not primarily one of emphasis, but of content. One proclaims a God who saves; the other speaks of a God Who enables man to save himself.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, what is at stake is the apostolic gospel itself.

We do well to consider that where true-hearted Calvinism has ruled there has been no aversion to confessing and promoting limited atonement.

J. I. Packer in his better days, prior to his "Evangelical and Catholics Together" compromise, summarized well the seventeenth-century

theologian John Owen's defense of Calvinism as the gospel in Owen's book *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. (In the following quotation the emphases are ours.)

If we listen to him [Owen], he will teach us both how to believe the Scripture gospel and how to preach it. For the first: he will lead us to bow down before a sovereign Savior Who really saves, and to praise Him for a redeeming death which made it certain that *all for whom He died* will come to glory. It cannot be over-emphasized that we have not seen the full meaning of the Cross till we have seen it *as the divines of Dort display it* as the centre of the gospel, flanked on the one hand by total inability and *unconditional election*, and on the other by irresistible grace and final preservation. [That spells TULIP—kk]. For the full meaning of the Cross only appears when the atonement is defined in terms of these four truths. Christ died to save a *certain company* of helpless sinners *upon whom God had set His free saving love*. Christ's death ensured the calling and keeping—the present and final salvation—*of all* whose sins He bore.<sup>2</sup>

But there have been more such Calvinists.

Abraham Kuyper, in his book *Particular Grace*, written to reintroduce confessional Calvinism to his apostatizing Reformed church in the nineteenth-century Netherlands, provides a list of quotes from Reformed fathers who tied Christ's atoning death to election, which is

<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1999, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Packer, "Introductory Essay," 15.

to say, limiting its scope to the elect. One of the theologians quoted was Dr. Trelcatius Sr., a stalwart who taught at Leiden prior to Dordt. Writes Trelcatius:

Christ did not die for all, but only for the elect, for if one should ask “For whom did Christ die?” then this pertains to those in whom the death of Christ hath effected its purpose, and this can only include all and every believer.<sup>3</sup>

This is an important quote, establishing that what is known as limited atonement was not a doctrine Dordt newly coined and invented, but was one already well established and which Dordt’s synod was convened exactly to *defend*.

And then Kuyper turns to a

<sup>3</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *Particular Grace: A Defense of God’s Sovereignty in Salvation*, translated by Marvin Kamps, (Grandville, MI: RFP, 2001), 7.

quote from what he calls “the well-known *Synopsis*” which “for almost a century remained the standard text of our theology” (but fell out of favor as Arminianism returned and modernism took hold):

The objects of grace are only the elect and true believers, both from the Old and New Testaments. For although the satisfaction of Christ, when viewed from the perspective of its scope, value, and sufficiency, *could be extended to all men*, yet it has been ordained specifically for those only whom the Father chose and granted to the Son.<sup>4</sup>

Again, the atonement of Christ could have been extended to all men, if that had been God’s will (because the value of the ‘shed blood’ is of *infinite* value); but it was not, because as Scripture makes plain, Christ’s death was ordained for a *specific*

<sup>4</sup> Kuyper, 8 (emphasis added).

segment of the human race, the chosen, or elect, limiting its scope.

We could quote more such Calvinists. A. W. Pink comes to mind, in his book *The Sovereignty of God*. Limited atonement as effectual atonement looms large in Pink (read chapter 4).

Let no one be mistaken. It is Stewart’s contention that those who have and do hold to the doctrines of God’s sovereign saving grace as being properly described by what TULIP represent “...a Calvinism on the margins, rather than...the Protestant tradition as a whole...” (89). That is the real myth.

It is what is in line with the decisive Calvinism of the Canons of Dordt that represents the biblically faithful Protestant tradition. Nothing less.

What Stewart is proposing is nothing less than a departure from the time-honored tradition and a corruption of the gospel. ☹

## LETTERS

### Concern over Psalter Revision

In light of the continued defense of the revision of the Psalter I share the following observations with the reader.

Any thoughts of changing the music of the Psalter weigh heavily on my heart. If I may, I would like to share some of the things that I have witnessed and observed during my membership in our denomination:

- After 60-plus years of instructing the Psalter in our elementary grade schools, we finally have generations who know and love the Psalter. We have been blessed with singing churches.
- Rewriting music in different key signatures than they are presently written will hamper our young children from learning and mastering the Psalter. Many already have them perfected as written.

- I have been a church organist since the split of 1953. Since then, I have witnessed “*struggling* Psalter-singing” churches become “*powerful* Psalter-singing” churches. I attribute this benefit to the work of our Protestant Reformed Schools.
- In 1976, I attended the Conference on Liturgy and Music at Calvin College. There I heard firsthand from conservatives sorrowing because the Psalter Hymnal of 1932 lost the Psalms as they were established in the 1912 Psalter. Out of these “studies” evolved the revised 1957 and 1989 Psalter Hymnal. The committees ignored the heart and soul of the believer in the pew. They gave no thought to the coming generations, churches, and schools they were serving. What is their legacy? Destroyed “Psalter Books.” This wrong decision removed from the

saints the blessed unity of singing from the same book, generation after generation. This must not happen in our denomination.

The 1912 Psalter has served us wonderfully. I am still teaching today because I am committed to having children learn to play from the Psalter. They love the Psalter. Here are their comments:

“This is my favorite song.”

“I love this one!”

“When can I start the Psalter?”

“Look at the list I have learned from the Psalter!”

“All I want to practice and play is the Psalter and not the other stuff.”

Scripture warns not to offend these little ones. We need to cherish this treasure as deeply as we do the KJV, the Heidelberg Catechism, or the Canons and Belgic Confession. If we don’t know our song to sing, we will be destroyed for lack of knowledge. It may sound very innocent and even lofty to make so-called “discreet changes,” but this generally leads to unnecessary destruction. Preserve what we have for future generations! We must “remain distinctive” was Rev. H. Hoeksema’s admonition from the pulpit.

Mrs. Fran Lubbers  
Hudsonville, Michigan

## RESPONSE

This letter was accompanied by a note from Mr. Case Lubbers, asking that it be placed in the *SB* before June 1, so it clearly is a letter from both Mr. and Mrs. Case Lubbers. I can appreciate their concern for the Protestant Reformed Churches, especially the children, as they have selflessly and capably served both the churches and schools all their adult life.

Because of my deep personal admiration and respect for this brother and sister, I am saddened by their letter. I will, nonetheless, seek to answer it in the spirit of meekness and out of the genuine love and respect that I have for them both.

First, the letter speaks of a “continued defense of the revision of the Psalter” in the *SB*. However, the articles of Rev. D. Kuiper are not intended to defend Psalter revision. The synod of the PRC mandated this work to be done. That does not need a defense. The articles are written to explain the actions of the committee—what

they are doing and how it follows the guidelines adopted by synod. Such information, it was thought, would be helpful to the readers of the *SB*.

Second, the letter refers to action in the Christian Reformed Church revising the 1912 Psalter. The actions of the CRC cannot be in the least compared to what the Psalter revision committee is seeking to do. The CRC stripped down the Psalter and added hymns. Our current activity is seeking to *improve* the Psalter, and *increase* the *Psalms* selection. Hymns are not part of the activity.

Third, the letter states that “Scripture warns not to offend these little ones.” The letter implies that changes to the Psalter may do this. But surely Mr. and Mrs. Lubbers know that the “offend” in Jesus’ warning means leading, even causing, children to *sin*. If the brother and sister want to make that statement, they must demonstrate that a change in the Psalter will cause children to sin. That charge would be true, for example, if the new Psalter inserted false doctrine into the songs. In fact, a significant goal of the committee is to make the Psalter more faithful to the Psalms, and the process may well result in removing language that contains false or misleading teaching.

A discerning reader will recognize that there is a very emotional attachment to the 1912 Psalter, and this attachment is shared by many in the PRC. I would like to say a few things, not to disparage those who have this attachment, but to put the matter into perspective.

A proposed change in the Psalter brings an emotional response from all who, as I, love the Psalter. Singing is a highly spiritual and emotional activity of worship. Any talk of changing the book we have sung from our youth arouses strong emotions. This kind of change is similar to the switch from Dutch to English in the catechism classes and in the worship services. In the history of the PRC, that elicited very strong emotional responses. “How,” some argued, “could the Reformed theology be properly expressed in the vile American language?” They were convinced that this change in language would lead to departure from the Reformed faith. Some congregations went through similar conflicts when changing (in the Lord’s Supper) from one common cup to individual cups. “It is destroying the unity,” some complained. These are difficult changes. Today, we may see them as



being insignificant. To (some of) the forefathers, there were not. Reformed churches have split over these emotional issues.

Other changes have happened in the PRC worship services. In my lifetime, some years ago, a lone congregation began reciting the Apostles' Creed in the worship service. "What new thing is this?! Are we following the CRC with responsive readings?" I recall the strong expressions of concern.

Now synod has commissioned three of our men to join a committee of two other Reformed denominations to work toward improving our beloved Psalter. That has caused consternation among some—"We are joining in this work with churches that are not Protestant Reformed?" Those so concerned need to consider the history of the 1912 Psalter. This song book was formed by a number of churches, mainly Presbyterian, led by the United Presbyterian Church. This latter denomination was hardly a purely Reformed denomination in 1912. And the CRC representative on the committee was Rev. J. Groen, the man who was pastor at Eastern Ave. CRC before Herman Hoeksema. You can check the history books to investigate how much he agreed with Protestant Reformed theology.

The Synod of 2016 adopted certain strict guidelines for the work of Psalter revision. A selection (Psalms 73-89) of the work of this full committee will come to the Synod of 2017. Synod will be able to see what kind of work is being done, and give advice to our committee. I hope that synod will share this work with the churches, and somehow, elicit constructive criticism. We want the best product possible. Singing praises to God demands that we produce the best possible Psalm book. And that includes a Psalm book that the churches love.

I assure the Lubbers that I might well share in their great concern, but for two things. First, I am greatly reassured by the integrity of the three men appointed by synod. They are men who have earned the respect and confidence of the Protestant Reformed Churches. And, they all love the Psalter. They believe it can be improved for better use in worship, but they love the Psalter. That gives me confidence in what they are doing. All the members of the PRC ought to share in my confidence in this regard.

The second reason that I have confidence in the broader committee's work is something that, admittedly, I have,

but few others do. I inhabit the office next to Prof. B. Gritters, one of these three men commissioned by synod to serve on this committee. I eat lunch, have coffee, hold meetings, stop to talk with him at least five days a week. And I am privileged to hear firsthand accounts of the work that the interdenominational committee is doing. I hear of his deep respect for the men on the committee. I hear his testimony that "these men *love* the Psalter." I hear the report that they are committed to doing careful work. I am informed that the members on this committee take very seriously the input of the PRC men. That relieves me of much of my personal concern as this committee carefully reviews the words to make them faithful to the Psalms, seeks better music when necessary, and yet makes sure that the Psalter we (and they) have used from childhood is not lost.

And one last thing. Perhaps the objection will be raised, "If you love the Psalter, why revise it?" To which I answer, you love your wife, right? You love your husband, correct? Does that mean you consider your spouse to be perfect? You love your husband because you see in him the picture of Christ, the husband of the church. And if it were possible to make a change in him that would result in your beloved husband being better, even more faithfully reflecting the reality of Jesus, our Bridegroom, would you decline that change because you love him? Or, welcome it? The committee is seeking to produce a Psalter that enables us to sing the Word of God even better and more faithfully that has been done since 1912. Eventually, a Protestant Reformed synod will have to judge whether or not that goal is achieved. But let us at least give the process a chance.

— Prof. R. Dykstra 

### Christ's Subordination

In reaction to the article "The Error of Eternal Functional Subordination" of Rev. McGeown in the *SB* of 1 February 2017, page. 201, I think that the problem is not with "eternal" or "functional" or "ontological," but with something different.

From the Canons of Dordt is the clear *fact* of God's sovereignty in predestination as well the *fact* that man remains responsible. In our human minds, these two facts are mutually exclusive. When we try to reason out *how* these two facts can stand together, we invariably will

emphasize the human responsibility at the expense of the God's sovereignty in predestination, and will get into Pelagian/Arminian heresies.

Similarly, when looking at the Son of God, there is the *fact* of His divinity and the *fact* of His humanity. In our human minds, these two facts are mutually exclusive. When we try to reason out *how* these two natures can be in one Person, we invariably will emphasize the humanity of the Son of God at the expense of His divinity, and will get into all kinds of heresies. Thus it is best to confess the facts as the Bible presents them, and to forego prying into the how.

So also we are faced with the *fact* that the Son of God is co-equal with the Father, as well as with the *fact* that the Son is subordinate to the Father. In our human minds, these facts are mutually exclusive. When we try to reason out *how* these two facts can stand together, we invariably will emphasize the subordination at the expense of the co-equality, and will get into all kinds of heresies. Therefore, let us simply confess that the Bible teaches both.

There is no denial that the emancipation of women has generated marriages filled with apprehension, distrust, insecurity, and tension, has caused massive marital breakdowns, and has led to common-law partnerships. Therefore, let us simply agree with the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood that, in contrast to humanistic wisdom, the Bible teaches headship in I Corinthians 11:3-7, and exemplifies subordination in Philippians 2:3-8.

Jan Reckman  
Aylmer, Ontario, Canada

## RESPONSE

I thank Mr. Reckman for his letter.

My fundamental disagreement is with the brother's premise: "So also we are faced with the *fact* that the Son of God is co-equal with the Father, as well as with the *fact* that the Son is subordinate to the Father."

We are *not* faced with the "fact" that the Son is subordinate to the Father, for the Son is *not* subordinate to the Father. The Son *became* subordinate to the Father when He willingly entered our humanity in the Incarnation, but he is *not* eternally subordinate to the Father. Those who teach Eternal Functional Subordinationism,

against whose teachings I wrote the original article, teach that the Second Person is subordinate to the First Person *in the eternal Trinity*. They teach that the Son is subordinate to the Father *because He is the Son*, and that sons are by definition subordinate to their fathers. While it is true that human sons are by definition subordinate to their fathers, it does not follow that the Son of God is eternally, functionally, although supposedly not ontologically, subordinate to His Father. It is also true that by definition human sons are *younger* than their fathers. Shall we start modifying the doctrine of the Trinity to deny the *eternal* Sonship of Jesus or to deny that the three Persons of the Godhead are *co-eternal*? (I understand that Mr. Reckman does not advocate such a position, nor do men like Wayne Grudem or Bruce Ware, but I am simply pointing out where such speculations and a misuse of analogies could lead).

Mr. Reckman mentions two texts, to which I briefly turn.

First, it is true that the Bible teaches male headship in I Corinthians 11. In verse 3, we read, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." That verse does not mean that the head of the Son *within the Trinity* is the Father. The name "Christ" in the Bible refers to the Son of God as the Incarnate Mediator.

Second, it is also true that the Bible teaches ("exemplifies" is the brother's term) subordination in Philippians 2:3-8. Nevertheless, that chapter does not teach the Eternal Functional Subordinationism of Grudem and Ware. The Son was not eternally subordinate to the Father, for Paul clearly differentiates between what the Son essentially *is* in the Trinity and what He *became* in the Incarnation. The passage teaches (1) that Christ Jesus was (although the participle "being" is a timeless present, so "was" would be a poor translation) "in the form of God" (that is, fully divine); (2) that Christ is "equal with God;" but (3) that He (the eternal Son of God) willingly humbled himself ("thought it not robbery;" "made himself of no reputation;" "humbled himself" and "became obedient") in order to become a man, suffer, and die for our sins on the cross. That is the greatest example of humility that the world has ever seen or known.

To teach that the Son is eternally subordinate to the

Father is not to confess two truths of the Bible while being unable to reconcile them fully in one's mind (which is the case with the first two examples that the brother offers), but it is to compromise the very doctrine of the Trinity. Such teaching is confusing, contradictory, and dangerous. Therefore, I cannot "simply agree with" the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood on this matter.

— Rev. M. McGeown

### How Much Did the Old Testament Saints Know?

Don Doezema's writings have always benefitted me, and his writings in the *Standard Bearer* continue to do so. However, I have a query regarding his last article "Robbing Christ of His Honour" (20) in *S.B.* April 15, 2017. Speaking about Simeon in Luke 2, Don gives an emphatic "no" to the idea Simeon was anticipating the cross when he told Mary, "A sword shall pierce through

thy own soul also." How come? Surely the mystery of the incarnation and death of the Son of God was known to him from the Old Testament Scriptures? He knew Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22 and 16. Surely every Old Testament saint believed in an incarnate Messiah, the son of the woman. Job certainly did, and Daniel, and David, and in calling Christ the Lamb of God, John, despite later doubts, must have known his Messiah was to die for his sins and the sins of the whole world. We are told in I Peter 1:11 that the Spirit of Christ in the prophets testified of the sufferings of Christ (including His death) and the glory that should follow (resurrection, etc.). Are we really to believe that few, if any of them, right up to Simeon, knew that their Saviour would have to die and be raised?

Dr. Julian Kennedy,  
Ballymena, Northern Ireland

### RESPONSE:

See "Robbing Christ of His Honor" (below).

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

## MR. DON DOEZEMA

Upon This Rock (30)

# Robbing Christ of His Honor (22)

For several reasons I'm glad for the letter from Dr. Kennedy printed above. I appreciate, first of all, the "query" itself, as it demonstrates interest in and careful attention to subject matter that has come to be dear to my heart. But, in addition, it gives me opportunity to address a related question. After the printing of the article to which Dr. Kennedy refers, I was asked twice by a couple of discerning readers if what I had meant to say in that article was that Simeon may well have been predicting the *death* of Jesus, but was not foreseeing the *manner* of it, that is, the *cross*. When I reflected on the words I had used in that article, I understood why the question arose. "Was Simeon, do you suppose, anticipat-

ing *that* too? The *cross*? Here, I think, the answer must be an emphatic no." I assured both questioners that by "cross" I did in fact mean "death." Simeon, as it seems to me, was not anticipating the *death* of Jesus in *any* form. As I explained in the next sentence: "The 'mystery' of which Paul spoke in Romans 16:25, the mystery kept secret since the world began, the mystery, that is, of the *incarnation*, and of the *death*, of the *Son of God*, remained as mysterious as ever."

Which brings me to the thoughtful challenge of Dr. Kennedy. I Peter 1:11, he says, makes clear that "the Spirit of Christ in the prophets testified of the sufferings of Christ (including His death) and the glory that should follow (resurrection, etc.). Are we really to believe that few, if any of them, right up to Simeon, knew their Savior would have to die and be raised?" As I understand Dr. Kennedy's

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Mr. Doezema is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.

question, he's asking, "Does Don really believe *that* to be the case?" To which the simple answer is: "Yes." Even, as I put it in the article in question, *emphatically* so.

But is the answer really so simple? That is, can it really be answered affirmatively—without qualification? What about those words of Simeon: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also"? Do they not anticipate the death of the cross? Indeed, they do. Just as the words of David in Psalm 16:10 ("For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption") unmistakably anticipate the resurrection of Christ. And as David's words in Psalm 69:21 ("They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink") anticipate a particular aspect of Jesus' suffering. And, as far as *types* are concerned, does not I Corinthians 10:4 tell us that the Israelites "drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was *Christ*"? And does not Jesus say concerning the brazen serpent, in John 3:14, that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up"? For that matter, does not Peter say (concerning David's words in Psalm 16:10) that "he [David] seeing this before *spoke of the resurrection of Christ*, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption"(Acts 2:31)?

All of which, maybe particularly the latter, would seem to indicate that Dr. Kennedy is...right. David *spoke* of the resurrection of Christ.

But then, if the Old Testament prophecies do indeed have the kind of transparency that Dr. Kennedy understands them to have, how do we account for Peter's vehement resistance to Jesus' forthright assertion that the time had come for Him to go to Jerusalem, where He would suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day? "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee!" Surely Peter, like Simeon, must have known Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22 and 16. Besides, Peter had had the added advantage of living for three years in the very presence of the One who, by His Spirit, had inspired every word of the Old Testament Scriptures. Is it conceivable that John the Baptist understood that "his Messiah was to die for his sins and the sins of the whole world," and that Peter, whose brother Andrew was at one time himself a *disciple of John the Baptist*, would be oblivious to that? Along

with all the rest of the followers of Jesus, who, when the time came, were convinced that with His death, His cause was forever *lost*?

And then with regard to the Incarnation. If it is in fact true that "every Old Testament saint believed in an incarnate Messiah," how can we account for the disciples' response to Jesus' calming of winds and waves: "What manner of man is this?" (Matt. 8:27). True enough, Peter, speaking for all the disciples, could affirm, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). But how good a hold did the disciples have, at this stage, on the concept of the *deity* of the *man* Jesus?

And, finally, there is Dr. Kennedy's assertion that, "surely the mystery of the incarnation and death of the Son of God was known to [Simeon] from the Old Testament Scriptures." What, then, are we to think of Paul's reference to the "revelation of the mystery [that is, in the new dispensation], which was *kept secret* since the world began [that is, for the whole of the old dispensation]" (Rom. 16:25)? Which agrees with what he writes concerning the gospel in Colossians 1:26: "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." Calvin's comments on this verse are very much to the point here. I therefore quote at some length:

Here [in 1:26] we have a commendation of the *Gospel*; that it is the wonderful *secret of God*. It is not without good reason that Paul so frequently extols the Gospel with the highest praises in his power; for he saw that it was a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks (I Cor. 1:23).... Here he calls it a sublime secret which was *hid* from ages and generations, that is, from the beginning of the world, through so many revolving ages. ...[W]hereas God had, before the advent of Christ, governed His Church under dark coverings, both of words [prophecies] and of ceremonies [types], He has suddenly shone forth in full brightness by the teaching of the Gospel. ...[W]hereas nothing was previously seen but external figures, Christ has been exhibited, bringing with Him the full truth, which had been concealed.... Lest anyone should misinterpret the word 'mystery,' as though he [Paul] were speaking of something still secret and unknown, he adds that it has now at length been published, that it might be made known to men. What, therefore, as *in its own nature secret*, has been revealed by the Will of God (emphasis added).



No less helpful are Calvin's comments on the Romans 16 passage:

Paul's remaining statements [that is, in verses 25-27] are made for the purpose of commending the power and dignity of the Gospel. He calls the Gospel *the preaching of Jesus Christ*, since the whole sum of it is contained in our knowledge of Christ. He refers to the doctrine of the Gospel as *the revelation of the mystery*. This ought not only to make us more attentive to listen to it, but also to impress on our minds the highest respect for it. Paul denotes how sublime a secret this is by adding that it was hidden for many ages from the beginning of the world....

If it is objected that Paul contradicts himself in saying that the mystery, to which God bore testimony by His prophets, had been concealed through all ages, Peter gives an easy solution to this difficulty. In their careful inquiries into the salvation which was offered to us [that is, the salvation *preached* in the gospel age], he says, the prophets ministered not to themselves but to us (I Pet. 1:12). God, therefore, was silent at that time [namely, throughout the old dispensation], because He held in suspense the revelation of those things concerning which He desired His servants to prophesy.

...Although the prophets had formerly taught all that Christ and the apostles have explained, yet they taught with so much obscurity, when compared with the shining clarity of the light of the Gospel, that we need not be surprised if those things which are now revealed are said to have been hidden.... We may, however, more properly conclude from the subject itself that only when God appeared to His ancient people face to face through His only begotten Son, were the shadows dispersed and the treasures of heavenly wisdom finally opened [emphasis original].

"...sublime secret...hid from ages and generations...nothing *seen* but external figures...under dark coverings, both of words and of ceremonies...in its own nature secret." And now? "revealed"! And all "by the Will of God."

I like that. "...in its own *nature* secret." Paul is speaking here, of course, of the day of *shadows*. And what is a shadow but an *indistinct* representation of the body by which it is cast. The best a shadow can do is *outline*. And for 4,000 years, the shadows were as close as the saints of old could come to *perceiving* the *reality*. "Hid from ages and generations"—from the heathen world entirely, but from the children of Abraham as well, made mysterious by being wrapped up in dark types and dis-

tant prophecies, so that "nothing was previously seen but external figures." And then suddenly, as it were, shining forth "in full brightness by the teaching of the gospel." Yes, it was by the teaching of the *gospel*, in the power of the Spirit of the risen Lord, that the types were at long last unveiled, the prophecies interpreted, the mysteries made plain. And, though more can perhaps be said about the purpose of God in it all, Calvin does well to attribute it all to "the Will of God." God *chose* to teach the saints of old only what Rev. Ophoff once called the "rudiments of the Jehovah-religion," the basic principles of the covenant of grace. *Progressive revelation*.

Why? Ponder *this*, from the pen of Rev. H. Hoeksema:


Why these scriptures of the prophets, predicting the coming manifestation of the mystery, and the preaching of the gospel, the message that now the mystery is manifested? Why this bringing of the Church unto the knowledge of this mystery and unto the obedience of faith?

There is but one answer: glory to the alone wise God!

O yes, it is *the* answer!

That we might behold His marvelous wisdom and be brought under the spell of it forever!

And then there are, yet, Calvin's comments on Romans 16, which, interestingly, speaks more to the prophets' *anticipation* of the gospel age. But that will have to wait till next time.

Which brings me to the third reason I'm glad for Dr. Kennedy's letter. His questions related to an article on *Simeon*. A response could conceivably have been given in a paragraph or two. Why, instead, two *articles*? It's because the article on Simeon did not come as it were out of nowhere. After laying down what might be called the *principles* involved, I'm applying them to actual *history*—of events and people. To the disciples of Jesus, first of all, but then to David and the psalms, to Simeon, and, in the last article, to John the Baptist. There's more to come. Dr. Kennedy's letter, as it seems to me, highlights the disadvantage of treating material like this in a series of sometimes widely spaced *SB* articles. The first article in "Robbing Christ of His Honor" appeared in the January 15, 2013 issue! Who remembers, *now*, articles written three and four years ago? A mid-course review/summary might, therefore, be helpful for all our readers. Hence, two articles. 

## The “Bible Answer Man” Embraces Eastern Orthodoxy

Imagine kneeling before an altar holding a candle and answering affirmatively to these questions:

Wilt thou renounce the errors and false doctrines of the Roman-Latin (or Armenian, or Lutheran, or Reformed) Confession?

Dost thou renounce the false doctrine that, for the expression of the dogma touching the Procession of the Holy Ghost, the declaration of our Saviour Christ himself: “who proceedeth from the Father”: doth not suffice; and that the addition, of man’s invention: “and the Son”: is required?

Dost thou renounce the false doctrine that the predestination of men to their salvation, or their rejection, is not in accordance with the Divine foreknowledge of the faith and good works of the former, or of the unbelief and evil deeds of the latter; but in accordance with some arbitrary destiny, by reason of which faith and virtue are robbed of their merit, and God is held accountable for the perdition of sinners?

Dost thou renounce the erroneous belief that in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist the bread and wine are not transmuted into the Body and Blood of Christ, and are merely emblems of the Body and Blood of Christ?

Dost thou renounce the erroneous belief of the Reformed teachers, who reject five Sacraments: Chrismation, Confession, Marriage, Anointing with Oil, and the Priesthood itself, which administereth the other Sacraments, and presume to administer Baptism and the Eucharist, never having received, through the laying-on of hands by a Bishop, that Ordination which hath been transmitted from one to another, even from the holy Apostles?

Dost thou renounce the erroneous belief of the Reformed teachers who receive not the traditions of the Holy Church, reverence not the Saints, and deprive the dead of spiritual aid, and the living of consolation, in that they reject prayers for the dead?

Dost thou acknowledge that the Holy Scriptures must be accepted and interpreted in accordance with the belief which hath been handed down by the Holy

Fathers, and which the Holy Orthodox Church, our Mother, hath always held and still doth hold?

Dost thou believe and confess that it is proper to reverence and invoke the Saints who reign on high with Christ, according to the interpretation of the Holy Orthodox Church; and that their prayers and intercessions before God avail with the beneficent God unto our salvation: and that it is well-pleasing in the sight of God that we should do homage to their relics, glorified through incorruption, as precious memorials of their virtue?

Dost thou confess that the images of our Saviour Christ; and of the Ever-virgin Mother of God, and of the Other Saints are worthy of being possessed and honoured; not unto idolatry, but that, through contemplation thereof, we may be incited unto piety, and unto emulation of the holy persons represented by these images?<sup>1</sup>

Then imagine that, having made such a confession, the priest says,

Enter thou into the Orthodox Church: and cast away all the errors and false doctrines wherein thou hast dwelt: and honour the Lord God, the Father Almighty, and his Only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, one true and living God, the holy Trinity, one in Essence and indivisible.<sup>2</sup>

Following this, the priest anoints you with holy chrism, and says, “Thou art justified. Thou art illumined. Thou art sanctified; in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.”<sup>3</sup>

Such a ceremony, or similar, Hank Hanegraaff, the president of the Christian Research Institute (CRI), and the host of the popular radio show, “The Bible Answer Man,” together with his wife Kathy, and two of his twelve children, underwent on Palm Sunday, April 9, 2017, in

<sup>1</sup> “The Office for Receiving Into the Orthodox Faith Such Persons As Have Not Previously Been Orthodox” in *The Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church* (compiled, translated, and arranged from the old church-Slavonic service books of the Russian Church and collated with the service books of the Greek Church), trans. Isabel Florence Hapgood. endors. Patriarch Tikhon (New York: Association Press, repr. 1905, 1922), 454-460.

<sup>2</sup> *Service Book*, 461.

<sup>3</sup> *Service Book*, 466.

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Rev. McGeown is missionary-pastor of the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland stationed in Limerick, Republic of Ireland.

St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. The “Bible Answer Man” has converted to Eastern Orthodoxy (EO)!<sup>4</sup>

Hanegraaff explained his conversion in a recent episode of the “Bible Answer Man” broadcast:

I am now a member of an Orthodox Church, but nothing has changed in my faith. I have been attending an Orthodox church for a long time—for over two years.... And so I learned that while truth matters, life matters more.... I was comparing my ability to communicate truth with [EO’s] deep and abiding love for the Lord Jesus Christ.... One man, by the way, said to me, truth matters but life matters more.... I’ve been impacted by the whole idea of knowing Jesus Christ, experiencing Jesus Christ, and partaking of the graces of Jesus Christ through the Eucharist or the Lord’s Table. And that has become so central in my life, but as far as the statement that you mentioned, that I’ve left the Christian faith—nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact I believe what I have always believed, as codified in the Nicene Creed, and as championed by mere Christianity.<sup>5</sup>

What is amazing—and troubling—about this is that Hanegraaff seems to think that he can *still* be the “Bible Answer Man” while confessing the doctrines (errors) of EO. Hanegraaff believes that his faith is essentially the same, despite the fact that to become EO he had to renounce the “errors” of Protestantism or Evangelicalism. Although Hanegraaff was never actually a child of the Reformation (he was prior to his conversion to EO an Arminian and hostile to the Reformed faith), he has now renounced the Reformation in its entirety, for EO rejects all of the fundamental truths of the gospel.

Hanegraaff claims to embrace “mere Christianity,” by which he means the “historic Christian faith,” which, as EO

teaches, is codified in the first seven ecumenical councils of the Church.<sup>6</sup> He confesses the Trinity and the death and resurrection of Christ, for example, but to be EO he must reject justification by faith alone, substitutionary atonement, and regeneration, to name but three cardinal doctrines of the gospel of grace.<sup>7</sup> As an EO member, Hanegraaff is now forbidden to interpret the Scriptures *contrary to the bishops of the EO Church* and he repudiates *sola Scriptura*. This will curtail his activities as the “Bible Answer Man” somewhat, and we will see him increasingly answer as the “EO Answer Man.” Indeed, that process has already begun. Recent broadcasts have shown Hanegraaff fudge answers on *sola Scriptura* and *sola fide*.<sup>8</sup>

EO is perhaps unfamiliar to many SB readers. The church experienced a traumatic schism, the so-called Great Schism, in 1054. The EO Church, rejecting the primacy of the pope, boasts (like Rome) of apostolic succession—not succession from Peter, but an unbroken succession of bishops from the apostles. In addition, EO rejects the *filioque* clause of the Nicene Creed: the Spirit proceeds only from the Father, *not from the Father and the Son* (*filioque* is Latin for “and the Son”). EO worships through icons (pictures) of Christ, Mary, and the saints—through the contemplation of icons, which are like an extension of the Incarnation, one becomes one with the divine. Moreover, salvation in EO is through *theosis*

<sup>6</sup> The first seven Ecumenical Councils are Nicea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), Constantinople (553), Constantinople II (681) and Nicea II (787). These, with their respective creeds and canons, constitute the heart of EO doctrine. In fact, EO has not really developed doctrinally since the eighth century, which means that the Reformation bypassed EO, so that the debates concerning justification, freewill/predestination, and other issues are seen as largely irrelevant in EO.

<sup>7</sup> In 1672, an EO synod formulated “The Confession of Dositheus,” of which the Thirteenth Decree states: “We believe a man to be *not simply justified through faith alone*, but through faith which works through love, that is to say, through faith and works. But [the idea] that faith can fulfil the function of a hand that lays hold on the righteousness which is in Christ, and can then apply it unto us for salvation, *we know to be far from all Orthodoxy*” (<http://www.crivoice.org/creeddositheus.html>).

<sup>8</sup> For insightful analysis of the “Bible Answer Man’s” recent answers, especially on the subjects of *sola Scriptura* and *sola fide*, listen to Dr. James White’s podcast, “Can a Consistent Eastern Orthodox Believer Be the Bible Answer Man?” on “The Dividing Line,” April 13, 2017, <http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/2017/04/13/can-consistent-eastern-orthodox-believer-bible-answer-man>.

<sup>4</sup> We might not be very familiar with Hank Hanegraaff. Perhaps his best known and most useful book is *Christianity in Crisis: 21st Century* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), which is an exposé of the prosperity gospel. As far as can be ascertained, the service book cited above is still used in EO today. Although EO priests have some freedom in the language used, the Chrismation ceremony requires converts to EO to renounce the errors of their former communion. There is no reason to believe that an exception was made for Mr. Hanegraaff.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in a pro-EO website, <https://journeytoorthodoxy.com/2017/04/bible-answer-man-hank-hanegraaff-joins-the-orthodox-church>.



or *deification*, the idea that by cooperating with God's grace, sinners become partakers of the divine nature—not of the divine essence, which is incommunicable and indivisible, but of the “divine energies.” If Rome confuses justification and sanctification, EO confuses justification and glorification. Hanegraaff explained *theosis* to one of his listeners who in March asked a question about EO, which was before the “Bible Answer Man” revealed that he was on his way to becoming the “EO Answer Man”:

We become Christ-bearers since His Body and Blood are distributed throughout our limbs, as Cyril of Jerusalem said.... The whole idea being that we become by grace what God is by nature.... We become, as Peter put it, partakers in the divine nature.<sup>9</sup>

Hanegraaff went on to wax lyrical about EO:

[It is] well within the pale of orthodoxy...compatible with the essentials of the historic Christian faith.... Orthodox is fantastic in that it uses earthly perceptible realities to point to spiritual verities, so it is constantly pointing you to the worship of God.... It's the early church. That was the church up until the split in 1054 between East and West, and essentially what the church was teaching up until the time of the Reformation, and even afterwards.<sup>10</sup>

What would attract a Protestant Evangelical to EO? Some years ago, the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) commissioned a report on EO in which they identified four main reasons why people are leaving true churches for EO churches: (1) mystery; (2) history; (3) beauty; and (4) experience.<sup>11</sup> A few citations from the report will illustrate this:

[Mystery]

EO theology and life does not feel to many like seeking the right answers for an exam, but rather like an artful and earthy journey to heaven in company of its God. EO has appeal to those yearning to be lost in something bigger than themselves, to those who say they are not

so much seeking answers as they are meaning, purpose, experience, community, and connection....

[History]

Three areas where many people long for this sense of connectivity to the historic church are worship, doctrine, and church government. Concerning the first of these three (worship), many converts to EO explain how they desired to worship God in the way of the early church, and that modern Protestant worship did not satisfy those desires. Burned out with worship services that reflect far more of popular culture than the liturgical practices of the historic church, many find the Divine Liturgy of the Orthodox Church attractive....

[Experience]

It was fantastic. I remember our first divine liturgy... and so I watched this whole thing. I was enamored by it, and bewildered, and confused, all at the same time. I didn't know what all exactly was going on, but I liked what I saw.... I think that when you go into an Orthodox Church, and you open your eyes to see the robes, to hear the chanting, the Psalms, the incense, the prayers, the presence of God there in the midst of his people, it's like you're reading the book of Revelation and you're seeing how worship happens in heaven.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, those attracted to (or, bewitched by) EO seek the “authentic early church” of the apostles. EO boasts antiquity, which is her claim that her doctrines and practices have not changed since the apostles. But the early church was not as idyllic as EO imagines, for the early church very quickly departed from the gospel of grace (Gal. 1:6), was filled with errors and divisions (read I Corinthians), and was threatened with the removal of her candlestick and other judgments (Rev. 2:5; 3:3, 16, etc.): “EO's claim that its liturgy has remained unchanged since the days of the apostles is unsubstantiated and overstated.”<sup>13</sup>

Tragically, the “Bible Answer Man” has rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of the forgiveness of sins in the blood of Jesus Christ, and the gospel of justification on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith alone. Such a man cannot be allowed to answer Bible questions in the future—he is not a safe guide. ☞

<sup>9</sup> Cited in <https://journeytoorthodoxy.com/2017/04/bible-answer-man-hank-hanegraaff-joins-the-orthodox-church>.

<sup>10</sup> You can watch the clip here: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/bible-answer-man-hank-hanegraaf-leaves-evangelicalism-joins-greek-orthodox-church-180035>.

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Committee Appointed by URCNA Classis SWUS to Study Eastern Orthodoxy, <http://www.oceansideurc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Eastern-Orthodoxy-Study-Committee-Report.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> URCNA Report, 4, 9, 25.

<sup>13</sup> URCNA Report, 13.



# Dwell

In general, “dwell” refers to the close, rich, abiding love lived between husbands and wives, parents and children, and members of the church within a structure (tent, house, city, land) that promotes and preserves that communion in peace (I Pet. 3:7; Heb. 11:9; Ps. 133:1). The main significance is that the Spirit defines the covenant as “dwelling,” that is, more specifically, as the blessed, abiding, and intimate communion of love between God and His church in Christ and through the Spirit, wherein God dwells in them and they dwell in God forever.

In both its old and new administrations, the covenant promise—I will be their God and they shall be My people—is called in-dwelling. At Sinai, God explains that the law prescribing tabernacle, priests, and sacrifices is so Israel may know “I brought them forth...that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God” (Lev. 26:11; Ex. 29:46). Paul applies this same promise to the New Testament church: “As God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people (II Cor. 6:16). Covenant perfection in the day of Christ is similarly described: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men; and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God” (Rev. 21:3).

But how is such covenant in-dwelling possible? God dwells in heavens that cannot contain Him, dwells in light no man can approach, and is a consuming fire that cannot dwell with sin (I Kings 8:27; I Tim. 6:16; Is. 33:14). And man dwells in darkness, dwells in flesh that cannot please God and wherein dwells no good thing (Rom. 7:18; Eph. 2:1). With men, impossible; with God all things are possible (Mark 10:27). So God must also govern the covenant. God does so by choosing the man with whom to dwell and causing him so to dwell (Ps. 65:4). And of all people and places, the Lord chose to dwell in Israel, Jerusalem, Zion, and the ark of mercy in a tent between the cherubim (Joel 3:21; Is. 37:16). The heavenly reality: God chose to dwell

forever with His church in His Son, the Christ, who being “God with us” and Head of the body, does not merely make this covenant dwelling possible, but is *Himself* the dwelling place (Ps. 90:1; Col. 2:9).

In the covenant, God not only dwells *near* us, working with and for us, but God dwells *in* us, working in and through us (John 14:17). Furthermore, although the covenant is unilateral (God alone establishes, maintains, and perfects it), the covenant is also a mutual in-dwelling. By the gift of the Spirit of Christ, God dwells in us and we dwell in God; Christ dwells in us and we dwell in Christ (I John 4:13; John 5:46). We do not, therefore, merely experience the covenant, but we dwell in it, which is to say, we actively live, love, believe, trust, and securely abide in God.

But how absurd to suppose God depends on us dwelling in Him for Him to dwell in us! We dwell in Him only because He dwells in us; we love Him only because He first loved us (I John 4:3, 19). In fact, our dwelling in God is the necessary, certain, irresistible work and effect of the in-dwelling Spirit. Thus, when Love, Grace, and Truth dwell in us, we dwell in love, grace, and truth with God and our brother (I John 4:16; II John 1:2). When Knowledge and Wisdom of the Word dwell in us, we dwell in the word, believing and living in it (Col. 3:16; II Tim. 1:14). When the Comforter dwells in us, we dwell in comfort, peace, and safety (Ezek. 34:28; Is. 57:15). When the Holy and Righteous Law dwell in us, we dwell in holiness and keep that law as fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:22; I John 3:24). And all this is as necessary, certain, and irresistible, as when the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, then that same Spirit will raise our mortal bodies to life immortal (Rom. 8:9-11). Necessary indeed.

And wonder of grace! Truly, blessed are they who dwell in the secret place of the Most High (Ps. 91:1). Surely, goodness and mercy will follow every man, woman, and child who dwells in the Lord’s house, for in all generations, He is our dwelling place (Ps. 23:6, 27:4).

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*Rev. Langerak is pastor of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*



“To Teach Them War” (15)

## Knowing Our Enemies: Our Sinful Flesh

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

### The Flesh as our Enemy

In our spiritual warfare we *must* know our enemies. Ignorance of the enemy is inexcusable folly. Knowledge of the enemy is one of the first principles of all warfare. Christian soldiers must know Satan, the wicked world, and finally, what the above passage calls “the flesh.” Our greatest enemy is *within*. The fiercest battle is *within*. And the menacing enemy within us is “the flesh.”

Our enemy “the flesh” does not refer to our physical body that occupies space and bleeds, but the corruption of our fallen nature that we receive from our first father Adam. The flesh is not a tangible thing. The flesh—what we also call our old man of sin (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9)—is a principle of operation, a spiritually dark and sinful power impelling to sinful affections, emotions, desires, thoughts, words, and deeds. As we have explained in earlier articles, regenerated believers have a new heart graciously ruled by the Holy Spirit of Christ and from which proceeds love for God and hatred for sin. The Spirit, not the flesh, has dominion within us. We live “in the Spirit” and are called to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). But until we take our last breath and leave this life, we children of God have cleaving to us our sinful flesh. Unlike the devil and the wicked world, the flesh is not an enemy who resides without, but within. He’s the enemy *in* the camp. If we are not consciously and actively fighting this enemy by the power of the Spirit, we fall into many sins, even great sins.

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Rev. Huizinga is pastor of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California.

Previous article in this series: February 15, 2017, p. 232.

As our enemy, the flesh is a hell-bent, traitorous, totally depraved, unchangeably and irreparably corrupt foe. The flesh cannot be converted, transformed, or counseled. Regeneration dethrones but does not eradicate him. This foe is a very present danger within and must be strenuously resisted and opposed, even mortified, until he is abolished at the end of our earthly lives.

The reason we regenerated believers are not sinless but continue to sin is the presence of our sinful flesh. The reason we sigh often and lament “O wretched man that I am,” even to our deathbed, is the presence of our sinful flesh. The reason our best works of joyful worship and our charitable acts of brotherly kindness are tainted with sin is the presence of our sinful flesh. The flesh is a miserably relentless foe that cleaves to us wherever we go and in whatever we do. Even when we make confession of faith and participate in the Lord’s Supper for the very first time, our sinful flesh will accompany us to the table of our Lord and seek to prevent us from lifting our hearts on high where Christ is at God’s right hand. The flesh will do that as long as we partake of holy communion.

Each one of us is responsible for the wickedness of our flesh. Our flesh does not sin. We sin. I sin. You sin. The person sins. The Adamic flesh did not eat the forbidden fruit, *Adam* did. The Mosaic flesh did not strike the rock, *Moses* did. The Davidic flesh did not take another man’s wife, *David* did. As we live from the flesh, *we* sin. Thus our lament is not, “Oh wretched flesh that cleaveth to me!” but “O wretched man that I am!”

As a tree is known by its fruits, so the sinful flesh is known by its works. Galatians 5 gives a catalogue of seventeen manifested works of the flesh. It is not an exhaustive list, for the apostle concludes with the statement “and such like” (v. 21), indicating there are many more similar works. But the list is complete for the apostle’s purposes. It is quite a list, a shameful and horrifying list. A sane man shudders. When you hear that the works of Caesar Nero included setting aflame Christians as torches to illuminate his imperial festivals, or that the

work of the modern abortion doctor is to go to the clinic each day to crush little babies into pieces, then you say “Desperately wicked men! Monsters!” But what do you say about your own flesh?

The flesh of every believer is desperately wicked and capable of producing every kind of vile work from the outward acts of “adultery” or “drunkenness” to the inner attitudes of “wrath” or “envyings.” We might go through our entire lives without ever committing the act of adultery as David did, or getting drunk as Noah did. Nevertheless, the flesh of each one of us is inclined and oriented toward adultery, drunkenness, and every sin. The power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and sometimes even the influences of the out-workings of God’s providence—as in the wrath (Rom. 13:5) of the police officer in his patrol car looking out for drunkards behind the wheel—may keep us from yielding to the flesh and keep many evil works from proceeding from us. Nevertheless, our sinful flesh as it stands alone without any influence acting against it is completely corrupt and capable of producing every conceivable form of iniquity, whether mentioned in the Galatians catalogue or not.

Furthermore, while every regenerated believer’s sinful flesh is inclined toward *all* wickedness and capable of manifesting all seventeen of the representative works catalogued in Galatians 5, not every believer feels the same pressure from the flesh toward the same sins. All will be aroused by the flesh, but not all are aroused to nor yield to the same sins of the flesh. While you might struggle mightily with and often find yourself yielding to sexual temptations, another might not. While another might struggle mightily with and often find himself yielding to fits of violent wrath in yelling, shaking, smashing, and throwing, you might not.

The seventeen works of the Galatians catalogue divide nicely into four *groups*. According to these four groups we could give the sinful flesh as personified four distinct *names*. These names impress us all the more with the frightening wickedness of our foe.

### **The Flesh as a Filthy Fornicator**

First, our sinful flesh is a filthy fornicator whose works include the sexual sins of “adultery [sexual intercourse with another’s spouse], fornication [from the Greek *porneia* and including all forms of sexual sin], unclean-

ness [which refers not exclusively but primarily to sexual uncleanness] and lasciviousness [unbridled lust giving way to unchaste actions].”

Know the enemy! The flesh is a filthy fornicator. Before any other of his works are mentioned, his sexually unclean works are mentioned. Does that not indicate that temptation to sexual sins of one sort or another and to one degree or another will cease not to threaten the believer in this life? Because of his sinful flesh, the believer is prone by nature to promiscuity, illicit fantasies, shamefully unclean desires that if uncovered and broadcasted to the world would horrify him, and temptations to find sexual satisfaction outside of the undefiled marriage bed in abhorrent relationships, in filthy jokes, movies rated “R” for their nudity, raunchy television programs, suggestive social media posts, lewd advertisements, and easily accessible pornography. The flesh has an insatiable appetite for fornication, and with every taste he is allowed, the cravings of this filthy fornicator intensify.

Should we hear of a former classmate who had a child out of wedlock, or that a cousin of ours has “come out as gay,” or that our friend’s sibling is divorced and getting remarried, or that our best friend’s father is getting counseling for pornography addiction and we exclaim (as if we would never fall victim to any of those sins), “Unbelievable! How can someone be so sinful!” we must stop. Stop. Stop, and with sanctified humility understand that our flesh is also a filthy fornicator and that if it were not for God’s gracious preservation, we would certainly be manifesting the exact same work of sexual uncleanness, just as certainly as we presently manifest the despicable work of arrogant self-righteous incredulity. How deceitful is our flesh! How powerful! Know the enemy.

### **The Flesh as an Infatuated Idolater**

Secondly, our sinful flesh is an infatuated idolater whose works include “idolatry” and “witchcraft.” The flesh is not only idolatrous, but so infatuated with idolatry that he may go so far as to practice witchcraft. Witchcraft includes all the ritualistic formulas, curious arts, incantations, and magic potions used to contact evil spirits in order to achieve extraordinary experiences. If it were not for the Holy Spirit, you and a few friends might use social media to contact some witchcraft enthusiasts and try to gather secretly in a back shed somewhere after school in

order to cast spells and call up the spirits of dead men before an altar to Satan. Sound bizarre and unthinkable? Our flesh is that depraved as an infatuated idolater.

Is it not so painfully true to our own experience that our flesh is infatuated with idolatry? Idols include (in addition to a wood carving that is venerated) a scholarship, a G.P.A number, clothing, money, automobiles, a smartphone, celebrities, professional athletes, and self. Self is the great idol before whom every knee must bow. The flesh is so idolatrous and infatuated with the praise of men that when walking according to the flesh we may sweat and toil and do all kinds of good things for people not first of all because we care about them or want to hear God say, “Well done thou good and faithful servant,” but because we want to enhance the reputation of self and get others to say, “That guy is something else—what he won’t do for people!” Or, “that girl is such a sweetheart—always thinking of others!” And if the compliments and recognition do not come? Then, according to the flesh, we say, “What’s the point of all the effort?” Such is the infatuated idolater’s way of thinking. Know the enemy!

### **The Flesh as an Angry Agitator**

Thirdly, our sinful flesh is an angry agitator always chipping away at the unity of the body of Christ. The works of the flesh include “hatred [enmity], variance [strife], emulations [jealousies], wrath, strife [rivalries with others], seditions [creating dissention, division], heresies, envyings, and murders.” It is nothing short of a miracle that peace may prevail in a congregation when behind every entry in the church directory could be the notice “angry agitator by nature.” The bitter little rivalries of junior high girls, the emotional outbursts of snobby high school drama-queens, and the intimidating, pompous strut of the alpha male in the senior class are all a part of the secular schools of the state. The same behavior can even appear in the good Protestant Reformed school, not only because there is carnal seed among the spiritual seed, but also because cleaving to every believing student is the sinful flesh that is given over to hatred, strife, murders, and the rest.

The flesh as an angry agitator is always critical of someone and unhappy with something. He can find something he would like to fight about with anyone—the

pastor, the school teacher, the fiancé, the best friend, the sibling, the grocer, the bank teller, even Christ Himself.

Heresy can appear in the church of Christ because even believers have by nature a sinful inclination toward “heresies,” which are inherently divisive. And even when heresy is effectively rooted out of the church, that leaven is sometimes purged in a dishonorable manner because even the staunchest defenders of orthodoxy are prone by nature to hatred and envy and the desire just to be right. Even the holiest of men when fighting for truth—men like the apostle Paul, Martin Luther, and Herman Hoeksema—had to give themselves to continual, conscious examination of the motive of every word they spoke or wrote, lest that angry agitator within have an influence. Know the enemy! Do not minimize him!

### **The Flesh as a Debauched Drunkard**

Finally, the sinful flesh is a debauched drunkard whose works include “drunkenness and revellings [drinking parties of debauchery, that is, excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures].” The flesh wants to go to college, live in the dorms, and party every weekend. The flesh wants to have some people over to “watch sports” while the parents are gone. “Watch sports” is code for “drink beer secretly smuggled, and lots of it.” If you have no desire to go to a party and get drunk, it is not because your flesh is sober but rather that the Spirit is graciously crushing these desires of your flesh. Every man’s flesh is inclined toward drunkenness. Therefore, the biblical narrative that includes the words, “And he drank of the wine and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent,” should not be shocking to us—lamentable, but not shocking. The tireless ark-building, righteousness-preaching, covenant father Noah could pass through the wonder that was salvation in the ark, hear the covenant promise of God confirmed by a rainbow, and then get drunk because his sinful flesh, like ours, is a debauched drunkard. Know the enemy!


### **The Flesh in Perspective**

Does not a consideration of the evil and powerful enemy that is our sinful flesh furnish us with constant matter for humiliation before God? This flesh is *in* us! In *me*! O wretched man that I am! God be merciful to me a sinner!



Does not this power of the flesh magnify the power of Christ's Spirit and the wonder of salvation? How is even one sinner saved? How is it even possible *not* to walk in the flesh? How is the church not torn to pieces by her own members and conformed to the world? Jesus Christ who quickens us by His Spirit unto a sanctified life of devotion to God must be some Savior. It is simply astounding that Christ by His Spirit beats back our flesh, enabling us to love God and sing from the heart, "Lord,

I love Thy good commandments, and esteem them more than gold; all Thy precepts are most righteous; hating sin, to these I hold." Indeed, my only comfort in the battle is that I am not my own but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, let all the impenitent who continue in the works of the flesh be warned, "...as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." 

## CLASSIS EAST REPORT

## MR. GARY BOVERHOF

May 10, 2017  
Byron Center PRC

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, May 10, 2017. Each church was each represented by two delegates. Rev. Wm. Langerak was the chairman for this session.

Rev. K. Koole was appointed as the new moderator of Southwest PRC. He replaces Rev. A. denHartog who has been on the west coast assisting our Lynden Church during the illness of Rev. Ron Hanco. Holland PRC, Southwest PRC, and Zion PRC were granted Classical pulpit supply for evening services from June through September, should they be needed.

Classis was informed that a brother intends to appeal to Synod a decision that Classis made during the January 2017 meeting. This decision was regarding admitting non-Protestant Reformed believers to the communion table.


The new Stated Clerk of Classis East was instructed to send a letter of thanks to Jon Huisken for his 40-plus years of faithful service to Classis East, and, further, to place a notice

of thanks in the bulletins of Classis East as well as in the *Standard Bearer*.

Most of the day was spent on a protest by a sister protesting the content of various sermons of her pastor. This was appointed to pre-advice committee for recommendations. After thorough deliberations, Classis declared that this protest was illegally before Classis on the basis that her work was not finished with her Consistory. Classis appointed the church visitors of Classis East to assist the Consistory and appellant with advice and guidance in their work.

A committee was appointed to digitize the minutes and supplements of Classis East. Due to the scope of this work, the committee is to report to Classis annually with their progress.

Classis approved the expenses for its meeting of \$1,268.80. The next meeting of Classis East will be at Grandville PRC on September 13, 2017 at 8:00 A.M., Lord willing.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Boverhof, Stated Clerk 

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

## MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

### Trivia Question

First, please add the great state of Indiana to the list of those as home to only one PRC. Cornerstone PRC is located in Dyer, IN.

When did the *Beacon Lights*, the periodical of the Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation, begin publication? Answer later in this column.

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

### Sister-Church Activities

This summer Rev. Angus Stewart and his wife Mary plan to take their biennial holiday in North America, D. V. Rev. Stewart is to preach a total of eight times in these PRC congregations: Spokane, Edmonton, Lacombe, Lynden, Providence, and Hudsonville. The Stewarts look forward to worshipping with the saints in these six churches again. Rev. Stewart also plans to present a slideshow in four of these churches. Rev. Stewart and Rev. Allen

Brummel are scheduled to speak at an evangelism conference in Lacombe on July 29.

### Mission Activities

The Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines held its first overnight Youth Camp recently. About 65 young people plus 10 staff were in attendance. The Youth Camp ("convention") was held from Wednesday through Friday in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. The three PRCP pastors gave

the speeches. All went well, and both Rev. Holstege and Rev. Kleyn enjoyed being with the young people and some of the members of the PRCP for the three days of the camp. We thank God for enabling this to take place and for His blessing upon it.

### Young People's Activities

The YPS of Crete, IL PRC recently hosted their annual pancake breakfast.

Aussie Burgers! The Trinity PRC Young People invited all in the area to join them at Heritage Christian School for freshly grilled burgers served the Aussie way—egg, pineapple, beets available. They also served grilled hotdogs, salad, and decorate-your-own cupcakes with gluten-free options available. There are those in our churches who grew up with Aussie Burgers and wouldn't have it any other way.

The young people at Wingham, Ontario, Canada encouraged members of their congregation to save their unwanted treasures and donate them to the Young People's Yard Sale in late May. Proceeds were to help the young people register for and travel to the 2017 Young People's Convention.

The Byron Center young people hosted a hanging basket flower sale on May 13 at Adams Christian School, from 9-1. Beautiful hanging baskets sold for \$15, or 3 for \$40. Many supported this convention fundraiser, and bought their Mother's Day flowers, Secret-Pal flowers, or flowers for their own home and garden.

### Congregational Activities

The congregation at Grandville, MI PRC decided recently to rebuild the church parking lot.

The Protestant Reformed Psalm Choir presented a concert on May 7 in Grandville PRC, singing a won-

derful selection of psalms, including some from the proposed revised Psalter. Many joined for an evening of praise. On May 21 they performed it again at First PRC of Grand Rapids.

Lots of interesting tidbits were seen on a recent bulletin at Hope PRC of Redlands, CA. These notes included a craft night, Adult Fellowship outing, Reading Club, Olympics Day, a summer basketball league, and the approval to host a Young Adults Retreat in 2018! Things are happening in Redlands! Also, it's a nice place to visit on your vacation.

Members at First PRC of Holland, MI joined the building committee on a recent Saturday to spruce up the church grounds. Shovels and wheelbarrows were recruited to spread topsoil and dispose of chipped branches. And a congregational father/daughter campout was held in early May. Hope it wasn't too chilly!

The congregation at Peace PRC in Lansing, IL voted in early May to replace the roof of the church building.

Southeast PRC members who like baseball arranged a night of fellowship at the West Michigan Whitecaps baseball game in early May. The \$5 entry fee included a hotdog and pop. Hopefully the home team won the game!

In light of the upcoming emeritation of Rev. Thomas Miersma the Council at Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, AB Canada will soon be forming a trio from which to call a new pastor. Members of the congregation were invited to suggest names for the trio to a Consistory member.

### Minister Activities

First PRC of Holland, MI formed a trio of Revs. C. Haak, R. Kleyn, and D. Kuiper. On April 30 the

congregation voted to call Rev. Haak to be their next pastor.

Southwest PRC issued a call to Rev. Cory Griess of Calvary PRC in Hull, IA. On May 7 he declined this call.

Zion PRC formed a trio of Revs. N. Decker, G. Eriks, and R. Kleyn, calling Rev. Eriks on April 23. On May 14 he declined this call.

Byron Center PRC voted to call Rev. Haak on May 7 for home missionary from a trio that included Revs. S. Key and C. Spronk.


Doon formed a new trio from which to call a third Philippine missionary. The congregation voted on May 14 to call Rev. H. Bleyenbergh from a trio that included Revs. G. Eriks and C. Spronk.

### Evangelism Activities

A "Contact in Africa" program was held at the Kalamazoo PRC on April 28. This multimedia presentation was given by Prof. R. Cammenga on the 2016 trip of a delegation of our Contact Committee to Namibia and South Africa. Refreshments followed.

### Trivia Answer

The first issue of the *Beacon Lights* was printed January, 1941. The light blue cover included a lighthouse as its main feature. It included editorials by Rev. C. Hanko, Bible Outlines by Rev. P. De Boer, a book review by Rev. L. Vermeer, Tomorrow's Man of God by Rev. A. Cammenga, and Discussion on the Canons. In God's providence the *Beacon Lights* is still going strong over 75 years later. Praise God for this excellent publication! If you are not a subscriber, sign up now. You will be glad you did!

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Consistory and the congregation of Edgerton PRC wish to express Christian sympathy to Carol Brands in the loss of her husband, Ron Brands in the loss of his brother, and Teresa Kuiper, Doug Brands, and Jason Brands in the loss of their uncle,

#### MR. HAROLD BRANDS.

May they find comfort in God's Word: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Psalm 23:6).

Rev. Douglas Kuiper, President  
Chester Hunter, Clerk

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Hudsonville PRC express their sincere sympathy to Russ Zwak and his family, in the death of his sister,

#### THEA SCHROTENBOER.

We pray that they are comforted in the words of Christ's prayer in John 17:24, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Rev. Garrett Eriks, President  
Ralph Vander Veen, Clerk

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Loveland PRC express their Christian sympathy to Robert and Phyllis Brands and family in the death of Bob's brother,

#### MR. HAROLD BRANDS.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

Rev. Steven Key, President  
Robert Van Uffelen, Clerk

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Loveland PRC express their Christian sympathy to Donna and Rick Campbell; their children Lora and Jay Kalsbeek, Kris and Jaime Campbell, Alicia and Adam Santistevan; and to their grandchildren in the death of Donna's mother,

#### MRS. SHIRLEY WALTERS.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Rev. Steven Key, President  
Robert Van Uffelen, Clerk

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Georgetown PRC express their sincere sympathy to Kevin and Barb Poortinga in the death of their mother,

#### HILDRENE GRAVELING.

It is our prayer that they and their extended family may receive comfort from the Holy Spirit in Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Rev. Carl Haak, President  
David S Miedema, Clerk

### Wedding Anniversary

■ As children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of

#### CORNELIUS and TRUDA JONKER,

we rejoice as they celebrate 70 years of marriage in the Lord on June 2, 2017. God's grace has been abundant in their lives as they sought to raise their children in a godly home. We see His covenant faithfulness as we, their children, seek to follow the godly example they continue to set in their marriage. Our praise and thanks go to our heavenly Father for the many years He has mercifully given them. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless and keep them close in His care.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:12-14).

✿ Donald and Jacque Jonker      ✿ Bernie and Laurie Kamps  
✿ Philip and Linda Jonker      ✿ Eugene and Sharon Kamps  
✿ John and Darlene Graeser      23 grandchildren  
✿ Eric and Marilyn Ophoff      63 great-grandchildren

Jenison, Michigan

### Wedding Anniversary

■ With gratitude to God for His faithful and abounding providence, the children and grandchildren of

#### PETER and RUTH NOBEL

join them in celebrating their 51st wedding anniversary on June 8, 2017. We honor them for their diligent instruction of us, particularly in early memorization of Scripture such as Psalm 27: "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it.... Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

✿ Abigail Nobel  
✿ John and Naomi Chesebro  
    Mercy, Ruthie, Peter, Gideon, Andrew, Christiana, Patience  
✿ Brian and Priscilla Boot  
    Julia, Timothy, Damaris, Susanna, Jared, Maria, Faith, Tabitha, Charis  
✿ Ken and Eve Atkinson  
    Miriam, Nathan, Job, Lydia, Sarah, Joanna, Sylvia, Stephen, Jemima, David, Seth, Rhoda  
✿ Travis and Charity Grassmid  
    Jessica, Esther, Lindsay, Alicia, Joseph  
✿ Luke and Andrea Nobel  
✿ Hope Nobel  
✿ Nick and Hannah Doornbos  
    Wanetta, and the other little ones in glory  
✿ Samuel Nobel in glory.

Dorr, Michigan

### Wedding Anniversary

■ On June 9, 2017, we will celebrate the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

#### HAROLD and WINNIE TOLSMAN.

We rejoice with them and thank our heavenly Father for blessing them with many years of marriage and for the godly instruction they have given us. Our prayer is that our heavenly Father will continue to bless and keep them in His loving care in the years ahead.

"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" (Psalm 145:3, 4).

✿ John and Lorinda Tolsma  
    Aliyah, Bailey, Silas, Regan  
✿ Ed and Mandy Tolsma  
    Luke, Andrew, Michael, Jason, Allison, Daniel, Daisy, Thomas  
✿ David and Esther Hollema  
    Alexander, Zachary, Madison, Jakob  
✿ Frank and Marisa Tolsma      ✿ Michael and Jenna Brands  
    Lillian, Joel      Ian, James, Ellen

Loveland, Colorado

## Standard Bearer

1894 Georgetown Center Dr.  
Jenison, MI 49428-7137

PERIODICAL  
POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
AT JENISON,  
MICHIGAN

### Wedding Anniversary

■ Giving thanks to our faithful, heavenly Father, on June 11 we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

**REV. JASON and JEAN KORTERING.**

Throughout their sixty years together they have remained committed to each other, to us, to the church, and to our glorious Christ whose church it is. We praise our covenant God for their life of love and service. "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will show forth thy praise to all generations" (Psalm 79:13).

- ✿ Barry and Lori Gritters
- ✿ Dennis and Sharon Griess
- ✿ Joann Klamer
- ✿ Leon and Ellen Kamps
- ✿ Rick and Carol Bos

25 grandchildren and 48 great grandchildren  
Jenison, Michigan

### Wedding Anniversary

■ With praise and thanksgiving to our gracious, heavenly Father, we rejoice with our parents,

**ROBERT and MARY LOU VERMEER,**

as they celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary on June 17, 2017. We are thankful for the years our Lord has given them together and we praise God for His covenant blessings bestowed on them in their generations. We are blessed by their godly example in marriage, and our prayer is that our Lord will continue to bless their marriage now and in the years ahead.

"The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel" (Psalm 128: 5, 6).

- ✿ Reverend David and Rebecca Overway  
Joseph, Elena, Benjamin
- ✿ David and Jessica Vermeer  
Sean, Hanna, Brendan, Ashley, Leia, Meghan,  
Courtney
- ✿ Daniel and Mary Jo Terpstra  
Samantha, Cameron, Mackenzie, Lincoln
- ✿ Michael and Beth Vermeer  
Caleb, Annette, Lydia, Kaylee, Willem
- ✿ Jim and Lori Hoogendoorn
- ✿ Jonathan and Katelyn Vermeer  
Alexandra

Saint John, Indiana

### Classis West

■ Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Hull, Iowa, on Wednesday, September 27, 2017, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the clerk of Hull's consistory.

Rev. D. Kuiper, Stated Clerk

### Call to Synod!!

■ Synod 2016 appointed Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan the calling church for the 2017 Synod.

The consistory hereby notifies our churches that the 2017 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, June 13, 2017 at 8:30 A.M., in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan.

The Pre-Synodical Service will be held on Monday evening, June 12, at 7:00 P.M. Rev. G. Eriks, president of the 2016 Synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service.

Consistory of Hudsonville PR Church  
Ralph VanderVeen, Clerk

### Notice

■ The RFPA is seeking to hire a full-time employee to fill the newly created position of Sales and Operations Manager. This position will feature a full-time salary and insurance benefits. The duties of the position will include sales, marketing, accounting, and general operations. The preferred applicants should have the education and experience that pertain to this role. Individuals interested in this position should contact Tim Pipe at the RFPA office for more details ([tim@rfpa.org](mailto:tim@rfpa.org)/616-457-5970).

### Teacher Needed

■ The Protestant Reformed School of Wingham is in need of a *part-time or full-time* teacher for the 2017-2018 school year. There is grade flexibility with grade assignments, etc. and the board is willing to work with an interested individual's preference. Please contact Jim Siertsema at [jimsiertsema@gmail.com](mailto:jimsiertsema@gmail.com) / 519-955-5665 or Preston Crich at [prstncrch@gmail.com](mailto:prstncrch@gmail.com) for more information and to apply.

## Reformed Witness Hour

June 2017

Rev. Carl Haak

### Date

### Topic

### Text

June 4	"In the Beginning God Created Marriage"	Genesis 2:18-25
June 11	"God's Design for Marriage"	Genesis 2:24
June 18	"God's Rule of Conduct for Marriage"	Colossians 3:12, 13
June 25	"A Dress Code for Marriage"	Colossians 3:12, 13