

# *The Standard Bearer*

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# Jesus In the Midst

“Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.”

John 19:18

Jesus’ crucifixion in the midst of two sinners reveals Him as the Savior of His people.

Two notorious sinners hung condemned on either side of the Savior. Both saw and heard enough so that they could know that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

By virtue of their close proximity to Jesus, each was forced to face the question, “What will you do with the crucified Christ?”



The contrast between Jesus and these two sinners could hardly have been greater. In the middle was Jesus, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, God the Son come in the flesh, perfectly holy, devoted to God, and separate from sin. On either side of Jesus were two corrupt creatures of the dust, rebels against the Creator and against the authority God had put over them, two who had devoted their lives to wickedness. How amazing that Jesus was crucified with such criminals, the Righteous One with such notorious sinners!

*Rev. Marcus is pastor of the First Protestant Reformed Church in Edmonton, Alberta.*

More amazing, Jesus was placed in the *midst* of them. If a band of robbers was crucified, the ringleader, the most guilty one, would be put in the middle. If anyone should have been in the middle of the two robbers, it was Barabbas. But, Jesus was put in the middle, implying He was the worst offender among them. In fact, as He bore the sins of His people, we could say He was indeed the most notorious sinner.

Jesus hanging in the midst of these notorious sinners is all the more astounding when we consider that the people knew Jesus was perfectly innocent. Pilate said on three different occasions, “I find no fault in Him” (John 18:38; 19:4; 19:6). Pilate’s wife knew it too and told Pilate to have nothing to do with Jesus (Matt. 27:19). Herod could find nothing worthy of death in Jesus (Luke 23:15). Judas Iscariot even proclaimed, “I have betrayed innocent blood” (Matt. 27:4). The centurion in charge of Jesus’ crucifixion would add this conclusion: “Certainly this was a righteous man” (Luke 23:47).

Still, they crucified Him. Pilate passed the sentence as a representative of the world power of the day and, therefore, of all the nations. The Jewish rulers seeking His death, represented Israel. The soldiers willingly followed orders, taking Jesus to Golgotha and cruelly fastening Him to the cross. But in reality, the entire world was behind His condemnation. By nature, we are all part of

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that same fallen world. The world faced the question, "What will you do with Jesus?" And, they answered, "Crucify Him!" If we had been there, apart from God's grace working in our hearts, we would have said the same: "Crucify Him!"

Very few punishments match the horror of crucifixion. But, having spikes driven through one's hands and feet, having one's tendons stretched and torn, having to labor for every breath, and burning with thirst, was not the worst. The true horror of Jesus' suffering came as Jesus experienced God's cursing wrath poured out upon Him. The cross was a symbol of that curse: "...he that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21:23). We can understand something of the physical pain Jesus endured. But, how could we ever understand the curse of God upon Him? How can we understand what it means to be forsaken by God? How can we understand the torments of hell, that place of everlasting weeping and gnashing of teeth and darkness, where the worm never dies and the fires are never extinguished?

Sinless Jesus, crucified in the midst of sinners, experiencing God's horrible curse as the worst of them—this can only mean that He suffered the curse in the place of sinners. The two thieves would have done everything in their power to avoid the death of the cross; but Jesus went willingly. That is the glorious message of the gospel for sinners who deserve the curse of God.



But, now we must face the same question as those sinners crucified on either side of Jesus: "What will you do with Christ crucified?"

These sinners came into closest proximity to the good news of Christ crucified. They became acquainted with His message. They heard Him pray, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." They knew that He hung on the cross as the Messiah. Two sinners came face to face with the truth.

Those two sinners represent the entire race of mankind who have rebelled against God. They illustrate the fact that among the mass of sinners in the world are only two kinds of people, the elect and the reprobate. The elect God calls out of darkness. He causes them to hear the Shepherd's voice, so that they repent and follow Him. The reprobate, on the other hand, continue in their sins,

desiring only to escape the consequences of sin. The question is, which sinner represents each of us? We have all been exposed to the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ, but how do we respond to that message?

The Gospel according to John only says "two others" were crucified with Jesus. Matthew and Mark both tell us that these men were thieves. Not just the kind that sneak into empty houses and steal, but bandits who violently rob people. Likely, they were accomplices to Barabbas who was guilty of murder and insurrection against the Roman government. Mark makes mention that Barabbas was not the only insurrectionist captured and bound at the time (Mark 15:7). Whatever their crime, they were clearly the worst of sinners. We need to see that if we had grown up in the same circumstances, apart from God's grace, we would commit the same sort of crimes. If we were oppressed by a wicked government as they were, we would be tempted to commit insurrection too. That very thing is condoned by many in the church world today.

How did these men react when they were exposed to the gospel as it was proclaimed in the person and work of Jesus Christ that day? How did they respond to Jesus' prayer, "Father, forgive them..."? How did they respond to the jeers of the Jewish rulers?

The first thief spoke reproachfully: "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us" (Luke 23:39). He despised Jesus along with the wicked crowd. Not the *guilt* of sin troubled him, but the *consequences* of sin. If Jesus had such mighty power as many claimed, this thief wanted Jesus to come down and deliver him from his punishment. But he had a completely wrong view of the Christ and His kingdom: he envisioned a Christ who would set up an earthly, physical kingdom. This likely accomplice of Barabbas had been fighting to gain freedom from the Roman Empire and was looking for a kingdom that would satisfy his lust for earthly pleasures and treasures. If Christ would not establish that kind of kingdom, he wanted nothing to do with Him. This man came into closest proximity with the gospel, and rejected it.

Many today come to know the gospel message; they know the doctrine of Christ and His suffering of God's curse in the place of sinners. They may have attended catechism classes and gone to a Christian school. But the Christ of the Bible is not the kind of Christ they want. They think, "If Thou be the Christ...help me get out of

these problems.” When they see that Christ is not like that, they reject Him.

The second thief, however, looked to Christ for salvation.

Not because he was any different by nature. Like the first thief, he too had pursued a life of wicked violence in the service of his lusts. But the same grace that put Jesus on the cross to save sinners opened the eyes of this second thief. He heard Jesus’ prayer, “Father, forgive them...” and saw Jesus as a merciful Savior. He heard the railing Jews and saw the injustice of it. By God’s grace, his eyes were opened to behold his Savior.

With spiritual eyes, he saw his sins and sinfulness and confessed that he deserved the punishment he was getting: “we receive the due reward for our deeds” (Luke 23:41). Smitten with the guilt of his own sin, the second thief was willing to sign his own death sentence, confessing that he himself deserved the punishment of the cross. True repentance is willing to accept the consequences of sin as fair recompense.

At the same time, he knew he deserved to fall under God’s cursing wrath, the very thing that the cross symbolized. That is why he said to the other thief, “Dost not thou fear God?” (Luke 23:40). The righteous God who comes to judge is more to be feared than all human authorities who might execute judgment on earth but who can only kill the body.

More than that, the second thief knew that Jesus was perfectly innocent: “This man hath done nothing amiss.” Maybe he was able to witness Jesus’ trial and hear Pilate’s multiple declarations of innocence. Whatever the case may be, God had graciously opened his eyes to see Jesus Christ as perfectly righteous.

And then, he did one more thing: he called upon Jesus for salvation: “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42). He was no longer concerned about an earthly kingdom, but the perfect kingdom of heaven that every child of God looks forward to.

He wanted Jesus to remember him on the Judgment Day. He did not claim that his works merited anything from Jesus. Instead, he cast himself completely upon Jesus for mercy.



To this sinner’s earnest plea, Jesus responded, “Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Jesus Himself promised it would be so. That second thief died knowing the comfort of belonging to his faithful Savior.

God’s Word in our text is both a warning and a comfort to everyone who faces the question concerning their response to Christ.


It is a warning to those who want a Christ and a

religion according to which they can pursue their own lusts. Both sinners came face to face with Jesus and with death. They had time enough to repent. We might think to ourselves, “I can always repent when I’m older.” But the first thief never repented. God gives us the example of this thief as a warning to everyone who pretends they will repent on their deathbeds.

On the other hand, Jesus in the midst of these two sinners is also an encouragement, because it shows that

Jesus forgives even the greatest of sinners. Though he had lived a life of violence and wickedness, the second thief found forgiveness at the cross. We must never think to ourselves, “My sins are too many or too great.” That would be to reproach Jesus and imply that His blood was not precious enough. In fact, it cleanses even the foulest of sinners. All who go to Christ and humble themselves before Him—even in the final hour of their lives—He will in no wise cast out.

Jesus Christ suffered the curse of God for all His elect. He suffered to satisfy the justice of a holy and righteous God whose anger burns against sinners.

What will you do with the crucified Christ? 

*...the same grace  
that put Jesus on the cross  
to save sinners  
opened the eyes  
of this second thief.*



# Training Teachers for Protestant Reformed Schools: A Proposal

How, then, can this be accomplished? The “it” is the goal set forth in the last eight editorials, namely, training that will equip young adults for teaching in Protestant Reformed schools. Training that will prepare them to stand in the place of Protestant Reformed parents; that will enable them to teach effectively and maintain proper (godly) discipline; that will set them on the road to giving excellent instruction with Christ at its center, and permeated with the Protestant Reformed world and life view. The desire and the need for this kind of education for teachers has been expressed in various ways in the Protestant Reformed Churches and schools in the last seventy years.

No existing colleges can do all that is desired because their professors are not Protestant Reformed. A college might be excellent academically, have a fine teacher-education program, and turn out excellent teachers. But they are not set up to prepare teachers for Protestant Reformed schools.

The need of the hour is that from

the ranks of our outstanding teachers arise men and women who will teach the next generation of aspiring teachers. There are many fine educators in Protestant Reformed schools with knowledge and understanding from years of experience of what it is to teach in a Protestant Reformed school. They have devoted their lives to the task of covenant instruction. They have taken great strides in learning how to provide instruction that is not only high quality and Christ-centered, but also distinctly Protestant Reformed. They have crafted lessons and revised and revised and revised both contents and methods. Their goal has been and continues to be to give the best instruction they possibly can in order to equip their students to serve God in today’s evil world. These teachers have a wealth of wisdom, understanding, and practical experience to pass along, and to impress upon those who have not yet taught a day in a Protestant Reformed school. These teachers have a clear understanding of the truth that God has entrusted to the Protestant Reformed Churches and possess a deep love for the covenant children. And they would spend themselves for this work.

I see an analogy between those who could teach future teachers, on the one hand, and professors in the seminary, on the other. The churches select for professors of theology men who have experience in the ministry and who have also demonstrated ability in the pastorate. They have been proven in the work, and demonstrated the ability to be effective pastors and preachers. So it should be with those who will teach future teachers: capable, experienced, proven teachers.

But all that has not touched on the institution responsible for training teachers. What kind of institution could be set up to accomplish such a program? My answer to that question is the “proposal.”

First, to be clear, I am not proposing a Protestant Reformed college, as much as I would like to see that become a reality. I do not propose that because it is far too great an endeavor for a group as small as the Protestant Reformed denomination. The schools need teachers with a broad education, a quality liberal-arts education in preparation for teaching. This requires a wide range of subjects taught by many highly educated college professors. The task of financing and staffing

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*Previous article in this series: March 1, 2017, p. 244.*

such an institution is beyond the Protestant Reformed Churches, in my judgment.

In a nutshell, my proposal is as follows. I propose that an institution for training teachers be formed that will work with an existing Christian college. I envision that an arrangement be worked out between such a college and a Protestant Reformed teacher-training institute, where the Protestant Reformed students will enroll in the college and take the bulk of their courses in that college. At the same time, the Protestant Reformed institution will provide all the ordinary education courses, including student teaching. The students who successfully complete the requirements of the college for their majors and the courses offered in the Protestant Reformed institution will graduate from the Christian college with an education degree from that college.

I am calling this “my proposal” because I take responsibility for it and am willing to work for it. It is not mine in the sense that I came up with it on my own. This is the fruit of discussions with Protestant Reformed teachers, administrators, and college professors. And after it was framed, I realized that a similar idea had been proposed in the early 1980s by a group of Protestant Reformed men who saw the urgent need for Reformed higher education. This group called itself a “conference,” and attempted to drum up support for the concept of a Protestant Reformed institution of higher learning. They wanted to start with teacher training, and hoped to move

beyond that to a college.<sup>1</sup> More on that later.

To fill out the proposal, let us consider what is needed to make this a reality that will work for the benefit of college students and schools alike.

The first requirement is some sort of organizing body that can also become the governing body. As has been discussed in the previous editorials, the responsibility lies on the parents for providing the teachers with the education they need. Perhaps a society of parents could be formed. Perhaps the existing Federation Board, expanded, could be the group commissioned by the schools to pursue this plan.

Second, an agreement must be worked out with a Christian college. Because the largest number of prospective teachers is from the western Michigan area, the first efforts should be with a college in this area, if possible. A proposal that will offer a Christian college some 40-50 students (estimating 10-12 students per year) could be made quite attractive to the college. Obviously, the Protestant Reformed institution will have to demonstrate that it will be able to produce quality, college-level classes. The group that met in the early 1980s was working with Trinity Christian College in Illinois and made considerable progress.

Third, experienced teachers are needed to fill positions in the institution. They must have a degree that is at least one level above what

they are teaching. Many of the teachers in Protestant Reformed schools already have a Master’s degree in education. Perhaps one or more could be persuaded to seek a Ph.D. in education. I do not put great stock in degrees simply for the sake of having a degree. Nonetheless, obtaining a higher degree gives a teacher opportunity to concentrate on a particular area for profitable study. In addition, one or more on the staff with a Ph.D. would indicate to the college, and to prospective teachers, that this institution is serious about quality higher education for teachers.

Fourth, scholarships for students is requisite. Generous scholarships. These scholarships are needed to make it possible for the students to attend the Christian college. Even larger scholarships will be needed for students from outside the state of Michigan. The reality is that many prospective teachers opt for a secular university due to the high cost of tuition in a Christian college. In a way, I cannot blame them—teachers’ salaries have risen much in the last 60 years, but they are not at the level needed for teachers to pay off sizable student loans. The fact that more and more students are opting to obtain an education degree at a public university only increases the urgency for getting a Protestant Reformed institution. At a Christian college, the education courses would give some assistance for teaching in a Christian school. A public university will not—may not—give any education to prepare someone for teaching in a Christian school,

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<sup>1</sup> See “An Open Letter Concerning Reformed Higher Education,” *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 59, No. 21, (Sept. 15, 1983), 496-8.

much less a Protestant Reformed school.

Fifth, obviously, financial support is requisite. A far-sighted plan is needed that will obtain money for the scholarships as well as for the running of the institution—preferably with endowments that will enable the institution to be on an excellent foundation, and give assurance for future financial security. And, a building will be required.

In all this, I hope that the PR teacher-training institution can make use of the professors in the PR Theological Seminary. At least some consideration should be given to incorporating courses from the seminary—perhaps in place of the religion classes of the college. One of the significant requirements for all Protestant Reformed teachers is that they understand and be fully committed to the doctrine and practices of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Six semesters of Reformed Dogmatics at the seminary would certainly give the doctrinal foundation that a teacher ought to have. But consider also how the seminary church history classes would equip someone for teaching church history at the high school level. All grade school teachers would be significantly helped by taking Old Testament History and New Testament History. These are the obvious choices. I believe there are more seminary courses that would be very valuable for teachers. I urge the teacher-training institution to examine the seminary curriculum with an eye to having the seminary assist in this endeavor of teacher training. And until such

an institution is realized, I urge prospective and current teachers to seek opportunity to audit classes at the seminary. Your attendance would be beneficial also for the seminary, in my judgment.


Teachers, school boards, and parents, do prayerfully consider this need. The first Protestant Reformed school opened some eighty-three years ago. About fifteen years later, three more opened. At that time, it was obvious to all that if the fledgling schools were to survive as legitimate options, they had to be schools that gave distinctly Protestant Reformed instruction. For that, training was needed—distinctly Protestant Reformed training. Efforts to produce that ensued, and continued to the present day. God has blessed the Protestant Reformed schools. But the situation has changed.

On the one hand, the schools are much larger. In 1982 when the committee was seeking to organize an institution for Protestant Reformed higher education, there were about 700 students in fourteen schools with a total of about 50 teachers. The denomination numbered 4,700. Today there are fourteen grade schools and four high schools, with well over 2,100 students and 150 teachers. And the Protestant Reformed Churches have almost 8,500 members.

On the other hand, training is even more necessary for the teachers today. The days are evil. Just as the divergence between the Protestant Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church has grown significantly since 1950, so too have

the Christian colleges developed away from the teaching and lifestyle of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Colleges driven by common grace have adopted liberal theology and obliterated the antithesis. Our teachers need a proper, distinctively Protestant Reformed training. Most of what these colleges and public institutions teach is at variance with, or directly militates against, what we believe. My only fear is that we have become complacent, resting on the continued numerical growth of the schools, and that the attitude now is—the schools are good enough.

There is, I believe, a proper analogy that can be made between the school and the church as concerns development. A church is never standing still. It is either becoming more faithful to the Bible, or it is deforming. It takes vigilance and diligence to strive to be ever more faithful to the truth. Likewise, no school is standing still. Either it is giving better and better instruction, or it is losing its edge, be it ever so slowly. The point is, the Protestant Reformed schools are currently a tremendous blessing for the covenant families. But can they be improved?

Let us set our sights on schools that rise to higher levels of excellence as the result of experienced Protestant Reformed teachers training a new generation of teachers. These new teachers will start out with the proper instruction, guidance, direction, and wisdom to develop their own courses that are distinctively Protestant Reformed. The schools and the covenant children will be the beneficiaries. And God will be glorified. 

### ■ Doug Wilson's Attempt to Disavow the Federal Vision

For years Doug Wilson has identified himself with the heretical movement known as the Federal Vision. He participated in the Auburn Avenue Conference of 2002 that ignited the Federal Vision controversy. In 2007 he affixed his signature to "A Joint Federal Vision Profession" with the other leaders of the movement. He is the presiding minister of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC), the denomination that has become the haven for the Federal Vision proponents. But now Wilson says, "I have decided, after mulling over it for some years now, to discontinue identifying myself with what has come to be called the *federal vision*."<sup>1</sup>

Wilson is repentant and seeking forgiveness. The sin he confesses is not the sin of teaching false doctrine. He does not express any sorrow for defending and promoting views that contradict Scripture and the Reformed confessions. His sorrow is over the manner in which he treated some of the critics of the Federal Vision. He admits that he did not see that some of the critics were "responsible" and made "a serious attempt at fair-mindedness." But Wilson treated them as if they were in the "same boat" as those who were guilty of "rash accusations, political maneuvers within the church, and theological incompetence." Wilson admits he did not treat the competent critics of the Federal Vision fairly, and "thought [he] needed to say so publicly."

But Wilson frankly states that he is not changing or retracting any of his beliefs. He is only changing "what I will *call* what I believe." He is not planning on resigning from the CREC or seeking to purge it of those who hold to the Federal Vision, such as Rich Lusk, Steve Wilkins, or Peter Leithart. These men are his "friends" and he embraces the "commonality" he has with them. Though he does not want to share the name Federal Vision with his friends anymore, he continues to "affirm [with them] everything I signed off on in the Federal Vision statement." He will continue to "speak of the objectivity

of the covenant," which means he is committed to the conditional covenant view that is the root of the Federal Vision heresy. He has not repudiated and, therefore, at this point one must assume that he continues to affirm, the Federal Vision's heretical doctrines of conditional, losable salvation (conditional election, justification, and preservation). Even though he will continue to maintain personal and ecclesiastical friendships with proponents of the Federal Vision, and even though he is not removing his name from "A Federal Vision Profession," Wilson no longer wants to be identified as Federal Vision.

Wilson recognizes that there is a Federal Vision movement and that there are men who are accurately identified as Federal Vision. He offers no explanation in his article of who these men are and how he differentiates himself from them. He mentions a description he formerly used to describe these men as "oatmeal stout federal vision" and himself and others as "amber ale federal vision." Apparently, he wants the name Federal Vision to apply only to the bold proponents of the movement and not to himself and others who are more muted in their teachings. He writes, "What I used to call amber ale federal vision should just be called...something else." Wilson gives the impression that he is not sure what to call himself now. He even suggests that his readers can call his views what they want, except for Federal Vision.

But Wilson does hint at how he wants to be identified. He writes, "I was, am, and will remain a Westminster Puritan within an irenic river of historic Reformed orthodoxy." Here is the explanation for why Wilson wants to disavow the Federal Vision name. Many Reformed and Presbyterian denominations, although they have failed to discipline men holding to the theology of the Federal Vision, have attempted to condemn the name. The OPC, PCA, and URC, to name a few, have all commissioned reports that were intended to condemn the Federal Vision. They have placed the Federal Vision outside of the camp of Reformed orthodoxy. The Federal Vision has been identified as heresy and, although Wilson did not think his theology was erroneous, he came to the realization that no matter how much he tried to explain himself, as long as he identified himself with the Federal Vision, people would conclude, he states, "I must be a heretic." Leithart, who openly speaks of "the end of Prot-

<sup>1</sup> <https://dougwils.com/s16-theology/federal-vision-no-mas.html>.

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estantism,” does not seem to mind being labeled a heretic who is not Reformed. But Wilson does mind. And he would like to change names from heretic to Reformed.

But he does not want to give up his Federal Vision theology. He cannot escape the truth of a slightly revised statement of Shakespeare: “A rose by any other name is still a rose.”

## ■ The Globalization of Immorality

On January 4, 2017 Tony Perkins reported on the “liberal activism” of the State Department during the administration of President Obama.<sup>2</sup> Perkins is probably exaggerating to make a point when he wrote, “this administration’s biggest export: rainbow flags and abortion dollars.” The point that Perkins effectively made is that the Obama administration used “the State Department...as a base for abortion and sexual activism” for eight years. Perkins provided a lengthy list of some of the things Obama’s State Department has done to promote the LGBT cause:

- Created a “Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Persons” at the State Department. When announcing the position, Secretary Kerry said: “Defending and promoting the human rights of LGBT persons is at the core of our commitment to advancing human rights globally.”
- Funded LGBT advocacy around the world through the State Department through an entity called the Global Equality Fund. “The Department of State continues to grow the Global Equality Fund, a multi-sector public-private partnership to advance the human rights of LGBT persons globally. Since the Fund was launched in December 2011, it has allocated over \$30 million to civil society organizations in 80 countries worldwide.”
- Used the United Nations to push LGBT issues. “In 2011, we proudly partnered with South Africa to ensure passage of the first-ever U.N. resolution on the human rights of LGBTI persons, adopted by the Council.”
- Flew the rainbow flag at U.S. embassies around the world, despite host countries’ complaints, concerns, and religious volatilities.
- Appointed ambassadors who openly identify as gay or transgender in defiance of other countries’ values

<sup>2</sup> “Trump Will Have His Hands Full Fixing Social Extremism in the State Department,” The Family Research Council, <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm>.

and traditions. As John Kerry said in 2014, “I’m working hard to ensure that by the end of my tenure, we will have lesbian, bisexual, and transgender ambassadors in our ranks as well....”

- Marked International Human Rights Day with a controversial Geneva speech insisting that “[G]ay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights.”
- Ordered the publication of overseas op-eds hostile to other countries’ views on sexuality to celebrate LGBT “pride.”
- Made transgender issues a key negotiating point with other nations at the expense of diplomatic relations. “We have instructed our human rights and health officers to raise transgender issues in their host countries, and we have encouraged our public affairs officers to include the needs of transgender groups in their programming, so that we are showing that this is something that we’re going to engage in....”
- Strong-armed other countries to accept America’s misguided policies on same-sex spouses. “Let me be clear,” Kerry lectured in a defiant speech, “we oppose any effort by any country to deny visas for spouses of American staff. It’s discriminatory, it’s unacceptable, it has no place in the 21st century.”
- Revised the State Department’s Foreign Affairs Manual to allow same-sex couples to obtain passports under the names recognized by their state through their marriages or civil unions.


Perkins also provided two examples of how the “State Department has loudly promoted overseas abortion policy and been quick to put taxpayer funds and resources behind it—regardless of other countries’ deeply-held beliefs.”

- Illegally funneled millions of dollars to efforts aimed at legalizing abortion in Kenya, despite the Siljander Amendment, which bans the government from lobbying for or against abortion overseas with taxpayer dollars.
- Used the access gained at the State Department to lobby for abortion-on-demand at the U.N.’s 4th Conference on Women in China. Clinton told the audience, “It is a violation of human rights when women are denied the right to plan their own families.”

Perkins is cautiously optimistic. He hopes that the Trump administration will put an end to these policies and use the State Department to promote “religious freedom” around the world. Regardless of what the Trump administration does over the next four to eight years, the

Lord used the previous eight years to prepare the way for the rise of the anti-Christian kingdom that will be united in immorality. And the United States has played in the role of the rise of that kingdom. She has played the lead role in the globalization of immorality. Is there really any

hope that a President Trump will tap the brakes on the spread of immorality?

Our hope and prayer is for the coming of Jesus Christ, the end of this present world, and a new world of global, yea, universal righteousness. 

## TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

REV. JAMES LANING

### The Kingdom of God (4)

# The Renewed People

As was mentioned in the last article, both Calvin College and Dordt College refer to themselves as institutions designed to train students to go out and “renew” things. The King, they say, calls us to be “agents of renewal”<sup>1</sup> wherever we go. If we are busily engaged in this renewing activity, then we are said to be establishing the kingdom of God on the earth.

Some have cited Colossians 1:20 as proof for this idea. That passage along with Ephesians 1:10 speak of all things being reconciled to God and gathered together in Christ. With regard to these verses, the previous article brought out the following points:

1. The phrase “all things” does not include the reprobate. Only the elect are reconciled to God and gathered together in Christ.

2. These passages do not speak of us working with this world to focus our attention on *earthly* things in an effort to “renew” institutions in society. Rather, it speaks of us being spiritually united with those who are in heaven, together with them keeping our mind on *heavenly* things.

We proceed now to consider another problem with this argument for the renewal of this world. It promotes a wrong idea about who the renewed people are, and what it means that they have been renewed. We turn now to consider that subject.

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the word “redeem” is used instead of “renew.” I have chosen to use the term “renew” when referring to their position, since both of these colleges have mission statements posted on their websites that use that term.

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*Previous article in this series: December 1, 2016, p. 107.*

### The regenerated = The renewed

The previous article included a quote from a book that has often been required reading at Dordt College. Written by Albert Wolters,<sup>2</sup> this book lays out an argument for why Christians are called “to promote renewal in every department of creation”:

The obvious implication is that the new humanity (God’s people) is called to promote renewal in every department of creation. If Christ is the reconciler of all things, and if we have been entrusted with “the ministry of reconciliation” on his behalf (2 Cor. 5:18), then we have a redemptive task wherever our vocation places us in his world. No invisible dividing line within creation limits the applicability of such basic biblical concepts as reconciliation, redemption, salvation, sanctification, renewal, the kingdom of God, and so on.<sup>3</sup>

Wolters speaks here of “no invisible dividing line,” yet very early in the book of Genesis God speaks of there being two antithetical seeds: the seed of the woman (Christ and those in Christ), and the seed of the serpent. Only certain people have been redeemed and renewed in Christ, and they are a holy people, called out and separated from the unbelievers of this world.

Scripture speaks of only certain people being renewed. Titus 3 says that the renewed ones are the people who have received “the washing of regeneration.” The regenerated and the renewed are one and the same: “Not by

<sup>2</sup> Wolters is an emeritus professor at Redeemer University College in Ontario.

<sup>3</sup> Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 73.

works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:5).

When God regenerates us, He gives us a new heart. He puts His Word in our heart so that we know Him and delight to do what His Word says. Our heart and will are resurrected from the dead and our mind is renewed by God's Spirit. This is the wondrous work of God referred to in the Third and Fourth Heads of the Canons of Dordt:

*Article 11.* But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, He not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit pervades the inmost recesses of the man; He opens the closed and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, infuses new qualities into the will, which, though heretofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree it may bring forth the fruits of good actions.

*Article 12.* And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid.

To be renewed is to be delivered from the corruption of sin. This is "the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture and denominated a new creation." Though we still have an old man—our sinful nature out of which comes nothing good, in the new man we are a new creation, a good tree that brings forth "the fruits of good actions."

The following passage, which speaks of our calling to put off the old man and to put on the new, makes clear that the new man is the renewed man: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him (Col. 3:9-10). A parallel passage also applies the term "renewed" to the new man: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man,

which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:22-24). In the new man we bear God's image. We are new creatures who have been renewed in knowledge after the image of our Creator.

### The renewed community

Since it is only the regenerated believers in Christ who have been renewed, it follows that the body of Christ is the only renewed community of human beings. Outside her there is only corruption.<sup>4</sup> Yet many today would persuade us that we have a calling to renew/redeem/reform "social systems" and "economic structures:"

God wants to save social systems and economic structures too. If the management/labor structure contains built-in antagonism, then it needs to be redeemed. If the health care delivery system reaches only the well-to-do, then it needs to be reformed.<sup>5</sup>

Yet Scripture speaks of renewing people, not man-made "systems" and "structures." Furthermore, what they envision as a "redeemed" or "renewed" society is not a society that is delivered from the corruption of sin. The unbelievers in such a society might have better health care, but they would continue going deeper into sin, self-destructing as they worship the gods of their own imagination.

In addition, the unbelieving majority in the societies of this world are corrupt trees that produce only corrupt fruit. They will never show true love and honor to their employers and employees. Corruption will characterize how they administer health care and everything else that they do. Good actions will not arise out of a group of people unless those people themselves have first been renewed.

But renewing people is not a work that we perform. God alone renews people, and He does so "without our aid" (Canons III/IV:12). By His efficacious grace He renews those whom He has unconditionally chosen. The elect church of Christ is the one and only renewed human community that there will ever be.

... to be continued. 

<sup>4</sup> A community is a unified body of individuals. I refer to the elect body of believers as a "community" here even though only a small portion of this group is on earth at any given time.

<sup>5</sup> Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Engaging God's World: A Reformed Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 97.


# Fire

Fire is the most prevalent, destructive yet, if controlled, beneficial power in the universe. Man, therefore, largely credits his ability to control fire for being able to swing out the trees and build modern civilization, to heat homes, forge steel, make electricity, and even rocket to the moon. But man cannot control all fire. He cannot control the fires of lightning and lava. He cannot control his fiery passions whereby he uses fire to sin, serve idols, shoot his neighbor, bomb cities to rubble, and thus also worry about living only a twitchy finger from nuclear oblivion. But most importantly, man cannot control God, who is a consuming fire and has reserved all the fire in the universe for the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly man (Heb. 12:29; II Pet. 3:7).

Fire belongs to God's glory. And, although most closely associated with His wrath, fire essentially represents God's holy, jealous, and vehement love for Himself, for His honor and His righteousness, which indeed is beneficial for anything holy as He is holy, but which breaks forth to consume everything opposed to Himself and His glorious, holy love (Ps. 11:6-7; Song 8:6; Deut. 32:22). The first mention of fire, besides the flaming swords that guarded Eden after the Fall, was the fire God rained on Sodom as an example of the eternal fire reserved for those who fornicate and indulge in strange flesh (Ps. 104:4; Jude 1:7). And throughout history, God, with flaming eyes, devouring tongue, and smoking nostrils, has melted, burned, and destroyed with fire untold individuals, cities, and nations for their sin (Ps. 18:8; 88:2; Is. 30:27; Jer. 23:29). In His just judgment, even wickedness itself becomes a fire, especially sins of the tongue, which, ignited by the fires of hell, burn everything in its path and turns liar, gossip, slanderer, and tale-bearer into serial arsonists who kindle strife (Is. 9:18; James 3:6; Prov. 16:27; 26:21). Even name-calling endangers one of hell fire (Matt. 5:22).

Behold, the LORD still is coming in flaming fire to

take vengeance on all who know not God and obey not the gospel (II Thess. 1:8). He comes to render His anger with fury and rebuke with flames of fire (Is. 66:15). Then, the sun shall scorch men with fire and the mountains on fire shall fall into the sea (Rev. 8:5-8; 16:8). Then, in trial by fire, every man's work shall be revealed of what sort it is (I Cor. 3:13). And then, every tree that did not produce fruit, all the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murders, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars, all the chaff, the tares, and the goats, all those who offended and did iniquity, all who worshiped the beast, persecuted the church, and are not found in the book of life, with the devil, beast, and false prophet, and even death and the grave, shall all be cast into the lake and furnace of everlasting, unquenchable fire and there be tormented forever (Matt. 3:10-12; 13:40-42; 25:41).

So how to control this fire? Repent, for except you repent, you shall likewise perish (Luke 13:5). Believe, for faith quenches the violence of fire (Heb. 11:34). Do not justify or believe in yourself, for you are a sinner who deserves and cannot sustain this fire (Mark 1:15; Heidelberg Catechism, LD 5). Repent and believe in Jesus. Believe that Jesus, in unquenchable love for everyone given unto Him by the Father, descended from heaven into that raging inferno of God's wrath for your sins, and as the Lamb slain and burnt offering of sweet savor unto God, delivered you from the torments of hell (Heidelberg Catechism, LD 16; Ex. 12:8; I Chr. 21:26). Believe that as you are baptized with water, so He baptized you by His loving Word and with His Holy Spirit, and by this pillar of fire, will dwell and talk with you, enlighten, warm, sanctify, protect, and guide you to everlasting glory (Deut. 5:4; Matt. 3:11; Acts 2:3). Believe His promise that, being justified, when you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, and that even if your works are burned, you shall be saved (Is. 43:2; I Cor. 3:15). Believe also that such faith, being more precious than gold, though tried with fire, will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus (I Pet. 1:7). 

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# The Character of Sacramental Dialogue (12d)

## A Different Way of Speaking and Hearing

God speaks to His people in the sacraments, and His people respond. The *way* that God speaks to them in the sacraments must affect the *way* God's people respond. The way that God speaks to us in the sacraments is different than the way He normally speaks to us in congregational worship. Normally God speaks to us solely through the written and spoken Word. But in baptism and the Lord's Supper, He speaks to us also sacramentally, that is, through visible signs. He speaks to us in a way that rearranges the function of the senses. We hear now, not only with our ears, but with our eyes and mouth and hands. The purpose of this change is important and ought to affect our response.

## Speech in the Water of Baptism

Through water applied to the skin as though to wash it, we hear of the blood and Spirit of Christ to wash us of sin's guilt and power. Water that we go under and come up out of in baptism speaks to us of union with Christ. In the visible pictures of the sacrament itself God speaks to us that He washes us, and washes us because we are united to Christ.

## Speech in the Signs of the Lord's Supper

In the Lord's Supper, God tells us that He has spiritual food for us *by means of physical food* He lays before us, namely, bread and wine. By breaking the bread and pouring out the wine before us, God tells us that Christ crucified is our spiritual food. He tells us we have union with each other, because we all eat of the same loaf together. He tells us we have heaven coming, because this is a meal and the first delight of heaven will be the marriage supper of the Lamb.

He tells us that we have all this in union with Jesus Christ, because, first, this meal is served on Christ's table. Second, He speaks of our union with Christ because,

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*Previous article in this series: February 1, 2017, p. 206.*

when we partake of the bread and wine, they are physically digested, becoming united to our physical body in order to give us nourishment, as a picture that Christ becomes united to our souls, giving us nourishment.

## Instituted Signs

But why do we hear these things in this water upon the head of the one being baptized and not when we wash our hands at home or give our child a bath at home? Why do we not hear these things when we break off a piece of bread at home and pour ourselves a glass of wine? What is special about this water that we ought to hear God speaking to us in it? What is special about this bread and wine and this table that we hear God speaking to us in it?

The answer is not that there is something special in the water or bread or wine or table themselves. It is not holy water; there is no such thing. It is not special bread or wine. The reason why we are to hear these things in worship and not anywhere else is because Jesus ordained them to be so. He instituted these signs to speak thus in church worship. So that, though we do not hear Him speaking when we eat bread and drink wine at home, we do in church. The Heidelberg Catechism says we hear it because "*Christ hath appointed this* external washing with water" to say this in the church. And Christ has "*commanded...these promises*" to be spoken through the bread and wine and table of the Lord's Supper. We hear it in the sacrament because Christ says we must hear it in the sacrament.

## The Speech of Assurance

But then, why speak to us through signs and not through words? Are not all the things the sacraments declare to us the same things the Lord says to us in the preaching? Are not we fed with these things in the preaching? Why then this way?

God in the sacraments speaks to us in this unique way to assure us, that is, to confirm to us personally, the truth we hear in the preaching. He is a good Father. He knows our needs. He understands our weakness. He under-

stands His covenant people include children too. So He uses visual aids, the only ones we may have in church. And He gives them to us personally, saying to us, “This is for you. This is real, and it is for you.”

It is like those times when you as a parent take your child, put his hands under the water, and wash them for him, teaching him, “So God washes away our sins.” God Himself as our Father does that for His children in the covenantal assembly. He puts one of us under the water of baptism and says to all His own, “See, this is what I do for you. I wash you.” He tells us what He always tells us, what we need Him to tell us, but in a way we sometimes need for our assurance—so simply, so clearly, a way we can see with our eyes and feel with our touch.

If you are teaching your child at supper-time devotions about how God strengthens us and your child says, “I don’t get it,” you might tell your child to take a bite of mashed potatoes. And when he does, you might say, “You have laid hold of those potatoes by the physical strength God gives you, and they are now going inside you and will strengthen you. So too by faith, given by grace alone, we lay hold of Christ and He is united to us and feeds our soul.” God knows we are *all* children and sometimes need it this plainly. So He takes us into His house of worship and He lets us go through the illustration: “Here, eat the piece of bread and drink some wine, my children; I strengthen you, you see.”

The sacraments are for *assurance*. “How art thou... *assured* by holy baptism that the one sacrifice of Christ is of real advantage to thee?” (Heidelberg Catechism, LD 26). “How art thou...*assured* in the Lord’s Supper” that Christ is for you? (Heidelberg Catechism, LD 28). Something of that assurance is emphasized in the account of Jesus’ appearance to the two travelers to Emmaus. What a striking thing they tell the others after the episode is all over: “And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread” (Luke 24:35)! He revealed Himself to them and opened their eyes so that they knew He died for them, *when He was in their house breaking bread with them*. He gave them the Lord’s Supper, and they were assured. Did He say the words of institution, “This is my body broken for you; this is my blood shed for you”? I imagine so. And their eyes were opened through the sacrament.

They needed the preaching. He preached to them the whole way (Luke 24:27): “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” The breaking of bread would have meant nothing without that preaching. But when the sacrament was administered, they put it all together. They were confirmed, assured in the truth; they saw Him so clearly in the breaking of bread.

### The Response of the Assured


And those travelers responded as those who were assured of His death for them (Luke 24:33-35): “And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed.... And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.” They had just come *from* Jerusalem. Jesus had preached to them when they were on the way to Emmaus from Jerusalem. And even though it is now night, they walked right back to the city, 7.5 miles so that they can tell the others about it. And they were zealous to do the telling.

So ought we to be. Is this not glorious what takes place here! These spiritual realities are thrilling. As we pray the prayers in the Form, we do not respond in our souls with the attitude, “Ok, whatever; is this going to be finished so I can go home and eat a proper meal?” Or, “Another baptism; so what? They happen all the time.” Both Forms have us respond not just with prayers, but with prayers of *thanksgiving*! Such is the title in the Form, *Thanksgiving*. Of course! God has just told us the greatest thing we could hear in the entire world—we are washed, and in a way that we may be so assured of it! He has just told us of His sovereign nourishing grace, and made us actually to partake of it! We respond with zeal and adoration! The words are living in us, “Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank and praise Thee that Thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins!” “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!”

We must respond, then, in harmony with the purpose the Lord has for speaking to us this way. He speaks to us this way that we might be assured of salvation. By these visible signs, He confirms what He tells us in the preaching, so that the sacraments are not only signs, but seals to

us. And we must respond to Him as those who have been confirmed in that, assured of that. We must sing and pray with the deep spiritual joy of those who have just been assured by their Father of His love and grace and perfect protection.

How does a bride respond when her bridegroom puts the ring on her finger, assuring her that he will be faithful to her till death do them part? Does she respond by sort of mouthing, “Thanks, that’s nice”? No, she rejoices! So too the bride of Christ must rejoice, especially at that moment. God has just stooped down to assure us of His

love. Respond like that bride of Christ. With joy! For your assurance He has spoken to you who have brought your sins to Him from a week gone by. He has said, “I wash you; I feed you.” He has reminded you of your identity in Christ. Respond then in the worship service and in all your life with this joy. The character of the response must match the character of the speech. The speech is for assurance; we must respond as those who have just been assured. And by the Spirit’s work within we will. How can we not?! 

## MINISTERING TO THE SAINTS

REV. DOUGLAS KUIPER

# Psalter Revision: Governing Principles (2 )

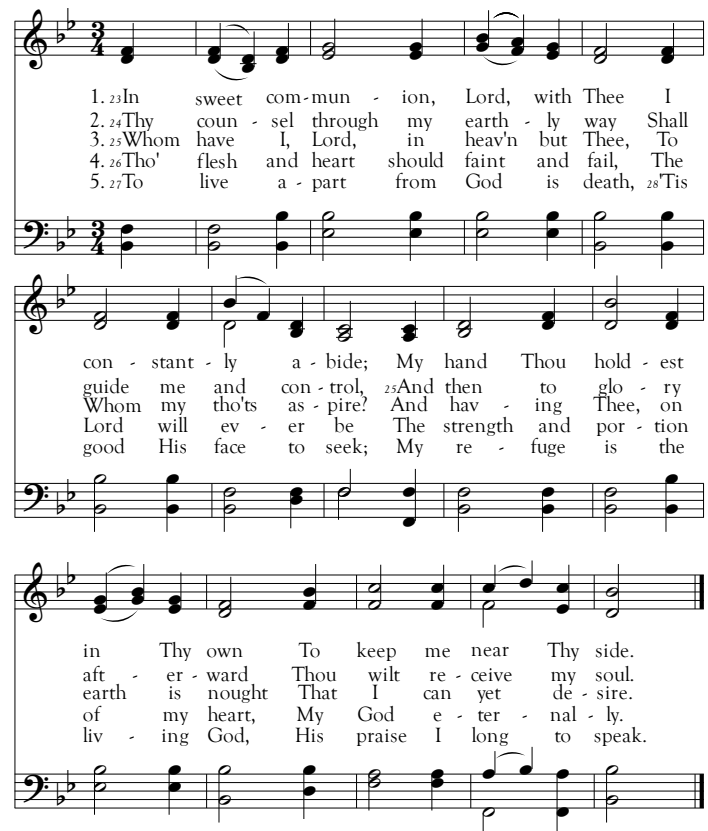
## Text

**T**he interdenominational Psalter Revision Committee, by using various principles to evaluate the Psalter selections, is determining whether to recommend changes to each individual Psalter number. These principles regard text, music, and format. I am explaining these principles, and using a current Psalter number as well as its proposed revision to help the reader understand the principles.

In the last article I surveyed the principles that regard format. When that article was published, the bottom of the page of Psalm 73C (Psalter 203, in its revised form) was cut off. As a result you could not see all the things I was trying to show you. For one thing, the tune’s author, name, and meter (that you could not see) will be found at the *bottom and no longer the top* of the page. But even more, you could not see that at the *bottom right hand corner* of the page is found this: “203.” I said it was there, but you could not see it (because the page was cut off). Trust me on this one. [With apologies, we reprint that page here.] We are

## 73C In Sweet Communion

vs. 23-28



1. <sup>23</sup>In sweet com-mun - ion, Lord, with Thee I  
 2. <sup>24</sup>Thy coun - sel through my earth - ly way Shall  
 3. <sup>25</sup>Whom have I, Lord, in heav'n but Thee, To  
 4. <sup>26</sup>Tho' flesh and heart should faint and fail, The  
 5. <sup>27</sup>To live a - part from God is death, <sup>28</sup>'Tis

con - stant - ly a - bide; My hand Thou hold - est  
 guide me and con - trol, <sup>25</sup>And then to glo - ry  
 Whom my tho'ts as - pire? And hav - ing Thee, on  
 Lord will ev - er be The strength and por - tion  
 good His face to seek; My re - fuge is the

in Thy own To keep me near Thy side.  
 aft - er - ward Thou wilt re - ceive my soul.  
 earth is nought That I can yet de - sire.  
 of my heart, My God e - ter - nal - ly.  
 liv - ing God, His praise I long to speak.

Rev. Kuiper is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minnesota.

Previous article in this series: January 15, 2017, p. 185.

William U. Butcher  
Prayer  
C. M.

203

doing our best to help you recognize the finished product as being a revision of the Psalter you know, so that you can get familiar with it more quickly.

In a moment we will turn to the principles that govern the text. But first...

### Our Website and the PR Psalm Choir

One of the committee members who represents the Heritage Reformed Churches, Ellis Meschke, works in the area of Internet technology. He has created a website, [www.thepsalter.net](http://www.thepsalter.net), to keep us informed with the progress of our committee, and he promises to do his best to keep the site up-to-date. As of this writing, that website contains two main resources: 1) a list of the principles that we are discussing in these articles, and 2) our proposals regarding Psalms 73-89.

All readers should note well: *the governing principles have received the approval of the three synods*. However, the proposed changes to the Psalter have not yet been officially adopted, nor will they be in 2017. And, *the proposed changes need further editing*. That which is found on the website is not the final product. However, from the website you will get a good idea of what the committee envisions, and the direction in which it is going.

While I am digressing anyway, let me point out that another committee member, Joshua Hoekstra, directs the Protestant Reformed Psalm Choir. As its name indicates, this choir sings Psalms—*only* Psalms. Many of their selections are from our current Psalter, while others are from other Psalm books such as the Scottish Psalter. But the choir has already been practicing and singing some of the new selections that our committee is proposing. If you are able, do attend their program on May 7, 2017 after the evening worship, at Grandville Protestant Reformed Church. And *after* the concert, if you were not able to attend, you can hear them on their YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/prpsalmchoir>.

Let's go on to the principles that govern the text, or lyrics of the songs.

### The first two principles

Of the seven principles regarding text, I will treat two in this article and the other five in the next. I quote from the original report (not the supplemental report) of the

interdenominational committee to the 2016 Synods of the FRCNA, HRC, and PRCA. This quote comes from paragraph 4, "The Principles," and from point a, "Text."<sup>1</sup>

We affirm the desire to sing accurate renditions of the Psalms. It is the purpose of the committee to review the general accuracy of the lyrics in the current Psalter. It was noted that the first version of each Psalm in the Psalter was generally seen as the most accurate rendition of the Psalm by the 1912 committee.

The general accuracy of the text will be considered along the following criteria:

1) Is all of the scriptural Psalm represented in the Psalter? Is there one Psalter that captures the whole Psalm?

2) Is the text faithful to Scripture? Is it theologically sound? Is it the language of Scripture? Are all things included that have been omitted in the past? To what degree is it a paraphrase or does it include unnecessary poetic license?

[Then follows principles 3-7, DJK.]

The general accuracy of the text must be considered in relation to what is already familiar and will be revised and compared with other versions only if the Psalter is seen as inaccurate.

Our committee of nine has summed up these principles in a few words: Principle 1 is "Completeness." Principle 2 is "Faithfulness."

### Completeness

"We, who have sung the Psalter all our lives, are hardly aware that there are parts of Psalms absent from the Psalter, and that some Psalter stanzas do not come from the Psalms. If they are interested in testing this, it would be worth anyone's time to start with Psalter #205, for example, and compare it to Psalm 74; or #206, compared with Psalm 75."<sup>2</sup>

The committee's desire is that our Psalter versifications be a complete versification of the Psalm, so that no part of the Psalm is ignored.

The matter is not always so easy; it requires the committee to make judgment calls.

<sup>1</sup> In the *PRC Acts of Synod 2016 and Yearbook*, this is found on pages 167-168.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Barrett Gritters, "The Question of Psalter Revision: An Update," *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 92, no. 11 (March 1, 2016), 259.



For example, Psalm 18 is versified in three Psalter numbers—34, 35, and 36. These three Psalter numbers successively versify the entire Psalm, so that one could say that the Psalm is completely treated. Yet, looking more closely, one notes that the 21 stanzas of these three Psalter numbers versify 50 lengthy verses of Psalm 18. The question must be faced: even if the Psalm is covered generally, what thoughts or ideas in the Psalm are omitted, or given the briefest treatment? Once those are identified, the next question is: can we add anything to the existing Psalter versifications, so that God's people can sing the entire Psalm? Usually it is very difficult, if not impossible, to blend new versifications into old. In that case, perhaps an entirely new versification of the Psalm is needed. The subcommittee assigned to Psalm 18 recognizes the problem, and is currently searching for the best solution.

Another instance to which a solution is being proposed regards Psalm 78's treatment of the ten plagues in verses 44-51. In the inspired songs of Zion, the ten plagues are treated in detail only in Psalm 78 and in Psalm 105:27-36. (Psalms 135:8-9 and 136:10 are much briefer treatments, with emphasis on the killing of the firstborn). That the Holy Spirit inspired songs that refer to these plagues, and list them in detail, is noteworthy. If God's judgments on Egypt served the salvation of Israel, we sing these songs in the conviction that God's ongoing judgments on ungodly unbelievers serve the salvation of His church today!

But how completely does Psalter 213 treat these verses? It packs all ten plagues into the last part of stanza 14 and the first part of stanza 15:

Ungrateful and blind, no longer they thought  
Of wonders and signs and mighty deeds wrought,  
Of how all the rivers of Egypt ran red,  
And plagues in God's anger were heaped on their head.

They thought not of how, their freedom to gain,  
In Egypt's abodes the first-born were slain,  
And how all God's people were led forth like sheep,  
The flock He delighted in safety to keep.

The committee proposes adding two stanzas between the two just quoted. Using these new stanzas, we would sing in praise to God:

The locusts and flies their harvests decreased,  
No plenty remained for man or for beast.  
The frogs and the lice o'er the land did abound,  
The vines and the trees were laid low to the ground.

Their herds were destroyed by hail from the sky,  
The flocks were struck down with fire from on high.  
The pestilence ravished throughout all the land,  
God's people were saved by His Almighty hand.

One other point related to "completeness" is worthy of note. The committee desires that the first selection of every Psalm (1A, 16A, 18A, 73A, 78A) be a versification of the entire Psalm. This does not rule out subsequent selections that treat a portion of the Psalm, but it does enable the congregation to use one number to sing the entire Psalm, when it desires to do so.

In some instances, this will mean combining Psalter numbers. For instance, Psalters 27 and 28 together treat Psalm 16; Psalters 37 and 38 together treat Psalm 19. These numbers will be combined into one selection, so that the entire Psalm can be sung. Of course, the longer the Psalter selection, the less likely that the minister would pick every stanza. However, the option to sing the entire Psalm will be available, and when that is not feasible, it will still be possible to sing various selections throughout the Psalm that relate more particularly to the sermon.

## Faithfulness

As the quote above indicated, several points fall under the umbrella of "faithfulness."

One point regards paraphrase and poetic license.

The reader can appreciate, I hope, that to turn Hebrew poetry into English poetry does require some poetic license. The main characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism—two sentences that are parallel in subject, verb, and object, in which the second sentence often adds to the meaning of the first, or provides a contrast to the first. But parallelism is not a primary feature in English poetry; rather, rhythm (meter) and rhyme are. So not only must one who sets the Psalms to music ensure that the English translation of the Hebrew Psalm is faithful, but he must then also try to convey that translation faithfully in the form of English poetry, without losing the meaning or chief ideas of the Psalm.

This is not always easily done. The Genevan Psalms (found in the Psalter's choral section) generally are very loose versifications of the Psalm. Often they cover the Psalm in a relatively few number of stanzas (though, admittedly, the stanzas are often long). In the process, they do not capture the thought of every verse in the Psalm. Other of our Psalter numbers are like that as well.

While our committee recognizes that some poetic license is inevitable, our desire is to be sure that the license taken was not excessive. For this reason, we are more willing to recommend a Genevan or another looser version of the Psalm as a second or third versification; but we strive to be sure that the first versification is not only complete but also as faithful to Scripture as possible.

That brings me to the second point about faithfulness—theological soundness and using the language of Scripture. We are reviewing each selection and comparing it with the Psalms to ensure accuracy.


Let me give a few examples of what is being proposed.

Psalm 20:7 reads, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." Psalm 43, stanza 5 reads: "How vain their ev'ry confidence Who on mere human help rely; But we remember for defense the Name of God, the Lord Most High." The graphic imagery of chariots and horses is lost. If we keep the lyrics of the current Psalm 43, we would surely want to change that. Consider the versification of another Psalm, which in every other respect is identical to our Psalm 43: "In chariots some have con-

fidence, on horses others will rely; But we remember for defense the Name of God, the Lord Most High." Considerably better. Exactly how we will address Psalm 43 is a question; does it need a new tune? If so, will we use different lyrics altogether? I cannot say what the answer will be. But what I can say is that, if we keep the current lyrics, we will also change that phrase. And we will argue that by doing so we are improving the faithfulness of our Psalm.

Two more examples I state briefly. Psalm 8:5 reads: "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honour." Psalm 14:5 versifies that as follows: "On man Thy wisdom hath bestowed A pow'r well nigh divine." "Well nigh divine"—is that really what Psalm 8:5 means?

Psalm 9:17 speaks of God's judgment on the nations: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalm 16:8 is faithful in this part of its versification: "The wicked shall perish, the nations shall fall," but then continues, "Forgetting their God, who is God over all." That God is the only true God is beyond dispute. But only *Israel* knew Him as "their God"; the wicked nations around did not, as the Psalm says.

More examples could be given. I do not mean to leave the impression that our current Psalm is unfaithful to Scripture, or only barely faithful. Generally, it is very faithful. But the goal of the committee is to be sure it is as faithful a versification as possible. 

## SPECIAL ARTICLE

## DR. BRENDAN LOOYENGA

# Zion Protestant Reformed Church

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Psalm 51:17,18

*Dr. Looyenga is a member of our newly formed Zion Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.*

In God's good pleasure, He continues to build His church—the New Testament Zion. He does this work through the evangelistic call of the gospel to "every nation, tongue and tribe," but also through the perpetuation of covenant seed in established churches. On Wednesday, February 8, God was pleased to continue building His visible church on earth through the organization of a new Protestant Reformed congregation—Zion PRC in Jenison, Michigan. This new congregation



is the daughter of Faith PRC, a church that God has graciously provided with much internal growth over the past several years.

In light of its growing membership, the Council of Faith appointed a long range planning committee in 2015 to determine whether it would be better to expand its facilities or start a daughter congregation. The committee concluded that establishment of a daughter congregation was a more suitable route and, through a questionnaire to the Faith congregation in February 2016, demonstrated that sufficient members were willing to join this group. When the number of committed persons reached the equivalent of forty families in October, the Council of Faith approved their request to begin meeting for worship at Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville. At the behest of Faith, Classis East approved the plan to organize this daughter congregation as Zion PRC at its January 2017 meeting.

The organization service for a new church is a uniquely memorable event for both mother and daughter congregations. It is an occasion for joy and celebration, but it also bears an element of sadness as fellow church members bid one another goodbye with God's blessing while parting ways. What transcends any feelings of sorrow, however, is the knowledge that fellow saints—regardless of where they worship—are bound together by the divine presence of Christ in His Holy Spirit. This truth was brought to the fore in Rev. Clayton Spronk's address to both congregations during Zion's organization service,

an address based on Acts 4:31, 32. In describing the activities and life of a church filled with the Spirit, Rev. Spronk exhorted both Zion and Faith to demonstrate the boldness and unity that characterized the early apostolic church. The same Spirit that enabled growth of the church two millennia ago still dwells in the PRC today, enabling the establishment of new congregations and filling her members with the desire faithfully to serve their risen Lord.

Following the worship service, Rev. Spronk read through the list of charter members at Zion, which numbered 104 confessing members and 115 baptized children, comprising 48 families. (The congregation also includes two infants who will be baptized in the coming months, Lord willing). From this group of believers four men were chosen as elders and three as deacons to form the



*Officebearers (l to r): Scott VanUffelen, Rodney Rau, Justin Koole, Gary Kaptein, Randy Dykstra, Howard Pastoor, Brian Decker*



first Council. Until such a time that God provides the new congregation with its own pastor, worship will be led by Rev. James Slopsema in the morning and by Classical and seminary appointees in the evening. Zion PRC continues to meet for worship at Heritage Christian School, and will be seeking to purchase or construct a church building within the Jenison area in coming months.

As the daughter congregation of Faith PRC, the members of Zion extend heartfelt thanks to their mother

congregation and its members for providing a spiritual home in which to grow in knowledge and faith. Through this nurturing process, a new manifestation of Christ's bride has been prepared to take up her work in building another household of faith within the PRC. Together we give thanks for the extended family of Christ found in the PRC, and look forward to taking an active role in witnessing to the glory of our precious Lord! ☞

## BRING THE BOOKS...

MR. CHARLES TERPSTRA, review editor



*A Spiritual House Preserved: A Century in the River's Bend*, Calvin Kalsbeek, ed. Jenison, MI: RFP, 2016, 728 pages + xxii, \$44.95. [Reviewed by Bruce Koole.]

Hope Protestant Reformed Church has set the standard for church memoirs with their book entitled *A Spiritual House Preserved: A Century in the River's Bend*. This is a book well worth spending the time it takes to digest its seven hundred and fifty pages of material. Hope's anniversary committee deserves *summa cum laude* for the vast amount of organization and labor put forth in the publication of this book.

The title *A Spiritual House Preserved* is so very apropos. "By my count for Hope's century of existence as a church militant, she has been without a minister for nearly twenty-five years" (131-132). Further, over her first twenty years of existence she had a minister for just under seven years. Jehovah tells Zerubbabel, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Zech. 4:6) and, "For who hath despised the day of small things? For they shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven" (Zech. 4:10). Such is the grand story of Hope Church: though very insignificant in the world, she is rewarded for her faithfulness.

The story of Hope and any other true church follows the preaching. Very appropriately, the book begins with

Rev. David Overway's concise meditation on I Peter 2:4-5 about a spiritual house built on the rejected cornerstone, Christ Jesus (xi-xiv). Without that foundation there would be no true Hope Protestant Reformed Church. The book ends with an edited version of a 2014 sermon on that same passage (708-720). Both are very instructive. This text had been the sermon first preached by Rev. John R. Brink, whose memoirs of Hope are included as Appendix 1, when Hope humbly began at the river's bend in the Winter of 1916.

This work of history has about every writing type and historical style possible; comprehensive is an understatement. *A Spiritual House Preserved* contains early history; a brief history of her twelve ministers (seventy-five years of which were related by Richard Bloem); an architectural history; a recalling of Hope's experiences in the searing 1924 and 1953 doctrinal controversies; perspectives and autobiographical retrospectives of Hope's ministers; an opening of Hope's consistorial minutes book; thirteen very dazzling oral histories; and the memories of those who experienced the 1956 tornado. There is the doctrinal section on the pastor's labors; the council's jobs; the member's responsibilities; the life of the various societies; the sons who have entered the gospel ministry (one of whom was my father); daughter congregations; mission work; covenantal education (637-651); Young People's Convention memories; and thirteen appendices with graphs, statistics, and charts. Yet more, there is a list of organists (700-701); themes and texts used in family visitation; a description of the card-making work of that guileless dove, Anne Buiter (498-499); a description of the struggles faced by wheelchair-bound Kris Moelker

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Mr. Koole is a member of Loveland Protestant Reformed Church in Loveland, Colorado.



(98-100); and the decades-long difficulties of the Kooi-enga family after Rog's car accident (222-224). In terms of mission work, Hope has labored in Lansing, Michigan; Christchurch, New Zealand; Victoria, Canada; Singapore; and Yangon, Myanmar. The book is chock-full of maps, diagrams, pictures of members, and buildings past and present. After reading all this, a man can say with the psalmist Asaph, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart" (Ps. 73:1).

In keeping with the budgetary struggles from her early years through both the economic difficulties of the Great Depression and the loss of members in 1924 and 1953, Hope's frugality played a role in their church life past and present, as it has in many of our churches. Permit me to elaborate on the sunglasses example mentioned by Professor Russell Dykstra (565-567). This story found its way into some *Standard Bearers*. This story is shaped by one of my ancestors.

Ken G. Vink explained in the *Standard Bearer* rubric "News from Our Churches" that during divine worship services the sanctuary architecture was designed in such a way that for five minutes or so of every sermon the setting sun's luminescence would blind the preacher. Hope debated getting a drapery and made a motion calling for such at a special congregation meeting.<sup>1</sup> In the course of debate, my paternal grandfather stood up and declared with absolute certainty that it was a waste of money to buy curtains. What they should do instead was buy sunglasses for the pastor. My grandfather would go so far as to pay for them himself. Say what you will, this argument proved conclusive to those present. Vink related that a drapery purchase was approved.

A few *Standard Bearer* issues later, Ken G. Vink reported that someone had instead donated the drapery. He concluded, "The [building] committee further reported that 'sunglasses were available for emergency conditions, but they were never used.'"<sup>2</sup> Even at the late date of 1977, Hope Church was still guided by the extreme financial paucity of her early existence (5-42, 132-150, 679-680). But such a Corinthian attitude toward building fiduciary is not unfamiliar in many of our other

churches. Many other stories dealing with poverty, budgets, and architectures are included in the book (77-102).

With all the highlights of the two keys of the kingdom—that is, the preaching and the administration of the sacraments—the third key, discipline, is not left out. It is dealt with mercifully. There was the shocking departure of a prominent member, Tony (253, 304-305). There was a minister who had to read the Form of Excommunication even as the unrepentant member thrust a microphone and tape recorder in his pastor's face (163). There were the children misbehaving in church (185, 226). And, there was the consistorial motion that only the believing parent may stand for baptism (193). Did you know that the later-deposed Hubert De Wolf (41-42, 142-143, 217-218, etc.) pastored Hope for five years? Read and see.

The true church always has the lines of election and reprobation cutting through the line of the covenant. This impacts me personally. My parents, paternal grandparents, and maternal grandparents all worshiped at Hope for many decades. While the history of this church has elements of hagiography, the history of each of us is hagiographical by the second. We are each covered in Christ's blood, without whose justifying death for our sins we could not stand in the throne room of Almighty Jehovah and pray, nor have any hope of salvation. Thus, mercy is the watchword.

Something else of note is that Hope Church's setup today in the modern, suburbanized world is providentially similar to her founding in the era of horse and buggy. Hope's members can walk to church, societies, catechism, grade school, and high school. In the age of the automobile, plane, space travel, and cell phone, the families and children who walk slow still run the show. What is the old adage? "The more things change, the more things stay the same"? Or, does not the unchanging Jehovah still show us a bit of Himself and have the last laugh?

Editor Calvin Kalsbeek deserves praise for keeping a very readable style throughout the book. With the large number of different authors, the book seems to have only one writer. There is certainly a repeat of various information about persons and their activities, but by no means was any of it monotonous. Credit the editor and the anniversary committee.

Three minor errors I did notice, which did not detract in any major way from the flow of the narrative. The sec-

<sup>1</sup> Ken G. Vink, "News From Our Churches," *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 53, no. 19 (August 1, 1977), 456.

<sup>2</sup> Ken G. Vink, "News From Our Churches," *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 53, no. 21 (September 15, 1977), 504.

tion on the church's early history notes that on January 23, 1916 (Hope's first church service) the United States was mid-way through World War I (78). Technically, America's official involvement in WWI started on April 3, 1917 and ended on November 11, 1918, and the half-way point would have been early February 1918. January of 1916 is more accurately Europe at the mid-way point through WWI.


Second, Professor Herman Hanko notes that Hope's official role with the 1953 controversy happened only through the work of elder Richard Newhouse. He was a hero of faith, delegate, and co-author of the adopted May 1953 Classis East minority report that called Rev. H. DeWolf's statements heretical *per se* (125-129, 691-693).

However, Hope was also involved in December 1950, when the consistory, under the signature of Rev. John Heys and elder Dewey Engelsma, sent to Synod a letter dealing with the Declaration of Principles. This letter did three things: first, it approved in the main the doctrines explained in the Declaration of Principles; second, it suggested a few other improvements and additional creedal quotes; and, third, it requested that a section on man's responsibility be added with creedal quotes to combat the calumnies lobbed at the PRCA (185-186, 687-690). This request was one of many that not only led the 1951 Synod to adopt a section on man's responsibility, but also eventually led to the memorable and edifying 1953 seminary graduation speech by Rev. Herman Hoeksema, entitled "Man's Freedom and Responsibility."<sup>3</sup> Hope followed the orthodox covenant doctrine as explained by Rev. John Heys (42-49, 143-151).

<sup>3</sup> Herman Hoeksema, "Man's Freedom and Responsibility," *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 29, no. 18 (July 1, 1953), 412-417.

Third (and this is not an error but an omission, in my mind), it would have been nice to include as Appendix 13 the church and school history reports from Gertrude Hoeksema's 1975 book *God's Covenant Faithfulness: The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America*, (16-17, 26, 40, 45-46; Hope PRCS: 647-649). This would have provided another delightful perspective on the difficult labor of both living during the Great Depression and getting a school started just after the rationing imposed by World War II.

I conclude with a request: perhaps the committee could consider including in the second edition a necrology, a list of the deceased. Grounds: the church militant becomes the church triumphant at death. Also in a concise manner, probably 3-5 pages, this list would take a poignant look at the great sorrow of death and the comfort contained therein when hope of salvation is grounded in Christ's blood. Churches provide that comfort through the preaching, as well as through the prayers and acts of the kindness of the saints (cf., for example, pp. 543-546 for a summary of the work of the church catering committee).

The book was beyond scintillating, and very edifying. I continually returned to it for new information and discovered such things as the benefit of classical music in junior high (648-650). I hope that other of our churches produce similar works soon so that, like Hope Church, they and we all can review our histories (Ps. 105). Along with the editor, Calvin Kalsbeek, I pray that our covenant God through preaching, Scripture, and the creeds preserves Hope Church and His church worldwide until His Son returns again (677-678). Most highly recommended. 

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

## MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

### Trivia Question

The Heidelberg Catechism, one of the three Forms of Unity, is dear to us. It was composed in the city of

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

Heidelberg in 1563 at the request of Elector Frederick III. The first edition contained 128 questions and answers. The second and third editions contained 129 questions and answers. Do you know which question and its answer were added

at the behest of the Elector? Answer later in this column.

### Young People's Activities

The Young People's Society of Cornerstone PRC of Dyer, IN held a basketball game fund-

raiser on March 4. The Heritage Christian School varsity team challenged some of the area ministers and seminarians on the hardcourt at Heritage School. An entry fee was charged, and concessions made available to help fund YPS convention expenses. Some of us would love to see the roster and box score of that game! With Sunday the next day, we hope all team members made it to the services. Perhaps the ibuprofen bottle was of some aid and relief to the participants.

### **Congregational Activities**

The activities committee of Providence PRC in Hudsonville, MI invited adult members of the congregation to go snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in February. Hopefully there was enough snow to allow that. If not, the gym at Covenant Christian High was reserved for indoor activities.

### **Denominational Activities**

We have a new congregation! In February Zion PRC, a daughter of Faith PRC, was organized. At the meeting of Classis East in January approval was given to a group of families and individuals from Faith PRC to organize as a new congregation, with Faith to oversee the activities. Rev. C. Spronk, pastor at Faith preached the message "The Life of a Spirit-Filled Church" from Acts 4: 31-32. Following the regular portion of the service, a congregational meeting was held in which Zion's male confessing members chose officebearers from nominations Faith's Council had approved. Zion PRC is temporarily meeting in the Heritage

Christian School music room at 9:30 and 5:30, with Rev. James Slopsema leading the morning services and teaching the Heidelberg Catechism. Second services are supplied by ministers from Classis East and the PRC seminary. We welcome our newest congregation and pray for God's blessing upon her!

### **Sister Church Activities**

Covenant PRC of Ballymena, Northern Ireland held a unique party for the congregation in late February. Interested members met for an evening they called the "Puzzle Party." Those attracted could take their own jigsaw puzzles or join in with friends to complete one of theirs. I'm sure lots of good discussion took place in the meantime! Sounds like fun!

Following are two pieces of correspondence concerning the website of Covenant PRC NI:

If you've noticed an "uptick" in hits on your site from the USA over the past month or so, I am responsible for a great deal of it.... Your and Prof. Engelsma's sermons and writings on the three marks of a true church, and the responsibility of joining with a true church are completely convincing to me.... [The] content-rich, yet always pithy and absorbing orations and writings have been used by the Lord in fortifying my soul with correct doctrine. I thank the Lord for you! There are many gifted preachers and teachers in the PRCA, but you have played a unique and special role in my development. You and your flock are in my prayers. —Connecticut, USA

I am a South African Reformed Christian and non-residential missionary to Madagascar. I was very pleased to come across your website. As things go and following debates and discussions on the social media, someone pointed to an article on your website. What a nice surprise even to see a lot of material in my own language. I have to commend you highly. — South Africa

### **School Activities**

Save the date! The Adams Christian School Amazing Race is scheduled to take place on May 6 at 4:00 P.M. Have you been training?

On a Friday in February the Covenant Christian School Ladies' Aid in Lynden, WA held a dinner. They called it a Spud Fest, which amounted to baked potatoes with all the fixings! After the dinner various games were played before dessert was served. The games included a Baggo tournament. If that term is puzzling to you, we must tell you that it is the equivalent of Cornhole and Bean-Bag Toss. Why so many names for the same game? We are not sure.

Alumni, past teachers and board members, supporters, and parents were invited to the 2017 All-School Program of the Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School in Doon, IA on March 10. This one was special in Doon, as a thankful throng there celebrated God's covenant faithfulness to the school family for 50 years! The theme of the program was "Praising Our Faithful Covenant God in Our 50<sup>th</sup> Year." Refreshments were served in the school after the program.


Those who remember the day the school opened wonder, where did the time go? What a blessing to our churches are our covenant schools!

### Trivia Answer

Question 80 was added to the

second and third editions of the Heidelberg Catechism. The third edition was also divided into 52 Lord's Days with the view to the Catechism's being explained in one of the services on each Lord's Day.



Better look up Q&A 80. More trivia next time.


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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Wedding Anniversary

■ With grateful hearts and thanksgiving to God, we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **JONATHAN and BARBARA BOL** on February 18, 2017. We rejoice in the many years God has given them together and give thanks for the godly example they've set for us in both marriage and a Christ-centered home. "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Psalm 34:8).

 Nate and Rebecca Bol  
Gerrit, Karissa, Tabitha  
 Kyle and Audra Bruinooge  
Elise, Devin, Grant

 Adam and Grace Bol  
Nora, Jonathan

Jenison, Michigan



### Wedding Anniversary



■ With joy and thanksgiving to our gracious heavenly Father, we are able to celebrate our parents',

#### **WILLIAM and PATRICIA DE JONG,**

40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, who were united in marriage on March 25, 1977.

We are so thankful for their love towards each other and faithful parenting and godly instruction shared with us through these years. What a blessing they have been as they have taught and continue to guide us to the Master and His love in all they do for us as their children and grandchildren, always teaching us by example to put the kingdom first in our pilgrim journey. The words of their wedding text: "Thou wilt keep in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee...trust ye in the LORD forever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:3, 4). Our prayer is that God grant them His perfect peace and many more continued blessings and years to them as they journey to their heavenly home.

 Nathan and Brenda Dykstra  
Kaitlyn, Emmalie, Seth, Brianna, Levi  
 Paul and Erin De Jong  
Jenna, Evan, Luke, Kara, Ryan, and Mary

 Michael and Beth Vermeer  
Caleb, Annie, Lydia, Kaylee, and Willem  
 Richard and Joanna VanDenTop  
Micah

Beecher, Illinois

### 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.

Delegates in need of lodging should contact Mr. Ralph VanderVeen, 2973 Willowrun St., Hudsonville, MI 49426. Phone: (616) 669-5833.

Consistory of  
Hudsonville PR Church  
Ralph VanderVeen, Clerk.