

The Standard Bearer

A Reformed Semi-Monthly Magazine • November 1, 2016

CONTENTS

Meditation	Doing All in the Name of the Lord REV. JOHN MARCUS	50
Editorial	Book Analysis: <i>Ten Myths About Calvinism</i> (2) REV. KENNETH KOOLE	52
Letters	■ Into Africa... Again (Divorce and Remarriage) 55 ■ Question on Children in the Covenant and Hebrews 10:29 58	
All Around Us	■ Some Facts about Ken Ham's Ark Exhibit 60 ■ California and Illinois Laws Promote Abortion 60 ■ Rome Canonizes Mother Teresa 61 REV. CLAY SPRONK	
Believing and Confessing	Second Helvetic Confession (3B) Of God, His Unity and Trinity PROF. RONALD CAMMENG	62
O Come Let Us Worship	The Sacraments in Worship (12a) REV. CORY GRIESS	67
Reports	■ Classis East 69 MR. JON HUISKEN ■ Classis West 70 REV. DOUGLAS KUIPER	
Activities	News From Our Churches MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM	70

Doing All in the Name of the Lord

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Colossians 3:17

God calls each and every one of His people to worship Him. However, our worship is not confined to attending services on Sunday morning and evening. Nor is it the case that our worship merely extends to times of family or personal devotions. Fact is, every aspect of our lives is a matter of worship. Everything we say and do declares how worthy of glory we consider God to be. Worship has to do with declaring God's *worth-ship*.

We make choices about worship every moment of our lives. God knows how we are prone to delight in serving ourselves. So, He gave us His Word as a guide for expressing our thankful worship. One expression of that is found in this text. God would have us honor the name of the Lord Jesus in every part of our lives.



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

The name of the Lord Jesus is the sum total of His revelation to us. Jesus Christ shows His name to be glorious in His Word and all His works.

Scripture reveals His name to be glorious, in the first place, because Jesus is Jehovah salvation, and Jehovah is the great I AM. Every moment brings irreversible changes to creation. A river flows. The wind blows. A leaf falls. Time courses on. But, Jehovah never changes; He simply is. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is like a solid rock; but comparing Him to a rock does not do Him justice. Even the most solid rock changes ever so slightly, be it over millennia. But, Jehovah does not change in even the slightest degree; therefore, we sons of Jacob are not consumed. He is perfectly holy, devoted to His own glory as the highest good, which glory He seeks in the salvation of His people. All things were created by Him and for Him.

The name of the Lord Jesus is glorious, in the second place, because it is the most wonderful manifestation of God's name in the work of salvation. Nothing reveals God's love more clearly than Jesus Christ, who loved us so much that He died for us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). Nothing

The Standard Bearer (ISSN 0362-4692 [print], 2372-9813 [online]) is a semi-monthly periodical, except monthly during June, July, and August, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.: 1894 Georgetown Center Dr., Jenison, MI 49428-7137.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the *Standard Bearer*, 1894 Georgetown Center Dr., Jenison, MI 49428-7137.

Reprint and Online Posting Policy

Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting or online posting of articles in the *Standard Bearer* by other publications, provided that such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; that proper acknowledgment is made; and that a copy of the periodical or Internet location in which such reprint or posting appears is sent to the editorial office.

Editorial Policy

Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Reader Asks department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be signed. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

Editorial Office

Prof. Barrett Gritters
4949 Ivanrest Ave. SW
Wyoming, MI 49418
gritters@prca.org

Business Office

Standard Bearer
Mr. Timothy Pipe
1894 Georgetown Center Dr.
Jenison, MI 49428-7137
PH: 616-457-5970
tim@rfpa.org

Church News Editor

Mr. Perry Van Egdom
2324 Fir Ave.
Doon, IA 51235
vanegdoms@gmail.com

United Kingdom Office

c/o Mrs. Alison Graham
27 Woodside Road
Ballymena, BT42 4HX
Northern Ireland
alisongraham2006@hotmail.co.uk

Rep. of Ireland Office

c/o Rev. Martyn McGeown
38 Abbeyvale
Corbally
Co Limerick, Ireland

Subscription Price

\$24.00 per year in the US, \$36.00 elsewhere
New eSubscription: \$24.00
eSubscription for current hardcopy subscribers: \$12.00.

Advertising Policy

The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$10.00 fee. Announcements should be sent, with the \$10.00 fee, to: SB Announcements, 1894 Georgetown Center Dr., Jenison, MI 49428-7137 (e-mail: mail@rfpa.org). Deadline for announcements is one month prior to publication date.

Website for RFPA: www.rfpa.org
Website for PRC: www.prca.org

The Reformed Free Publishing Association maintains the privacy and trust of its subscribers by not sharing with any person, organization, or church any information regarding *Standard Bearer* subscribers.

reveals God's justice as much as Christ's suffering. Such is the nature of God's justice that He could not let sin go unpunished. Rather than overlooking our sin, He punished it in His only begotten Son. God's glorious attributes, including His mercy, His abundant goodness, and His truth are most clearly displayed in Jesus Christ.

Through His atoning sacrifice, Jesus Christ has purchased our salvation. He delivered us from bondage to sin and Satan. He has raised us up to new life in Himself. If we are recipients of the grace of God, we will not come up with a more excellent name in all the earth. How glorious is the name of Jesus Christ!

God has regenerated us and is now sanctifying us to restore us to the image of Christ. Now, He would have us do all things as those who have our life in Christ, as His representatives, manifesting His image in the world. "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed," whether you are listening or talking, working or walking, nothing is excluded. In all these things, give honor to the name of your Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

Immediately after giving this command, the inspired apostle points to the three main classes of relationships we generally experience in this life: husband and wife, parents and children, and masters and servants. Wives are called to reverence the name of the Lord by submitting to their husbands (Col. 3:18). Husbands are called to bring honor to Christ's name by loving their wives and cherishing and nourishing them, without being bitter or harsh towards them (Col. 3:19). Children have a calling to reverence the Lord Jesus by obeying their parents in all things (Col. 3:20). Parents have a calling to reverence Jesus Christ by manifesting God's love, not provoking their children to anger (Col. 3:21). Servants in the workplace honor the Lord Jesus by giving an honest day's labor, working as to the Lord (Col. 3:22-23). Employers bring honor to the name of Jesus Christ by respecting their employees and treating them fairly (Col. 4:1). The way we live in these relationships testifies loudly of our relationship to Christ, whose name we bear. "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

The truth is, no matter what relationship, no matter what station and calling, no matter what activity we are involved in, Jesus Christ would have us reverence His holy name, both in word and deed. Our main objective should

not be our own happiness, although that may be one of our objectives. Our main objective should not even be the good of our neighbor, although we ought to seek the good of our neighbor. Rather, our main objective in life ought to be that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ would be glorified in and through us.

Any time we fail to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, we are taking away from the glory He deserves. Depending on how we choose to live at any given moment, we are saying either "He is worthy of glory" or "He is *not* worthy of glory." If we listen to music that glorifies sex and rebellion, we are saying, "God is *not* worthy of glory and honor in this part of my life." If we watch television programs or movies that take God's name in vain or that make sin a matter of entertainment, we are saying, "God is *not* worthy of glory and honor in this activity." On the other hand, if in obedience to God we deliberately dress in a way so as not to cause others to stumble, we are saying, "God is worthy of honor and glory in the way that I dress." If we consciously get our rest during the week so that we are able to stay awake during the worship and preaching on Sunday, we are saying, "God is worthy of glory and honor in the worship services." "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).



Why should we do all in the name of the Lord? Why should we reverence God's holy name?

Because this is the way of thankfulness: "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks to God and the Father by him*" (Col. 3:17). If our speaking and doing is truly in the name of the Lord, it will also be done with thanksgiving to God for His great goodness to us. You cannot have one without the other. Reverencing God's name and an attitude of thanksgiving to Him are inseparable. No other reason will motivate us to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus as much as our thankfulness to Him for His goodness and mercy to us. Indeed, it is the Lord's goodness and mercy that *enable* us to do all in His name.

God's mercy in Christ Jesus becomes all the more precious when we consider the wrath that we deserve for profaning God's name: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). We have


all profaned God's holy name. We have not sought His glory and honor perfectly as we should have. By nature, we seek our own glory and honor. Amazingly, God loves us in spite of our sin. Not that He ignores our sin; He could never do that owing to His justice. But, in love, He gave His only begotten Son to suffer the torments of hell that we deserved for blaspheming His name. By His grace, we begin to reverence the name of the Lord Jesus in thankfulness for delivering us from bondage to sin and Satan. Our motivation to seek the things above is God's gracious gift of life in Christ: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).



Those who give such honor to God, who seek to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, can expect a blessed

reward: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the *reward* of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23-24). The reward of the inheritance is a *gracious* gift, as the term 'inheritance' suggests. The reward, of course, is a reward of grace, earned completely by the work of Jesus Christ.

The apostle identifies those who can expect a reward from the Lord as an encouragement to us to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Though we might see little earthly reward for our labors here below, God encourages us with the knowledge that we have a glorious inheritance above, the weight of which glory far surpasses any sacrifice we have made in this life.

We have been bought with a price and belong to Jesus Christ body and soul. What a glorious privilege is ours! Do we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus? 

EDITORIAL

REV. KENNETH KOOLE

Book Analysis: *Ten Myths About Calvinism* (2)

We continue our critique of Kenneth Stewart's book, *Ten Myths About Calvinism* (IVP Academic, 2011—cf. *SB*, Oct. 1 editorial).

Our thesis is that Stewart's book makes it plain that, when all is said and done, what Stewart wants is to retain the right to be called a 'Calvinist' (and 'Reformed') while undermining doctrines that were central to Calvin himself—doctrines that are fundamental to any theology that has the right to call itself

'historically Reformed.' In particular, doctrines that have to do with God's sovereign will and grace (cf. the Oct. 1 editorial).

We devote some editorials to this because we are convinced that, in far too many instances, this is becoming the 'Calvinism' of our day, a 'neo-Calvinism' that Stewart wants to encourage and justify.

We remind the reader that Stewart's book is divided into two sections: The first is labeled: "Four Myths Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)"; the second is labeled: "Six Myths Non-Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)."

As stated, our main concern is not with the second section, myths commonly circulated by non-Calvinists (or better, anti-Calvinists), though we cannot agree with everything Stewart writes in that section either. Rather our focus is on Stewart's first section entitled "Four Myths Calvinists Should Not Be Circulating (But Are)."

The four ideas that, according to Stewart, contemporary Calvinists should dismiss as myths are these: "One Man (Calvin) and One City (Geneva) Are Determinative"; "Calvin's View of Predestination Must Be Ours"; "TULIP is the Yardstick of the Truly Reformed"; and, "Cal-

Previous article in this series: October 1, 2016, p. 5.

vinists 'Take a Dim View of Revival and Awakening.'

It is especially in myths two and three (as he calls them) that Stewart's departure from historic Calvinism is exposed.

However, it is in his first 'myth' that Stewart lays the groundwork for what he labels as 'myths' two and three.

Stewart, while compelled to acknowledge that in the days of Calvin and Beza "Geneva enjoyed this reputation as a bastion of Reformation orthodoxy and zeal throughout the sixteenth century" and that, as a result, "...theological students from across Europe flocked there in great numbers" (23-25), yet goes to great lengths to prove how quickly the academy at Geneva went apostate and "...lost its exemplary reputation for rigorous Christianity..." in the centuries following (25).

As a result of Geneva's loss of reputation, in the next two centuries European theologians other than Calvin were the theologians of influence and were the names on everyone's lips.

Stewart goes on to contend that it was not until the 1800s that the works of Calvin, such as his *Institutes* and *Calvin's Calvinism*, enjoyed a revival and publishing surge, putting his writings back on shelves of Reformed believers.

And this supposedly warrants the conclusion that,

Despite what conservative Calvinistic literature continues to reiterate by profuse references to Calvin and the city he labored in, *it is not justifiable* [emphasis added] to continue to think in terms of a

preeminent reformer [namely, Calvin] and [his] city being the prime mediators of this theological movement down to our own time" (35).

Nonsense!

In reality, what is not justifiable is that Stewart should argue that because Geneva early on lost its reputation as a bastion of orthodoxy, that therefore Calvin's influence upon orthodox Reformed thinking was not of primary (defining) significance over the following 200 years. As if it is just that 'recent' zealots in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made it *seem* that Calvin and his writings were of primary influence.

To be sure, soon after the death of Beza (Calvin's successor in Geneva) solid 'Calvinism' ceased to be taught in the Academy of Geneva. But does it follow that Calvin's doctrinal influence and stature in other Reformed academies that sprang up across Europe also rapidly faded and were dismissed? Especially when it was Calvin's and Beza's students that taught in so many of these academies?

An argument without merit.

And then to argue that because in the two centuries following Calvin's death it was not Calvin's works that Reformed believers commonly quoted but many other Reformed writings and preachers, that therefore Calvin's theological positions were not of primary influence for Reformed orthodoxy is another specious argument.

The question is not with what books and theologians the people were most familiar in the two hun-

dred years following Calvin's death, and what writers they quoted. The question is, From whom did these popular preachers and writers (whom the people quoted) learn *their* Reformed orthodoxy, whose books and writings were *their* source?

From whom but Calvin primarily!

Zacharias Ursinus and Guido deBrès come to mind. Dutch Protestants in the centuries following Calvin's death quoted the Catechism (Heidelberg) and Confession (Belgic) of these two stalwarts again and again.

But from whom, pray tell, did these two get their doctrine and convictions?

From whom but Calvin himself, under whom they had studied.

Stewart's argument is forced.

What's behind Stewart's misleading argument? Clearly this: Stewart wants to make room in the Reformed church world for men whose teachings are at odds with Calvin and his "Calvinism," and that in the fundamental area of his doctrines of grace.

Calvinism *redefined*, if you will.

Something that is subscribed to by far too many today, who want to remain in Reformed churches but without being truly Calvinistic.

And that brings us to what Stewart labels as the second myth about what should be allowed to define a Calvinist.

Stewart's second myth (which is, we are convinced, what prompted Stewart to write his book to begin with), is that "Calvin's View of Predestination Must Be Ours"—that is, if one is to be considered orthodox and Reformed.

There is, of course, a semblance of truth to Stewart's contention. The primary question for the Reformed believer is not whether one's view of predestination lines up with Calvin's. The great question is, Does one's view line up with the Scriptures? With the apostles? And what about the creeds?

And then, when it comes to Calvin, the question is, Does his doctrine line up with that of the apostles and Scripture? If so, what should ours be?

Significantly, Stewart never raises or seeks to answer that question.

What Stewart is intent on doing is warning young Calvinists from "exalting Calvin's understanding of predestination..." above other Reformers' view of the doctrine (46).

Why Stewart wants to dissuade young Calvinists from adopting Calvin's view in the name of the biblical and Reformed faith becomes plain. Stewart is compelled to acknowledge that the mature, fully developed Calvin in his later writings, as he responded to the errors of Pighius and then of Bolsec, explicitly taught what has become known as "double predestination," a predestination in which God from eternity not only elected some of mankind unto eternal salvation, but also reprobated the rest unto a damnation—and that before they had done good or evil (cf. 53, 54).

Stewart is not happy with the doctrine of eternal reprobation. Those Reformers who taught double predestination Stewart labels as holding to a 'strident' form of the doctrine.

What is telling is that Stewart lists Arminius (who studied in Geneva under Beza) as a casualty of Geneva's 'strident' view.

Stewart informs the reader that in Arminius' examinations for ordination as a minister in Amsterdam and then for professorship in the University of Leiden there is no evidence that he was required to "...endorse the strident [!] predestinarian teaching he found taught at Geneva" (67).

A paragraph later, in speaking of Arminius' conflict with Gomarus in the University of Leiden over Arminius' teaching, Stewart states that Arminius and Gomarus "...diverged...in their adherence to the strident [!] elaborations of the doctrine of predestination associated with contemporary scholars Beza and Perkins."

What Stewart is implying is that it was Calvin and his disciples' 'strident' view of predestination (one might as well read 'hyper' view, Calvin then being the original hyper-Calvinist!) that Arminius and his followers reacted to (and understandably so!), and is what drove them to their "Arminianism." Stewart clearly implies, if certain Calvinists (Calvin among them) had been less 'strident' in their views, the overreaction of Arminius could have been avoided.

So, it is Calvin and his brand of Calvinism that is to be blamed for Arminius and many others becoming "Arminians." Quite an allegation.

And, evidently, we must conclude that the best way to keep church members from leaving the

Reformed faith is to be a little less 'Calvinistic.'

Probably true.

But then, this question: Would what one is left with be the Reformed faith any more?

To support his claim that Reformed men have the right to reject Calvin's 'strident' view, Stewart contends that other early theologians of Reformed reputation were not nearly so 'strident' (hyper) in their doctrine of predestination. He mentions the names of Bullinger and Peter Vermigli among others (58). It is Stewart's contention that these men taught what is known as "single predestination," a sovereign, eternal election unto salvation, but not an equally sovereign, eternal reprobation unto condemnation.

We contend Stewart misrepresents these Reformers.

Vermigli is a case in point, as any honest reading of Vermigli's own words makes plain. While it is true that Vermigli insisted that Scripture uses the word 'predestination' only in connection with 'election unto salvation,' for all that he held to a reprobation from eternity. Quoting Vermigli himself (lifted from a larger quotation found in Stewart's book), Stewart finds Vermigli stating,

Reprobation is the most wise purpose of God, whereby he hath before all eternitie [!], constantly decreed without any injustice, not to have mercie on those whome he hath not loved, but hath passed over them (59, 60).

Notice that God determined to have no mercy "...on those whom

he hath not loved....” that is, has not loved from “before all eternities.” That is not the language of those today who, though wanting to retain the name Reformed, are committed to a ‘single predestination’ view in order to jettison the doctrine of reprobation.

Why jettison the doctrine of reprobation?

Why else, but in the service of the well-meant gospel offer (of which Stewart is well aware and favors).

To be sure, there has been since Calvin’s day many a theologian

whose teaching on predestination has been something other than that of Calvin himself, men who still claim to be Reformed

But that does not make them so.


In the end, it comes to this: for the man claiming the right to be labeled orthodox and Reformed, the determining factor is not whether one’s position on predestination is that of Calvin’s; the key factor is, is your position that which is set forth in the Reformed creeds, in this instance, in the Canons of Dordt? And for the Calvinistic Presbyterian, is it still that which is set forth

in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms?

No? Then one has forfeited the right of claim to being orthodox and Reformed.

And, to being truly Calvinistic.

And, say what Stewart will, it is Calvin’s Calvinism that is found in the Canons of Dordt (and in the Westminster Confessions as well). Something that Stewart wants to deny, especially in his third myth about TULIP being the yardstick of Calvinism.

That we hope to treat in a future article. 

LETTERS

■ Into Africa... Again (regarding Divorce and Remarriage)

In the September 15 issue of the *Standard Bearer*, the editorial that reported on the visit to Namibia of the PRC’s Committee for Contact occasioned a handful of letters wondering about and commenting on what the delegation said to the saints about the PRC’s position on divorce and remarriage. The paragraph of interest said:

Then we explained further the PRCA’s view on remarriage of divorced persons. Further, because some had heard us in 2010, and some had read PRCA literature. But others heard for the first time, listening with great interest to our exposition of Matthew 19 and related passages. By those who participated in the discussion widespread agreement was expressed. What difficulty any had was not with the exegesis or theology of the position, much less with seeing the practical importance of maintaining marriages in a day of rampant divorce and remarriage. Rather, they wondered how to treat the few members in their congregations who had already remarried. We related the PRCA history on the issue—that those who were already remarried were allowed to remain, but no others were permitted to join, nor were present members allowed to remarry while their spouse was living.

We pray these explanations will be helpful for the new gathering of churches to come to one mind on the vitally important doctrine of marriage.

Because most of the correspondents did not ask that their letters be published, we do not print them. But the questions and comments in them were important enough that an article addressing their concerns is warranted. The questions and comments were of this sort:

1. Did the delegation from the Contact Committee teach that persons who have been divorced and are now remarried may be members of the church in good standing if their remarriage took place prior to knowing the biblical truth of marriage?

2. Did the delegation advise the Namibian Christians that this (see question #1) is the official position of the PRC?

3. If so (see questions #1, 2), where can this position be found in the official decisions of the PRC?

4. The delegation should not have aired the PRC’s “dirty laundry,” that is, that the leadership of the PRC in the past allowed divorced and remarried members to come to the Lord’s table. The *SB* readership is owed a further explanation.

5. What was the historical context of this PRC history dealing with remarried members? Was it the mission field or in an established congregation?

6. When these PRC members were “allowed to remain,” was this an allowance to remain as PRC members, or an allowance to remain in the remarried state?

7. Did the consistories, in this PRC history, work diligently to bring these remarried persons to see the sin of their remarriage?

8. Do you think that the PRC position on divorce and remarriage is too strict?

9. Implied in one comment was the question (and its conclusion) that certainly gets at the heart of the writers’ concerns: Why would you seek ecumenical ties with a denomination that would permit divorced and remarried persons as members in good standing? This will soon allow divorced and remarried persons into the PRC.

These questions and comments give good opportunity to write a further explanation.

First, as the editorial reported, the delegation explained to the Namibian Christians the PRC’s official position about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The Contact Committee initiated the subject in 2010; the committee was determined that divorce and remarriage would be included in the topics discussed. In 2016, the delegation repeated the instruction about marriage, this time at the request of the Namibian Christians. The editorial of September 15 made that clear. What the editorial did not think to say, since we assumed it to be understood, is exactly what the PRC’s position is that was explained, thoroughly. Now that questions about our instruction have arisen, we will spell out here what was taught: 1) The only ground for divorce is adultery. 2) Divorce does not break the bond of marriage, for only God can break the bond through the death of one of the spouses. This teaching is grounded in part in the PRC’s strong conviction about God’s unconditional covenant. 3) In all cases of divorce, remarriage is forbidden while the first spouse is living. Remarriage in this case is continued adultery. No such remarried person is allowed to be a member of the PRC. 4) Those who divorce and remarry before they come to know the PRC’s position on the matter are not exempted from this prohibition.

These were the points that the delegations both of 2010 and 2016 patiently, carefully, and very clearly explained, grounding them in the exegesis of Scripture. For one of the questioners, then, to ask why the delegation did not inform the Namibians that remarriage after divorce while the spouse still lives is adultery is a surprising question. If the delegation had *not* done so, they could not have reported afterwards, as they did, that they had explained the PRC’s position regarding divorce and remarriage. Did the delegations make that position clear? They made it *crystal* clear, both in 2010 and 2016. To be asked, now, as one of the questioners did, why we did not inform the Namibians that remarriage after divorce while the spouse still lives is a grievous disappointment.

Second, not only did the delegation make the PRC’s position unmistakably clear, but at the end of the day it was a matter of great joy (and not a little surprise) that no argument was raised, but only agreement. Of course, it must be remembered that this was not an official ecclesiastical assembly, but a conference designed for the Namibian churches to come to know the PRC. Nevertheless, agreement, even at that level, is reason to be encouraged.

It is important that that reality sink in for a moment: a little, newly-forming group of five churches from historic Reformed roots, recently departed from a large and apostatizing denomination, seeks to know the view of the PRC on marriage. The Contact Committee knew this had to be one of the topics of discussion in 2010. The Namibians asked for the explanation to be repeated in 2016. The second delegation explained it again. The believers listened. They agreed with the explanation. This aspect of the Word of God, which most had not considered before, now becomes clear to them. The Holy Spirit is convicting them of truth by the Word of God the delegations have brought to them.

At the end of the meeting, a question was put to the delegation: How should we handle the difficult matter of those few members of our churches who are presently divorced and remarried?

(Some of those who wrote letters of concern were clear with what their answer would have been: The elders must be instructed to call these members to divorce their present spouse, and if they do not, they are living impenitently and must be declared outside the kingdom of heaven.)

I can report that, at that point in the meeting, the delegation *briefly* recounted what our fathers did in the 1940s and into the 1950s when they faced a similar difficulty. The recounting was much briefer than this paragraph will be. In at least two congregations of the PRC, and likely more, there were members who were divorced and remarried. These members were divorced and remarried with the express approval of the ministers and elders in the churches. This was the PRC view—remarriage was permitted to the innocent party when a divorce took place on account of the adultery of one spouse. This was the view of the PRC before Herman Hoeksema began to rethink the historic Reformed position. And when Hoeksema became convinced of the position that the PRC now has embraced, his consistory and others in the denomination needed to *become* convinced. “Again and again” Hoeksema said in 1943, his consistory did not agree with him, “as often as a concrete case comes up in our congregation today.” Since we will not conclude that Hoeksema was exaggerating, there may have been more than a few cases of remarried persons in the congregation he served. In the same era, in another of our churches, a young man asked his minister if he might remarry after his legitimate divorce. After consulting with Hoeksema and getting his agreement, the minister gave permission to the young man and performed the marriage. The couple were members in good standing in the PRC. This was in the 1940s and early 1950s.

As far as we know today, unless someone can present evidence to the contrary, the consistories did not, after the change in thinking regarding remarriage after divorce, send committees to these couples to call them to repent. They were not placed under discipline or set outside the denomination.

Nor did any broader assembly face the question. No synodical declaration had been made: “We approve the remarriage of the innocent party.” Neither was a decision taken: “We declare it to be sin that the innocent party in a legitimate divorce would marry another.” Rather, from 1924 the practice of the PRC was the standard Reformed practice since John Calvin. And the “position” of the PRC was a “teaching position.” That is, although no broader assembly made any declaration on the matter, the ministers taught what Reformed churches commonly taught. This was the PRC “view.” Then, when Hoeksema became

convinced of the PRC’s present position, he began writing about it. Gradually, not overnight, the “teaching position” of the PRC changed. And during the transition, the officebearers did not discipline those to whom they had given permission to marry after a divorce.

This is the PRC history that the delegation was referring to when the Namibians asked. The details, as given above, were not given to them.

That someone would consider this history to be PRC “dirty laundry” (see Q#4, above) that ought not be aired for neighbors to see is a mistake. Rather, this history illustrates how a church reforms. Change does not take place overnight. Nor is real, genuine change accomplished simply by *decree*. It comes by instruction.

It is understandable, although it is mistaken, that some might judge the *recounting* of this history to the Namibian churches to have been an official *recommendation* of that position for them. That is to misjudge the event and the reporting of it. The recounting of the history was a small part of the discussion at the end of an intense and intensely profitable time of discussing and teaching the biblical truth about marriage. The delegation merely made them aware that our churches faced the same question.

What might not be a mistake on the part of the letter-writers, though, is their complaint that the report of the visit could leave the wrong impression. The fact that a number of readers wrote of their concerns indicates the possibility of misunderstanding, even by charitable readers. By way of clarification, therefore, let me assure our readers that the delegation did not recommend that the action the PRC took in its history should be the action the GKNA takes in theirs. But the last sentence of the paragraph in question could be misunderstood in that way: “We pray these explanations will be helpful for the new gathering of churches to come to one mind on the vitally important doctrine of marriage.” But “these explanations” refers not primarily to the PRC’s history, but to the exegesis of Scripture and the doctrinal explanations the delegation gave.



To conclude, a few things should be said about the work of Contact Committee who sent this delegation, and to whom the delegation reported when they returned.

When the CC makes initial contact with a church or churches that seek out the PRC, the CC makes visits to get to know these churches. It is also important that the churches get to know the PRC, so that if, in the future, any official ties are established, they are made with full knowledge of one another's positions—both officially adopted positions and "teaching positions." As in a dating relationship that precedes a healthy marriage, thorough conversations need to take place over a long period of time before there is explicit discussion of more formal relationship. If the history of the PRC in establishing these relations has taught them anything, it has taught them to be completely open and to proceed slowly.

The position of the PRC is clear: There is no allowance of any divorced and remarried persons to be members as long as their first spouse lives. Accordingly, the PRC are determined that no relationship with another church will lead to divorced and remarried persons becoming members of the PRC. Synod's 2008 adoption of the Contact Committee's recommendation regarding the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia demonstrated that resolve. The PRC established a corresponding relation with the ERCA, rather than a sister-church relationship. One significant reason why it is not a sister-church relationship is that there may be no free exchange of members or ministers with these churches whom we love because they are not one with the PRC in their view of divorce and remarriage.

A colleague of mine recently expressed in a sermon in my home congregation what has been also my personal knowledge of the PRC and her officebearers: He knows of not one elder, minister, missionary, or professor who has even hinted at a desire to relax, change, or challenge the view of marriage that the Lord has graciously led us to embrace. Our unity in this is a reason to rejoice.

—Prof. Barrett L. Gritters

■ Question on Children in the Covenant and Hebrews 10:29

When I read Prof. Engelsma's article ["Conditionality, Not Responsibility" in the September 15, 2016 *Standard Bearer*, p. 487], it reminds me of his book *Covenant and Election in the Reformed Tradition* [RFP, 2011]. If I understand correctly, the Reformed Baptism Form is set up with only elect children in mind.

Your book deals with the question what it means to be "sanctified in Christ." According to a footnote on page 121, VanVelzen was amazed, indignant, and horrified with a weak interpretation of being sanctified in Christ, and insisted that, as certainly as our children have been washed with water, they have the forgiveness of sins, for to them is promised redemption from sins by the blood of Christ, not less than to the adults. Thus being sanctified in Christ means having been saved by Jesus Christ, which is certainly true for elect children.

My question is now, how should I interpret Hebrews 10:29? For this verse speaks of someone who was sanctified by the blood of the covenant, which would indicate that he is elect, and yet treads underfoot the Son of God and counts Jesus' blood as an unholy thing, which would indicate that he is reprobate.

I understand that, within the sphere of the covenant, there are elect children and reprobate children. But, as far as I can see, this remark does not satisfactorily resolve the dilemma of this Scripture verse, for, if someone is reprobate, then it should not have been said of him that he was sanctified by the blood of the covenant.

I would be delighted to see your comments on this.

With hearty greetings in Christ,
Jan Reckman
Aylmer, Ontario

Response

Hebrews 10:29 reads as follows: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

One explanation of the text utterly and obviously fails to do justice to the inspired language. This is the explanation that would have the text teaching an "external" work of God upon all baptized children of believers, which "external" work some children despise and reject when they come to years, whereas others yield to the "external" work and are saved. The doctrinal heresies of this teaching are gross. First, it denies the efficacy of the grace of God and of the blood of Christ. The text speaks of the application to the children of the "blood of the covenant" and of the "Spirit of grace." Second, this explanation makes the

salvation of the children of believers depend upon their response to the grace of God, which supposedly all alike receive from God. All alike are sprinkled with the blood of Christ and receive the Spirit of grace, indeed the Son of God Himself, but only some are saved. The explanation must then be the will of the children. This is the denial of the biblical truth that salvation is by grace alone.

Further, the text does not refer to some “external” work of salvation, whatever this may be. (VanVelzen was right to be “amazed, indignant, and horrified with a weak interpretation of being sanctified in Christ” regarding the salvation of the infant children of believers, as signified by their baptism. So are we amazed, indignant, and horrified with such an interpretation of being sanctified in Christ on the part of Reformed churches and theologians today.) That being sanctified with the blood of the covenant in the text is genuine, saving, “inner” cleansing from sin and renewal with the life of the Son of God is proved by the added, and explanatory, phrase, “and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.” The work of sanctification that the apostates count an unholy thing is accomplished by the Spirit of grace. The Spirit of grace is no “external” person. Nor is His work of grace a merely “external” operation. The Spirit of grace regenerates the heart of the elect sinner and sanctifies him or her in the deepest recesses of his or her being. One sanctified by the Spirit of grace is not merely set apart from other children *outwardly*, in the pathetic hope (wish, really) that he may be savingly sanctified later in life, usually as a very old man, but is made holy *inwardly*.

How then can the text teach that such a person treads the Son of God under foot, counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and does despite to the Spirit of grace? Does the text perhaps teach the falling away of saints?

Not at all.

The text teaches what is true of some members of the church institute, *according to their own confession*. They *professed* to believe in the Son of God. They *confessed* themselves to be washed in the blood of the covenant. They *claimed* to have been sanctified by the Spirit of grace. Indeed, for a time they *showed* themselves to be covenant friends of God. Then they fell away—fell away decisively and finally, for “it is impossible...to renew them again unto repentance” (Heb. 6:4-6). The passage in

Hebrews 10 in which the text in question occurs concerns apostasy, or, as verse 26 describes apostasy, “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.” The sin of the apostate is described in terms of his own profession. As he professed to be sanctified by the blood of Christ, his sin is treading the blood of Christ under foot. As he confessed himself to have been born again by the Spirit of grace, his uniquely great wickedness is despising the Spirit of grace.

Sticking more closely to the language of the text, the apostate “hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified [according to his profession], an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace [with whom and His work the apostate was thoroughly familiar as a member of the church and by whom he professed to have been regenerated and sanctified].” This profession makes the apostate worthy of a “much sorer punishment.”

The Bible describes the sin of the apostate similarly elsewhere. II Peter 2:1 charges the false prophets—heretical preachers who were originally esteemed teachers in the church—with “denying the Lord that bought them.” The meaning is not that Jesus redeemed these apostates, but that this had been their profession and claim.

Regarding the appeal to the text by Reformed theologians in support of their erroneous doctrine of infant baptism and the inclusion of the children of believers in the covenant of grace, as though all the children alike are “externally” sanctified by the blood of the Son of God, but some may yet perish, the text teaches no such thing. It teaches a genuine, saving, inner work of sanctification by the grace of the Spirit of Christ, applying the cleansing blood of Christ to the heart of the totally depraved child. If the text teaches what is, in fact, true of all the infants of believing parents, the text teaches the impotence of the Son of God, the failure in many cases of the blood of the covenant, the dependence of the Spirit of grace upon the will of the children of believers, and the falling away of saints.

All of this underscores the importance of a right doctrine of the covenant with the children of believers, and infant baptism. And this right doctrine has the covenant with the children of believers, and the covenant salvation of the children, governed by God’s election.

—David J. Engelsma 

■ Some Facts about Ken Ham's Ark Exhibit¹

- It is HUGE — 510-feet long, 85-feet wide, and 51-feet high. According to the exhibit's homepage the ark is "the largest timber-frame structure in the world."
- Inside the ark are cages filled with life-sized animals in order to give a sense of how the animals lived on Noah's ark.
- It is not sea-worthy (some of you are wondering!).
- The first phase of the exhibit cost \$91 million. The second phase (including a replica of the Tower of Babel) is estimated to cost another \$50 million.
- Tickets for the park are \$40 for adults and \$28 for children.
- Ken Ham believes that the ark exhibit is "one of the greatest Christian outreaches of our era."

My evaluation:

- Ken Ham's ark is not Noah's ark. Although the Bible mentions the dimensions of the ark built by Noah, there is remarkably little information about Noah's ark in the Bible. The creators of the "Ark Encounter" admit that they took "creative license" in many ways. The replicated ark includes a library and a blacksmith shop, and assertions are made about Noah's early life and his marriage that are not mentioned in Scripture.
- There is no biblical warrant for believing that Ken Ham's ark will serve as an effective instrument for the ingathering of the saints. In terms of numbers of converts, the original ark was not a successful evangelism tool. During the 120 years that Noah built the ark he was a "preacher of righteousness" (II Pet. 2:5). Nevertheless, I Peter 3:20 tells us that only "eight souls were saved by water." And there is always this question: Why didn't God preserve the original ark if He wanted the church to use it as an outreach tool?
- The "Ark Encounter" is potentially dangerous. Ham evidently thinks of it as part of a Christian amusement

park and compares it to Disney World and Hollywood. One can easily see how the "Ark Encounter" could encourage Christians to put more confidence in impressive "biblical" exhibits than in the preaching of the gospel.

- I have reservations about the "Ark Encounter," but I still want to see it in person.

■ California and Illinois Laws Promote Abortion

Not content with the legalization of the murder of unborn children, California and Illinois are determined to make it as easy as possible for women to have an abortion. At the same time these states are hindering the efforts of pregnancy centers that work to encourage women not to abort their babies. Both states provide funding for abortions so that women will not be deterred because of financial considerations from committing murder. And the states are determined to inform pregnant women that 'affordable' abortions are available. Maybe lawmakers in these states will appropriate funds for advertising campaigns with the slogan, "Need an abortion? Come get one, it's on us! (Paid for by the state of...)" Perhaps the lawmakers will run their ad campaigns on billboards along interstates or on television and radio. Actually, they thought of something even more effective: "Let's make anti-abortion pregnancy centers promote the availability of government-funded abortions!"

In California, according to the *Washington Times*, Governor Jerry Brown signed a law on October 9, 2015, requiring "pregnancy centers that discourage women from getting abortions in California...to provide information about abortions and other services."² The law requires posting a public notice in 22-point font and distributing a copy of the notice to every patient in no less than 14-point font. It reads (in 14-point font):

California has public programs that provide immediate free or low-cost access to comprehensive family planning services (including

¹ These facts were gleaned from arkencounter.com and from christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/july-web-only/ken-ham-ark-encounter-visit.html.

Rev. Spronk is pastor of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.

² Juliet Williams, "California Governor Signs Crisis Pregnancy Centers Bill," *The Washington Times*, October 9, 2015, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/oct/9/California-governor-signs-crisis-pregnancy-centers>.

all FDA-approved methods of contraception), prenatal care, and abortion for eligible women. To determine whether you qualify, contact the county social services office at [insert the telephone number].

In another article, the same news organization reported on August 2, 2016 that the

Republican Governor of Illinois [Bruce Rauner] signed a bill forcing medical professionals and pregnancy centers to promote abortion, regardless of their religious or moral convictions. SB 1564 amends the state's Health Care Right of Conscience Act so as to compel pro-life doctors and clinics to refer patients to health care providers who perform abortions.³

The Illinois law requires the pregnancy centers to give every pregnant woman "a written document that contains the names of and contact information for health care facilities, physicians, or health care personnel that can provide the particular form of health service refused because of a conscience-based objection to the health care service." This means that a doctor in Illinois, who will not perform an abortion because he believes it is immoral, is obligated to provide each patient with information about the availability of abortions. You see, as far as the state of Illinois is concerned, abortion is a "health care service," not murder. And every patient has the right to know all of her "health care" options.

The California law is being challenged in federal court. The Illinois law is also likely to face legal challenges.

■ Rome Canonizes Mother Teresa

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Pope Francis proclaimed Mother Teresa a saint on Sunday [September 4, 2016], bestowing the Catholic Church's highest honor on one of the most widely admired public figures in recent history."⁴ Canonization requirements include "an endur-

ing reputation for sanctity among the faithful" and the performance of two miracles.⁵

Mother Teresa's humanitarian efforts continue to be lauded as evidence of her "sanctity." According to the Roman Catholic Church she also performed two miracles. These miracles are important because "a person worthy of sainthood must demonstrably be in heaven, actually interceding with God on behalf of those in need of healing."⁶ Roman Catholics pray to their saints. For obvious reasons, they do not want to pray to anyone who is not in heaven. So to prove that Mother Teresa is in heaven, Rome has "documented" two miracles that she performed.

Both of the miracles attributed to St. Teresa are miracles of healing that occurred after her death. It is reported that "a woman in India whose stomach tumor disappeared and a man in Brazil with brain abscesses who awoke from a coma both credited their dramatic recovery to prayers offered to the nun after her death in 1997."⁷ Doctors who work for the Vatican have determined that there is no other (natural or medical) explanation for these recoveries. Therefore Rome has determined that St. Teresa must have heard these prayers and miraculously healed these individuals.

Rome's canonization of Mother Teresa is ridiculous but also very instructive. Rome continues to deny that all believers are equal in Christ Jesus by elevating some to "hero" status in the church. She continues to show that she knows nothing about what holiness is—the grace of God to fight sin and to begin to observe His commandments. She continues to hold to unbiblical views about the afterlife. Most people go to purgatory but "saints" go directly to heaven. And Rome continues to promote the wicked theology that denies Jesus is the only Savior by teaching her members to pray to saints and look to them for salvation in addition to Jesus (Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 30).

Pope Francis has a reputation for being a "progressive." Prior to him, many people have looked for (rooted for?) changes in the Roman Catholic Church. For some

saint-by-pope-francis-1472980320.

⁵ <https://www.ewtn.com/johnpaul2/cause/process.asp>.

⁶ Tom Gjelten, "How the Catholic Church Documented Mother Teresa's Two Miracles," National Public Radio, August 31, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/08/31/491937448/how-the-catholic-church-documented-mother-teresas-two-miracles>.

⁷ Gjelten.

³ Bradford Richardson, "Illinois governor signs bill forcing pre-life doctors to promote abortion," *The Washington Times*, August 2, 2016, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/aug/2/bruce-rauner-illinois-governor-signs-bill-forcing>.

⁴ Francis X. Rocca and Daniel Stacey, "Mother Teresa Canonized as a Saint by Pope Francis," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 4, 2016, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/mother-teresa-canonized-as-a>

reason, many people want to find reason to make peace with Rome, including people in Reformed churches. The canonization of Mother Teresa proves that Pope Francis and the Roman Catholic Church have not departed at all from the false doctrines and superstitions that our Reformed fathers condemned in the sixteenth century. What John Calvin said then still applies:

Divine worship being vitiated by so many false opinions, and perverted by so many impious and foul supersti-

tions, the sacred Majesty of God is insulted..., His holy name profaned...Nay, while the whole Christian world is openly polluted with idolatry, men adore, instead of Him, their own fictions. A thousand superstitions reign, superstitions which are just so many open insults to Him. The power of Christ is almost obliterated from the minds of men, the hope of salvation is transferred from Him to empty, frivolous, and nugatory ceremonies...religion throughout has degenerated into an entirely different form. ∞

BELIEVING AND CONFESSING

PROF. RONALD CAMMENGA

Of God, His Unity and Trinity

(Second Helvetic Confession, Chapter 3B)

The third chapter of the SHC concerns the fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith, the doctrine of the Trinity. Convinced of this truth from the very beginning, the Christian church confesses that although God is one divine being, He exists as three distinct persons. Together the three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the one true and living God. In the first article on this chapter we concerned ourselves with the truth that God is one,

“one in essence or nature [being], subsisting in himself, all sufficient in himself,” to use the language of the SHC.

In this article we will treat the second main part of the doctrine of the Trinity, namely, God’s threeness. We will also note some other confessional statements, as well as the biblical support for the doctrine of the Trinity cited by the SHC. And finally, we will consider the SHC’s concluding paragraph in which various heresies and heretics are identified and condemned.

God Is Three

Notwithstanding we believe and teach that the same immense, one and indivisible God is in person inseparably and without confusion distinguished as Father, Son and Holy Spirit so, as the Father has begotten the Son from eternity, the Son is begotten by an ineffable generation, and the Holy Spirit truly proceeds from them both, and the same from eternity and is to be worshipped with both.

Thus there are not three gods, but three persons, consubstantial, coeternal, and coequal; distinct with respect to hypostases, and with respect to order, the one preceding the other yet without any inequality. For according to the nature or essence they are so joined together that they are one God, and the divine nature is common to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Prof. Cammenga is professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Previous article in this series: March 15, 2016, p. 275.

God is three. The same God who is one is also three. At the same time, though not in the same sense that He is one, God is three. He is one in essence or being, whereas He is three in persons: “Notwithstanding we

believe and teach that the same immense one and indivisible God is in person inseparably and without confusion distinguished as Father, Son and Holy Spirit....” Although they together share the one divine being, each of the persons is distinct as a person from the other two persons. In this respect, God is the wholly other One. With us men, we exist always as one being and one person. For that reason, from a strictly spiritual, biblical-psychological viewpoint, multiple personalities within a single individual are an impossibility. It cannot happen. And it cannot happen because God makes men in such a way that they are one person within one being. But with God that is not the case. God is so preeminently exalted that He exists as three persons within one divine being.

The names that Scripture gives to the three persons distinguish them personally. One of them is Father. Another of them is Son. And still a third is Holy Spirit. Their distinct names designate the three persons as three distinct individuals.

In keeping with the ancient church, the SHC distinguishes the three divine persons from each other by identifying their distinct personal properties. At the same time, these three distinct personal properties are the works of the three persons within the Godhead. The Father begets the Son eternally: “as the Father has begotten the Son from eternity.” The Son is begotten: “the Son is begotten by an ineffable generation.” And the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son: “and the Holy Spirit truly proceeds from them both, and the same from eternity and is to be worshipped with both.”

Immediately the SHC draws the conclusion: “Thus there are not three gods, but three persons, consubstantial, coeternal, and coequal; distinct with respect to hypostases, and with respect to order, the one preceding the other yet without any inequality. For according to the nature or essence they are so joined together that they are one God, and the divine nature is common to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” That is traditional trinitarian language, that the three persons are characterized as “consubstantial, coeternal, and coequal.” That is traditional language for affirming the unity or oneness of the divine persons.

At the same time, they are “distinct with respect to hypostases, and with respect to order, the one preceding the other yet without any inequality.” The three persons

are appropriately referred to as the *First* Person, the *Second* Person, and the *Third* Person. God the Father is the First Person; God the Son is the Second Person; and God the Holy Spirit is the Third Person. Although there may be a certain danger connected to using this kind of language, the danger that we rank the three persons of the Godhead in order of importance or authority, this way of referring to the three persons does have value for underscoring their individuality. They are three distinct persons: First, Second, and Third. Being three distinct persons, they are also three distinct subsistences or hypostases.

“Subsistence” is Latin in derivation and “hypostasis” is Greek in derivation. Both words refer literally to “that which underlies.” It is the underlying reality of something—that which makes it uniquely what it is and sets it apart from everything and everyone else. That is what our person is in us human beings. Our person—connected to which is our personality (although person and personality are not identical)—distinguishes us from every other human being. There are no two people alike because there are no two persons that are identical—not even that of identical twins. Our person is the subject of all our thinking, willing, and acting. Everything that we experience as human beings, we experience in our person. Our person is the unchanging reality in every one of us. We undergo many changes throughout our lifetime. We are born and mature. We marry and raise a family. We undergo many struggles and experience many heartaches. And finally, we grow old and die. But throughout the duration of our lifetime and despite all these changes, our person remains constant. It is there and will always be there; and it makes us before God and men who and what we are. What is true of us and our personhood is all the more true of God.

One thing that stands out in the SHC’s description of the doctrine of the Trinity is its reliance upon the language of the ancient trinitarian creeds—language that accurately reflects the biblical revelation of this truth. The chapter makes explicit reference to the Apostles’ Creed: “In short, we receive the Apostles’ Creed because it delivers to us the true faith.” But apart from the mention of the Apostles’ Creed, the language of the SHC is creedal language. The Nicene Creed speaks of the Son’s being begotten from eternity (“before all worlds”), as well as the

Spirit's double procession: "who proceedeth from the Father and the Son" (the *filioque*—"and the Son"—was added to the Nicene Creed by the Council of Toledo, 589). It also calls for the Spirit to be "worshipped and glorified" along with the Father and the Son.

Besides making use of the language of the Nicene Creed, the SHC makes reference to the Creed of Chalcedon, sometimes called the Chalcedonian Definition, of A.D. 451. More than any other previous creed, this creed confirmed the deity of Jesus Christ and established the proper relationship between the two natures

of Christ in the one divine Person of the Son of God. The creed is famous for its four qualifying phrases by means of which the relationship of the two natures to the one Person of Christ is set forth. Christ is to be acknowledged in two natures "inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, and inseparably." Bullinger, now, borrows the language of Chalcedon in order to explain trinitarian realities. "Notwithstanding we believe and teach that the same immense, one and indivisible God is in person inseparably and without confusion distinguished as Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Scriptural Support

For Scripture has delivered to us a manifest distinction of persons, the angel saying, among other things, to the Blessed Virgin, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). And also in the baptism of Christ a voice is heard from heaven concerning Christ, saying, "This is my beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17). The Holy Spirit also appeared in the form of a dove (John 1:32). And when the Lord himself commanded the apostles to baptize, he commanded them to baptize "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). Elsewhere in the Gospel he said: "The Father will send the Holy Spirit in my name" (John 14:26), and again he said: "When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me," etc. (John 15:26). In short, we receive the Apostles' Creed because it delivers to us the true faith.

The confession of the Trinity is of no value if it does not arise out of and stand in complete agreement with the Holy Scriptures. And so, after explaining the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity, Bullinger marches straight to the text of Scripture for the support for this doctrine. What is revealed must be confessed. And what is revealed must be known, and thus taught to God's people. Is there biblical support for this doctrine? If so, what might that support from Scripture be? What is the "manifest distinction of persons" that the Scriptures clearly teach?

The proofs appealed to by the SHC are the standard proofs to which appeal has been made since the time of the early church. It appeals, first, to the word of the angel to "the Blessed Virgin" Mary:¹ "The Holy Spirit

will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God," (Luke 1:35).² In the announcement of Jesus' birth, the angel makes unmistakable reference to three persons: the Holy Spirit who will "come upon" her and accomplish conception within her; the "Most High" who overshadows her; and "the child" who is conceived within her and born to her, who is referred to as "that holy thing."

At the time of Jesus' baptism, on the occasion of the inauguration of His public ministry, there was a clear revelation of the Trinity. There was the voice from heaven, the voice of the Father who said, "This is my beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17). There was the Holy Spirit in

¹ Although the Reformed orthodox rejected the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the virgin Mary, they continued to honor her by referring to her as "the Blessed Virgin." This same expression is applied to Mary in Article 18 of the Belgic Confession of Faith.

² The Scripture passages in the SHC are quite obviously not from the KJV, but are Heinrich Bullinger's own translation of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. That is also the case with Scripture quotations in our Three Forms of Unity and in our Reformed liturgical forms that the quotations are not from the KJV, but are original to the authors of the creeds and forms.

the form of the dove (John 1:32). And there was Christ Jesus on whose head the dove alighted and about whom the voice said, “my beloved Son.” Three distinct persons: Christ who is sent now to preach; the Father who sends Him; and the Holy Spirit who qualifies Him to do the work for which He is sent.

In the third place, the SHC appeals to the baptism formula and to the fact that the Lord commanded the apostles, and through them the New Testament church, to baptize “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). This is a striking proof for the doctrine of the Trinity—both aspects of the doctrine. For, although three names are mentioned, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Lord commands that baptism be administered, not in “the names,” but in “the name,” singular. Although there are three names, in an important sense there is only one name, “the name,” because God is one in being.

And, finally, the SHC makes reference in the gospel

according to John to the passages that refer to the sending of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. According to John 14:26, the Father sends the Comforter, or Paraclete. According to John 15:26, Jesus sends the Comforter from the Father. Once again, all three persons are referred to. Father and Son send the Comforter, and the Comforter proceeds from the Father and the Son. In connection with these verses and the truth that three *persons* are referred to, and not simply three modes of existence, there is the fact that personal characteristics are attributed to the three persons. Father and Son “send,” which is a personal activity. The Spirit “is sent,” “proceeds,” “bears witness,” “comforts,” and “counsels.”

Indisputable proof. Incontrovertible reasoning. Convincing argumentation. But they are never so blind as those who will not see. And throughout history there have been those so blind that they will not see. Or better, those whose eyes the heavenly Father has not seen fit to open.

Heresies

Therefore we condemn the Jews and Mohammedans, and all those who blaspheme that sacred and adorable Trinity. We also condemn all heresies and heretics who teach that the Son and Holy Spirit are God in name only, and also that there is something created and subservient, or subordinate to another in the Trinity, and that there is something unequal in it, a greater or a less, something corporeal or corporeally conceived, something different with respect to character or will, something mixed or solitary, as if the Son and Holy Spirit were the affections and properties of one God the Father, as the Monarchians, Novatians, Praxeas, Patripassians, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Aëtius, Macedonius, Anthropomorphites, Arius, and such like, have thought.

The truth is antithetical and must be confessed antithetically. The truth must not only be set forth positively—though it must be. But error and errorists must be identified. In this the SHC is only following the example of our Lord and the apostles in the New Testament Scriptures. The list of “Heresies” includes not only “heresies,” but also “heretics.” False teachers are mentioned by name. Those who have publicly promoted false doctrine and those who have defied the condemnation of their views by the assemblies of the church, ought to be identified by name. In this way they are exposed and the people of God are armed to defend themselves against the influence of these heretics.

With the exception of the Jews and Mohammedans,

the heresies and heretics mentioned at the end of Chapter 3 of the SHC threatened the early church. Two things about this. First, their errors exist still today, albeit under different names and in association with different groups. The cults and sects that have arisen in the modern era espouse the same errors as a number of the groups mentioned. These would include the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Mormons. Second, the church needs to be reminded of the old errors because there is always the danger that old errors are revived, refitted, and re-introduced into the church.

The most helpful way to consider these heresies and heretics may be by means of the following chart:

Heretics and their Heresies on the Trinity

Heretics	Denial	What They Taught
Jews	Trinity; deity of Jesus.	God is only Father; Jesus was a mere man.
Mohammedans (Muslims)	Trinity; deity of Jesus.	God is only Father; Jesus was a good prophet, like Mohammed.
Monarchians	Trinity; deity of Jesus.	One God who is one person. Jesus was only a man and the Spirit only the force or presence of God; or, Father, Son, and Spirit are different modes of being of the one God.
Novatians	Son essentially one with the Father.	Son begotten from the Father and is like the Father, but not substantially one with the Father.
Praxeas	Personal distinction within the Godhead.	God is one in being and one in person.
Patricians	Trinity; distinction of persons in Godhead.	Defended oneness of God to such an extent that they were charged with teaching that the Father was crucified.
Sabellius	Three distinct and distinguishable persons in the Godhead.	Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are different modes by which God reveals Himself.
Paul of Samosata	Personal distinction of the Son and Holy Spirit.	Son and Spirit are "the same" as God in a certain sense, though they are not personally distinct from God.
Aëtius	God the Son of the same substance as the Father.	God the Son was created by the Father from nothing.
Macedonius	Deity of Holy Spirit.	The Spirit is the energy or force of the one God.
Anthropomorphites	Persons and personal distinction within Godhead.	God as Father and Son is only a human way of designating the one God. God is an impersonal being. He is not really Father and Son, but only <i>like</i> a father and <i>like</i> a son.
Arius	Trinity; deity of Jesus; personality and deity of Holy Spirit.	Jesus Christ was created by God the Father and called the Son of God in honor of His supreme goodness.

The Sacraments in Worship (12a)

*A word of explanation. I thought I was finished writing about worship, but realized I had not explained the sacraments in worship, a key aspect of God-ordained worship. I do that in this article and the next five. After that I will be finished writing on this topic for now. Thanks for reading.

Introduction

If someone would ask you what you do to worship God, what would you say? Surely you would say that you pray to God, privately and in church. You would say that you sing to Him. You would answer that you read His Word and hear it preached with His people on the Lord's Day. I wonder though if you or I would ever answer that question by saying also, "I worship Him by using the sacraments."

We do, you know. Not just the parts of the service before and after the sacrament, but the baptism itself and the Lord's Supper itself on those Sunday mornings are worship. Why is that? How is that?

In our series on the worship of the church we began with three great principles of Reformed and biblical worship. The first was that the public worship of God on the Lord's Day is a *covenantal assembly*. God Himself calls us to come together as a people before Him, not just as individuals, but as a body, the covenant people gathered before our covenant God.

Secondly, the Scriptures teach that when we come before God in that covenantal meeting, that experience is played out in a holy dialogue between God and His people. The covenant at its heart is fellowship between God and His people in Christ. And the chief means of fellowship is communication. That is what the Reformed

worship service is—a holy dialogue. There are elements where God is speaking to us in His Word, and there are elements where we respond to Him.

Finally, we noticed, that this covenantal assembly and its dialogue is regulated by God. God determines what the dialogue will be about. God determines, in principle, how the dialogue will take place. God determines how we will worship Him as He comes close to us. There must be no will-worship, as the apostle Paul describes it—worship that is governed by what we want instead of what God wants. Instead the question must be asked, What does God in His Word tell us to do before His face?

God Commands Us to Worship Him By the Sacraments

One of those things God calls us to do in this covenantal assembly as we meet with Him is to participate in the sacraments. Did you ever wonder why the minister does not instead go to the homes of the families who want their children to be baptized and perform the sacrament there? Did you ever wonder why we cannot celebrate the Lord's Supper at home, with our father explaining what it means, as Israel did in the Old Testament with the Pass-over? Why is it part of the public corporate worship of God? The answer is, because the sacraments are a God-ordained element of corporate worship.

That is proved first from the fact that when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He gave this sacrament *to the church*. The disciples with whom He first celebrated the Lord's Supper were the apostles, the leaders of the New Testament church. Jesus did not celebrate the Lord's Supper with his blood family, as was the custom, but with the disciples as leaders of the church. He gave this sacrament, therefore, to the church, to be administered only with the authority of the church in her officebearers and to be performed officially in her worship.

That was also the practice of the church already in the

Rev. Griess is pastor of the Calvary Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa.

Previous article in this series: June 2016, p. 405.

book of Acts. Acts 2:42 describes the worship services of the apostolic church and includes the element of the Lord's Supper: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, *and in breaking of bread*, and in prayers."

That baptism is also a God-ordained element of church worship is proved in two ways. The first proof comes from the essential unity of the sacraments. Though Acts 2:42 does not mention baptism in its description of apostolic worship, (it did not happen as often as the Lord's Supper) due to the essential oneness of what it is to be a sacrament, if the Lord's Supper was performed in church services, baptism must be also. The second proof is that the institution of baptism in Matthew 28:19 shows that baptism too is a church element: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here Christ is again speaking to the apostles as the leaders of the church. Baptism was to be used by the church in an official manner.

Part of the purpose of baptism is to mark out those who were part of the instituted church. This is the same significance that was attached to baptism's Old Testament shadow. And in the Old Testament, that marker, circumcision, was placed upon someone by the *church institute*. Circumcision was performed at the place where the church institute gathered, that is at the temple in Jerusalem. It was a church rite. That is why Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the temple on the eighth day to be circumcised at the temple. And if people did not live near Jerusalem, or could not get to the temple, the rite was practiced in the synagogue. It became a "church thing." And now, in the Great Commission the Lord calls for baptism to be performed by the church as part of what the church does officially. So, while there are certainly examples in the book of Acts of the apostles baptizing outside of a worship service, the main principle is that baptism, like the Lord's Supper, is to be performed in church worship.

For these reasons, when the Heidelberg Catechism lists the elements of public corporate worship for the New Testament church in Lord's Day 38 (Q&A 103), it includes the sacraments: "...And that I, especially, on the sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear His word, to *use the sacraments*,

publicly to call upon the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the poor..." (emphasis added).

This is why the Westminster Confession says the same in Chapter 21. After listing the other elements of public corporate worship it adds, "the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ, are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God."

And this is also, in part at least, why the Church Order of Dordt says this, "The covenant of God shall be sealed unto the children of Christians by baptism, as soon as the administration thereof is feasible, *in the public assembly* when the Word of God is preached" (Art. 56, emphasis added). And this, "The administration of the Lord's Supper shall take place only there where there is supervision of elders, according to the ecclesiastical order, and *in a public gathering of the congregation*" (Art. 64, emphasis added).

Part of the Holy Dialogue

Since the sacraments are elements of worship, they are part of the holy dialogue between God and His people. This is the divine motivation for regulating worship in such a way that the sacraments take place in church worship. In these sacraments God speaks to us, all His people, and we, hearing, understanding, and appropriating His speech, respond to Him in prayer and praise. The sacraments have their own distinctive dialogue, so that there is a "dialogue within the dialogue" when the sacraments are used. In fact, this is the primary purpose of the sacraments, and we are to use them this way, aware that a holy and special conversation with Jehovah is taking place through them. This makes the sacraments, too, part of the *covenantal* assembly, the assembly of fellowship with God.


If you recently had a baptism in your church, God spoke to the congregation beautifully. He did not just speak to the parents or to the one being baptized. He had a declaration to give to the whole of His true people gathered before Him. The main point of that baptism was not that God was there *acting* in that sign itself. God is not, as Roman Catholics and many Lutheran and Anglicans teach, actually regenerating the one baptized by the water. The sacrament itself, that is, the water on the person, though a visible thing, is not accomplishing a

divine invisible action. It is accomplishing a divine invisible *speech*. Even the sealing aspect of the sacrament is accomplished by what is being *declared*. The sacraments are speech that give witness to divine acts, but they are not the acts themselves; they are declarations.

That is why the Catechism asks and answers, “Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself? Not at all...” (Q&A 72). Well then, what is it? Lord’s Day 25, A. 66 states, “The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals, appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof He may more fully *declare* and seal to us the promise of the gospel” (emphasis added). Declare! Speak! And then, to answer this question, How do the sacraments speak to us? Lord’s Day 26, A. 69 says, “Christ appointed this external washing with water adding there-to this *promise...*” (emphasis added). Christ attached a promise to this sacrament, so that it is God speaking to us. In baptism God is speaking to His church.

If you recently had the Lord’s Supper in your church, God spoke to the congregation beautifully. He had something to declare to all His people gathered before

Him. Especially as the elements were there before us on the table and the bread and wine were broken is this the case.¹ In those signs the Lord’s Supper is not, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches, a visible divine *action* in the sense that it is a re-sacrificing of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not an atonement for sin being accomplished. His actual body is not being broken; His actual blood is not being poured out. In those actions rather are found visible, divine *speech*.

That is why the Catechism says in Q. 75, “How art thou *admonished* and *assured* in the Lord’s Supper...” (emphasis added). Admonishment and assurance are communication, speech. For this reason A. 75 points out again that Christ has attached promises to these elements. There is *speech* here, promises being spoken in the sacrament. And so, A. 80 also says the Lord’s Supper “*testifies to us.*” God has something to say to us. Are we listening? Are we responding? 

¹ In the actual taking of the elements God will also act and give to us what He declares to us. As the elements are on the table and being broken and poured out, God is only declaring.

CLASSIS EAST REPORT

MR. JON HUISKEN

September 14, 2016
Southwest PRC


Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, September 14, 2016 at the Southwest PRC. Each church was represented by two delegates. Rev. C. Haak served as the chairman for this session. Welcome was given to the delegates from Pittsburgh PRC who were attending classis for the first time and to the delegates *ad examina* from Classis West who were present for the consideration of the request for emeritation from Rev. A. denHartog.

Southwest PRC requested approval for the emeritation of their pastor, Rev. Arie denHartog effective January 1, 2017. Classis granted this approval as did the delegates *ad examina* from Classis West. Rev. Haak spoke fitting words to Rev. denHartog on this occasion, thanking him for his able and faithful work as a minister of the gospel in our churches.

The Classical Committee reported on their work in approving the 2016 and 2017 subsidy requests from Pittsburgh and of their approval of the transfer of the ministerial credentials of Rev. W. Bruinsma from Southwest PRC to Pittsburgh PRC.

Classis granted classical appointments to First PRC of Holland, MI. Classis also appointed a search committee to bring nominations to the January, 2017 Classis for the selection of a new Stated Clerk. Classis also informed the Pittsburgh PRC that they did not need permission to ask the churches in Classis East and Classis West for collections for their Building Fund.

The expenses of Classis amounted to \$1,866.99. Classis will meet next at the Georgetown PRC on January 11, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huiskens, Stated Clerk 


Classis West met in regular session on September 28, 2016, in Randolph, WI.

Rev. S. Key opened the meeting with devotions and an exhortation based on I Thessalonians 2:1-6. He reminded the delegates that God has entrusted us with the gospel. This becomes a source of confidence for us who minister the Word, as well as a reason for commitment and the power of divine commission.

Rev. R. Kleyn chaired this meeting of Classis. The agenda was brief. The stated clerk, classical committee, and reading sermon committee all reported routine labors. The expenses of this meeting totaled \$6,871.73. Classis adjourned before 11:00, after hearing Rev. Kleyn give a brief parting exhortation based on I Corinthians 15:58. Classis is scheduled to meet next on March 1, 2017 in Redlands.

The day before Classis, the delegates and several visi-

tors enjoyed fellowship and instruction at an officebearers' conference on the topic of "Biblical Counseling." The two morning sessions were led by Rev. Jeff Doll, pastor of biblical counseling at Cornerstone United Reformed Church, and director of the Institute for Reformed biblical Counseling. Rev. Doll's first presentation set forth seven foundational principles for Reformed Biblical counseling. In his second speech he laid out seven steps to follow in counseling God's people. The afternoon sessions were led by Rev. Garry Eriks and Rev. Rodney Kleyn. Rev. Eriks spoke on "The Practice and Goal of Biblical Counseling," and Rev. Kleyn on "Implementing Biblical Counseling in the Local Church." The instruction was timely and the fellowship pleasant.

Rev. Douglas Kuiper
Stated Clerk, Classis West 

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

Minister Activities

From the trio of Rev. Allen Brummel, Rev. Nathan Decker, and Rev. Rodney Kleyn, the Lord of the harvest chose Rev. N. Decker to receive the call to be the denomination's third missionary to the Republic of the Philippines. This was done through the voting of the male members of the Doon PRC on September 18. We pray that this same Lord might make His way known to Rev. Decker in the consideration

of this call. Rev. Decker planned to answer on October 16.

Rev. Dennis Lee, pastor at Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL along with his two oldest sons, Jonathon and Benjamin, became United States' citizens on September 19. With that, the entire Lee family is now of U.S. citizenship, as Rev. Lee's wife, Foong Ling, obtained citizenship earlier in the year and youngest son Jason was born in the U.S.A. The other members of the Lee family (minus Jason) were born in Singapore.

Rev. Brian Huizinga was led of the Lord to decline the call extended to him by the congregation at First PRC of Holland, MI. May

we continue to keep the flock at Holland in our thoughts and prayers as they await their next undershepherd. Holland announced the new trio of Revs. Nathan Decker, Steven Key, and Rodney Kleyn, calling Rev. N. Decker on October 9.

From the bulletin of the Hull, IA PRC we find the following:

With thanksgiving to the Lord of the harvest we remind our fellow saints of the 45th anniversary of the ordination and installation into the ministry of Rev. Rodney G. Miersma (September 1971). He and his wife Sharon have faithfully served our churches in Isabel, SD; Pella, IA; Holland, MI; Wellington, New

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

Zealand; Lacombe, AB Canada; foreign missionary to Ghana; and Loveland, CO. Our emeritus minister continues to serve our churches in northwest Iowa. "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me" (Ezek. 33:7).

September marked the 30th anniversary of Rev. Steven Key (Loveland, CO PRC) in the ministry of the Word and sacraments in our denomination. He has served faithfully in our congregations of Southeast Grand Rapids, MI; Randolph, WI; and Hull, IA, in addition to his present charge in Loveland. We are deeply thankful for Rev. Key's work in our churches and wish him the Lord's continued blessing in his work.

Classis East met September 14 and approved the emeritation of Rev. A. denHartog effective at the end of this year. We thank God for Rev. denHartog and his 42 years of faithful labors in our churches as a pastor, missionary, and minister-on-loan. May the Lord continue to bless him as he labors in the service of our God.

The Council at Southwest PRC of Wyoming, MI voted to place the following ministers on trio from which their congregation would call a man to replace Rev. denHartog upon his emeritation: Rev. Brian Huizinga, Rev. Martyn McGeown, and Rev. William Langerak. On Sunday, October 9, the congregation voted to call Rev. B. Huizinga.

We rejoice with Rev. Erik and

Cherith Guichelaar, and give thanks to God with them on the occasion of the birth of a covenant daughter, whom they have named Bethany Alice. Bethany was born September 20.

Sister Church Activities

On September 30 Rev. Angus Stewart, pastor at Covenant Protestant Reformed Church of Ballymena, Northern Ireland, spoke in South Wales on the topic: "Are Unbelievers in God's Image?"

Congregational Activities

The Siouxland area churches received the "latter rains" spoken of in Scripture, where as much as 5 inches fell in one day, and around 9 inches of water in a few weeks' time—near record proportions. This caused the grass to grow at a rapid rate and mowing of the lawns to commence there in haste. Ordinarily at this time of year such mowing is about done for the season.

While this much rain is an exception there, it is fairly common in the Philippines. On a recent Sunday Rev. Daniel Kleyn preached in the Maranatha PRC in Valenzuela City, and upon returning home the heavens poured forth rain, three inches in a few hours. Rev. Kleyn was glad to be home before this downpour, as rain there often slows traffic. Those who mow the lawns there most often use their mechanical, reel-type push mowers or hand clippers, and not gas-powered mowers.

The roof on the parsonage at Wingham PRC of Ontario, Canada needed some work. On a


recent Saturday many men of the congregation rolled up their sleeves and dug in. With all the men who showed up, the work was done in good time... and the roof looks great! Good job, gentlemen.

Young People's Activities

October's full moon is in Native American lore the Hunter's Moon. A perfect time for Midwest small-town America's "Survival Runs" to commence. Just mention it to Siouxland area young people, then watch and listen as smiles and stories abound!

School Activities

The Covenant Christian High School Fall Festival took place on Saturday, October 8. Wagon rides, dunk tank, pony rides, carnival games and face painting are just a few of the fun activities that took place from 4-7 P.M. A delicious dinner included pulled pork, hot dogs, salads and sundaes, while a bake sale, farm market, and apple sale were also held. All proceeds benefit the CCHS' senior class trip in May, 2017, D.V.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The congregation and Council of First PRC of Holland express our deep sympathy to Rika VanderPloeg in the recent passing into glory of her beloved husband,

GEORGE VANDER PLOEG.

Psalm 23:4 "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Henry DeJong, Vice President
Darle Wassink, Assistant Clerk

Wedding Anniversary

■ With great joy and thankfulness, we celebrate, D.V., the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents,
HARVEY and MARILYN HOLSTEGE,

on November 11, 2016. We give thanks to God for the godly covenantal instruction they have provided for us throughout the years of marriage together. We are thankful to the almighty God that we are able to celebrate this with a family dinner together where we can see the fruit of God's constant faithfulness in their fifty years of marriage. We pray for God's continued blessing and care upon them in all the remaining days of their life together. "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant" (Psalm 25:14).

❖ Gregory and Rhonda Holstege

Michelle, Marissa, Stephanie, Jodi, Travis, Maci

❖ Mark and Brenda Zandstra

Brandon and Christian Huisenga (Coen)

Ryan, Chad, Nicole, Eric

❖ Jay and Heidi VanBaren

Zachary, Connor, Kaylee, Reid, Breilyn

❖ Michael and Nicole Holstege

Zoe, Logan, Danika, Piper, Ayla, Nash

❖ Jeff Holstege

❖ Joel and Lanae Holstege

Lindsey, Jori, Spencer, Brady, Symone
Hudsonville, Michigan

The Reformed Witness Committee's Annual Reformation Day Lecture:

The Reformation's Zeal for Missions

Rev. Allen Brummel

Friday, November 4, 2016

7:00 P.M.

B.J. Haan Auditorium
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa

Sponsored by the Reformed Witness Committee of
Calvary, Doon, Edgerton, Heritage, and Hull PRC.

Hope's Lecture

The Necessity of Membership in a True Church of Jesus Christ

Speaker:

Prof. David Engelsma

Friday, November 11, 2016

7:30 P.M.

Hope PRC
1580 Ferndale Ave. SW
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Sponsor:

Reformed Witness Committee of Hope PRC

Will be live-streamed on SermonAudio.

REMINDER

■ The September 15 issue marked the end of Volume 92. If you are interested in having your copies bound, drop them off at the RFPA office ASAP. Price—\$24.

Reformed Witness Hour

November 2016

Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

Date

November 6
November 13
November 20
November 27

Topic

"Looking Well to Her Household"
"Living with an Unbelieving Spouse"
"In What Does Life Consist?"
"Aged Women: Holy Teachers"

Text

Proverbs 31:27, 28
I Corinthians 7:13-16
Luke 12:13-21
Titus 2:3-5