

The Standard Bearer

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CONTENTS

<i>Meditation</i>	God's Sure Foundation REV. JOHN MARCUS	458
<i>Editorial</i>	Ready to Give an Answer (to the News Media) REV. KENNETH KOOLE	461
<i>All Around Us</i>	Brexit REV. MARTYN MC GEOWN	464
<i>Taking Heed to the Doctrine</i>	Christ: The King over All (2) REV. JAMES LANING	468
<i>Things Which Must Shortly Come to Pass</i>	Premillennialism (10) PROF. DAVID ENGELSMA	469
<i>Go Ye Into All the World</i>	PR Missions: The Depression Years: Mission Methods Developed (1932-1939) REV. WILBUR BRUINSMA	473
<i>Special Article</i>	A Fisher of Men in the Philippines REV. JOSHUA ENGELSMA	476
<i>Activities</i>	News From Our Churches MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM	477

God's Sure Foundation

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

II Timothy 2:19

There are times in the history of the church and in the personal lives of God's people when all seems hopeless. Times of persecution. Times of upheaval. Times of weakness. Times when it appears that the devil has the upper hand. Times when we wonder if our feet are about to slip. Our encouragement in the midst of those times must be that the foundation of God stands sure.

That was the inspired word to Timothy as he faced hardship and heresy in the church of Ephesus. Hymenaeus and Philetus denied the truth of the resurrection and led others astray with them. Apostasy was sure to lead to more ungodliness. But, no matter the opposition that Timothy faced. No matter the opposition that the church of Jesus Christ faces in every age. No matter what spiritual battles we face personally. The foundation of God stands sure.

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A foundation, of course, is critical to the structure that is built upon it. Jesus told of the wise man who dug down until he found solid bedrock and laid the foundation of his house on it. When the storms came and the floods rose up against the house, it stood firm because of its foundation. The foolish man, on the other hand, did not care about the foundation. He found a nice-looking place and built on the shifting sand. When the floods came against his house, it fell with a great crash.

How much more critical to have a sure foundation when it comes to matters of eternity! How important for our comfort to know that the church of Jesus Christ is founded on solid ground. How important to know about our own salvation that the foundation of God stands sure.

When we see people falling away from the truth and from the church, we might wonder, "Do we have the truth after all? Can the church survive against all these onslaughts? Might I fall away too?"

To be sure, if our salvation and the existence of the true church rested on man-made foundations, we would have reason to worry. But thankfully, the foundation is laid by God Himself; it is called the foundation of God because He put it into place. He laid the bedrock and

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founded the superstructure of the church upon it. God's foundation is solid and immovable. We confess with the psalmist, "The LORD is my *rock*, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust" (Ps. 18:2).

What is this foundation of God?

The foundation is certainly not of man's making. People of every sort build philosophies that serve as pseudo-foundations for their lives and practices. They may appear ever so solid and immovable. But history has proven again and again that the foundations of men are always shifting. Hymenaeus and Philetus were perhaps influenced by the Gnostic philosophy that matter was evil and the spiritual good. The "me first" of Hedonism proves empty when pleasure fails to satisfy.

The foundation of God is that spiritual reality that undergirds the salvation of the church as a whole and the salvation of every individual child of God.

The foundation of God stands sure!

We could translate the passage, "The firm foundation of God *is standing*" to express the idea that God's foundation *was*, and *is*, and *ever will be* standing. It will never be moved because God Himself can never change. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6). His promises are forever sure! His purposes can never fail!

What a comfort in the midst of this changeable world we call a valley of tears! What a comfort when our enemies assail us on every front!

The foundation of God stands sure!

What foundation forms the basis for the church's existence and the salvation of each child of God? The unchangeable counsel of God as it stands in Jesus Christ. The foundation of God is His eternal decree to elect us in Christ before the world was created. Christ is the Elect One. He is the chief Cornerstone that determines the rest of the foundation and structure of the temple.

That Christ is central to the foundation is indicated in the two statements that follow in the text. First, "The *Lord* knoweth them that are his." Jesus Christ, the *Lord*, knows His sheep. Secondly, "Let every one that nameth the name of *Christ* depart from iniquity." The foundation is nothing without Jesus Christ.

Not only does the foundation of God include His eternal decree of election, it also includes the working

out of that decree in history. When Jesus Christ regenerates us and dwells in our hearts through His Spirit, He establishes a firm foundation that can never be moved. Whoever has this saving work will never go lost. When God pours out His love in our hearts, He never takes it back (cf. Rom. 11:29).

It is true that false teachers will arise in the church. They will deny cardinal doctrines in the attempt to demolish the hope of the gospel. Some will deny the resurrection of the body, as did Hymenaeus and Philetus. Others will deny salvation by grace alone through faith alone apart from any merit or conditions to meet. They will make men the deciding factor in salvation, as do the teachers of the Federal Vision heresy. These false teachers will lead many astray so that they deny the gospel.

Be that as it may, we must never imagine that the foundation of God is cracking or sinking. We must never imagine that false teachers and heresies hatched in hell itself can make even the smallest chip in God's firm foundation. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44). False teachers and falling away only shows that there will always be hypocrites who have attached themselves to the church but who have nothing to do with the foundation of God's saving work. They were not chosen in eternity, nor were they regenerated by the Spirit of Christ.

The foundation of God stands sure!

The work that Jesus began in us, He will certainly bring to completion. If He laid the foundation, He will finish the building. If Christ loved us and died for us when we were yet sinners (cf. Rom. 5:8), surely He will not forsake us when we stumble in weakness. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).

To encourage us even more, the apostle describes a twofold seal that is inscribed, as it were, on God's sure foundation: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."



On one side of the seal is inscribed God's knowledge of His people: "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

God confirms His saving work to us by His intimate knowledge of His people. His knowledge is more than a bare understanding of facts about us. He knows those whom He gave to Christ in eternity. He knows those for whom Jesus Christ died. He knows those who have received His saving grace. He knows the way of the righteous. He knows our sorrows and joys. He knows the good He has planned for us. He looks upon us, and cares for us, and shines upon us with His grace. He knows us with a love from which none can separate us. Everything, therefore, serves as a conduit of His love toward us. His unchangeable purpose is to bless us ultimately by bringing us into glory.

The golden chain of salvation presented in Romans 8 begins with God's knowing us in eternity: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. 8:29-30).

If Jesus Christ bought us with His precious blood, then He truly is the Lord who owns us body and soul. He knows us better than we can know ourselves. He knows we are sinners. He knows we struggle with besetting sins. He knows we are far from perfect. He knows how we rejected Him in Adam. But His love is unchanging, and there is nothing that can separate us from that love. That He knows us now means He will know us also on the judgment day. He will say to us and all who are His, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).



On the other side of God's confirming seal is our duty to depart from sin: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

It is striking that the Holy Spirit would put this duty together with the comfort expressed in the statement "the Lord knoweth them that are his." Some might even imagine that the Holy Spirit has just taken back the comfort He gave in the first part of the seal. Nevertheless, we must not divide asunder what the Holy Spirit has joined together.


The idea is not that we must depart from iniquity because if we do not then the Lord will "un-know" us. Such is how the Arminian would present things. The truth is that God calls us to depart from iniquity because this provides evidence that we are in fact known by the Lord. On the judgment day, Jesus will say to the wicked, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23). How can we know that we are not going to be in that number to which Jesus says "Depart from me"? How can we know that we are not "workers of iniquity" who only hate God and our neighbor? How can we know that a firm foundation has been laid in our hearts through the irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit? By the evidence of the Spirit's work in our hearts. That is, by the fact that we depart from iniquity.

This is why the text admonishes us, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." God calls us to withdraw from unrighteousness and wickedness with urgency. The purpose is not that we constantly measure our failures and doubt the sure foundation of God. Not to make us boast in ourselves, as if we departed from iniquity in our own strength. But so that we see in ourselves a small beginning of departing from iniquity, which sincere departing could only be the result of Christ's work in us.

If we name the name of Christ, professing to belong to Him body and soul, professing to love Him who first loved us, looking to Him for all of our salvation, then it follows that we will want to depart from iniquity. Although we fall short in our fight against sin, by God's preserving grace we continue to battle against sin, not giving up. As often as we fall, we look to Jesus to forgive us and pick us up to continue in the battle.

He is faithful. He will hold us in His right hand so that none can snatch us away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

His foundation stands sure!

The chief Cornerstone of this sure foundation is Jesus Christ. All of God's counsel and revelation centers itself in Jesus Christ. "He is before all things and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:17). What a glorious comfort for the church to know that this firm foundation will ever stand! 

Ready to Give an Answer (to the News Media)

Tensions are mounting in our society.

The chant goes up, “Black lives matter!”

The reply is heard, “So white lives don’t?”

Angry mobs take to the streets chanting “Where is justice?” And along with the fiery words come fiery bottles, hurled at storefronts and police cars. There is fire and smoke in the streets of large cities. And flying bullets.

Racial tensions have been building for the past few years.

And now the shooting of the police officers in Dallas, TX, killing five. A retaliation, declared the shooter, for the black persons shot down by this nation’s police over the past number of years and for their exoneration in the courts of law again and again. Equality and justice for all?! Maybe if you are white folk. Not for the minorities, that’s for sure, it is said.

The tensions, the resentments, the suppressed anger along racial lines continue to build like pressure along the San Andreas fault. When will it break loose and rock the whole country? Surely, it is only a matter of time.

The deep divide that exists in this nation’s citizenry over a host of social issues is only amplified by this year’s political race—two candidates whose vocal supporters simply detest each other, seemingly ready to

settle their differences in physical assaults and clashes if not restrained by threats of law.

It seems, at times, that we are living in a country ready to come apart at the seams. More and more citizens ready to take the law into their own hands. “Vengeance is ours,” says a frustrated and angry citizenry. Who can trust the courts of law? Circuit Courts of Appeal? The Supreme Court? Basically controlled by liberals, one and all. And it is only going to get worse.

So the question: What is the solution if our increasingly polarized society is going to be kept from a ‘great fall’ into civil strife bordering on anarchy? Or, what hope is there that this Humpty-Dumpty society of ours can be put back together again?

United States of America, indeed!

Anger, frustration, and hatred showing itself more and more in violent, murderous ways.

Not that things are any better on the international scene. The recent spate of terrorist attacks in Europe are well documented, and what ISIS is doing to large communities, young and old, male and female, in the Near East and Africa almost defies comprehension. Can men really be such cold-blooded beasts? What is human nature incapable of doing?

That said, the murderous assault on the law enforcement officers

in Dallas has simply served to underscore where things are in this country, and will continue to go if the deep fractures that run through our society are not addressed and, somehow, resolved.

Which brings us to the point of this editorial.

Our readers may recollect that it was the shocking news of five police officers gunned down, coinciding with news of another black man shot to death by police—this time near Minneapolis, MN—that led the national news media to ask the question, What can be done to bring this nation back together again before civil strife breaks out nation wide? The specter of the civil unrest and race riots of the late 1960’s raised its ugly head again.

News reporter after news reporter shoved microphones under citizens’ noses and asked, “And you, sir (or ma’am), what do you think is the solution to all this hatred and violence that we are witnessing of late?” And answer after answer came back, “Well, we have to learn to get along with each other and respect each other’s differences. We have to learn what it means to love one another, that’s all.”

You may be sure that that Sunday morning, July 10, pulpit after pulpit proclaimed the need to love our fellow man, and that we as Christians had to be the shining examples of how this was done. Only

if the leaven of that love could permeate society could we, as Americans, live in peace and respect each other as we should. The Christian community had to lead the way, reaching out to its communities in love, assuring the neighborhoods (especially of the inner cities) that we as Christians were as non-judgmental and accepting of others as persons can be. "We just want to befriend others any way we can."

Here in West Michigan, the news media has made a point of showing various churches of white suburbia joining together with churches of the inner city for worship and cook-outs, proving how we can all, in love, learn to get along.

And the clergy of the various congregations are making sure they get their air time to indicate how Christianity has enabled their congregations to love their neighbors as themselves, promoting unity, not division and strife.

Now the question: If after the shocking developments in Dallas, a reporter had shoved a microphone under your nose asking you not only what your reaction was to the tragic events that occurred in Dallas, but what you thought the solution might be to all the recent violence and deep-seated division in our society, how would you (or I) have answered?

Would you, would we as Protestant Reformed, be prepared to give a good, biblically based answer?

Our society, in the face of recent events, has been forced to acknowledge that people are deeply divided over all kinds of social issues, and that growing segments of society

seem ready to arm themselves and turn to violence to express their growing hatred of each other.

What can be done to keep the fractures and fissures from getting worse and spawning more and worse violence down the road?

"And now (it is asked us) you Christian communities and churches, what are you going to do to help us heal? What solution do you propose? Justify your existence in our midst!"

"Are you going to be part of the solution, or add to the problem of division, suspicion, and denunciation of each other?"

We raise this, because, we are convinced, this is going to be *the question* that is put to us as Christians and as Protestant Reformed believers in the future.

And according to our answer we are going to be judged by society.

Answer after answer from the Christian community has been, "We will be part of the solution."

How?

They assure society that they will preach love—love for the neighbor as the Good Book teaches. And loving each other means reaching out to help each other regardless of race, color, or creed, or political affiliation. "We must, as Christ Jesus taught us, love even our enemies, those who have done us wrong, returning good for evil. We as Christian churches must preach and practice that. And only if that takes root will there be resolution to and hope for this deeply divided society of ours. We will take the lead."

Such is the common answer.

Of course, this is what nominal

Christendom has been saying for decades, (for over a century really), what is labeled as the 'social gospel'—big on Christ's words "Love one another," with little to no emphasis on His person, claims, and redemptive work.

Over the years, an increasingly anti-Christian society has paid little to no attention to such words. But now, in a time of crisis, indications are that our society is looking for help, whatever the source. She seems ready to listen. So, this 'just learning to love one another' in an unselfish way is the message to bring. It is the Christian solution to the whole business, right?

To which we answer, "No, it is not."

The common 'Christian' answer referred to above, regardless of quoting a few of Christ's phrases, is wholly inadequate from every biblical perspective.

One can talk about 'loving the neighbor' all one wants, loving even those who seem to be your enemy and returning good for evil; but for all that, one has not proposed the biblical solution for ungodly man. Such is not the solution that is going to resolve the enmity that permeates our society.

Why not?

Because the *root* of the problem in a society so filled with violence and division and with hatred and abuse of others is not the lack of love for the neighbor; rather, it is *rooted* in our society's hatred for God and for God's good commandments

And when the news media begin to ask us what we think the prob-

lem in our society is and what the solution is, before we start talking about people learning to love their neighbors in a more Christian way, we must point the questioners and reporters to *God* and our society's relationship to *almighty God*. We must remind those who interview us that we are living in a society that has turned its back on God, denying any truthfulness in Him—and that in a most public and arrogant way. There is, they say, no God to whom we must answer. So who cares one iota about His laws?

And where that spirit rules and becomes embedded into a nation's laws, judgments will follow, as a matter of course.

That is the problem—the evil let loose in our society. And our society is reaping a harvest of thorns. When you go to war against God (and have no humility before Him), you will, as a matter of course, go to war against your fellow man.

So it is today.

So then, what *is* the solution?

Our answer: as things stand now, as our society despises Jehovah God, there is none! At least not along the lines society is looking for, namely, men learning to love their neighbors as themselves and living in unity and peace. There is only *one solution* in the end, namely, repentance from the sins of despising the things of God, and turning in faith to Christ Jesus. Otherwise, all this call for love, and learning to live in love, is doomed to failure. It is nice talk, but it is not biblical Christianity.

Our answer must be along those lines.

Not that such an answer will

make us popular with society, though it might with the news media. They will probably want to hear more on our perspective just so they can air it far and wide. It is bound to stir up controversy and improve their ratings. It will also serve the liberal news media's desire to label a brand of Christianity as contributing to the problem, not as part of the solution—this Calvinism, this fundamentalism, that has always been so judgmental and devoid of love.

How long is our society supposed to endure this kind of exclusivist Christianity!

Our society has no problem with a Christianity that talks about love as such, love that promotes what they call 'the neighbor's happiness and advantage.'

What they want no part of is a Christianity that ties in that love with Jesus of Nazareth and faith in Him, and in Him alone.

What?! As if mankind cannot rid itself of hate and self-centeredness apart from this biblical Christianity? As if there can be no self-denial and true forbearance of others apart from repentance from sin and faith in this Lord Jesus?

A Christianity that promotes itself as only *one* of the ways in which mankind can learn to live in the way of self-denying, forbearing, neighborly love, is a Christianity society welcomes. But a Christianity that declares that for there to be any true, self-denying love for the neighbor there must first be a love for almighty God (and His Word), a love rooted in a faith in Christ Jesus, is and will continue to be a

Christianity that is despised and denounced.

But such is the truth.

Why?

For various reasons. But one that looms large is that only when a person has stood before the almighty, holy God, and has the grace to appraise himself in that light, can one really see himself for who he is—small and insignificant in self. Such is absolutely necessary for true humbleness of mind, humbleness after the 'stature' of the apostles Paul and Peter.

Apart from that self-knowledge, one that comes only via the knowledge of God, the Phariseeism of Saul of Tarsus and the inherent sense of superiority found in Simon-bar-Jonah will always show itself and prevail. The largeness of "I" (who 'I am' as compared to my fellow man) will always rear its ugly head. "Who do you think you are, to treat me like that! I will show you whom you are dealing with! Take that!"

Man, who is so arrogant that he can not find it within himself to humble himself before almighty God, is going to humble himself when it comes to dealing with his irritating fellow man?! Think again.

You have a dream, you say, of men of every sort living in enduring peace and unity and love, but one in which Christ is conspicuously absent?

Well, dream on. Because that is all it will ever be.

Apart from Christ Jesus, 'BA-BEL' is written over every such endeavor by men.

When selfish people deal with

self-centered people, there will not be unity and peace, but division and conflict without end.

And apart from Christ every one of us is self-serving and self-centered.


That might not be a welcomed

truth today, but it is truth.

And it falls upon us to give this answer when required. It is the only real, truthful answer there is. To allow our society to think it can save itself from division and conflict and live in unity and true peace apart

from the power of the great King is anything but love. Such thinking simply encourages self-deception

The full gospel is man's only hope.

We must be ready to present it when the occasion arises. 

ALL AROUND US

REV. MARTYN MC GEOWN

Brexit

What is the EU?

A new word entered the English vocabulary recently—*Brexit*, which means the “British exit” from the European Union (EU). To understand the implications of this move, let me briefly provide an overly simplified history of the EU, as well as an outline of its political and economic structures.

The “European project” began as a way to avoid the horrors of a Third World War. Hitler’s Germany must never be permitted to reoccur. The goal of the “European project” was to prevent nationalism from becoming too powerful. Remember, that the Nazis were the *Nationalist* Socialist Party. In 1957, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and (West) Germany signed the Treaty of Rome, which came into force on January 1, 1958, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC). In 1973, Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom (UK) joined the EEC. Greece, Portugal, and Spain joined the EEC in the 1980’s, during which time the Schengen Treaty was signed, which effectively abolished border controls throughout much of Europe (Ireland and the UK, being islands, are not in the Schengen area). The Maastricht Treaty followed in 1992, which changed the name of the EEC to the European Community (EC). It contained the embryo of a European Constitution and paved the way for a single European currency (the Euro). In 1995, Austria,

Finland, and Sweden joined the EC, which by now was called the European Union (notice the progression from EEC, to EC, to EU). Between 2004-2015 many Eastern European nations (Poland, Czech Republic, Latvia, etc.) joined the EU family. In the intervening years, several other treaties (such as the Nice Treaty of 2003 and the Lisbon Treaty of 2009) were ratified, most of them without any consultation of the citizens of Europe. Little by little, European leaders were signing away their national sovereignty and giving more power to a centralized bureaucracy. (When some of these treaties were put to a referendum in nation states, they failed, results that the European leaders either ignored or changed. For example, the Irish electorate rejected the Nice Treaty in June 2001, so a second referendum was held—after the Irish government negotiated some concessions—in October 2002).

By June 2016, the EU consisted of 28 member states (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK). Of those 28 countries, 19 countries are in the monetary union (the Eurozone), and use the single European currency, the Euro. Notably, Denmark, Sweden, and the UK are *not* in the Eurozone. On the European continent, Norway and Switzerland are *not* in the EU.

What began as cooperation between certain European nations on trade and other mutually beneficial issues has grown into an economic and political union with

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erick, Republic of Ireland.*

legislative and bureaucratic powers, centered in Brussels (Belgium), Luxembourg, and Strasbourg (France).

The various European treaties gave birth to a plethora of European structures. First, there is the European Council with its (current) President Donald Tusk. This body, according to the Lisbon Treaty, “shall provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development.” Second, there is the European Parliament (EP) with 751 members (MEP’s) headed by its (current) President Martin Schulz. With its gargantuan bureaucratic apparatus, the EP meets in three locations: Brussels, Luxembourg, and Strasbourg. It is the EU’s legislative branch, with its MEP’s elected every five years. Third, there is the European Commission, the EU’s executive branch, with its (current) President, Jean-Claude Juncker. In addition to these institutions, the EU boasts a European Court of Justice, a European Court of Human Rights, and a European Central Bank. Each of these institutions has an enormous administrative budget (in 2015 the EU budget was €143 billion), to which the member states must contribute.

It is clear from the direction of the EU that the goal is the creation of a European superstate, the “United States” of Europe. Although the member states of the EU are equal, Germany and France are dominant, with Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, seen as a very formidable and influential leader in Europe. Major players in the EU institutions push for further integration with a blurring of national borders and a ceding of more powers to Brussels—a common agricultural policy, a common immigration policy, a common taxation policy, a common policy on criminal justice, and a common military policy are among some of the “achievements” and aspirations of the EU.

The United Kingdom (which consists of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) joined the EU (the then EEC) by accession treaty on January 1, 1973. A referendum held in June 1975 confirmed that the citizens of the UK desired at that time to remain in the EEC (67% to 33%).

The Rise of Euroscepticism

Over the past decades, “Euroscepticism” has developed in the UK, especially in the Conservative (Tory) party. With an ever-increasing burden of EU regulations and directives, with recurring financial crises in the Eurozone

(which the UK never joined), with a bloated administrative budget in Brussels demanding more from the British Exchequer, with the diminishing of national sovereignty, and with increasingly uncontrolled and uncontrollable immigration, “Euroscepticism” has increased. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and other parties were formed to lead the UK out of the EU and to regain national sovereignty. One of the leading figures of “Euroscepticism” in the UK is Nigel Farage, the erstwhile leader of UKIP, MEP since 1999 for South England, and thorn in the side of the European Parliament, where he is known for making fiery speeches. For example, in February 2010, he addressed the newly appointed President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy, in these words: “You have the charisma of a damp rag and the appearance of low grade bank clerk,” adding that he believed that van Rompuy would be “the quiet assassin of European democracy and of the European nation states.” Another colorful character in British politics is Boris Johnson, the erstwhile Mayor of London, who also campaigned for the Brexit.

Brexit happened, first of all, because the erstwhile British Prime Minister, David Cameron, promised the people of the UK an “in-out referendum” on membership in the EU. The Conservatives (Tories) made this promise in their 2015 election manifesto under pressure from the Eurosceptic wing of the party and in light of the surge of support for UKIP. David Cameron staked his political future on the result of the referendum, and actively campaigned for a “yes” vote.

Following the announcement of the referendum, both the “remain” and “leave” sides campaigned vigorously for their various positions. Politics is a dirty business, and lies, misrepresentation, and exaggeration occurred on both sides. However, the issues were these—does the UK want to regain her national sovereignty, control over her own borders, control over her own laws, and establish free trade agreements with the rest of the world *outside of the EU*, or does the UK want to continue *inside the EU*, and contribute to the development of a European superstate in which more and more policies are determined by a centralized government in Brussels, and fewer policies are determined by individual national parliaments?

From my own observation of the debate, I believe that the “remain” side overplayed their hand—David Cameron

and his chancellor George Osborne predicted apocalyptic catastrophes (recession, unemployment, and even war!). The people did not believe the scaremongering. In addition, outside influences did not help—the EU, of course, was vehemently opposed to the UK's leaving. The EU's goal is to expand, not lose members. Other globalists were alarmed at the prospect of a Brexit. In April 2016, U.S. President Obama warned the British people in a press conference with David Cameron that, if the UK chose to leave the EU, the UK would be “at the back of the queue” (his use of the British word “queue” instead of the American word “line” was deliberate) in any future trade agreement negotiations with the USA. America, he said, would prioritize trade with the EU bloc.

Immigration

Immigration was (and is) a very important factor in the Brexit debate. The EU permits the free movement of peoples, which seems like a laudable policy. Any citizen of any of the member states of the EU is permitted to live, to work, or to retire in any other of the member states. A German or Italian could live in Sweden or France, for example, without residency visas, work permits, and the like.

The problem, however, is the integration of foreign nationals and the resultant multiculturalism. Since not all EU countries offer the same economic opportunities, there is the perception (confirmed by statistics) that certain countries are being overrun with citizens from other nations. Eastern Europeans, for example, take advantage of the EU to live and work in wealthier countries. (More Poles and Lithuanians migrate to the UK than British people migrate to Poland or Lithuania, for example.) In addition, the EU requires that a Pole, Bulgarian, or Romanian living in the UK receives the same *welfare benefits* as a UK citizen, making the UK a magnet for so-called “economic migrants.” For example, a Latvian man can “earn” more as an unemployed person in Britain than he can by working in his native land; plus, he can claim child benefits for his family, even if his children do not reside in the UK. (By the way, there are many hardworking Europeans, and I do not fault them for seeking a better life for themselves and their families.) Besides this, the European Court of Human

Rights makes it very difficult for the British government to deport foreign nationals, even if they are convicted of a crime. There are countless examples of foreign nationals, who after serving their sentences in British prisons, have been permitted to remain in the UK because their “human rights” would be violated if they were returned to their nation of origin.

The European Migrant Crisis

The immigration crisis came to a head when in September 2015 Angela Merkel, in response to the refugee crisis from Syria, effectively opened the doors of the EU to refugees and migrants from war-torn Syria, announcing that migrants would be allowed to cross the border from Hungary into Austria and onward to Germany. (If a migrant achieves refugee status in one EU nation, there is little to prevent him residing in another EU member state.) The result was a large influx of migrants from Syria, Albania, North Africa, Iraq, and even as far away as Afghanistan. Contrary to popular belief, these refugees and migrants are *not* Christians (ISIS has wiped out most of the Christian minorities in Syria) but Muslims, many of them young men. Human traffickers have also exploited the desperation of these migrants, organizing journeys across the Mediterranean in barely seaworthy vessels, with the result that many have perished in the attempt to reach the outskirts of the EU (especially Greece and Italy, which are ill equipped to cope with the numbers of migrants). It is also noteworthy that none of the Islamic nations of the region (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, etc.) have offered to take in refugees from Syria, some of these nations citing “security concerns” (because who can tell whether Islamic Jihadists have used the refugee crisis to reach the EU?). Saudi Arabia generously offered to finance the construction of some 100 mosques—not houses, schools, hospitals, but *mosques*—in Germany! The EU, in conjunction with Turkey, has been trying to manage the refugee crisis, but it shows no sign of ending, and many nations are increasingly frustrated that the EU has imposed quotas upon member states. (Each member state must agree to receive a specific number of refugees.)

Throughout the EU there are whole communities that self-identify as “Muslim.” Significant numbers of these Muslims have been radicalized—terrorist attacks in France and Belgium are ample evidence of that. In

addition, there have been reports of sexual assaults on women especially in Germany and Sweden. In Cologne, Germany, on New Year's Eve 2015, gangs of men of Arab or North African appearance (the overwhelming majority of whom were asylum seekers and immigrants) attacked, groped, and sexually assaulted hundreds of women. They are reported to have taunted the police with cries of "Merkel invited us." This does *not* mean that all (or even most) Muslim men are rapists, or "rapefugees," a word coined in recent years, but it does mean that a significant number are not prepared to integrate into European society, and that their views of women are incompatible with European law. The native Europeans are understandably alarmed and, remember, Europeans have no Second Amendment right to self-defence (even pepper spray is illegal in many EU nations). Some have described recent trends as an "Islamic invasion" of Europe.

Add to that the fact that the EU is in negotiations with Turkey, an *Islamic* nation of some 79 million people. For many of the British people, the expansion of Europe to include Turkey is a step too far.

Brexit and Beyond


The Brexit campaign came to an end on June 23, 2016, when the people went to the polls. The turnout was high (72%) and the result was close (52% voted to leave and 48% voted to remain). The vote also revealed division within the UK—Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to stay in the EU, and England and Wales voted to leave; and, generally speaking, the young (whose turnout was low) voted to remain, while the older generation (whose turnout was high) voted to leave. Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon immediately declared that Scotland would fight to remain in the EU and would, if necessary, seek independence from the UK. (Thus, Scotland would leave one union, the UK, to join another union, the EU.) That is very unlikely at this point because the British government has ruled out a referendum on Scottish independence, and the EU will not negotiate with Scotland alone. On the other hand, Northern Ireland's position is uncertain. The Republic of Ireland remains a EU member state while Northern Ireland remains part of the UK. What will become of the border? Neither the British nor the Irish governments desire to see border controls

on the island. This means, too, that the *Limerick Reformed Fellowship* remains in the EU, while the *Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Ballymena* leaves the EU.

Brexit sent shock waves across the EU and the world. The markets reacted predictably—the financial markets do not like uncertainty, and Brexit means uncertainty, because no one really knows what will happen next. These are uncharted waters. Marches took place in protest, and a petition was organized to demand a second referendum, something the British government rejected. David Cameron immediately resigned and, after a short leadership contest, Theresa May became British Prime Minister on July 13, 2016. Nigel Farage also stepped down as leader of UKIP saying that his political goal had been achieved.

The next step is to invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which will trigger a process of withdrawal from the EU, something the British parliament will not do hastily. Since Britain is the world's fifth largest economy, an independent UK will seek trade deals with the EU, USA, Australia, and the rest of the world. However, since the UK is deeply enmeshed in the bureaucratic and legal structures of the EU, the exit process could take *years*. In addition, it is not in the interests of Brussels to make the process painless, because the fear among EU leaders is that, if Britain is a success outside the EU, other countries might follow (some are toying with the idea of their own referenda), which would lead to the unravelling of the "European project." Scepticism is not unwarranted, however, because we should never underestimate the duplicity of politicians!

The EU (with the United Nations) is a modern-day Tower of Babel or part of the nascent kingdom of the Beast. Brexit *seems* to have struck a stake through its heart, for which I am glad. "Power was given [the beast] over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him" (Rev. 13:7-8).

It seems that, in the providence of God, the exalted Lord Jesus has said to the Beast, "Not yet! Your time is not yet come." If this is indeed the case, let the church work while it is day, for "the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). 

The Kingdom of God (4)

Christ: The King over All (2)

Last time we considered how Scripture and our Reformed confessions speak of the church as God's kingdom. But what does it mean when Scripture speaks of Christ as the King of all the earth? Are those outside the church in Christ's kingdom, too? We turn now to consider two things: first, what it means that Christ is King of all the earth; and secondly, how He rules over those who reject Him as their King.

The King of All the Earth

That Christ is the King of all the earth means that He is the King of a group of believers that is gathered out of all the nations of the earth. A remnant from each nation believes in Christ and willingly serves Him. This is what is being referred to in many passages that speak of Christ as the King of all.

Psalm 47, for example, speaks of Christ this way: "For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth" (v. 2). "For God is the King of all the earth" (v. 7)¹ In this passage Christ is being referred to as the King of those who serve Him *willingly*. This is brought out elsewhere in this psalm where it speaks of all the nations clapping their hands rejoicing that Christ is on the throne: "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth" (vv. 1-2). The word translated "people" is in the plural in the original Hebrew. All *peoples* of the earth are said to clap

¹ These passages that speak of God are also referring to Christ. God reigns in and through Christ, whom He has given authority over all things (John 3:35; Matt. 11:27; 28:18). Since Christ is both God and man, when Christ is reigning, it is in fact God that is reigning.

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their hands and shout for joy in praise to Christ, their King.

Many Old Testament passages speak of this. Psalm 72 says, "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (v. 11). Going further in this psalm, we see again that these nations delight to serve Christ. A few verses later we read of them calling Christ blessed: "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (v. 17). All nations shall serve Christ, just as God promised Abraham many years before these psalms were written. God told him that in his Seed, Jesus Christ, all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8).

So when Christ is called "the King of all the earth" that does not mean that unbelievers are in His kingdom. Rather, it means that there is a believing remnant in each nation that serves Christ. When these believers are gathered to Christ, all the nations are said to serve Him.

Who rules outside the church?

So if Christ is ruling within the church, who is ruling outside the church? Christ is ruling there, too, but in a different way. Christ graciously rules by His Word and Spirit within the church, but outside the church He rules with a rod of iron, dashing the wicked to pieces (Ps. 2).

This judgment justly comes upon such people. Christ rules graciously by His word in those who listen to Him. But outside the church are those who refuse to believe and submit to what our Lord says. They are evil citizens that Christ refers to in the parable of the ten pounds: "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14).

Those who refuse to serve Christ are justly punished: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me"

(Luke 19:27). The righteous King slays those who do not desire Him to reign over them.

This slaying begins already in this life. Christ smashes rebellious unbelievers with an iron rod. When we look to Scripture to see what this means, we see that it speaks of Christ using the ungodly as His rod to beat the ungodly. In other words, He uses the ungodly to punish the ungodly. Christ uses the devil, the ungodly nations, and the ungodly person himself to destroy each person who refuses to serve Him.


First of all, He uses *the devil*. I Corinthians 5:5 says that those outside the church have been delivered over to Satan. The devil does indeed rule over those outside the church. Yet He does so under the control and direction of Christ, who gives the impenitent over to Satan, accomplishing His purpose through what the devil wickedly does.

Christ uses not only the devil, but also *ungodly human beings* to punish the ungodly. Take, for example, the wicked Assyrians and later the ungodly Babylonians. What these empires did against Israel and Judah was evil, for which they are guilty before God. Yet our sovereign Lord was the one directing all this. He did not merely *predict* what these nations would do; He also determined and directed it.

God told the Israelites this in a number of places. The Assyrians, for example, are called the rod of God's anger: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation" (Is. 10:5). A few verses later God says that the Assyrians who foolishly boasted

of their victories were like an axe boasting against the God who was hewing with it: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?" (Is. 10:15). God used similar language later when speaking through the prophet Jeremiah. He referred to the Babylonians as His battle axe by which He was destroying nations: "Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms" (Jer. 51:20).

God uses *ungodly nations* to destroy other ungodly nations. He uses the ungodly to destroy one another. In fact, He sovereignly controls the impenitent unbeliever so that he destroys himself. The sinful practices an unbeliever delights in actually turn out to his own destruction. "The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands" (Ps. 9:16). King Jesus is known by the judgment He executes. Those who reject Him as King will justly become enslaved to the destructive rulers they have chosen.

Yet we remember that we also deserve the same. The only reason we serve Christ is because God gave us to Christ, who suffered the punishment we deserved and purchased for us the right to receive a new heart with the law of our King written in it. He put His Word in our heart, and has caused us in the new man to delight to do His will. That is why we believe when others do not. Understanding this, we lovingly fear our Lord and our God and praise Him for calling us out of darkness and translating us into the kingdom of His dear Son. 

THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS

PROF. DAVID ENGELSMA

Chapter Five

Premillennialism (10):

Its Explanation of Revelation 20 Refuted

Introduction

The previous article in this series pointed out two errors of the premillennial understanding of Revelation

which, although serious, are not the fundamental error of the explanation of Revelation 20 by that doctrine of the last things.

One serious error is the supposition that Revelation 20 teaches events that follow the events recorded in Revelation 19 in time and history. According to this mistaken

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notion, the binding of Satan and the millennium occur after the destruction of Antichrist and his infernal army as recorded in Revelation 19. This understanding of the relation between chapters 19 and 20 of Revelation is universal among premillennialists and is vital to their explanation of Revelation 20. This understanding of the relation between chapters 19 and 20 ignores a prominent feature of the structure of the book of Revelation: again and again the book takes the reader to the very end of history, only to view the last days once again from another perspective.

The vision of Revelation 20 does not consist of events that follow the events of Revelation 19 in history. Rather, Revelation 20 views the entire new dispensation, from the first coming of Christ to the last battle of Satan against Christ and His church, from a new perspective and with regard to certain, particular realities. The new perspective is the binding of Satan throughout much of the present age. The realities characterizing this present age that Revelation 20 emphasizes are the living and reigning of the martyrs during a millennium and the loosing of Satan from his bonds for a little season at the end of the millennium.

A second serious error of premillennialism is the conclusion it wrongly draws from the binding of Satan. Premillennialism thinks that this binding effectively puts an end to much of Satan's evil influence upon the human race. As a result, the millennium, which for premillennialism is a thousand years of a "golden age" on earth—the age of a carnal kingdom of Jesus Christ—is a long period of human history during which sin and its consequences are virtually eradicated from the human race. Indeed, much of the race will be converted to God and will live godly, at least for much of the thousand years. This allows premillennialism to dream its dreams about the blessed, blissful, and godly reign over the world of the restored nation of Israel.

What premillennialism overlooks is that Revelation 20 itself describes the binding of Satan as consisting of this one thing, that Satan cannot deceive the nations, that is, deceive the nations into uniting under him in his appointed man, the personal Antichrist, in order to launch the most ferocious attack upon the church in all the history of the church.

It is also a serious error of premillennialism regarding

Revelation 20 that it explains the thousand years as a literal period of time, refusing to understand the description of time as symbolical. Exposing this error is part of this article.

The Fundamental Error

The main error of the premillennial interpretation of Revelation is enormous, and obvious. Revelation 20:4-6 does not describe the circumstances of the millennium *on earth*, but the blessedness of the saved children of God *in heaven*. This truth is fatal to the millennial expectations and theory of premillennialism.

Contrary to the teaching of premillennialism, John did not see men and women in their resurrected bodies sitting on thrones in Jerusalem on earth. But he saw "souls." These are the souls "of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands" (v. 4). These are the same "souls" that John saw under the altar, crying out for divine vengeance upon their persecutors in Revelation 6:9-11.

"Souls" are not bodies. The dwelling-place of souls is heaven, not earth. The passage proclaims the millennial victory, glory, and power of the saints in heaven at the moment of death, especially the death of martyrdom.

Revelation 20 does not foretell a fleshly reign of resurrected saints on the old earth in their glorified bodies. The idea is incongruous. It is another aspect of premillennialism that is as ridiculous as it is erroneous. Resurrected, heavenly, sinless humans are active in the old world of sin and death, cooperating with merely earthly, sinful mortals in the affairs of this perishing world!

But the passage is comfort for the church in the world with regard to persecution for Christ's sake. At the instant of the death of the martyred believer, he or she lives and reigns with Christ in *heaven*—in his or her *soul*.

Although Revelation 20 gives this comfort particularly to those who die under the beast, who is antichrist, the comfort applies also to all the martyrs throughout history. The typical antichrist, after all, was the antichristian, persecuting Roman empire of John's own day under its Nero, Domitian, and other godless emperors. Indeed, the comfort of living and reigning with Christ at the moment of death is applicable to all true believers, for

all Christians suffer loss for Christ's sake, in one way or another, at the hands of an antichristian, wicked world, including an apostate, hateful church.

Martyrdom takes more forms than the actual loss of physical life, as Jesus suggested in Matthew 10:39: "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Reproach, defamation, ridicule, and ostracism on account of one's confession of the truth (which is the name of Jesus Christ) are forms of martyrdom, forms of losing one's life. Luther was a martyr, although he died of natural causes in his bed. So also was John Calvin. So also was Herman Hoeksema. So also is the faithful, uncompromising Reformed preacher today. So also are all members of the Protestant Reformed Churches who live their confession, as also all living members of other Reformed churches who suffer in all kinds of ways for their confession of the truth and for their antithetical life in a wicked world.

Charles D. Alexander is right when, in his fine, though in places eccentric, commentary on Revelation, he declares that "the Church as a whole is a martyr Church."¹

The "First Resurrection"²

The "first resurrection" of Revelation 20:5, 6 is the deliverance especially of martyred believers at the moment of their death into heavenly life in the soul. This is the teaching of the text. With reference to the living of the "souls," as "souls," verse 5 states: "This is the first resurrection." The "first resurrection" of Revelation 20 is not a bodily resurrection of so-called "tribulation saints," as is the teaching of premillennialism. The text does not say, or even hint, that the "souls" are persons whom Christ has raised from the dead in their bodies.

Living with Christ in one's soul at the moment of death is definitely a resurrection. It is a resurrection in two ways. First, it is the deliverance of the person, in his or her soul, from physical death. Out of death, he or she rises, in the soul into eternal life in heaven. Second, life with Christ in

the soul at death is resurrection because Christ translates the soul from sinfulness to perfect holiness, from earthliness to heavenliness, and from mortality to immortality. Not even the soul of the elect believer naturally soars into heaven at the moment of the death of the believer. The soul of the believer is earthly, sinful, and subject to death. At the moment of the believer's death, Christ Jesus performs a wondrous, saving work upon the soul of the believer, that is, upon the believer with regard to his or her soul. The work is resurrection-work. Jesus raises the soul from earthliness to heavenliness, fitting it for life in the new world; from sinfulness to perfect holiness; and from mortality to immortality.

At the moment of the death of the believer, Jesus transforms his or her soul into a soul that is suited fully to live and enjoy the eternal life of the risen Christ.

The Heidelberg Catechism confesses the resurrection of the believer in his or her soul at death, as the first resurrection, in Q&A 57:

What comfort does the "resurrection of the body" afford thee? That not only my soul after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head; but also that this my body, being raised by the power of Christ, shall again be reunited with my soul, and made like unto the glorious body of Christ.³

Inasmuch as the life of the believer in his or her soul in heaven at death is an aspect of the truth of the resurrection of the body, according to the Catechism, this life of the believer in the soul is also *resurrection*. According to the Catechism, the soul does not naturally fly off into heaven, but is "taken up" by Jesus Christ. This is a work of resurrection, by the "power of Christ," as much as the life of the body one day will be.

The second resurrection of these believers will be their bodily resurrection when Christ returns.

On those who enjoy this first resurrection in the soul the second death has no power (Rev. 20:6). The second death is damnation.

As those who are blessed with the first resurrection are kings—reigning with Christ (v. 4)—so are they also "priests of God and of Christ" (v. 6). These glorious offices identify the souls of Revelation 20 as members of Christ's church. Revelation 1:6 expressly identifies the members of the "seven churches" as "kings and priests unto God and his [Jesus'] Father."

³ Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 57, in Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), 325, 326.

¹ Charles D. Alexander, *Revelation Spiritually Understood* (Plas Gwyn, Trelawnyd, Wales: K&M Books, 2001), 503.

² The remainder of this article does not intend to be a thorough, positive explanation of Revelation 20. The Reformed, amillennial explanation of Revelation 20 was given earlier in this series (see Chapter Three, "The Millennium," [1], [2], and [3]). See also Herman Hoeksema, *Behold, He Cometh! An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1969), 636-668.

In the theology of premillennialism the souls of the martyrs of Revelation 20 would have to be Jews, not members of the Christian church, for premillennialism has the church raptured prior to the persecution of the Antichrist. And Revelation 20:4 identifies the souls as persecuted by the “beast.”

The binding of Satan occurred at the first coming of Jesus Christ, specifically by His atoning death for His church, His resurrection as living Lord, His ascension into heaven, and His sitting at God’s right hand. The loosing of Satan to rear up the world-kingdom of Antichrist occurs shortly before the return of Christ in the body, at the end of history.

The Millennium

“Millennium,” or thousand years, in Revelation 20 is the figurative description of the history between Christ’s ascension and a time shortly before Christ’s second coming. Ten is a symbolic number in the Bible. It symbolizes completeness as, for example, the ten commandments are the complete will of God for the thankful life of His redeemed child. The thousand years of Revelation are not a literal period of time, but, as the multiple of ten, the fullness of time and history with regard to the gathering of the church and the glorifying of God by the church and her Head, Jesus the Christ.

For the earth and its inhabitants, the millennium means that the antichristian kingdom cannot be established. During the millennium, on earth the white horse of Revelation 6:2 runs its victorious course through all the nations. The running of the white horse symbolizes the triumphant work of Jesus Christ gathering His church by the preaching of the gospel. By the gospel Jesus goes forth “conquering and to conquer.”

As the opening of the first seal, this victorious proclamation of the gospel and gathering of the church dominate and control everything else that happens in history, including the loosing of Satan at the appointed time. So important to God are the preaching of the gospel and the gathering of the church.

Here, a difference between the Reformed faith and premillennialism surfaces. Not the restoration of old Israel, but the gathering of the church is paramount in God’s counsel regarding all of history. The salvation of the church is determinative for history, not the restora-

tion of old Israel in Palestine. And this is the fundamental difference between dispensational premillennialism and covenant theology, between the eschatology of the typical Baptist church and the eschatology of the Reformed faith and church.

Revelation 20, however, emphasizes the *heavenly* significance of the millennium. The truth of the thousand years of Revelation 20 is the living and reigning with Christ *in heaven* of those who have suffered for Christ’s sake in the world.

The millennial glory of Revelation 20 is not that of a nation of Israel on earth. It is the glory *in heaven* of the members of the church, who were always persecuted, whether by fire or by word, for their witness of Jesus.

Still to come in history, in or after AD 2016, not for Israel of physical Jews, but for all who faithfully confess that Jesus is Lord and who, therefore, refuse the mark of the beast, is the battle against them of deceived nations as lackeys of Satan, who will have been loosed (Rev. 20:7-9).

This last battle is already forming. Indeed, it is looming. The foes are fearsome.

Therefore, Christians need the reassurance of Revelation 20 that death, specifically death at the hands of the persecuting Antichrist, ushers us into the glory of living and reigning with Christ in heaven and also that the time of Satan’s final, furious raging against Christ in His body, the church, is only a “little season” (Rev. 20:3).

God will cut short the time of Satan’s assault upon the church with fire from heaven. Satan will then be consigned to hell “for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).

The final judgment will sit. The reward will be blissful for the elect, those “found written in the book of life,” in accordance with their having refused, in one way or another, to take the mark of the beast (Rev. 20:15). They will not be cast into the lake of fire, but will be graced with the eternal life of the risen Jesus Christ, body as well as soul.

For those whose works were evil, including willing citizenship in the kingdom of the beast and participation in the persecution of Christ’s church under the Antichrist, the judgment will be terrible, if just. According to God’s decree of reprobation (“whosoever was not found written in the book of life,” Rev. 20:15), they will be “cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15).

Conclusion

Revelation 20:1-10 not only gives no support to premillennialism, but also is the death-knell of the theology of premillennialism. The passage comforts elect, believing, but persecuted saints with the promise of living and reigning with Christ in heaven in the soul. It says not one word about a reigning of resurrected, unearthly bodies on earth for a thousand years of continuing earthly history. There is, therefore, no New Testament basis for the doctrine of a restoration of an earthly kingdom of Israel, on the old earth, as part of the continuation of earthly history, in which carnal kingdom of Jews are realized in a literal, earthly way the prophecies of the Old Testament. Absolutely none!

Nor is there a New Testament prophecy of the church's escape from tribulation. The main passage on which premillennialism hangs its hat rather foretells the martyrdom of those who witness of Jesus Christ, confess His Word, and resist the seductions and threats of an antichristian world-power.

Contrary to premillennialism's "optimism" on behalf of the church, Revelation 20 prophesies the gathering under Satan at the end of history of hordes of the ungodly against the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

And these saints are not the Jews, but those who are "found written in the book of life" (Rev. 20:15). Those found written in the book of life are the members of the elect church among all nations and in all times, as Jesus makes plain in Luke 10:20-24. They are all those who know who the Father is, by the Son's revelation of the Fa-

ther to them by the gospel. "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven...[the] babes...to whom the Son will reveal [the Father]."

Premillennialism is false doctrine concerning the last things.

It is an utterly erroneous, and even foolish, eschatology.

Every Reformed church and Christian repudiates it, root (Israel as different from the church) and branch (the rapture of the church out of the world before the raging of Antichrist).

Reformed Christians do not face, indeed presently live in, the last days according to the absurdities and false doctrines of premillennialism. They do not live in the expectation of rapture out of the world, so as to escape persecution. But they live in the hope of the resurrection, first of the soul at the moment of death, and then of the body at the one future coming of Jesus Christ, having been privileged by Christ to suffer for His sake in an antichristian world, including a false church.

"Suffer" for His sake, not *escape* suffering because of faith in Him.

"Privileged" to suffer, as though suffering under antichrist will be "given in the behalf of Christ" as a great good (Phil. 1:29), not as though suffering for Christ's sake in the church's last battle is an evil from which to be spared—by being raptured out of the arena.

God be thanked for the Reformed faith.

God be thanked for the Reformed faith concerning the last things.

... to be continued. 

GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

REV. WILBUR BRUINSMA

Protestant Reformed Missions

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

Rev. Bruinsma is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Previous article in this series: December 1, 2015, p. 114.

The decade of the 1930s ushered in the era known as the Great Depression. The Depression actually started already in 1929, when in October of that year the stock market crashed, causing

millions of investors to lose all their money. Business and construction began to slow down, resulting in a large-scale firing of laborers. By 1932 twelve million, about 25 % of the work force, were without work. The farmers had already been battling severe drought and falling food prices through the 1920s. This continued through the 1930s. Neither were God's people spared the hardships of that time. My father recounted living daily on bread and spaghetti, the only staples handed out in the food lines. Once, a neighbor gave his mother Christmas cookies. For a week he and his siblings ate for their school lunch two slices of dry bread with a Christmas cookie between them.

The Great Depression also left its mark on our churches and, therefore, on their mission work during this period of time. There are two characteristics worthy of note. The first is the *inability to support* the work of missions. The saints were poor. They possessed little in the way of this world's riches. When the work of home missions was delineated in June of 1932, the task of caring for needy churches (subsidy) became a matter of the Classical Mission Committee.

...there is the task of instituting and organizing churches, of caring for them, as long as they are not able to help themselves, and thus to give support both morally and financially as may prove necessary. From this follows quite naturally, that funds must be created, from which can be drawn to support all these undertakings. The classis is responsible for these funds, also over the possessions, buildings, tents or tabernacles, that may be needed to carry out this work.... This implies...that our needy churches shall apply to the Home Mission Committee for financial aid, and from now on the classis will be advised by the committee in regard to the necessary financial support.¹

At the same meeting of classis it was decided that every family be assessed \$2.50 a year for the work of missions. By the next year \$1.00 was added to assist needy churches. By 1939 the Needy Church Fund had risen to \$7.00 per family per year—a sizeable amount of money in that day. The financial reports submitted to classis by the Mission Committee during these years indicate

¹ *Minutes of the Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America*, June 1, 1932 (Supplement 6).

that the churches were unable financially to meet the demands of the work. We were blessed with twenty-one congregations, but by the mid-1930s twelve of these churches were drawing from the needy church fund and seventeen were in arrears in paying their assessments to the mission fund. In January of 1937 the Mission Committee reported, "The requests (for subsidy) were considerably higher than in former years which was due largely to the widespread crop failure in our western states."² Yet, despite the terrible financial hardships of our denomination during these years, the first missionary was called and local churches remained active in their own work of evangelism. The Lord prospered our denomination by adding seven congregations to our fellowship during this decade.

The second characteristic of this period in our churches' growth is that of *spiritual zeal*. Gertrude Hoeksema makes the observation,

Besides being a struggle, life was *simple* in the decade of the thirties. Because they did not have and could not get the luxuries of life and because life was a severe struggle against poverty, the priorities, particularly of God's people, were changed. It has always been true in history, and it was true in this period of history, too, that when God's people live in abject poverty, the result is that they have a vital interest in spiritual realities. The luxuries of this earth do not seem very important. In the Protestant Reformed congregations during this period of the depression, the members showed a hearty dedication to the truths of God's Word, particularly of His sovereign grace, during their trials; and they were diligent to teach these truths to their children.³

Because there was little or no work, men who had no more than an eighth grade education took to reading theological works that many college graduates today would not care to pick up and read. They had the time, but more, they had the desire to study the theological issues of the day. And they discussed these issues in their homes, in the church, and even in the cities. It may be a bit of an exaggeration but the saying goes that "theologi-

² *Minutes of the Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America*, January 13, 14, 1937 (Supplement 15).

³ Gertrude Hoeksema, *A Watered Garden: A Brief History of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1993), 103.

cal discussions took place on almost every street corner of the city!" It is a fact that church affairs oftentimes made the headlines even in the secular newspapers. How nice it would be to unclutter our lives and return to those "simple" times!

This same zeal showed itself toward mission work. During this decade the task of the classical Home Mission Committee was clearly defined. Though there was, as we mentioned, a sore lack of funds to support this work, in 1936 our first missionary was also called and sent out. Pamphlets were published and distributed as a means to stimulate interest in the beautiful truths of grace that were taught in the PRC. A letter addressed to the Classis of February, 1933 by the South Holland PRC exemplifies the fervor several of our churches had toward mission work:

The consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland decided at our meeting of November 9, 1932 to become actively engaged in the mission work that requires our devotion. First of all, our consistory feels compelled to take this action in the full consciousness of the responsibility and calling which we always as church of Jesus Christ must recognize over against the expansion of His kingdom....

Moreover, the consistory feels itself spurred on to this work because we, although always acknowledging God's sovereign election in all His work, still bow ourselves in deep humility, since it pleased Him to separate us, unworthy ones, to bear His eternal, and unchangeable truth, and the further extension thereof and deem it a direction of God to proclaim it among our Reformed brethren of former days....⁴

We will learn the results of this request later, but this is a prime example of our churches' enthusiasm to spread the gospel to others.

There is one other matter that can be mentioned about this decade as a whole. The leaders in the Christian Reformed Church were silent on the issue of common grace. In the very early years after our expulsion from this denomination, several leaders in the CRC still made it a point to defend in her periodicals the doctrine of common grace. During the decade of the Depression,

however, they ignored the Protestant Reformed Churches. This too, Gertrude Hoeksema, who lived during this era, noted in her book on the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches, *A Watered Garden*:

During the years of the Great Depression, which were also the years of the development of the Protestant Reformed denomination, the Christian Reformed Church gave them the silent treatment. For the most part they ignored the new denomination and refused to recognize its existence. In their church magazines they paid little or no attention to the Protestant Reformed denomination and flatly refused to discuss any doctrinal issues.⁵

It was not as if the clergy of the Christian Reformed Church were not interested in developing and expounding her doctrine of common grace. In 1939 Prof. Louis Berkof of Calvin Theological Seminary and an avid defender of common grace during the controversy of 1924, published his *Systematic Theology*. In this work Berkof develops his view of common grace, devoting an entire lengthy chapter to it. The doctrine of common grace was, therefore, before the hearts and minds of Christian Reformed theologians. But they did not want to engage the Protestant Reformed denomination in any sort of debate on this issue anymore. To do so would lend too much credence to the separate existence of our churches. Besides, perhaps it was felt that to continue to debate the issue would only serve to send more of their members into the fold of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

This too had its effect on our mission work. Rev. Bernard Kok reported to the Classis meeting of June, 2, 1937 concerning his mission labors in Highland, Indiana:

The leaders of the Christian Reformed Church show much more opposition to the Reformed principles which we seek to propagate than over against the superficial Arminian and humanistic propaganda of our day.... The people are admonished not to attend our meetings. Even modernism is more welcome than the proclamation of the sovereign grace of God.⁶

Although the Lord increased our denomination with more congregations during this decade, by its end it was becoming more difficult to attract attention to the cause of the Lord as the PRC represented it. God in His sover-


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

⁵ *A Watered Garden*, 103, 104.

⁶ *Minutes of the Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America*, June 2, 3, 1937 (Supplement 13).

eign control was forcing our churches to seek other ways of promoting the truth in order to solicit requests from interested groups. But it was also in God's wise and good design that our denomination by the end of this decade would never again see the swift growth that characterized her during the first fifteen years of her existence. This lack of quick growth began to bother some—even among our clergy, as we will find when we consider our mission work during the late 40s and early 50s.

The meeting of Classis (remember, the PRC had no synod yet) on June 1, 1932 was an important one regarding the future mission work of the Protestant Reformed Churches. It revealed that the Mission Committee, now made up of Reverends William Verhil and Bernard Kok, and elders Tom Elkhart and Abe Poortinga, was active in missions. These men already exhibited an understanding of the labors given them. They not only were busy in their work but also formulated recommendations with grounds for future work. We will consider these recommendations in the next several articles.

But we put these recommendations on hold to examine first another important decision taken by the Classis of June, 1932. The *special* committee (this committee was not the Mission Committee) appointed by Classis in 1931 to study the scope and the labors of the Mission Committee also submitted a lengthy report. It was entitled, "The Report of the Committee in Regard to the Defining of the Task of the Classical Home Mission Committee." This report included such matters as the goal of home missions, the objects of missions, who must carry out this work, and in what manner these labors must be done. This documented for our churches the whole of our domestic mission work. It was used to guide the Protestant Reformed Churches in their mission labors until a new constitution was adopted for the Mission Committee in 1942. For that reason it is important that this report be published in full. Since it is a lengthy report it will take the space of an entire article to publish it. Next time, D.V. 

SPECIAL ARTICLE

REV. JOSHUA ENGELSMA

A Fisher of Men in the Philippines

Our children probably have heard and can sing from memory the words of the hymn: "I will make you fishers of men..." The song is based on the call of Jesus to His disciples to leave their occupation as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee and take up their new labor as fishers of men in the world.

Such is still the call of Jesus today. He calls certain of His disciples to labor as fishers of men in the gospel ministry. He calls them initially to this work. And He calls them throughout their ministry to move from one specific part of the sea of men to fish in another part.

In 2010, the Sovereign of the sea called Rev. Daniel Holstege to labor as a fisher of men in the ministry of the Word and sacraments. And Christ assigned Rev. Holstege to labor among His saints in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, MI. He labored there faithfully for five and a half years.

Rev. Engelsma is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Doon, Iowa.

But in March 2016, Jesus called Rev. Holstege to a new area of labor. He led Rev. Holstege to accept the call of Doon Protestant Reformed Church to labor as missionary to the Philippines. He was installed on Friday, July 1, in a call to worship for Doon PRC, but held in the spacious sanctuary of Calvary PRC so that others from the area might attend. The service was led by Rev. Joshua Engelsma, who preached from Luke 5:4-11 on "A Fisher of Men." After the sermon, the Form for the Installation of Missionaries was read and Rev. Holstege came forward to sign the Formula of Subscription. On the following Sunday morning, July 3, Rev. Holstege preached his inaugural sermon from Matthew 28:18-20 on "The Great Commission."

Rev. Holstege is now the fourth missionary to labor in the Philippines, following Revs. Audred Spriensma (2002-2007), Richard Smit (2009-2015), and Daniel Kleyn (2009-present).

Although Rev. Holstege is now installed, he will not be leaving for the Philippines immediately. For about

five more months he will be continuing his preparations to take up this work.

Included in his preparations are intensive studies in the theology and practice of missions. The Foreign Mission Committee in conjunction with the Council of Doon PRC have developed a foreign missionary training program. The program outlines four areas of preparation. The first involves familiarization with the mission field. Rev. Holstege is already somewhat familiar with the field since he visited there earlier this year, but he also is planning to visit the field again in October. The second area of preparation is training in missions through reading. There is a list of more than twenty books (ten of which are required) that the missionary is asked to read to acquaint himself with the work of missions. The third area is language training. Rev. Holstege is already hard at work learning Tagalog, the official language of the Philippines, largely through the use of Rosetta Stone. The fourth area of preparation is training through courses. Rev. Holstege is enrolled in a missions class at Calvin Seminary for the fall semester, and he will also be doing an independent study with Prof. B. Gritters at the PRC Seminary on the history of missions.

In addition to these preparations, the Holsteges also have a good deal of work to do in preparing to move. This involves sorting through their belongings, selling some things, finding storage for others, arranging to move certain things across the Pacific, furnishing their

new home on the field, making financial and legal arrangements, and so much more.

Along with all this, the Holsteges are also making preparations for an addition to their family. Rev. Holstege's wife, Leah, is expecting their fourth child in November. God willing, if all goes well with the pregnancy and delivery, the Holsteges and their new baby will move to the Philippines in January 2017.

As a denomination we give thanks to God for giving to us another fisher of men to labor in the Philippines. We ask that you continue to pray for the Holsteges, for the Kleyns, for the churches in the Philippines, for Doon's Council, and for the FMC. And pray that God would soon raise up a third man to labor on the field with Missionaries Kleyn and Holstege. ☞



NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

Minister Activities

Pittsburgh PRC formed a trio consisting of Revs. W. Bruinsma, C. Griess, and R. Kleyn from which to call a first pastor. On July 10 the congregation voted to extend a call to Rev. Bruinsma to be their minister. Our God and Father, the King of His church, led Rev. Bruinsma to accept

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

this call. We rejoice with the congregation in Pittsburgh upon hearing this good news! May God bless our newest sister as we go forward!

On Sunday, July 17, the congregation of First PRC in Holland, MI extended a call to Rev. Cory Griess, pastor at Calvary PRC in Hull, IA, to be their next minister. On August 7 Rev. Griess announced that God had led him to decline this call. We are thankful to God for revealing His will to Rev. Griess, and we continue

to remember the congregation at Holland as they seek another minister of their own.

The congregation of Doon, IA PRC voted on July 24 to extend a call for a third missionary to the Philippines. From the trio of Revs. A. Brummel, C. Griess, and B. Huizinga the call was sent to Rev. Cory Griess, who now must consider his current call at Calvary PRC along with the call to the mission field of the Philippines. May

God grant a clear indication of His will to Rev. Griess.

Young Adult Activities

The Lynden, WA PRC is planning on hosting a Young Adult's retreat July 3-6, 2017 in northwest Washington. Updates, contact, and registration information will be made available at lyndenprc.org/retreat and at their retreat Facebook page.

Meanwhile, this year's Midwest Young Adult Retreat took place from August 15-19 at the Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp, sponsored by Calvary PRC in Hull, IA. The theme from Psalm 19:1, "The Heavens Declare the Glory," was to include speeches by Rev. C. Griess and Rev. J. Engelsma, with many activities planned for the week.

Sister-Church Activities

Prof. R. Dykstra and his wife Carol spent seven weeks in Singapore this summer, laboring in and enjoying the fellowship of Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church there. From the "Pastoral Voice" segment of the CERC bulletin we take the following, written by Prof. Dykstra to the congregation there:

But my answer [Has CERC changed?] was also "No." From the point of view of CERC's love for, and commitment to the truths of sovereign, particular grace, to the doctrine of God's gracious, unconditional covenant, to the blessedness and biblical requirement of marriage for life—indeed, all the doctrines of the Scriptures as summarized in the Reformed Confessions—has CERC changed? Not one mm. That is the change

that I am most interested in. Yes, I found new faces and new relationships. I see two new officebearers about to be installed. I see families being established and marriages on the horizon. But fundamentally, CERC has not changed. On account of that, we can take our leave of CERC with happy hearts. Our question this past week was: How could seven weeks fly by so quickly? And the answer is: you made it happen. Your astounding hospitality and Christian love have swept us along in these weeks in a whirlwind of activity and blessed covenant fellowship that make us grateful to God once again for the privilege of knowing you, returning to you, and serving you for a little time.

Missionary Activities

Missionary-pastor Daniel Kleyn and his wife Sharon returned in late July to the metro Manila sub-division of Beverly Hills near Antipolo City. Rev. Kleyn commented that the furlough in the USA went well and was enjoyable and relaxing; and, thus, they were refreshed. They were also encouraged by the obvious support for the work among those they visited in the States. "It is good to be home and getting back into the swing of things here."

On August 13 a "Mission Awareness Morning" was held at Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI. The purpose was to give thanks for 75 years of the Reformed Witness Hour radio broadcast and to spread awareness of developments in the mission fields of the PRC. The keynote address "Your Labor Is Not in Vain" was presented by Rev. Rodney Kleyn. Presentations on the Philippines, Pittsburgh (home missions),

and India took place. A great reminder that God gathers His church from every tribe and nation!

Young People's Activities


The annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention took place August 8-12 at Lake Williamson, IL, with Grace PRC and Wingham PRC serving as the sponsoring churches and using the theme "Contentment in an Age of Entitlement." The pre-convention singspiration was held at Fair Haven Church (Jenison, MI) on August 7 and buses left for Lake Williamson (a 7-hour drive) early the next morning. Nearly 450 young people and chaperones were in attendance! A great way to promote fellowship among the youth of our denomination!

Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism committee of Grace PRC in Standale, MI informed the congregation with enthusiasm of a new Bible study they are organizing, as they reach out to the communities in and around Spring Lake, MI. The first Bible study is scheduled for September 20.

Congregational Activities

First PRC of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada recently organized their annual church hike in Whitehorse Wildland Provincial Park. Just the name makes one want to hike there! We hope Rev. Marcus and the gang took their bear spray and GPS units!

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Adult Fellowship Society of Hope PRC Redlands express their sincere sympathy to Ed and Jeanne Karsemeyer and Shaun and Lorianne Karsemeyer in the departure from this life of their dear mother and grandmother,

MRS. MARION KARSEMEYER.

We also rejoice with them that she has gone on to meet her Maker. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15).

Rev. Brian Huizinga, President
Linda Smit, Secretary

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Georgetown PRC express their sincere sympathy to Marge and Lisa Faber in the death of their husband and father,

MR. JOHN W. FABER.

It is our prayer that they and their extended family may receive comfort from the Holy Spirit in Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints".

Rev. Carl Haak, President
David S. Miedema, Clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Georgetown PRC express their sincere sympathy to Joel and Ellen Bruinooge and their family in the death of their mother,

MRS. LOIS KREGEL

We pray that they may receive comfort and assurance from the word of God in Psalm 121:1, 2, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."

Rev. Carl Haak, President
David S. Miedema, Clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of the Hope PRC, Walker, Michigan extend their sincere sympathy to Elder Jim Koole and his wife Gladys following the death of Gladys' mother,

HILDRED HOEKSTRA.

We find comfort in God's Word as we find it recorded for us in Philippians 1:21: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Rev. David Overway, Pres.
David Moelker, Clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The congregation and council of First PRC of Holland express Christian sympathy to Bob and Shelley Cammenga and family in the death of their beloved father, grandfather, and fellow member,

EDWARD CAMMENGA.

"Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:1, 2).

Henry DeJong, Vice- president
Darle Wassink, Asst. Clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Hope PR Men's Society of Walker, MI mourns the death of our faithful member,

MR. ERNIE MEDEMA.

Our prayer is that Ernie's family finds comfort in God's Word: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39).

Harry Langerak, Pres.
Harry Rutgers, Sec.

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Hope PRC, Walker, Michigan extend their sincere sympathy to Elder Dan DeMeester and family following the death of Dan's mother,

MARJORIE KAMPS.

May they be comforted by the confession of Psalm 73:24: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory."

Rev. David Overway, Pres.
David Moelker, Clerk

Wedding Anniversary

■ With joy and gladness in our hearts we give thanks to God for blessing our parents and grandparents with 60 years of marriage in the Lord. We thank our parents for faithfully bringing us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, for their love, generosity and example. We give thanks that on August 24th we could celebrate this milestone with them, and we pray for God's continued care over

JOHN and BEVERLY FEENSTRA.

"In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust.... For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me" (Psalm 31:1a, 3).

✿ Kenneth and Glenyce Feenstra
Paul and Tena Hoekstra
(Isaac, Tyce, Gideon, Daniel)
Brent and Stacy Meelker
(Hannah, Evelyn, Simon, Natalie)
John and Madeline Feenstra
David and Anna Waldorf
Michael and Abigail Peters
✿ Peter and Linda Smit
William, David, Lanae, Lorraine,
Suzanna, Dirk
✿ John & Cynthia Dermody
✿ Doug & Lori Bekkering

Redlands, California

Wedding Anniversary

■ With thankfulness to God, we will celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents,

**JAMES and KATHLEEN
VANDER KOLK,**

on September 24, 2016. We give thanks to Him for blessing them in their marriage and keeping them in His covenant care. It is our prayer that He will continue to bless and uphold them all the days of their life. Psalm 128:1-3, "Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table."

✿ Michael and Monica VanderKolk
✿ Clinton and Renae VanderKolk
✿ Jordan and Rachelle VanderKolk
✿ Travis and Katie VanderKolk
✿ Lenora and Seth Bodbyl
✿ Loren VanderKolk and fiancée Kayli
18 grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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MICHIGAN

Wedding Anniversary

■ With joy and thanksgiving to our covenant Father we celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

GARY and ROSE MOELKER,
on September 22, 2016. God has blessed our family through their godly instruction. Our prayer is that He will continue to bless them in the years ahead. "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psalm 100:5).

- ✿ Mike and Jennifer Moelker
Joshua, Caleb, Aliesa, Matthew
- ✿ Scott and Sharla Moelker
Erica, Branden, Daren, Jorden,
Rylee, Macy
- ✿ Todd Moelker
- ✿ James and Tami Boorsma
Sieger, Izaak
- ✿ Scott and Lynn Oosterhouse
Nicholas, Joseph, Alexander,
Anthony, Elizabeth
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Classis West Notice

■ Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Randolph, WI, on Wednesday, September 28, 2016, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. Delegates should be aware that an officebearers' conference is being planned for Tuesday, September 27. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should contact Randolph's clerk, Mr. George Vroom, 920-296-9634, <mailto:george@vrooml.com>.

Rev. Doug Kuiper,
Stated Clerk of Classis West

Seminary Convocation

■ The convocation of the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary will be held September 7 at 7:30 P.M. in the Grandville Protestant Reformed Church. Prof. Dykstra will speak on "The Ezra Model: A Heart for the Lord's House." Everyone is welcome.

Reformed Witness Hour

September 2016
Rev. Carl Haak

Date	Topic	Text
September 4	"The Secret Providence of God"	Job 19:21
September 11	"Who Is Jesus?"	Matthew 1:21
September 18	"The Sin of Lukewarmness"	Song of Solomon 5:1-8
September 25	"Grace For Today"	Matthew 6:349

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

Reformed Free Publishing Association's

ANNUAL MEETING

Rev. Joshua Engelsma will speak on

**"Lord Grant Boldness": The RFPA's
Witness in the Sexual Revolution**

September 29, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

Providence Protestant Reformed Church

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

SW PRC Lecture

Keeping the Sword Drawn:

Our Calling as the Church
of the Militant Christ

Rev. Brian Huizinga

September 30, 2016

Grace Community Church
3500 New Holland St.
Hudsonville, Michigan

7:30 P.M.

Sponsored by
Southwest PR Church
For Livestreaming: southwestprc.org