

The Standard Bearer

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An Admonition to Love Not the World

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

1 John 2:15-17

John's first epistle emphasizes the truth of the antithesis, the spiritual separation that exists between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial. God has created that spiritual separation by saving His children of light out of the world of darkness. The antithesis is rooted in the eternal counsel of God, in His sovereign decree of election and reprobation. Redeemed in the blood of Christ, regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, God's people are called out of the world of darkness into His marvelous light. And He calls us to live antithetically in the midst of this world. So we are exhorted, “Love not the world!”

Rev. DeVries is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Never has this Word of God been needed more urgently! From a natural point of view, these are very exciting times to be alive! What a world in which to live! Technology advances by leaps and bounds. Opportunities abound for obtaining possessions and wealth. The pleasures and entertainments are multiplied. Oh, there are many challenges—but who would deny that it is an exciting time to be alive?

But, we must not be caught up in it all. We must realize that it is also an exceedingly *dangerous* time to be alive from a spiritual point of view. Not since Babel and its famous tower has the unbelieving world been so united against our God and the cause of Christ. Never before has so much of what calls herself church compromised the truth of God's Word to such an extent that she is virtually indistinguishable from the world. Never before have so many Christians been so enamored with pleasures and treasures of the world. Let us heed this vital admonition!

The Content

The term “world” is used no less than six times in this passage. It is clear in Scripture that this word (liter-

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ally “cosmos”) has various meanings. Basically, the term “world” looks at the universe from the viewpoint of its organic unity and harmony with man at its head. It can refer to the whole of God’s creation, such that we read of “the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). “World” is used when speaking of the sum total of God’s elect as an organic whole, along with the creation that shall also be redeemed and restored in Christ; and so we read, “For God so loved the world...” (John 3:16). But the word is also used with respect to the fallen creation. In this sense “world” refers to all ungodly men as they dominate in creation and develop in sin through their use of God’s creation. Jesus says in John 17:9, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world.”

Obviously, it is in this last sense that the apostle John speaks in this passage. “World” here is the whole of reprobate, ungodly men together with all the earthly creation as they develop and use all things in the service of sin. It is the world whose harmony has as its principle the perfect agreement to rebel against God and trample His law. The beauty of this world is the carnal, sensual, perverted glamour of Hollywood. It is the world that exalts man and caters to his every whim. This is the world out of which Antichrist arises in the last days, as verse 18 states. This is the world in the midst of which the church lives.

This wicked world is all around us! Think of the casinos, the night clubs, the dance halls, and the theaters. This world is in the corporate offices, on the factory floor, but also in the places of learning, the schools and universities, which in pride deny the sovereign Creator. It is in the political campaigns, the halls of justice, and the legislative chambers. This world is promoted by the media that thrives on the sensational and whatever titillates our senses. It is even in much of the modern-day church that extols a gospel of self-esteem and tolerance. This world is found in every sphere of life, yea, even in our own sinful natures, so that we cannot possibly avoid coming into contact with it.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” The “things that are in the world” imply everything that is produced and used by the world in the service of sin. This does not mean that the various creatures of creation are evil in themselves. Trees and stars, cars and computers, government and economics and industry are all created and established by God. The various crea-

tures of creation are good creatures of God to be used in our lives.

But the idea is that the wicked who dominate in this world take all of these good creatures of God and use them in the service of sin. All the culture, government, science, technology, philosophy, economics, industry, education, music, and art are used in awful rebellion against God. The ungodly are dedicated to the overthrow of the living God and to the establishment of a kingdom of darkness in which sin rules supreme.

What then is our calling as God’s people toward this world? “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” True love is a spiritual relationship that unites, that rejoices and finds pleasure in the perfectness of another. In the deepest sense, it is the love that proceeds from God to us and that through us returns to God. That love must not be directed toward the world!

That we “love not the world” means that we do not consider the world and its things precious. It means that we have no harmony, agreement, or fellowship between us and the world. It means that we have no affection for it, no setting of the heart on it, no seeking of it or striving after it.

And neutrality is impossible! That we love not the world means that we *hate* the world with all our hearts. It means that we despise the world and its evil allurements. That we love not the world means that we love God! Our affections must be set on God and His kingdom. We must consecrate ourselves to Him and His service, living antithetically in the midst of this world.

The Reason

This Word of God gives us an objective reason for this admonition: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (v. 16). The word “lust” here is not used in the narrow sense of carnal sexual desires, but it refers to evil desire in the broad sense. Lust is evil desire for anything that is contrary to God’s will. Here these lusts are conceived of objectively, as something that is in the world and with which we come into contact, desires that are presented to us as objects to love.

These lusts are classified here. We read first of “the lust of the flesh.” This is the lust of the lower desires of man that burn with passion. The lusts of the flesh are

gluttony, drunkenness, drug abuse, all manner of sexual immorality and such things. The world says, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Think of Eve as she was tempted by Satan in the Garden of Eden. We read in Genesis 3 that the woman saw that the tree was good for food. She lusted after it. Here sin reveals itself as "lust of the flesh".

The "lust of the eyes" is the lusts of the highest senses that from an earthly point of view are attractive to the eyes. The world of art, culture, entertainment, music, philosophy, and fashion are objects that satisfy these carnal desires. Through the lust of the eyes "they glory in their shame." Recall again Eve in the garden. Eve saw that the tree was pleasant to the eyes. Here sin is manifested as the lust of the eyes.

Finally, lust is the "pride of life." This is the vain glory of life that seeks self. The world, by its scientific advancements, inventions, technology, scholarship, and so-called wisdom, thinks it is in control of all things and exalts itself as God. Once more think of Eve being tempted by Satan. We read that the woman saw that it was "a tree to be desired to make one wise." Eve considered the tree from the viewpoint of the lie of the devil: "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." This setting aside of the Word of God in preference for her own judgment is the "pride of life."

All this is not of the Father, but is of the world. The Father is holy, just, and good. In God is no darkness at all. All this is of the world. All darkness, sin, and evil have their source in the world. There is no trace of goodness, no sign of any fruit of a "common grace" or "civil good." All that is in the world is godless, not godly. If you seek it, you love the world. And let us not forget that we can so easily indulge in these lusts vicariously through our big-screen TVs, our smart phones, the Internet, and other media.

But there is also a subjective reason for this admonition: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." By grace, we have the love of God in our hearts. God lavished His love on us in Christ. In His love, we love Him and all that is of Him. Yet, that love is not perfect and complete in us. We have only a small beginning of true obedience. Our old man of sin is filled with the principle of the love of the world.

This love of the Father excludes the love of the world!

Do you love the world? Is the world precious to you? Do you crave its wealth, its fame, its carnal culture, its pleasures, its immorality? We must fight against the principle of the love of the world with all our heart! It is either-or! "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14). We are admonished to love not the world because of the absolute antithesis between sin and grace, between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial! The antithesis calls us to walk as pilgrims and strangers in the earth, seeking and loving all that is good, hating and fleeing all that is evil.

The Incentive

What an incentive we are given to heed this admonition! "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." This world is on the way to destruction! It is now in the very act of passing away. And the lusts of the world are also hastening to destruction. The lusts of the world and their glory soon fade away. All its glitz and glitter, all its fame and fortune, all its might and power, all its technology and genius, all its pleasures and treasures are but for a moment. How foolish to love something so temporary!


But there is a word of warning here. Ultimately, he who loves the world goes to destruction with it. Jehovah thunders in Isaiah 13:11, "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." The lovers of this world will be left naked, wretched, doomed to the torments of hell. All who love the world will perish with the world!

In contrast, "but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." He who does God's will belongs not to the world. He belongs to the work of God's grace in the midst of the world. He was delivered from the world and its lusts through the saving work of Christ and His Spirit. He shall abide forever! A crown of glory awaits him—everlasting life in the kingdom of heaven.

Are you doing the will of God? Are you spiritually sensitive, recognizing the world and the things that are in the world? The love of the world is not far from us. We still contend with the lusts of the flesh and of the eyes and the pride of life. How easily we are overwhelmed with fleshly emotions! And it is all virtually at our fin-

gertips—materialism, sports fanaticism, violence, pornography. Search your heart! “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2).

Be not deceived! The world is passing away and the lusts thereof. Love not the world! Desire to abide forever

with your heavenly Father. “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless” (II Pet. 3:14). 

EDITORIAL

REV. KENNETH KOOLE

Freedom of Speech: Under Assault

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievance.”

Do you recognize the above quote? Can you identify it?

It belongs to the Bill of Rights governing this fair land of ours, meaning, rights we as U.S. citizens have been guaranteed. The freedoms listed above comprise what is also known as the First Amendment and stand at the head of the list of our constitutionally granted rights.

Strikingly, the right to the ‘free exercise’ of religion, followed immediately by freedom of speech are the first two freedoms guaranteed.

The two are inexorably tied together. Prohibit the one (the free exercise of religion), and freedom of speech (and to preach) dies with it. Abridge the other (freedom of speech) and the expression of religion is no longer free. It is State controlled.



That said, another July 4 (U.S. Independence Day) has just been marked and celebrated, the 240th since the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Whether we Christians should celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence as such raises some interesting questions. Ask any Protestant Reformed history teacher: should we give thanks to God for this declaration, this act of defiance? It was, after all, an act of rebellion against the God-ordained government of the land at that time, Great Britain.

Such acts are clearly condemned by Scripture.

If it is one thing disciples of Christ are not to be, it is revolutionaries, insurrectionists against the State (with its God-ordained magistrates). And that, no matter how wicked, corrupt, or oppressive the ruling government may be at any given time.

Against the libel of being threats to Caesar and fomenters of rebellion against the Roman State, the apostles and the early Christian church

had to defend themselves again and again. And then, willingly they suffered terrible injustices at the hands of corrupt, wicked officials without retaliating in turn.

Such has been the testimony and behavior of the faithful in Christ’s church for over 2,000 years.

Yet for all that, it’s what took place on July 4, 1776 in Independence Hall in Philadelphia that served to put in place the freedoms so precious to us today. “Sweet land of liberty, Of thee I sing.”

That phrase was once found in the back of our Psalter. Who can deny that the song does have a certain ring to it.

God in His good providence used the revolutionaries of 1776 to provide His church in this great land of ours (note that we say “great *land* of ours,” not “great *country* of ours”) with its freedoms of religion and worship and speech to this present day; freedoms so vital for the free instruction of our children and for the free proclamation of the gospel here and abroad.

Well, a great ‘sea change’ is taking place before our eyes. Those free-

doms are presently under powerful and relentless assault, in particular, freedom of speech. And once freedom of speech is sufficiently curtailed, freedom of religion and the right to worship and to assemble without government interference and prohibition will inevitably follow.

So it has been in every fascist, communist, and totalitarian government of the past 100 years. Think of Lenin's communist Russia and of Stalin's Soviet Union; think of Hitler's Nazi Germany and of Mao Zedong's communist China. In each regime the will of the ruling power was, "No citizen will open his mouth to criticize, disagree with, or condemn the laws and policies of this State! And if you do, we will silence you with legal restraints and consequences, using police force and imprisonment and worse, as we see fit. The State will view you and yours as criminals with no rights at all." To be sure, in some instances trials were held, very public trials. But what the State called 'due process of law' was a mere charade, meant to intimidate the masses to conform. Or else!

That this is the direction in which these United States of America is heading becomes clearer every day.

A parishioner alerted me to a recent survey posted by the *New Criterion* magazine (November 2015), a survey that demonstrates the extent to which opposition to free expression has become the position of college students, which is to say, the coming generation, in alarming numbers.

The William F. Buckley Jr. Program at Yale recently commissioned a survey from McLaughlin & Associates about attitudes towards free speech on campus. Some 800 students at a variety of colleges across the country were surveyed. The results, though not surprising, are nevertheless alarming. By a margin of 51 percent to 36 percent, students favor their school having speech codes to regulate speech for students and faculty. Sixty-three percent favor requiring professors to employ "trigger warnings" to alert students to material that might be discomfiting. One-third of the students polled could not identify the First Amendment as the part of the Constitution that dealt with free speech. Thirty-five percent said that the First Amendment does not protect "hate speech," while 30 percent of self-identified liberal students say the First Amendment is outdated.

Before we comment on the above survey, a comment by the author of the article in response to the survey is worth quoting. He points out:

We should be clear about what these results mean. It is not merely the case that most students like trigger warnings and think responsible faculty ought to include them. No, students think trigger warnings should be *mandatory*. Their concerns about the emotional needs—real or perceived—of their classmates comes first; the faculty's free speech rights come second.

The reference to "trigger warnings" means students are to be told

prior to a lecture or when material is assigned that they may be confronted by statements they judge hurtful to their preferences or practices. If so, they may be excused from the lecture or from having to read or do that assignment. It is left to each student's discretion what he or she finds 'discomfiting' (as the survey puts it).

'Discomfiting.' A newly coined word. And one with huge legal implications, make no mistake. "Yes, your Honor, my client found the whole lecture extremely discomfiting, hence this lawsuit."

What defense does one have?

As the author points out above, the key word in all of this is the word "mandatory." Meaning, if the professor has not, in the judgment of a student, complied, he is to be reported to the university administration. And they are required to turn the case over to those new committees now sprouting up on campus after campus to judge what constitutes offensive and insensitive speech, which in turn will determine what degree of discipline should be applied.

In the end, one's very tenure as professor will be at stake.

What are being formed on campus after campus these days are nothing less than committees of 'thought police,' committees on which youthful representatives of the 'student body' are to be well-represented, young zealots who like the youthful Saul of Tarsus are going to countenance no counter thought to their avowed ideology and convictions. Only here their ideology and convictions have nothing to do with

Mosaic law and traditions, but with the new ideologies of gender, race, and every hot social issue in vogue. They are as fierce as wolves with the scent of blood in their nostrils. And Christianity, biblical Christianity with its 'antiquated, repressive' moral code, is the prey of choice.

One is reminded of what happened in communist China some 60 years ago, with the rise of the Red Guard, youthful zealots who, shouting their slogans, took it upon themselves to cleanse the land of all thought foreign to that of Chairman Mao. All upon whom suspicion fell (a word whispered in secret was sufficient to condemn one) were treated without mercy, often publicly in brutal fashion.

The youthful zealots growing in number on our nation's college campuses are of the same spirit. The only freedom that a man (or administration) has is to think as they think.

But now, let us get back to the results of the survey itself.

First, as we stated, these results indicate what we called a 'sea change' in our society and, in particular, among college-age students (the products of the increasingly liberal and anti-Christian public school education of our day). In the tumultuous 1960s and '70s those promoting radical, anti-establishment ideas were the foremost promoters of First Amendment rights. They defended their right to protest and disrupt campus life, as well as to hurl 'discomfiting' epitaphs left and right at every authoritarian figure they could think of, exactly by insisting that this was nothing less than a ex-

pression of their First Amendment rights.

They were exercising freedom of speech.

Censorship was the last thing they were interested in.

In striking contrast, the survey mentioned above shows a growing desire for increased censorship; 51% favoring speech codes, 63% wanting codes that in essence forbid a professor from saying anything in class that might make some feel uncomfortable ('discomfiting' them), and 30% of the self-identified 'liberal' students ready to call the First Amendment outdated, not nearly restrictive enough; meaning, they were in favor of State-applied censorship as a way of life.

What that last-mentioned result really means, we are convinced, is that only 30% of the liberal students were honest enough to admit that they had no interest in granting those who disagreed with them the right and freedom to express it publicly. And especially that is true when it comes to religion and Christians stating what they considered to be sin and error and displeasing to Almighty God.

How 'discomfiting'!

Such freedom must be sharply curtailed.

To be sure, only 30% of the liberals polled admitted they judged the First Amendment to be outdated for our times. What has become self-evident is that censorship is part and parcel of the liberal agenda across the board, both in church and State, in university administrations and the federal courts. When in the minority, they vigorously

insist on the right of dissent and to voice their contrary view. But put liberals in power and dissent by the 'conservative' party (whether in ecclesiastical or political affairs) is now denounced as divisive and working unrest in church and State. "Such are disturbers of the peace. This ought not be allowed. Censor them for their 'hateful' speech."

What we find 'discomfiting' about the above results is not that students favor having a speech code as such. Surely, the parents of our Christian schools insist on a speech code. Scripture defines what is acceptable and unacceptable. No cursing, swearing, or vulgarity. No speaking to others in demeaning language. And the list goes on. And surely, lack of adherence to the speech code (or lack of enforcement by a teacher and administrator) could mean expulsion from our schools.

That's not the problem.

Even in secular society freedom of speech does not mean one has the right to say whatever one feels like saying. In a landmark case dealing with First Amendment rights back in the 1920s, Chief Justice Holmes of the Supreme Court pointed out that the law does not protect one's right to shout "Fire! Fire!" in a crowded theater, causing a panic and posing risk for injuries. Words that pose a real and present danger to the safety of others are not covered by the First Amendment.

In public universities there is room for speech codes of some sort. Should Christian students have to endure persistent blasphemy by

lecturers or personal ridicule on campus simply because some hate and detest Christianity?

Of course not. Such ought to be forbidden.

And the same goes for subjecting gays and lesbians to public ridicule on campus or Muslims and their Allah to mockery.

Certainly, such is not the proper Christian response to these evils.

Such verbal abuses should be forbidden with penalties attached.

What we find 'discomfiting' with those advocating new speech codes is not a speech code as such, but what these young advocates have in mind with their newly installed speech codes. Or if you will, *why* they want to add to the present speech codes in place.

It is one thing for a public university to declare that university policy prohibits its faculty and students from ridiculing or verbally assaulting anyone due to their race, color, creed, or even sexual preference. It is another matter to put in place policies that are meant to prevent and silence dissent on matters of religion, morals, policies, and issues of national laws.

And that is what this move towards greater censorship on campuses is all about.

And once in place there, you may be sure such censorship will be applied to the 'market place' as well.

What the newly self-appointed 'thought police' have set about to do is to intimidate college administrations into adopting their very lenient code of ethics and (im)moralities. They will then forbid anyone, whether professor or student,

the right and the freedom to express one's dissent to these newly established standards and policies. They have no interest in granting those who think differently the freedom to present their own convictions and assessments.

Such is the mentality of liberal zealots on campuses today.

It is one thing to maintain that freedom of speech is not license to verbally assault another's person, to ridicule his beliefs, or endanger one's safety. It is another to curtail

*A muzzle is being
prepared to silence
biblical truth
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society's abominations
and falsehoods.*

freedom of speech so that one no longer has the right to voice dissent against prevailing opinions and laws. Legalized abortion and gay 'marriage' come to mind.

Such is liberal mentality. No one should have the right to label such things as sin, condemned by God and His Word. Such declarations make too many feel uncomfortable.

It was exactly to protect the right to voice such dissent, and that in a public fashion without fear of legal reprisal, that the Bill of Rights, and the First Amendment in particular, was drawn-up and adopted.

Whatever weaknesses this nation's founding fathers might have

had, their understanding of what constituted freedom of speech in civil affairs and the truly free exercise of religion was not one of them. They understood that the curtailing of these freedoms could lead to but one thing—tyranny! Tyranny of thought itself.

In the end, anything but liberty and justice for all.

What is developing today on college campuses places these freedoms in jeopardy. A muzzle is being prepared to silence biblical truth and its testimony against society's abominations and falsehoods.

We know the days must come. The evidence mounts that the evil is closer than we may think. There is a tide in human affairs that presently runs heavy against what is good and right and true.


And a hurricane of evil repression blows behind it.

The urgency to teach our children what is right and true has never been greater.

But God be thanked, even when the day comes that society informs us that it has removed our right to freedom of speech, God will inform us that in His judgment we still have the right to speak freely and bear testimony.

In fact, it will be our solemn calling.

Ultimately, our freedom of worship and speech does not hinge on our nation's Bill of Rights, but on our status as citizens of Christ's kingdom.

As for the laws of *that* Kingdom, the laws of no earthly kingdom or society can abridge, abrogate, or supersede them. 

■ New Government in Myanmar (Burma)

In the April 4 issue of *Time* we read,

On April 1, Burma, a nation under military dictatorship for nearly five decades, will have a new government headed by the democratic opposition. The triumph of the National League for Democracy (NLD), headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, was a victory for democracy in the face of repression (13).

This is striking. But what does it mean? Is the door of mission work in Myanmar finally opening wide? Will the PRCA, who have had close contact with Rev. Titus and the PRC of Myanmar for so many years, finally be able to call a full-time missionary to Myanmar? It is hard to say. For there are still “many obstacles to progress in Myanmar.” Primarily this: “The military remains a powerful force.”

Fearing the tremendous influence of Suu Kyi, the military government made a law in 2008 that would keep her out of the presidency. In the May 4 issue of *Christian Renewal* we read this:

Aung San Suu Kyi could have easily won the election, but was forbidden to run based on a 2008 law that forbids any citizen of Myanmar who has a foreign spouse or children to run for the post. Aung San Suu Kyi's children are British citizens, as was her late husband. The law seems to have been passed exclusively to keep her out of office, though it's expected that her influence in the new government will be significant (33).

Rather than Suu Kyi, therefore, a close confidant of hers named Htin Kyaw is now president. Nevertheless, Suu Kyi occupies several positions in the new government that give her considerable influence.

But it remains to be seen how much power the new democratic government really has and how much religious freedom will actually be granted in Myanmar. The February 24 issue of *Christian Renewal* had an inter-

view with Presbyterian pastor Mark Robinette, who has made several trips to do mission work in Myanmar since 2012. He said,

The people [of Myanmar] are hesitant to believe that this new government will take control the way it should, even though the election was a landslide. They are very hopeful, however. If things transition nicely, they will be freer than they've ever been (8).

Let us pray earnestly that the exalted Lord Jesus, to whom all authority was given in heaven and on earth, will use this democratic development for the progress of the gospel in Myanmar, for the strengthening of our ties with Rev. Titus and the PRC of Myanmar, and for the opening of a door to a full-time missionary in Myanmar.

■ Trump and Clinton

Here in the United States we are also about to transition to a new administration of government. In case you have not noticed (!), it is a presidential election year. More and more it looks like the two primary candidates on the ballot will be Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. This has to give us reason to pause and reflect. As Reformed Christians, we may not merely evaluate politics politically, but must also consider them eschatologically; that is, with a view to the coming of Christ. Then too, not in expectation of a golden age on earth in which the political realm too will be entirely Christianized, the postmillennial dream. But rather, with the full realization according to biblical and Reformed amillennialism that dark days must precede the glorious appearance of Jesus on the clouds.

What then do we see in this political scene? We notice, first of all, a candidate who was raised Methodist and stands with progressive secularism, and a pro-abortion, pro-homosexual agenda, and thus against those who stand for the truths of the Bible; someone who is also surrounded by allegations of corruption and lies at the highest level of the federal government from her time as Secretary of State. We notice, secondly, a candidate who also claims to be a Christian, but who is on his third marriage; who viciously breathes out contempt for anyone

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who dares to challenge or disagree with him; who shamelessly boasts in his own personal greatness, but who sees no need to ask God for forgiveness; who claims to be a Presbyterian, but is not a member of any local congregation (cf. “Donald Trump’s Problematic Claim,” February 15 issue of the *SB*). We could make a number of judgments about the views and behavior of these candidates. But that is not my purpose here.

Rather, let us evaluate them eschatologically. Then we become struck by the deepening darkness in our land. God is not blessing the USA. God is casting judgment on this nation for its increasing godlessness. Indeed, God through Christ is working out His eternal purpose to glorify Himself in the highest possible way, in the way of sin and grace, judgment and redemption, which includes the development of an anti-Christian kingdom here on earth as the culmination of all the efforts of sinful man to achieve power and glory over against God.

The profile of this Antichrist, both in his political and religious aspects, is revealed in the Word of God. As to his political side, he will be a king “who shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of a time” (Dan. 7:25). The day of Christ shall not come until “that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (II Thess. 2:3-4). All the world will wonder after him and say, “Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies” (Rev. 13:4-5).

Today we see two candidates for the most powerful position of the most powerful nation in the world who have some of the characteristics of this beast who will rise out of the sea. No, not all of the marks... at least not yet. But we certainly observe a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, a showing of oneself as if he is God, and an opposing of the things of God.... The one especially in her views, the other especially in his character. The one and only true Christ warned us: “Take heed that no man deceive you.”

Our great hope over against the man of sin, whoever

he is and whenever he arises, is that “the Lord shall consume [him] with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy [him] with the brightness of his coming” (II Thess. 2:8).

■ Union of United Reformed and Canadian Reformed?

The readers of the *SB* probably recall that the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) and the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) have been engaged in ecumenical dialogue for a number of years now, looking into the possibility of a union of the two denominations. The URC has three phases of ecumenicity and church unity: phase 1—corresponding relations; phase 2—ecclesiastical fellowship; phase 3—church union. Since 2001 the URC and CanRC have been in phase 2 in which, for example, members may transfer their papers freely between the two denominations and pulpits are open to ministers of both denominations. The URC’s Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU) has been pursuing phase 3, full church union. But there has been a strong pushback in the URC.

URC Synod 2014 in Visalia, CA voted to table indefinitely the CERCU’s proposal to move to phase 3.

URC Synod 2016 in Wyoming, MI (this past June) received an overture from Classis Pacific Northwest “to direct CERCU to discontinue all further action, advancement, processes, efforts or steps towards unification with the Canadian Reformed Churches and specifically advancement to Phase Three, Step A.”¹

The CERCU stated in its report to Synod Wyoming,

In our own committee’s discussions last November, as well as in our discussions with the Canadian Reformed, we came to the conclusion together that we will not make any recommendations concerning stepping forward to the next phase of relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches for at least the next six years.


Thus, the Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO) Committee asked synod that it be dismissed since the union of the two denominations, and thus the need for a

¹ Cf. the provisional agenda to the 2016 synod of the URC: <https://www.urchna.org/urchna/Synod2016/ProvisionalAgenda.pdf>.

joint church order, will not be considered again until 2022 at the earliest.

Although it is certainly lamentable that conservative Reformed and Presbyterian churches are divided into so many denominations due to the countless, schismatic attacks of false doctrine throughout history, and that the union of any two of these denominations is exceedingly rare,² we ought at the same time to acknowledge

² It happened in 1892 when the Dutch churches of the Afscheiding (1834) and those of the Doleantie (1886) joined into one denomination called the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands). But before and after the merger there were disputes about doctrinal differences, so that within the denomination there was, practically speaking, a division

the preciousness of denominational unity. I speak now in regard to the Protestant Reformed Churches with our sister churches. We must seek to express the unity of the Spirit, unity in the truth, with other denominations as much as possible. But while doing so, we ought to appreciate and thank God for the unity that we do enjoy among our churches. How good and how pleasant is it for us to dwell together in unity! (Ps. 133:1). Let us *endeavor* to keep that unity (Eph. 4:3). 

between the so-called “A” churches and “B” churches. A compromise was sought in 1905 at the Synod of Utrecht. But the differences remained. Eventually a split occurred in 1944, known as the *Vrijmaking* in which the Liberated Churches began.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

REV. THOMAS MIERSMA

The Fear of God, a Sure Guide Through Folly’s Temptations

All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness.

Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?

Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?

It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

Ecclesiastes 7:15-18

Reflecting further on the sober reality of our life, its trials, and God’s government, Solomon returns to that which he has seen. “All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness” (Eccl. 7:15). That which he has seen evidently gives him pause. He has said, “Consider the works of God: for who can make

that straight, which he hath made crooked?” (Eccl. 7:13). He is not here considering everything he has seen, but all that belongs to the contrast that he now introduces. A just or righteous man perishes, while a wicked man prolongs his life.

How can this be in the light of God’s righteousness? He speaks of this, too, in connection with the character of their walk. The *righteous* man perishes. He does so even as he walks in righteousness or in the sphere of uprightness. He dies. By contrast the *wicked* man, in his wickedness, continues. He does evil, works wickedness and yet, from what can be seen under the sun, he prolongs his life. He does not die. Judgment does not come immediately upon him. How can this be?

He puts this sober observation, therefore, in the context of his own life, “in the days of my vanity.” Man is both a creature of the dust and subject to the curse of God through the Fall and returns to the dust. His life is frail, fleeting, and transitory under the judgment of God upon sin. The world was subjected to vanity through the Fall. His own life also is subject to the transitory character of life in a world under the curse of God upon sin. God, in all that He does, is righteous; but the righteousness of His judgments is a matter of faith in the fear of God. God’s

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ways are higher than our ways. They are both sovereign and transcendent. The divine purpose is unfolded in time and history, and we may observe it, but that does not mean that in the things we see, we can fully understand or find it out. We are to walk by faith in the light of God's Word.

In that connection, it must be kept in mind that he speaks of what can be seen. Our translators bring this out by rendering the word righteous by the word "just"—"a just man." He is not speaking of the man as he stands in heart and conscience before God, but as he appears to us, a just man.

In the light of that broader principle of God's providence, there is one element that can be brought to our attention, and it is to this particularly that he directs us in verses 17 and 18. That is, when what is seen is self-destruction, such that a just or wise man not only perishes, but destroys himself. He is the cause of his own trouble. Likewise, when the wicked walks the way of a fool, he works his own death. Both are rooted in a certain excess. In the light of the conclusion, "For he that feareth God shall come forth of them all" (Eccl. 7:18), this excess is not rooted in the genuine fear of God. It is rooted rather in the flesh in both cases and in the pride of life. He is not, in what follows, advocating a kind of golden mean between virtue and sin. Both are, in fact, sin, and he would guard us from them.

The first speaks of false virtue, "Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" (Eccl. 7:16). Righteousness is set forth, here, from the viewpoint of our walk, an upright walk. To such a walk the justified believer is called in the love of God, a walk that is to be rooted in the fear of God, which keeps His commandments by faith. To be 'over' righteous, however, is a different thing. It is to multiply righteousness, to make it beyond what is commanded. It is self-righteousness. It is the walk of the Pharisee, with the internal appraisal rooted in a trust in one's own virtue, righteousness, and works. It is not the gift of righteousness without works in Christ (justification), nor a humble upright walk in the way of sanctification. It is the spiritual problem of Israel under the law: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness

of God" (Rom. 10:3). The root is a spiritual problem of having a "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom 10:2). This problem is not limited to the New Testament era or the rise of Phariseism after the exile. It is the problem of the church under the law in the Old Testament, and is still with us in the New Testament dispensation. It is the temptation to turn from resting in God's gift of imputed righteousness to trust our own works and our own inventions. It is rooted too in sinful pride that looks down on others.

Similarly, wisdom is a gift of God, which Solomon rightly sought of God. But it could so easily become a seeking after wisdom out of sinful pride for its own sake. One of the things Solomon wrestles with in Ecclesiastes is that wisdom was elusive: "I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me" (Eccl. 7:23). He applied himself to wisdom, "I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness" (Eccl. 7:25). The pursuit of such wisdom has certain dangers to it, namely, that it ceases to be seeking wisdom from God and becomes making "thyself over wise;" that is, it becomes an end in itself, a matter of sinful pride, something misdirected and vain.

A holy zeal after God and understanding can become a spiritual problem when it is corrupted by the flesh and sought out of pride of heart apart from God. Then such zeal becomes what is sometimes called "200 percentism," a false enthusiasm, and a misguided arrogance, which works destruction personally in one's spiritual life but also in the life of God's church. It is the way of being wise in one's own conceit. The Pharisees of Jesus' day, who trusted in their own works and regarded themselves as above the publicans and sinners, are only one example of this. This false zeal in a good cause is perhaps a temptation particularly to those who are young. So Solomon's admonition in what follows applies to this also, "It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand" (Eccl. 7:18). There may also be here a confession of Solomon's own battle with sin and his weakness, though that is an inference and not the main point.


By contrast the text says, "Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?" (Eccl. 7:17). He is not advocating that we sin

a little bit, just not to excess. He is rather pointing out a certain characteristic of sin, that it, as rebellion against God, has a self-destructive impulse in it. Yielding oneself to sin, sin becomes the sinner's master and holds him in bondage. This he has already shown with the bondage to covetousness in the heaping and gathering of the foolish rich man.

He adds to that warning the parallel thought, "neither be thou foolish." The folly of sin, the way of yielding oneself to sin, is a self-destructive foolishness that endangers not only the soul, but also the body and life itself in its recklessness. The wickedness that he has in view is truly foolish in its recklessness, so that it leads to death, an early death according to the measure of man's life. Pride of heart and the seeming fact that one gets away with something for a season or appears to receive no harm leads to the delusion that, 'I can do this with impunity.' The present thrill of some sin grows dull, and one seeks it now in a more exciting and risky form. The risk itself becomes part of the thrill. This is the way of the folly of sin and the deceitfulness of sin. Therefore he asks, "why shouldest thou die before thy time?" The end of sin is destruction; one walking in the risky thrill of sin is hastening to his own destruction, even a premature death according to the time of life.

This twofold warning he would press upon our mind, "It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand" (Eccl. 7:18). Take hold of it and having done so, do not let go of it! The call-

ing to appropriate spiritually this warning is needful, for we are inclined by nature to say, "that doesn't apply to me or this aspect of my life," and to let go of spiritual instruction. We may have such warnings in mind and carry them spiritually but then in some temptation we open our hand and drop them, forgetting all that we know in the moment of the temptation.

The antidote, and what is true wisdom is, "for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all" (Eccl. 7:18). We are not to be deceived by a false zeal or self-righteousness, neither by the temptations of sin and the folly of excess. For a season they may appear to prosper, but their end is destruction and even death. Hence the emphatic, "take hold and do not let go" of the text. The conclusion here gives a reason for hanging on to this instruction. The text, as it were, pictures a path with dangers on either side. To come forth "of them all," that is, of all of these dangers of sin, takes the fear of God. Not one who walks in either of these errors, but the one who fears God *shall* come forth of them all. The fear of God, in meekness, keeps one both from being lifted up in self-righteousness and from the reckless folly of sin. The reason given is also a word of assurance in the battle with sin, he "shall come forth;" his passage is safe. The fear of God is the principle thing, for it gives true wisdom in the pathway of life. Indeed, this is the conclusion he would have us come to at the end of the book: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). 

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

PROF. RONALD CAMMENG

Revelation, Inspiration, and Infallibility (16)

"What Saith the Scripture:" The Bible's Authority

Introduction

The Bible is authoritative. The Bible is the authority over faith (what we believe) and over conduct (how we live). It is the authority for the individual believer, wheth-

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er layperson or officebearer, whether professional or day-laborer, whether company executive, farmer, or carpenter, whether housewife, student, or office worker. The Bible is the authority over the church as a whole, whether the local congregation, consistory, classis, or synod; whether in the established congregation or on the mission field; whether in the seminary classroom or in debate at one of

the church's assemblies. Attention must be given by all to one voice. All must bow before one scepter. One sword must be unsheathed for safeguarding the truth and for defense against the lie. Before the Scriptures the Christian's response must be that of Samuel when God spoke directly to him: "Speak, for thy servant heareth" (I Sam. 3:10).

Scripture is authoritative *because* it is the infallible Word of God. If Scripture was not the inerrant Word of God, neither could it be authoritative. If Scripture was in any respect the word of man—the weak, often inaccurate, in many instances mistaken word of man—it would be impossible for Scripture to function as the authority in the church. Scripture's authority is dependent on its infallibility. Because Scripture is the Word of God, it possesses the authority of God Himself. Just as parents' words are authoritative for their children, and as the boss' word is authoritative for the worker, so the Word of God is authoritative for His people.

In the past the church has used certain theological terms to express the supreme authority of the Bible. It is always good to be aware of these theological terms as a helpful way of expressing biblical truth. Formerly, the church has referred to Scripture as the *norma normans non normata* (the norm with no norm over it) or the *norma causativa* (the causative norm) or the *norma absoluta* (the absolute norm). Scripture is *the* norm or standard; everything must be judged (normed) according to it and by comparison with it. The Reformers referred to Scripture as the "norm of norms, and without norm." With these words they confessed their belief in the sole authority of Scripture. "Norm of norms" is to be understood like such similar expressions as "king of kings" and "lord of lords." Scripture is the supreme norm. As the norm over all lesser norms, Scripture is without norm. As a norm, Scripture is in a class by itself.

Alongside of Scripture, as a secondary authority subservient to Scripture, are the creeds. Traditionally Reformed theologians have referred to the authority of the creeds as *norma normata*, that is the normed norm. The creeds are the normed norm inasmuch as they are normed to Scripture, the ultimate norm. Since they are normed to Scripture and to the extent to which they are normed to Scripture, the creeds are authoritative. Their authority is a real authority, but it is a *derived* authority

and a *secondary* authority. The authority of the creeds is always subject to the authority of the Bible.

Biblical Support

In more than one place and in many different ways the Bible teaches its supreme authority.

Both classic passages on biblical inspiration and infallibility teach Scripture's authority. In II Timothy 3:15-17 the fact that Scripture is "God-breathed" (v. 16) implies Scripture's authority. If Scripture is indeed the breath and Word of God, it carries with it the authority of God whose Word it is. Additionally, since Scripture "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," it must be authoritative. Scripture can only be profitable for doctrine if it is authoritative in doctrinal matters. Scripture can only be profitable for reproof if Scripture is authoritative in its warnings, reproofs, and rebukes. Scripture can only be profitable for correction if Scripture is authoritative in setting forth the standard according to which Christians are to be corrected. Scripture can only be profitable for instruction in righteousness if what Scripture teaches regarding Christian living is authoritative. It ought to be obvious that all the profit of Scripture is dependent on Scripture's authority.

II Peter 1:19-21 also clearly establishes Scripture's authority, an authority like no other authority in all the world. The apostle teaches in this passage that the written Word of God (the "more sure word of prophecy") is as much the Word of God as the word proclaimed by God on the Mount of Transfiguration, when God said from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (v. 17). Since Scripture is the Word of God, it must also carry the authority of God whose Word it is. The authority of Scripture also comes out in this passage when about Scripture it is said that it is "a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (v. 19). Since Scripture is the only light that shines in this dark and evil world, we ought to walk in its light. As much as the light ought to be followed by those who are walking in a dark place, if they are to avoid the pitfalls, obstacles, and dangers that surround them all unseen, so ought also Scripture to be followed by the Christian. That establishes the authority of Scripture.

The Lord Jesus teaches the authority of Scripture by the example of His own use of it. From the beginning of His public ministry, time and time again, Jesus appealed to the Holy Scriptures in support of what He taught, in defense of what He did, and as the basis for His rebukes. He set the pattern at the time of His confrontation with the devil in the wilderness at the time of His temptations, immediately following His baptism and the inauguration of His public ministry. What did Jesus do when the devil came tempting him? How did He respond to Satan's temptations? In all three cases He appealed to Holy Scripture. "It is written," He said (Matt. 4:4, 7, and 10). To such an extent did Jesus regard Scripture as authoritative that, rather than to appeal to His own authority as the Son of God, He appealed to the authority of Holy Scripture. What was written decided the issue, so far as our Lord was concerned.

Christ's apostles followed the example of their Lord. For the apostles, too, it was not a matter of the authority that they possessed as Christ's apostles, but it was a matter of what the Scriptures taught. This was how the issue of the way in which the Gentiles were to be admitted into the New Testament church was resolved at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. The decisive speech at the council was that given by James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, who had become a prominent elder in the Jerusalem congregation. It "pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church" to follow the recommendation that he made. But it pleased them to follow that recommendation because James supported his recommendation that the Gentiles be added to the church as Gentiles and not by way of circumcision according to the teaching of Scripture. James appealed to Old Testament prophecy in order to support his position, especially what is written in Amos 9. For James and for the entire Jerusalem Council the question before the assembly was decided on the basis of Scripture. Scripture was the authority.

Throughout his epistles, the apostle Paul follows the same pattern. Time and again he appeals to Scripture in order to support what he is teaching, whether what he is teaching is doctrinal instruction or the nature of the Christian life. In Romans 3, for example, the apostle is setting forth the truth of original sin and total depravity. How does he establish the truth of what he is teaching? By appeal to Scripture: "As it is written," he says in verse

10. "What things soever the law saith," he adds in verse 19. And in verse 21 he appeals to that which is "witnessed by the law and the prophets." Clearly, for the great apostle there was no higher authority for his preaching and teaching than the authority of sacred Scripture.

To such an extent did the apostles submit to the authority of Scripture that they were willing to suffer persecution for the sake of their obedience to it. That, of course, is the great test of one's submission to the authority of Scripture. It is easy enough to acknowledge Scripture as authoritative—until obedience to the Scriptures requires of us sacrifice, hardship, or persecution. Then the matter of Scripture's authority is put to the test. Obedience to the Scriptures meant for the apostles enduring false accusation, imprisonment, being beaten and threatened, to which their response was: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Such a day is coming for Christians in North America, as indeed is the experience of Christians in other countries around the world at present. Then our conviction of Scripture's authority will be put to the test. God grant that our response is the same as was the apostles' long ago.

Confessional Support

The Reformation brought about a return to the supreme and sole authority of Holy Scripture. *Sola Scriptura*, the great watch-word of the Reformation, was a slogan that trumpeted especially the Reformers' conviction regarding Scripture's authority. The *sola* of Scripture was especially its *sola* as the authority in the church, an authority above that of the pope, church councils, and ecclesiastical tradition. It was a *sola* against which every theological teaching, worship practice, ecclesiastical verdict, and personal decision was to be judged. Nothing was above the Scripture; everything was subject to its authority.

This view of Scripture's supreme authority was incorporated into the Reformation creeds. The title of Belgic Confession, Article 5 is "From Whence the Holy Scriptures Derive their Dignity and Authority." The article goes on to state that the sixty-six canonical books of the Bible are "for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith." In Article 6 of the Belgic Confession the canonical books are distinguished from the apocryphal books, which may never "detract from the authority of the...sacred books." Article 7 adds:

We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe, unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein. For, since the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in them, at large, it is unlawful for any one though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures; nay, though it were an angel from heaven, as the apostle Paul saith.... Neither do we consider of equal value any writing of men, however holy these men may have been, with those divine Scriptures, nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees, or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, for the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule which the apostles have taught us saying, Try the spirits, whether they are of God. Likewise, if there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.

The very first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith is devoted to the truth of Holy Scripture. A number of the paragraphs in this chapter affirm the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. Paragraph 4 states:

The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.

Paragraph 6 teaches that

[t]he whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

And paragraph 10 concludes:

The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scripture.

The Second Helvetic Confession asserts Scripture's supreme authority when it concludes in chapter 2:


Wherefore we do not permit ourselves, in controversies

about religion or matters of faith, to urge our case with only the opinions of the fathers or decrees of councils; much less by received customs, or by the large number of those who share the same opinion, or by the prescription of a long time. Who is the Judge? Therefore, we do not admit any other judge than God himself, who proclaims by the Holy Scriptures what is true, what is false, what is to be followed, or what to be avoided. So we do assent to the judgments of spiritual men which are drawn from the Word of God.

Who is the Judge? God is the Judge. Where does God issue His judgments? In the Holy Scriptures. Why in the Holy Scriptures? Because the Scriptures are the Word of God—the Word of God in the words of men. Because Scripture is the Word of God, inspired by God, infallible and inerrant in its entirety, Scripture is also authoritative. It is, in fact, the supreme and only authority in the whole world.

I doubt that very few, if anyone, who reads this article would disagree with the teaching that the Bible is the supreme authority in the church and in the life of the believer. We all confess that by virtue of our subscription to the Reformed confessions. But what about practically? On a practical level, do we honor the authority of Scripture? We all ought to examine ourselves. The Bible says that we are to seek first the kingdom of heaven, believing that God will take care of our earthly needs. Do we seek first in our lives the kingdom of heaven? The Bible says that we are not to set our heart upon riches, earthly fame, or glory among men. Have we set our hearts on riches, earthly fame, or glory among men? The Bible calls us to live in the world, but not be one with the world. Do we live antithetically, in the world while not of the world; or, are we friends with the children of this world and run with them in the same excess of riot (I Pet. 4:4)? The Bible calls us to honor our parents and all who are in authority over us. Do we honor those through whom it pleases God to govern our lives? The Bible calls us to date and marry in the Lord. Are we dating and do we intend to marry in the Lord? The Lord calls us to live chastely and temperately in this present evil world, and not give ourselves to indulgence in sexual uncleanness. Do we strive to live out of the conviction that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit? The Bible calls us to live faithfully in marriage; it

calls husbands to love their wives and wives to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord. Are we living faithfully in our marriages? Do we as husbands love, nourish, and cherish our wives? And do we as wives reverence, submit to, and assist our husbands in all things?

It is one thing to subscribe to the truth of Scripture's sole authority. It is quite another thing to live in such a way that we submit to Scripture's authority. May God give us the needed grace to honor this first and outstanding perfection of Scripture. 

GOD'S WONDERFUL WORKS

REV. JAMES LANING

Foundational Principles (1)

God's Works: A Most Elegant Book

So far we have talked about God's revelation in Scripture, the miraculous signs that took place during the time that Scripture was being revealed, and the lying signs and wonders that God has told us will be performed by false teachers in the last days. We now turn to consider how God makes Himself known by the creation that He has called into existence.

God makes Himself known both by what He *says* and by what He *does*. Referring now to the latter, Scripture tells us that God makes Himself known by what He has made and by what He does with what He has made. There are some things that even unbelievers know about God from the creation itself, even apart from Scripture. But those who believe the Scriptures understand and receive with joy in their heart what God teaches us by His creation and government of the universe.

What God makes known by the creation, and why

Scripture tells us that the creation declares to all human beings that there is an eternal and powerful God who created all these things. We sing of this in the Psalms:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their

line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world (Ps. 19:1-4a).

The apostle Paul quoted this passage and said that all nations have heard this declaration: "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18).

This declaration is not sufficient to convert man. Nor is that God's purpose with it. Rather, God desires all human beings to hear this in order that the unbeliever might be without excuse:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

God's purpose with this declaration for the believer is different. God works in the believer to believe and profit from Scripture's explanations of the illustrations found in the creation.

God's Word and His works: Which is more clear?

God makes Himself known by both His Word and His works. But of the two, it is by God's *Word* that He makes Himself known more clearly and fully. We confess this in Article 2 of the Belgic Confession:

We know Him by two means: first, by the creation, pres-

Rev. Laning is pastor of Hull Protestant Reformed Church in Hull, Iowa.

ervation and government of the universe.... Secondly, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known by His holy and divine Word....

In the creation God provides us with pictures that illustrate for us what God tells us in His Word. Having God's Word along with these pictures is better than having the Scriptures without them. But of these two means, it is God's Word that makes Him known to us with greater clarity.

This is similar to how we make ourselves known to others. We make ourselves known by what we say and by what we do. Which of these makes us known more clearly and fully? When I ask this question to children, they frequently say, "by our works." But it is actually *our words* that show forth more clearly what is going on in the heart. As our Lord said,

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh (Luke 6:45).

It is certainly true that a person is shown to be a hypocrite if his actions contradict his confession (and that is what a child usually means when he answers, "by our works"). But it is still true that our words make known more clearly what is going on inside of us.

We believers do know this, even if we may not have thought of it this way. If a believer goes about his own business, is an honest and diligent worker, but keeps his mouth shut about what he believes, the persecution he will experience will be relatively little. But if he begins to speak about what he believes and starts explaining how Scripture speaks against popular false doctrines and sinful practices, then those around him will see much more clearly who he is, and the persecution from those of this world will greatly increase.

Understanding this, we are not surprised that Jesus was crucified only a few years after He began His public preaching. Then we also recognize that the ungodly to-day who openly speak against what God makes known in creation, especially despise what God says in His Word.


A (not the) most elegant book

Although it has sometimes been misquoted, the Belgic Confession does not speak of God's creation as *the* most elegant book, but as *a* most elegant book: "We know Him by two means: first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book." The Scripture is the one book that is exalted above all others. The creation is then likened to a most elegant book that illustrates for us what

God tells us in His Word.

The relationship between illustrations and words is commonly misunderstood. Pictures by themselves are not better than words. Words and pictures *together* are better than words all by themselves. The sacraments, for example, are illustrations. Yet, they do not teach us better than the preaching does. Rather, it is the preaching and sacraments *together* that are better than the preaching by itself.

It is similar with regard to the illustrations in creation. Learning from the creation is not better than learning from the Scriptures. But having the Scriptures as well as the illustrations in creation—illustrations that the Scriptures themselves explain to us—is better than having the Scriptures without those illustrations.

The multitude of illustrations that God has given us in His creatures, as well as in the way He preserves and governs them, helps to impress upon us what God tells us in His Word. Therefore, it is important that we take note of these illustrations, meditating upon and believing the explanation of them that God Himself provides for us in the Scriptures. 

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But having the Scriptures
as well as the illustrations in creation
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Sufficient

“To the one we are the saviour of death unto death; and to the other the saviour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?”

II Corinthians 2:16

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.”

II Corinthians 3:5

Just as it was with Paul, so is it with you. To him was committed a most glorious work, to preach the gospel of Christ. It was his calling to take up that work in a very different area of work than the rest of the apostles. Since Christ called him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, he knew it was his duty to travel far, to preach the gospel where Christ was unknown. And as he considered his work, he knew that he was insufficient for it.

Your calling is certainly not that of an apostle. Nor is your calling likely that even of the office of the ministry of the Word. But you do have a calling that is similar in kind. Your calling as a Christian is to confess the truth of God's Word in this world, to testify of the hope that is in your heart.

You have a testimony to give. This testimony is an important implication of confession of faith, and is part of that confession itself. Public profession of faith is confession of faith that is public.

Your confession of faith is public as you make it in the church of Jesus Christ. Approved in private by the consistory, your confession of faith is made public as you stand up in the church and answer “Yes” to the questions that are asked of you. You do so in a worship service that is public. That worship service is advertised, and it is not an exclusive meeting. Any one in the world who wishes can hear your confession of faith in that worship service. It is also a public confession because you join your voice to that of the church as she proclaims the testimony of the gospel in all the world.

Rev. VanderWal is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Wingham, Ontario.

However, the very idea of a confession of faith, as it comes from your heart and your mouth, also means that it must be made wherever you go in the world. Your confession is a matter of consistency. You have one heart and one mouth. As that heart and mouth confessed the truth of God's Word in the church, so in the world they must continue to speak the same language and express the same faith.

In the world and, especially, speaking to the world, your Christian duty is to confess your faith, to make the truth of God's Word known in the world. In that duty is your privilege to manifest the glory of the one true God through His Son Jesus Christ. In that duty is your calling to declare the truth over against the lie, as part of the Christian's battle. Your blessing is to be an instrument both for the conversion of the elect and the hardening of the reprobate, to be a savor of life unto life and a savor of death unto death!

Are you sufficient for this high and glorious calling?

How are you at bringing that witness and testimony? Do you feel bold or timid, competent or incompetent? In short, do you feel sufficient or insufficient? If you feel insufficient, you join the ranks of the apostle Paul and his company. When he looked at the glorious work that was committed to him and his company, he did not feel sufficient. “Who is sufficient for these things?” Not he. Not his company. Not anyone that he could think of.

As far as your witness and testimony is concerned, there are two kinds of insufficiencies to talk about. The first insufficiency has to do with *your abilities*, that is, with how to work from the ground of Holy Scripture and reason from it to show those you have discussions with what they ought to believe and how they ought to live.

In this blessed work you will discover that you are insufficient. You may find that you are unable to use reason to move from the simple statements of Scripture to show how it demands belief and confession of this or that truth. You may be unable to remember the Scriptures well enough to show the things that you believe are grounded on them. You may encounter some difficulties

in explaining what you believe in a way that is clear and understandable to the one who is listening to you.

To be sure, there is room to become more sufficient in this area. Your abilities here are something you can improve, and there are many ways to improve. You can grow in your knowledge of Scripture through study. Engage in conversations with your fellow saints (parents, elders, minister as well as Christian friends), simply going over this territory, making it more and more familiar. Reading also is of great value, but so too is being able to talk about what you are reading. Get discussions going! Make sure that your discussions go in both directions. Be sure to listen and think about what you are hearing, in order truly to interact in your discussions.

Even so, you can always expect that you will be confronted with your own insufficiency. You will sometimes find yourself at a loss. What to say? How to explain? What ground to give, or what argument to present?

The other kind of insufficiency is deeper, more spiritual, and has to do with *your heart*. You can know this kind of insufficiency when the first kind of insufficiency presents itself. When you see that you might be losing an argument, what happens? Do you become angry and bitter? Does the volume of your voice increase? Do you become sarcastic in your speech and harsh in your tone? Do you perhaps become scornful and derisive in your attitude toward the person you are arguing with. Do you begin to “tell them off,” and attack them with your words?

This second kind of insufficiency is very different than the first. Not only is it deeper, it is also more fundamental. It shows to the person you are talking to that you are simply stuck, weak, and helpless in your position. He can see through the fact that you yourself may not be convinced of the truth you are confessing. In fact, there is such a difference between these two kinds of insufficiencies (ability and heart) that you can be completely insufficient with the first, but not with the second.

What does it mean to know that you have this second kind of sufficiency, this *heart* sufficiency? How can you demonstrate that your sufficiency is from God?

Let us say that you have entered into a discussion. You have spoken the truth, and you have been able to support the truth to some degree. You receive a reply that you cannot answer. But you do not become angry and upset. You maintain your calm and peace. And you

say something like, “I cannot answer that, but I do know that this is the truth of God’s Word.”


When you give an answer like that and maintain your calm and peace, you show by your response that you have a sufficiency outside of yourself on which you wholly rely. It is of God and of His Word. You point back to the Word, and you honor and uphold the Word of God.

There are two points to this divine sufficiency.

The first point of sufficiency is that God has given to you exactly what you need to be His faithful witness in the world. He has given to you His Word and faith in His Word. He has given to you such a faith that from your heart you confess His name and truth in the world. That sufficiency may be eloquence. It may not be. That sufficiency may be a strong memory to recall the Scriptures, down to chapter and verse. It may not be. That sufficiency may be a clear, logical reasoning from the Scriptures. It may not be. At bottom, that sufficiency is that you speak the truth and that you declare you know it to be the truth of God’s Word. That is a sufficiency that is your rest and peace when you have spoken.

The second point of sufficiency from God is that He alone is able to make your witness powerful and mighty. On the one hand, your eloquent, well-reasoned, biblically grounded confession cannot by itself lead to a belief and confession of the truth. That is not because you did not say enough, but because God was not pleased to use it for the salvation of the hearer. He was pleased to use it to harden him.

On the other hand, there may be the simple witness and testimony of one who speaks and who says only that he knows it to be the truth of God’s Word. That testimony does lead to the salvation of the hearer. That testimony breaks someone’s unbelief, and it leads him to forgiveness of sin and salvation in Christ through faith in Him. Why? Because God’s particular, sovereign grace made that testimony sufficient. He was pleased to bless it to the salvation of the hearer.

In this sufficiency of God, find and know your own sufficiency. Use your mind and heart to their fullest capabilities to know and speak the truth of God’s Word. Make sure they are sufficient with God’s sufficient gifts to think and speak. But, as you use His gifts to bring the word and testimony of His truth, rest always in His sufficiency. 

Humble Orthodoxy, Joshua Harris. Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2013. Pp. 83. [Reviewed by Matt Kortus.]

In the apostle Paul's second letter to Timothy, he urges Timothy to "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1:13). By these words, Paul encourages the young pastor to orthodoxy. In the same letter, Paul exhorts Timothy to instruct *in meekness* those who are in opposition (2:25). By these words, Paul encourages the young pastor to humility. In his most recent book, Joshua Harris, author of several books including *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, draws from these verses and the rest of the Bible to affirm that both orthodoxy and humility matter.

Harris begins by establishing orthodoxy as right thinking about God. He rightly affirms that the truths of faith that constitute orthodoxy are those clearly taught in Scripture and the historic creeds of the Christian faith. Harris continues by asserting that as Christians we must be committed to maintaining sound doctrine.

Having established the need for orthodoxy,¹ Harris continues by explaining the need for *humble* orthodoxy. As he writes, "We must care deeply about truth, and we must also defend and share this truth with compassion and humility" (5). The author draws from II Timothy to explain that while holding to sound doctrine is essential for the Christian, we must do so with humility. In other words, your attitude matters.

The basis for this humility comes from the message of Christian orthodoxy itself. "Genuine orthodoxy—the heart of which is the death of God's Son for undeserving sinners—is the most humbling human-pride-smashing message in the world. And if we truly know the gospel of grace, it will create in us a heart of humility and grace toward others" (30).

When we understand the doctrine of grace in the gospel, we are filled with thanksgiving that God chose us. The doctrine of grace produces humility, not pride.

¹ *Humble Orthodoxy* represents the author's work to expand on the last chapter of a previous book entitled *Dug Down Deep: Building Your Life On Truths That Last*, in which the author focuses on the need for sound doctrine and orthodoxy.

Mr. Kortus is a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, MI, and a second-year student at the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

Harris continues by demonstrating that a desire to worship the holy God better must drive our pursuit of biblical orthodoxy, rather than a desire to prove that we are better than someone else. Furthermore, to have right doctrine is not enough. Instead, we must concern ourselves with applying the doctrines and truths that we believe to our own lives. To evaluate this, Harris recommends that we ask ourselves whether or not we are expending more energy to applying God's Word to our own hearts and lives than we are to criticizing others who detract from it.

Harris draws from II Timothy 2:15, where Paul exhorts Timothy to present himself to God for approval. As Christians, we know we are *supposed* to live for God's approval, but often we are guilty of seeking the approval of our place in history, our culture, and our Christian peers. However, only God's approval matters. This means that humble orthodoxy matters "because God's truth matters and because the reality of God's character must shape our lives" (60). In addition, Harris rightly reminds the reader that the message of the gospel is and always will be offensive to sinners.


Harris concludes with a description of heaven. Once we arrive in heaven, we will discover how wrong we were about so many different things. In addition, only in heaven will we realize just how precious the truths of the gospel really are.

Humble Orthodoxy demonstrates the need for both orthodoxy and humility—we cannot have one without the other. The author writes in a very concise manner, leaving out any filler that would detract from the main points of the book. The end result of this: a book only 61 pages in length, making it very accessible to all readers. Nearly every page contains content worth highlighting.

Negatively, due to the short length, a few points were not fully developed. For example, Harris rightly points out that showing love for God and our neighbor demands that we oppose false teachings. In fact, it would be unloving on our part to remain silent about lies that would lead to another person's eternal ruin. However, Harris does not elaborate on practical methods for challenging unorthodox teaching while maintaining a spirit of humility.

Overall, I strongly recommend this book to all who hold dear the doctrines of sovereign saving grace. Grace that is irresistible, effectual, and particular. Grace that leaves no room for works, merit, or conditions. Grace that should only ever produce humility in the heart of a sinner who has experienced it. It is a gross irony if we, who champion sovereign grace, become lifted in pride because of our orthodoxy.

Sadly though, our sinful natures are characterized by such a pride. *Humble Orthodoxy* reminds us of our calling:

“to be ready always to give an answer...with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). 

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

Evangelism Activities

The Reformed Witness Committee of the five Siouxland area churches recently published their May newsletter. To summarize some of their activities: 1) the Evangelism Committee of Calvary PRC in Hull, IA plans to host another Summer Bible Camp and possibly a Personal Evangelism Conference. They also made a mailing to 1,700 addresses in the nearby town of Sheldon, inviting the recipients to attend one or more of their church services. 2) The Evangelism Committee of the Doon, IA PRC is in the process of erecting signs along the roads into Doon notifying travelers of the church's location. They also continue to publish articles by Rev. Joshua Engelsma in the *Doon Press* and have organized a fall lecture for November 4 in Dordt College. 3) The Evangelism Committee of the Edgerton, MN PRC held a presentation by Rev. Douglas Kuiper entitled “Signs, Wonders, and Mighty Deeds: Miracles in the Bible,” and are making plans for a fall presentation. 4) The Evangelism Committee of Heritage PRC of Sioux Falls, SD conducted a Bible study in nearby Harrisburg and plan to hold a summer workshop entitled “Witnessing in the Workplace.” 5) The Evangelism Committee of the Hull, IA PRC reported on the Young Reformers Bible Study held at Dordt College and contemplates placing the

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

Standard Bearer, Beacon Lights, and other literature in area libraries. We are glad to note that these committees are alive, well, and working!

School Activities

If you are vacationing in Colorado, or passing through on your way to Redlands, the Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School Fund-raisers are ready to lodge you, as they are again sponsoring their Bed & Breakfast Project! This will be the 17th year of this successful and enjoyable fund raiser. Reservations can be made online at solanyk5@aol.com or by phone at (970) 669-9005. Welcome to beautiful Colorado!

Minister Activities

On June 12 Rev. Garry Eriks, pastor at Hudsonville, MI PRC was led by God to decline the call that had been issued to him from the congregation at First PRC of Holland, MI. May the King of the church grant contentment and peace with His will concerning this call. From Holland's new trio of Revs. C. Griess, B. Huizinga, and R. Kleyn the congregation voted on July 17 to call Rev. C. Griess.

The Council at Doon, IA PRC presented to the congregation a new trio from which to call a third missionary to the Philippines. The men of Doon planned to call on July 24 from the trio of Rev. A. Brummel, Rev. C. Griess, and Rev. B. Huizinga. May God guide these proceedings for the good of His universal church.

Denominational Activities

Synod 2016 of the PRCA met June 14-17 in Hull, IA PRC. In addition to the routine work of each synod, some interesting details concerned the work of the Psalter revision committee, the approval of a concept for examining seven students in 2017, approval to call a third missionary to the Philippines, approval of a proposal from the Domestic Mission Committee to add a missionary with Byron Center PRC as the calling church, and the treatment of an appeal of recent decisions of Classis East. See the editorial in the July issue for all the details.

The evening of June 24 marked a momentous event for Pittsburgh Protestant Reformed Fellowship. That group was organized into the newest Protestant Reformed Church and welcomed into the denomination! Rev. W. Bruinsma preached the sermon from Luke 12:32, “Fear Not, Little Flock.” Rev. A. den Hartog completed the service with the reading of Classis East's decision to proceed with institution and also read the names of the charter members. Voting and installation of officebearers also took place that night. We rejoice with the members there in this historic event and pray God's continued blessing in the future as a sister congregation in the PRCA!

From their first trio of Revs. W. Bruinsma, C. Griess (Calvary PRC), and R. Kleyn (Covenant of Grace PRC), the newly organized Pittsburgh PRC extended a call to

Missionary-pastor W. Bruinsma on Sunday, July 10.

Mission Activities

The Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines met June 13 in the Maranatha PRC in Valenzuela from 9:00 A.M. until about 4:30 P.M. The main item on the agenda was the examination, of Rev. Leovy Trinidad (pastor of the Maranatha PRC), according to Article 9 of the Church Order. Rev. Trinidad preached a sermon on John 1:1, and then underwent three-plus hours of oral examination. The brother gave a very good account of his knowledge and convictions of the Reformed faith, and the Classis unanimously approved his examination. The Classis gave him a diploma and declared him to be a minister of the Word and sacraments within the PRCP. We thank the Lord for adding another pastor to the denomination there and for upholding Rev. Trinidad during his examination.

On July 1 Rev. Daniel Holstege was installed as the second missionary to the Philippines at a call to worship for the congregation in Doon, IA. Rev. J. Engelsma preached from Luke 5:4-11: "A Fisher of Men." Afterward, the congregation had a time of refreshments and fellowship, allowing them the opportunity to greet Rev. Holstege and his wife and extend words of encouragement to them. On Sunday, July 3 Rev. Holstege preached his inaugural sermon in Doon from Matthew 28: 18-20, "The Great Commission." Rev. Holstege's parents, his wife's parents, and other family members were able to travel to Doon for the occasion.

Rev. Richard Smit and son Jay spent about a month in the Philip-

pines while Rev. Daniel and Sharon Kleyn were on furlough in the USA. What follows is a response by Rev. Smit when asked how they were doing in that far-away land:

For Jay and me, life here briefly again seems routine. Nothing strikes us as out of the ordinary. The climate, stores, traffic, rainy season downpours, and food all seem the same as they were. There are some new stores in Antipolo that are really nice. There is a lot of construction around the NAIA terminals, on Marcos highway for the LRT2 extension to Masinag, near where the Berean PRC buildings are located, and along the Sumulong highway that we use to get to Bible study, catechism, and the worship services at the area churches. We're busy with the work of preaching and teaching, but also with some house cleaning and some other odd jobs that the Kleyns arranged for Jay. So, we are being kept as busy as we need to be, and still have time to enjoy the visit as well. I do laundry and dishwashing and floor mopping in our old house. Jay takes care of the Kleyns' house. He is power-washing the concrete in the front of our old house. I tried to fix the gas dryer at our old house, but looks like it needs some new parts. Who does the cooking? We both do. Jay can do breakfast. I try to do supper. We like rice, and to my great delight that is very easy to make with a rice cooker. However, several times already I have absentmindedly lost track of time because of being absorbed in my reading, writing, or other preparation, and suddenly it's time to eat! Now what?! In such situations, I

have deferred to the convenience of fast food delivery on a motor-bike! Of course, it's nowhere near as healthy or tasty as the cooking of my organized and faithful wife, but it has averted hunger a time or two! ☺ For supper devotions, we are reading through the book of Matthew....

Sister Church Activities

From the June newsletter of the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church, Ballymena, Northern Ireland we find the following:

These recent additions mean that the CPRC now consists of 16 families, 37 communicant members, 14 baptized members, and 51 total members. This is the largest we have ever been, though we are still a relatively small church. Our numerical growth has been slow but steady, with three steps forward and two (or two and a half) steps back. Our testimony is that the Lord is faithful and that Jesus Christ alone builds His church.

The BRF [British Reformed Fellowship] Conference begins exactly one month from today (16-23 July). Rev. A. Lanning from Singapore and Prof. D. Engelsma are our two main speakers on the theme "Behold I Come Quickly, the Reformed Biblical Truth of the End." Bookings are almost finalized and a good body of believers are coming. We are expecting a blessed week with the rich exposition of the Word and the sweet communion of the saints!

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

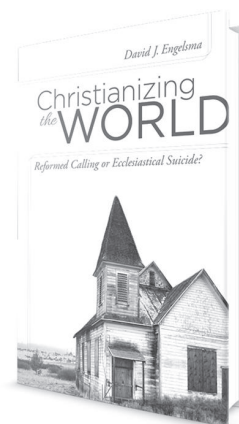
Christianizing the World: Reformed Calling or Ecclesiastical Suicide?

David J. Engelsma

The author examines Kuyper's theory of a common grace of God that intends the Christianizing of culture, or way of earthly life, of the world outside the church. The author also answers the question whether such Christianizing of the world by a common grace of God is the calling of Reformed Christians, as Kuyper urged, or ecclesiastical suicide.

Christianizing the World examines the theory of common grace and its cultural ambitions in light of the Reformed creeds and holy scripture, particularly the passages of scripture to which Kuyper and his disciples mainly appeal.

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Wedding Anniversary

■ We rejoice and give thanks to God our heavenly Father for His love endures forever. His providential care to our parents has been an inheritance to us and is our reason to give thanks and celebrate. August 10, 2016 marks 50 years of marriage in the Lord for

HENRY and MARY KIPPERS.

In love from:

✿ Robert and Carolyn Kippers

Eric (in glory) Greg, Ryan, Amy

✿ Robert and Patricia McEwen

✿ Brian and Elaine Onderwater

Naomi, Jonas

✿ Charlene Connelly

Chondra, Liam, Jordyn

"Rejoice in the Lord, alway: and again I say rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

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. Material for inclusion in the agenda must be in my hands by Monday, August 29. 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, e-mail to: george@vrooml.com.

Rev. Doug Kuiper,

Stated Clerk of Classis West

Classis East Notice

■ Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 14, 2016 at the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, Wyoming, MI. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than August 15, 2016.

Jon J. Huiskens

Stated Clerk

PRICE INCREASE FOR STANDARD BEARER BOUND VOLUMES—Binding new issues: \$42.00. Binding own issues: \$24.00.

Reformed Witness Hour

August 2016

Rev. Carl Haak

Date	Topic	Text
August 7	"The True Christian Life"	II Timothy 4:7, 8
August 14	"True Faith"	John 3:36
August 21	"The Creation"	Genesis 1:1
August 28	"Christian Education Is Covenant Education"	Isaiah 39:19

ERRATA:

■ In the caption for the picture of the 2016 delegates to synod on the cover of the July issue of the *Standard Bearer*, the names of Rev. Rodney Kleyn and Elder Keith Bruinsma (between Elders Brian VanEngen and Howard Pastoor) were inadvertently omitted.