

The Standard Bearer

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The Victory of Faith

Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

Habakkuk 1:12, 13

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Habakkuk 2:4

The church of God in this world is the church *militant*. Her picture in the Word of God as well as her actual appearance in all the ages is of a warring camp. The struggle is the most furious and the most uncompromising of all wars and struggles that exist.

Rev. Miersma is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

In Psalm 44, Israel is in wicked hands, crying to God in her agony, being killed all the day long and accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in this struggle, the church has only one weapon—faith—and that weapon is enough, for it is God-given faith that overcomes the world. The just shall live by faith, for through it we have life eternal—here and now, and forever. This truth is upon every page in Scripture, which should inspire us to fight the battle of faith.

As far as Habakkuk is concerned, we know next to nothing of the person himself, other than that he prophesied of the Babylonian captivity. He lived in the days of great apostasy, and cries to God for help and salvation. God answers him and reveals to him the great captivity. The prophet then becomes afraid and calls upon God for mercy. The announcement of judgment upon Israel is the cause of this struggle, but in it he is the victor, for the victory is of faith.

The struggle in connection with the nation of Israel is that Israel is the peculiar possession of God. The prophet speaks of her as “Thy people” and “Thy anointed.” As such, she is a picture of the eternally elect church,

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beloved from everlasting to everlasting, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the temple of God in which He will dwell forever in the new paradise. God loves His people, as is evident from Romans 8:29, 30, where spiritual Israel is foreknown in the foreknowledge of divine love and destined to be glorified forever.

Scriptural history bears that out. In that love God called Adam out of the place of concealment to tell him the message of eternal love. That love drew Noah and his family out of the company of the wicked into the ark. That love called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees. The same can be said about God as He thundered and lightened round about Sinai, giving His beloved nation the law of God and leading them to the typical land of rest, the picture of glory and peace.

In the fullness of time that love of God was revealed toward His people in the giving of His Son. Never before and never since have we seen the love of God as in those days. In Christ Jesus we see God and His people united in a bond that can never be dissolved, as seen in His name, Immanuel. This truth must be seen to appreciate the struggle of this prophet. His trouble and anxiety are because of the tension between his knowledge of the coming judgment and his knowledge of the love of God for His people.

But this nation that God loves is very sinful, as is evident from chapter 1:1-4. This prophecy is a burden for Israel. The situation is so terrible that the prophet calls upon God for help in the midst of this situation. This can be explained in that the wicked always compass the righteous. There are those born in the church but who never essentially belong to it. There are also the true members of the church who love God but who often do that which is contrary to God's will.

These elements were present in Israel at this time. However, we know that there is always a remnant according to God's gracious election. If the remnant were not there, we could not speak of the struggle of the ages. God heard this prayer of Habakkuk and tells him what He is going to do. Nebuchadnezzar will come and take them captive for seventy years. The beloved people of God will be in chains while the holy temple and the holy city of God are destroyed.

Thus the prophet struggles. God is too pure of eyes than to behold evil or to look on iniquity. God is the

absolute virtuous one, that is, He hates the evil and loves only the good. How then can He give success to the evil Nebuchadnezzar? How can He take His own beloved Israel and hand her over into the wicked and cruel hands of the devilish hosts of the Chaldeans? In this is also the struggle of the church of all ages: the people of God are in the cruel hands of the wicked while God seems to remain silent.

This is also a prophecy of Christ's trial. Habakkuk cries, "Why dost Thou look on the man that is a betrayer and holdest Thy tongue when Nebuchadnezzar devoureth Israel which is more righteous than he?" This cry is fulfilled in Christ's cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This too is our struggle. God loves us and we love God. Yet we are delivered into the hands of the wicked, hated and persecuted.

In this struggle we need weapons, for we are weak. What we need is the weapon of faith, which is the operation of the almighty life of God's love. When that love-life is operative in us, we cleave to that which we have of God, that is, His Word and promises. Faith is the living bond that unites us with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It connects us to the central dynamo of God's almighty power, which is none other than Christ. When we appeal to that dynamo, it is never in vain.

Faith is a perfect knowledge that knows all things, chief of which is the wonder-working God in Christ Jesus the Lord. Yet more, faith is an absolute trust and reliance, the virtue whereby we act now as though the promised scene is already come to pass. God is the Rock whose work is already done. Having this faith, we are strong through God's strength. It matters not that we are small. Look at Noah and his family in the ark and the small army of Gideon.

There was victory for Habakkuk, for faith operated in him. He saw Nebuchadnezzar in his true light. He saw Israel in bondage and understood the vision. He saw the silent God and was satisfied, for he knew and trusted. He grew still. Listen to him. "O Lord, Thou hast ordained them from all eternity for judgment." He will correct His servant Israel who will then be the better for it.

Concerning Nebuchadnezzar he says, "His soul is not upright in him." When one appears before God as not upright, then the only end for him is eternal damnation. He devoured one who was more righteous than he, proof

of utmost wickedness. This was later fulfilled in Christ when wicked men killed Him.

Habakkuk had the victory by faith. He says in verse 12, “We shall not die. Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One?” Nebuchadnezzar had cursed and destroyed him that was more righteous than himself. “O wicked Chaldean, you cannot harm him for I have beheld the Unchangeable One. He shall always fulfill His promises: I am afraid no more.”

Habakkuk is now in heaven with all the rest of the prophets. We are yet in the struggle. Therefore, have faith and exercise it! It is God’s gift to you and to me. Faith is the only weapon by which you can quench all the fiery darts of hell. You lived, you live today, and you shall live forever by your faith. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). For “the just shall live by his faith.” ☞

EDITORIAL

PROF. BARRETT GRITTERS

What It Means To Be Reformed (4)

CALVINISTIC

Introduction

What it means to be Reformed, as we have seen so far, is to believe heartily the biblical doctrine of the covenant, to confess that truth openly, and to live it with greatest joy. Covenant! This is Reformed. And Christian.

In this 90th anniversary year of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (1925-2015), we are reflecting on the heritage God has given to us as a Reformed denomination. There are many things that we could say about the PRCA but, being Reformed Christians, what we want most to say is that we love, defend, and embrace covenant theology.

In the previous two editorials, we explained the doctrine of the covenant: *God’s living bond of friendship and life between Him*

and His elect people in Jesus Christ—embracing also their children—established and sealed with inviolable promises. We also saw four very direct and important implications of this teaching: for worship, for the Sabbath, for believer’s children and, emphatically, for Christian marriage.

—WIMTBR—
COVENANTAL
CALVINISTIC
CHURCH
CONFESSIONAL
CHRISTIAN LIFE

Calvinism

The next of the five “Cs”—Calvinism—is not an *implication* of the doctrine of the covenant. It is the biblical way of understanding the *truth* of the covenant. The biblical truth of the covenant is known

when the covenant is understood Calvinistically. That is, the wonderful love-relationship between God and His people is established and maintained by *sovereign grace*. Understood in its most elemental form, Calvinism (in its doctrine of salvation) is the teaching that salvation is by sovereign, irresistible, unconditional, efficacious grace—if you will forgive the four redundancies. Grace is grace, as water is wet. But because errors have crept into the teaching of grace, redundancies sadly are necessary to emphasize that grace is truly grace. But it is almost like saying that “water is powerful wet stuff.”

The Protestant Reformed Churches have expressed this Calvinistic view of the covenant in this way: First, the covenant is established and maintained by God with His elect and with them alone, unconditionally. Second, if God establishes His covenant with an

Previous article in this series: March 15, 2015, p. 269.

elect believer, he will remain a friend of God everlastingly. That is, God “*will* not sever His covenant-bonds” (a versification of Psalm 105), and believers *cannot* sever them.¹ By this manner of phrasing it, the PRC is determined to confess God’s covenant in harmony with the truths known as Calvinism.

The Five Points of Calvinism

To most Christians, Calvinism is defined by five essential doctrines. These doctrines are sometimes called the “doctrines of grace,” more often the “Five Points of Calvinism.” As I will show next time, to be Calvinistic is to embrace much more than the “Five Points,” but one may not claim to be Calvinist without embracing these five points, even though vigorous but vain efforts are often made to do just that.² To be Calvinist is to believe and confess Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and the Preservation (or Perseverance) of the Saints. These five points are often remembered by the acronym TULIP.

Applied to the doctrine of the covenant, these five points can be put in this way.

Total Depravity: Those with

¹ The covenant can be “broken” in the sense of “violated,” but man can never sever the bond that God creates when He creates that bond.

² For two recent examples of this, see Kenneth J. Stewart, *10 Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011); and Oliver D. Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

whom God lives in loving fellowship have nothing in themselves to merit His love—they are, by nature, fully and completely depraved, “so corrupt” that they are “incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil” (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 8). That is, God’s love for His friends is not earned or deserved, for when God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did seek God... there was not one (Ps. 14:2, 3). By Adam’s fall into sin, man forfeited all his excellent gifts and “entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment, became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate in heart and will, and impure in his affections” (Canons 3/4:1).

The overall Scripture is consistent with the clear teaching of Romans 7:18 and 8:7: “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” Natural man cannot do good and has no desire to do good. He is “dead in sin and in bondage thereto” (Canons 3/4:3). In the estimation of God, no works done by an unbeliever are good. For a work to be good in God’s eyes, its source must be faith, its motive love, and its goal God’s glory (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 32). And with regard to the “natural light” an unbeliever yet has, he is not able to use it rightly “even in things natural and civil” (Canons 3/4:4). Those whom God chooses to befriend have nothing in them that deserves it.

Unconditional Election: Viewing the mass of fallen humanity in eternity, God graciously *chose* some of them to make them the

bride of His Son, and *predestined* their eternal state to be glory in His heavenly home (Canons 1:7). The reason for choosing some and not others was not that He foresaw that these would distinguish themselves to be worthy of His love and favor. So we see that the doctrine of total depravity sets the stage for the teaching of Unconditional Election. The *election* of God’s beloved friends and bride *must be* unconditional (Canons 1:9). It was a determination to give unworthy sinners to Christ (Eph. 1:1, 4, 10; 2:10), to be saved by Him, to make them holy (Eph. 1:4) by the worth and power of “the beloved” (Eph. 1:6). So when Romans 8:29 teaches that God predestined those whom God “foreknew,” this is not to be understood to mean that God foreknew something *about* them. The text does not say that. Rather, God *knew* them; that is, He loved them. That is real, biblical knowledge (see Gen. 4:1, 25; Amos 3:2; Matt. 7:23; II Tim. 2:19). God chose His covenant friends unconditionally.

Limited Atonement: For these elect and for these *alone* God sent Jesus Christ to make atonement. “It was the will of God that Christ... should...redeem...all those, and those only, who were...chosen to salvation” (Canons II:8). Christ laid down His life “for his sheep” (John 10:11,15). God sent His Son to save “His people” (Matt. 1:21), to redeem His elect friends. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). There are those who are not His sheep (John 10:25-28). Jesus did not die for them.

Thus, the “all” for whom Christ gave His life a ransom (I Tim. 2:6) is not every man who ever lived. And the “all” whom God wills to be saved (I Tim 2:4) is not every man head-for-head (any more than the “all men” in Luke 21:17 means every man head-for-head). The “all men” expressions in the New Testament usually mean all *kinds* of men—a way of speaking sorely needed for the new but immature Jewish Christians, who wrongly supposed only *one* kind of man could be saved—a Jew. And the “world” that God loves (John 3:16), is not every man who ever lived, but the world viewed organically.³ Even the “any” in the phrase “the Lord...is not willing that any should perish” (II Pet. 3:9) is not a reference to every man, but to God’s elect, the “us” in the earlier part of the verse. Christ’s death, and God’s will to save through that death, are both restricted, or limited, to those whom God has chosen unconditionally to be saved. God’s purpose in Christ’s death “proceeds from everlasting love towards the elect” (Canons II:9).

Especially here—both with the definite and *limited nature* of the atonement as well as with the limited *intent* of the atonement—so many are offended. Because of their unwillingness to accept *this* point, many call themselves Four Point Calvinists (a contradiction in terms, like “a four-sided pentagon” or a “goalie-less hockey team”). Especially here Calvinism must be inflexible.

³ As Arthur W. Pink so clearly shows in the appendix of his *The Sovereignty of God*.

In the end, we maintain the Calvinistic teaching of Limited Atonement, not merely because some or even many texts prove it, but because of the entire biblical witness to the sovereignty of God in covenant salvation.

Irresistible Grace teaches that God comes sweetly but powerfully to His chosen but lifeless friends and gives them life. The grace that brings them out of darkness into light, from the grave into life, is such a power that it cannot be resisted. When God determines to accomplish His good pleasure in a man, he can only surrender. When God calls, none can refuse, any more than Lazarus could have determined to stay in the grave when Jesus said, “Come forth!” Because grace is power (I Cor. 15:10), when God comes to men He “powerfully illuminates their minds,...opens the closed and softens the hardened heart,...infuses new qualities into the will...[and] renders [that will] good, obedient, and pliable” (Canons 3/4: 11). Not that any object of His grace *wants* to resist, for God makes them “willing in the day of his power” (Ps. 110:3).

Preservation of the Saints: In these redeemed elect, God “preserves...the incorruptible seed of regeneration from perishing.” And though we at times fall and fall deeply, God “certainly and effectually renews [us] to repentance” and will not allow us “totally [to] fall from faith and grace” (Canons V:7, 8). Jesus’ friends “shall never perish” (John 10:28). He is faithful to His promises. God’s “counsel cannot be changed, nor His promise fail,

neither can the call according to His purpose be revoked...” (Canons V:8).

“Once saved always saved” may be one way to express this fifth point, but that may tend to a flip-pant attitude. When God’s grace preserves His friends, it works in them *perseverance* in holy living. No one can separate us from the love of God in Christ. None can pluck us out of the Father’s hand, indeed. But because of grace God’s people actively persevere in faith and holiness. Although no one is dragged, kicking and screaming, to heaven, neither does anyone come to glory without a struggle to live in holy obedience to his Father.

The Five Points are “Reformed”

It is surprising to me that so many Calvinists would defend the Five Points by appealing everywhere, it seems, except to their real and authoritative source—the Canons of Dordt.⁴ No one may defend the Five Points by appealing merely to Calvin; just as no one may try to undermine one of the Five Points by quoting Calvin. The authoritative definition and explanation of the

⁴ Yet this is what happened in the recent book of essays, by various authors, in honor of R.C. Sproul, *After Darkness, Light: Distinctives of Reformed Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003). An otherwise promising book according to its title and chapter headings—the five points of Calvinism and the five “solae” of the Reformation are the topics—the book is written with scarcely a mention of the Reformed creeds, much less the Canons. The one happy exception is W. Robert Godfrey’s “Unconditional Election.”

“doctrines of grace,” for Reformed Christians, is the officially adopted creed called the Canons of Dordt.

There is sometimes discussion as to the source of the acronym “TULIP.” Some have pointed out that reference to the phrase “Five Points of Calvinism” can be found only as far back as the early 1900s. Thus, the Five Points are said to be a novelty. But a Reformed Christian has very little interest in the origin of the acronym. He knows that, although these teachings are indeed what Calvin himself taught, the origin of the “Five Points” as five distinct but inseparable expressions of biblical truth is the “Great Synod,” the Synod of Dordrecht. This international gathering of Reformed churches, meeting in the Netherlands in 1618 and 1619 to defend Reformed truth


against the heresy of the Arminians, adopted the “Canons of Dordt.” These canons (a set of binding rules or standards) were laid out in five major “heads,” in the order U-L-T-I-P.

If a man is Reformed, he will know and understand the doctrines explained in this beautiful creed. Even if, in the providence of God, some Reformed Christians or churches have not officially embraced this creed—as our Presbyterian brothers or our German friends—they will still express assent to the truths contained in the Canons, and heartily agree with the errors rejected by the fathers of Dordt.

We are happy to call these five doctrines of grace “The Five Points of Calvinism.” They are certainly

the doctrines of John Calvin. To be more historically accurate, we might better call them the “Five Points of Dordt.”

More than the Five Points

But Calvinism is much more than the Five Points, even as being Reformed is far more than the doctrines of grace. Properly understood, Calvinism is a particular way of worship, a unique form of church government, an antithetical (holy) way of life, and more. We will have something to say about all these in the later articles in this series. But before we go on to the “Implications” of Calvinism, some important things must be said about Calvinism’s “solas” as they apply to the doctrine of a gracious covenant. April 15, God willing. 

LETTERS

Abortion...and the Grace of God for Sinners

This letter is in response to Rev. Martyn McGeown’s article “Abortion: the Culture of Death” in the January 15, 2015 issue of the *Standard Bearer*. While reading the article, I had to lay it down and stop reading it several times because it was so disheartening. Although the content about women advocating for and endorsing abortion was heartrending and disturbing, this was not the reason for my being disheartened. For a denomination—the PRC—that proclaims and promotes grace (like no other denomination does) as the ultimate covering for the worst of broken sinners, there was little mercy given to women who have fallen for the lie and had an abortion. The tone of the article, overall, seemed harsh and appeared to lack understanding of the circumstances that lead women to have abortions. The circumstanc-

es—poverty; lack of family, spouse, or church support; drug/alcohol use; and even selfishness—are not excuses for having an abortion, but they should give us pause as grace-believing Christians. Most telling is a short sentence in the letter posted by user *sacredthrowingaway*: “It wouldn’t be fair to bring a new life into a world where I am still haunted by ghosts of the life I’ve lived.”

World magazine also had an article addressing the letters written by these women, and it concluded by expressing that the church is the place that needs to be offering solace and comfort to women that have had abortions. Who else can extend this to them? And in what other way could they be led to repentance, grace, and forgiveness? This is true whether these are women within our own church or women in the community.

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without [out-

siders], redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:5, 6).

Prayers that the articles in the *Standard Bearer* would represent Christ and His grace well.

Annise Koops
Loveland, Colorado

Response:

While the purpose of my article was to expose the moral evil of abortion, and to answer some of the arguments of pro-abortion advocates, the sister is right to remind us that as Christians we need a *gracious* response to this subject. Clearly, to scream "Murderer!" at everyone who has had an abortion is not helpful. I know that there are Christians who counsel broken sinners who have had abortions, and who even offer alternatives (such as adoption and support through pregnancy) to women who are in such desperate situations that they are considering abortion. Such organizations, although not the church, do good work. I would welcome more information on such (especially Reformed) organizations, if the sister would be willing to provide it.

Also, if she could give some practical advice on how to deal with such people as (the anonymous) *scaredthrowingaway*, I would be glad to learn. If *scaredthrowingaway* came into one of our churches, pregnant, poor, and alone, how would *we* receive her? Would we avoid her? Would we talk about her behind her back? Would we tell such women that they *must not* have an abortion, and then send them away empty with pious words, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled" (James 2:16). I hope and pray that we could offer her more than condemnation.


Nor must we be so self-righteous as to imagine that abortion could never be a temptation for *our* members. If David could seek to hide his sin of adultery by committing murder, how much easier would it be today for a fornicator/adulterer among us to take advantage of the anonymity of the abortion clinic or medical centre to hide her sin by committing murder. Young women can have abortions today (a dangerous medical procedure!) without parental notification.

Apart from the destruction of the baby, the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual consequences of abortion for women are often devastating. We need to be prepared to help such women and their families. Some women are haunted by the ghost of abortion for the rest of their lives. When we preach from the Heidelberg Catechism LD 40 on the sixth commandment, we (rightly) condemn abortion in the sermon, for it *is* murder. I thank the sister for the reminder that I need to preach that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin—even the sin of abortion!

However, not all abortion-seekers and advocates are "broken sinners." In fact, as Canons III/IV:Rejection of Errors says, "...to offer unto God the sacrifice of a broken spirit is peculiar to the regenerate and those that are called blessed (Ps. 51:10, 19; Matt. 5:6)." We are seeing an increasing callousness in sinners today, women prepared to murder their offspring with hardly a pang of conscience. Emily-Letts, who filmed her own abortion, is a case in point. She reminded me of Proverbs 30:20: "Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness." Even *scaredthrowingaway* would need to be brought to see her sins, before the gospel of Christ could be good news to her.

In John 8, Jesus encountered a broken sinner, who had been caught in the very act of adultery. Gleefully, the Pharisees prepared to stone her to death, hoping to entrap Jesus in the process. Utterly merciless they were. Jesus' response to that woman is very significant, and blessed. Having dismissed the Pharisees, He addressed the woman: "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" (John 8:10). She responded, "No man, Lord," to which Jesus replied, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). We need to include both truths in our response: Jesus does not condemn penitent sinners, and forgiven sinners are expected to go and sin no more.

When I encounter broken sinners, I pray that my attitude will be Christ's, and not the Pharisee's.

Rev. M. McGeown
Limerick,
Republic of Ireland 

Update on Peter Leithart: “No Baptism, No Justification”

As previous contributors to this rubric have documented, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) exonerated teaching elder and Federal Vision (FV) advocate, Dr. Peter J. Leithart.¹ Leithart remains a member and a minister in the PCA.

Let me remind you of the case: By his advocacy of the FV, Leithart was accused of teaching views that are not in accordance with the Westminster Standards, the confessions of the PCA. The presbytery of Pacific North West exonerated him. When the presbytery's decision was challenged, the presbytery rejected the complaint and referred it to the Standing Judicial Committee (SJC) of the PCA, which concurred with the decision of the Presbytery. Thus, the highest judicial body in the PCA found that Leithart's views are *not at odds* with the Westminster Standards. Leithart's differences with the Standards, according to the SJC, “amounted to semantic differences,” that is, differences in wording, not in substance. Since then, the chief prosecutor, Jason Stellman, has defected to Rome, something so irregular that some have labelled it a mistrial, and have moved for a retrial, which is unlikely ever to take place.

Leithart, free from ecclesiastical censure, continues to promote the FV. On November 14, 2014, he wrote an article entitled “No Sacraments, No Protestantism.” In it Leithart argues for “sacramental efficacy,” concluding with this provocative statement: “No baptism, no justification.”²

No baptism, no justification!

Defenders of Leithart might like to argue that, perhaps, Leithart is referring not to water baptism, but to the spiritual reality of baptism, the work of the Holy Spirit. Not so, for Leithart neglects to—indeed, *refuses*

to—distinguish the sign of baptism (water baptism) from the reality (the salvation that baptism with water *signifies*). Moreover, Leithart insists that *all* baptised persons, elect and reprobate alike, receive the spiritual blessings of salvation, although they may lose those blessings, if they do not fulfil the conditions of faith *and works*. All of this is classic FV theology.

Moreover, this is not the first time Leithart has linked baptism with justification. The substance of his November 2014 blog post appeared on *First Things*, an ecumenical website (with a strong Romish influence), in April, 2005, with the title “Baptism and Justification.”³

In both articles, Leithart links baptism and I Corinthians 6:11 (“...but ye are washed”). He wants to do this, because “ye are justified” appears in the same verse. In the 2005 article, he even writes, “They have become different folk by being baptized.... Sanctification and justification are two implications of the event of baptism. The pagan Corinthians have been washed-sanctified-justified by their baptism.” In 2014, he writes, “The shift from what the Corinthians ‘were’ to what they ‘are’ is marked by their baptismal washing, which is both a sanctification and a justification.” Arguing from Romans 6:7, he adds, “Through baptism, we die to Adam and are brought to life in society with Jesus. Paul calls that transition from the reign of Death to the reign of Life a ‘justification,’ and it happens at baptism.”

Readers should notice Leithart's deception—I say “deception” and not mere “confusion,” because Leithart, an experienced theologian, *knows* better. Leithart *knows* that sometimes the Bible uses the word “baptism” for the sign of [water] baptism (Acts 2:41; I Cor. 1:14-17); and he *knows* that at other times Scripture uses the word

¹ The last report on the Peter Leithart case was in *Standard Bearer*, vol. 90, issue 1, 10 (October 1, 2013).

² “No Sacraments, No Protestantism,” in *The Evangelical Pulpit*, November 14, 2014, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/evangelicalpulpit/2014/11/no-sacraments-no-protestantism/> (accessed, February 16, 2015).

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³ “Baptism and Justification,” in *First Things*, April 20, 2005, <http://www.firstthings.com/blogs/leithart/2005/04/baptism-and-justification/> (accessed, February 16, 2015). According to their own website, “*First Things* is published by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and educational 501(c)(3) organization. The Institute was founded in 1990 by Richard John Neuhaus and his colleagues to confront the ideology of secularism” (<http://www.firstthings.com/about/>). Neuhaus (1936-2009) was a Lutheran pastor who defected to Rome in 1990. He and Charles Colson (1931-2012) were leading architects of the compromising document *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (1994).

“baptism” for the spiritual reality of baptism (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12). He also *knows* that these two are so closely related that the Bible speaks of one in terms of the other. Moreover, Leithart *knows* that it is an error to confuse or (in his case) deliberately to identify the sign and reality.

Catechumens, ages 12-14, *know* that, for they are taught it in Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 26!

Leithart seeks to escape the charge that he teaches justification by works; but it is telling that he never uses the phrase “justification by faith *alone*.” Of course, he doesn’t. He is an advocate of the Federal Vision. “Baptism is an act of God,” he insists. Of course, Rome would agree. Baptism, he adds, personalizes God’s general “offer” [sic!] of grace: “baptism declares God’s favour to *me*. Baptism wraps the gift of forgiveness and justification and puts my name on the package.”

That sounds good, but what do I have to do to receive—and, more importantly, to retain—this “gift”? The answer, as we have come to expect, is: believe, produce the works of faith, and endure to the end. If not, “I cannot expect baptism to rescue me at the end.” No, indeed, but can I expect *Christ* by His perfect obedience and substitutionary atonement to rescue me in the end?

All of this sounds like Liberated conditional covenant theology—grace for everyone, a promise to all the baptized, and the need to fulfil the conditions of faith and obedience. Only a robust doctrine of the unconditional covenant of grace with the elect alone can destroy Leithart’s heresy.

Ostensibly, Leithart is concerned about assurance. How can I have assurance that I am justified without faith in the efficacy of baptism?

If baptism is not a public declaration of justification, where and when does that public declaration take place? Is it ever heard on earth? Is it *ever* spoken to *me* in particular? Can I hear it anywhere except in my heart? If I only hear the declaration of justification in my heart, how can I be sure I’m not hearing things? To be sure we’re right with God, we need some sign *from Him*, and it has to be a sign to *me*.

A good question, but one to which Leithart has no assuring answer, his “baptismal efficacy” notwithstanding.

Baptism is a means of assurance *only to believers*.

Neither Esau nor Absalom were assured by their circumcision. And neither Ananias nor Sapphira were assured by their baptism. We know this because they were reprobates. Reprobates *never* have assurance, for they never have faith. We are assured *by faith*, which is the activity of trusting in the promises of God’s Word, centered in Christ Jesus and Him crucified. Faith, by definition, looks away from itself to its object, namely, Jesus. If a believer has difficulty believing that his sins could be washed away, he must remember what the Word says and what the sacraments teach us. Baptism reminds us that, as water washes away the filth of the body, so the blood of Christ washes away sin. However, baptism cannot give any assurance without the Word. The sacraments are added to the Word, but are meaningless without it.

Moreover, one who does not believe the gospel can have no assurance whatsoever. And one who promotes a false gospel, as Leithart does, leads the people further from Christ, further from true assurance, and encourages them to trust in the baptism of water, to the damnation of their souls. One trusting in water baptism or in any other work except the work of Christ will perish.

Leithart concludes:

Justification by grace through faith cannot be sustained, either in theology or in our experience, without confidence that God works in the sacraments. We cannot get assurance unless we’re convinced that God declares me His beloved child in the water of baptism. Which means, No baptism, No justification. And that implies, No sacraments, No Protestantism.

This is, however, vain and empty deceit, for earlier Leithart admitted that one could be baptized (with water) *and still perish*. All that Leithart can assure anyone of is that he *was* a beloved child in the water on the day of his baptism; but he cannot assure anyone that he will *remain* a beloved, justified child of God on the day of his death, and on the Day of Judgment. Something could very well separate someone from this “love” of God (contra. Rom. 8:35-39). It is very possible, teaches Leithart—and it has happened frequently according to the FV doctrines of apostasy, resistible grace and losable salvation—that such a “beloved, justified child of God” could be plunged into the fires of hell! Where’s the assurance now, Dr. Leithart?

Why does Leithart not swim across the Tiber into the

waiting arms of Rome? That is what Jason Stellman, the man who was *prosecuting* Leithart at his trial, did. Leithart answers that in another blog post on *First Things*.⁴ He begins with pragmatic reasons: he would have to make new friends and lose other friends (that's the cost of apostasy from the truth). But his main reasons are theological, for first, he does not know where the church of the future might be (so he might as well stay put); and, of course, he has some "objections" to Romanism:

For all my profound admiration for Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy, and for all the vibrant renewal in those churches, I continue to have standard, biblically grounded Protestant objections to Purgatory, to Marian doctrines,

⁴ "Staying Put in the Presbyterian Church," in *First Things*, <http://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/05/staying-put> (accessed February 16, 2015).

the Papacy, and icons, as well as lingering puzzlement about ambiguities concerning justification and the role of tradition.

"Profound admiration" for Rome? "Vibrant renewal" at the Vatican? "Standard, biblically grounded objections"? Perhaps, for now, Leithart knows on which side his bread is buttered. And maybe, just maybe, if the PCA had actually removed Leithart from the denomination as a heretic and denied him the possibility to teach in the PCA, Leithart could have taken his FV "nuances" with him, and could have overcome the "ambiguities" of Rome.

Many have managed it in the past. After all, an open enemy in the false church is less dangerous than a treacherous serpent in the true. ☞

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

REV. THOMAS MIERSMA

Better Is the Sight of the Eyes

Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?

For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

Ecclesiastes 6:9-12

"Better is the sight of the eyes...." With these words Solomon introduces a conclusion to this section of Ecclesiastes, comprising chapters five and six. His concern is that we spiritually make the warning concerning covetousness our own. The sight

of the eyes is that which stands before us this moment, under God's providence, as our portion of the day. It is what is given us, seen and known, the profit of the day's labor, our daily bread. It is the good, that which is fitting, and to be enjoyed as the blessing of the day. It is also that which the wicked man, given to covetousness, is not given to see. For though he live twice that of Methuselah, "...yet hath [he] seen no good" (Eccl. 6:6).

The problem is in man's soul. In discontent, he wanders in heart and mind. His soul roams about, covetousness always leading him away from what is immediately before him to all that he desires and lusts after. The wandering or roaming about of the desire and lust of men brings with it only vexation of spirit, or more literally a striving after the wind, which is thus one of futile frustration. Therefore, "Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 6:9). Where discontent and covetousness rule, there can be only an empty futility because the striving of such an one is ultimately with God.

Solomon then returns to this point that has been made

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before, as an explanation of this, “That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he” (Eccl. 6:10). This explanation takes us back to man’s creation. It contains two conjoined elements. The first is the meaning of the name “man.” It refers to the first man, whose name was Adam, the Hebrew word derived from the word for “dust.” This emphasizes that man is of the earth earthy, a creature of the dust. Being fallen in sin, he receives its wages: “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19). The result was, “Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken” (Gen. 3:23).

Because this is so, all man’s days are bound to a world subject to vanity. This is the judgment of God upon sin. Apart from the grace of God in Christ, he cannot return to Eden’s paradise or enter into glory. He lies in the midst of death. Leaving aside the question of his eternal reward, man, in himself and in this world under the sun, can be only a creature of the dust, returning to the dust from whence he was taken. Covetousness leads him to pursue what is vain.

Yet man, who is dust (Adam), strives with this reality, for the text continues, “...neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he” (Eccl. 6:10). Shall the dust contend with the Almighty, the creature with the creator? But that is exactly what Adam did in his rebellion in the fall. The lie of the devil was, “ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). In rebellion man sets himself in the place of God, in pride lifting himself up to strive with God who is “mightier than he.” This arrogance shows itself, of course, in many ways: in sin and rebellion, in lawlessness, in vain boasting in himself. Man seeks to change times and laws and seasons as if the life of man, the world, and all things are in his own hand. He would be his own lawgiver. Here, however, the focus is on the pride of man who so thinks he is in control of his life upon earth, that in the wandering of his desire and in covetousness he may contend with God and determine his own portion. The rebellion and pride of man rejects the confession, “O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

The fool says otherwise. He says, “I will build bigger barns and enjoy my ease,” until, as Jesus Himself illus-

trates, “...God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (Luke 12:20). Nebuchadnezzar’s boast in himself expresses the same spirit of exalted pride: “The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” (Dan. 4:30). The judgment of which he was forewarned came upon him. The Lord smote him, gave him to eat grass like an ox, and took his understanding from him until he was compelled to confess the Most High, the Almighty,

whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Dan. 4:34, 35).

Covetous man walks in that same spirit of Nebuchadnezzar. In his wandering desire after earthly things, he seeks not what is before him, nor acknowledges that it is from God, but will be his own master. His own will, his own plans and desires, will rule according to his own imagination. In his blindness, the future is deemed to be in his own hand; and yet it is not so. Man is a potsherd, a broken piece of clay pottery. God says to him, “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?” (Is. 45:9). Yet the covetous man denies that sovereign power of God, not only over great issues in his life, but also in the wandering of his lust over the very present reality of daily life. He says, “...Today or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain” (James 4:13). To which the Word of God in James, who may well have had this passage in view, answers “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:14, 15).


Solomon makes the same point. He first reminds us, “Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?” By “things” he has in view earthly things, earthly abundance. He has said, “When goods

increase, they are increased that eat them" (Eccl. 5:11). Earthly riches, the things of this world, belong to its vanity. When they increase, then vanity also increases and man is not better off. He has still no profit in anything of abiding value. Nor can the riches truly satisfy. It is not in the things themselves, which man covets and desires, to do so. It is not in their nature, that is, in the "stuff" of this world under the sun, to give abiding profit or satisfaction that endures.

Solomon then adds, "For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?" (Eccl. 6:12). The life of man is as an insubstantial shadow moving over the ground that vanishes away; he is a vapor as James puts it. He does not know what the morrow will bring. He may think his life is in his own hand. He may deny there is a sovereign potter, deny that God has a hand in his life, but he is a fool in bondage. He does not know what is for his own good. Neither does he determine the course of his own steps. His wandering desire leads him to the delusion of his own power, when he is actually but a vapor, a moving shadow on the ground, frail, weak, and brief. Not only is that which he pursues vanity, he is himself vanity. In the flowing stream of life he has no idea what the next bend in the river will bring, for he cannot

see beyond the curve of the river. It may be placid water or it may be a whitewater rapids and destruction. His "control" of the future is a delusion and an attempt to strive and contend with his Maker.

In pride man says within himself, "I will have this or that; I will get this or that," turning from what is before him to his own imagination, relying on his own power. And yet he does not even know what the next day or hour may bring, even in daily matters of this life and his place in it. He is truly a shadow in himself. "For who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?" (Eccl. 6:12). The text certainly includes the fact that he shall die and then what? But the addition, "under the sun," suggests that Solomon also has in view the fact that, even in this life, while "under the sun," man does not know what comes after, even on the morrow.

Better, therefore, is the "sight of the eyes," that is, what is for today, our daily bread. Prudent provision for the morrow we may make, for the point is not to be profligate or a poor steward of God's gifts as God's people. But it is always, "If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4:15). To walk thus requires the grace of God to humble ourselves under His hand, to flee from covetousness, and to receive that which He wills for us, which only is good. This is the gift of God. 

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

REV. JAMES LANING

God's Covenant with Noah (1)

Genesis 8:21 said to be a promise of common grace

Wrong views on God's kingdom are related to wrong views on God's covenant. Whether you are talking about the cry to "redeem culture" that is heard coming from some colleges (such as Dordt College), the two-kingdom theology taught at Westminster Theological Seminary West (California), or the dispensational views held by

Baptists, these teachings are connected to erroneous explanations of God's covenant promises.

There are many, for example, who base their earthly-kingdom position on what God said after the flood. The covenant that God made with Noah is often said to be a covenant of common grace, and this common grace is then said to be the power by which sinful man has been building his kingdoms.

With this article I begin a series on God's covenant with Noah. Since many base their view of common grace on what God said in Genesis 8:21, I have decided to begin

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by considering this verse: “And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done” (Gen. 8:21).

In our efforts to counter various false teachings, it is good to remember that God in His providence makes use of the errors of our day to prod us to go to the Scriptures, not only to refute those errors but also to grow in our own understanding. Sometimes, for example, when we consider a false teaching and then ask ourselves, “What would be the opposite of this false teaching?”, we come up with a correct view of a passage that up to that point we had not seen. This is one of the many ways in which all things work together for the good of God’s people.¹

Common explanations of Genesis 8:21

After the flood Noah offered burnt offerings, and God smelled the sweet smell and said this in His heart: “I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done” (Gen. 8:21b).

This statement, many say, is a promise to give common grace. The phrase “common grace” has been used to refer to a grace that is given to all human beings in com-

mon. That, these people say, is what God was promising here.

Michael Horton, currently a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary West (California), views this text to be a promise to give non-redemptive, common grace:

The covenant most clearly related to common grace is that which God made with Noah. ...It is a peace treaty with the whole creation. We will not find here, however, a promise to redeem sinners or to reconcile them to him through the gift of his Messiah.²

Michael D. Williams, a former professor at Dordt College, explains Genesis 8:21 this way:

Though the creature, who was called to rule on God’s behalf, employs his giftedness for that commission against God and God’s cause, God steps in and declares that he will preserve the created order in spite of man. Man’s godless way in the world

will not thwart the divine intent.

This is an expression of what is often called common grace. The term does not refer to redemptive action toward man on God’s part but rather God’s continuing providential care over human life in the world even though “man is totally depraved, inclined toward self-destruction, and worthy of judgment.” In other words, God does not allow man to become as fully evil as his fallen heart would otherwise lead him to become.

...God’s merciful preservation of fallen man involves God’s restraining the effects of sin upon man, his society, and the creational order. God preserves man and the created order in the Noahic covenant....³

¹ In Scripture we see an example of this in the story of the man born blind whom Jesus healed. After this man’s bodily eyesight was restored, the Pharisees told him that Jesus was a sinner. At first the man responded that whether that was the case or not, he did not know. But then, as he gave some more thought to this, he recognized and confessed that the very opposite of what the Pharisees were saying was actually the truth (John 9:24-33).

² Michael Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 113.

³ Michael D. Williams, *Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption* (Philippsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005), 91. Michael Williams was a professor at Dordt College for six years before joining the faculty of Covenant Theological

O. Palmer Robertson, who was an associate professor of Old Testament theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, is the individual whom Michael Williams was quoting in the passage above. First Robertson says that God's promise not to send another flood is a promise to give grace to all human beings. Then he goes on to say that this common-grace promise is the platform from which we are to begin when preaching the gospel:

By the provisions of the Noahic covenant God committed himself to a course of universal testimony. Creation's witness of grace toward sinful man still provides the platform from which the universal proclamation of the gospel should be launched.

Robertson then proceeds to explain in a footnote what he means when he says that this so-called witness of grace to sinful man "provides the platform from which the universal proclamation of the gospel should be launched." In that footnote he makes a reference to II Peter 3:3-10, and makes a connection between the following two verses:

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (II Peter 3:7)

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9)

Putting these two verses together, Robertson maintains that when God said in Genesis 8:21 that He would no longer curse the ground, that meant that He was graciously going to delay the final judgment out of a desire that all human beings might be saved.

...the "desire" of God that "all" should come to repentance should be interpreted universally. The fact that God may "desire" what he has not explicitly "decreed" simply must be taken as one of those areas of God's purposes that

Seminary in 1996. This book has often been required reading for students at Dordt College. In this section he quotes from O. Palmer Robertson's book, *The Christ of the Covenants*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 115.


cannot be comprehended by the finite mind. The context would not favor the limitation of this desire to the "elect," despite the possibility that "longsuffering to you" could be interpreted as meaning longsuffering to the believing recipients of Peter's letter. The point of the text is not that God is longsuffering toward the elect, not willing that any of the elect should perish. The present delay of judgment on the world indicates his longsuffering to the whole of humanity, despite the fact that ultimately not all shall be saved.

Summary of these statements

To summarize, there are those who teach that common grace, including the well-meant offer of the gospel, are taught by what God says in Genesis 8:21. Some maintain that in this verse God is promising the following:

1. Not to curse but rather to bless creation and all of human society, even though man by nature remains sinful;
2. To preserve human society by preventing man from becoming fully evil;
3. To delay the final judgment out of a desire that all human beings might be saved. (As a consequence, it has been added that when we go forth to preach the gospel we should begin by proclaiming that God desires that every human being be saved).

That God promises these things is said to be proven by what God said after He smelled Noah's sacrifice.

This summary serves to bring out how important it is that we understand Genesis 8:21 properly. Beginning with the next article, we will look at how Scripture explains what God said in this verse. 

The Elder's Ordination (1): What?

And when they had ordained them elders in every church.... (Acts 14:23)

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. (Titus 1:5)

The fact that a man is qualified to be an elder in Christ's church does not, by itself, make him an elder. Nor has he become an elder by virtue of being designated by the council of a church or being chosen by the congregation to be an elder.

Until the church of Jesus Christ *ordains* a man to be elder in her midst, that man may not consider himself to be an elder. Such is the importance and necessity of ordination into office.



Long-time readers of the *Standard Bearer* might remember that, when writing on the office of deacon, I also devoted several (seven) articles to the subject of the election and installation of deacons.¹ Those articles explained at some length the requirements of Articles 22 and 24 of our Church Order regarding how to enter the office of deacon (the process of election and installation); of Article 27 regarding how long to remain in office (limited terms, or life terms); and the requirements of Articles 79 and 80 regarding suspension and removal from office. In addition, they treated two matters not explicitly treated in our Church Order: one being the responsibility of a man nominated for office to consider that nomination, and request to be removed from that nomination only for weighty reasons; the other being resignation from office.

¹ This series of seven articles begins in volume 78, page 368, and concludes in volume 80, page 14.

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As the principles set forth in those articles apply as well to the office of elder as to that of deacon, I do not intend now to re-explain the requirements of the Church Order regarding the election and installation of elders.

I do, however, intend to treat one specific aspect of the requirements of the Church Order and of Scripture, that being the ordination of the elder. We will explain what ordination is and why it is necessary.

To treat this will be to emphasize the need for good order in the church, and particularly in the church offices; and will pave the way for us later to examine in detail the work of the office of elder in Christ's church—a work which can be done officially only by those ordained.

Ordination

Ordination is the work of the church by which she officially and authoritatively places a man into that church office for which he was chosen. Samuel Miller's definition is helpful: "By Ordination is meant that solemn rite, or act, by which a candidate for any office in the Church of Christ, is authoritatively designated to that office, by those who are clothed with power for that purpose."²

The King James Version uses the word "ordain" to translate several different Greek words. The Greek verb found in Acts 14:23 refers literally to stretching out one's hand, especially by voting. The meaning of this verb introduces a difficulty into the verse: on the one hand, the verb indicates that the elders were chosen by vote of the people; on the other hand, the subject of the verb is "they," referring to Paul and Barnabas. My solution is that which several other commentators (Calvin, Lenski, Kistemaker) also give: the use of this verb with its subject combines the ideas of election and ordination. In other words, Paul and Barnabas directed the church

² Samuel Miller, *An Essay on the Warrant, Nature, and Duties of the Office of the Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church* (General Books [www.General-Books.net], 2009), 137.

to chose its elders, which the church did (by vote, with stretching out of the hand); and then Paul and Barnabas installed those elders into their office in a ceremony, with prayers and fastings.³

The verb in I Timothy 2:7 (“whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle”) is the word “to place, set.” The same verb is used in Titus 1:5, this time with a prefix added that emphasizes that one is placed or set down in a position, and therefore bound to a position and the work that that position entails.

The idea expressed by our English word “ordain” is a bit narrower, referring to one’s being put into office, to do the work of that office.

Ordination and Installation

Is there a difference between *ordination* and *installation*?

We use both terms, as do our minor confessions.⁴ Opening the book, *The Confessions and the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches*,⁵ to the “Table of Contents,” you find that it includes a “Form for Ordination (or Installation) of Ministers of God’s Word,” a “Form for Ordination of Elders and Deacons,” a “Form for the Installation of Professors of Theology,” and a “Form for the Ordination (or Installation) of Missionaries.”⁶

Then, turning to the section of that book containing the Church Order,⁷ you find Article 4 speaking of the “ordination” of candidates who have accepted calls; Article 5 requires that a minister from one church who accepts a call to another church shall be “installed...agreeably to the

form for this purpose”; and Articles 22 and 24 requiring that elders and deacons “be installed.”

All of which begs the question: are these terms synonyms? In short, the answer is “Yes” and “No.”

In a general sense, they are. Both “ordination” and “installation” refer to the beginning of service in an office. Apart from ordination (installation), a man is not an officebearer in the church. The fact that our Church Order speaks of elders and deacons being installed, while the forms used at that ceremony speaks of their being ordained, suggests that the terms are somewhat synonymous and can be used interchangeably.

Yet there is a distinction that can be made between the two, which distinction especially applies with regard to the office of minister. Understanding this distinction will help us understand why Church Order, Article 4 speaks of ordination, while Article 5 speaks of installation; and why the forms used when ministers and missionaries are put into office are called “Form[s] for Ordination (or Installation)” of ministers or missionaries.

The distinction is this, that in Reformed circles a minister is “bound to the service of the church for life,”⁸ which means that unless he leaves office or is deposed from office, he holds that office for the rest of his life. Not so elders and deacons; these serve limited *terms* of office.

When a man enters the office of minister for the first time, having recently been declared a candidate for the office, he is “ordained” (the terminology of Church Order, Article 4). When he accepts a call to another church, he continues in the office of minister, but must enter that office in another congregation; and so he is “installed” (the terminology of Church Order, Article 5).

Therefore, the form to use when ministers are put into office in a congregation is a “Form for Ordination (or Installation) of Ministers of God’s Word”—*ordained*, if they have not been in the office of minister in another congregation before; *installed*, if they have served previously in another congregation.

Because missionaries hold the office of minister, they also might be *ordained* as missionaries (having never served in office before), or be *installed* as missionary (having previously served another congregation as pastor). So the Form to use at that time is called “Form for the Ordination (or Installation) of Missionaries.”

³ The idea of laying on of hands while placing one into office (Acts 8:18, 1 Tim. 4:14) is expressed by a different Greek word than that which is found in Acts 14:23. Acts 14:23 does teach that men were installed into the office of elder—but emphasizes that they were those men whom the church chose by voting in the way of stretching forth hands.

⁴ Minor confessions are officially adopted confessions of Reformed churches, which treat a very narrow subject. They are narrow not in their authority, but the scope of what they treat. Examples are our Church Order, and the Liturgical Forms in the back of the Psalter.

⁵ *The Confessions and the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches* (Grandville, MI: Protestant Reformed Churches in America, 2005). This is the *hardcover* green book.

⁶ Ibid. 284-306.

⁷ Ibid. 378-404.

⁸ *Church Order*, Article 12; 384.

Why, then, is the Form which we use when installing a professor not called the Form for the “Ordination (or Installation)” of such, but rather the “Form for the *Installation* of Professors of Theology”? Like the missionary, the professor holds the office of minister. Unlike the missionary, who did not necessarily serve as a pastor of a congregation previously, the professor has served as the pastor of a congregation; he has previously been ordained. The Form itself presupposes this, beginning this way: “Beloved brethren, it is known unto you that our brother *in the holy ministry* (italics mine, DJK), N. N., has been called by our last synod to the important office of professor of theology at our theological seminary.”⁹ The wisdom of this our churches recognize. Article 5 of our “Constitution of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches” says, “In electing professors, synod shall give preference to one already a minister of the gospel.”¹⁰

But I have digressed.

I set out to explain what ordination was, and how it was related to installation. And our conclusion is that,

⁹ *Confessions*, 296.

¹⁰ *The Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches and Constitutions of Standing Synodical Committees, Rules and Regulations, By-laws, Forms, Declaration of Principles*, 2010 edition, 67. This is the loose-leaf binder green book.

while there is an important distinction between the two terms, especially regarding the office of minister, they both refer to an official placement into office, and both indicate that one is now authorized to begin the work of that office.

A church ceremony

Such ordination must take place in a ceremony.

The use of a Form for ordination in Reformed Churches, and the requirement of Article 22 of the Church Order that they “be installed with public prayers and stipulations,” makes clear that a public ceremony is required.

Acts 14:23 suggests that such a ceremony took place, in that the apostles oversaw this ordaining of elders, and “prayed with fasting.” The phrase “laying on of hands” (Acts 8:18, I Tim. 4:14) suggests such a ceremony, at which the apostles or other officebearers placed their hands on the newly elected officebearers. And we know from Acts 6:6 that when the first deacons were chosen, they were installed in a public ceremony.

Why?

Why a public ceremony?

Why the need for ordination and installation?

Stay tuned. ☞

○ COME LET US WORSHIP

REV. CORY GRIESS

The Church Confessing Truth: Reciting the Apostles’ Creed (10b)

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in

the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

I Timothy 3:15-16

Introduction

In the previous article we showed that the practice of reciting the Apostles’ Creed in worship is a biblical practice. We did that by appealing to the confession of truth as a form of prayer, and also by showing that there was

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

Previous article in this series: February 1, 2015, p. 205.

confession of creeds in synagogue worship and at least in the life of the New Testament church. In this article we turn to the foundational reason why the church ought to engage in this form of the element of prayer.

The Foundational Reason

It is the very nature of the church to confess the truth. It is no coincidence that the apostle records for us a confession of the New Testament church in verse 16, after what he says about the church in verse 15. I Timothy 3:15 states, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground [or foundation] of the truth.” The church is in her very nature the pillar and ground of the truth, and that is the foundational reason she confesses truth in worship.

When the text says pillar and ground of the truth, truth here is the doctrines of the Word of God, both for faith and for life. It is the knowledge that has its source in God Himself who is truth, and who has revealed all His truth in Holy Scripture. Truth is the teachings of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the center of that teaching. The church is to be the upholder of that truth in this world. This is her task, her responsibility, her calling. This identifies her. No matter how long the institution has been around, if a church or group of churches is not upholding truth, she is no longer church.

The illustration in the text is of a building, particularly a Greek temple. These temples had pillars that held up the roof of the building. These pillars rested upon a foundation. The purpose of both the foundation and pillars was to hold the building up—to hold the roof up, that it might be a building. The text is saying that the church is the pillar and ground (foundation) that holds up the roof of truth in the world for all to see.

Interestingly, it is not the truth that is the pillar and foundation holding up the church, although that could be said too. But here it is the *church* that is the pillar and foundation of the truth. That does not mean that the church invents the truth or produces it. Nor does it mean that the truth does not exist without her. Nor does it mean that she decides ultimately what is true and what is not. The Roman Catholic Church views truth that way. She views herself as the one who invents the truth, such that simply because she says something, it is true.

But the text is not speaking about that at all. It is talking about the truth that God has revealed in His Word being upheld in the world. The church acts as foundation and pillar to hold up the truth for all to see. If the church were not there, the truth would still exist, but it would not be held up, propped up, in the world. If the church is destroyed from off the face of the earth, then the truth is not upheld in the world.

It is the church *institute* that must be the pillar and ground of the truth. This is proved from the fact that the apostle Paul is giving instruction to Timothy regarding the local church in Ephesus. In verse 15 the apostle says he wants to come to Timothy in Ephesus, but he might be delayed a long time. Therefore, he writes this letter, “that you might know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the church of the living God.” It is the responsibility of the local church (in unity with other local churches of like faith too) to uphold the truth of the Word of God in the world. It is the church’s calling and honor to be upholder of truth about God, Christ, this world, man, sin, redemption, and the end of all things. It is no other institution’s calling. The state is not the pillar and ground of the truth. A business is not the pillar and ground of the truth. Only the church is given this distinct honor and high calling.

Because the church alone is the pillar and ground of the truth, Satan does his best to destroy the church. He knows what the pillar and ground of truth is. He knows the only way truth is preserved and upheld in this world is through the church. He attacks the church. The church is the only thing preventing him from blinding every last person with the lie. The church must preserve and uphold the truth in this world. And God will give grace to ensure that she does.

This ought to make us love the church. She is not very flashy. She does not have worldly glory. But she is the upholder of truth. Is that what we are looking for the church to be? If we are looking primarily for anything else in the church of Jesus Christ, we are looking for the wrong thing. Ask this question: Is she upholding the truth? This ought to make us work for her. It ought to make us focus our lives on her. See her prosper. See her lovingly bold in the faith. See her stand strong. Wear out the knees on our pants in prayer for her. Spend blood, sweat, and tears for her.

How is the church the pillar and ground of the truth?

The church upholds truth in her confession and life by what she teaches and confesses and how she lives in conjunction with that teaching. Verse 16 speaks of the “mystery of godliness,” that is, the secret to piety, the soil out of which comes a godly life. And in the text, that soil is the confession given her, the truth about Christ and His work. The truths of the Word of God are truths that lead to piety in the true believer, to a holy life.

That means, then, the church must be meticulous in her theology, knowing the Word of God and confessing the truths of that Word wisely and boldly. She must know truth in order to confess it from the heart. The elders and deacons and ministers certainly must, but also the members and the children. This is why creeds are important for the church. Our creeds are the teachings of the Bible in summarized form, so that we can understand them in a logical way. They are expressions of what the Bible says is true. As such they are the glove that allows the hand of the church to grasp the Word of God. These creeds that the churches have formed must live in her soul if the church is to be the upholder of truth. Our responsibility is to know those creeds and understand them, love them, and use them. This is how the church will maintain her confession. This is how she will remain the upholder of the light of truth in a world of darkness.

But truth is also upheld by the church in her *worship*. In all of her worship, the church is confessing and upholding truth. In the preaching of the gospel, the church is confessing truth and upholding truth for all to see. In the singing of the church, the church is confessing truth about God in Christ, about salvation from sin, about the glories of their covenant God. In the prayers that are prayed, and of course in the recitation of the creed, truth is confessed and held up for all to see. In worship the church adores her God by confessing what He has revealed to be true. She proclaims that He is the living God as Paul calls him in verse 15. She says, “He is not like the dead idols that men worship. He is not like the vain and empty pursuits that the modern age bows before. He is no myth; He is the living God. And He meets with us in the worship of the church. We know Him; we experience His grace overwhelming our souls. He is alive. And we will tell you and Him that we believe it so.”

If she does not do this, she is not being the church. If her preaching is the preaching of lies, and not truth; if her songs say things about the God of heaven and earth that are not true; if her prayers treat God as someone other than what He is, then the church is not fulfilling her calling. But the church who worships by confessing truth is the church holding truth up for all to see—in all of her life, activities, and worship—a body confessing the truth about God, worshiping Him in Spirit and in truth.

Important Results


An important result of the church upholding truth in reciting the Apostles’ Creed in her worship and life is, first of all, the salvation of God’s own people. The illustration of I Timothy 3:16 is that the church is pillar and foundation so that the roof of truth might be held high in the sky for all to see. God has His elect in the world, and it is His truth upheld in love by the church that will draw them to Christ by the Spirit.

Secondly, an important result is that the church is shaped by the truth that she confesses. This is the argument of the apostle Paul in I Timothy 3. In this book the apostle is giving instructions for the conduct of the church, for the way the church functions and lives her life. And he roots those commands in the truth that the church confesses. The church is pillar and ground of the truth and confesses that truth, and that must shape all her life and conduct as church.

This is another benefit of choosing to recite the Apostles’ Creed. Every time we preach through the Heidelberg Catechism, we expound the truths contained in that creed. That allows us to recite the creed knowing what is being said and the implications of the truths we are confessing, so that when we confess the faith together from the heart and not simply out of custom, we are making a confession of the truth that has shaped us as a people. We did not invent this truth; this truth has invented us, and that is why we uphold it and confess it from the heart.

Finally, an important result is that God will be worshiped and glorified in the church’s confession of truth. The apostle, in giving instructions for the church in this book, has this end in mind. He makes that clear in the last chapter, chapter 6:14-16 where he tells Timothy to keep the commands Paul has given him, “without spot,

unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.... To whom be honour and power everlasting." That is, "Make sure, Timothy, that the church remains pillar and ground of the truth. Obey all I have commanded, that it be so. Make sure she confesses the truth in all her life, for this brings the King glory." In all her life, and in the body rising as one to confess the universal, undoubted Christian faith, the church is worshiping, bringing glory to God. God is glorified when His church rises up to tell Him what she knows of Him, when she confesses the

truth about Him, and when from the heart she experiences the truths of His words. Therefore, He is glorified when she declares to Him in praise to His name that He is the true God, that Jesus is His Son, and that salvation is wrought by Him in the Holy Spirit. He loves to hear that His people understand and experience the reality of who He is in Jesus Christ. And He loves to hear His people praising Him by declaring what they know about Him. Such a confession of the truth exalts His great name. 

CLASSIS WEST REPORT

REV. DOUGLAS KUIPER

March 4, 2015

On March 4, 2015, the thirty delegates to Classis West met in the Doon, IA PRC. The day dawned sunny, clear, cold, and windy—a typical winter morning on the eastern edge of the plains. Inside, the delegates enjoyed warm fellowship.

Rev. Erik Guichelaar (Randolph PRC) opened the session by reading I Timothy 4:11-16, and giving a meditation on verse 16. The young pastor reminded the delegates of the need both to be diligent in our labors, and to be personal examples of godliness, assuring us from God's Word that in this way we will enjoy God's blessing on us personally and on our congregations. After devotions, Rev. R. Hanko (Lynden PRC) took the chair and capably led the Classis through its work.

For the most part, this was a routine spring meeting. Classis approved the labors of its stated clerk, classical committee, church visitors, and reading sermon committee. It provided Peace PRC with classical appointments. Classis approved Edgerton's request for subsidy for 2015, and approved subsidy requests for six churches for 2016. Since 1999, Edgerton has been able to subsidize its own General Fund by drawing annually from the interest and principal of a sizeable bequest. Edgerton informed Classis that, because the bequest could be completely gone in about five years, Edgerton thought it prudent to subsidize its General Fund partly from that bequest fund, and partly from denominational subsidy—which Classis granted. All subsidy requests will now be forwarded to Synod 2015 for final approval or disapproval.

Voting for various functionaries and synodical delegates is always on the agenda of the spring meeting. Classis appointed Rev. J. Laning to a three-year term on the classical committee. It chose Revs. S. Key, R. Kleyn, D. Kuiper, and J. Laning as church visitors for the next year, with Revs. A. Brummel and D. Lee as alternates. It brings to Synod the recommendation to approve Rev. D. Kuiper for a three-year term as *primus* synodical deputy, and Rev. J. Laning for a three-year term as *secundus*. It delegated to synod Revs. Brummel, Key, Kleyn, Kuiper, and Laning, and elders Keith Bruinsma (Peace), Chester Hunter (Edgerton), Alan Meurer (Bethel), Jack Lenting (Crete), and Jack Regnerus (Randolph). Alternate delegates are Revs. Griess, Huizinga, Langerak, Lee, and Marcus, and elders Jim Andringa (Hull), Glenn Feenstra (Hope), Jim Hoogendoorn (Doon), Victor Solanyk (Loveland), and Steve VanDrunen (Crete).

Classis dealt with two non-routine matters.

First, Peace PRC informed Classis that its congregation has authorized its Council to investigate buying property or existing buildings south of its current location, "most likely in Indiana." Recognizing that the Illinois/Indiana border is the designated boundary line between Classis East and Classis West, Peace asked Classis to bring to Synod its request to be permitted to remain in Classis West, should Peace move across the classical boundary into Indiana. Classis forwarded this request to Synod, with its approval.

Second, the stated clerk informed Classis that he was nearly finished preparing an index of the decisions of Classis West, and desired advice from Classis regarding


the printing, distributing, and updating of this index. Classis decided to permit every consistory in the denomination to receive a printed copy, and every minister in the denomination to receive a printed and/or electronic copy of this index. Because the index contains publicly known information, Classis faced the question whether to make the printed version available to any member of the denomination who requests it. Classis decided instead that members of the congregations may ask their consistory to use their copy, since the consistory is in a better position to judge why the member desires to use it. The stated clerk was then instructed to update and redistribute the electronic version of this index every year, and

the printed version every ten years. However, every year the stated clerk must send those who receive the printed version a loose-leaf sheet of cumulative updates.

Glancing through the minutes, I see that consistories have asked for advice regarding erasure or increase of censure at seven of the last eleven meetings. This meeting was one of those four at which no consistories sought such advice.

The expenses of this meeting totaled \$8,029.82.

Classis is scheduled to meet next on September 30 in Edgerton, MN.

Rev. Douglas Kuiper,
Stated Clerk 

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

Denominational Activities

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches met in Doon, IA PRC on March 4. The business was mostly routine. Classis West plans to meet next on September 30 in the PRC of Edgerton, MN.

Evangelism Activities

The Evangelism Committee of Trinity PRC, Hudsonville, MI held a personal witnessing seminar for members of their congregation on February 25 and March 4. The seminar took the place of the society meetings normally scheduled on those dates.

Young People's Activities

There is a PRC Young People's Convention on the horizon! Scheduled for August 10-14, the 2015 convention will be hosted by Southeast PRC of Grand Rapids, MI at Michindoh Conference Center in Hillsdale, MI. This year's theme

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

is "The Man Eating Lion Survival Guide," a timely topic based on I Peter 5:8. Registration is open from March 2 through May 20 at a cost of \$340 per conventioneer. Check out <http://prconvention.com/> to register and find all the information you will need. You can also email pryp2015@gmail.com. Parents, encourage your young people to attend and to register soon!

You can tell the young people of the denomination are planning ahead to attend their convention by the fundraisers that abound in our churches across the country and beyond! On March 1, the host congregation at Southeast held a night of special music presented by members of their congregation with the offering to assist conventioners.

The same type of evening occurred at Grace PRC in Standale, MI already in February, where a variety of vocal and instrumental numbers were presented to glorify our heavenly Father.

On March 7, the young people of Faith PRC, Jenison, MI sponsored a

Mexican Dinner and Silent Auction in their fellowship hall with proceeds benefitting convention attendees.

The young people of Southwest PRC, Wyoming, MI held a pancake breakfast with all the trimmings to help financially those attending the convention.

In Loveland, CO the young people fixed an Italian Feast for those of the congregation wishing to partake and help their young people with convention expenses.

The YPS of Hull, IA PRC held a soup supper and bake sale along with a basketball shooting contest, where shooters could acquire prizes by making a layup, free throw, three point basket, and half-court shot, all within a minute's time.

Hope PRC, Walker, MI young people held a soup supper followed by a travelogue entitled "Trains of the Mountain West."

The YPS of Hope PRC, Redlands, CA held a French Toast breakfast for the congregation.

There was a church potluck and "delicate dessert" silent auction at

Grandville, MI PRC to benefit the young people there.

Minister Activities

Rev. Daniel Holstege, pastor at First PRC of Holland, MI had been considering the call to be the next missionary to the Republic of the Philippines. On March 8, God led Rev. Holstege to decline this call. We are thankful that God's will was made known and we trust in the King of the church to provide another missionary in His time.

Peace PRC in Lansing, IL announced a new trio consisting of Rev. Cory Griess (Calvary, PRC, Hull, IA), Rev. William Langerak (Southeast PRC, Grand Rapids, MI), and Rev. John Marcus (First PRC, Edmonton, AB, Canada). On March 2 the congregation at Peace issued a call to Rev. Griess to come over and help her as her next pastor.

Mission Activities

A delegation of two elders and two deacons from Southwest PRC in Wyoming, MI recently traveled to the PRCA's Pittsburgh, PA Fellowship to oversee the Lord's Supper there, to meet with missionary pastor Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma and the Steering Committee, and to conduct family visitation.

The Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines met February 25 in the Berean PRC in Greenheights Subdivision of Mayamot, Antipolo. This Classis meets three times a year. Rev. Daniel Kleyn, who chaired the last Classis, opened with devotions and a meditation from Psalm 87:2. By rotation, Rev. John Flores, pastor of the Prot-

estant Reformed Church of Bulacan, served as chairman of this Classis. In addition to receiving reports from the clerk and treasurer and approving their work, the Classis received and treated reports from its standing committees. These reports mainly involved presenting constitutions to Classis for their respective duties as committees—i.e., constitutions for Contact Committee, Finance Committee, Seminary Student Training, etc. The Classis also treated and approved the procedure which is to be used when churches request membership in the PRCP. This procedure will now be put into effect in treating the request of Maranatha Protestant Reformed Church in Valenzuela to join the Federation. The Classis began at 9:00 A.M. and was finished at 1:00 P.M., with this being Rev. Richard Smit's last meeting. He bade farewell to the Classis and led in the closing prayer. As many of the men said, he will certainly be missed. The next meeting is scheduled for June 12, the Lord willing, and will be hosted by the PRC in Bulacan.

A delegation of Rev. Allen Brummel, representing the Foreign Mission Committee, and elder Jim Regnerus, representing the calling church of Doon, IA PRC will travel to the Philippine mission field in late June.

Sister-Church Activities

The Chinese New Year season is widely celebrated in Singapore. In 2015, the year of the goat, the dates for this occurrence were February 19 through March 5 as based on the lunar calendar. Many superstitious practices take place nationwide during this time. On the 18th

people were only required to work a half day so they could then take part in reunion dinners with their families, and the 19th was declared a public holiday to visit friends and relatives. Families traditionally incorporate Yusheng, a type of raw fish salad, into their holiday menus, with the stirring and tossing of the ingredients a custom also.


In Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church, Pastor Lanning has been reminding the congregation (through sermons and writings) of the biblical imagery of goats, including the goats sacrificed on the great day of atonement. The members of CERC use this time to visit each other in various homes. They also visit their unbelieving relatives. Their weekly bulletin included this: "Pray that we may use the time of our Chinese New Year visitation this Thursday and Friday to share the gospel to our loved ones and friends who have not known the Lord Jesus Christ."

Congregational Activities

The men of Edgerton, MN PRC hosted the annual combined Men's Society meeting of the five Siouxland area churches on March 23, with the men from Hull, IA PRC providing the after-recess topic for discussion.

Seminary News

Seminary student Ryan Barnhill and his wife Miranda were blessed with the birth of a son, Nolan Ryan. We give thanks to God for the blessing of another covenant child given to their home.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Congregation and council of Hope PRC expresses Christian sympathy to Dorothea Kalsbeek and family, fellow officebearers Elder Cal Kalsbeek and Elder David Kamps and families, in the death of their husband, father, grandfather, brother, and brother-in-law,

CHARLES KALSBECK.

May they find comfort in the words of Psalm 121:1, 2: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."

Rev. David Overway, President
David Moelker, Clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Southeast PRC express their Christian sympathy to John and Lynn Kalsbeek, Eric and Anne Pastoor, Charles and Monica Hoekstra in the death of their beloved father and grandfather,

CHUCK KALSBECK.

"My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

Rev. Bill Langerak, President
Doug Mingerink, Asst. Clerk

Classis East

■ Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk by April 13, 2015.

Jon J. Huisken,
Stated Clerk

Synod

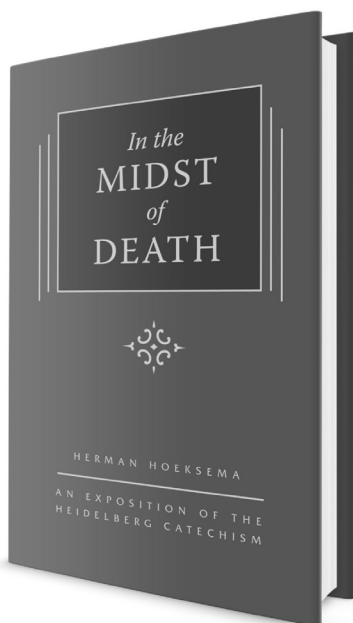
■ All standing and special committees of the synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as well as individuals who wish to address Synod 2015, are hereby notified that all material for this year's synod should be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than April 15. Please send material to:

Don Doezeema
4949 Ivanrest Ave. SW
Grandville, MI 49418

Reformed Witness Hour

April 2015

Date	Topic	Text
April 5	"Burning Hearts and Opened Eyes"	Luke 24:13-35
April 12	"Our Greatest Privilege"	Hebrews 10:19-21
April 19	"Draw Near to God"	Hebrews 10:22
April 26	"Encouraged to Persevere"	Hebrews 10:23



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