

The Standard Bearer

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Christ's Example of Servanthood

If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

John 13:14, 15

It is Thursday evening of the Passion Week, the week of Jesus' suffering. It is the day before Christ would lay down His life on the cross. The time that the disciples would be with their Master was growing short. Certainly they could sense that things were working toward a climax. Jesus had warned His disciples repeatedly, in one way or another, that He was to suffer and die. We would think that there would have been a very quiet, somber attitude among them all. They had come together in the upper room to partake of the Passover meal with Jesus. We might expect that the disciples would have been very meek, and that a spirit of humility would have been much in evidence. We might suppose that their hearts and minds would have gone out to Jesus

with concern at this difficult time, but that was not the case.

Rather, they had been disputing at great length about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. It was, it seems, the ambition of each of them to have the highest place. Each one of them thought that he was uniquely suited for special consideration and qualified for some great position. Apparently the idea of power possessed them—to have power over others, to have others bow before them and recognize their worth! They ate, drank, and slept with little else than the grand thought of having dominion and rule. So they pushed themselves to the forefront at every opportunity, tried to surpass one another at every turn, called attention to themselves constantly, and boasted of their abilities and strength. So intense was this competition among them, that the mother of two of them even became the advocate of her sons, asking Jesus if one of her sons could sit on His right hand and the other on His left when He came into His kingdom! Perhaps at this time contention arose in connection with the seating arrangement in the upper room. Each one may have coveted for himself one of the most honorable places at the table.

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Pride! Awful pride! Stinking pride! Pride is such a root sin. Who of us does not have to struggle against pride? Yes, by grace we have the life of regeneration in our hearts. But we still carry with us in this life that proud, sinful flesh. Certainly the heart of this narrative of the foot washing is the cross, our need to be washed from our sins by the shed blood of our Savior. But these verses call attention to the powerful example of the Lord Jesus—an example of true humility, an example of servanthood. We too must hear and heed the words of the Savior: “... ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

An Amazing Example

Everything was now ready for the Passover meal to begin. However, custom demanded that their feet had to be washed before they could begin the supper. They wore sandals, and their feet were dusty after a walk of about five miles over the Mount of Olives on the dusty road into Jerusalem. It was unthinkable that they could begin without the feet of each guest being washed. Notice, too, that everything needed for the washing of their feet was there—water in a basin and a towel. The only thing lacking was a *servant* to perform the lowly task of getting down on his knees before each one, washing the dust from their feet, and then drying them with a towel. There is no denying that it was a very humble task.

Can you not picture the twelve there in the upper room? None of them had volunteered to wash the feet. Apparently each of them had taken a place at the table. No doubt they were fidgeting on their couches, glancing about, waiting—waiting for someone else to do this servant’s task. Did it not enter their minds that one of them should take care of this matter, so that they could get on with the significant things of that evening? I am inclined to think that the situation stared each of them in the face, and that each one refused to humble himself in regard to the others. Their pride and self-esteem would not allow them to stoop that low.

Then we read, “loving his own...unto the end,” and “knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God” (vv. 1, 3), without a word *Jesus* arose from the table, removed His outer cloak, and wrapped a towel around Himself. After that He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, wiping them

with the towel. Yes, Jesus, our blessed Lord and Savior, did that! He who is the only begotten Son of God in our flesh! Can you fathom such a thing?! Jesus is doing the servant’s job! Does not the beauty and simplicity of it all overwhelm you? Does it not bring tears to your eyes to behold the Lord Jesus humbled so? Undoubtedly the apostle Peter has this amazing incident in mind, when he writes in his first epistle, “Be ye clothed with humility” (5:5). With that servant’s towel Jesus had literally girded Himself with humility! So great was the humility that He, the Lord and Master, the very Son of God, the King, did the work of a common slave!

The context emphasizes that Jesus did this *knowingly*. He understood that that very night His sufferings would be intensified, yea, His hour had well nigh come. The next day He would be crucified, crucified for the salvation of those proud disciples. But not only for them—also for many others who are equally proud and haughty—yea, for you and for me. Was it ever made clearer that He came to serve, to minister, and not to be ministered unto? And still Peter gives evidence of foolish pride: “Lord, dost thou wash *my* feet?” He means, “How shameful that the others allow you to do this for them; they ought to know better! Don’t you see, Jesus, that I am better than they? You’ll never wash my feet!” But the Lord Jesus patiently explains. And the Master proceeds to wash Peter’s feet and the feet of the remaining disciples. Jesus replaces His robe, takes again His seat, and then asks the penetrating question: “Know ye what I have done to you?” Do we know? Do we understand?

Our Solemn Calling

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.” It is very clear that we have here not a ceremony or a sacrament of sorts that can be kept on one day of the year, or perhaps periodically. Jesus does not say, “This do ye.” But He says, “Do *as* I have done to you.” He gives us an *example* that must be followed carefully and faithfully. It goes far beyond the outward act. It is a matter of the heart and the basic attitude of our lives!

Certainly the fact that He performs the work of a servant symbolizes His great love and amazing humility! There is nothing that Christ will not do for His people!

Further, this act was symbolic of the work the Lord Jesus would perform the very next day on the cross. Jesus would lay down His *life* for His people! The water points to the blood He would willingly shed on the accursed tree. The dust of their feet stands for the awful corruption of sin, of our sins as well. If we are to have a place in His kingdom, we must be washed from our sins by our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what about this example? Plainly there is a calling here that falls to each one of us in the communion of the saints: “Ye ought also to wash one another’s feet”! Jesus said, “If I then, your Lord and Master do this....” What about it? Is this beneath us? Do we suppose that we are somehow exempt? Or that we are too good, too important, too popular, too talented? Are there some things that Jesus did that are simply beneath our dignity? If this be the case, we are proud! And we show that we have not learned the first thing about the kingdom of heaven. “Be clothed with humility.” That is the heavenly example we must follow! The followers of Christ are to manifest that humility that is in Him so beautifully and wonderfully!

What a struggle it is to count others better than ourselves, to be concerned, first, not with our own welfare and advantage but with the welfare of others! Let us seek not the praise and honor of men, but the approval of the God of our salvation! Our Heidelberg Catechism puts it so beautifully in A. 55: “...that everyone must know it to be his duty, readily and cheerfully to employ his gifts, for the advantage and salvation of other members.” Do you seek the good and spiritual welfare of the brother or sister? That is the implication of washing one another’s feet. Do you help one another in the daily battle of faith? Do you do that as servant, not in haughty pride, not looking down your nose at the erring brother or sister, but in the humility of a servant, loving the brother, seeking the salvation of his soul?


How is that possible? Christ is the power of our humility! Always the humility that characterizes the life of the saints is a humility that is rooted in regeneration. It is a virtue that comes by grace alone. It is worked in us through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. By His Spirit He works the humility of His own cross within our hearts. Never does this humility come of ourselves! God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! (Gal. 6:14).

Thus, we must take Christ as our example. He is our pattern, and His humility is the pattern of our humility. “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” This is the profound truth of Philippians 2:5-8: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” By grace, we must walk in the footsteps of Christ. Oh, we fall far short! We will never be able to approximate, except in a very small measure, the depths of His humility. But that is our calling! As servants of God, in humility, we must be servants of one another.

The Rich Blessing

Jesus says, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (v. 17). The beautiful passage in Philippians 2 which speaks of the humiliation of Christ, also goes on to describe His exaltation: “Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name...” (v. 9).

We too are exalted in the way of humility, in the way of washing one another’s feet. Oh, in this life we may well be despised and hated, but we are and shall be exalted by our God. And when one day we stand before the judgment seat, we will be exalted to the glory of heaven. By grace we will cry out: “Lord, when have we done anything pleasing in Thy sight? When have we been willing to be a servant to Thee? When have we fed Thee when Thou wast hungry, and clothed Thee when Thou wast naked, and warmed Thee when Thou wast cold? When did we visit Thee in prison? When did we wash Thy feet?” But the Lord will say, “The way of humility is the way to glory! It is the way of the cross! Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of My brethren, ye have done these things to Me. You have washed the feet of the lowliest of My people—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Let us pray then for the beautiful grace of humility! May humility more and more characterize all of our lives. Think upon Christ in that upper room! Esteem each other better than yourself! In love serve one another! In that way we truly serve our God. 

What It Means to Be Reformed (2)

COVENANTAL

This 90th anniversary year of the Protestant Reformed Churches (1925-2015) is good opportunity to remind ourselves who we are, to reflect with joy that God has preserved us as a denomination, and to express humble gratitude for what God has given us. It also makes us plead (paraphrasing but slightly, *Psalter* #27): “O God, preserve us; for in Thee alone our trust has stood.” And exclaim: “The lines are fallen unto us in places large and fair; a goodly heritage is ours, marked out with gracious care.” Grace has brought us where we are; grace will sustain us, if God will be pleased to do so.

To be and remain *Reformed* is what the PRCs want. This is my conviction and must be the conviction of all her confessing members. Membership in a church with the name “Reformed” means understanding and agreeing with what the name designates.

I ended last editorial saying that, although there are many opinions of what it means to be Reformed, these editorials will assert that to be Reformed is to be covenantal, Calvinistic, confessional, church-focused, and have a definite and

particular view of the Christian life. Without any one of these, a church may have important elements of a Reformed identity, but cannot legitimately take for herself the name Reformed. Especially in these days when so many want to be known as Reformed only because they believe the five points of Calvinism, it is im-

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COVENANTAL
CALVINISTIC
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CONFESSIONAL
CHRISTIAN LIFE

portant to identify Reformed more carefully and more comprehensively.

The heart of it all

Central to understanding what it means to be Reformed is God’s covenant of grace. The heart that pumps with life in a Reformed church is the reality—both the teaching and the living—of God’s everlasting covenant.

We start with covenant and we end with covenant.

And not merely because covenant has been at the center of PRC history and doctrinal development, although it certainly has. The existence of the PRC and the his-

tory of the PRC are related to the defense of and development of the doctrine of the covenant. For many in Reformed churches, to say “Protestant Reformed Churches,” is to say “covenant.” We are happy with that.

But we start and end with covenant because the Christian faith does. Christianity itself is covenantal. To say “Christian” must make a Reformed person say “Covenant.” To say “Christian” without saying “Covenant” is to misunderstand the very essence of Christianity.

The everlasting covenant of grace is *God’s living bond of friendship and love between Him and His elect people in Jesus Christ—embracing also their children—established and sealed with inviolable promises*. The covenant is not children, even though it is necessary to emphasize that God’s covenant embraces also the elect children of believers. The covenant is not promise, even though covenant is not covenant without rich and beautiful promises. Nor can we say covenant without saying, “unconditional,” a hallmark adjective of PRC doctrine, which will be explained under the heading “Calvinistic,” since God’s covenant must be understood as gracious. But God’s covenant is a bond of friendship and love. It is the revelation outside of Himself

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of the covenant life He lives within Himself as the God of Trinity, in which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit fellowship in love.

At the heart of the Christian faith and experience is God's *embrace* of an undeserving people, His *drawing* them to Himself in love by His own Son, His *declaration* to them, "I am the LORD thy God and ye are my people," and His *binding* Himself to them with the oath: "I love you eternally; I will never break my covenant." God's covenant friends then by grace respond, "We belong to Thee, body and soul, in life and in death; we love Thee and delight in Thee."

Christianity—Reformed Christianity—is personal, experiential, comforting, delightful.

Living the covenant

It is not permissible, although it is possible, for Reformed Christians to defend covenant doctrine, battle against covenant heresies, explain everything theological in terms of covenant, but not *live* covenantally. To be Reformed is not only to confess the gracious covenant, but to live the life of the covenant. To *be* a friend of God. To *speak* with and embrace Him. To *listen* to His Words of love to us. To walk with Him in the cool of the day. To delight in His presence.

Of course, one cannot live covenantally without knowing covenant truth. One cannot embrace a God he does not understand, or listen to a God whose embrace of him he thinks is, for example, deserved. So my saying that covenant must be *lived* is not saying that covenant

need not be *explained*—by thorough and precise doctrine. It is saying, however, that it is possible to know all about the covenant without truly knowing God and, thus, that without living as God's friend one cannot call himself truly Reformed.

Illustrating covenant

To confess, defend and fight about the *doctrine* of the covenant without living covenant life would be like a married man spending his life on the road, speaking at conferences about the beauty and truth of marriage, without coming home to love, embrace, and fellowship with his wife. He may speak ever so eloquently, even moving married people to tears by his explanation of God's good gift of marriage, but if he does not draw near to, embrace, converse with, and live intimately with his wife, he does not know marriage.

That is an apt illustration because it is biblical. "I am married to you," God said to Israel (Jer. 3:14; see also Ezek. 16, especially v. 8). In Ephesians 5, after Paul described marriage in quite the detail, he concluded with the startling remark, "But I am speaking of Christ and the church." The relationship between God and His people in Christ is best illustrated by a good, Christian marriage. The covenant relationship (really a redundancy) between God and His people, first revealed in paradise of Genesis, finds its goal and climax in the *marriage* supper of the Lamb, the paradise of Revelation and eternity.

A marriage is a bond. I am bound

to my wife, for life. In a Christian marriage is delight, fellowship, conversation, intimacy. Marriage is not a promise, even though a man is bound to his wife by oaths he swears at the wedding. Marriage is not children, even though in most marriages there are children. Marriage is a living bond of friendship and love. So is God's covenant.

Proving covenant

That covenant is the heart of the Reformed faith and of Christianity itself is biblical. The Bible itself is comprised of Old Covenant and New Covenant. A legitimate way to think of and even translate the word *testament* in "Old Testament" and "New Testament" is *covenant*. The entire Word of God to His people is in the framework of covenant. For the first four thousand years, God's way of speaking to and living with His people was the "shadowy" way of types and pictures, designed for an immature church, but all pointing to Jesus Christ. God's way of speaking to and living with His people, for the past two thousand years, is new—that is, without all the old forms and shadows of the first dispensation. But whether old or new, God has always spoken to and lived among His people as their covenant friend. Whether old or new, it is all covenant.

So God's relationship with the crown of His creation—Adam—the one in the *image* of the Creator, was a "friendly" relationship, until sin interrupted that intimate fellowship, which immediately brings the promise of the sending of God's own Son to restore and elevate that

friendship to the highest level. But all through the old covenant, this is the testimony of the Word. God was the friend of Noah. Enoch walked with God. Both Testaments identify Abraham as the “friend of God.” And when God’s people became a multitude, He preserved His friendly relationship by erecting His tabernacle-house in the middle of the multitude, from which house He spoke to them and lived with them. “Come, visit Me. I am your God; ye are My people.” Friendship. Intimate secrets (Ps. 25:14). Love. Covenant.

When God’s friends violated that relationship by loving and communing with other gods, the prophets put that sin in terms of violating a marriage—adultery. “I am married to you!” objected God through Jeremiah. To the prophet Hosea God said, “Marry a woman known for her unfaithfulness; she will be unfaithful to you; but by this painful experience you will be able to convey to My people what their idolatry is *essentially*—a violation of a marriage friendship.”

And when God—true to the promises of His covenant—would graciously maintain the relationship with undeserving people, He sent His own Son. Not only would Jehovah-Salvation pay for our sins. God would have Him known as “God with us” (Matt. 1:23), the one who “tabernacled among us” (John 1:14). If nothing else testifies that the heart of the Christian faith is *covenant as friendship*, it is the stunning and humbling reality that God did not spare His own Son from death, and that His own Son

willingly and lovingly laid down His life for His *friends*.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends.... ...I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends... (John 15:13-15).

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If anything makes a Reformed believer happy that he may number himself among those who rightly call themselves Reformed, it is this reality. God is my Friend through Jesus Christ. I love Him. He loves me. Me. Undeserving me. Gracious friendship. Gracious covenant. This is Reformed.

Confessional truth

It may be said that at the time of the writing of the Reformed confessions the doctrine of the covenant was not developed as it is today.


That may be true. Explicit definitions of covenant may be lacking. Fully worked-out doctrine of the covenant explicitly as friendship, pictured by marriage—a gracious and everlasting relationship of love—you will not find.

But no one may say that our Reformed fathers did not know covenant.

The greatest statement, in my estimation, that shows that our Reformed fathers understood the Christian faith—the Reformed faith—as essentially friendship and love, a statement that will likely never be improved upon, is the opening statement of the Heidelberg Catechism. That experiential, comforting, personal, most favored of all the Reformed creeds, begins with a statement that could hardly be described better than “covenantal.”

Read it again, and think of it in the terms we have been describing. And rejoice that you may call yourself Reformed, and by that simply mean “Christian.”

What is thy only comfort in life and death?

That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with His precious blood, hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto Him. 

The Bread of the Mouth and the Soul

Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place? All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?

Ecclesiastes 6:6-8

We have seen that God gives to the man who is good in His sight, to His people, to eat and drink in contentment with their portion under the sun. This gift of God is not yet perfected in them, because of sin and the infirmity of the flesh, but it is, nevertheless, a work of grace. To the wicked, held in the bondage of covetousness in various ways, this gift is denied, in God's judgment. Solomon has spoken of the man who has many things in this life but, "his soul [is] not filled with good" (Eccl. 6:3).

He now turns to that same man, to whom is given long life, for this was mentioned before and is considered desirable in the world. The example Solomon uses is that of one who lives twice the length of life given Methuselah and more: "Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told..." (Eccl. 6:8)—a long life indeed. But in the bondage of covetousness, it is a long life characterized by the statement, "yet hath he seen no good" (Eccl. 6:8). Not only is his soul not filled with good, internally, but the good is really withheld from him altogether so that he sees it not. It never comes into his view.

He may seek what seems good in his own eyes. He may heap and gather. He may seek after abundance and earthly riches, but his work is driven by a covetousness that finds its treasure below and seeks its satisfaction in earthly things. Such earthly treasures can never satisfy,

to fill the soul with good. There is never enough, so that he has an abiding joy and peace. We may be inclined to say, how can this be? The answer lies in the nature of covetousness, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase" (Eccl. 5:10). To such a man, in his bondage, enough is never enough. He is enslaved to heaping and gathering. Long life does not change this.

Not only so, but we also read, "do not all go to one place?" (Eccl. 6:8). The covetous man shall still die. He still comes in the darkness of sin and departs in darkness. He lives for this world and its vanity, without seeing the good, which can only be known in God, and death at length carries him away. He goes to the grave and his portion under the sun is taken from him. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" says Proverbs 16:31, but when it is found in the way of sin, of worldly-mindedness and covetousness, it is not a glory but a horror to behold. The old, unbelieving fool is one whose long life actually profited him nothing in this life. But he then also goes to the grave in shame and has nothing that he carries away with him. The stillborn, mentioned in the preceding verses, has more rest than he.

Solomon directs us to a reason for this, bound up with the essential vanity of this world under the curse: "All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet his appetite is not filled." His appetite, literally his "soul" in the original, is not filled. The figure of the mouth, and thus the appetite, or the hunger of the body, reflects the reality of man's life and its vanity. Man works to eat that he may work again to eat again. Never does he, nor can he, lift himself above that cycle to some abiding good that satisfies. He is never truly filled such that the need and desire are quenched. This is the reality of man's life under the sun. If then he knows not the grace of contentment, he is most miserable.

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Now, this reality of the very empty vanity of earthly life, this need of life driven by the mouth, touches the child of God also. Under the sun, we too must labor to eat and then labor again. Solomon raises this point also, “For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?” (Eccl. 6:8). The one who is wise is, after all, one who fears God, for that alone is the beginning of wisdom. The poor in the text, who “knows to walk,” is one who holds God’s Word, walking by faith in the light of that knowledge. He knows how to walk. He may be poor in the things of this world, but he is first of all poor in spirit. Yet he also must live in this world and labor for the needs of the body; he is held in the same circumstances of human life under the sun. Outwardly his life under the sun is bound by the same limits of the vanity of this present life as the fool.

Does that mean that there is no difference? In earthly and material terms, the organic reality of human life is the same for both the wise and the fool. Spiritually, however, there is a profound difference. The fool labors all his life for the bread that perishes and, in the end, he himself perishes. The spiritual state of the covetous soul, held in the lusts of the flesh, is that it is never satisfied even as his mouth never has enough and the appetite—the lust of his soul—is never satisfied. Since the cravings of his mouth and that of his soul are one and the same, the covetous man is held in bondage to the flesh.


In God’s grace there is a better portion given unto the children of God. It is not measured by earthly things or circumstances. It is to have the bread of eternal life and to drink of the fountain of the water of life in Jesus Christ by faith. Our Savior, who by His Spirit gave also this word in Ecclesiastes, refers to the idea of it on more than one occasion. The text asks a rhetorical question: “For what

hath the wise more than the fool?” The answer, which the text itself later gives, is this: he has the knowledge of God, the Creator, the covenant God (Eccl. 11:9; Eccl. 12:1). He has the fear of God and keeps His commandments by faith walking a pathway that is by grace. He has Christ, the end of the law, for righteousness (Eccl. 12:13, 14).

Jesus takes up this point of Ecclesiastes and directs us to Himself as Immanuel, God with us: “Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed” (John 6:27). Jesus makes the same point under the figure of water

when He speaks to the Samaritan woman: “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:13, 14).

To the one who is fed by that living Bread by faith in Jesus Christ and who drinks of that Water of life the answer to the question, “What hath this more than another?” is, in fact, much in every way. Though known only by faith and not founded on the things of this present life, its blessing extends even to the things of this present life. For, though a child of God labors for the needs of the body, it is given him, in a measure, to eat and drink with contentment of heart.

Because he has been given “the meat which endureth” and “the well springing up into everlasting life,” it is also given him in earthly things, “power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God” (Eccl. 5:19). It is such a gift of grace because it serves a life that seeks the things above. It is a gift in this present life to one who has eternal life. 

*In God’s grace
there is a better portion
given unto
the children of God.
It is not measured
by earthly things
or circumstances.
It is to have the bread
of eternal life
and to drink
of the fountain
of the water of life
in Jesus Christ by faith.*

Crown


The crown is an ornament of glory given to another and prominently displayed on his/her head. It represents the glory adorning the holy gospel and person of Jesus, and given to all who believe the gospel. This glorious gospel is that man, who disgracefully corrupted the glory of his original creation, is crowned with righteousness and life incorruptible by Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, and is now crowned with glory and honor, that He by grace should rule over the works of God's hands (Heb. 2:7-9).

Besides the crown that is our head itself (II Sam. 14:25; Is. 3:17), Scripture refers to several kinds of crowns, each representing a different aspect of the glory given to and by Jesus. As expected of an ornament, one glory of a crown is its *beauty*. Thus, those being married were often adorned with a crown, or garland of beauty (Song 3:11). And in the Great Marriage, the Bride made beautiful by Christ's blood, and the Bridegroom beautiful in His grace, are both crowns to each other (Is. 28:5; 62:3). There is also a crown of *wisdom*. All who believe in Jesus, who is Wisdom, wear such a crown (Prov. 4:9). While the simple possess folly, the prudent are crowned with knowledge (Prov. 14:18). The wise wife is a crown to her husband (Prov. 12:4). Children of children reared in wisdom's ways are the crown of old men (Prov. 17:6). And since wisdom comes progressively through life, gray hair should even be to us a crown of glory (Prov. 16:31).

Another crown is the glory of *authority and power* by anointing of the Spirit to office (Lev. 21:12). In the Old Testament, two kinds of officers were crowned. The high priest was endowed with the glory of holiness to the Lord, as indicated by an engraved gold plate attached to a linen crown (Lev. 8:9). The king represented the glory of powerful and righteous judgment by wearing a massive, jewel-encrusted, gold crown taken as spoil from the enemy (I Chr. 20:2). Prophets had no such crown, but had to be content with beautiful feet bearing the glorious gospel (Is.

52:7)—indeed, the gospel of a glorious crown made for Jesus from the gems of His people, whom as both King and Priest He would redeem victoriously from wickedness (Zech. 6:11-14; 9:15).

Fitting that in this gospel that includes Gentile gems, the Spirit would also lift a crown from Greek culture and repurpose it. This crown is called a *stephanos*, or the laurel wreath given athletes who completed or won events. As the Christian martyr of the same name (Stephen), this particular crown represents glorious victory by perseverance of faith unto death. So Paul summarizes his life as fighting a good fight, finishing the race, and keeping the faith with a view to "a crown of righteousness" that the Lord "shall give me...and...all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7-8). Victory in this contest requires spiritual preparation, motivation, and endurance. The spiritual man (literally athlete) is not crowned except he strive lawfully (II Tim. 2:5). He must have discipline and temperance in all things (I Cor. 9:25) and hold fast to what he has, lest someone take his crown (Rev. 3:11). To be crowned, he must be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

And yet, although requiring preparation, motivation, and endurance, both perseverance of faith and the crown of victory are *gifts of grace*. Striking that the first crown mentioned in the New Testament is the one of thorns pressed into the head of Jesus (Matt. 27:29). His royal crown was defiled for our sakes (Ps. 89:39). Therefore, the heavenly church gladly casts their crowns at the feet of Jesus saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power" (Rev 4:10-11). We are given a crown, but He has many (Rev. 5:20). We have a crown, but He it is who made us kings and priests (Rev. 19:2). Our crown is glorious, but it is His glory (Is. 28:5). It will not fade away, because it is the crown of His incorruptible righteousness (I Pet. 5:4). The faithful unto death certainly receive a crown of life, but it is His life. And He it is who crowns us with loving kindness and tender mercies (Ps. 103:4). Christ indeed rewards our good works, but it is through His grace that He crowns His gifts (B.C., Art. 24). What a crown! 

Rev. Langerak is pastor of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

■ Five RCA Churches Join the PCA, A Sixth May Soon Follow

Below is a December 26, 2014 article posted on *The Aquila Report* (theaquilareport.com).

Five Illinois Churches in the Reformed Church (RCA) in America have voted to affiliate with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). The PCA's Chicago Metro Presbytery met with, examined, and approved the pastors and elders of these churches during 2014.

On October 15, 2014, the churches were officially approved and received by the Chicago Metro Presbytery. The Presbytery will have a special service of celebration and welcome on February 1, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.; during this service the pastors and elders will be installed. The service will be held at the First Reformed Church in Lansing, IL. Dr. Ligon Duncan, Chancellor of Reformed Seminary, will be the guest preacher.

The five churches in Illinois are:

Crete Reformed Church, Rev. David Smith, pastor

Grace Reformed Church, Lansing, without a pastor

First Reformed Church, Lansing, Rev. Ben Kappers, pastor

Peace Community Church, Frankfort, Rev. Kurt Kruger, pastor

Missio Dei Church, New Lenox, Rev. Paul Vroom, pastor

These churches had submitted to the process for withdrawing set up by the RCA Classis of Illiana Florida. A number of conditions were included in the agreement. For example, each of the churches was allowed to withdraw with their respective properties and assets. However, if a church should withdraw from the PCA within five years of the approval of the agreement, then the property is to revert to the Classis of Illiana Florida.

Also, each church will have to pay its annual assessments for five years (2015-2019) to the RCA Synod, the Regional Synod of Mid America, and the Classis of Illiana Florida. These payments may be made annually or in one lump sum.

Further, the churches must take action to notify the general public that they are no longer affiliated with the RCA. The agreement stated, "A name change may be the best way to communicate this new reality."

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

Chicago Metro Presbytery extends an invitation to all to attend the welcoming and installation service on February 1.

University RCA of Lansing, MI., pastored by Kevin De Young, is on its way to becoming the sixth congregation to leave the RCA for the PCA. What follows is De Young's November 24, 2014 report posted on *The Gospel Coalition* (thegospelcoalition.org).

At a special congregational meeting last night University Reformed Church voted 366-18 (95.3%) in favor of leaving the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and affiliating with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

Of the 384 votes, 335 (320-15) were cast at the meeting and 49 (46-3) by absentee ballot.

The 384 votes represent 91% of our communicant membership. University Reformed Church currently has 422 members and a Sunday morning attendance of around 650.

It may seem like you've heard this news before, so let me try to explain the process.

- Our congregation also voted in April to leave the RCA. This was only an advisory vote and not required by the Book of Church Order (BCO). In our polity, the consistory is the body that files the petition for withdrawal. The meeting we had in April was the consistory's attempt to discern the mind of the congregation before making our final decision. We filed our petition with the Classis of South Grand Rapids in May.

- After the classis received our petition they established a four person committee to investigate the reasons for withdrawal. As a part of their investigative work, the committee, as per the BCO, met separately with each of the installed pastors and then with the consistory (without the pastors present).

- The classis committee called a special congregational meeting for last night. I was given 10 minutes to present our reasons for withdrawal. The committee then spoke for 10 minutes against the motion to withdraw. Following the two brief presentations, the congregation was given about 30 minutes to ask questions of either side. We then voted by secret ballot. The results of our vote in April do not matter to the classis. Last night's vote is the one that counts.

What happens now?

In the next month, the classis committee will meet

with representatives of the PCA to ascertain whether we would be received into our new denominational home with open arms. The committee will then write a report, with recommendations, that will go before the whole classis. This report is due in January. The classis will vote on the committee's recommendations in March.

If our church is given permission to withdraw from the RCA we can officially join the PCA once (1) any classis stipulated obligations are met and (2) the elders and pastors are examined and received into membership by the Presbytery of the Great Lakes.

Please continue to pray for a fair process and an outcome that will best serve the interest of Christ's kingdom.

I have not found any explanation of the reasons why the five Illinois congregations left the RCA. In May of 2014 De Young revealed that University RCA's council submitted a 39-page petition to withdraw from the denomination. That petition is not public yet, nor has De Young offered his own detailed explanation for the withdrawal from the RCA. But he did provide a brief explanation, writing, "Let me simply say at this point that our reason for seeking to leave the RCA is not one thing, but many things. From the adoption of the Belhar Confession, to the removal of the conscience clauses related to women's ordination, to the growing acceptance of homosexual practice in the denomination, we believe the RCA has changed significantly in the last several years. The denomination has moved away from churches like ours. Our request is that we may be able to move too."

It will be enlightening to read and evaluate the reasons why these congregations left the RCA, if and when they are made available to the public. The RCA has been on the road of apostasy for decades, and "conservative" congregations refused to leave. Six congregations determining to leave at virtually the same time indicates that something very serious has happened. It is likely that every one of the congregations objected to the three developments De Young notes, the adoption of the Belhar Confession, the removal of the conscience clause regarding women's ordination, and steps toward approving of homosexuality.

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The last two especially are the straws "that broke the camel's back." Clergymen in the RCA are required (in certain circumstances) to participate in the ordination of women (clauses that allowed them to abstain have been removed). It is not possible anymore to remain in the RCA and have the attitude, "as long we don't have women in office on our congregation, it doesn't bother us." At the same time that the RCA is attempting to force the acceptance of women's ordination, it has made appalling synodical decisions about homosexuality—two acts that these six congregations apparently find intolerable.

Is it right for these six congregations to leave the RCA because of a disagreement over the acceptance of women's ordination and homosexuality? Of course. We rejoice to see churches take a stand for what the Scriptures teach about these issues. But that doesn't mean that this move from the RCA to the PCA is above criticism. But before we get to that criticism....

■ Defining the Church

What follows is an excerpt from an article by Mark Johnston entitled, "21st Century Challenges: Not Allowing Ourselves to be Defined by Sexuality" (info.alliance.org/placefortruth, Jan.22,2015).

It may seem more than a little strange to include this issue as one of the major challenges facing the church in the 21st Century, but the sad reality is that it is. The glaring evidence for this can be seen in the way the church in many parts of the world has allowed itself to be backed

into a corner over this aspect of its teaching. In doing so has [sic] allowed not only its own credibility to be called into question, but that of the gospel as well.

This situation has not arisen suddenly. For four decades and longer the Bible and the role of women—especially when it comes to holding office in the church—has been hotly debated among those within the church

as much as with those on the outside. In many denominations this has led to a deliberate shift away from the belief that the offices of elder (both those who teach and those who lead) and of deacon are intended only for males in the church.

Although this shift in church practice was welcomed by many it was not the end of the discussion—even for those churches that had embraced it. The focus of debate moved on to the church's attitude to homosexuality. Again, even though the church in light of the Bible's teaching has long debated this issue, the issue now being brought to the fore was the desire of some to approve homosexuals for ordination to the Christian ministry.

It came to the fore in both the United States and in Britain with a number of high profile cases that were highly publicised in the media and inevitably intensified the pressure on those who opposed such appointments. The net effect of this for those who refused to support such a move was not only for them to be portrayed as 'anti-gay' in the liberal press, but for the gospel to be cast in that light as well.

We are not suggesting for a moment that these battles over what the church believes and practises should not have been fought—scripture demands that they must. We are, however, suggesting that the church has given them a profile that has led to confusion over what ultimately defines the church. Especially because in a number of instances the issue of so-called 'gay ordination' has become the catalyst for secession from wider church bodies.

Those who support the ordination of homosexual clergy (along with homosexual behaviour and same-sex marriage) have raised a valid question over making this particular issue the Rubicon from which there is no going back. They rightly point to other major debates that have divided the church over the past half-century—the authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ and the nature of the resurrection to name but a few—and ask why these more fundamental issues have not provoked the same reaction from evangelicals. And therein lies the problem: evangelicals, perhaps unwittingly, have allowed the secular world to set the agenda for the church and give the impression that it is our human sexuality that defines us as individuals and as communities.


Let me reiterate, this doesn't imply that this debate should not be taking place. These are hugely important issues and the church needs to be clear on them. But to elevate them to a status above that of the authority of Scripture or the bodily nature of the resurrection is to send wrong signals.

The article is not written with the RCA or the six congregations mentioned above in mind. Nevertheless, Johnston's comments about where the church's priorities

should be apply. There are reasons to criticize the priorities of the six congregations leaving the RCA. The criticism is not that these six congregations have elevated the issues of women's ordination and homosexuality too highly. The criticism is that they have failed to recognize other hugely important issues. This does not mean that the congregations or their pastors have ignored these other issues. Throughout the years they have perhaps voiced objections concerning issues other than women and office and homosexuality. The 39-page petition from the University RCA probably explains that the congregation was not in agreement with other RCA positions. But by not leaving because of those issues and by leaving now over women in office and homosexuality, these congregations are, to use Johnson's words, sending "wrong signals."

For decades the RCA has denied important Reformed doctrines, such as reprobation. And for decades the RCA has rejected important Reformed practices, such as the preaching of the Heidelberg Catechism. These are "hugely important issues," but apparently not for these six congregations that were willing to tolerate such changes by not leaving the denomination over them.

But it is especially in joining the PCA that these congregations are giving the signal that women's ordination and homosexuality are more important issues to them than the gospel of Jesus Christ. The PCA does not currently approve of women officebearers (although some renegade congregations have women deacons). Nor does the PCA give evidence of accepting homosexuality. But the PCA has officially approved of the heresy of the Federal Vision, which denies the very heart of the gospel—justification by faith alone! And some years ago the PCA changed its requirements for subscription to its confessional standards, which has resulted in the PCA allowing people to hold numerous positions (even publicly) that are contrary to historic Reformed and Presbyterian doctrines.

Is it hugely important to stand in opposition to the ordination of women and the acceptance of homosexuality? Yes, and it is worth stating once again that we are happy that the six congregations that left the RCA took a stand on these issues. But it is also important to define ourselves by and stand up for everything the Bible teaches as summarized in our Reformed Confessions. 

The Second Helvetic Confession

Background

The Second Helvetic Confession was written in 1562 by Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), whose life we considered in our previous article. It was intended by Bullinger to be buried with him as a testimony to the faith for which he had lived and which he had defended to his dying day. But despite his intentions, before he died Bullinger's confession came to light and was widely disseminated. This was due to a request from the pious Elector of the Palatinate, Frederick III, that Bullinger prepare a clear and complete exposition of the Reformed faith that he might use as a defense of himself against charges of heresy before the Imperial Diet of Augsburg. The Elector was so pleased with Bullinger's confession that he requested and received permission to publish the new confession.

What became known as the Second Helvetic Confession was first published simultaneously in Frederick's capital, the city of Heidelberg, and Bullinger's hometown of Zurich, in 1566 (March), in both German and Latin. That same year it was translated by Theodore Beza into French and published in Geneva. Thereafter, it was translated into English, Dutch, Italian, Romansh, Hungarian, Polish, Turkish, and Arabic.

In short order the Second Helvetic Confession was officially recognized by Reformed Churches throughout Europe and beyond. It was the first international Reformed confession. Besides its adoption by Reformed churches throughout the cantons of Switzerland (I remind readers that "Helvetica" is Latin for "Switzerland"), the Second Helvetic Confession became the official confession of Reformed Churches in Scotland, Austria,

Hungary, Poland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, North America, South America, and elsewhere. Today it remains the confession of Reformed and Presbyterian churches throughout the world.

Contents and Style

Commenting on the "Character and Value" of the Second Helvetic Confession, Philip Schaff writes:

Upon the whole, the Second Helvetic Confession, as to theological merit, occupies the first rank among the Reformed Confessions, while in practical usefulness it is surpassed by the Heidelberg and Westminster Shorter Catechisms, and in logical clearness and precision by the Westminster Confession, which is a product of a later age, and of the combined learning and wisdom of English and Scotch Calvinism.¹

And Alexander Stewart says in evaluating the Second Helvetic Confession that

[i]t was based upon the First Helvetic Confession, in which Bullinger also had a share, but contains many improvements [that is, enlargements], besides being much more comprehensive. It has been described as 'Scriptural and catholic, wise and judicious, full and elaborate, yet simple and clear, uncompromising towards the errors of Rome, and moderate in its dissent from the Lutheran dogmas.' It is, of course, more of the nature of a theological treatise than a popular Creed.²

The Second Helvetic Confession is not a brief statement of the main articles of the Reformed or Christian faith. Rather, it is the fruit of the mature theological reflection of one of the leading second generation Reform-

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Previous article in this series: January 1, 2015, p. 158.

¹ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), 1:395.

² Alexander Stewart, *Creeds and Churches: Studies in Symbolics* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916), 154.

ers. It is a restatement of much of what was contained in the First Helvetic Confession, but with considerable expansion and development—“with great improvements in matter and form,” according to Schaff.³ It is a substantial work of thirty chapters, each chapter containing generally from four or five paragraphs to as many as twenty-five paragraphs. In length it is nearly twice as long as the Westminster Confession of Faith and nearly three times as long as the Heidelberg Catechism.

The Second Helvetic Confession covers all the main doctrines of the Reformed faith. The confession begins with two chapters that are devoted to the doctrine of Holy Scripture. These two chapters are followed by three chapters devoted to the truth concerning God—*theology*. These three chapters are followed by five chapters that cover anthropology broadly, including providence, creation, the fall, and free will. Chapter 10 is devoted to predestination. Chapters 11-13 cover the person and work of Christ, including both the law and the gospel. Chapters 14-16 cover the doctrine of salvation: repentance and conversion, justification, faith and good works. The next thirteen chapters cover the truths of ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church): the catholic and holy church, the office of the ministry, the sacraments, ecclesiastical gatherings, public worship, holy days, catechizing, burial and funerals, celibacy and marriage. The last chapter, chapter 30, is devoted to the magistracy: the duty of the magistrate and the duty of the citizens toward the magistrate.

Throughout the Second Helvetic Confession, the truth is confessed by use of the first person plural pronoun: “We.” “We acknowledge”; “We believe”; “We believe and confess”; or “We teach.” The use of the first person plural pronoun is significant. To begin with, the confession is personal, as the use of the *personal* pronoun indicates. It is the personal confession of faith that is put in the mouth and heart of every Reformed believer. It is not an objective, cold, dogmatic statement of the truths of Scripture, but the warm, living conviction of faith that comes to expression in the Second Helvetic Confession. It is the first person pronoun that is made use of, but specifically the first person *plural*. That, too, is significant. Although the believer makes confession of his or her faith personally, he or she does not do so in isolation

from all others. On the contrary, by our confession we bind ourselves to others who make the same confession of faith. Those others, as the Second Helvetic Confession itself makes plain, are the members of the church of Christ in every age—all those who have gone before who made in their day the same confession that we make in our day. Besides connecting us to the church of all ages, our confession binds us to Reformed believers in our own day who live in other lands, who are members of other Reformed churches and church federations, and who join us in making this same confession of faith.

And that too—it is a confession of *faith*: “We believe,” (5.5; 6.1; 11.10; 12.3; 14.3; 20.6); “We believe and teach,” (3.1; 3.2; 11.1; 11.3; 11.12; 11.16); “We believe and confess,” (1.1); or “We acknowledge,” (11.5; 13.2; 17.11; 18.9). Each of these expressions makes clear that this is the confession that we make of our faith, that which by the grace of God we believe. Since faith has content, since faith believes, the Second Helvetic Confession makes clear the content of true faith. Faith is not ignorance, “blind faith” in the church, that is, what the church says and teaches. But faith knows; faith knows the content of sacred Scripture. And faith confesses—publicly confesses—what it believes. To a greater or lesser degree, every believer ought to be able to articulate his faith.

Since faith is not only knowledge in the head, but conviction of the heart, faith expresses itself as conviction of the truths that it confesses. Faith is assured of that which it confesses. Faith is so convinced of these truths that for the sake of them the believer is willing to endure reproach, rejection, and persecution, as believers in Bullinger’s day experienced on a wide scale in nearly every land in which the Reformed faith was found.

And we *teach* this faith. Numerous paragraphs begin with the words, “We teach,” (5.1; 9.6; 12.1; 16.4; 16.7; 16.10; 16.11; 16.12; 17.17; 20.7; 29.3). We know these truths and are convinced of them for ourselves not only, but we also teach them to others. Those others whom we teach include especially those outside of the Reformed faith to whom we make our public confession of faith. Those others whom we teach also include those who are new to the faith and who are just learning the fundamentals of the Reformed faith. And those others whom we teach include our own sons and daughters, our children and young people. Ever since its first publication, the

³ *Creeds of Christendom*, 394.

Second Helvetic Confession has served as a very useful tool for the instruction of the youth of the church.


Polemical and Antithetical

It belongs to the Second Helvetic Confession that it is polemical in nature—polemical and antithetical. The Second Helvetic Confession, like other of the Reformed confessions, is distinctive. It draws the lines sharply and clearly. Boundaries are set. The Second Helvetic Confession not only sets forth the truth positively, but it also condemns error, false doctrines, and wicked practices. Errorists and heretics are mentioned by name. Those of a former day: Arius and the Arians, Eutyches (“we thoroughly execrate the madness of Eutyches”), the Nestorians, the Monothelites and Monophysites, Valentius, and Marcion. The errorists and heretics of the days in which the Second Helvetic Confession was written are identified: the Roman Catholic Church, the pope and the Papists, the Anabaptists, Schwenkfeldt and the Schwenkfeldians. Condemned are those who make God the author of sin, those who ask curious questions that cannot be answered out of the Word of God, and those who are contemptuous of the magistrate (“rebels, enemies of the state, seditious villains”). Numerous chapters contain paragraphs entitled “Heresies” (1.6; 3.4; 9.11), “The Sects” (7.5; 8.6; 11.3, 8, 10, 15, and 19; 13.7; 14.12; 19.15; 24.11), or “Errors” (14.11).

Some subjects that are treated in the Second Helvetic Confession are unique to this confession, in distinction from other of our Reformed confessions. Among those subjects are: “The Preaching of the Word of God Is the Word of God” (1.4); “Councils” (2.4); “Relics of the Saints” (5.6); “Curious Questions,” as the concluding paragraph of Chapter 8 on man’s fall into sin (8.8); “Pa-

pal Indulgences” (14.13); “James Compared with Paul,” the concluding paragraph of Chapter 15, “Of the True Justification of the Faithful” (15.7); “We Teach True, Not False and Philosophical Virtues” (16.11); “Even Evil Ministers Are To Be Heard” (18.23); “Synods” (18.24); “The Worker Is Worthy of His Reward” (18.25); “Decent Meeting Places” (22.5); “Modesty and Humility to be Employed in Meetings” (22.6); “The True Ornamentation of Sanctuaries” (22.7); “Singing” (23.5); “Canonical Hours” (23.6); “Fasting,” “Public and Private Fasting,” “Characteristics of Fasting,” and “Lent” (24.6-9); “Of Catechizing and of Comforting and Visiting the Sick” (Chapter 25); “Of the Burial of the Faithful, and of the Care to Be Shown [to the Dead]” (Chapter 26); “Of Rites, Ceremonies and Things Indifferent” (Chapter 27); “Of the Possessions of the Church” (Chapter 28); “Of Celibacy, Marriage and the Management of Domestic Affairs” (Chapter 29) and “War” (30.4).

Reading through the Second Helvetic Confession one cannot but be struck with the breadth and depth of the Reformed faith. The Reformed faith embraces every fundamental doctrine of the Word of God. The Reformed faith has implications for every aspect of the life of the Reformed believer: his life in the church; his life in society, in the marketplace, and on the job; his life in his marriage and family. In every aspect of his

life, the Reformed believer strives to live in obedience to God’s Word and to the glory of God. And in all of life he is unashamed of who he is and whose he is. What this means in detail and concretely, the Second Helvetic Confession makes plain. In future articles, we will examine together the individual chapters and paragraphs of this gem among the Reformed confessions. 

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Main Characters in the Most Elegant Book—Air

It is at this time of the year that we in the Protestant Reformed Churches and other Reformed churches that hold to the same Church Order (Art. 67) observe our annual Day of Prayer. We do so for no small reason. Each of us is truly dependent upon God's daily provisions for our earthly existence. Though North American society has drastically changed in the past one hundred years, from the farmland to the office cubicle, we are no less dependent upon the physical creation for our daily existence. Long ago, in the era of the small family farm, people of God were more conscious of their dependence upon good soil, sufficient rainfall, and plenteous sunny, warm weather, and thus, more readily noted God's providential care. Today, we and our children can just open the refrigerator, or dash to the local grocery store to easily obtain our food and drink for another meal. Without much consideration as to where our food really comes from, we gather around the table and enjoy the bounties of this earth. Perhaps, in the early twenty-first century in North America we need a Prayer Day service more than ever before, to remind us of our dependence on God.

Last year, we examined water—a substance of vital importance for our physical existence and worthy of consideration in connection with our annual Day of Prayer. In this article we will examine air—and more particularly its fundamental element, oxygen—and note our absolute dependence in our every breath for this indispensable gift of God. As we observe the annual Day of Prayer, calling on Almighty God to grant us what we need both physically and spiritually, may we give earnest attention to His good provisions in the creation for our physical needs. In an age in which we have an abundance of physical things, we may be tempted to be proud and forget or deny God (Prov. 30:7-9). It is our hope that this series of articles

may stimulate us to a renewed consciousness of our utter dependence on God for our physical (and most assuredly, spiritual) life.

To help us grow in our understanding of our dependence on God's government of the creation, let us, in this and future articles, look at three vital processes in which oxygen plays a significant role: respiration, combustion, and oxidation.

Respiration

Under normal circumstances man cannot live for much more than five minutes without oxygen. On average, humans inhale approximately 7-8 liters of air per minute, or 11,000 liters of air per day. The lower layer of the atmosphere in which we live (up to 10 miles in altitude) contains on average 21% oxygen gas, 78% nitrogen gas, and 1% other gases. Therefore, of the 7-8 liters of air we inhale per minute, about 1.5 liters is oxygen. Only a small portion of this amount is actually used by our body (we use about 5% of the total air we inhale). The rest is exhaled, which is why mouth-to-mouth resuscitation is possible. By the end of each day our lungs have absorbed approximately 550 liters of oxygen. Picture 275 two-liter bottles on your kitchen floor; this is the volume of oxygen each of us uses per day! When one considers the nearly 7 billion people on the earth today, to say nothing of all the animals that also use oxygen through respiration, one is simply overwhelmed with the massive volume of oxygen that must always be present in the atmospheric storehouse to supply us with the necessary oxygen to survive.

God in His wisdom designed a pair of processes—respiration and photosynthesis—that by His providence give ample oxygen for us and the animals of creation to breathe. As fast as we remove oxygen from the atmosphere via respiration, photosynthetic organisms such as plants, algae, and cyanobacteria convert carbon dioxide (a waste product of our respiration) into a fresh, new oxygen supply. Or-

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ganisms that contain the green-colored, “solar-powered” chloroplast organelles are the best-known “recycling facilities” on the planet. All through the day, as humans (and animals) use oxygen for their daily existence, the chloroplasts, powered by sunlight, convert the waste carbon dioxide that we exhale back into oxygen gas (and simultaneously produce sugar products that are stored in the plant fibers, which we, incidentally, will use later on as our food supply). By this marvelous pair of processes, the oxygen supply in the atmosphere remains fairly stable so that we always have sufficient oxygen to breathe.

This “recycling” of carbon dioxide to produce fresh oxygen is accomplished primarily by the tiny algae and cyanobacteria in the creation. With 70-80% of oxygen production performed by these marine organisms, we ought to be encouraged to take good care of our marine ecosystems, as they contribute significantly to our oxygen supply.

Those of us who have difficulty breathing due to allergies or some other respiratory ailments are perhaps more conscious of the air God gives us to breathe. But we all ought to rise from our bed each morning and give thanks to God for the good gift of air and the ability to breathe. What an absolutely marvelous and intertwined creation God governs every moment of the day so that we can physically exist!

Diffusion

What further illustrates the amazing design in God’s creation is how the body is able to “absorb” oxygen via the lungs in order to support all of our life functions, and simultaneously exchange it for the harmful carbon dioxide that is produced as a by-product of our life processes.

Oxygen is absorbed into our bloodstream by an amazing process called diffusion. Diffusion is the process by which molecules move through a membrane from areas of higher pressure to areas of lower pressure. In order for oxygen to pass through the walls of the alveoli—the tiny air sacs at the end of the respiratory tubes that form the bulk of our lungs—into the capillaries of the bloodstream, the pressure in the alveoli must be greater than the pressure in the bloodstream. Atmospheric pressure at sea level is approximately 760 torr (a unit of measurement for pressure). Oxygen is approximately 21% of atmospheric air. Atmospheric oxygen pressure, therefore, is about 160 torr. Pressure of oxygen in your lungs is a bit lower at about

100 torr due to various factors, including higher water content in the lungs, and consequently less place for oxygen molecules. Venous blood (blood returning to the lungs from the cells) has a lower oxygen pressure (about 40 torr) because it has recently given up its oxygen to various cells that needed it throughout the body. Due to this pressure difference of about 60 torr, oxygen will move through the capillary-alveolar cell membranes, thus exiting the lungs and entering the bloodstream via the capillaries.

Anything that affects this pressure difference will in turn affect the amount of oxygen that can cross into the bloodstream. One factor is the oxygen pressure of the atmospheric air. As one climbs to a higher altitude, the atmospheric pressure decreases because there are fewer air molecules at higher altitudes. Consequently there will be a lower atmospheric oxygen pressure. Therefore, less and less oxygen will be ‘pushed’ into the bloodstream. This explains why we feel ‘out of breath’ as we hike in higher altitude terrain.

What we likely take for granted is the ease with which we breathe. This is because it takes only about 1 torr of pressure difference between the pressure in the atmospheric air and our lungs in order to inflate the balloon-like alveoli that comprise our lungs. However, to cause each spherical alveolus to inflate and expand requires much more pressure than the 1 torr that we use.


The reason that our alveoli require a large amount of pressure to be inflated is that they are coated in a water-based fluid lining. A drop of water has a tremendous surface tension, due to the attractive forces between its component molecules, thus decreasing its surface area. Consequently, the alveoli naturally collapse, helping to expel carbon dioxide from our lungs. In this way the fluid lining serves an important role in respiration. However, this fluid will also cause the alveoli to resist expanding. But God in His wisdom also created another chemical to be present in the lungs to act as a surfactant, which minimizes the surface tension of the fluid layer. This allows the alveoli to inflate much more easily. Without such an important chemical, we would have to work much harder to catch a breath of fresh air. A lack of this surfactant is one of the key causes of death in premature babies. This vital surfactant is produced during the 24th-35th weeks of gestation, which means that babies born before the 35th week will have difficulty breathing.

God's Good Provisions

This kind of intricate detail is not the exception in God's creation. It is the norm. While many in the world have deceived themselves into believing that the human body with all of its intricacies somehow developed on its own over time through an evolutionary process, we by the grace of God see this great beauty and wisdom as the handiwork of God.

God provides us with the good gifts we need in order to live in this world. He wisely created, and continues every day to govern the processes and systems of the creation so that they work in an intricate fashion to enable us to live and thrive. From the vital respiration-photosynthesis relationship to the tiny surfactant molecule in the alveoli that makes them inflate easily, we can see God's marvelous ways of providing us the oxygen we need to fuel our cells.

God provides for us in similar detailed ways for all of our physical needs. When we get food from the grocery store, we must recognize that the right amount of rain, sunshine, and mineral content in the soil was sovereignly governed by God so that all these factors perfectly worked together to assure that crops could grow. God in His goodness to us provides us with all that we need for our physical life through many such intricate and inter-related means.

We have so much reason to give thanks to God for His good provisions to us each day. As we gather for our annual Day of Prayer, may we rightly consider all God's good provisions for us. Thanks be to God, who gives us eyes to see His handiwork in creation and confident hearts to trust His willingness and ability to provide for us throughout this year and the years to come. 

WHEN THOU SITTEST IN THINE HOUSE

REV. ARIE DEN HARATOG

The Covenant Home: God's Ideal Institution for the Nurture of Covenant Children (5)

The Covenant Home Must Be a Sheltered Environment

The covenant home is God's ideal institution for the nurture of our covenant children. There is no worldly institution that can properly nurture the children of the covenant. The ideal covenant home must provide a sheltered environment for our covenant children. Especially in the formative and impressionable years of their lives our covenant children must be sheltered from the evil influences of this ungodly world, from its evil philosophy of life and from its wicked behavior, dress, entertainment and amusements.

God's covenant people are called out of the world to be a holy and peculiar people unto the Lord. The covenant home must train the children for this calling. The Christian family is not a monastery where our children

are trained in complete isolation from all contact and interaction with the world. That is obviously impossible. Our children must be trained for life in the world.

The covenant home is the intimate sphere of the loving protection of godly covenant parents for nurturing their children in the fear of the Lord, in keeping His commandments, and in living in friendship with God through Jesus Christ.

God declares concerning His covenant people, "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone" (Deut. 33:28). God says to His people: "...Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (II Cor. 6:14-18). God's covenant people must be spiritually separate from the world, radically different in every part of their daily lives. The people of God are admonished not to make friends with the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh,

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Previous article in this series: January 1, 2015, p. 161.

and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15, 16).

It should be clear to us that no worldly institution can train our covenant children to be separate from the world. No worldly day-care center can train our covenant children for their calling. No public school will do this. These institutions will in fact do the very opposite. Foolish parents imagine that their children have the calling to be little missionaries in public schools, working to convert public school students into children of God. What in fact will happen is that these public institutions will seek to estrange covenant children from God and promote in their hearts worldliness and ungodliness. Public schools are by no means neutral in their child psychology and philosophy of instruction. When public institutions claim to be free from any so-called religious bias, they are declaring themselves in fact to be ungodly and atheistic. They are saying that knowing and serving and loving the true God is not important, and makes no difference in life. Even worse, it will deprive children of worldly pleasures, success, and human glory that is the supposed right of all.

Public institutions operate from the perspective of basic Pelagian philosophy. According to this philosophy children must be left as much as possible to themselves, to develop with only a minimal guidance from adults. Children are to be given the freedom to make their own choices in all the important matters of their lives and future.

So outrageous is this worldly philosophy, that it promotes the idea that children should be allowed the freedom to chose their own sexual identity, whether it be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. All of these orientations are to be considered equally acceptable. Every child that is born into the world has a genetic inclination to one of these. Whichever sexual identity a child chooses—even as young as four years old—must be accepted by parents. To teach children that only one of these is acceptable to God is bigoted and will do great psychological harm to children, according to the world. Such a perspective will teach them to be intolerant hate-mongers toward anyone who happens to be different than they are!

In our age it is maintained that young people need not to be strongly warned against the evil of immorality in their lives and the judgment of God on such a lifestyle.

It is said that most young people will be sexually active in their lives and must not be condemned for this. Perhaps they need to be mildly counseled regarding some of the consequences of a promiscuous lifestyle, such as venereal disease, AIDS, and unwanted pregnancies. But children should not be influenced with ideas that condemn their own parents in adulterous, extramarital affairs and the ways they are destroying their own homes and families. Let none of us as covenant parents imagine that the outrageous immoral philosophies of life I refer to are not taught in public institutions of the world we live in; they are!

Children, by their very nature as children, are not old enough or mature enough to make the great and important decisions that must guide them in their lives already as children and in later life as adults. The fundamental reason for this is the fact that our children are themselves conceived and born in sin. Not only are they born into a sinful and ungodly world; they are also born with a totally depraved nature that left to itself will cause them to follow all the temptations of this ungodly world. The devil's powerful influence in the hearts and lives of our children, along with the whole world under his influence, will seek only to increase the ungodliness.

Every serious, godly parent who loves God will realize how urgent it is to maintain the home as a sheltered environment for the protection and nurture of the covenant children God has given. In this home father and mother must give serious and specific warnings about the evil philosophy and lifestyle of this world in which we live. In this home parents must teach their children every day about spiritual discernment between right and wrong and about the fear of God that must be the great perspective of the Christian in this ungodly world.

In the covenant home parents must be the role models for their children with regard to godly living. We must not cultivate in our children's minds the idea that they should imitate the popular heroes of the world, the immoral movie and sports personalities so influential in our modern culture. In the covenant home children must be taught to honor and love their godly mothers and fathers by following their example as witnessed by the children from day to day. In the sphere of this home, time is given for instruction together as families in the Word of God

and prayer. Parents must be able to say to their covenant children, "Follow me, as I follow Christ."

Maintaining the covenant home in the midst of this ungodly world has many urgent, practical implications. Everything that comes into and influences the life of the covenant home must be guarded, supervised, and carefully monitored. The books that are read must be selected carefully. An appreciation for art and literature is a proper part of the nurture of children in the home. But much of the world's art and literature must be condemned and rejected. Covenant children are not being deprived when they do not read the books constantly coming from the presses, even if they are considered best-sellers and award-winning novels. The reason is that many of these books describe in enticing ways crassly immoral lifestyles and blasphemies of God and His commandments.

Television watching must be carefully monitored in the covenant home. Our covenant children, to be considered intelligent and cultured, do not need to know the Academy-award movies of the world and their popular actors. Our children need to know that this world belongs to God and that its things are to be used and enjoyed only in a way that brings glory to God. There are, in fact, many good reasons why it is a great advantage for the covenant home to have no TV watching at all. A constant stream of moral filth and wickedness of every sort flows from the TV programs of our times. Evil influences from these programs corrupt the minds and hearts of covenant children. If there is any TV watching in the covenant home, it is urgent that this be supervised by godly covenant parents.

The world increases in power and inventions in our day, with which they invade our covenant homes and the lives of our children. Without a doubt, the greatest influence in the lives of young people comes through media such as the Internet, by means of computers, smart phones, and other technology. Facebook and a host of so-called social media designed for interaction and knowledge of people's lives have a powerful influence in our times. Some are specifically designed to influence the lives and thinking of our youth. Some of them are even kept secret from adults, especially from parents. Some of these tools can be put to proper and beneficial use, as instruments for instruction and learning in the pursuit of an occupation or in preparing for the necessary tasks of our modern life. However, their use by our children

must be carefully monitored in the Christian home in order to guard our children from being enticed by worldly philosophy.

Entertainment in the home must be guarded from the evil influences of the world. It is very common in the world that in this area all morality and decency can be forgotten. The world considers that drinking parties and the abuse of drugs are legitimate forms of entertainment, and that no one has the right to judge and condemn them, especially if these things are used in the privacy of one's own home. The sheltered Christian home must promote wholesome entertainment that is godly in perspective and that promotes godly conversation and fellowship among covenant youth.

Modesty in dress (an important aspect of Christian living) is not taught by the ungodly world. It must be taught by godly fathers and mothers in the covenant home as their children are growing up so that they learn the excellent principles of the Word of God concerning these things. True beauty is not displayed by immoral dress, or the excessive use of make-up, or following the latest worldly fashions, but in the earnest concern for the modesty and holiness that is pleasing to the Lord.

In the sheltered environment of our covenant, Christian homes our children must be taught the important principles of choosing good Christian friends and companions. Especially when children grow up to be young adults, they are greatly in need of good, Christian friends that can have positive influence and encouragement in their lives. The sheltered covenant home can be the place where good friends meet, come to know each other, and develop strong bonds of Christian friendship guided by strong Christian principles of behavior.


Many marriages arise out of friendships between young men and young women at the appropriate stage of their lives. These can be nurtured in a wholesome way by good, covenant homes. The sheltered Christian home can serve as the environment where such friendships can be guarded from sinful and destructive conduct, and supervised so that they blossom into and lead to good, Christian marriages. Also our young people ought to reject the notion that they have total freedom in choosing their life's partners and that parents have no right to supervise, make good judgments, and give wise counsel to them. Such parental involvement is not intrusive or an invasion of their

privacy in this crucial time of life for young people when very important choices must be made.

Worldly child-psychologists will laugh at the ideals I have set forth in this article. They will judge it as bigoted and far too controlling for the lives of our children. They will mockingly say that the sheltered environment of the covenant home is hopelessly inadequate for training children to live in the so called real world. Others will laugh and say that such a sheltered environment where children are carefully supervised is far too controlling and will only lead to rebellious youth in later life.

Our covenant children must be deeply rooted and

grounded in the truth of God for a life of principled holiness in the fear of God. This more than anything will prepare them for the covenant life to which God in His great love has called us and our children.

In the sheltered environment of the covenant home children must learn deeply the reality of covenant life. Here there is great peace and joy and stability in such a life. Here there is protection by the almighty Lord of heaven and earth. Here there is great joy and blessing and peace. Here there is ordered covenant life with God and His Son Jesus Christ, with the great reward of the hope of His salvation in eternal glory. 

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

Congregation Activities

Grace PRC's (Standale, MI) consistory is sponsoring a conference on "Elders' Supervision of the Minister." Prof. Ronald Cammenga is the presenter of three interactive lectures concentrating on this main theme. All ministers, elders, deacons, and former elders and deacons are invited to attend this conference. The conference is being held at Grace PRC, with all sessions starting at 7:30 P.M. The first speech was given on February 26 and was entitled "The Elders' Supervision of the Minister's Life and Work." The March 5 speech is "The Elders' Supervision of the Minister's Preaching (1)." Soon to follow on March 12 is the second speech on "The Elders' Supervision of the Minister's Preaching (2)." The format is a speech of about 45-50 minutes with opportunity

during it for questions and then a 30-minute question and answer session after the speech. The speeches are being recorded in both audio and video format and are also being live-streamed for those who cannot attend the conference.

Our congregation in Wingham, Ontario, Canada has a goal. It is a noble goal. They desire to begin a Protestant Reformed Christian School. Located in Huron County, Ontario, about five hours to the east and north of Grand Rapids, MI, the city of Wingham has a population of about 3,000. Our congregation there numbers 16 families with a total membership of 70. Currently some members of the congregation homeschool and some use other local schools including a Baptist school and a Christian Reformed school some distance away. About eight years ago the school Board there approved the work of starting a school, but in God's providence a school did not materialize at that time, as the Board was unable to hire a Protestant Reformed teacher.

A few years ago a proposal to begin a school containing grades K-12 did not pass. However, now the same proposal has been adopted unanimously. The plan is to begin in the fall of 2015 with grades K-8 and to add a grade each of the next four years, D.V. Kindergarten through the eighth grade would include 17-20 students. The school is planning to use volunteers to assist in the school to ease the workload of the teacher as much as possible. A Protestant Reformed School is needed. A teacher is needed to make the school a reality. The school Board is working hard to hire one. The members in Wingham pray to God that He will bless the work of the school society with the establishment of a school there. Let's join them in that prayer. What great news it would be to hear of a teacher-signing in Wingham!

Various Midwestern U.S. PRCs cancelled some or all of their services on February 1 due to snowstorms. Almighty God spoke to them in a different manner on this

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

Lord's Day, making His power visible and felt, and calling attention to His holiness and majesty in the blanket of white. Many appreciated technology, enabling them to view or listen to other PRC services online via live-streaming.

The congregation of Randolph, WI PRC is enjoying the sounds of a new baby grand piano in their worship services.

Ladies and girls of Wingham PRC who were interested joined in a crochet class recently, an enjoyable time of fellowship.

Young People's Activities

Are you aware of the Young Calvinists committee of the Young People's Federation Board? This committee has a twofold purpose of maintaining an Internet presence and organizing events for young people of the churches. Find them at the website, www.youngcalvinists.org and view the blog, which has timely articles by various authors on many religious topics meant to inform, edify, and encourage the youth in our churches. Also, check the resources link. The plan is to expand the website in the future to include interaction among our young people, thereby unifying the youth of the churches. The Young Calvinists are interested in adding members to their staff. If you are interested in helping, you may e-mail Alex Thompson at lotralex@gmail.com. Young people, you may enjoy this website and perhaps you can even contribute to it!

Minister Activities

Rev. William Langerak had been considering the call to be the next

missionary to the Philippines. In his answer to this call on January 25, a letter of decline was read in Doon, IA PRC. We are thankful that the sovereign God has made His will plain to Rev. Langerak in the consideration of this call. On February 8 a new trio was announced, consisting of Rev. Allen Brummel (Heritage PRC, Sioux Falls, SD), Rev. Nathan Decker (Trinity PRC, Hudsonville, MI), and Rev. Daniel Holstege (First PRC, Holland, MI). Doon planned to call on February 15.

Rev. Rodney Kleyn, pastor of the Covenant of Grace PRC in Spokane, WA, received the call from Peace PRC, Lansing, IL to come over and help them as their pastor. May the Lord grant Rev. Kleyn a clear indication of His will concerning this call. Rev. Kleyn planned to answer on February 15.

On February 8 a letter of acceptance was read in First PRC of Grand Rapids, MI and also in the calling church for the Philippine mission field, the Doon, IA PRC. The King of the church in His divine providence led missionary-pastor Richard Smit to the decision to take up his labors in First PRC. It is an emotional time for many—the Smit family, the Kleyn family, First PRC, and Doon PRC—with tears surely being shed by all. Tears of thanksgiving and joy because God has blessed the labors of Rev. Smit in the Philippines for nearly six years, has kept the Smit family well in His almighty hand, and now has provided a new and needed place for him to labor. There were sensitive tears too, as the Smits must now leave the

many saints they have grown to love in that far-away land, and leave the Kleyns behind as well. All involved confess that God is good, sovereign in all His ways, and working all things for the benefit of His elect. We are eager to see the Smits in the U.S. again soon, and pray often for the Kleyns as they remain in the work in the Manila area.

Evangelism Activities


The Evangelism Committee of Hudsonville, MI PRC held a conference entitled “Managing God's Money” on January 29 and February 5 and 12. Various speakers addressed finances, debt, giving, stewardship, budgeting, saving, and much more from a biblical vantage point. Financial tools, financial ethics, financial communication, the work of deacons, and estate planning were also considered in various breakout sessions.

Mission Activities

Our missionaries in the Philippines are thankful to be able to use recorded versions of our seminary's lectures in their 7M classes on Catechetics, taught by Prof. B. Gritters. This is a new use of technology there, and beneficial for our missionaries and their 7M students.

Denominational Activities

Classis West planned to meet March 4 in the Protestant Reformed Church of Doon, Iowa.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call to Aspirants to the Ministry

■ All young men desiring to begin studies in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the 2015-2016 academic year should make application at the March 19, 2015 meeting of the Theological School Committee.

A testimonial from the prospective student's consistory that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith and upright in walk, and exhibits the qualities and personality necessary for a gospel minister; a certificate of health from a reputable physician; and a college transcript must accompany the application. Before entering the seminary, all students must have earned a bachelor's degree and met all of the course requirements for entrance to the seminary. These entrance requirements are listed in the seminary catalog available from the school or on the Seminary's website.

All applicants must appear before the Theological School Committee for interview before admission is granted. In the event that a student cannot appear at the March 19 meeting, notification of this fact, along with a suggested interview date, must be given to the secretary of the Theological School Committee before this meeting.

All correspondence should be directed to the Theological School Committee,
4949 Ivanrest Avenue SW
Grandville, MI 49418.

Jon Huiskens, Secretary

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The Protestant Reformed Seminary admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Seminary

■ All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary who will be in need of financial assistance for the coming school year are asked to contact the Student Aid Committee secretary, Mr. Bill VanOverloop (phone: 616-669-1504). This contact should be made before the next scheduled meeting, March 10, 2015, D.V.

Student Aid Committee
Bill VanOverloop, Secretary

Wedding Anniversary

■ With thanksgiving to God, we rejoice with our parents,

JOHN and MARGE MANTEL, who (Lord willing), will celebrate 50 years of marriage on March 19, 2015. We confess together with them God's covenantal blessings to us as a family. "He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations" (Psalm 105:8).

* Jay and Anita Teunissen

Derek and Brittany Koedam & Nora
Matt and Chelsey VanBeek & Owen
Jesse, Samuel

* Earl and Gloria Kamps

Erica
Jordan and Jessica Hiemstra & Harlow
Danielle, Seth, George, Hannah,
Stephen, Earl, Kate

* Mike and Danita Mantel

Joey and Sherry Mantel & Calvin
Luke, Jenna, Collin

Doon, Iowa

Wedding Anniversary

■ With joy and thankfulness on February 11, 2015 we celebrated the 60th wedding anniversary of our beloved parents, grandparents and great grandparents,

**GORDON and MARILYN
WASSINK.**

We have been blessed by their godly example and guidance through their zeal for God's glory and covenant. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15b). May our God sustain and care for them in the years that are to come according to His plan.

* Deane and Donna Wassink
* Darle and Colleen Wassink
* Linda Mowery
* David Curtis Wassink (in glory)
* Douglas and Kathy Wassink
* Ryan and Karla Feenstra

26 grandchildren

57 great grandchildren

West Olive, Michigan

Teacher needed

■ The Protestant Reformed School in Wingham is planning to begin a school in September 2015 with grades 1-8, D.V. To that end we are seeking applications to fill a full-time teacher/administrator position for the 2015-2016 school year. For more information and to apply for this position you are encouraged to contact our recruitment committee: Henry Devries 519-367-3627 devries@wightman.com, Brian Hilt 519-357-0667 brnhilt@gmail.com, Gerry Guichelaar 519-395-5868.

Reformed Witness Hour March 2015

Date	Topic	Text
March 1	"Victorious in His Suffering"	Isaiah 52:13-15
March 8	"The Man of Sorrows"	Isaiah 53:1-3
March 15	"Our Substitute"	Isaiah 53:4-6
March 22	"His Silence in His Suffering"	Isaiah 53:7-9
March 29	"The Success of His Mission"	Isaiah 53:10-12