

# *The Standard Bearer*

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## CONTENTS

<i>Meditation</i>	Affirm Constantly the Profitable <b>REV. RON VAN OVERLOOP</b>	218
<i>Editorial</i>	What It Means to Be Reformed <b>PROF. BARRETT GRITTERS</b>	220
<i>Taking Heed to the Doctrine</i>	Revelation, Inspiration, and Infallibility (12) <b>PROF. RONALD CAMMENGA</b>	223
<i>Things Which Must Shortly Come to Pass</i>	Premillennialism (4) <b>PROF. DAVID ENGELSMA</b>	227
<i>God's Wonderful Works</i>	Foundational Principles (2) <b>REV. JAMES LANING</b>	230
<i>Strength of Youth</i>	To Teach Them War (5) <b>REV. BRIAN HUIZINGA</b>	232
<i>Go Ye Into All the World</i>	Monthly Missionary Reports <b>REV. RICHARD SMIT</b>	235
<i>Reports</i>	Classis East Report <b>MR. JON HUISKEN</b>	237
<i>Activities</i>	News From Our Churches <b>MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM</b>	238

# Affirm Constantly the Profitable

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Titus 3:8-11

This is the last of the five times Scripture speaks of “a faithful saying.” The other times are: I Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:8, 9; and II Timothy 4:8, 9. This expression draws special attention to these points. Additionally, this expression alerts the readers to the fact that the proposition being introduced in this way has stood the test of prior experiences; it is reliable.

The apostle Paul has followed a simple, clear line. He confesses that formerly Titus and he (and all of us) were “foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (3). Then the “kindness and love of God

our Savior toward man appeared” (4). We were “justified by His grace” and we were “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (7). Now Paul calls Titus to “affirm constantly” these truths, so “that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works” (8). While Titus is to affirm certain things, Paul alerts him that there are other things he is to avoid.

## The Things to Be Affirmed

Some of the things that Titus is constantly to affirm are found in this third chapter. A faithful pastor is to affirm constantly “the kindness and love of God toward man” (4), that salvation is only by mercy, not by our works (6), and that the grace of God in Jesus Christ is the effective cause of our justification (7). He also is to affirm that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that regenerates and renews man (5), and that the purpose for all these things is that we might become heirs-in-hope of life everlasting (7).

Another thing that Titus is to affirm constantly is that the elders are to hold “fast the faithful word,” so they might exhort and convince the gainsayers (1:9). And in addition, the fact that a life style is demanded by sound doctrine (2:1). Especially Titus is to affirm that God’s grace brings salvation, a salvation that teaches us the

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calling to deny ourselves and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (2:11, 12). He is also to affirm that Jesus Christ gave Himself in order to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify unto Himself a people who are zealous of good works (2:14).

All these things are to be believed, professed, and published. Of these truths Titus is to be assured himself, so that he speaks of them with certainty and boldness. The doctrines of grace are to spur the hearers unto a zeal for good works.

Paul would have Titus affirm these truths strongly, with an assured confidence. Some people speak confidently about frivolous matters or things about which they really know little (cf. I Tim. 1:7). But Titus is to stress those matters of which he has become firmly and rightfully convinced.

### The Unprofitable Things

In contrast to the things that Titus and every preacher is to affirm, there are other things that pastors are to avoid. Paul declares that they are *unprofitable*. Note that this was and is no little matter. In each of his letters to young ministers the apostle is inspired to make the young men aware that there are certain matters they are to avoid and not let themselves be drawn into as legitimate matters to occupy their time and consideration.

First, there are “foolish questions.” These are matters that amount to nothing (I Tim. 1:4). They are man-made supplements to God’s law (I Tim. 1:7), such as myths and fables (II Tim. 4:4) and old wives’ tales (I Tim. 4:7).

Second, Paul speaks of “genealogies.” These are investigations into genealogies as if the truth can be learned from knowing a person’s family. Jewish rabbis were known to take a name and make a story. Always there seems to be some who would indulge in a strange mixture of truth and error, treating their conclusions as all important.

Third, Paul warns of “contentions.” This word refers more to the attitude of entering into argument and debate just for the sake of arguing and debating, as well as to see who can win the argument. Such contentious persons enjoy carrying on lengthy debates about differences. All of this is not only unprofitable for the weaker sheep but also takes valuable time away from things that really matter.

Fourth, Paul speaks of “strivings about the law.” This refers to efforts to discover fine distinctions and to carry on hair-splitting disputes. The result is that the law of God is made of none effect by human traditions. Jesus gives an example of this in Matthew 15:5-9.

It is at this point that the apostle speaks of a “heretic.” Contrary to the way this word is used today, in referring to someone who presents false doctrine, the reference here is literally to someone who is factious and schismatic. One who persists in unprofitable things is factious and schismatic. Originally this word referred to one who chooses for himself. Such a person is more conscious of his own views than he is about the well-being of the body and about his duty to serve the other members of the body. Foolish questions, contentions, and law-strivings make sides or divisions in Christ’s body. Such a person so stands for his own views, even if it brings damage to the unity of the church of Christ. Such a person creates division without biblical justification. This happened in the church at Corinth when one said, “I am of Paul,” another declared himself to follow Cephas, or Apollos, or Christ (cf. I Cor. 1:11-13).

Paul points out the seriousness of this sinful attitude for the church of the new dispensation when he declares that such a person is to be rejected after the first or second admonition (10). The unity of the church is of great importance. It is the calling of every member to seek it according to Romans 12; Romans 16:17, 18; Ephesians 4:1-6; and Philippians 2. It is Satan’s goal always to divide and to separate, while Christ’s is to join and to bind in fellowship (covenant). Lying, murder, and dividing the church are proper works of the devil.

Such people are to be given “admonition” (put into their mind). The idea is that discipline must spring from love, with a desire to heal by teaching. There ought not be the desire to rid the church of the individual, but every effort is to be made to show such a person what they are doing to the body of Christ.

In God’s judgment such a person is to be rejected or refused (cf. I Tim. 5:11 and II Tim. 2:23). The purpose for this sharp action is the welfare of the church (cf. Matt. 12:25), the glory of God (II Thess. 3:14, 15), and the salvation of the individual believer.

An individual who, after repeated warnings, persists in this practice is “subverted,” that is, distorted, perverted,

inside out, twisted. He is “being condemned of himself.” He judges against himself because he is rejecting repeated warnings from the authoritative Word as brought by authoritative elders. In this case, such are to be rejected or refused, that is, expelled.


### The Good and Profitable

“These things are good and profitable unto men” (8b). This expression refers to that which results in godliness and a zeal for good works (cf. 1:1; 2:1; 2:14). The faithful things (the kindness of the Father and the work of the Spirit) are excellent and beneficial to all men. These truths are not only “good” (excellent in themselves), but they are also “profitable,” that is beneficial and useful to the other members of the church (cf. I Tim. 4:8 and II Tim. 3:16). They are made profitable by the Spirit for reviving, establishing, and building up the saints. When these truths are appropriated by faith, they bring life, light, joy, and peace where there had been death, darkness, sadness, and fear.

Those whose faith is fixed on God in Christ will be

careful to apply themselves to these noble deeds. The young ministers (really, all ministers) like Titus should concentrate on deeds of gratitude, applying themselves with diligence to such matters. In fact, the recipients of grace should take the lead in the world to do good works. That is the idea of “careful to maintain” good works. They are not to lag but to be excelling to provoke each other and others to love and good works. They say that they believe. Good! But their faith is to be evidenced in their devotion to excel in all they do.

This is the thought with which the apostle began his letter to Titus. He is a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ in the interest of the faith of God’s elect and of their acknowledging the truth that accords with godliness, based on the hope of eternal life that God promised before the world began (1:1,2). And this is how he ends it.

May every minister so labor. And the elders with them. And, by implication, may every believer focus on that which is good and profitable for the sake of the other members of the body of Christ. 

EDITORIAL

PROF. BARRETT GRITTERS

## What It Means to Be Reformed

“**W**hat does it mean to be Reformed?” is a question I have asked catechism students for most of my ministry in order to help them become, so to speak, ecclesiastically self-aware. After all, they are members of Protestant *Reformed* Churches, and catechism serves to prepare them to become mature, confessing members of these churches.

The word *Protestant* in “Protestant Reformed Churches in America” is not as significant as the word *Reformed*. “Protestant” refers mainly to the PRCA’s origins

in 1924/25. For a time we were *protesting* Christian Reformed Churches. Eventually, after the protests were unsuccessful, we took to ourselves the name *Protestant* Reformed Churches in America. Today, most would explain our use of the word *Protestant* as “not Roman Catholic,” indicating our origins in the Reformation. Which is appropriate. In addition, our name is Protestant Reformed *Churches*, not *church*. But the more important word in our name is “Reformed.” What does it mean to be *Reformed*?

The year 2015 is the ninetieth

year of the existence of the PRCA and thus an opportune time to reflect on our name and identity as a church of Jesus Christ in the world. For those who have newly joined our denomination—although most have been catechized prior to joining—this may be a brief refresher course. Young Protestant Reformed members reading this may find out that their pastor’s explanation of *Reformed* in catechism was not merely his personal opinion. And, for those who do not know what “Protestant Reformed” is, this is an opportunity for the PRC to offer a positive and public witness. We



are, and we want to be, fully and genuinely Reformed.



We are *glad* to identify ourselves as Reformed. Some do not know the term, or know only a caricature of it. But others are embarrassed to claim this as part of their identity. Or, it may be considered sinful pride to label one's self as anything other than "Christian." Witness the modern trend of removing denominational affiliation from church signs. New churches are adopting names that say nothing about what they stand for, like "The River," "The Link," "Encounter," "Movement," "Pulse," "Beat." Or the names tell only place—"(*Your-town-here*) Community Church." Possibly these names tell more about the churches than first glance would indicate—they do *not* want you to know what they stand for; or, they want to be known as trendy. I have always encouraged our churches who construct new signs by the road to put the *place*—Hudsonville, Redlands, Wingham—in smaller print than the denominational identity—Protestant Reformed Church. Not because that's essential, but because it indicates a desire to be transparent, as well as unashamed of who we are (which is not the same as being proud).

If some are embarrassed to be known as Reformed, there is, on the other side of things, a resurgence in the number of Christians who are eager to be identified as Reformed. The population of self-identified Calvinists is swelling. Those who read books and blogs are familiar with the "young, restless and Reformed," or the "New Calvinists."

There is something very encouraging about a renewed interest in and commitment to the sovereignty of God and the "doctrines of grace," as the five points of Calvinism are sometimes called. We pray that the faith that gives all glory to God for salvation will continue to spread. Yet being a Calvinist is more than confessing the doctrines of grace, and commitment to being Reformed involves more than embracing God's sovereignty.

We are Protestant *Reformed* Churches.



For us, to be Reformed is to be biblical. It is simply to be Christian. Identifying as Reformed is not an attempt to be something other than what Christ calls His church to be. But since hundreds of groups, unfaithful to Jesus Christ and His Scripture, call themselves Christian, it is necessary to distinguish ourselves from them by our name. On the other hand, because many others are very *similar* to us in faith and life, yet not close enough to be united institutionally, we must distinguish ourselves from them as well. In the former group would be Roman Catholics. In the latter, many other Reformed or Presbyterian churches.

In the past, when a distinctive confession of faith was valued, churches understood the need for a distinctive name—a kind of flag they hoisted on their ship. Thus Baptists, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, Methodists, and all the other church groups were plainly identified in their faith and life by their name. Our name is *Reformed*.

Holding convictions and announcing them in a name is not smug arrogance. It is not sectarianism. Holding convictions about faith and life and announcing them in a name is a desire to be faithful to God and His Word, and transparent to those who may want to join our churches. It's also a recognition that the ecclesiastical landscape is strewn with churches that are not true churches any longer, because in their history they lost a conviction that Christ is truth, lost the boldness to broadcast their faith, lost a sense of who they were historically, and lost the realization that churches are destroyed under the judgment of God for lack of knowledge. True, churches can be destroyed in God's judgment for *other* things as well, like pride in the truth without loving the truth. Or pride in a name without loving what the name represents. But that's a story for a later article. Here the point needs to be made that *convictions* and *transparency* about those convictions are vital.

Things Christians used to *die* for are less important to some than what university logo shows on their car window, or what political party they advertise on their license plate. The things Christians used to *live* for are sometimes dismissed with a shrug, or a sneer. Pretty soon the church becomes little more than a human institution for satisfying one's social appetite.

*Not* to hold convictions and publicize them in a name may well indicate the sentiment that one form of Christianity is as good as any other. And that's one step away from becoming a false church.

I pray this does not sound arrogant. I pray that all Christians—especially those who are called Reformed Christians—have strong convictions about what it means to be Christian, and advertize those convictions. The Protestant Reformed Churches and our ecclesiastical family in the world believe that true Christianity is most faithfully represented in *Reformed* Christianity. If not, honesty requires that we join some other church communion.



But who has the right to declare what is Reformed Christianity? Is there somewhere an authoritative definition of Reformed?

I think everyone would agree that the designation “Reformed” came from the time of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century when large groups of believers separated themselves from the corrupt Roman Catholic Church, *reforming* the church. These were designated *Protestants*. And when Calvinists among them distinguished themselves from Lutherans and Anabaptists, these Calvinists were called Reformed. In England, Scotland, and Wales these Calvinists were called Presbyterians, identifying themselves more by their church government than their history. But on the mainland of Europe they were called Reformed.

In the early seventeenth century, the Reformed were distinguished from Arminians by the Canons of Dordt.

In the Netherlands the Gereformeerde Kerken (GKN) separated in 1834 from the Hervormde Kerk

(the larger state church). In 1886 another group separated itself from the Hervormde Kerk. All of these claimed to be, and wanted to be Reformed, over against a departure from the Reformed faith.

Among the Dutch immigrants that came to America in the nineteenth century, some who joined the Reformed Church in America soon determined that they could not belong to that denomination and formed a new Reformed denomination—the Christian Reformed Church. In 1924 the Protestant Reformed came out from the Christian Reformed. Out of the same CRC, fifty years later, came the Orthodox CRC and the Christian Reformation Church, claiming to be truly Reformed. In the 1990s, led primarily by the formation of Mid-America-Reformed Seminary (MARS) in NW Iowa, thousands more left the CRC, eventually forming the United Reformed Churches. These also claimed the name Reformed, but would not be identified as Christian Reformed.

To speak of our Presbyterian relatives from the UK, the fragmenting and fracturing of Presbyterianism into different denominations because of varying degrees of unfaithfulness to that name, means that the old proverb—“One Dutchman a church, two Dutchmen a denomination, three Dutchmen a schism”—is not so ethnic as one might think. There are as many or more Presbyterian denominations as (Dutch) Reformed.

And all lay claim to faithfulness to “Reformed Christianity.”

So men from most of these de-

nominations have written books describing what they believe to be the heart and core of what it means to be Reformed. (The interested reader may ask for a short bibliography of 15 such books.)

In the editorials that follow, I will try to point out from history and tradition—and especially the official documents of Reformed churches—what is the best answer to this question: What *does* it mean to be Reformed? The matter may not be as black and white as one would like it to be. But it is not so subjective as one might think, and certainly not mere personal opinion.



For most of my ministry as I taught catechism to the young adults, I identified three main areas that they needed to concentrate on as they thought of themselves as members of a Reformed church and as Reformed believers. Almost weekly I reminded them of three words—Covenantal, Calvinistic, and Confessional—and then asked them to give voice to what each of these words means. For mature Reformed Christians, in order to be more careful as well as more comprehensive, it would be good to add two other elements (also starting with “C” if only for memory’s sake): Reformed believers put a strong emphasis on *Church*, and have a distinctive view of the *Christian* Life.

**Covenant.** We start with Covenant. The reality of covenant friendship with the triune God whom we love because He first

loved us, is the heart of the Christian and Reformed faith.

**Calvinism.** That covenant relationship must be understood properly—Calvinistically. How and why God entered into friendship with a people, and whether that relationship can ever end, are answered by the Calvinistic doctrines of the sovereignty, efficacy, and particularity of grace; and the unconditional character of double predestination.


**Church.** Those whom God befriends will join themselves to a true Church. Reformed believers are not

individualistic in thinking or living, but ecclesiastical because Christ is (Eph. 1:21-23). To be Reformed is to understand church membership, the church's worship, her government, her discipline, and more.

**Confessional.** A Reformed church is Confessional. That is, she adopts and teaches creeds as official and binding expressions of the faith of the Scripture. An integral part of her church life is *using* these confessions. Inseparably involved with being confessional is that she has a sense of, and deep appreciation for, history and tradition.

**Christian life.** At this date in church history, it is also necessary to say that Reformed believers and Reformed churches have a unique perspective on the Christian life. Especially some New Calvinists, and all neo-Calvinists, have a view of the Christian life that is not historically Reformed.

God helping, we will explain each of these five elements in at least one editorial in the coming months.

We are Reformed Christians. To God alone be glory. 

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

PROF. RONALD CAMMENGA

Revelation, Inspiration, and Infallibility (12)

## What the Bible Says about the Bible:

## The Unique Witness of the Gospel Accounts and Acts

### Introduction

If the Bible is not an altogether unique book, both as far as its contents and its authority are concerned, then the Christian Scriptures are reduced to what its critics, whether outside of Christianity or apostates from Christianity, allege: a merely human book, intended to solve merely human problems, flawed by human foibles, and suffering from the delusion that it is something more. If Christianity is to make good on any claim that it represents something greater than the other world religions, that it is not just another philosophy holding out the hope of improving the social and economic lot of its adherents, or that it is not just another, albeit somewhat large, support group that claims to uplift its members

and impart to them certain coping skills, then what must distinguish it above all else is its authority. If Christianity is altogether unique, that can only be due to the fact that its authority and basis are altogether unique. What is unique about the Christian religion is that its authority is a divinely inspired, infallible, and inerrant Scripture. Every religion has its sacred book. But no other religion has a book like Christianity's book. Its book is a uniquely holy book. Its book is holy because its book is the very Word of God—the Word of God in the words of men.

We are busy examining the doctrine of Holy Scripture. In particular, we are busy examining what the Bible teaches about itself. We have examined what the Old Testament Scriptures say about themselves—the law, the prophets, and the psalms. Last time we considered Christ's view of Scripture. We saw that our Lord's view of the Old Testament was that it is the very Word of God, a Word, therefore, that cannot be broken (John 10:35).

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*Previous article in this series: October 1, 2014, p. 10.*

Because it is the Word of God, Jesus appealed to the Scriptures as the final authority both for His teaching, as well as in controversy with His theological opponents. Even when confronting the Devil, Jesus chased him away with “It is written....” Jesus honored the Holy Scriptures not only in His teaching, but also by submitting to them in His own life, submitting to them when that submission involved suffering, shame, and ultimately death—the death of the cross.

Jesus’ attitude towards and use of Scripture is recorded in the gospel narratives: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But not only do the gospel narratives make plain what Jesus’ attitude was towards the sacred Scriptures; they also make clear the view of the gospel writers themselves. To the gospel accounts can be added the book of Acts, which was also written by Luke, “the beloved physician,” and which sets forth those things that Jesus continued to do and teach in the church—the gospel according to Luke setting forth those things that “Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1). The book of Acts records those things Jesus continued to do and teach after His ascension into heaven and after He poured out His Spirit into the church. The gospel narratives and the book of Acts make plain that the gospel writers shared the Lord’s high view of Scripture. They too considered the Old Testament Scriptures—and by extension the New Testament Scriptures—to be the very Word of God.

### The “Synoptic Problem”

Before we consider the evidence that makes clear the gospel writers’ view of Scripture, there is a preliminary issue that we ought to address. That preliminary issue is what is usually referred to as the “Synoptic Problem.” What is the Synoptic Problem?

When the first three gospel accounts—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are compared to each other, it is unmistakably clear that there are similarities between them. The gospel of John is somewhat unique, both in its approach and in the material that is recorded in it. Much of what is found in the gospel according to John is found only in John. But the other three gospel accounts are similar in content and in expression. They record many of the same events in the life, ministry, and death of Christ. Many of the same sayings of Christ, many of the same controversies, many of the same miracles,

and many of the same parables are found in these three gospel accounts. It is estimated that as much as ninety percent of the material found in Mark is also found in Matthew. Because of their similarities, the first three gospel accounts are often referred to as the synoptic gospels, or simply, the synoptics. The word “synoptic” comes from two Greek words: *sun*, which means “together” and *opsis*, which means “a sight, or view.” The synoptics present a somewhat shared view of Jesus; their “sightings” of Him are much the same.

The similarities among the synoptics have led some to speculate as to the explanation for the similarities, as well as the differences. The question of how to explain the similarities and differences among the synoptic gospels is called the “Synoptic Problem.” What could account for the similarities among the synoptics? Whole books have been written—many books—by eminent scholars analyzing and proposing solutions to the Synoptic Problem. The following are some of the main solutions (hypotheses) that are proposed.

One solution is that the gospel writers depend on a *common oral tradition*. Back in Bible times people relied more on oral tradition than they do today in our age of texting, emails, faxes, and Facebook. This was the case in the Old Testament before Moses wrote the first five biblical books that comprise the Pentateuch. This was also the case in the early apostolic age. Many of the sayings and deeds of Christ were transmitted orally among Jesus’ disciples. This is the teaching of John in the last verse of his gospel account: “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25). Access to this common oral tradition, in the judgment of some, accounts for the similarities among the synoptics. Only two of the gospel narrators—Matthew and John—were eyewitnesses of Jesus’ public ministry, which, in turn, was only a portion of Jesus’ entire life. Mark, or John Mark, was a close associate of the apostle Peter, and Luke was a close associate of the apostle Paul, accompanying him often on his missionary journeys, as the book of Acts makes clear. There must have been an oral tradition on which especially John Mark and Luke relied.

Another solution that is offered to the synoptic prob-



lem is that of a *common written source*, perhaps a lost gospel, a proto-gospel from which each of the canonical gospel accounts drew. This common written source is often referred to as “Q,” from the German word *quelle*, which means “source.” We know that there were more than twenty apocryphal gospels, many of them Gnostic or Ebionite: the Gospel(s) of Mary Magdalene, of Peter, of Barnabas, of Bartholomew, of Thomas, of Matthias, of James, of Andrew, of Nicodemus, and more besides. Many of them attempt to fill in details concerning Jesus’ childhood and youth, including miracles that He performed and judgments that He called down upon other children who mocked and teased Him. One or more of these written gospel accounts was the common source of the synoptics, it is alleged.

Yet another solution to the synoptic problem offered by scholars is that *the gospel accounts are dependent on each other*. Some hold that Matthew wrote first, that Mark then created an abbreviated version (the *Reader’s Digest* version, if you will) of Matthew, and that Luke then borrowed material from both Matthew and Mark. All the possible variations of this hypothesis, differing with regard to who wrote first and who was dependent upon whom, have also been proposed, as well as a two-source hypothesis, to which many contemporary scholars hold.

### Is There Really a Problem?

But is the “Synoptic Problem” really a problem for the Reformed believer and the Reformed minister who holds to the infallible inspiration of Holy Scripture? Do the proposed solutions create greater problems than the “problem” they allegedly solve? Do the solutions, in fact, compromise Scripture’s teaching concerning itself?

We believe they do. They do, because the scholars who propose them cannot accept the fact that despite their similarities the gospel accounts were written entirely independent of each other. The scholars who envision a “Synoptic Problem” cannot accept the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures as the main, if not the sole explanation for both the similarities and the differences among the gospel narratives. In their view, something other than verbal, plenary inspiration must come into play to account for the similarities and the differences among the gospel narratives.

But for the child of God who approaches the Scrip-

tures with the humble attitude, “Speak, for thy servant heareth” (I Sam. 3:10), the truth of divine inspiration ultimately accounts for both the similarities and the differences among the gospel accounts. To him there is no need for a heavy dependence on human sources; no need for a proto-gospel upon which the gospel writers depended. Although the writers were undoubtedly aware of the oral traditions that circulated, and although they may have engaged in a certain amount of research and investigation before writing their gospel accounts, what they wrote they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He revealed to them the contents of their accounts. What they wrote of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, they wrote because it was revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. No less than the Old Testament writers and no less than the apostle Paul, the gospel writers wrote down what the Holy Spirit put in their hearts and minds. The similarities among them are due to the one Holy Spirit who inspired the gospel writers, to the one Lord Jesus Christ whose words and deeds they faithfully recorded, and to the one church of God throughout the ages to whom the gospel accounts are addressed.

The differences are not to be viewed as evidence that the accounts are contradictory, but rather complementary to each other. In a wonderful way they supplement each other. Together the four gospel accounts give us a complete picture of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like so many pieces of a large jigsaw puzzle, they fit together to give us what is fundamentally one grand description of Jesus Christ, God’s Son in our flesh, our Lord and Savior.

It must be emphasized that the purpose of the gospel accounts is not to provide us with a biography of Jesus. If that were their purpose, they have failed miserably, especially in light of the lack of information concerning Jesus’ childhood and young manhood. Rather, their purpose is the revelation of God in the Person and work of His Son, sent into the world to save elect sinners. The material selected by the Holy Spirit in each of the gospel accounts fits this purpose.

### Explanation for the Differences among the Gospel Narratives

The differences among the gospel accounts are largely due to the different groups that are specifically addressed

in them, as well as their specific purposes. Matthew addresses his gospel account to *the Jews* in order to demonstrate to his countrymen that Jesus is the Christ, the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises and prophecies. This accounts for the frequent reference to fulfillment of Scripture. This is why Matthew's genealogy of Jesus begins with Abraham, the father of the Jews. Addressed as it is to the Jews, Matthew's gospel account fills a real need. The book of Acts makes clear that for over a decade after Christ's ascension, the church was composed almost entirely of Jews or proselytes to Judaism. The first need for an authoritative record of the words and works of Jesus arose among the Jews.

The second need for a gospel account arose among *the Romans*, the people and empire in power during the time of the apostolic church. In his missionary journeys to the Gentiles, Paul reached the major Roman provinces of his day and brought the gospel to the Roman world. John Mark, or Mark, who traveled with him for a portion of his missionary labors, wrote his gospel account in response to this need. In his gospel account, Mark describes Jesus especially as the great King, the glorious world Ruler. He presents Jesus in action. He omits many of the lengthier discourses and parables, and concentrates rather on Christ's mighty deeds and miracles—deeds and miracles that demonstrate His kingly power.


The need for a gospel account also arose among *the Greeks*. On his second missionary journey Paul penetrated Greece, thereby bringing the gospel to the continent of Europe. Consequently, there was a need to instruct the Greeks concerning the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. This need was met by Luke, Paul's companion in his missionary labors throughout the Greek world. Luke was a physician and through his close companionship to the apostle Paul had an intimate knowledge of the truth of the gospel. Besides the gospel according to Luke, Luke was the human writer of the book of Acts.

Luke's viewpoint is of Christ as the Son of Man. In distinction from the great men honored by the Greeks as heroes, Jesus is *the* Son of Man. For this reason, Luke's genealogy goes all the way back to Adam, the first man. He is the sovereign Lord over all; not Caesar, but Jesus Christ is the Lord. Luke writes his gospel account to the "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3). That is a Greek

name and means "God-lover." It is evident from the preface to the gospel according to Luke that Theophilus was a believer, and had already received basic instruction in the words and works of Jesus. He may have been a catechumen at the time of the writing of Luke's gospel account. Luke's purpose was to enrich Theophilus' understanding, so that he might be fully assured of the things wherein he had already been instructed. Luke indicates that in writing his gospel account he was dependent on those who "from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word" (Luke 1:2).

The gospel according to John stands apart from the synoptics. John was a Galilean fisherman, the son of Zebedee, who along with his brother James was called to be a disciple of Jesus. He and James were the cousins of Jesus, Salome their mother being the sister of Jesus' mother Mary, according to John 19:25. Prior to being Jesus' disciple, John had been a disciple of John the Baptist. In later life, according to tradition, John labored in Asia Minor, probably after Paul's imprisonment. Under the emperor Domitian, in A.D. 95, John was banished to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation. After regaining his freedom, he spent the last few years of his life in Ephesus, where he died in A.D. 100.

It is John's purpose to present Jesus as the eternal and incarnate Word. This is the fundamental truth about Jesus that must be believed whether one is a Jew, a Roman, or a Greek. His gospel account is a defense of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word who was in the beginning, who was with God and who is God (John 1:1). The things that John writes in his gospel account he writes "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). The many discourses that he records, as well as the deeds of Jesus, are calculated to demonstrate beyond any question that Jesus is the Son of God.

Inspired as they are by God, the gospel accounts "carry the evidence in themselves" that "they are from God," and thus they serve "the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith" (Belgic Confession, Art. 5). Next time we will take a closer look at what the writers themselves say with regard to Scripture's inspiration. 

## Chapter Five

### Premillennialism (4)

# Orientation (4)

“The doctrine of the future is the best known element in dispensational theology, and at the same time, the least important.... [The] underlying concept [of dispensational theology] is the difference between Israel and the church.”

“[Separating Israel and the church, dispensationalists] fundamentally misunderstand the Bible.... Dispensationalism...divides the people of God.... It divides the people of God into the endless future.... This proves that dispensationalism is not a biblical doctrine but is, in fact, anti-biblical at its essential level.”

“Dispensationalism...destroys the salvation message.”

John H. Gerstner, “Primer on Dispensationalism”

### Confessional, Reformed Doctrine about the Church

For a Reformed Christian it is binding, creedal doctrine that God has, and has ever had, only one, unified people—the elect church composed of believing Jews and Gentiles—in the one Savior, Jesus the Christ, who is both the church’s Head and the church’s King. That in the time of the Old Testament the vast majority were of Jewish descent and that in the time of the New Testament the vast majority are non-Jews, or Gentiles, makes no essential difference. The church is the body and kingdom of the Messiah, or Christ, of which elect believers

in God, as He makes Himself known in His Messiah, are the members and citizens.

What dost thou believe concerning the Holy Catholic Church?

That out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world, the Son of God, by his Spirit and Word, gathers, defends, and preserves for himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion in the unity of the true faith...<sup>1</sup>

For a Reformed Christian it is binding, creedal doctrine that Jesus is not only the *Head* of the church, but also the *King* of the church, in contradiction of premillennialism’s teaching that Jesus is Head of the church, but King only of the coming nation of Jews.

We believe and profess one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation and assembly of true Christian believers.... This Church hath been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal king...<sup>2</sup>

Article 27 of the Belgic Confession identifies Jesus Christ as King of the church, indicating that the church is the kingdom of God in the world, contrary to dispensationalism’s doctrine that the church and the kingdom are two distinct, different, and eternally separate peoples and that Jesus is King, not of the church but of the coming nation of the Jews.

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<sup>1</sup> Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 54, in Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), 324-25.

<sup>2</sup> Belgic Confession, Art. 27, in *ibid.*, 416, 417.

## The Catechism on the Second Petition

Likewise, the Heidelberg Catechism teaches that the church of Jesus is the kingdom of God. To the question concerning the meaning of the second petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy *kingdom* come," the Catechism answers: "Preserve and increase thy *Church*."<sup>3</sup> Premillennialists of all stripes flatly deny that the church is the kingdom of God: "The church is not the kingdom."<sup>4</sup>

Denying that the church is the kingdom of God, premillennialism explains the kingdom in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer as the earthly kingdom of the nation of Israel that will someday be re-established as God's kingdom on earth, in Palestine.

According to A. McClain, the second petition of the Lord's Prayer requires us to ask God to establish "on earth, the historic nation of Israel." The "favored nation" constituting the kingdom on behalf of which Christians pray in the second petition "will be the Israel of history." The petition desires "a regathering of the dispersed nation [of Israel] back into the land from which they were cast out...[with] a restoration of ancient privileges and rights." The "capital [of the kingdom of God of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer] will be the city of *Jerusalem*."<sup>5</sup>

Condemning this theory as erroneous interpretation of the biblical kingdom of God and as false doctrine, the Heidelberg Catechism confesses the kingdom of God to be the church of both Old and New Testaments.

Also, when the Catechism goes on to affirm that the "full coming of [God's] kingdom" will have God being "all in all," it condemns premillennialism.<sup>6</sup> For premillennialism, the full coming of the kingdom of God is the millennial kingdom of national Israel. But, as premillennialism must acknowledge, God is not "all in all" in their millennial kingdom, for there are still sin and sinners,

<sup>3</sup> Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 123, in *ibid.*, 352; emphasis added.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth L. Barker, "The Scope and Center of Old and New Testament Theology and Hope," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 316. Ominously (with regard to the NIV translation of the Bible), Barker is identified as "Executive Director, NIV Translation Center, International Bible Society" (table of contents).

<sup>5</sup> Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1959), 148-152.

<sup>6</sup> Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 123, in Schaff, *Creeds*, 352-353.

indeed reprobate sinners, in the millennial kingdom, to say nothing of the threat of a brooding, though bound, Satan.

For Reformed Christianity, the full coming of the kingdom of God, in which God will be all in all (I Cor. 15:28), will be the perfecting of the church at the future, one coming of Jesus Christ in the body to raise all the dead, conduct the final judgment, and re-create the heaven and the earth as the home of the members of the church, who are also the citizens of the kingdom. According to I Corinthians 15:27, 28, God will be all in all when "all things shall be subdued unto him." This will not happen in the millennial kingdom of premillennialism, by the admission of all. But according to the Reformed Heidelberg Catechism, this will take place at the one, only future establishment of the kingdom for which all Christians hope, or should hope: the full perfecting of the kingdom, at the end of history and the onset of eternity.

## One Church from the Beginning

Both Article 27 of the Belgic Confession and Q&A 54 of the Heidelberg Catechism confess that the church has existed, as the one people of God, from the very beginning of the world, that is, from God's pronouncement of the promise of the gospel of Jesus the Christ to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. This contradicts the teaching that is fundamental to premillennialism, namely, that the church was born on the day of Pentecost. Prior to Pentecost, according to premillennialism, the church did not exist.

Although present-day, supposedly more "moderate," or "progressive," premillennialists howl at the charge in affected outrage (without disproving that this was the teaching of the earliest proponents of premillennialism and is still the inescapable implication of dispensational teaching, and without a frank confession of the gross wickedness of the teaching), there is good reason to charge that for dispensational premillennialism the church was not in the mind of God from the beginning of His thinking and planning of history. God's purpose was the kingdom of Israel, as an earthly kingdom with carnal benefits. Only because the Jews rejected this kingdom, which Jesus supposedly offered the Jews at His first coming, with Himself as King (as though the Jews



of Jesus' day were opposed to the earthly kingdom and carnal kingship that Jesus supposedly offered the Jews!), did God interrupt His program for history by turning to the Gentiles for the forming of the church.

According to all premillennialists, whether the original teachers or the later, purportedly more "moderate," theologians, the church did not exist until the day of Pentecost. C. I. Scofield, he of the notes of the Scofield Bible, one of the original teachers, wrote that "the birth of the Church [was] in Acts 2."<sup>7</sup> John F. Walvoord flatly declared that "prior to Pentecost there was no church."<sup>8</sup> Charles C. Ryrie affirmed that "the Church...is a distinct entity in this present age" and that "the Church could not have begun until Pentecost, and it had to begin on that day."<sup>9</sup> The still more moderate George Eldon Ladd likewise contended that "the Church properly speaking had its birthday on the day of Pentecost."<sup>10</sup>

### Condemned and Banned by the Creeds

As I have stated, it is not my purpose here to enter into controversy with premillennialism concerning its false doctrine of the church. For the exposure of the premillennial error concerning the church, the reader should consult the books mentioned above, especially Gerstner, Allis, Hoeksema, and Bavinck. My purpose here is only to demonstrate that premillennialism stands condemned as un-Reformed by the Reformed creeds, some of which I have cited in the preceding paragraphs.

For a Reformed Christian, it is binding, creedal doctrine that the church existed in the Old Testament. It existed, originally, in the fellowship of our first parents, Adam and Eve, who worshiped their gracious God in the hope of the promise of the coming seed of the woman, who is Jesus Christ. In the gathering of the two of them for worship in the name of the coming seed, the Christ was in their midst (see Matthew 18:20).

Then the church existed in the family of Adam and Eve. Abel's bringing of an offering to Jehovah indicates

some form of worship, the spiritual activity of the church (Gen. 4:4). Inasmuch as Abel's offering was "of the firstlings of his flock [of sheep]," the worship by Adam's household was founded upon the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in typical form. Though with only rudimentary knowledge, the church that was the household of Adam and Eve raised to God its worship of praise and gratitude for the redemption of the cross. In principle, that earliest worship was the worship of the church of Jesus Christ in His name and on the basis of His atoning death. Even more formal worship of the LORD by the extended family of Adam and Eve, as the worshiping church, is indicated by the statement in Genesis 4:26: "then began men to call upon the name of the LORD" (Gen. 4:26).

In the ark, though they numbered only eight persons, was the church. Peter identifies Noah and his family as the church, essentially one with the church of the New Testament, even though he does not use the term "church." For the apostle teaches that the water by which Noah and his family were "saved" was essentially the same as the water of New Testament baptism. The water of the flood, like the water of the sacrament of baptism, signified and sealed to Noah and his family "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (I Pet. 3:20, 21). This good conscience comes only by the justification based on the cross of Christ. And I Peter 3:21 insists that the water of the flood spoke to Noah and his family, as the water of our baptism speaks to us today, of salvation "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." A body of persons cleansed by the blood of Christ and saved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the church of Jesus Christ.

The church existed in the midst of the nation of Israel as the seven thousand who did not bow their knees to Baal (Rom. 11:4), or the remnant according to the election of grace among the Jews (Rom. 11:5).

It is creedal, binding, Reformed doctrine, therefore, for all Reformed believers that the teaching of premillennial dispensations is false doctrine. No Reformed minister or theologian may teach the doctrine. No member of a Reformed church may believe it. That professing Christians in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area who claim to be Reformed flock to premillennial churches, particularly Calvary Church and its daughter, Mars Hill, is evidence, not only that these deluded people have wrongly abandoned the Reformed faith, but also that many Reformed

<sup>7</sup> C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (New York and Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.), 9.

<sup>8</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, revised and enlarged ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 65.

<sup>9</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 135, 137.

<sup>10</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959; repr. 1981), 117.

churches, which these converts to premillennialism left, miserably failed to warn them concerning the heresy of premillennialism. The readiness of many in Reformed churches to abandon covenant theology and to convert to premillennial dispensationalism is an indictment of the Reformed churches and their pastors for their lack of solid instruction of their members, especially the lack of catechizing the children and youth, which includes warning against the errors of premillennialism.

I do not make the foolish boast that no member of a Protestant Reformed church will ever fall away to a premillennial church, any more than I would contend that no member of a Protestant Reformed church will ever apostatize to outright unbelief. But I do maintain that no member of a Protestant Reformed church, whose

pastor has fulfilled his calling, will ever be a member of a premillennial church without a guilty conscience, or will ever hear the heresies of a restored nation of Israel and the folly of the rapture without being smitten in his or her soul by the truth of the one covenant of the grace of God in Jesus Christ with its one hope of eternal life in the new creation, in which truth he or she was indoctrinated by a soundly Reformed church.

Since its teaching of the millennium is rooted in its heretical doctrine of dispensations, the premillennial teaching about the thousand years of Revelation 20 must be, and is, also erroneous.

As will be demonstrated.

... to be continued. 

GOD'S WONDERFUL WORKS

REV. JAMES LANING

## Foundational Principles—(2)

# Forbidden to Add to God's Word

**I**n the days of the Old Testament God warned His people about adding to or subtracting from the Scriptures: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32).

This same exhortation is found at the very end of the Bible, where God adds a warning about the punishment that will come upon anyone who does not heed what He says about this:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take

away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18-19).

These exhortations and warnings teach us that the Scriptures are perfect and complete in all respects, and that all we need to know concerning the will of God is found there.

### Examples of adding to the Word of God

There are numerous ways in which people try to add to the Word of God. Some of the common ones in the past and in the present are as follows:

#### I. Claiming another book is the word of God

There are those who claim that the Quran is the word of God, or that the book of Mormon is the word of God. These are, of course, obvious examples of adding to God's Word.

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## 2. Adding books to the Bible

There are 66 books that constitute the Bible. Some printed versions of the Bible include what are referred to as the apocryphal books.<sup>1</sup> These books, however, are not divinely inspired. Anyone who says that they are is guilty of adding to the Scriptures.

Perhaps someone would ask how we know that the 66 books that are in the Bible do in fact belong in the Bible. We answer that the Holy Spirit assures us of that, and that the Spirit does this in a threefold way. First, we have the Spirit's testimony in the Scriptures themselves. The writings that the Spirit inspired testify that they are from God. Secondly, we have the Spirit's testimony in our own hearts. God has written His Word in our hearts, and causes us to recognize His voice when we read the books that He inspired. Thirdly, we have the Spirit's testimony in the decision of the church to receive these books as God's Word. The Spirit of God guided not only this or that individual but the church as a whole to recognize and receive these books as His Word.

## 3. Claiming to receive new revelations from God today

Many in our own day claim that God has spoken to them just as He did to the prophets in the days in which the Scriptures were written. Such individuals are false prophets, since the Bible was completed in the days in which the apostles lived. All that we need to know about the great salvation we have in Christ is found in the Scriptures as we have them today: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Heb. 2:3).

The "great salvation" was proclaimed by Christ and then confirmed unto us by them who heard Him. The Old Testament had been completed before Christ came, and the New Testament had been completed when Christ and "them that heard him" were no longer on earth. It is also worthy of note that the warning in the book of Revelation about adding to or subtracting from the Scriptures is found at the very end of the Bible.

## 4. Claiming that there have been infallible statements since the Scriptures were finished

The Roman Catholic Church has claimed for many

<sup>1</sup> The term "apocryphal" comes from a Greek word meaning "hidden."

years that there are times in which the pope is guided by God to speak infallibly. According to the Romish church, the pope speaks infallibly:

When, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church.<sup>2</sup>

They claim that an example of such an infallible utterance took place in 1950, when Pope Pius XII defined the Assumption of Mary as an article of faith.

Any infallibly inspired utterance would have the same authority as Scripture itself. To claim that infallibly inspired statements have been made after the time that Scripture was finished is to be guilty of adding to God's Word.

## 5. Claiming that the creation reveals more of God's will to us

There are those today who say that the Scriptures are insufficient to teach us all that we need to know concerning the will of God. They say that, in addition to the commandments found in Scripture, we are to hear and follow what are referred to as "norms" made known to us in the creation, which supposedly tell us how we are to conduct ourselves in human society. This, however, is adding to the Word of God.

The law of God concerning how human beings are to conduct themselves toward one another is found in its entirety in the Scriptures. God does make Himself known in the creation, but by this means He does not make known any additional laws for human conduct.

## 6. Inventing commandments and wrongly claiming to find biblical support for them

At the very beginning of the Scriptures we have an example of someone doing this, when Eve claimed that God said that they were not allowed even to touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had not said this, and Eve was thus guilty of adding to His words.

Many do this still today, and it is something against which all of us must constantly be on our guard.

## 7. Inventing promises and wrongly claiming to find biblical support for them

<sup>2</sup> First Vatican Council, *First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, chapter 4, 9, [www.catholicplanet.org/councils/20-Pastor-Aeternus.htm](http://www.catholicplanet.org/councils/20-Pastor-Aeternus.htm).


This has often been done in the past and continues to take place today. Multitudes today, for example, say that God has promised that the Jews will reign on this earth for 1,000 years sometime in the future. Though they claim to find biblical support for their position, they are actually prophesying falsely. They are saying, “God has promised...,” when actually He has not.

This serves to bring out how extremely serious it is to promote wrong views on eschatology.

### Believing the pure Word of God

One of the passages that warns against adding to God’s Word says that the Word of God is pure, and that those who receive God’s Word as it is will experience God to be their shield. “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add

thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:5-6).

Here we have not only another warning about adding to God’s Word, but also a comforting statement about the protection experienced by all who receive what God says. Every addition to God’s Word will be found to be false. But every word that God has spoken is pure. The true believer comes to know this quite well. He has experienced in his own life that our Lord always does what He says He will do. Every one of His promises is certainly fulfilled. A shield He is for those who walk in His ways, fully protected from every foe. It is those who trust in the Lord, believing all that He says without additions or subtractions, who walk without fear, perfectly shielded by their God and Father. 

STRENGTH OF YOUTH

REV. BRIAN HUIZINGA

“To Teach Them War” (5)

## Knowing War’s Origin: In God

Jehovah is a Man of war (Ex. 15:3). His right hand dashes in pieces the enemy (Ex. 15:6).

Jehovah has sworn that He will have war with Amalek from generation to generation (Ex. 17:16).

Jehovah bends His bow like an enemy, and stands with His right hand as an adversary (Lam. 2:4).

Jehovah is mighty in battle (Ps. 24:8) and mustereth the host of the battle (Is. 13:4).

Jehovah teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight (Ps. 144:1).

Jehovah is “The Lord of hosts.” Hosts are armies that go forth to war.

### Holy God

Every fire has something to ignite it. Every war on earth is ignited by any number of troublesome circum-

stances roiling about. What about our holy war as members of the church militant? What is its origin? What is responsible for bringing it into existence?

We begin with God. We began, last time, with God’s *counsel*. In His good, eternal, sovereign, determinate counsel God ordains war. We now consider His attribute of *holiness*. God’s holiness necessitates, gives rise to, and empowers the holy war of His church.

When Scripture speaks of God as a Warrior it reveals to us His attribute of *holiness*. In holiness the triune God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—is eternally consecrated to Himself as the infinitely and supremely blessed one. God is God and, therefore, the fullness of goodness. All the creatures of the universe are obliged to join God and consecrate themselves to the praise and honor of His name, always and forever. “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:4).

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In holiness, God is rightly and intensely jealous of all adoration; therefore, He must destroy all opposition to Himself and His covenant. Because Jehovah is holy, Jehovah is a Man of war. If Jehovah would tolerate opposition to Himself, He would not be holy. If Jehovah would allow enemies to blaspheme His blessed name, assault His marvelous handiwork—the church, and take counsel together against Him and His anointed with impunity, He would not be holy. If righteous wrath were not kindled in Jehovah against the raging heathen who imagine vain things against Him, He would not be holy. If Jehovah would even allow the “mere” ignoring of His name, He would not be holy. God’s attribute of holiness demands that He have in derision, break with a rod of iron, and dash into pieces both those who are against Him and those who are not for Him. If feeble earthly monarchs, who sit on thrones of gold that perish, will destroy all those who pose a threat to their fleeting, vain glory, how much more will not Jehovah who sits enthroned on high set Himself against those who oppose His infinite glory. In holiness Jehovah is a Man of war against His enemies.

Inasmuch as He is eternally holy, God is eternally a Man of war. There was never a time when Jehovah *became* a Man of war. God did not change from an eternal Man of peace to a Man of war at the rebellion of Satan and mankind. Exodus

15:3 states, very literally, “Jehovah Man of war, Jehovah His name.” As eternally unchangeable as His name, Jehovah *is* His holiness, and thus His identity “Man of war.” However, prior to the rebellion of Satan and man in the creation Jehovah was not *at* war; therefore, His holiness did not come to expression as vengeance by a Man of war. When enemies vaunted themselves against God, His identity as a Man of war came to expression.

This God is our God. We must rightly know Him so that we can fear and reverence Him for who He is. Holy God! Jealous Jehovah! Protector of His covenant! Man of War!

## Holy Jesus

To see God as the Man of war, we must see Jesus. God is not a man. Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity incarnate, is a man, the Man of war. Indeed, for Jesus is the *holy* child (Acts 4:27, 30), and therefore devoted to His Father’s glory (John 12:28).

Jesus is the better Canaanite-fighting, dagger-wielding, ox goad-swinging, jawbone-driving, trumpet-blasting Deliverer of Israel. Jesus is the better David, “a mighty valiant man, and a man of war,” (I Sam. 16:18). Jesus is the man from Bozrah clothed in blood-sprinkled garments as He tramples His enemies in His fury (Is. 63:1ff). This is not mere Old Testament language, as some who hate the Savior’s holiness charge. The New Testament concludes by saying of Jesus, “And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp

sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev. 19:14-15).

All men will see this exalted Man of war soon enough; but did they not see Him already when He marched through this earth in His state of humiliation? With the dagger of His word He assaulted the kingdom of Satan, saying to the evil spirit that had tor-

mented a crying and cut-up man, “Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit!” and to a woman bowed together and bound by Satan eighteen years, “Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity!” Man of war! With the ox goad of His word, He swung, not recklessly but deftly, pronouncing effectual curses, “Woe unto thee Chorazin!” And again, “Woe unto thee Bethsaida!” And again, “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, ye hypocrites...ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” Man of war!

If He took the jawbone of His word—“Have ye not read...?”—to one proud enemy who was attempting to trip

*This God is our God.  
We must rightly know Him  
so that we can fear  
and reverence Him  
for who He is.  
Holy God! Jealous Jehovah!  
Protector of His covenant!  
Man of War!*

Him up in His words, He did it to a thousand. Into families He drove His sword, setting at variance God-loving, truth-confessing sons and daughters against their pleasure-loving, carnally minded fathers and mothers. Man of war! Never was such a mortal blow delivered to the kingdom of Satan as when Jesus willingly offered His flesh to the accursed tree, thereby breaking the serpent's head and spoiling principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, triumphing over them. Man of war!

You will find this Jesus in Scripture, not in the modern pulpit. The Jesus of the modern pulpit is the man of pacifism. He loves all and wants to save all, if only some are willing. He smiles at His enemies, judging and condemning none. He says, "Doctrine divides. I don't care about your doctrines (what you say about Me and My Father, or yourselves, or the creation, or the church, or My kingdom....), just love each other with a 'Christian spirit.'" This Jesus does not think it strange should you make ungodly friends and run with them to the same excess of riot in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries (I Pet. 4:4). He is no man of war. He is not holy. Therefore, neither is His Father.

The Jesus of Scripture is most certainly loving and peaceful, yea, so tender He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. God be thanked. But He is also holy. Do not forget that with regard to all wickedness and to the reprobate ungodly in the kingdom of man He is an awful avenger. God be thanked. We are at war. The devil does not want to injure you; he wants to kill you. The devil does not want to scare the covenant baby in the cradle; he wants to devour him. The devil's intention is not to use the wicked world with its people and pleasures to play with you young people of the covenant but to strangle your souls in sin and sinful relationships. The old man of pride, jealousy, anger, and lust, fights every battle like it's his last (how is it going for you today?).

If Jehovah, on behalf of His covenant, is not in Jesus Christ a Man of war, our souls will be swallowed up alive. Moses and Israel knew that. After their harrowing escape from Pharaoh, their singing on the other side of the Red Sea must have been thunderous, "...I will sing unto the LORD for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea... the LORD is a man of war, the LORD is his name!" (Ex. 15:1, 3). If you

make it to your Bible and bed tonight still loving God, you can thank God that your Savior is a Man of war. If He were not, you would have been overcome, spiritually. I am glad Jesus is holy—a Man of war. Never will we be gladder than when He returns to His bloodied bride and starts treading the Antichrist in His fury, then commanding wars to cease.

## Holy War

Whence comes my (our) holy war against sin and the kingdom of darkness? My holy war comes from Jehovah who is a Man of war. If God were not holy, there would be no war—for Him, for His Son, or for us His people. He is holy. He is a Man of war. There is war. We must trace the origin of our holy war back to God's holy nature.

As we saw last time, God ordained enemies of His kingdom (counsel). Yet He hates and will destroy them (holiness). God ordained what He hates? Yes. God did not ordain enemies as an end in themselves, but only to serve His holy purposes. According to His counsel, and by means of His providence, God raises up the enemy Pharaoh. God hates Pharaoh. As a human being whose rational, moral nature is never violated by God's sovereignty, Pharaoh willingly hates and opposes God—a sin for which he is eternally responsible as one outside of Jesus Christ. God raises up this seemingly invincible enemy, who willingly hates Him, for the good purpose of showing His almighty power in the destruction of that enemy, to the declaration of His name throughout all the earth (Rom. 9:17). There is no conflict between God's decretive will and God's holy nature.

Because God is holy, He declares war and musters the hosts of the battle. Because He is holy, He commands us to be holy (I Pet. 1:15) and engage in holy warfare against sin and Satan. Our holy war arises out of God's holy Being and will. Holy Jehovah is the origin of our holy war.

This gives urgency and importance to our spiritual war. When our spirits flag, or when our hearts become weary in the battle against sin, or when we simply do not feel like fighting but participating in sin, we need to hear and sing the truth about our God, "Jehovah is a Man of war!" That stirs us to battle. As Thou art, O God, make me! Conform me to the image of Thy dear Son, the Man of war! Make me, each day anew, a man of war until I join the church triumphant. ☞

# Monthly Missionary Reports

Annual synodical reports from our foreign missionaries are published in the *PRC Acts of Synod*. Slotted in the supplements along with the Foreign Mission Committee's (FMC) annual reports rest the yearly snapshots from the eyes of our foreign missionaries about their labors on our foreign mission fields. Members of our denomination can read those reports and familiarize themselves with the history and the current status of our foreign mission work in the Philippines.

However, one aspect of the reporting that our foreign missionaries do may not be so well known. That is our monthly reports. These are submitted at the end of each month for the Council of our calling church, the Doon PRC, and the FMC. These reports set forth in detail what is happening with our missionaries and their families on their foreign field of labor. Each month the Doon PRC Council and the FMC study these reports, approve the labors of the missionaries, and approve any specific recommendations from the missionaries in these reports.



This idea of regular reporting has been a long standing practice by our foreign missionaries. All of our foreign missionaries, past and present, in Singapore, Ghana, and the Philippines produced monthly reports. Reports have been submitted by mail and by fax machine. In recent years, reports have been submitted quickly by email to the Doon Council and the FMC.

This missionary duty is required according to the Constitution of the FMC of the PRCA. In section VII, C, we read that "the committee shall receive a monthly report from the missionary concerning the details of his labors

and the expenses incurred." A little later in the same Constitution, it is noted that the Council of the calling church is also required to "receive a copy of the monthly report of the missionary." This duty of monthly reporting is implied in the call letter for foreign missionaries to the Philippines, where it lists one of the duties for the missionary as conducting "the administrative work of the mission field."

What the details in the report should be is not suggested in the FMC Constitution. However, the Constitution of the Domestic Mission Committee (DMC) of the PRCA does provide some helpful ideas about what details would be worthwhile in a monthly report from our foreign missionaries. The Constitution of the DMC states in section V, B that

the report shall contain the following:

1. A statement of the number of calls made.
2. A statement of the number of speeches delivered, and radio broadcasts, if any.
3. Figures as to the number of pieces of literature mailed and personally distributed.
4. The number of miles travelled, how travelled, and why.
5. An opinion as to the progress made, and the prospects of the field, together with the motivation for such an opinion.
6. Requests for information, advice, and assistance deemed necessary.

This list is not exhaustive. In fact, foreign missionary reports might include such details as the number in attendance at speeches, conferences, pastors' training classes, and the number of families at worship services. What is preached and what subjects and doctrines are taught are routinely reported. Recently, it has become a routine for our Philippine missionary reports that lists of questions asked by those attending our instruction classes

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*Rev. Smit is a missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, stationed in Manila, the Philippines.*

are included. The welfare of the missionary families is included in the reports from time to time as necessary. The impact of national calamities or other major events that affect our work is reported.

In other words, the missionaries attempt to provide enough profitable and sufficient detail about their labors that a clear picture of the labors can be submitted to the calling church and the FMC. Failure to do this will cause problems and might even result in a visiting delegation being unpleasantly surprised about what is actually happening on the mission field. Hence, there is need for faithful reporting. That work involves trust, clarity, and transparency by the missionaries so that a stream of monthly reports delivers the necessary and accurate summary of what is happening on the mission field.

Of course, once the Doon Council and the FMC receive the monthly reports, they have the responsibility to absorb the information of the reports, so as to become knowledgeable of what is happening in the field of labor over which they have been placed as overseers by the Lord of the harvest, Jesus Christ.



That position of the Council and the FMC over the mission field and our missionaries is the main reason why missionaries are required to submit detailed monthly reports. Receiving and treating monthly reports is one way in which the overseeing bodies do their necessary part in foreign missions. Without this regular reporting, the calling church and the FMC would have no idea whether the Word is being preached, whether there is an open door of work on the field of labor, whether there are any positive and/or negative fruits to the mission work, and in what direction the work is headed. In order to observe properly the labors of our missionaries and, in that way, to take ownership and oversight of the mission work, the Council and the FMC need regular and accurate reporting.

The place of regular reporting in connection with proper oversight of the mission is based on what we read in Acts 14:27 in regard to the mission work of the apostle Paul. When he with Barnabas came back to their calling church, the church in Antioch, at the end of his first missionary journey, they gave a verbal report of their labors to the church. We learn this detail from Acts 14:27, "And when they were come, and had gathered the church

together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

The church to which this passage refers includes the officebearers of the church, particularly her elders. To those ruling elders in particular, the apostle Paul rehearsed all that God had done through Barnabas and him in their mission work in Asia Minor. This practice honoured the principle of proper church government in which the ministers of the Word and sacraments remain accountable to their ruling elders. That accountability applies not only to pastors, but also to missionaries.

Even today, then, this principle must be applied. Missionaries, no matter how far away they may be sent by the church to their foreign field of labor, are accountable to their calling church, to their Council, and particularly to their ruling elders. To their Councils, they must rehearse and give an account of what God has done through them. They must tell the good news about how God has either closed or opened a door of faith unto those peoples among whom the missionaries were sent to labor.



Is all of this monthly reporting beneficial? We believe so.

First, the monthly reports serve as the basis for the personal meetings that the missionaries must also have with the Council and the FMC. In the current practice, our foreign missionaries usually have three meetings a month: one with a three-man committee of the Doon PRC Council, then a meeting with the entire Doon Council, and later another meeting with the FMC. During these meetings through the electronic means of Skype, the reports are worked through carefully. Issues raised in the reports are discussed. Developments, both joyous and disappointing, are noted. When necessary, questions are asked by the Council and by the FMC, and in real-time the missionaries answer those questions. The overseeing bodies are kept as close to the work as is possible and as up to date as possible. Although the unavoidable separation of significant distance remains, yet our Council and FMC members learn the challenges, the joys, the disappointments, and the direction in which the work is headed. They become part of the work and




enjoy the blessings of that oversight for the gathering of Christ's church from the peoples of the earth by His Word and Spirit.

Secondly, this regular reporting serves an important purpose for the missionaries. It helps them to remember that they are accountable to their overseeing bodies, which are far away and unseen. Because the Council is not nearby, easy it is for the missionary to start doing things "on his own." However, the note on his monthly calendar about another report being due, is a reminder of the oversight of his Council and the FMC. In this simple way, the hand of Christ through the oversight of the Council and the FMC taps the missionary on the shoulder, and through this monthly duty He asks him, "What did you do in the past month as you laboured in My harvest?" The detailed, monthly reports for the Council and the FMC are the missionary's answer to that question.

Finally, this practice of regular, monthly reporting serves as a good example to the groups and churches

among whom our missionaries labor. It shows that our foreign missionaries are not self-appointed and self-directed in their work. Our missionaries are sent by Christ through the local, calling church. They labor under the oversight of Christ through His ordained ruling elders in the church. This example and practice is noticed on the mission field, which promotes a good example for the local churches, their pastors, their consistories, and for future missionaries to follow some day in their own orderly mission endeavours.



Thus, in addition to the preaching, catechism teaching, advisory, and pastors' training work that our foreign missionaries conduct in the Philippines, remember that they also faithfully rehearse each month the various details about what God has done through them, and how He has opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles, particularly in the Philippines. 

## CLASSIS EAST REPORT

## MR. JON HUISKEN

January 14, 2015  
First Holland Protestant Reformed Church

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, MI. The churches were each represented by two delegates. Rev. Heath Bleyenberg served as chair for this session.

Classis received a protest from a brother against its decision taken at its September/October, 2014 session regarding the scheduling of Prayer Day services. The protestant argued that the way to make this change in the date for Prayer Day services would be through overture. Classis did not sustain this protest. The grounds given by Classis (summarized): 1) Classis East's decision did not make allowance for an individual consistory to determine for itself matters of the Church Order or that which belongs to the churches in common. Classis allowed only the change of the date of the service, not the elimination of the day. 2) The protest erroneously assumes that all common practices are of the same importance and therefore must

be changed only by overture. 3) The protest is based on a fear that the change of the date on which Prayer Day is observed will lead to other changes. This fear is not a legitimate conclusion. 4) The protest claims that the decision of Classis would establish precedent that would prove destructive to denominational unity. The protest, however, does not prove this point. 5) The protest does not respond to nor interact with any of the grounds Classis gave for its decision.

Classis elected the following to serve as delegates to Synod 2015: **MINISTERS:** *Primi:* G. Eriks, C. Haak, K. Koole, W. Langerak, R. VanOverloop; *Secundi:* N. Decker, M. DeVries, D. Holstege, A. Spriensma, C. Spronk. **ELDERS:** *Primi:* Robert Drnek, David Kregel, Gerald Kuiper, Sid Miedema, Howard Pastoor; *Secundi:* Brad Dykstra, Jon Engelsma, Steve Kuiper, Harry Langerak, Jack Warner.

In other voting Rev. A. denHartog and Rev. M. DeVries were elected to serve three-year terms as *primus* and *secundus* terms respectively. Rev. W. Langerak was appointed to serve a three-year term on the Classical


Committee, and Revs. Haak and VanOverloop were chosen as church visitors; Revs. Koole and DeVries will serve as alternates.

The church visitors reported that they found a spirit of peace and unity in the churches.

2016 subsidy requests of \$28,000 for Kalamazoo PRC and \$41,000 (CDN) for Wingham PRC were

approved and will be forwarded to Synod 2015 for approval.

Expenses for this session amounted to \$238.84. Classis will convene next on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at the Hudsonville PRC.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jon J. Huiskens, Stated Clerk 

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

## MR. PERRY VAN EGDOM

### Congregational Activities

In January, newly elected officebearers were installed in many Protestant Reformed Churches. This quote from the adopted Form was included on one of our church bulletins and serves as good counsel for officebearers and congregations alike:

Therefore, ye elders, be diligent in the government of the church which is committed to you and the ministers of the Word. Be also, as watchmen over the house and city of God, faithful to admonish and to caution every one against his ruin. Take heed that purity of doctrine and godliness of life be maintained in the church of God.... On the other hand, beloved Christians, receive these men as the servants of God; count the elders that rule well worthy of double honor; give yourselves willingly to their inspection and government... ("Form of Ordination of Elders and Deacons").

At a special congregational meeting held January 19 the members of the Loveland, CO PRC voted to

replace the pews and carpeting in the sanctuary with the work to be completed in the coming months.

Taken from the bulletin in our Edgerton, MN PRC and applicable to all of us:

"distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:10, 13). Some of our members are elderly, while others experience various infirmities of the flesh. Pray for them, that God give them patience. Some of our members are young and impressionable. Pray for them, that God give them discernment and wisdom, and they might grow in grace. Some of our members are parents and adults. Pray for them, that they glorify God in all their decisions and actions. Some of our members are single. Pray for them that they might glorify God in singleness. Some of our members are absent for a time. Pray that they might return in safety, in God's time. One of our members is in the nursing home, unable to worship with us. Pray for her, and visit her to show the communion of saints. One of our members bears a young unborn child. Pray for her and the child. Perhaps as you read through the church directory you will think of particular needs

of other members. Do we bear up each other in prayer every day?

### Minister Activities

The Council of the First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI announced a new trio consisting of Rev. Nathan Decker (Trinity PRC, Hudsonville, MI), Rev. Carl Haak (Georgetown PRC, Hudsonville, MI), and Rev. Richard Smit (missionary to the Philippines). From this trio a call was extended to Rev. Smit on January 18. May God show His way clearly to Rev. Smit and bless First PRC with her own pastor in His perfect counsel.

The Council of Peace PRC in Lansing, IL, announced a trio including Rev. Cory Griess (Calvary PRC, Hull, IA), Rev. Rodney Kleyn (Covenant of Grace PRC, Spokane, WA), and Rev. William Langerak (Southeast PRC, Grand Rapids, MI). On January 22, the congregation called Rev. R. Kleyn.

As of the printing of this issue, Rev. William Langerak was still considering the call to be the next missionary to the Philippines. May God bless these men as they consider the calls set before them.

We rejoice with Rev. Erik Guiche-

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

laar (Randolph, WI PRC) and his wife Cherith in God's gift of a son, Jayden Gerry, born January 8. And also congratulations to Rev. Brian Huizinga (Redlands, CA PRC) and wife Michelle in the birth of a son, Benjamin Asher, born January 14! Wonderfully made, covenant children are a great blessing, and the joy of their parents. And with the news of the baby in Redlands, assurances also that there have been no earthquakes felt there lately!

### Sister Church Activities

The Contact Committee of the PRCA reports that a delegation traveled to Northern Ireland from January 9-19. Prof. Barrett Gritters along with Dave Kregel (from Grandville, MI PRC), members of the Contact Committee, (and their

wives) made the trip. Prof. Gritters preached twice in the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church located in Ballymena on January 11 and twice in the Limerick Reformed Fellowship on January 18. Church visitation was conducted in the CPRC and the lecture entitled "The Prince of Darkness Grim—the Reformed Teaching on Satan" was given by Prof. Gritters in Ballymena. In Limerick Prof. Gritters' lecture topic was "The Meaning of Reformed."

### Denominational Activities

Classis East met at First PRC of Holland, MI on January 14. In addition to adopting a pulpit supply schedule for First PRC of Grand Rapids, MI, Synodical delegates and other committee members were elected. Classis did not sustain a protest that contended that to


change the date for Prayer Day requires an overture. We are thankful for the faithful labors of our classical delegates. Classis East plans to meet next on May 13 in Hudsonville, MI PRC.

Classis West will meet March 4 in Doon, IA, D.V.

The Classis of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines plans to meet February 25.

### Young People's Activities

The Young People's Society of the First PRC of Holland, MI hosted a Saturday morning fresh, made-to-order breakfast with many delicious options to choose from.

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Teachers needed

■ The Protestant Reformed School in Winham 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 brnhlt@gmail.com, Gerry Guichelaar | 519-395-5868.

■ As the Lord has blessed our 3rd/4th grade teacher with the expectation of a child due in April, the Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School is seeking applicants for a full time 3rd and 4th grade teaching position for the last part of the 2014/2015 school year (April 13-May 22, 2015). Applications will also be taken to fill this 3rd and 4th grade teaching position for the 2015/2016 school year. Those interested should send a resume and contact administrator Jay Kalsbeek 970-988-1429, jaynlora@yahoo.com or board president Leon Griess 970-566-4568, leongriess@yahoo.com

■ Protestant Reformed Christian School of Dyer, IN is seeking applicants for two teacher positions for the 2015/2016 school year. We are interested in hiring a 5th grade teacher and a junior high teacher. Interested applicants may contact the administrator, Ryan Van Overloop at (219) 558-2660 or ryan.vanoverloop@dyerprcs.org.

### Classis West

■ Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Doon PRC on Wednesday, March 4, 2015, at 8:30 A.M. the Lord willing. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the clerk of Doon's consistory, Jim Hoogendoorn, (712) 726-3573, jimhoog@premieronline.net.

Rev. D. Kuiper,  
Stated Clerk

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of First PRC of Holland express their Christian sympathy to her adopted son, Jai Mahtani, his wife Esther, and their family in the death of.

#### GERTRUDE MEERSE.

May they be comforted in the word of God found in Psalm 121: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber.... The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

Rev. Holstege, President  
Greg Bos, Assistant Clerk

### Wedding Anniversary

■ Because the sovereign Jehovah God has graciously shown us His covenant in Jesus Christ, we thank Him for His goodness and faithfulness to our parents,

#### ROBERT and MARILYN ADAMS,

in their 40 years of marriage on February 14, 2015. We are thankful for God's covenant mercies and for the instruction in godliness they have given us. "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness. Mark ye well [Zion's] bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:10, 13-14).

\* Susan and Philip Hall

Corey, Katelyn, Lucas

\* Cynthia and Alexander Kalsbeek

Alanna, Cara, John

\* Stephanie Adams

Grand Rapids, Michigan

### 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.

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 Huisken, Secretary

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

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Georgetown PRC express their sincere sympathy to John and Mary Windemuller and their family in the death of their brother and uncle,

#### BERNARD TEN BROEKE.

We pray that his family may receive comfort and assurance from the words of our Lord found in Revelation 14:13: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Rev. Carl Haak, President  
Jerry Kuiper, Clerk

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of First PRC of Holland express their Christian sympathy to Marcia Ten Broeke and family in the death of their beloved husband, father, and grandfather,

#### BERNARD TEN BROEKE.

May they find comfort in the word of God and be assured of His salvation as we are told in the words of Psalm 48:14: "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

Rev. Dan Holstege, President  
Greg Bos, assistant clerk

### 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: 669-1504). This contact should be made before the next scheduled meeting, March 10, 2015, D.V.

Student Aid Committee  
Bill VanOverloop, Secretary