

The Standard Bearer

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The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God,
I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons
and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men
shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will
pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall
prophesy.

Acts 2:16-18

As the 120 disciples of Jesus were assembled on Pentecost in an upper room in Jerusalem, three very unusual things happened. There was the sound as of a mighty rushing wind that filled the house where the disciples were assembled. Cloven tongues as of fire appeared over each of them. And then they all began to speak in foreign languages concerning the things of God.

There was a twofold reaction from the crowds that gathered to witness these things. Some doubted, asking, "What meaneth this?" Others, mocking, said, "These men are full of new wine."

This reaction became the occasion for Peter to ad-

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dress the crowd to explain that they were witnessing the fulfillment of prophecy. The prophet Joel had spoken of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on all flesh in the last days. This would result in dreams, visions, and prophecy in every tier of society. According to Peter the unusual things that had just taken place were all signs of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And the disciples' speaking in many different languages of the things of God was the Spirit's gift of prophecy of which Joel spoke.

All those who have faith in Jesus Christ possess the poured-out Spirit of Pentecost.

And with the gift of the Spirit comes the gift of prophecy.

This is a gift that we must all embrace and use.



"I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh."

This was the word of the Lord spoken through the prophet Joel.

To pour out means to bestow abundantly. Think of the entire contents of a bowl being poured out, in contrast to a little of the contents of the bowl being sprinkled around. Joel spoke of the day when the Lord would pour out His Spirit and the church would possess the Spirit of God in much richer measure.

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Notice that Joel wrote, “I will pour out my Spirit.” Peter quoted Joel by saying, “I will pour out of (literally “away from”) my Spirit.” Often the New Testament writers did not quote the Old Testament prophets exactly, but by inspiration added their own interpretation to it, as Peter did here.

Let’s understand Peter’s inspired interpretation of the prophet Joel. It is through the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, that God bestows the blessings of salvation upon His people. It is the Holy Spirit who resides personally in every child of God. And it is through the indwelling Spirit that the elect of God enjoy the blessings of regeneration, faith, justification, sanctification, and assurance. And so we may say that all the blessings of salvation are (away) from the Spirit. Joel spoke of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Peter by inspiration emphasized the fullness of salvation that would come through the outpouring of the Spirit.

According to Joel, there would come a time that there would be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church. To extend this figure, Israel experienced only a trickle of the Holy Spirit and His blessings. But one day there would be an outpouring of the riches of salvation.

And this outpouring of the Spirit and His blessing would be “on all flesh.” The meaning is not that the outpouring of spiritual blessing would come upon every individual of the human race. The meaning is rather that this outpouring of blessing would come on every tribe, tongue, and nation. This was not the case in the Old Testament. The blessings of salvation were bestowed in the Old Testament also by the Holy Spirit, but it was only upon one nation, and this nation was Israel. However, there would come a day when the Holy Spirit would not only be poured out, but be poured out on all flesh.



Afterwards!

Joel was a prophet of God in Judah almost 200 years prior to the Babylonian captivity. It was a time of growing apostasy. Joel spoke of a plague of locusts that would lay the land waste as God’s judgment on Judah’s apostasy. This army of locusts was merely the forerunner of the armies of men that would take Judah captive and destroy the land. This was fulfilled in the Babylonian captivity. But Joel also spoke of the restoration of Judah to their land in the way of repentance. This was fulfilled in the return from captivity.

Joel continued to describe what would come to pass afterwards.

After the return from captivity the Lord would pour out His Spirit on all flesh.

According to Peter (who spoke by inspiration), Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost.

Why at this time and not before? Why not earlier? Because God had finally provided atonement for sin.

On account of her sins, the church deserves only to perish under the severe wrath of God with the rest of the world. The only way that she can enjoy the blessings of salvation from the Spirit is for her sins to be atoned through proper payment.

In the Old Testament era this atonement had not been made. It was only symbolized and promised in the multitude of offerings Israel was required to make at God’s altar. On the strength of that promise, Israel possessed God’s salvation from the Spirit, but only in small measure. The Holy Spirit and His blessings were sprinkled on the church. And it was Israel alone that enjoyed these blessings.

However, that all changed with the coming and work of Jesus Christ. God sent His Son into the world in our flesh to atone for sin at the cross. His death was an atoning death because through it He endured the full punishment of God for sin. This atonement was not just for one small nation (Israel), but for all flesh—the elect of God that would be found in all the world. And so now the Holy Spirit and His blessing are poured out in rich abundance and are poured out upon all flesh. This began at Pentecost, 50 days after the atonement was made.

In harmony with this, Peter also spoke of the “last days.” Here Peter did not quote Joel but interpreted him. Joel had spoken of “afterwards”—after the return from captivity. Peter by inspiration interpreted this and identified this “afterwards” as the last days. This is in harmony with the rest of Scripture, which identifies the era after Pentecost as the last hour of history. Jesus’ atoning sacrifice on the cross has secured the salvation of the church. The next great event of history will be the return of Christ to bring the elect of God to their final glory in a new creation. We are now in the last days.

In these last days the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh.



All those who receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit shall prophesy.

The prophet Joel spoke of different kinds of people—sons and daughters, old men and young men, even servants and handmaids.

They shall see visions, dream dreams, and prophesy.

Visions and dreams were means whereby God revealed Himself. Visions differ from dreams in that the one who receives them is either awake, in the one case, or asleep, in the other. Those who received revelatory dreams and visions also prophesied. They proclaimed what God had revealed to them.

According to the prophet Joel, all those who receive the outpouring of the Spirit shall receive the revelation of God and prophesy. In the Old Testament, only a few were given revelation to prophesy. But through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter days, this gift shall be given to all who believe—young men and old, sons and daughter, even the servants.

How must we understand this?

The dreams and visions were temporary and have been replaced with the completed Scriptures. Pentecostalism teaches that revelatory dreams and visions still occur to this day along with prophecy. God is still revealing new things to the church. Interestingly, they claim this gift of the Spirit is given only to some, not to all who believe. Contrary to this we must understand that revelatory dreams and visions were only for short while after Pentecost. These were necessary until the revelation of God was complete and infallibly recorded by divine inspiration in the Bible. With the writing of the book of Revelation by John, the revelation of God

to the church is complete. God has no new thing to say this side of glory. And with the completion of God's revelation, all revelatory dreams and vision have ceased. In turn, we have much more in the Scriptures than the early church had with visions and dreams. And by the indwelling Spirit every believer is able to understand the revelation of God in Scripture.

And so the prophet Joel also spoke of prophecy.

To prophesy is to proclaim the revealed word of God.


This is done officially by ministers of the gospel, who serve as pastors in the local church and on the mission fields of the world.

But this prophecy is also the gift of God to all believers as they by the indwelling Spirit proclaim the word of God to others—parents to their children, fellow believers to one another in the fellowship of the saints, and saints to those outside the household of faith.

This is the fruit of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. By the Holy Spirit of Pentecost every believer understands the revelation of God as the church never did before. That word so boils over in him that he cannot help but speak it.

Let us live in the power of the Holy Spirit so that we know the Scriptures and are faithful to proclaim them as a church and individually.

The Holy Spirit will use our prophecy to accomplish His purpose, as He did through Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost. Some will be hardened. But others will be pricked in their hearts and believe.

And this will hasten the day of the Lord when He shall come to give us all things! 

EDITORIAL

PROF. RUSSELL DYKSTRA

Teacher Training

One of the most significant covenant blessings given to the Protestant Reformed Churches is its Christian schools. God establishes His covenant not merely with believers, but

also with their chosen seed. Believing parents are committed—by their own baptism vows—to instructing their children in such a way that their children know, love, and obey Jehovah their God. God commands

parents to instruct their children constantly—from the rising up out of sleep to the time they tuck their children into bed at night. In this way, their children will know God, know His creation, and be

equipped to serve Him in the country and culture in which they live.

Wise parents understand the daunting nature of instructing their children in all the various disciplines that are necessary for Christians to live and work before God in this age. They are also deeply conscious of the uncompromising demand of God, and of the vows they have taken. Hence they seek to fulfill part of their responsibility through the instruction of a good Christian school. For over sixty-five years, God has granted conscientious Protestant Reformed parents this crucial assistance from their own schools. We cannot be thankful enough for this precious gift.

In the prayers of thanksgiving, parents, elders, ministers, and the whole congregation include the gift of good teachers. The Christian school is the teachers, and the teachers are the Christian school. *They* stand in the parents' place. *They* rear the children in those school hours. *They* impart necessary knowledge of God, His creation, and how to serve God as His covenant people in the world.

Because of the vital task teachers perform, and because teachers are partially fulfilling the demand God places squarely upon parents, the standards for teachers in Protestant Reformed schools are, and ought to be, high. The Christian school teacher must possess the God-given ability to teach—effectively and interestingly to convey the beautiful knowledge of God and His works in Jesus Christ. To teach in a Protestant Reformed school, he or she must be Protestant Reformed, that

is, not merely a member, but one who grasps, loves, and is wholeheartedly committed to the truths God has given to the PRC. The teacher must also be compassionate and have a love for the children placed under his or her care. Teachers must be able to admonish and discipline biblically and effectively. They must be equipped, prepared, to rear these children in the fear of the Lord. Teachers are the Christian school.

That raises the question of preparation for teaching. What is required of an individual, from a formal point of view, to be allowed to teach in a Protestant Reformed school? The answer: Membership in a Protestant Reformed church, and a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with an education certificate.

Is that it? Yes, that is all. They may receive their diploma from a college that is Christian Reformed, Reformed, Baptist, Lutheran, or Methodist, or a state institution.

Why are we parents satisfied with that kind and that limited amount of training? These teachers stand in our place—rearing our covenant children. And the only thing we require of them is that they be members of the Protestant Reformed Churches and have a college degree with state certification?

School boards interview prospective teachers and look for the best qualified to take their place on the staff. They can search for indications of spiritual strength and commitment to the work of covenant instruction. But, is this twenty-two year old girl an effective *teacher*? Effective not according to

the standards of Grand Valley State, or Kings College, or Hope College, but according to *our* standards? And is this twenty-two year young applicant an effective *Protestant Reformed* teacher?

Do not misunderstand. I am not attacking our teachers. I am not even criticizing them. Any teacher reading this editorial need not feel threatened by anything written in it. I love the teachers in the Protestant Reformed schools. I have personally seen their ability, their zeal, their commitment, their love both for the truth and for the children. I have witnessed these things sitting in a desk as a student for thirteen years, as a teacher working with other teachers, and as a parent of nine. Do they all have the same teaching capabilities? Of course not—neither do ministers. But it is not with the teachers that I have an ax to grind. My criticism concerns their training. My question is this: Why are we as parents not doing more to help our teachers be the very best teachers—Protestant Reformed teachers—they can be? Why, after over sixty-five years of maintaining Protestant Reformed schools, do we not have an institution to train young men and women for teaching in a Protestant Reformed school? It is puzzling, even disturbing, and it needs to be faced.

It may interest you to know that the Protestant Reformed Churches have faced this matter in the past, and that officially as churches. During the years 1948-50, strong consideration was given to requests that the churches work together to establish an institution for training Protestant Reformed teachers. In

the future, D.V., I will discuss that history in some detail. If you are interested, you can consult the Acts of Synod for those years.

Early on, the seminary of the Protestant Reformed Churches revealed its willingness to assist in the significant effort to train teachers. Both Herman Hoeksema and George M. Ophoff were willing to make speeches and even craft a course for teachers. This interest in a quality, Reformed training for teachers was seen in Rev. Hoeksema in his earlier years in the ministry, dating back to his time in the Christian Reformed Church.

This comes out in an editorial entitled “The Normal School” that the young HH wrote in *The Young Calvinist* in April of 1920. We quote here the first third of that editorial in order to present his viewpoint on training teachers. It also explains the concept of a “normal school.”

We trust that most of our readers believe in the necessity of Christian schools. It is not necessary, I think, to discuss the necessity of Christian education and the question of the Christian school as such.

After all, the children are not the possession of the State. Neither is the State responsible for them before God. The children are under the stewardship and for the responsibility of the parents. They, therefore, must also educate them. They are before God responsible for their education.

Hence, it is our conviction, that free schools¹ ought to be the

¹ Free schools are Christian schools.

rule, and that the State, naturally interested in the education of its citizens, ought to have power to supervise and to establish schools where the parents neglect to do so. Free schools the rule. State education the exception.

But the question of the Christian school as such I was not going to discuss. I will proceed from the assumption that most of our readers agree with us on this question. If this is a fact, however, if we believe in the Christian primary education, it stands to reason that we must also believe in Christian normal schools. And it is this cause which I wish to bring to the attention of our societies and of our young men individually.

What is a normal school? It is an institution for the purpose of training young men and young women for the teaching profession. It is with a view to the teaching profession what a seminary is for the ministry. Now, we all agree that we must not expect competent ministers in our church without a good seminary. But just as little right we have to expect competent teachers in our Christian schools without a good normal school. We must have teachers that are theoretically well-informed, that are practically well trained and that are principally on a sound basis. Our entire Christian school depends upon such teachers. The teacher is the heart of the school. If we want to have Christian schools, we must have Christian teachers in the first place. And to get Christian teachers we must simply train them.

Rev. Herman Hoeksema instilled in his son and successor in the seminary the same zeal for

Christian schools, and for training Protestant Reformed teachers. In the early 1950s H. C. Hoeksema penned a lengthy series on Christian schools, and there he focused also on the need to train teachers. He held the conviction that the Protestant Reformed people had to establish a training institution—either a college or a normal school. He writes:

But let us now understand that we may not and must not be satisfied as long as our teachers receive their training in Reformed or Christian Reformed or even outright worldly institutions. It may be granted that such institutions may train teachers. But it lies in the very nature of the case that such institutions cannot train *Protestant Reformed teachers*, that is, train them to be Protestant Reformed in their teaching. You don’t get cookies at a hardware store. You don’t get Protestant Reformed teachers from a non-Protestant Reformed college.²

What would such an institution have in its courses that would be distinct from another teacher training institution? HCH gives a fairly thorough list,³ including “educational subjects, such as the principles of education, the philosophy of education, and the psychology of education (or, at

² “Looking to the Future (Chapter 2): The Teacher Problem (Suggestions Towards Solutions),” *Standard Bearer*, 28, 15, p. 351.

³ “Looking to the Future (Chapter 3): On Teacher Training,” *Standard Bearer*, 29, 2, pp. 40-42.

least, general psychology).” In addition, courses that would acquaint the teachers with the “principles of history, of geography, of arithmetic, of music, of language, etc.” Especially high on his list was a thorough program of practice teaching, with constructive criticism an essential part.

He concludes:


For the present, however, we may have to be satisfied with a normal course in the limited sense of the word. Possibly we could begin with a few of the general college subjects, possibly not. It may be that for a time our prospective teachers would have to seek that part of their education elsewhere, as they do now, even though principally it would throw a monkey wrench in the machinery of their education.

But I am convinced that the time is not distant when we must and shall establish the beginning of our own teacher training school. It will probably be a humble beginning. Let it be. But let it be healthy, principally sound, and as complete as possible. And let us beware that we be not satisfied with half finished, amateurish efforts.

That was the sentiment expressed some sixty years ago. This is my conviction as well. The purpose of this editorial is not to discuss all the options and difficulties, of which there are many. That I will do, D.V., at a later time. The purpose now is simply to consider the disturbing lack of training for our teachers. And to start us thinking about solutions.

The Protestant Reformed Churches have long and generously

supported the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary. Why? Because it is well understood that the work of the minister is the heart of the church—preaching and catechetical instruction. Both must be distinctively Protestant Reformed. Continued existence as Protestant Reformed Churches demands that we train men to be ministers in the PRC.

The same must be said for the Protestant Reformed schools. The teachers *are* the Christian school. If we would have Protestant Reformed schools, distinctive in their instruction, we must have Protestant Reformed teachers. How can we be confident that these young men and women, good and godly though they may be, will be properly trained to be Protestant Reformed teachers, if we do not train them? 

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

PROF. RONALD CAMMENGA

Revelation, Inspiration, and Infallibility (8)

What the Bible Says about the Bible: The Testimony of the Prophets

Introduction

What is the Bible? The Bible is a library of books within one book.¹ It is a library with two branches: an

¹ I am indebted to J. I. Packer's description of the Bible as a library in his book *Truth and Power: The Place of Scripture in the Christian Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

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Previous article in this series: April 15, 2014, p. 320.

Old Testament branch and a New Testament branch. It is a library made up of sixty-six books: thirty-nine in the Old Testament branch and twenty-seven in the New Testament branch. The books are written mainly in two languages: Hebrew and Greek. It is a library containing about forty different authors, who wrote over a period of approximately fifteen hundred years. The contents of the books vary: some contain history, others prayers, hymns of praise, visions, poetry, proverbs, letters (epistles), laws of worship, civil codes, doctrine, polemics, announce-

ments of judgment, statistics, confession of sin, and much more. The characters in the Bible include kings and commoners, royalty and lowly fisherman, prophets and apostles, leaders specially called of God and ordinary folk, publicans and sinners, converted harlots and hardened sinners, and, of course, the main character: our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Word made flesh.

Although there is great variety in the books of the Bible, the Bible is itself one book, the Good Book—as pious saints of a bygone time were wont to refer to the Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, from the first announcement of the gospel in Genesis 3:15 to the glorious fulfilment of the gospel in the new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21 and 22, the books of the Bible display a marvelous unity. In the end, the Bible is the one word of God, proclaiming the one Savior and the one way of salvation, to the glory of the one Lord God. Put simply, the Bible is the word of God—the word of God in the words of men. Concerning the Bible, Reformed believers confess with the Westminster Confession of Faith: “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good, and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture” (WCF 1.6).

At present we are busy examining the Bible's testimony concerning itself. What does the Bible say about itself? What claims does it make for itself? Does it claim to be a unique book, a book altogether different from any other book or collection of books? Does the Bible claim to be infallibly inspired by God? And does the Bible claim authority over faith and morals? We are specifically examining the Old Testament with regard to these matters. Last time we examined the Old Testament law, one of the major divisions of the Old Testament. We saw that without doubt the Old Testament law claims that it is the law and word of God. In this article, we want to continue our examination of the Old Testament by looking together at the second major division of the Old Testament: the prophets.

Messengers Sent by God

Often the Old Testament prophets are referred to as messengers sent by God to speak His word to His people. The prophets were and were to be regarded by the

people as “God's messengers.” In Haggai 1:13 we read, “Then spake Haggai the Lord's messenger....” In Malachi 3:1 the prophet Malachi prophesies the coming of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist (Jesus Himself said “there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist,” Luke 7:28), as “my messenger.” All the prophets were, thus, Christ's messengers. The same verse speaks of Christ as “the messenger of the covenant.” If Christ as the great Prophet and Teacher of God's people is “the Messenger” of God's covenant, all the prophets who prophesied of Him were also “messengers” of God's covenant. The last chapter of II Chronicles recounts the overthrow of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem. The inspired chronicler gives as the chief reason for the Babylonian captivity Judah's rejection of His messengers the prophets. He says in I Chronicles 36:15, “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place.” How did Judah receive God's messengers? “But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” Notice that: they mocked “the messengers of God” who brought “his words.”

The Old Testament word for “prophet” emphasizes the truth that the prophets were God's messengers. The word “prophet” means literally “to bubble over.” The prophet is one who “bubbles over.” That with which he bubbles over is the word of God. Himself filled with the word of God, the prophet “bubbled over” with the word of God to God's people. What a prophet is we learn from Deuteronomy 18:18: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.” To be sure, this passage is prophetic of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Prophet of whom all the Old Testament prophets were types. Nevertheless, of all the prophets it is true that God raised them up; God put His words in their mouths; and God commanded them to speak unto His people.

As God's messengers the prophets were sent by God. This was the all-important thing with regard to the Old Testament prophets: They were sent. We read of the prophet Isaiah's commission in Isaiah 6. In verse 8, the

voice of the Lord says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah's response was, "Here am I; send me." To which Jehovah's response was, "Go." To the prophet Jeremiah the Lord says, "Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." In the passage from II Chronicles 36:15 referred to earlier, the prophets whom Judah rejected were the prophets whom "the Lord God of their fathers sent to them...rising betimes, and sending."

In contrast to the true prophets, false prophets were not sent. This was always true of the false prophets, that they were not sent, but came in their own name and in their own authority. In Jeremiah 14:14 Jehovah says that the false prophets "prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them." Ezekiel 19 contains the Lord's rebuke of the false prophets in Israel: "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy out of their own hearts." These false prophets "have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord" (v. 5). About these false prophets, the most important thing of all is that "the Lord hath not sent them" (v. 6).

"Thus saith the Lord"

One very clear proof that the prophets spoke (and wrote) the word of God is the constantly recurring refrain, "Thus saith the Lord," which occurs over four hundred times in the Old Testament. Isaiah 43:1 begins with the familiar prophetic formula: "But now thus saith the Lord...." Jeremiah 22:1 and 2 are similar: "Thus saith the Lord; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David...." The well-known prophecy of Amos 8:11 concerning the famine of the "hearing of the words of the Lord" that God is about to send upon Judah begins: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God." To Judah, who is more concerned with building their own houses than the house of the Lord, comes the word of the Lord in Haggai 1:7: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; consider your ways." Not, "Thus saith Haggai the prophet," but "Thus saith the Lord...." And in Zechariah 1:3, the Lord sends His prophet with these words: "Therefore say thou

unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts...."

God says to Moses in Exodus 4:12, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Even the false prophet Balaam says to king Balak, in Numbers 22:38, "Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." Concerning Jeremiah we read in Jeremiah 1:9, "Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." To the prophet Ezekiel, God says in Ezekiel 2:7, "And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear."

Several times in the prophecy of Isaiah the expression is found, "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." In Isaiah 1:20 we read, "But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Similarly, we read in Isaiah 40:5, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Towards the end of the book, at the conclusion of a prophecy that speaks of Israel's deliverance and restoration, once more the expression occurs: "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Is. 58:14).

Over and over again we read in the prophecy of Jeremiah, "The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord." Jeremiah 7:1: "The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying...." Again, in Jeremiah 11:1: "The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying...." Confer also Jeremiah 18:1; 21:1; 29:30; 34:1; 37:6; 40:1; 43:8; 46:1; 47:1.

Throughout the prophets the expression recurs: "The word of the Lord that came to [prophet so-and-so]...." For example, we read in Ezekiel 12:17: "Moreover the word of the Lord came to me...." Hosea's prophecy begins, "The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea, the son of Beer..." (Hos. 1:1). The prophecies of Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi all begin in this way.

Similar to the above, it is often said of the prophets that the word of the Lord came unto them. In I Kings 12:22 we read, "But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the

man of God, saying....” Similarly, in I Chronicles 17:3 we read, “And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan [the prophet], saying....” Several times in the prophecy of Jeremiah we read: “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord,” as in 7:1; 11:1; 18:1; 21:1; 26:1; 27:1; 30:1, and in several other places as well. Outside the prophecy of Jeremiah this expression is also found, as in Ezekiel 1:3 and 3:4, 10, and 11, as well as in Hosea 1:1 and 2.

Because they spoke God’s word, to reject the word of or to disobey the prophet was tantamount to rejecting the word of and disobeying God. God said to Samuel the prophet: “They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me” (I Sam. 8:7). This was precisely Judah’s sin on account of which she was sent into captivity, as II Chronicles 36 makes plain. According to II Chronicles 36, because the people despised His prophets, “the wrath of the Lord arose against his people.” “Therefore he [that is, God] brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.... And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon” (II Chron. 36:16-20).

A powerful attestation to the inspiration of the prophets is the frequent quotation of the prophets by Christ and by the writers of the New Testament Scriptures. Always these quotations are assumed to be quotations of God’s word, which is often indicated by the way in which they are introduced. The gospel according to Matthew was written primarily to the Jews in order to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. As might be expected, Matthew includes a good number of Old Testament quotations in his gospel account. Invariably those quotations are introduced or concluded in such a way as indicates their divine inspiration. The very first such quotation is found in Matthew 1:22: “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled *which was spoken of the Lord* by the prophet, saying....” Another example is Matthew 2:15: “And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled *which was spoken of the Lord* by the prophet, saying....” Confer also Matthew 2:23; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9.

What all this comes down to is that the Bible is the word of God. This is what the Bible teaches about itself. This is how believers must regard it. This is the honor that we must show to it. For this reason we must obey it and live our lives according to it. The attitude that we must have toward it is the attitude God requires in Isaiah 66:2: “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”



ALL AROUND US

REV. MARTYN MC GEOWN

The Strange Fire Conference

Charismaticism seems a world away from Reformed—especially Protestant Reformed—Christianity, yet there are an estimated 500 million Charismatics or Pentecostals in the world today. The Charismatic or Pentecostal movement (although we can distinguish between Charismaticism and Pentecostalism, I use the words interchangeably) is the fastest growing movement among Christians, especially in the Third World. I can

guarantee that there is a Charismatic church near you, and our missionaries in the Philippines have undoubtedly encountered Charismaticism. Philip Jenkins writes, “almost one Christian in five worldwide is neither Protestant, nor Catholic, nor Anglican, nor Orthodox,” but Charismatic.¹ Moreover, the so-called “Young, Restless, and Reformed movement,” with celebrity pastors such as John Piper and Mark Driscoll, is open to, and supportive of, Charismaticism in various forms.

In October 2013, the Twitterfeed and blogosphere

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¹ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2002), 60.

were abuzz with reports of *Strange Fire*, the anti-Charismatic Conference, organized by John MacArthur in his Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, from October 16-18. *Strange Fire* presented the case for Cessationism vs. Continuationism.

Continuationism is the belief that the apostolic gifts of prophecy, tongues, and healing *continue* in the church today, while Cessationism is the belief that the apostolic gifts have *ceased*. Continuationism includes men like John Piper, who are open to some of the gifts. Piper, for example, believes in the continuation of prophecy, but he himself does not claim the gift of tongues. Mark Driscoll also argues for Continuationism and even claims the gift of prophecy. This makes Piper and Driscoll all the more dangerous, because their advocacy of Continuationism gives Charismatic and Pentecostal theology a certain aura of respectability among young Calvinists.

At the other extreme of the Continuationist camp are the men and women of the so-called Word Faith Movement, the men and women who appear on Christian TV such as TBN (Trinity Broadcasting Network). Big names in that movement are Benny Hinn, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, T.D. Jakes, Kenneth Copeland, and Joyce Meyer, who claim that the Lord speaks to them—usually when the “Lord” allegedly does so, “he” speaks nonsense or heresy—and who claim a special anointing from God to do miracles and make their followers rich.² Somewhere in the middle, between Piper/Driscoll (the “Reformed Continuationist” camp) and TBN (the charlatans and prosperity peddlers), are the mainline Charismatic churches, such as the Assemblies of God and a host of independent churches in almost every city, where speaking in tongues and other phenomena are the norm among those who claim to be “baptized by or in the Spirit” or to have received the “Second Blessing.”

Strange Fire was an answer to *every* form of Continuationism. Some critics of the conference—which had 4,000 enrolled attendees and was live streamed to some 127 countries—claimed that MacArthur’s conference was guilty of generalizations, and especially that *Strange Fire* only attacked the more lunatic fringe of the Charis-

matic movement, lumping everyone together or painting everyone with the same broad brush. While it is true that the speakers at *Strange Fire* did aim much of their criticism at the extremes of the movement, it is *not* true that they dealt only with the Benny Hinns and Joel Osteens of this world. Much of the conference was devoted to a positive setting forth of the work of the Holy Spirit and a defense of Cessationism in general. That especially made it worthwhile and beneficial for Reformed Christians.

MacArthur gathered together some high-profile and world-renowned speakers for his conference: Phil R. Johnson, Steve Lawson, R.C. Sproul, Tom Pennington, Conrad Mbewe, Nathan Busenitz, Justin Peters, and Joni Eareckson Tada. All of the speeches and seminars were recorded and can be watched for free online.³ For me, one of the most moving speeches was “A Deeper Healing,” by Joni Eareckson Tada. Tada has been a quadriplegic since July 1967, following a diving accident. She describes her visit to the healing crusade of Kathryn Kuhlman (1907-1967), the Benny Hinn of her day, which left her disillusioned and bitter, because, not only did Kuhlman not heal her, but she and similarly disabled people were ignored by Kuhlman’s staff! Tada recounts her feelings that night: “When I got home that night, I thought, ‘Okay then, if I can’t be healed, I’m just not going to do this. I’m not going to live this way.’ And soon a bitter spirit, a mean, a real complaining spirit began to take hold.” Tada uses a very insightful analogy: “[Trials] became the lemon that He kept squeezing in my life, revealing all sorts of things from which I needed to repent...bitterness, spitefulness, selfishness. I don’t like it when God squeezes the lemon, but I need it.”

Is that how we see our trials in our lives, as God squeezing our lemon to reveal the bitterness within, and to heal us of that bitterness?

Later, Tada makes a journey to Jerusalem and visits the Pool of Bethesda (John 5). She prayed, “Thank you for a ‘No’ answer to a request for physical healing. You really knew what you were doing so many years ago, because a ‘No’ answer to a request for physical healing has purged so much sin out of my life, so much selfishness and bitterness....”

² For some good documentation about and critique of the Word Faith Movement, watch/read the seminars by Justin Peters on the *Strange Fire* Conference website. Peters includes many clips documenting the outrageous heresies of such false teachers.

³ “*Strange Fire*,” accessed March 14, 2014, <http://www.tmstrange-fire.org/>. The website includes the audio and video recordings as well as the transcripts of all the speeches.


No wonder Tada calls it a “deeper healing.”

The other speeches dealt with a variety of topics: the views of Calvin and the Puritans on Sola Scriptura (Lawson), various kinds of spiritual gifts (with a critique of tongues, prophecy, and other gifts [Nathan Busenitz and Tom Pennington]), a refutation of the Word Faith Movement (Justin Peters), and the devastation that extreme Charismaticism is causing to the churches in Africa (Mbewe). Mbewe is the “Spurgeon of Africa” and ministers in Zambia. Some intriguing titles include “Is There a Baby in the Charismatic Bathwater?” (Johnson); “A Word from the Lord? Evaluating the Modern Gift of Prophecy” (Busenitz); “Are We Preachers or Witch Doctors?” (Mbewe); and “The Devilish Puppet Masters of the Word Faith Movement” (Peters).

Such a conference was bound to be controversial, and MacArthur drew much criticism from various quarters: “Touch not the Lord’s Anointed!” “Do not blaspheme the Holy Spirit!” “The letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life!” “You are unloving, divisive, extreme, and offensive!” If you have met Charismatics, you will recognise these slogans. One does not touch the theology of some 500 million Christians without drawing some criticism.

One of the most outspoken critics of *Strange Fire*, who even wrote a book called *Authentic Fire* in response, is Michael Brown. Brown’s main criticism is that *Strange Fire* uses a broad brush to condemn all Charismaticism based on the antics of the lunatic fringe—this was the inspiration for Phil Johnson’s excellent speech, “Is There a Baby in the Charismatic Bathwater?” However, Brown’s credibility was seriously tarnished when he announced that he would be appearing with Benny Hinn on TBN, and, upon receiving criticism about giving a man like Hinn credibility, he claimed that he did not know what Hinn teaches!

Charismaticism is incompatible with the Reformed faith. It is an attack on the sufficiency of Scripture. With Luther we say to the modern Charismatics, “I slap your spirit on the snout!” However, that does not mean that we should ignore it. We need to know how to answer its claims, because it has a wide appeal. Certainly in Ireland, and on other mission fields, Charismaticism is in vogue. In some quarters, if you reject Charismaticism, your church is “dead” and unspiritual.

MacArthur is to be commended for this timely conference. 

ALL THY WORKS SHALL PRAISE THEE

MR. JOEL MINDERHOUD

The Wisdom of God Displayed in Water

In our last article we began to look at some of the unique properties of water. We continue our examination of the properties of water based on its unique structure and polarity. We do so now, focusing on the goal of seeing the wisdom of God displayed in water. For God has created “all creatures as it seemed good unto Him, giving unto every creature its being, shape, form, and several offices to serve its Creator” (Belgic Confession, Art. 12). Every creature has been created and continues to be maintained by God in a specific and unique

way in order to reveal the many facets of His glory. Each creature has been perfectly and precisely formed so that it might accomplish the purpose for which God made it—Jehovah’s glory!

Unique Properties

God’s wisdom is marvelously displayed with the most common substance on Earth—water. Consider the following unique properties of water and notice how they are each absolutely necessary to support life on Earth as we know it. Especially note how harmoniously the various parts of creation are interwoven—showing the great wisdom of God.

Under normal circumstances, water boils at 100°C

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(212°F) at sea-level. However, this boiling point does not fit the “pattern” one would expect if water is compared with its “sister” molecules (those made from two hydrogens bonded to other elements in the same family as oxygen). These sister molecules have a much *lower* boiling point than water has. If water behaved as one would expect, water (the smallest of the sister molecules) should have a boiling point of approximately -91°C (-132°F). (This temperature seems difficult to imagine because we associate the word boiling with hot temperatures; but many substances boil—change from liquid state to a vapor state—at very cold temperatures). If water had this supposed boiling point, we would experience water only in the gaseous state because we generally live in temperatures between -40°C (-40°F) and +40°C (104°F). We would have to experience a very frosty winter day (-90°C; that would be one for the record books!) in order for us to experience water in its liquid state. The practical significance of this is that if water behaved as expected, based on its size and family, we would never experience water in the liquid form. Our God has wisely given water a special boiling point to fit perfectly with the particular climate He also gave us.

Closely related to its boiling point, water also has a unique heat (not temperature) of vaporization—the amount of *heat* needed to change it from a liquid to a vapor; and an extremely high specific heat value—the amount of *heat* needed to change its temperature by any amount. These two heat values are very important. God uses these properties of water to regulate temperature. Consider, for example, water’s effect on climate. One has only to go to the beach of a large lake on a hot summer day to realize that the temperature at the beach is several degrees cooler than it is a few miles inland. This is because a tremendous amount of heat is necessary to make water’s temperature change at all. Sand or concrete, on the other hand, changes its temperature much more quickly when heated. Because of water’s ability to absorb a lot of heat without much change in its temperature, areas near lakes tend to be cooler than areas without lakes. In addition to climate, water’s high heat capacity and heat of vaporization are instrumental in regulating our body temperature. When we get hot, we sweat. Sweat helps cool us because it must absorb a tremendous amount of energy in order to vaporize. So much heat is conse-

quently removed from our body to evaporate the sweat that our body temperature drops—we are cooled. God wisely gave water this tremendous ability to absorb heat, in part, so that the temperature of our bodies, as well as that of our climate, may be carefully regulated.

In addition to these exceptional properties, water, in its solid form, has a very unusual density. Only a handful of substances known to man expand when they freeze—most substances shrink in volume and become denser. Consequently, most substances in their solid form will sink when placed in a container with their liquid counterpart. But not so with water. When water is cooled, its particles slow down and get closer together. However, just before the water reaches its freezing point of 0°C, the particles no longer are able to be “pushed” any closer together. On the contrary—they actually begin to organize into hexagonal patterns, taking up *more space* than they did before. These hexagonal patterns provide a very orderly structure that occupies more space than the molecules did as they slid past each other in the liquid state. Thus water actually expands as it freezes.

This special feature of water has profound effects. The fact that water expands when it freezes means that ice will float on water. This has the obvious benefit of permitting the pleasurable activity of ice-skating. But there are far more important reasons for ice to float on water. Ice insulates lakes from the cold winter air—allowing fish and plant life to continue to live below. If, theoretically speaking, ice were heavier than water, then, when the water was sufficiently cold, ice that forms at the surface (where it is coldest) would sink to the bottom. In time the lake would fill with ice, effectively killing plant and animal life. Again God’s wise design of water—creating it so that it expands when it freezes—displays His care for all His creatures, ensuring that plant and animal life may be sustained during the colder months.

God also cares for the creation by means of another distinctive property of water—its high surface tension. Water molecules are strongly attracted to each other because of their great polarity, which we described in the last article. But they also are attracted to other molecules. In very narrow tubes, called capillaries (as found in plant roots, for example), water molecules are attracted to the molecules of the capillary. They cling to the capillary walls and slowly “climb” along it, fighting against the

downward force of gravity. Capillary action is the wise means God uses to give plant life its life-giving water supply.

Wisdom of God Revealed

God is wise!

Wisdom is the marvelous virtue of the Most High that is displayed in the perfect harmony and adaptation to one another of all things, so that each creature in the whole cosmos has its own name, occupies its own place, serves its own purpose, and is perfectly adapted to serve that purpose; and so that the individual purpose of each creature is subservient to the purpose of the whole: the revelation of God's name and the praises of his glorious virtues.¹

Consider all the things we have just discussed! Because water has a distinct shape and polarity, it exhibits unique properties that impact the climate of the world; that allow our bodies to be cooled when we sweat; that protect the life of aquatic plants and animals during winter; that give necessary water supply to many plants; and that permit it to exist in a liquid form at the typical temperatures that we live at in order that we may have fresh water with which to drink, cook, and clean. What a marvelous and wise design! God made this main character in the Elegant Book of Creation so beautiful, harmonious, and intricately detailed that it may work with all the other characters in order that life may abound. Truly each creature is *perfectly* equipped that it might *fit in the whole* in order to “serve its Creator” (BC Art. 12)!

This is what Herman Hoeksema reminds us of when he writes: “When...it is declared that God saw what He had made, and that it was very good, then this does not simply denote that there was no imperfection in the work of God as it stood at that very moment before His face, *but also that everything was adapted to the final purpose unto which God from the very beginning had created all things*”² (emphasis mine). That original creation was very good because everything was perfectly adapted to the final purpose for which God in His coun-

sel had ordained it. In His wisdom, God perfectly gave every creature the exact characteristics necessary for it to fit *harmoniously with the rest of creation* in order for all creatures to accomplish their ordained callings. From that perspective, water, as it is connected to all the other creatures and as it serves its place and purpose in creation, was created in the *only way* it could be. Any different properties would have necessitated an entirely different cosmos. In His sovereign good pleasure, God willed water (and all other creatures in connection to it) to have the precise characteristics it has so that He could be glorified in the highest possible way. That's God's wisdom—sovereignly and powerfully creating all things in such a way *that His name is glorified to the utmost degree*.

If we marvel at God's wisdom shown in the *beautiful harmony of the creation*—how climate, body cooling, and floating ice on the lake, for example, are all possible by His wise design of water molecules—*so much the more we stand in awe of His wisdom in our salvation*. We confess: “Yea, all things must be subservient to my salvation” (Heidelberg Catechism, LD 1), and “He doth make an eternal covenant of grace with us, and adopts us for His children and heirs, and therefore will provide us with every good thing, and avert all evil or turn it to our profit” (Baptism form). What wisdom of God is displayed in the perfect working of all events in our lives—the sickness and the health; the riches and the poverty; yea, all things—for our salvation! Not only in God's providential care of the creation, but also in our daily lives we see God's wisdom, that is, that God directs all things so that He is glorified in the highest possible way. Whether we have cancer, lose our job, suffer persecution for Christ's sake, or lose a dear loved one—all things in this life are ordained and sovereignly directed by God for our good and for His glory. Our lives are the way they are, because this is the sovereign will of God for us so that His name is glorified. “O LORD, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all” (Ps. 104:24). O the wisdom and majesty of God! Far beyond our comprehension!


Not only is God's wisdom displayed in the perfect harmony of all things, but it is especially displayed in Jesus Christ and His work of salvation. This is because Jesus Christ *is* the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24). Jesus

¹ Hoeksema, Herman, *All Glory to the Only Good God* (RFPA, 2013), 253.

² Hoeksema, Herman, *Reformed Dogmatics* (RFPA, 1966), 174.

Christ is the “*brightness of his [God’s] glory*, and the express image of his person” (Heb. 1:2). He is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature,” by whom and for whom all things were created and by whom all things consist (Col. 1:15-17). Above all, God is pleased to glorify Himself in and through Jesus Christ. Therefore, when creation (in picture-form) points us to the work of Christ, it reveals to us God’s wisdom in an even richer sense. As we noted in a previous article, water teaches us of Christ’s work. For example, water is the substance that we drink every day to sustain our life. This life-sustaining physical water is a picture of Jesus Christ, the Living Water. In addition, water, with its unique ability to dissolve substances, is the substance that we use every day to wash away the filth from our skin and our clothes. This cleansing ability of water is a

picture of the blood of Jesus Christ, which washes away our sins (BC Art. 34). To us who wear the spectacles of Scripture, water pictures the work of Jesus Christ—and thereby displays God’s wisdom.

When we look at water, or any other part of creation, in the light of Scripture, we see the wisdom of God—whether that be manifested in His marvelous and harmonious works in creation or in the spiritual pictures of Christ and His work of salvation. In all His works—in Creation and in salvation—God is glorified. What marvelous wisdom—revealing His glory in the highest possible way! “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ...For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” (Rom. 11:33, 36). 

GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

REV. DANIEL KLEYN

On Wednesday, April 9, 2014 a new denomination of Reformed churches was formed and established, namely “The Protestant Reformed Churches in the Philippines.” On that momentous and memorable occasion, one of our missionaries in the Philippines, Rev. D. Kleyn, spoke to the two churches involved (the Berean Protestant Reformed Church and the First Reformed Church of Bulacan) and to all who attended concerning the significance of the event and of the work the Lord has given the newly formed denomination. What follows is the content of his speech, which was based on I Corinthians 15:58—“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

Abounding in the Work of the Lord

A highly significant event will take place here today—a significant event in the history of the church of Christ in this world, and thus in the history of Christ’s true church here in the Philippines.

The event that will take place is not only highly signifi-

cant, but also rare. Churches today are characterized by departure and apostasy. Churches today have abandoned and rejected the historic Reformed faith, the Reformed confessions, and even the Word of God. Churches today question and actively oppose the Reformed truth, labeling it as old-fashioned and criticizing it as extra-biblical. Churches today cry out for doctrinal freedom, and for something new and more exciting than what was held to and confessed in the past.

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With that being the ecclesiastical environment of our day, very few churches are uniting and forming Reformed denominations. When was the last time any of us heard of this happening? Mostly we hear of disagreement and fighting. Mostly we hear of churches splitting and separating. It is rare for churches to unite, and to do so on the basis of the truth.

Yet today, in a far off corner of Manila, in the remote islands of the Philippines, with hardly anyone noticing or paying attention, a new denomination of Reformed churches will be established. A denomination that is distinctively Reformed, confessionally Reformed, and unashamedly Protestant Reformed. A denomination that confesses that the Bible is the infallibly inspired, inerrant, trustworthy, and all-sufficient Word of God. A denomination that confesses the absolute sovereignty of God. A denomination that defends the particular grace of God, and rejects the errors of common grace and the well-meant offer of the gospel. A denomination that holds to the beautiful truth of God's covenant of friendship with His people in Christ. A denomination that deliberately links itself to the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. A denomination that is willing to proclaim to all the truth that has, by the grace of God, been handed down and entrusted to it.

We have reason to rejoice, therefore, in what God has done. It is God, and not you or I or anyone else, who has brought you to this highly significant point in your history. It is because of God, and not because of your efforts, that you have been brought together as churches who are one in the faith. It is God's work, and not your diligence, that gives you the hope of others joining you in this denomination. It is God, through Christ, who has fulfilled Christ's promise, "I will build my church!" And it is God, through Christ, who has stopped the gates of hell from prevailing against you.

We have much to be thankful for. What great things God has done.

However, as the text (I Corinthians 15:58) reminds us, your work is not over. The PRCP denomination still has much work to do. In many ways, the work is just beginning.

It is true that you have done a lot of work in the past. The work of growing in your understanding of Reformed doctrines. The work of understanding and

putting into practice Reformed church government, Reformed worship, and Reformed living. All this work has involved intense study and great struggle. In addition to all this, you have also held many meetings as you have traveled together on the road toward federation. That too has been hard work—the hard work of becoming clearly united in the truth, and that with firm conviction in your hearts that you are indeed one.

But the point is that the work is not over. You have not arrived as regards knowing, learning, using, and applying the truth. For to be truly Reformed, you must be Reformed and always reforming.

The reality is that you have a plate full of work to do.

First, there is the work of maintaining the unity that will be formally established today. We do not want to let this denomination disintegrate. We do not want it to be ruined by strife, pride, or the terrible activity of biting and devouring each other. As I Corinthians 15:58 points out, you must remain steadfast and immovable. You must continue to stand together around the truths of Scripture and the Reformed confessions. The truth needs to be known, loved, preached, defended, confessed, and lived. Only in that way will you remain united.

Secondly, there is the work of learning to function properly as a denomination. What should a denomination do? How should churches relate to and assist each other? How should denominational work be done, and done properly? These things are not learned overnight. The denomination that will be formed today, the Lord willing, must continue to learn and grow.

Thirdly, you have the denominational work itself to do. And there is plenty of it: training ministers, mission work, classis meetings, church visitation, working with others who desire to join the PRCP, contact with other denominations, establishing sister-church relationships, etc.

In light of all this work, it is certainly appropriate that you be admonished, as the text does, to "abound" in the Lord's work. That refers to overflowing in the Lord's work. You must not be satisfied with doing just a bare minimum, but you must be willing to do extra work. As regards the work of the church, that means that none of you waits for others to volunteer to do the work, but each steps forward and says, "I will gladly do it!"

It is necessary to be reminded that the work that you

must be busy in is the “work of the Lord.” It is not your work. It is Christ’s work. He is building His church. He is establishing His kingdom. He is calling His people out of darkness into light. He is working conscious faith and salvation in His elect. He is uniting His people in His truth so that His church is a communion of saints and a light in this world. And Christ accomplishes all this by means of the power of His Word.

The amazing thing is that you are involved in Christ’s work, so that His work is also your work. He is pleased to use you to do the work that He is doing. Doing that work is indeed a calling and a duty—the calling and duty to preach the gospel. But it is also a privilege—the privilege of preaching to the ends of the earth the gospel of Christ that saves.

What makes us realize the wonder that Christ uses us is that Christ does not need us. The work of saving the people of God is the work of the Lord.

He alone is able to do it. He alone is mighty to save. He does not need the PRCP to accomplish this. He does not need any individual officebearer or member. He does not need your wisdom, ideas, or contribution. And that is how it must be, so that He receives all the recognition and praise. All the work is about Him, and not about us or anything we do.

Yet He is pleased to use you and me. He has determined to use the PRCP. And today He unites you together as churches so that you do not have to do the work alone, but are able together to be busy in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ also gives you encouragement.

This encouragement is needed, for the work of the Lord is always demanding. It requires sacrifices. It involves opposition and even mockery, which you will certainly face as a Reformed denomination. It entails a daily struggle against the flesh, which wants to take to itself the recognition and praise that only Christ should have. And after the excitement of today’s momentous event has worn off, it is a work in which you will be tempted to become weary.

In light of that, Christ promises that when you do the Lord’s work, and do it properly, then it is not in vain. The work is not pointless and fruitless, but instead it is fruitful. The work will be successful. The work will have good results. Even though we do not do the work perfectly (because we cannot), our Lord’s assurance is: “I, your Lord, will prosper your labors. As you faithfully work, I will see that there is fruit.”

This means the Lord Jesus Christ promises to use the PRCP, as you faithfully do His work, for the building of His church. The Lord willing, congregations will grow

spiritually and numerically. Men will be prepared for the ministry of the gospel who are faithful, solidly Reformed, and hard-working preachers and pastors. Doors will be opened for mission work. Sister-church relationships will be established. Other churches will be joined to you on the basis of the truth. Why? Because Christ builds His church, and thus His

work through you will not be in vain. Christ’s work will succeed. In addition to the privilege of being involved in His work, you also have the privilege of your work being blessed and prospered by Him.

May this spur you on to be faithful and diligent in the work the Lord has given. There is much work to be done. But you can do it in the strength of Jesus Christ. Already God has done great things for you. Now He promises to continue to accomplish great things through you. What a wonder and a blessing.

Notice, in closing, the first few words of the text: “My beloved brethren.” These are first of all the words of Christ to you—you are His beloved brethren. But there are also many others today who view you and call you “beloved brethren” (as will be clear from the many letters of greeting that will soon be read). And amongst those others are also the missionaries of the PRCA here. You are our beloved brethren. You are my beloved brethren. You are my brothers and sisters in Christ. And therefore I say to you, “My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

*The amazing thing
is that you are involved
in Christ’s work,
so that His work
is also your work.*

The Covenant Home, God's Ideal Institution for the Nurture of Children (1)

The covenant family was created by God in His infinite goodness and perfect wisdom to be the ideal institution for the nurture of the children. However, marriage and the family were deeply corrupted and troubled by the fall. What God intended to be a place of order, peace, happiness, and love has been ruined by self-seeking, pride, violence, lust, adultery, and the treachery of ungodly men. Many of the world's marriages are torn apart by the great evil of divorce. It is no wonder that such homes can no longer be the ideal place to nurture children, where order and structure can be given to their lives, and where they can be taught all the important principles that are absolutely foundational for living.

Even in Christian homes, there can be trouble and conflict. Nowhere in this sinful world is there an ideal Christian home. Our own sin and foolishness and irresponsibility can do great damage to our marriages and grievously trouble our families. We still have such a small beginning of the new obedience. It takes much wisdom and effort and care and diligence to maintain what God intended our families to be.

There are many respects in which the family, as God designed it, is the ideal sphere where children must be nurtured. We receive our children as helpless babes from the Lord. According to Psalm 139 they are formed in their mother's womb. There God shapes every part of their unique personality. He has determined the purpose for their life in this world and planned perfectly the course of their whole life.

Rev. denHartog is pastor of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.

God commands us to take care of the children who belong to Him before they belong to us. They need to be clothed and fed and sheltered with great compassion and love because of who they are. They must be tended to when they are sick, protected from the enemy, and supported in the many trials and fears of their life in this ungodly world.

But there is much more to the nurture of children than this. Children's unique personalities must be developed. Godly principles must be established in their minds and hearts. A pattern of life has to be established for them. Moral and spiritual discernment must be instilled in them. In the home, children must be brought to spiritual strength and maturity and prepared for the time of their independence. They need to be prepared for responsible Christian living as adults. In our Christian homes our children need to be trained for their calling to be citizens of the kingdom of Christ in an ungodly world. Children must be equipped and trained in the Christian home for the great spiritual battle of life. They need to be instructed in the love of the truth and prepared to be faithful and steadfast members of the true church of Jesus Christ. In fact, they must in this life be prepared for their place in eternal glory.

It goes without saying that no worldly institution can perform this task, no worldly day-care center, no humanistic public school. Only devoted, God-fearing parents and the influences of a truly Christian home can accomplish the tremendously important task of the nurture of children. Children, from the beginning of their life, must know that they are deeply loved by their godly parents and that these parents have a great interest in their future development.

God in His Word has very much to say concerning marriage and the family. His truth and His command-

ments must be the perfect guide of our Christian marriages and of how we raise our children.

Not all married couples receive children from the Lord. Even when God does not give children to a marriage, God's purpose in their Christian marriage can be fulfilled. God intended marriage to be an intimate relationship of friendship and fellowship between husband and wife, and a lifelong relationship of service and faithfulness to each other. This relationship is in the Bible called a great mystery. It is a mystery because of the intimacy of life in marriage between husband and wife. Especially in this aspect marriage is a reflection of God's covenant.

One of God's great purposes for marriages is the bringing forth and nurture of covenant children. These children are born from the act of marriage, which is intended to be an act of intimate love. God has not made celibacy the ideal for man. Those who forbid marriage, even for the clergy, are teaching the doctrine of devils. Those who willfully refuse to bear children resist the purpose of God for marriage, and the heart of their marriage will often become self-centeredness and worldliness.

We bring forth our children in our own image. They come forth from the union of our flesh and blood in marriage. The bonds of blood ties between parents and their own children are very deep and very strong. These bonds, through sin and wickedness, can be turned into bitter hatred and strife and division in families. There are few things more ugly in this world than family strife and hatred. But when the bonds of the family are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ and the truth of His Word, these bonds can become a very powerful influence in the nurture of our children.

Where there is faithfulness, honor, and the love of God between husband and wife, there is the excellent sphere where children can best be nurtured. When these children are taught the fear of the Lord, the keeping of His commandments, and the love of His truth, there is the spiritually healthy sphere for the raising of covenant children. There our children are sheltered and protected from the world and its devilish ungodly influences. There they are made strong in the truth and they experience the favor and blessing of God from childhood on. The home of the God-fearing, where husbands and wives are faithful to serve one another, and where children learn to honor and obey their parents, there is order and stability

and peace, and there is godly love and joy, which are all so vital for the healthy spiritual nurture of children.

Each member of the family was created by God for his or her unique and important calling in the family. Both Adam and Eve were created in the image of God, and in this respect they are equal before God. But each of these was also created uniquely for his or her God-ordained role in marriage and the family. Man was created to be the head of his wife and his family. He must rule his family well. He must not be some sort of cruel tyrant in his home, ruling according to his own selfish purposes and pride and unrestrained sinful passion. He was created by God to be a faithful and diligent, responsible and loving, wise leader and guide and protector of his wife and family. He has the calling to discipline and to admonish his children, and to lead and guide and protect them both by the instruction he gives in the family and by the example of his own life.

God has created the woman's body in such a way that she is able to give birth to children. What an astounding wonder this involves! She was created with a womanly nature according to which she can feed her children at her own breasts and hold them close in her arms. She was created with a special kind of tenderness for children. She will spend much time with these children, especially in the early years of their life. Supported by her godly husband, she will complement him in her tender compassion for her children and intimate protection of them through the years of their life. Who can comprehend the mighty influence of a godly mother on her children? Her role requires self-denial and a great deal of personal sacrifice. She has a place of great honor in the sphere of the covenant home because of the important role she has there in nurturing her children. In the ideal home, her husband greatly honors his wife and supports her in her calling. He trusts her with the most precious of the possessions that God has given to their family, the children. When this godly mother performs her calling well, her children will arise and call her blessed.


The ungodly men of this world have wrecked God's holy institution of marriage. Their sin and wickedness destroy the family. The role of women in the home has been degraded. The women of the world have abandoned their calling in the home for the imagined glory of independent lifestyles and self-seeking careers. Some insist that they

are such super women that they can handle a busy career in the world and at the same time devote the time and energy required for properly maintaining the home and nurturing the children God has given to them. In spite of all their boastful pride, they usually fail miserably, and that failure has very serious consequences for their family.

From the broken, wretched situations in many American families comes forth a stream of juvenile delinquents who in their later life fill our cities with violence and ungodliness. Many of the young people from these families are, already in their youth, filled with anger and bitterness and hopelessness. They have little if any sense of direction or purpose in their lives, and many end up doing drugs, or seeking to drown their miseries in alcohol, or getting involved in crime.

Because of the utter failure of the home and family in our modern-day world, attempts are made to build institutions of man, professional day-care centers for the nurture of children, and public schools for the humanistic education and nurture of the children. The family, it is said, has become obsolete and irrelevant in our modern-day world. These public institutions have their professional educators, child psychologists, and counsel-

ors who are, in their own imagination, better equipped to nurture children. Billions of tax dollars are spent on these institutions, for magnificent buildings, for the latest educational equipment, and for training of teachers in modern educational philosophy. Elaborate sports programs and extracurricular activities are promoted. It is imagined that all of these things will keep the children of this world out of trouble. Through all of these, children will be made responsible citizens with humanitarian concern and they will be nurtured to be the gifted leaders of our modern world. Yet America has one of the most dismal records of academic achievement and success at preparing the youth of our land well for their life careers and responsible living in society. These institutions cannot solve the great problems created by the failure of the home to accomplish their God-ordained calling.

All of this I mention as the dark background against which we as covenant parents must realize the great and urgent calling that we as parents have to maintain God's ideal order and purpose in our Christian families. We want to go into some detail in a few articles to speak of the various ways God's ideal of the covenant home serves for the great benefit of the nurture of our covenant children. 

BRING THE BOOKS...

MR. CHARLES TERPSTRA, review editor

The Beauty and Glory of the Father, edited by Joel R. Beeke. Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, MI. 2013. [Reviewed by Scott VanUffelen.]

One of the most humbling and awe-inspiring experiences one can have is standing at the base of a cluster of giant redwood trees in the midst of a lush forest. Their towering greatness looms above you, casting a serene and peaceful shadow over the tranquil landscape. As the fresh-aired stillness pervades the scene, a deeply rich calmness and beauty settles upon you as your senses become alive to the sights and sounds of nature praising God. A Christian, quickened in this experience, cannot help but bask in the beauty and glory of the Father who created and sustains such majesty by the power of His word and love.

Mr. VanUffelen is a teacher at Covenant Christian High (Grand Rapids), and a member of Faith PRC.

The above scene is an extrapolation of the cover picture aptly chosen for the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary's latest conference book. *The Beauty and Glory of the Father* is the printed collection of eleven lectures given at their August 2013 conference rejoicing in God the Father, wrapping up their Trinitarian theme of the past two conferences focusing on *The Beauty and Glory of Christ* (2011) and *The Beauty and Glory of the Holy Spirit* (2012). The stated goal of the conferences was to "reinforce the ongoing necessity of cultivating a Trinitarian piety" in the Reformed believer, something that this book does well.

The layers of richness in this book led me into a deeper and richer love of my Father and a more complete understanding of His infinite love, a love first and foremost for His Son. Setting the tone for this conference was Bartel Elshout's lecture on "The Father's Love for His Son," using John 3 as his guide. Not knowing much about this pastor, I was eager to see how he was going to use this chapter (fa-

mously used by Arminians and proponents of the free offer of the gospel) to show how, from creation to redemption to final glorification, all of Scripture's testimony revolves around the Father's love for His Son. The answer given was not John 3:16 but rather verse 35: "The Father loveth the Son." These beautifully simple words overshadow any and all emphasis on the Father's love for the world, for His children, etc. The Father loveth the Son! Out of this deep love He sent His Son to be the Savior. So begins a thorough look at how the Father's love is the fountain of all theology.

I read this book at the time of year when we naturally focus our attention on the birth and incarnation of the Son of God. It brought a welcomed depth to the discussion and celebration. Reading this book primarily on Sunday evenings, I found this was a delightful and treasured way to end the Sabbath. Basking in the loving words of the Father to me and His church through the preaching, I could end the Sabbath with relatively short chapters expounding the holiness, mercy, and faithfulness of my Father, and prepare for the beginning of a work week with a calling to rest in His loving Hands.

The reader will be deeply moved by the emphasis on the Father's love to His Son as the reason for all of the Father's creative work, as well as the need for the sending of His Son. The lectures make a point of stating that the Creation was a gift of love of the Father to His Son, not a gift for mankind. This same love motivated the Father to create Adam in the image of His Son. We were created in His image to know, love, and serve the Son perfectly. What wretchedness, then, was the Fall, wherein we lost the image of God's own Son! God so loved His Son, God so loved His creation made for His Son, that in love He sent His Son to save His people and to redeem them—yet also for the glory of His Son! With this theology in mind, the reader is impressed even more by how often the gospels record the testimony of God to His people: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him," or the words of Christ Himself saying, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Not all of the chapters are deeply profound, nor freshly insightful for a mature reader, but they are profoundly biblical. As such, they add layers of substance to the discussion and to the expression and understanding of our worldview. The heart of this, for me, was the emphasis on the Father being known as the Savior, not the Son alone. The church is able to see the Father in the face of Jesus, and this is through the work of the Holy Spirit. Even as Jesus was preparing His disciples for the time when He would no longer be

with them, He comforted them with the truth that the Holy Spirit would continue the ministry of the exalted Son. At the conference, the very next lecture reinforced this concept by looking at the amazing wonder of adoption as the work of God the Father made possible through the redemptive work of His Son (I John 4:10). We are not God's children by nature; God has only one natural Son. But we are His children through atoning sacrifice. This should, and does, affect our relationship with God, and with His church.

The final section of the book is deeply comforting, reminding us how often the Lord says to us that He loves us. The Father loves us in Heaven. He loves us in our trials. He loves us in our chastisements. In all things He loves us, for His Son's sake.

Reading this book made me regret not having read the first two when they were published. The doctrine of the Trinity is not something that is meant to be relegated to seminary instruction but is meant to be the cornerstone of our understanding and worship of God. Begin with this book, as I did, and you will be richly rewarded in "The Beauty and Glory of *Our* Father." ☞

Life in Jesus: A Memoir of Mary Winslow, edited by Octavius Winslow. Reformation Heritage Books, 2013, 554 pages. ISBN: 978-1-60178-290-8. [Reviewed by Debra Poortinga.]

This book brings you into the spiritual life of Mary Winslow, who lived on this earth from 1774-1854. This book is a compilation of her written correspondence through diary and letters, preserved lovingly by her son Octavius, who took great pains in the careful editing of these materials to present to "sinners called to be saints" a heart made beautiful by the dawn of grace.

Mary Winslow experienced much joy and sorrow in her life. Her origin of birth was the Bermuda Islands, only child of Dr. George Forbes. At the age of 17 she married Lieutenant Thomas Winslow, whose lineage goes back to the pilgrim founders of Plymouth. They moved to England. God gave them 13 children. Three of the children died before the age of one. Her husband's abrupt retirement from the


Mrs. Poortinga is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church in Crete, Illinois.

navy enhanced their decision to settle in the United States. She left England with her eight sons and two daughters and household servants, preceding her husband by a couple months in order to prepare a home for him. As providence would dictate, adversity came her way. Her infant daughter died in her arms within a short time of her arrival on the new shores of America, and her husband died back in England from illness. Adjustment to the great change of life experiences grounded her more in the “rock of her salvation.” The letters that give expression to these deep adversities are a treasure to read. One cannot but be moved by her acceptance of God’s will for her as being tried by fire. God is indeed a Father to the fatherless and a Husband to the lonely.

Her letters and diary entries give us a peek at one long departed from this earth, who had a longing for the heavenly glories that render one silent. In her diary she presses the importance of having a strong, intimate, daily communion with Christ. She demonstrates devotion to His Word, patience through trials, the sweetness of confession, her love of preaching, and her love of family and the family altar. She shares her thoughts on slavery. She was a constant encourager to family and friends through correspondence and visits. And last but not in the least, there is

her transparency of heart, where time and again she urges us to take every care and anxious thought to the throne of grace and hold nothing back. “Deal unceasingly with God as God deals unwearyingly with us.” Letters to her sons, three of whom became ministers of the Word, and to her one daughter, as well as other family correspondence, are endearing to read and share. She must have come to love Puritan theology, for references are often made to John Owen, John Bunyan, and Samuel Rutherford. She was stalwart in her defense of baptismal regeneration, which was in her day as well as ours a fiery topic.

The last chapter of this fine book takes you to the final days of her earthly pilgrimage. She loved the truth of the resurrection and spoke often of the moment of departure and the awakening into glory and seeing our Lord and Savior and all the saints that have gone before us.

I strongly encourage you to read this book as a devotional. It should be read prayerfully, in order that the truths expressed may be impressed upon your hearts. Do read the footnotes; they too are a good read for the soul. We live in a different world today, but we, like her, are living in the last days, and we possess the same hope of glory. If it were possible, I would love to have tea with Mary Winslow and benefit from her godly advice for our own pilgrim journey. 

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. BENJAMIN WIGGER

School Activities

A recent bulletin from the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA included a note that we thought would be good to pass along to our readers. “From Hope Christian School Board: The School Board has completed preliminary work on planning for a high school in Redlands and is ready to present a proposal to the school society. The written proposal will be handed out to all society members or interested persons this morning after church (April 27). The board

has scheduled a society meeting for the evening of May 8 to present the board’s work and to request society permission to proceed toward formally beginning plans and preparation to open the high school in the 2017-2018 school year.”

Friends and supporters of Hull PR Christian School were invited to the 5th and 6th grade chapel held on Monday morning, May 5 at the Hull, IA PRC. The theme was, “Fruitful Branches in God’s Kingdom.” Rev. Steve Key, of the Loveland, CO PRC, was the featured speaker. All were invited to school for refreshments after chapel.

NexGen, the fund-raising arm

of Genesis Christian School in Lacombe, AB, Canada, took part in a highway clean-up on Saturday, May 3. NexGen invited all interested persons aged 9 and up to help with the event. The proceeds for the event were directed to Genesis. Plans called for the volunteers to meet together around 9A.M., carpool to their section of the highway, complete the clean up, and return for some food and fellowship around a fire.

The supporters of Hope PR Christian School in Walker, MI sponsored a Spring Flea Market at Hope School on Saturday, May 3. Supporters were invited to come

Mr. Wigger is an elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

and shop for vintage finds, antiques, re-purposed and up-cycled goods, home decor, furniture, hanging baskets, handmade items, rummage sale, and baked goods. Lunch was also available, from 11 A.M.-1 P.M. As the saying goes, this sale had “something for everyone.”

Congregation Activities

The ladies of the First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada, along with the ladies of the Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, AB, Canada, were invited to their annual Spring Ladies Lecture, held this year at Immanuel on May 6. The morning began with a cup of coffee around 10:30, followed by Rev. John Marcus, pastor at First, speaking on “God’s Word Our Guide,” based on Psalm 119:105. After the speech the ladies could collect their infants or toddlers and they enjoyed lunch and fellowship together.

The members of the Hope PRC in Walker, MI were welcomed to join their church’s Men’s and Ladies Societies April 29 to hear a speech by Seminarian Josh Engelsma entitled, “Simon Van Velzen: Watchman on the Walls of Zion.”

The combined meeting of the Junior Bible Studies of the churches in the Chicago, IL area met on April 22 at the Crete, IL PRC. Rev. Nathan Langerak, pastor at the Crete PRC, led the Bible study based on Ephesians 6:10-18, in connection with the theme, “Putting on the Armor of God.”

The spring season always seems to be the time of year many of our church choirs present their annual Spring Concerts. This year was no exception.

On Good Friday the Trinity Men Singers, a men’s group from the Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI, presented a concert commemorating our Lord and Savior’s crucifixion and death.

Sunday, April 20, the choir of Hope PRC in Redlands, CA gave their Easter choir concert following their evening worship service.

On Sunday evening, April 20, the congregation of the Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, AB, Canada enjoyed a light supper, followed by an Easter song service, lifting up their voices in praise to our risen Savior. There were also several special numbers by their choir as well.

Friends of Grace PRC in Stendale, MI were invited to join them on Sunday evening, April 27, for their choir’s annual Spring Choir Concert.

The choir of the Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI presented their Spring Program on May 4. In addition to selections by the choir, there was also audience singing, special numbers that included a vocal duet by Arial Bosman and Hailey Overbeek, a young ladies’ quintet, a violin solo by Julie Groenhof, and Matt Fisher on the piano.

April 27 the choir of the Loveland, CO PRC presented their spring concert of praise to our heavenly Father after their evening worship service.

On May 4 the members of our churches Psalm Choir presented a concert at the Grandville, MI PRC.

The mothers and daughters of the churches in Iowa enjoyed a Mother-Daughter Banquet on April 23 at the Calvary PRC in Hull, IA.

This year’s theme was, “Precious Memories,” and in order to capture the precious memories of the evening, there were photo booths set up for those attending to take pictures. One booth was set up for a formal shot, one had fun props to dress up with (mustaches, glasses, masks...), and one had dress-up clothes from days gone by.

Evangelism Activities

On Friday, April 25, the Randolph, WI PRC sponsored their annual Spring Lecture. Prof. Barry Gritters spoke on “Post-Modernism and the Church—Today’s Christians are ‘Rethinking’ Church.”

Young Adult/ Young People’s Activities

The young people and young adults in west Michigan were invited to attend a Young Calvinists Talking Points at the Kalamazoo, MI PRC on May 3. Dinner was provided by Kalamazoo’s YP/YA between 5:30 and 6:15, followed by singing around 6:30 P.M. The speech/discussion, “A Challenge to the Youth: Be Committed to Serve in the Church,” led by Rev. Mike DeVries, followed around 7:00 P.M.

The Young People of First PRC in Holland, MI invited their congregation to a “Chinese Night” on May 3. This fundraiser included dinner and a silent auction, as well as games and crafts for children.

Minister Activities

Rev. Garrett Eriks received the call from the First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI to serve as their next pastor. ☺

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wedding Anniversary

■ On June 19, 2014 our beloved parents and grandparents,

CHET and SHARON HAVEMAN, will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to God for their godly example and for His covenant faithfulness. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her 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 into death" (Psalm 48:12-14)."

✿ Joel and Janna Huiskens

Trevor, Mitchell, Kelly, Emily

✿ Mike and Heidi Haveman

Ethan, Darcie

Hudsonville, Michigan

Address Changes

■ As of June 1, 2014, the new mailing address of Prof. David J. Engelsma is: 6290 Gentry Court South, Hudsonville, MI 49426. His new telephone number is: (616) 379-5186.

Covenant of Grace Protestant Reformed Church (Spokane, WA) has a new church mailing address: 4005 E Marietta, Spokane WA 99217. New worship times are 9:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. each Sunday.

Call to Synod!!

■ The consistory of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, MI hereby notifies our churches that the 2014 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, June 10, 2014 at 8:30 A.M., in the Hope PRC, Walker, MI.

The Pre-Synodical Service will be held on Monday evening, June 9, at 7:00 P.M. Rev. Ron VanOverloop, president of the 2013 Synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service.

Consistory of Hope PRC
Dave Moelker, Clerk.

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Grandville PRC express their sympathy to Mark and Sara Looyenga and family in the recent passing away of Mark's father, **TED LOOYENGA**.

May the family take comfort in the words of Psalm 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."

Rev. Kenneth Koole, Pres.
David Kregel, Asst. Clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Loveland PRC express their Christian sympathy to Jay and Lora Kalsbeek and to their children in the death of Jay's father,

MR. JOHN KALSBECK.

"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isaiah 51:11).

Rev. Steven Key, President
Robert VanUffelen, Clerk

Classis West

■ Classis West is scheduled to convene Wednesday, September 24, 2014, at the Peace PRC, Lansing, IL. All material to be included in the agenda must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than Monday, August 25. Delegates who need lodging or transportation to/from the airport should so inform Peace's clerk, Mr. Barry Warner, by phoning (219) 322-9773, or by emailing elderbtwarner@hotmail.com. An officebearers conference is being planned for Tuesday, September 23; delegates should bear this in mind when making travel plans.

Rev. Douglas Kuiper, Stated Clerk



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