

# *The Standard Bearer*

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# Titus Is Further Instructed in His Duties

“These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let not man despise thee.”

Titus 2:15

Paul had given to Titus the calling to pastor (shepherd) the new Christians in the various congregations on the island of Crete. This included the selecting and ordaining of men as officebearers in order that the congregations might be instituted churches (1:5-8). It also included exhorting and convincing the unruly, vain talkers, and deceivers (1:10-13). And it included preaching and teaching “the things which become sound doctrine” (2:1), that is, godliness.

Paul detailed the godliness required by a faith that holds for truth what God has revealed in His Word (2:2-10). Then he explained why godly living is to be expected of these new Christians (2:11-14).

Now, in the above text, Paul concludes as he began. He repeats the calling to “speak” the things that become sound doctrine (2:1) with these words: “these things speak and exhort and rebuke.” May God graciously enable us to understand His Word, and may godly officebearers heed the admonition contained in it.

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## What were Titus' duties?

First, we may say that Titus' duties were the same as those that God gave to Paul. Paul details his duties in 1:1, 2. He must live and work in the consciousness that he is a slave of God. Titus is a slave of God both by virtue of creation and by virtue of redemption. Every human must acknowledge that he is not his own but owes his all to his Creator and Sustainer. Every breath, every ability, and every moment is a gift from the Creator of the heaven and earth. Thus every breath, every ability, and every moment must be used with thanksgiving to the glory of the Giver.

In addition, every child of God is a slave of God also by virtue of redemption. We have been bought with the blood of God's Son from the bondage of sin, and we have been given the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Jesus Christ. Whereas all the reprobate increase their sin by denying that they are the servants of God, the regenerated and justified elect are given the consciousness that they are not their own but belong, body and soul, in life and in death, to their faithful Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. They, by the Spirit of Christ, are made sincerely willing and ready to live unto Him. They willingly and with great delight acknowledge themselves to be slaves of God.

Second, Titus was commissioned by the apostle Paul

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to “set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee” (1:5). The Scriptures do not state specifically of Titus that he received the laying on of hands (as they do of Timothy), nor are we specifically told that he held an office (some conclude that he had the office of evangelist). Nevertheless, when Paul gives to Titus the responsibility to ordain elders and to “speak the things which become sound doctrine” (2:1), then we may assume that Titus had an office in the early church—a position of some authority. It was his responsibility to ordain elders and to speak authoritatively of sound doctrine and of the things that are consistent with sound doctrine.

Another duty of Titus was to stand opposed to gain-sayers and false teachers. They taught “things which they ought not” (1:9b, 10, 11, 16). These were and are instruments of Satan to oppose the truth and those who bring the truth. They present not only wrong beliefs, but also sinful living: insubordinate, vain talkers, deceivers (1:10). They spread their teachings for the sake of getting rich (11). This shows that false teachings lead to spiritual unhealthiness.

Titus is to make a sharp contrast between himself (as a true office-holder) and the false teachers. First, he was to be “a pattern of good works” (2:7), that is, have an attitude and conduct that was exemplary. To the best of his ability Titus was to be an example to the new Christians. He was to say, “Do as I do.” “Follow me.” He must do “good works,” that is, those deeds that are useful and beneficial to others.

Finally, our text gives to Titus the duty to speak “these things.” “These things” consist of the teachings concerning God, the Creator and Sustainer of all, the teachings of sovereign, gracious, and particular salvation accomplished by the only Mediator, God’s Son. While these are the essential teachings, Titus is to teach the Scriptures. The inspired writings of the Old Testament were those that Paul and Timothy and Titus were taught from their childhood. Only the Scriptures are “able to make one wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus,” and they alone are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:15, 16).

This instruction is to be “sound,” that is, “healthy.” There cannot be a love of the truth without a love for

the hearers. One cannot love God and His truth without also loving the neighbor, that is, being concerned about his spiritual well-being. Any teaching that is faithful to God’s Word results in the spiritual health of the hearer.

### **How is Titus to carry out his duties?**

Paul instructs Titus how to perform his duties: “speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority.”

Titus must first speak—literally, keep on speaking. He must use the faculty of speech, both publicly and privately, faithfully and with boldness, clearly and plainly. Titus must preach the doctrines that declare the truth of God as revealed in the Scriptures—not his own ideas, nor the politically correct thoughts of the day, and of course not any false doctrine. And he must keep on speaking about the lifestyle that flows from the right teaching. He must instruct them to realize that how they live must harmonize with what they believe.

This truth he must speak. Note that the word translated “doctrine” in the KJV is, literally, “teachings, instruction.” This word implies that one is teaching others. The truth of God’s Word is to be communicated as clearly and as sincerely as possible. The concern of the teacher is not only the accuracy of the instruction but also whether the instruction is understood and received. This further implies that the instructor may not be promoting himself or concerned for his own well-being (for example, “for filthy lucre’s sake,” 1:11). Rather, his motive of grateful love of the awe-inspiring God is to be obvious, along with a love for (concern for the spiritual well-being) of those he is instructing. When one loves the truths because they are his salvation, then he loves to proclaim them. He wants others to know the same joy. He wants them to share in the desire that God be glorified.

Second, Titus must keep on exhorting. This word is translated in a variety of ways in the KJV: exhort, comfort, beseech, encourage. This Greek word means literally to “call alongside.” It paints a picture: two people are standing side by side, shoulder to shoulder. Instead of coming at the new Christians on Crete in the arrogant manner of one who is going to set others straight, Titus must call the young Christians to his side, and show them how to deal with a problem or to

face an issue. Titus is to teach in such a way that he stands next to them, identifying himself with them. To exhort implies that he lets his fellow-saints know that he also is listening to the instruction that God is giving through him. He also is hearing what he is being used of God to teach.

Third, Titus is to keep on rebuking. This word means to reprove, to refute, to chide or admonish, to call to account. This word implies a love for those being rebuked. The rebuke is a warning and is a pointing out of their errors with a view to correcting them. Notice how Paul speaks of rebuking in 1:13: "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." Even though he had just identified the Cretians as "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies," they are to be rebuked in order that they may become sound in the faith.

Fourth, Paul tells Titus to keep on speaking, exhorting, and rebuking "with all authority." Titus must know that he has been given authority from Christ through the church to give these commands to the saints. The authority is derived, not original. It is an authority that belongs, not to Titus' person, but to Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church, who sends Titus. Titus is to make it plain that when he is speaking, exhorting, and rebuk-

ing, those being instructed are to see that they do not have a choice as to whether they are going to heed it or not. They are to bow in humble obedience, acknowledging the truth and striving mightily to live according to it. The word is to be brought with authority—the authority of God's Word.

Finally, Titus is told, "Let no man despise thee" (cf. I Tim. 4:12). One despises another when he sets himself up in his mind as better than the other. It is to exalt myself, with the result that I look down on others. Ultimately, of course, Titus cannot prevent others from despising him. When there are those who despise him, he must continue to do his work carefully and humbly, forbearing them (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13) and committing himself and them to Him who judges righteously (I Pet. 2:23).

Nevertheless, Titus is to conduct himself in all of his work in such a manner that he gives no occasion for himself to be despised. He is to perform his duties with diligence and humility. He is to "walk in wisdom toward them that are without," and his speech is to be "always with grace" (Col. 4:5, 6). He is to behave himself so that he is not worthy of being despised.

May every officebearer so speak and exhort and rebuke. ☞

## EDITORIAL

## REV. KENNETH KOOLE

# Calvin, Hoeksema, and the Free Offer (2)

**W**e continue our response to an article entitled "Calvin's Treatment of the Offer of the Gospel and Divine Grace" found in the *Mid-America Journal of Theology* (MJT, vol. 22, 2011) written by Dr. J. Mark Beach. Beach's thesis is that Calvin was a proponent of the "Free or Well-meant Offer of

the Gospel," and, in close connection with that, that H. Hoeksema's contention that Calvin was not an advocate of the WMO is specious and incorrect.

As stated at the conclusion of our previous article (SB, May 1) we are not convinced of either aspect of Beach's thesis—either that Calvin was a proponent of the well-meant offer, or that Hoeksema erred in his stout denial that Calvin taught the WMO.

And let us state at the outset that our taking issue with Beach and his thesis is not simply a matter of loyalty to Hoeksema, our feeling compelled to defend a theologian whose name is so closely associated with the origins of our own Protestant Reformed Churches. Our concern is much larger than that.

From Beach's article, as well as a number of other articles found in recent MTJs (as previously commented on), it is evident in what

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*Previous article in this series: May 1, 2013, p. 340.*



direction this whole business is going. The writers of the *MJT*, as staunch advocates of Kuyperian common grace, are putting forth a concerted effort to demonstrate that those who take issue with certain of Calvin's statements having to do with a common grace, or that he made on texts that have to do with the gospel offer, are not truly "Calvinistic" (thereby deserving the label 'hypers'); and, in close connection with that, if one cannot agree with Calvin when it comes to the offer of the gospel, then such place themselves at odds with the Reformed creeds (which purport to be "Calvinistic," after all). Such is the implied charge.

But it goes deeper than that—because if all the above is true, and a Reformed man has placed himself at odds with the Reformed confessions on this matter of the gospel offer, then, in the end, really one is at odds with the very Apostles themselves. One is at odds with the marrow of *their* 'divinity' (theology) and gospel preaching! After all, for the Reformed theologian, it is the great historic Reformed creeds that define what belongs to the heart of the apostolic gospel.

Do not think there is not a freight of charges implied in this turning Calvin into a free-offer theologian and the progenitor of Kuyperian common grace.

Beach describes Hoeksema's opposition to the claim that Calvin was an advocate of the well-meant offer as follows:

For Hoeksema, the mere external call to repentance and faith is not

"a well-meant offer of salvation." He reads Calvin as saying that the gospel is presented to sinners—with no offer of salvation to the reprobate—and consequently God is not in any manner whatsoever gracious or favorable or kindly disposed to the non-elect (*MJT* 22; p. 62).

To a large extent this is an accurate presentation of Hoeksema's view, namely, that the external call to repentance and faith is not a well-meant offer of salvation and that God does not have a gracious disposition to the non-elect (or reprobate). However, we take issue with the word "mere" in describing Hoeksema's view of the call to repentance, which word leaves the distinct impression that if one rejects the free offer, then one's call to repentance and faith is going to be no more than a "mere" perfunctory exhortation, words recited dutifully in a detached and impersonal way.

This certainly is what Dr. Beach implies. Such is clear from his comment following a quotation from Calvin in which Calvin speaks of "sinners not complying with [God's] invitation [to all addressed by the gospel]." (In what follows, let the reader take special note of Beach's insertion of the word "mere" into his comments.)

[The] fact [that God invites and bids all to repent and believe], as Calvin seems to make clear here, does not comport with rendering the idea of "offer" or "invitation" to a mere [!] announcement [!] without a call to commitment or a display of the gospel without a summons (*ibid.*, p. 67).

As if this is what Hoeksema (and the PRC with him) have done to the gospel call (which both the Canons and the Westminster Confession label also as an 'offer'), turning it into a *mere announcement*!

Not so. Such is a caricature.

Earnestness and a deep urgency in calling sinners to repent and turn to Christ do not require a free-offer conviction. Consider that sitting in the audience may well be one's own relation, one's own flesh and blood (cf. Rom. 9:1-3), perhaps even one's own wayward son or daughter. The latter is not unknown. There is nothing "mere" about the external call to repentance and faith by preachers who reject the well-meant offer, not when one loves those to whom one is bringing God's Word. And Hoeksema loved both his own flesh and blood and the congregations to whom he preached. It pained him, and pained him deeply, when members who were brought up in the very bosom of Christ's church turned away from the apostolic and confessional truth to embrace the world and its lifestyle. And such found expression in his preaching, as it does in the preaching of PRC pastors and missionaries to this present day.

But more importantly, Beach's statement that Hoeksema's position was that there is "no offer of salvation to the reprobate" is incorrect and misleading. What Hoeksema denied (and the PRC with him) was that there is any *well-meant* offer of salvation to the reprobate.

We state once again, there is a difference between the two.

To be sure, these days we would

prefer not to use the word “offer” at all. It has become so identified with the WMO that invariably when used it is assumed one has in mind the “free-offer” with its general love of God. Nonetheless, we are talking about two different species here. The WMO is defined by the content of what it declares, an all-inclusive, general, divine love for all who are addressed, even to the point of declaring “Christ has died for you!” Whereas the promiscuous *gospel offer* is a confessional matter, has different content, and was maintained by Hoeksema.

Where statements can be found in Hoeksema in which he takes issue with the notion that God “offers salvation to the reprobate,” one may be sure he is using the word “offer” as shorthand for the “well-meant offer,” and the context will make that plain.

That said, we assert that Hoeksema was correct in his insistence that “Never, no not once, does Calvin teach that the preaching of the gospel *is grace to all that hear* (emphasis ours—kk)” (ibid., p. 62).

This is exactly what the CRC version of common grace teaches. Not simply that grace is *offered* to all or set forth before all with the declaration that God is one who graciously forgives all who turn, but that the preaching is *grace to all who hear it*. This is what the well-meant offer teaches as well.

....there is in God a benevolent loving kindness towards the repentance and salvation of even those whom he has not decreed to save. This pleasure, will, desire is expressed in the universal call

to repentance.... The full and free offer of the gospel is a grace bestowed upon all [!]. The love or lovingkindness that lies back of that offer is not anything less; it is the will [!] to that salvation (*The Free Offer of the Gospel*, p. 27, Stonehouse and Murray).

Whatever statements Calvin made about God’s kindness to all in confronting them with the gospel, he did not go so far as to say that the gospel *is grace* to all who hear it, a grace of the word preached applied by the Holy Spirit to all who hear, which grace a man is able to resist and refuse, which, in fact, the majority of hearers then do.

This is what the contemporary theory of common grace and the free-offer assert.

That is not Calvin.

Second, as we have stated, the well-meant offer is a defined species of gospel preaching that posits *two wills* found in God in regard to the *reprobate* (which, by the way, is a word free-offer adherents *prefer* not to use, preferring to speak only of the “non-elect”—meaning that for all their professed Calvinism there are certain words of Calvin they would just as soon not use either, in this instance a biblical word!).

As if only Hoeksema had reservations about certain phrases Calvin used! Making him not quite Calvinistic. But when Hoeksema’s critics have reservations about certain expressions found in Calvin, their Calvinism remains fully intact!

A paradox indeed.

Be that as it may, there is, according to the WMO, one divine will according to which God has deter-

mined not to save certain men, and yet (as the last sentence in the above quote states) there is also another will in which God yet desires, wills, and yearns for their salvation. In other words, there is in God a will for the salvation of those whom He has eternally willed (determined) not to save, or, to use a word Calvin was not averse to using, reprobated. Such as Esau.

And therein lies the necessity for the promoters of the WMO to seek refuge in the paradox.

Strikingly, this is not the language Calvin uses. As Beach’s own quotes of Calvin make clear, whatever ‘unhappy language’ Calvin used in explaining certain texts (as we would assess the statements), Calvin was not given to speak of two wills in God. In fact, in commenting on such texts Calvin always made a point of yet insisting that, when it came to whom God would save and whom He had determined not to, there was but one harmonious will in God.

But (and this is an important *but*—one you would think those schooled in nuances would not ignore, but for some reason have), according to Calvin, sometimes God, in order to accommodate himself to our weak understanding and meager capacity, uses language that makes it *appear* as if He had two wills in this matter.

This is Calvin’s approach. In explaining Ezekiel 18:23 he states:

God does not leave us in suspense when he says, that he wishes all to be saved.... But we must remark God *puts on* (emphasis ours—kk)

a twofold character, for he here wishes to be taken at his word (ibid., p. 69).

And then a few sentences later Calvin states:

...meanwhile this will of God which he sets forth in his word does not prevent him from decreeing before the world was created what he would do with every individual (op. cit.).

And that last statement is important because it establishes what basic truth Calvin never wanted the reader to lose sight of, namely, the matter of election and God's predestinating will; in other words, that very will and decree that the free-offer men want to set aside as 'un-preachable' (and one that they end up 'merely announcing' as biblical now and again). Why? Because who exactly are predestinated to salvation is consigned to the secret will of God; and what does something secret have to do with gospel preaching? It is alleged that all that that can do is lead to speculation and 'navel gazing.'

Nonsense.

Try comfort and assurance. After all, the *doctrine* of election is not secret. It is revealed and looms large in the apostolic Scriptures. And if we read the Canons aright, there are various infallible means by which one may come to know one's own personal election unto the adoption of grace as well. Something sinners need to hear *preached!*

Let any honest theologian search the sermons of Calvin and his po-

lemical works and dispute where Calvin's emphasis lay when it came to God's will unto salvation. Who can honestly conclude that Calvin thought that God's will of sovereign predestination, that of election and its grace, had little to do with the gospel preaching, and that for Calvin this sovereign electing will did not belong to the marrow of his own divinity and teaching?

It cannot be done.

And in this same connection, as Beach himself notes concerning Calvin's explanation of I Timothy 2:3-5, when Calvin concludes that Scripture *seems* to be speaking of God's will in a twofold way:

Scripture does this because of our "grossness and rudeness." God must "change his own hue" if we would understand his will. God's will isn't double [!], but he sometimes speaks as though it were [!] in order "to apply himself to our weakness, because that our understanding is gross and heavy as lead" (ibid., p. 71).

Nuances? Shall we talk about nuances? Well, here is one worth talking about.

What the above distinction means is that Calvin, for all the questionable language he uses to explain certain texts, had no intention of going where the free-offer men have gone, namely, positing a double will in God, two conflicting wills toward those whom He has ordained unto condemnation, which conflict can be resolved only by reference to a paradox.

This is of no little importance. History has shown that where the

invasive species of the free-offer with its double will of God has been introduced into a church's theological yard, the doctrine of God's 'will' of electing grace first has been compromised and then choked out. In time such churches are left with a theological yard of little else than Arminian crabgrass with its 'general-love-for-all' gospel. And, correspondingly, there will be an emphasis on the *responsibility* (for which read *ability*) of man, who is no longer *totally* depraved either. Common grace has modified that. In time the genuine Calvinistic confessional 'bluegrass' with its TULIP beds are no longer to be found.

Crabgrass and bluegrass do not peacefully co-exist. Neither does the free offer mentality with the gospel of particular and irresistible grace.

Even in those sections of Calvin's commentaries where his more questionable explanations can be found, what will of God with its particular grace Calvin refused to lose sight of or let go is plain.

Strikingly, in the same *MJT* issue (vol. 22, 2011) is to be found a book review (pp. 223-8) by another of MARS' professors, Dr. A. Strange. The book reviewed is *Ten Myths about Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition*, by Kenneth J. Stewart. Stewart is a professor at Covenant College Lookout Mountain, GA, a seminary of Calvinistic reputation. It is a book worth reading if one would learn what direction contemporary Calvinism is going these days. Revisionists are hard at work. New portraits of the sharp-featured

Calvin with whom we were once familiar are being drawn. He is becoming a fleshier sort of fellow.

Significantly, Strange's review is favorable. Having taken a shot at "...those who define Reformed almost exclusively in decretal terms and who wind up in hyper-Calvinism," Strange praises the book as one that "...should go a long way to... provid[ing] a basis for greater unity in the Reformed faith" (p. 223).

Of special interest to us is what Stewart designates as the second myth about Calvin and Calvinism, namely, that "Calvin's View of Predestination Must Be Ours," and then along with that, Strange's following endorsement of that perspective.

Some might allege that Stewart is denying double predestination [in this section] because he takes issue with Calvin's construction of it. I do not read Stewart, however, as doing that but rather preferring the more careful way that Bullinger treats this and especially the way that the Canons of Dort and the Westminster Confession

treats it, both of these making it clear that while God ordains all that comes to pass, the decree to damn and to save are not equally ultimate.... Stewart's point here is that the earlier Calvin (*it is the later Calvin that gets a bit ham-handed and treats reprobation and election as parallel*) [emphasis mine—kk] and the Reformed confessions are to be preferred in their treatment of this blessed yet easily abused doctrine (p. 224).

There you have it. Two professing Calvinists, both of whom adhere to common grace and favor the WMO with its implied double will in God—opting to emphasize which of the so-called 'two wills in God'? Not the decretal one. That's plain. Rather, expressing a fondness for a *certain* 'Calvin,' but not so much for that *other* Calvin, the one who in his writings of later years in defense of the gospel of grace and God's saving will comes down on the side of election and reprobation.

Strikingly it is the later and older Calvin who is dismissed as being a "bit ham-handed," the older Calvin being a bit extreme in his theology.

Dare we say, prone to one-sidedness? And where have we heard that before!

One might suppose it is the 'older' Calvin who would be considered the more mature theologian, the definitive Calvin. And keep in mind that this 'older' Calvin referred to was around 50 years old—hardly in his dotage and getting a bit crotchety as a result. He was only 55 when he died, after all.


And it is the statements of this 'older' Calvin (the fully developed controversialist rising to the defense of the heart of the gospel of grace against its assailants) that are to be dismissed and set aside?

How telling.

Who is it that does not want the 'whole' Calvin, but only a selected version of him? And who ignores where the real emphasis of Calvin and the thrust of his theology lies?

Hoeksema? Or the common grace, free-offer revisionists?

Let the discerning reader decide.

In one last future article we intend to bring this discussion to a close. 

## ALL AROUND US

## REV. NATHAN LANGERAK

### The PCA's Leithart Decision (I)

In a landmark decision on March 7, 2013, the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) exonerated federal vision (FV) heretic Peter Leithart. The decision has been a long time coming. In 2007 the PCA adopted a report on the FV. Since then the Peter Leithart case has been going on at various levels in the PCA, notably his lengthy trial last year in his own Pacific Northwest Presbytery (PNWP), in which he was acquitted. One

member of the presbytery, a ruling elder, appealed the case to the PCA's Standing Judicial Committee (SJC), the highest judicial body in the PCA outside of the General Assembly. After examining the 722-page record of the case (ROC), the SJC acquitted Peter Leithart and approved his heretical FV theology as within the bounds of the Westminster Standards.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The record of the case is the collection of all the documents related to his trial including a full transcript of the trial itself. All quotes cited as ROC are from this document. The document is available at <http://pnwp.org/index.php/notices/leithart-trial>.



In its decision the SJC concluded that “Leithart’s differences with the [Westminster] Standards amount to semantic differences” and are a matter of “provocative statements,” “infelicitous” and “injudicious” use of language, and a lack of “sufficient explanation.” They cautioned him to “define his terms more clearly,” but did not condemn his doctrine.

The SJC reiterated that “nothing in this Decision should be construed as addressing (or thereby endorsing) in general TE Leithart’s views, writings, teachings or pronouncements.... Our conclusion is simply that neither the prosecution nor the Complainant proved that TE Leithart’s views, as articulated at the trial or otherwise contained in the Record of the Case, violate the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Standards.”<sup>2</sup>

By this decision the PCA approved the theology of one of the most vigorous and persistent teachers of FV heresy, whom his outstanding FV advocate, friend, and employer, Douglas Wilson, refers to not as FV “pale ale,” but as FV “dark,” even “oatmeal stout.”<sup>3</sup> By this decision the PCA allowed FV teachers to promote their heresy as sound doctrine within the bounds of the Westminster Standards.

The FV has captured the city of the PCA almost without a fight. They have the bricks, and they will now use them for aggressive promotion of false doctrine. They also have the ecclesiastical courts, and anyone who disagrees will be marginalized or put out. Proof of this came out during Leithart’s trial, when it was revealed that two previous critics of the FV in the PCA had been threatened with being investigated or are now in the process of being investigated for what amounts to violating the ninth commandment, a common charge of heretics against those who defend the truth.<sup>4</sup>

As the defense for Leithart in his trial before his presbytery not so subtly noted, and as Douglas Wilson suggested, it is time for those who disagree to recognize that “you now belong to a communion which has formally decided FV...to be within the reformational pale.” Wilson also pointed out to them that if they keep

opposing the FV, “people will wonder why you remain within a church that has now decided, at the highest level, the ‘wrong way’ on the article of the standing or falling church.”<sup>5</sup> Wilson is flippant, but he makes a valid point. The critics of the FV in the PCA have made the issue in this controversy the federal vision’s heretical doctrine of justification. The PCA has now decided the wrong way on the mark of a standing or falling church, and the critics must leave.

The ROC in the Leithart trial is also instructive on a number of points.

First, the ROC makes clear that the church polity of the trial was wrong. The PCA has courts with a panel of judges, defense attorneys and prosecuting attorneys, and briefs and counter briefs. Modeled on the worldly courts they also tolerate the wicked behavior and tactics of worldly lawyers. Leithart’s defense counsel, while crying about a lack of love and castigating the opposition of the FV for disturbing the peace, savagely attacked the character and reliability of a witness against Peter Leithart, PCA minister Rev. Lane Keister. The moderator and all the judges of the court not only looked on but also joined in with that ecclesiastical lawyer. In the judges’ written opinion of the case they wrote “much if not all of the controversy concerning Dr. Leithart’s views can be traced to the witness himself.”<sup>6</sup> A troubler of Israel he is, and the courts that accused him of it are as dangerous as those of Ahab, too.

Second, the trial made plain that in that court there was a great deal of love for learning, scholarship, academic letters, and titles, but very little love for the truth. The defense that mercilessly savaged the credibility of a witness also showed open contempt toward him because he possessed no doctorate. Listening to the defense, the judges said in their opinion, “The Court saw no reason to consider this witness as an expert on theological matters. An expert is one who by training or experience has qualifications and attainments rising above the ordinary in his field. Mr. Keister has no advanced degree in theology (Th.M. or Ph.D.), and has published no scholarly books or journal articles.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> PCA SJC Case 2012-05 Hedman v. Pacific Northwest Presbytery.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dougwils.com/Auburn-Avenue-Stuff/federal-vision-controversy-rip.html>.

<sup>4</sup> ROC, 445.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dougwils.com/Auburn-Avenue-Stuff/federal-vision-controversy-rip.html>; ROC, 620.

<sup>6</sup> ROC, 24.

<sup>7</sup> ROC, 23.

At the same time the defense obsequiously deferred to every doctor in the room and gave a tiresome 23-page list of all the scholarly accomplishments of the three star witnesses for Peter Leithart, who despite all their books, papers, lectures, dissertations, theses, conferences, wide learning, eminent teaching positions, and widely regarded reputations at international congresses do not understand the gospel or the creeds' teaching of the gospel.<sup>8</sup> It is a kind of boasting that no doubt is a fruit of their proud doctrine that teaches men to trust in their works for salvation and to boast before Jesus Christ of the many mighty works they have done in His name.

Bowing before every doctor, the judges and defense neglected to call Lane Keister either Reverend or Pastor, but referred to him as "Mr.," as though to put a verbal exclamation point on his lack of a doctorate and their contemptuous view of his credibility. They recognized every title at the trial except minister of the gospel. That court would have attacked Amos because he was a gatherer of sycamore fruit. It would have joined in the mockery of David because he was a mere lad going out without armor against Goliath. It would have rejected all of the apostles because they were unlearned.

Third, the prosecution in the trial of Peter Leithart was ineptly carried out by PCA minister Jason Stellman, who turned out to be a quisling who showed that he did not believe a word of what he had said or had defended when shortly after the trial he left for the Roman Catholic Church. He was the defender of the truth in the PCA, a kind of Balaam, who in spite of himself said some commendable things at the trial, but believed nothing of it.

Belonging to the ineptness of the prosecution was its inability or unwillingness to grapple with the heart of the FV controversy, a covenant cut free from election, by allowing all kinds of admittedly important but secondary issues to crowd out this main issue. Five charges were brought against Leithart, but his erroneous view of a conditional covenant was not even so much as mentioned. The prosecution, failing to deal with that root, throughout the trial often appeared

as a heroic, but badly myopic, Don Quixote tilting at windmills.

Fourth, by exonerating Leithart they exonerated rank rebellion against the creeds. Throughout the trial Leithart made no secret that he loathes the creeds and that his doctrine is formulated with the creeds as the foil. There was even a row that had to be settled before the trial began about the place of the creeds in the trial, and in response to which the prosecuting Balaam spoke truth when he informed the court, "It is TE Leithart and his views and teachings that are on trial, not the Confession and Catechisms."<sup>9</sup> After the Leithart exoneration Douglas Wilson, speaking for the FV men in the PCA, showed that they take their opponents for fools when he wrote that FV teachers are "happy to labor in the system of doctrine taught by the Westminster Confession."<sup>10</sup> This is a blatant falsehood in the case of Peter Leithart and other FV men in light of everything they have written. Or this means that Peter Leithart and other FV teachers will be happy to labor within the system of doctrine of the Westminster Standards like a fox will be happy to labor in the henhouse. They are not happy to labor within the Westminster Standards, and not a one of them has had the integrity to write a gravamen to change them, but these men continue to promote false doctrine contrary to the Westminster Standards while simultaneously perpetuating the charade that they do not disagree with them.

Fifth, of note in the trial was the conspicuous absence of the PCA's study committee report on the FV. The PCA, like many Reformed and Presbyterian churches, adopted a report on the FV, which, like the rest, failed to lay its finger on the root of the controversy in a covenant doctrine cut free from election. Lane Keister wrote of FV teachers going "underground" in the PCA. What allowed them to do this there as elsewhere was the study committee reports. So effective were these reports at sheltering the FV that it is conceivable that they were the brainchild of FV men or their sympathizers, or if not, the FV teachers would have been foolish to oppose such an effective cover. Besides not dealing with the root of the issue, these reports provide a false

<sup>8</sup> ROC, 252–275.

<sup>9</sup> ROC, 8.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.dougwils.com/Auburn-Avenue-Stuff/federal-vision-controversy-rip.html>.

sense of security by implying that the FV has been dealt with, obstructing the discipline of false teachers by time, energy, and resource-consuming decisions instead of discipline, and thereby allowing the false teachers to go underground and to continue to flourish like a cancer.

This ought to teach any denomination that thinks it has dealt with the FV by a study committee report, that it is a false hope. These reports all and sundry are toothless, worthless, and dangerous as a lion who has no teeth to defend himself or his pride, because for all his bluster and posturing he is incapable of doing anything against his opponents, and in fact enrages them. Or they are dangerous as a doctor who treats cancer only by cutting off the lump but fails to analyze the lump and get at its source. So these reports are dangerous for allowing the federal vision to continue to exist in the churches.

The exoneration of Peter Leithart is both unremarkable and unsurprising.

It is unremarkable because of a patent unwillingness to condemn the heresy, which comes out in the trial documents. The PNWP was unwilling. The defense decried that this trial had to happen at all and pinned the blame for lack of peace on the opponents of the FV. The prosecutor was unwilling. There was also a familiar, though uneasy, banter in the trial that was unbecoming a heresy trial. The witnesses against Leithart told the court how they would rather speak of how many things they learned from Peter Leithart, and there was much laughter between all. The star witness of the prosecution, Lane Keister, for all his knowledge of the FV heresy refused to call it a heresy because “the word heresy is like ‘h’-bomb,” which is the theological equivalent of a vulgar f-bomb and about as acceptable in the Reformed and Presbyterian ecclesiastical world of the day as the vulgar word is in polite society.<sup>11</sup> About the only person who wanted the trial was Peter Leithart, who had insisted on a trial.

The unwillingness to prosecute the heresy as heresy, even if the prosecutors would only have recognized it as a heresy regarding justification, is inexcusable and contrary to the Scriptures that bind the believer to contend earnestly for the faith regardless of what his

natural predispositions are. It is contrary to the Scriptures’ demand that the believer love the truth, which love is jealous for the truth and its purity, as a husband is jealous for his wife and her purity. It is contrary to the subscription of all that binds them not only to confess and uphold the truth but also to guard the purity of doctrine, which demands condemnation of heresy.

In a similar vein is the advice of the SJC prior to the trial of Leithart, advice that revealed its unwillingness, and its allowance for the PNWP’s unwillingness, to prosecute Peter Leithart by allowing him to seek timely affiliation with another communion, worthless advice in any situation, but evil in this case. Even if the central error of the FV is justification, this is the article of a standing or falling church. If Leithart is teaching such a soul-destroying, church-destroying heresy, then for his good, and the good of all the people to whom he has taught that lie, they show him his error, condemn that error, and call him to repent.

To his bold demand that, if he indeed taught heresy, the wickedness that followed from it be shown to him, the prosecutor should have pointed out to Leithart that the wickedness is his doctrine itself. The wickedness of his doctrine is that it denies the one sacrifice of Christ and His perfect righteousness as the only ground of salvation, and teaches men and women that they may show up in the judgment trusting in their works of salvation.<sup>12</sup> He should have been told that the blood of all those people who will be damned by Christ because they believed his doctrine and trusted in their works is on his head except he repent. But there is very little love today in these churches—very little love for the churches, or for the erring teachers, or for the truth, or for God and Christ for whose truth they are called to contend, but persistently refuse.

Leithart’s exoneration is unremarkable as well because this decision follows a string of decisions in Reformed and Presbyterian church bodies for over thirty years that have refused to deal with the FV heresy or have exonerated those who teach it. The board of Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia refused to level charges against the heretical teachings of FV leader Prof. Norman Shepherd. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which refused to deal with Norman

<sup>11</sup> ROC, 445.


<sup>12</sup> ROC, 353-354.

Shepherd—one of the reasons the PCA originally rejected a proposed merger with the OPC—afterwards exonerated FV teacher John Kinnaird, and continues to shelter the vigorous supporter of both, Richard Gaffin. The United Reformed Churches refused to discipline heretical teacher John Barach and others and instead adopted a study committee report that pinned the blame on the FV's heretical doctrine of justification, but ignored its heretical covenant doctrine, a report that pleased no one, drew fire from both sides, and allowed the false teachers to escape unscathed.

To that group the PCA must be added. The PCA has refused to condemn FV teachers before. This is not the first case involving charges of teaching the FV that has surfaced in the PCA. The defense counsel cited both cases. FV proponent Steve Wilkins turned tail and ran before charges could be brought against him. FV teacher Jeff Meyers was exonerated at the level of the presbytery. Now at highest level the PCA has approved the heresy.

There is, however, one remarkable feature of the trial. It is the remarkable candor with which the witnesses for Peter Leithart, the judges who tried and exonerated him in their written opinions, and Peter Leithart himself state what is indisputably at the heart of this controversy. Equally remarkable is the unwillingness of the prosecution and the appellants to lay hold on this central issue.

At the heart of the controversy, at its very core, is not the issue of baptism, justification, apostasy, the preservation of the saints, or the covenant with Adam. The prosecution charged Peter Leithart with all these things and more. Rather, at the heart of the controversy is the violent warfare between the conditional covenant doctrine and the truth of sovereign grace in the covenant as embodied in the Westminster Standards, what at his trial Peter Leithart candidly called a “clash of paradigms.”<sup>13</sup>

To this we turn next time. 

<sup>13</sup> ROC, 499.

## Chapter Four

### Postmillennialism (24)

# The Reformed (Amillennial) Critique of Postmillennialism (cont.)

#### Introduction

In our critical examination of the biblical proof put forward by postmillennialism for its erroneous understanding of the last things, one passage remains to be considered. We have already considered three passages of Scripture to which postmillennialism appeals in support of its doctrine of the end. One was Isaiah 65 with its prophecy of the coming of a glorious kingdom of the

Christ. The other two were Matthew 24 and Romans 11:25, 26. The passage that remains is Revelation 20.

I have commented on this passage earlier in this series, but a critical look specifically at the biblical proof adduced by postmillennialism must take Revelation 20 into account.

The importance of the passage for postmillennialism is that Revelation 20 is the one passage in all of Scripture that mentions the millennium, that is, a period of one thousand years.

Satan will be “bound” for “a thousand years” (v. 2).

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This binding of the devil prevents him from “deceiving the nations...till the thousand years should be fulfilled” (v. 3).

During the thousand years, or millennium, the saints “reign with [Christ]” (v. 6).

All of these references to the millennium, the post-millennialists, zealous for the carnal triumph of an earthly kingdom of Christ, gladly claim, and press into the service of their eschatology.

But Revelation 20 goes on to teach that “when the thousand years are expired,” “Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,” in order to gather a huge army of ungodly enemies of the kingdom of Jesus Christ and the saints and to make war on the kingdom of Christ and its citizens (vv. 7-9).

Only after this last, great battle of the seed of the old serpent against the seed of the woman does the world end, the final judgment sit, and eternity set in (vv. 10-15; Rev. 21).

### The Postmillennial Interpretation

The postmillennial interpretation of the thousand years of Revelation 20 is that it is a very long period of time in the future before the second coming of Jesus and the end of the world and its history.

Not all postmillennial theologians, however, understand the thousand years as literally one thousand years. Douglas Wilson writes that “most postmillennialists today hold that...the millennium is not literally one thousand years.”<sup>1</sup> Many explain the period as much longer. The New England theologian with the memorable name Eliphalet Nott theorized that the millennium would last 360,000 years. His argument was that Christ’s reign on earth ought to outstrip by far Satan’s reign of 6,000 years.<sup>2</sup> Christian Reconstructionist David Chilton explains “that the ‘1,000 years’ of Revelation 20 represent a vast, undefined period of time.”<sup>3</sup> Chilton adds that “this world has...perhaps hundreds of thousands of years of increasing godliness

ahead of it, before the Second Coming of Christ.”<sup>4</sup> In his purported commentary on the book of Revelation, Chilton expands the millennium of Revelation 20 still further. He quotes with approval Milton Terry, who stretched the millennium to “a million years.”<sup>5</sup>

Two troublesome characteristics of postmillennialism are evident from this elongating of the millennium. One is that postmillennialism virtually ascribes to the earthly kingdom of the millennium one of the attributes that Scripture gives to the heavenly kingdom that Christ will establish in the new creation at His second coming. For all practical purposes, hundreds of thousands, or even a million, years is in the thinking of humans everlasting.

The practical effect of investing the earthly, temporal Messianic kingdom of the postmillennial dream with the attributes of the heavenly, everlasting kingdom taught by Scripture is that the postmillennial teachers and their disciples put their hope on the millennial kingdom, rather than on the heavenly kingdom that Jesus Christ will perfect at His coming. Although postmillennialist Iain Murray allows that Christ’s second coming is the “best hope,” the “Puritan hope” that he promotes in his book of this title is mainly the hope of the millennium. It is this hope that grounds piety and stimulates missions.

Not only does Murray, as is characteristic of postmillennialism, direct the hope of Christians to a will-o-the-wisp, but he also draws off the hope of the church and of the Christian from the one, biblical object of hope: the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the body.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 221, 222.

<sup>5</sup> David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance: An Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987), 507. I dismiss the book as a commentary on Revelation by calling it a “purported” commentary in view of the fact that a book that explains virtually all of the book of Revelation as applying to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, and the woes of the Jews at that time, is no commentary on the book of Revelation, but the imposition upon an important part of inspired Scripture of Chilton’s—and postmillennialism’s—hermeneutical and theological agenda. As a commentary, the book is worthless, although Gordon Wenham calls it “valuable” and publisher Gary North, a “masterpiece.”

<sup>6</sup> Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1971).

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Wilson, *Heaven Misplaced: Christ’s Kingdom on Earth* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2008), 134.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. De Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640-1810* (Kampen: Kok, 1970), 221.

<sup>3</sup> David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion* (Tyler, Texas: Reconstruction Press, 1985), 199.

That postmillennialism directs the hope of Christians to the millennium instead of heaven was bluntly expressed by the Puritan Thomas Goodwin: "The kingdom of Christ on earth to come is a far more glorious condition for the saints than what their souls have now in heaven."<sup>7</sup>

The second disturbing characteristic of the virtually everlasting earthly kingdom of postmillennialism is that it reveals that postmillennialists have no ardent desire for the second coming of Christ, for His personal glorification, for His personal reign in all the creation, and for our life and reign *with Him*, that is, with Him *on the scene*, and on the scene, *front and center*. Gladly, the postmillennialists shove His coming into the distant future—so far into the future as to make that remote coming an unreality. Without a qualm, postmillennialists have themselves reigning gloriously virtually forever, while King Jesus is off in heaven, invisible. Theirs is a kingdom without the king.

Adding to the oddity, to say nothing of the dishonoring of the king, of this conception of the Messianic kingdom of postmillennialism is that according to the postmillennialists this earthly kingdom of Christ will be the supreme and final form of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. After the millennium, upon the second coming of Christ, the kingdom of Christ ends, giving way to the kingdom of the triune God. Hence, according to the postmillennialists, Jesus Christ never personally reigns, never personally is glorified before and by all, never sits on His throne throughout all the climax of His kingdom.

No self-respecting earthly king would put up with such an incongruous state of royal affairs. One can only imagine what would have been the response of Henry VIII to the suggestion by his underlings that he betake himself to some distant shore, far removed from England, and that they would show themselves rulers of Great Britain to the people on his behalf.

Evidently the Jesus Christ of postmillennialism is content with this peculiar veiling of His kingship.

Quite different from the postmillennialists is the

Reformed believer. With the saints of all ages, he lives in the eager anticipation of the second coming of King Jesus. Rather than contentedly to shove the second coming into the far distant future—perhaps "a million years"—he prays daily, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). And this prayer is his response to Jesus' assurance to the church, "Surely I come quickly. Amen" (Rev. 22:20).

Radically different from the will of the postmillennialists that desires the glory of the reigning saints during the fulfillment of the Messianic kingdom is the will of God. God wills the glory of the personally ruling Messiah. During the "days" that Messiah has "dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," it will be He Himself who has this dominion. All will "fall down before him: all nations shall serve him." "To him shall be given of the gold of Sheba" (Ps. 72:8-15).

In the coming kingdom that Scripture proclaims, not the saints, much less the saints in the absence of Jesus, but Jesus Christ Himself will be the powerful, glorious king. And the saints would have it so. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory...then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed...[in] the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (II Thess. 1:7-10).

During this long period, or in the last stages of this long period, according to the postmillennial interpretation of Revelation 20, Satan is virtually impotent and inactive. The power of wickedness in the world, therefore, is tremendously weakened, if not removed altogether.

This enables the church to convert a vast majority of humans to Jesus Christ, beginning with a majority of the Jews. The notion that a vast majority of Jews will be converted is based on a mistaken understanding of Romans 11:25, 26, as we have already seen. Indeed, some postmillennialists have recently contended that all humans then living will one day be converted and saved during the millennium. This is the contention of Christian Reconstructionist Martin G. Selbrede. Following B. B. Warfield, Selbrede advocates "eschatological universalism." The significance of this postmillennial salvation of every living human is that "[the millennium] is

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature & Theology 1550-1682* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 46.

the period in which the world is conquered to Christ in its totality.”<sup>8</sup>

Since the majority of humans in all nations, if not all humans, will be converted, Christians will rule the world. Earthly life will continue, but all of it will be subject to the law of God. All will be Christian. The result will be a “golden age” of earthly peace and earthly prosperity.

The millennium of Revelation 20, thus conceived,

<sup>8</sup> Martin G. Selbrede, “Reconstructing Postmillennialism,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction: Symposium on Eschatology* 15 (Winter, 1998): 146-224.

will be the victory of the kingdom of Christ. The kingdom will conquer *within* history, prior to the second coming of Jesus and the end of all things. In fact, the return of Jesus Christ will spell the end of His victorious, Messianic kingdom. Misconstruing the apostle’s teaching in I Corinthians 15:25 that Christ “must reign, till he hath put all things under his feet,” postmillennialists suppose that at Christ’s return the Messianic kingdom will fade away, to be replaced by a kingdom of the triune God. On this view, Christ the king will one day be dethroned. ☞

## MINISTERING TO THE SAINTS

## REV. DOUGLAS KUIPER

### The Qualifications of the Office of Elder (1)

## An Overview

God tells His church what kind of men may, and what sort of men may not, hold the office of elder.

That He does this is reasonable. Because the office of elder is found in God’s church, God may dictate who holds the office. In addition, the office itself is God’s institution. And through the body of elders in a congregation, Christ Himself rules the congregation on God’s behalf.

We do well, then, to pay close attention to the qualifications of the office.

First, by so doing we show that we have a high view of the office. For the church to put into the office anyone, without regard to whether or not he is qualified, is to have a low view of the office itself.

Second, by so doing we show that we have a high view of the church. Our high view of the church leads us to desire that her leaders be qualified men—the well-

being of the church itself depends on it. How often in the Old Testament did the whole nation of Israel or Judah suffer because her kings and judges were ungodly men! Solomon put it this way: “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn” (Prov. 29:2). The apostle Paul suggests the same thing when he concludes his list of the qualifications of elders and deacons in I Timothy 3 with these words: “that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (v. 15). If the people scoff at the qualifications for the office, and ignore them when putting elders into office, they are not behaving as they ought in God’s house; and if they persist in this, eventually the church will no longer be the pillar of *truth*.

Third, by taking heed to the qualifications of the office of elder, we show that we have a high view of Scripture—for, of course, it is in Scripture that God tells us what these qualifications are. For the church to put in office those who are not qualified according to God’s written word, or for the church to explain the scrip-

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tural qualifications for the office of elder as being not relevant for us today, is to have a low view of Scripture. In which churches does one find women in the office of elder (or deacon or pastor)? In those churches that have already decided that much of Scripture is time-bound and culture-bound—it was meant for people far away, long ago. The believer who says that Scripture is authoritative for us, “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16), thereby says that all of Scripture speaks to all of God’s people in every culture, era, and circumstance—also in the matter of who may hold the office of elder.

Finally, by taking heed to the qualifications of the

office of elder, we glorify God and Christ. Christ is the one who ultimately calls men to the office of elder and puts them into office. Indeed, He uses the church as a means to this end. But by these qualifications He draws the church’s attention to those men whom He has raised up for the purpose of serving in this office.

### I Timothy 3 and Titus 1

The two places in Scripture in which the qualifications for the office of elder are set forth at length are I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Let us quote both of these passages—but put them side by side, better to compare them.

#### I Timothy 3:2-7

2. A bishop then must be  
blameless,  
the husband of one wife,  
vigilant,  
sober,  
of good behavior,  
given to hospitality,  
apt to teach;
3. Not given to wine,  
no striker,  
not greedy of filthy lucre;  
but patient,  
not a brawler,  
not covetous;
4. One that ruleth well his own house,  
having his children in subjection with all gravity;
5. (For if a man know not how to rule his own house,  
how shall he take care of the church of God?)
6. Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall  
into the condemnation of the devil.
7. Moreover he must have a good report of them  
which are without; lest he fall into reproach and  
the snare of the devil.

#### Titus 1:6-9

6. If any be  
blameless,  
the husband of one wife,  
having faithful children not accused of riot or  
unruly.
7. For a bishop must be  
blameless, as the steward of God;  
not self-willed,  
not soon angry,  
not given to wine,  
no striker,  
not given to filthy lucre;
8. But a lover of hospitality,  
a lover of good men,  
sober,  
just,  
holy,  
temperate;
9. Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been  
taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both  
to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Because the same apostle penned these words by the inspiration of the same Spirit, we are not surprised to find similarities between the two lists:

- Both emphasize, above all, that the elder must be “blameless.”
- Both speak to the matter of his family life—his being

the husband of one wife, having faithful children, and ruling his own house well.

- Both refer to the godliness that must be evident in his personal life, positively and negatively. The lists do not use identical terms in every instance, but they treat the same basic ideas.



- Both emphasize the love he must have to other saints and humans by the phrase “given to hospitality” (I Tim. 3:2) and “a lover of hospitality” (Tit. 1:8). Titus alone adds “a lover of good men” (8).
- Both emphasize the need for him to teach. I Timothy 3:2 says he must be “apt to teach,” while Titus 1:9 refers to his being able to exhort and convince the gainsayers.
- Either explicitly or implicitly, both indicate he may not be new to the Christian faith. I Timothy 3:6 says “not a novice,” while Titus 1:9 indicates that he has been taught the faithful word and holds it fast.
- I Timothy 3:9 alone speaks to the good report he has of those outside the church.

## The Old Testament

Because the office of elder has its roots in Old Testament Israel, the qualifications for judges in the Old Testament are also relevant.

In our first article on the history of the office, we briefly referred to some Old Testament passages in which these qualifications are set forth. We do so again, to demonstrate that the qualifications for the office of elder in the New Testament church are essentially the same as those for the elders in Old Testament Israel.

When Israel for the first time was given a body of men to assist Moses in judgment, as Jethro had advised, Jethro specified what kind of men Moses should appoint: “Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness” (Ex. 18:21). The wisdom of providing such qualified men was not merely earthly, political wisdom; Jethro himself was a godly priest, and he understood how best to ensure that God’s people Israel prospered. Later Moses himself refers to this event, and to the kind of men whom he set over Israel, when he says, “So I took the chief of your tribes, *wise* men, and *known*...” (Deut. 1:15; emphasis mine, DJK).

When Moses told Israel, in his farewell speech, that one day she would desire a king, he specified that this king must be one whom Jehovah would choose. At the same time, he told Israel what kind of king they must seek: he must not be a stranger; he must not multiply horses, wives, silver, or gold to himself; he must know God’s law, and learn to fear Jehovah and keep His law

(Deut. 17:14-20). As the elders are kings, these qualifications are to the point; and they are reflected in the Word of God that requires the elders not to be a novice, not to be covetous, to be the husband of one wife, and to be blameless and godly.

When Jehoshaphat set up judges in Judah, after the pattern of the body of judges that Moses gave Israel he charged them that they fear Jehovah, guard against covetousness, and do their work faithfully and with a pure heart (II Chron. 19:6-7, 9). These words regard what the judges must *do*, and how they must do their *work*; but one who does one’s work well manifests himself to be of good character. In other words, by implication Jehoshaphat is telling them what kind of men they must be.

## The High Standard

These qualifications set a high standard for the church as she seeks out prospective elders in her midst.

This high standard does not imply that there are two standards of godliness in the church—one for Christians in general, and another for elders or prospective elders. The standard for godliness that these qualifications set forth are no different than the standard to which all children of God must adhere. In other words, I Timothy 3:2-4 and Titus 1:7-8 set forth the kind of character that every Christian man must have.

Even though the standard for *godliness* is no higher for elders than for other Christians, the qualifications given do narrow down the list of prospective elders to only some men in the church. Some Christians are women; they may not be elders. Through no fault of their own, but due to the way God has worked in their lives, some men will be novices; they are to be excluded from consideration for the office of elder. Others will not have the natural ability to teach; God does not intend them to hold the office. Still others are not living the kind of life a Christian man must live; their sinful nature shows itself in the form of covetousness, brawling, or keeping the bottle too close. Many of these do recognize their weaknesses and fight against them and are not properly the objects of church discipline; at the same time, they are not to be put in the church as elders.


The reason for this high standard is simply this: Christ, the King of the church, is blameless, perfect in His devotion to God, and sinless in His love for His people. These elders represent Christ and do His work. So they must be Christ-like.

This does not mean that they are entirely without sin. No man is. But being Christ-like, these elders love God's law and strive to keep it. When they sin, they (by God's grace) confess their sins, fight against them, and trust that Christ's blood has covered their sin in God's sight. They do not excuse their sins. And although they are not without sin, they are not guilty of any gross, deliberate transgression of God's law that would bring dishonor on God's covenant and give occasion to the church's enemies to blaspheme.

The purpose of this high standard is to emphasize that the church is the body of those redeemed by Christ, called to glorify God by obeying His law. The men who rule the church must be leaders and examples in this regard. In them the congregation—and even

those who are outside the church—must see the power of God's grace in Christ transforming sinners into saints and restoring to these sinners the image of God.

The faithful church must, and will, honor this standard. Her Councils will do so as they seek out men in the congregation to hold the office of elder. Her male confessing members will do so as they vote from the nominations given by the Council. Her officebearers will do so as they exercise Christian censure among themselves in accordance with Article 81 of our Church Order—one way in which officebearers hold each other accountable to God's Word. And her Consistory will do so, if it ever must undertake the sad task of suspending or deposing an officebearer from his office.

What great things God has done for us; what precious gifts He has given us! We have a place in His house and family! God give us grace to behave in His house as we ought in every respect—also in regard to the qualifications for elder. 

## TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

REV. JAMES LANING

# Developing “Culture”

Many love to speak about “culture” today. Christian education, supposedly, is designed to teach our children to engage in “cultural activities” that will make this world a better place.

But what exactly is culture? What is accomplished by the various “cultural activities” promoted in neo-Calvinistic colleges today? More importantly, what activity would be the biblical counterpart to the world's idea of developing culture?

### What is “culture”?

A cultural activity is one that is designed to develop human beings, especially by means of education. It

refers to the act of “cultivating” people to promote their growth. Just as *agriculture* has to do with the growth of crops, so cultural activity has to do with the growth of people.

The growth spoken of here, however, is not merely intellectual. It is also moral. Various popular dictionaries will define culture as the act of developing the intellectual and moral faculties, especially by education.<sup>1</sup>

So a cultural activity is one designed to improve people from a moral point of view. But what does that mean?

Morality has to do with issues of right and wrong. So a person who is morally improved makes better decisions, and he more frequently does what is right.

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

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the eleventh edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.

That being the case, what activity or activities will improve people morally? What does God use to cause some people to make better decisions concerning matters of right and wrong? And in which people will it have this positive effect?

### Christ: The Cultivator

The chief means that God uses to cause people to make sound moral decisions is the preaching of the Word of God. Good works are only those that proceed from faith, and it is gospel preaching that is used by God to produce this faith.

The only ones, then, who will ever be improved morally are those who sit under gospel preaching and who genuinely receive what God says. These are the only ones who will ever make sound decisions, rejecting what is sinful and doing what is right. Those who reject what God says never, *from the heart*, do what is right. They are plants that will never produce a single good fruit.

And producing good fruit is what culture is supposed to be all about.

So Christ is the one farmer who engages in true cultural activities. He is the only one who can and does improve people morally. He is the one who cultivates the ground, softening the hard hearts and making them receptive to the Word. Then He also is the one who sows the seed of the Word of God, which takes root in the good-soil hearts of His people, so that they produce good fruit to the glory of God's name.

Gospel preaching is the central activity that Christ uses to promote cultural development. It is chiefly by this means that He causes us to grow spiritually, so that we turn away from that which is evil and delight to do what is right and pleasing in God's sight.

### Can this world be morally improved?

So moral improvement does take place. But it takes place only in the church of Jesus Christ. Those outside of Christ are spiritually dead. There is nothing that can or does improve them from a moral point of view. By means of modern science and technology, even those outside of Christ may see an improvement in their *bodily* health. But nothing sinful man comes up with will ever bring about a *moral* improvement inside a

depraved sinner. The dead, depraved sinner will always act unjustly in his dealings with other human beings.

So what about when we Christians bear witness to the truth and publicly make known biblical principles? Does this activity have any positive effect on those who are outside of Jesus Christ?

Many think that it does. But the truth is quite to the contrary. The proclamation of God's Word is one of the keys of the kingdom that opens the kingdom to believers and shuts it against unbelievers (Lord's Day 31). The Word of truth exposes the sin of unbelievers, so that they become angry, and then experience even more so the curse of Almighty God. They come to recognize that they are cut off from the living God. And the more they are aware of this, the more they grow in their hatred for God and His people and are plunged even deeper into the ways of sin.

### The one city that will remain

Those who reject God and are cursed go quickly about building their own city. Thrust out of the city of God, they busy themselves with building their own city. That was what Cain quickly did when he was cursed of God and was thrust out from His presence.

And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch (Gen. 4:16-17).

The cursed Cain began to build his own city, with his own view of right and wrong. Such a city would have its own "culture," designed to promote its own "moral values." Yet no genuine moral improvement would actually take place there. In fact, not long thereafter, all the cities of sinful man would go underwater, justly destroyed by the waves of God's wrath.

Such is Jehovah's view of the "culture" produced by sinful man.

Christ alone is the one who truly performs cultural activities. He alone performs the work that produces good fruit, gathering a people out of all nations, tribes, and tongues. Together He unites them in one city, the everlasting city, with one view—God's view—of what is good and what is evil. ∞

## He Must Increase, But I Must Decrease (1)

**A**mong other significant parts and stages in mission work, there is this one, which ought not to be overlooked, namely, that of transition.

John the Baptist experienced the reality of it and confessed his response to it in the words of John 3:30, quoted as the title for this article. The apostles experienced it. Preachers experience it when moving from one congregation to another. Faithful missionaries and their calling churches have experienced it. In fact, in the PRCA foreign mission labors in the Philippines, the missionaries have experienced an example of the same phenomenon very recently. What John the Baptist confessed according to John 3:30 teaches us that transition is something we should expect in foreign missions, view as necessary, and be thankful for when, with His blessing, Christ causes it to happen in our mission labors.



Transition becomes a reality for faithful mission work. By it, for example, the preaching of the Word shifts from missionaries to the local church and her officebearers who have been gathered and established by Christ and His Spirit through the labors of the missionaries. As a result, the keys of the kingdom, along with the administration of the sacraments, are exercised fully by the locally instituted churches in the mission field under the authority of Christ, the Head of the church. These instituted churches, through their officebearers, perform the duties of the support of their pastors, of seminary-student training, of mission work, of contact with other churches, and of other such eccle-

siastical labors. Eventually, the preaching, instruction, guidance, and then presence of the missionaries and the calling church is phased out, and the mission churches mature into a sister-church relationship with what were formerly the calling and supporting churches of their missionaries.

This phase in the work of the church was what the apostle Paul experienced in his labors. For example, he labored in Ephesus and was used by the Lord to establish a congregation there. Eventually, because it was time for him to move on, the work of preaching and of administering the sacraments under the oversight of the council in Ephesus was carried on by other preachers, like Timothy. Hence, once the apostle's role in the mission was completed, he moved on. The work of the means of grace in Ephesus continued, but without Paul and by means of another servant of Christ.

Various degrees of transition in the church still happen today. In the local congregation it happens when one pastor leaves to take up a call in another congregation, and eventually, after a period of vacancy, a new pastor is called and installed into office in the congregation. There is also a kind of transition in the election every year of elders and deacons in our churches.

Transition happens in foreign mission work, such as in the PRCA mission work in the Philippines. For example, this phenomenon happened on Friday, November 2, 2012. On the third floor of a humble building, known locally in Cubao, Metro Manila, as the PCC building, the Reverend Pastor Vernon R. Ibe was ordained and installed as the first pastor of the Berean Protestant Reformed Church, in a worship service that was led by Rev. David Overway, pastor of the Doon PRC and member of the PRCA Foreign Mission Committee. Participating with him in the ordination ceremony of "the laying on of the hands" were also the two foreign missionaries of the PRCA in the Philippines,

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



Rev. Daniel Kleyn and Rev. Richard Smit, as well as Rev. Ronald Van Overloop, pastor of the Grace PRC. Because of his ordination and installation, the Reverend Pastor Ibe now serves as the first pastor of the Berean PRCP, and the work of Rev. Smit in the Berean PRCP in the role of a pastor for three and half years came to its official end. The work of Christ's church continues, but there has been a transition in the servants of the Lord who are sent to do the work.

This transition is the proper goal to which missionaries labor in obedience to Christ. Missionaries should work wisely towards the goal of becoming phased out of the work of the local churches that are the fruit of their labors.

This follows the example of the transition with which John the Baptist reckoned in his own brief ministry. He had been preaching and baptizing in Judea, and he had gained many disciples who repented and believed in God. Then, after he had baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, he pointed out to the people of God that Jesus is the Lamb of God, he saw Jesus begin His earthly ministry, and he witnessed his disciples and the people in general flock to Jesus. His popularity plummeted, while the popularity of Jesus skyrocketed. It was one thing to be the forerunner of Christ to prepare the people to look for the coming of Jesus and then turn to Him. It was one thing for the forerunner of the Lord to preach that Jesus was incomparably greater than he and that the people should look for the preeminent One very soon. However, it was quite another thing to

experience the sudden transition, when, in only a few short months, the forerunner was replaced by Christ as the main attraction for the people because of His preaching and especially His miracles.

This sudden change jolted some of the disciples of John to carnal concerns that this was unfair. In response, John pointed out that being phased out was the goal of his work. John confessed, "He must increase, and I must decrease." He admitted that his work of preparing the way of the Lord had reached nearly its end. He needed to step aside and be replaced because the work of Christ in the salvation of His church must move forward without his preaching.

Similarly, there comes a time in the work of a missionary when, for the sake of Christ, who governs where and how long His laborers will work in certain locations in His harvest field, the missionary must be ready willingly to step aside so that the local deacons, elders, and pastors carry out the work of the means of grace and of their own church government. In readiness for that phenomenon, the missionary will submit to the transition when it occurs because he remembers that the mission work is the Lord's. In faithful mission work, Christ increases. In the church, Christ is revealed as the ruler of His church, appointing and sending one laborer and then replacing him with another. Thereby Christ increases in the church institute as the King of the church. In the Lord's work, that is an amazing phenomenon to witness.

... to be concluded. 

## BRING THE BOOKS...

## MR. CHARLES TERPSTRA

*Holding Hands, Holding Hearts*, Richard and Sharon Phillips. P&R Publishing 2006. Paperback. 183 pages. [Reviewed by Dr. Julian Kennedy (NI).]

This is an excellent guide for young and not-so-young people contemplating marriage, looking for a mate, or already embarked upon courting. The authors are Presbyterians who rightly state that our

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*Dr. Kennedy is a member of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Northern Ireland.*

ultimate satisfaction is in God alone, not a mate, and that He is the sovereign Matchmaker. They speak from their own personal experience and from their seeing and advising many couples.

They start with creation and God's purpose for marriage, which they say is based in commitment (leaving and cleaving), intimacy (one flesh), and interdependence (head and helpmeet). They are very insightful in their consideration of the results of sin in Eden and how this affected Adam and Eve and everyone since. Here I quote: "Instead of waiting on God, women are

tempted to manipulate a man and capture him for marriage. Instead of finding satisfaction in God, they seek happiness in man." Also: "...feminine sin involves disrespect toward men, challenging for control, belittling comments, incessant nagging, and exploiting his weaknesses." In Christ, relationships are redeemed when He is the center of two lives. "Manipulation gives way to ministry."

Concerning men: "The enemy that men need to stand up to is the one who lives within themselves: the one who is selfish, insensitive, and uncommitted."

Both men and women need to seek godliness rather than looks in a prospective mate. This is wisdom. The authors give good advice to follow before first starting to date and then in what to do on dates. They emphasize absolute purity in the relationship before marriage. They wisely start with marriage roles and then work back into dating roles. As the relationship progresses, or doesn't, as the case may be, they say that "counsel, prayer and accountability" are vital. Their last chapter, on singleness, will be helpful to all in that position.

Highly recommended. 

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

## MR. BENJAMIN WIGGER

### Congregation Activities

Reflecting on the Word of God found in Ephesians 5:25, "as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it," we extend our congratulations to four of our congregations who celebrate their anniversaries this month. The Loveland, CO PRC organized June 7, 1958; the Hope PRC in Walker, MI organized on June 8, 1916; the Providence PRC in Hudsonville, MI organized on June 18, 2008; and the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA organized sometime in June (the exact date unknown) in 1932.

The Consistory of the Hudsonville, MI PRC recently gave their approval to a group of parents to organize a group for boys of their church. The goal of this group is to aid these young sons of the congregation in their growth in areas such as service to others, stewardship,

integrity, leadership, personal devotions, etc. This group should also provide an excellent opportunity for the men of Hudsonville to lead by example, mentor, and ultimately assist in building godly men. With those goals in mind, these parents decided to call the group BUILD, for Boys United in the Lord's Direction. Boys from kindergarten through eighth grade were encouraged to attend. Plans called for typical meetings to involve an activity, to be followed by devotions directly related to that activity. For example, building birdhouses, followed by devotions about God caring for sparrows and us. Also a tour of our Seminary, followed by devotions about supporting our ministers and ways to serve in the church.

Rev. David Overway, recently installed as pastor of the Hope PRC in Walker, MI, preached his first sermon there on Sunday morning, April 21. Rev. Overway chose to expound God's Word as found in Matthew 28:20b under the theme, "Jesus' Promise to Be with Us."

Sunday, April 28, following their evening worship service, the congregation of the Kalamazoo, MI PRC was privileged to attend an interesting and informative program presented by John VanBaren and Hank VanderWal, members of the Hope PRC in Walker, MI. From these two men who, last fall, had served as a delegation on behalf of their church to the PRC of Myanmar, the Kalamazoo congregation was able to learn much about Hope Church's work in that faraway land.

The Choir of the Randolph, WI PRC invited their congregation to join them Sunday evening, April 21, as they presented the Easter Cantata, "Hallelujah, What a Savior."

The Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI invited interested members of neighboring congregations to join them Sunday evening, April 21, for a slide-show program on the Reformed Christian Church of Vellore, India. This presentation focused on the recent visit in January made by Pastor Carl Haak, Prof. Barry Gritters, and elder Deane Wassink

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

to Pastor Paul Raj, and the RCCV. The program was also a report of Georgetown's work in Vellore, India over the past six years.

The Adult Bible Society of the Peace PRC in Lansing, IL invited fellow society members of nearby PR congregations to join them for the Annual Combined Bible Study on April 23. This annual event marks the end of the Bible study year. The topic for discussion this year was the purpose of Heidelberg Catechism preaching.

The Voices of Victory, a male quartet from the Grand Rapids, MI area, presented a program Friday evening, April 26, at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Wingham, Ontario. This program was sponsored by the Wingham, Ontario PRC.

While your thoughts are with the Wingham congregation, we take this opportunity to encourage you to check out their new website, [www.winghamprc.org](http://www.winghamprc.org). We found the site while reading their bulletin last week at our PRC official website, so you can find it that way too! We especially enjoyed reading about their history as an organized congregation under "About Us." Give it a look.

The members of the Providence

PRC in Hudsonville, MI were invited to what was advertised as their "Spring Spectacular Mystery Scavenger Amazing Race Hunt" on Saturday afternoon, April 20. Those attending were reminded to bring along a digital camera, preferably with an empty memory card. Sounds like the activity could have been very interesting.

All confessing male members of the Faith PRC in Jenison, MI were invited to an organizational meeting for a Men's Bible Study, which will meet this summer, DV. This meeting took place on Sunday, April 28.

### Mission Activities

Recently missionary-pastor Daniel Kleyn had the opportunity to accompany Rev. John Flores on a visit to the PR Fellowship in Albuera, a mission work of the First Reformed Church of Bulacan in the Philippines. During their four-day visit Rev. Flores spoke twice (concerning the cessation of the special gifts of the Spirit) and preached once. Rev. Flores also translated Rev. Kleyn's speeches and sermon. Rev. Kleyn spoke twice (concerning prayer) and preached once. In addition, these two men met a few times with Bro. Buboy, a man who leads the Fellowship on Sundays,


using reading sermons supplied by First Reformed Church. Rev. Kleyn concludes his blog by adding, "What a blessing to see the excitement and zeal of these dear fellow believers... and their earnest request for our assistance and prayers so that they might not stray from the truth. Let us remember them in our prayers."

Members of the PR Fellowship in Pittsburgh, PA invited all interested contacts of the Fellowship to join them on May 2 for their annual Spring Lecture. This year missionary-pastor Wilbur Bruinsma spoke on the subject, "Who Rules Our Nation: God or Man?"

### Evangelism Activities

The Covenant of Grace PRC in Spokane, WA sponsored a special lecture on May 3. Pastor Ron Van Overloop, of the Grace PRC in Standale, MI, spoke on the question, "Does Your Church Need a Vision?" Pastor Van Overloop also preached for Covenant of Grace the following Lord's Day.

### Minister Activities

Rev. Clayton Spronk, pastor of the Peace PRC in Lansing, IL, declined the call extended to him by the Doon, IA PRC to become their next pastor. 

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Southeast PRC express their Christian sympathy to James Swart on the loss of

#### DOROTHEA "DOT" SWART,

his loving wife of nearly 67 years.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:55, 57).

Rev. W. Langerak, President  
Gerald Van Baren, Asst. Clerk

### Reminder

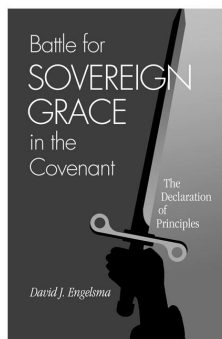
■ The *Standard Bearer* is published only once a month in the months of June, July, and August.

## Schism of 1953 SIXTY YEARS

This month marks the 60th anniversary of the schism of 1953 within the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC), the culmination of the hard fought battle for sovereign grace in the covenant. Delve into this history with these materials brought to you by the Reformed Free Publishing Association.

### COMING SOON!

*The Battle for Sovereign Grace in the Covenant* provides a brief history of the controversial adoption by the PRCA of the Declaration of Principles. Since the document occasioned schism in the PRC, the book sketches the history of the schism and includes the first ever commentary on the Declaration and its doctrine of the covenant.



Available late  
June 2013!



## LISTEN

at [www.rfpa.org](http://www.rfpa.org)

The Heritage Recordings audio collection features the sermons and lectures given by the men who represented the opposing sides of the controversy of 1953, Rev. Herman Hocksema and Rev. Hubert DeWolf. Visit [www.rfpa.org](http://www.rfpa.org) for access to free downloads of these sermons and lectures.

### Classis West

■ Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in regular session on Wednesday, September 4, 2013, 8:30 A.M., at the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church, Loveland, CO. All material for the agenda must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than Monday, August 4. Delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport can contact Loveland's Clerk, Mr. Rob VanUffelen, at [rvanuff@comcast.net](mailto:rvanuff@comcast.net), or call him at (970) 744-1019.

Rev. Douglas Kuiper,  
Stated Clerk

### Wedding Anniversary

■ With grateful hearts our thanks we bring, before the great Thy praise we sing!

God by His infinite wisdom, constant faithfulness, and sufficient grace has guided

**ROBERT and GERALDINE  
BLANKESPOOR**

through 45 years of marriage. We gave humble praise and honor unto Him on May 1 for this great blessing. We pray that He may continue to grant them what they stand in need of, that they may strive to live together in all godliness and holiness until death parts them.

Deuteronomy 7:9: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."

With much love from all your children and their families.

George, Iowa

### Call to Synod!!

■ Synod 2012 appointed Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan the calling church for the 2013 Synod.

The consistory hereby notifies our churches that the 2013 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, June 11, 2013 at 8:30 A.M., in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church.

The Pre-Synodical Service will be held on Monday evening, June 10, at 7:00 P.M. Rev. Steven Key, president of the 2012 Synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service.

Consistory of  
Hudsonville PRC  
Ralph VanderVeen, Clerk

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council of Hope PRC, Walker, Michigan express their belated Christian sympathy to fellow officebearer Mr. Tim Bomers and family in the death of his brother

**MR. BRUCE BOMERS.**

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Rev. David Overway, President  
David Moelker, Clerk