

# The Standard Bearer

A Reformed Semi-Monthly Magazine • September 15, 2012

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# Godliness for Young Men

“Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things....”

Titus 2:6, 7a

Titus was laboring among the new Christians on the island of Crete. Paul is giving instructions to young Titus concerning his work. He is to preach and teach that godliness of life is consistent with true faith. One’s acknowledgment of the truth should be accompanied by godliness (1:1), and Titus must keep on speaking and exhorting and rebuking with all authority the things that are consistent with sound doctrine (2:1, 15).

This is always important, but it was especially so in the midst of the ungodliness that characterized the inhabitants of Crete. Paul becomes quite specific in telling Titus how godliness is to characterize the various members of the Christian congregations: aged men, aged women, young women, and now young men.

A careful examination of this passage in the original language shows that the first three words of verse 7 in

the King James Version belong with verse 6. Young men are to be sober minded in all things!

## The Chief Calling of Christian Young Men

We can take the young Christian men to be of the same age as the young women addressed in verses 4 and 5. The women were married and had children in the home.

When Paul instructs Titus to teach the young men to be sober-minded, he is not implying that this characteristic is to begin at marriage. Sober-mindedness must be developed in one’s upper teens in order to be present in a marriage. In fact, young women should be looking for this attribute in the young men they would date. They ought to look for sober-mindedness flowing from godliness.

To be sober-minded is not to be somber and sad, to smile infrequently, or to think that to smile is nigh unto being wrong. We are helped by realizing that this Greek word is rooted in the word “wisdom.” The idea here involves how one views oneself. Young men are to think of themselves soberly, resulting in the ability to curb their passions. It is the wisdom of exercising self-control. We often think of being sober over against being drunken. When one is drunk, one does not see

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*The Standard Bearer* (ISSN 0362-4692) is a semi-monthly periodical, except monthly during June, July, and August, published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.: 1894 Georgetown Center Dr., Jenison, MI 49428-7137.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to the *Standard Bearer*, 1894 Georgetown Center Dr., Jenison, MI 49428-7137.

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### Subscription Price

\$21.00 per year in the US, \$30.00 elsewhere  
New eSubscription: \$21  
eSubscription for current hardcopy subscribers:  
\$10.50.

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oneself and other things clearly. One lacks sober-mindedness when he thinks that he lives to have fun, and that to have fun he needs alcohol or drugs.

Sober-mindedness puts balance and perspective in one's life. The health-giving teaching of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone ("sound doctrine") frees one from romanticism, from unreal dreams of glamour, from the foolish demand for personal rights, from the thinking that life on this earth is only to be for my personal pleasure. One who has faith in Jesus Christ knows himself always to be a horrible sinner who must be confessing his sins, denying himself, and controlling his own desires. Faith sees (and does not forget) all that God has done: that salvation is graciously and freely given, without any merit of mine. By faith one sees himself placed by the all-wise and loving Father in every situation of life, with the calling to fear, serve, and obey this Father in his actions, words, thoughts, and even in the imaginations of his heart.

Sober-mindedness is the realization that the blessings of salvation placed on me many obligations. First and foremost, I am to be constantly grateful. The more I am aware of how much I have been given, the greater my sense of debt and of gratitude to God. To be sober-minded is to realize that grace (the undeserved love of God) is indeed sufficient (II Cor. 12:9) to satisfy fully our every need. Second, it is to be humble. The awareness that I have an old man who must always be put off, and that spots adhere to my best works, is a constant source of humility (Canons V, 2). The assurance of eternal and unchangeable election is an additional reason for humility (Canons I, 13). And the certainty of perseverance is so far from exciting in believers a spirit of pride, that on the contrary it is the real source of humility (Canons V, 12). Third, gracious salvation places on one the obligation to be faithful to maintain the inheritance given. It is to live in the awareness that I am privileged to be a steward of God, realizing that everything I have, I received (I Corinthians 4:2, 7).

### **There are implications arising from the calling to be sober-minded**

"Likewise" means that much of what was said to the Christian young women applies equally to the Christian young men. Paul does not write in detail again,

having just stated these things to the young women. To be "sober-minded in all things" is the key to a life that fits with, complements, harmonizes with, the doctrinal teachings of Christianity.

Sober-minded young men realize that they have a God-given responsibility in the home and family. This attitude is so essential for the well-being of the home. They also realize that they have a responsibility in their church and at their place of work. The sober-minded young man realizes that his duties and responsibilities are determined by the Lord that bought him and not by what he thinks he wants or ought to do. The sober-minded young man will consider whether he ought to be a eunuch for the kingdom's sake or marry in the Lord. The sober-minded young man seeks a wife based on her attitude toward Jesus (not first her looks or personality). He seeks a mate who shows in her life of obedience that she loves the Lord, is kind, and is herself also sober-minded.

A sober-minded young man strives to lead and rule his home well. In today's world many act as if they do not want to lead and as if they are more interested in their work and fun. In contrast, the sober young Christian accepts the responsibility of promoting an atmosphere in the house so it is a home, a comfortable haven for his wife and children. He rules his home so as to promote its spiritual well-being. He uses God's Word as his guide instead of ruling according to his whims and pleasure. He is careful to dwell with his wife with understanding, not slipping into bitterness, but giving honor to the more delicate vessel. He is aware of how easy it is to provoke a child to wrath.

The sober-minded young man realizes that his love for his wife and children is something learned and not fallen into. He is always striving to reflect God's love. He is aware of God's love for His people and knows that this is the love he is to reflect by being sacrificial, selfless, giving (not demanding or possessive), and forgiving. He lives aware that His love must be unconditional, as is God's—not dependent on whether the object is nice or good.

The sober-minded young man balances his God-given home obligations with the God-given obligations he has outside the home. He has obligations to use his God-given talents in the service of the church and of

the various causes of God's kingdom. He realizes that he must labor diligently and faithfully in the calling wherein God has set him so he can maintain his household with honesty and likewise support the needy and the other causes of God's kingdom.

To do all these things as before the face of God requires that the young Christian be sober-minded, self-disciplined.

### The purpose of sober-mindedness

God's purpose for such godliness is the same as it was for the Christian young woman, namely, "that the word of God be not blasphemed."

God's Word is blasphemed when it is spoken against, reviled, or slandered. This is what happens when God's Word does not have the effect on a professing believer that it ought, namely, that he is always striving to deny himself. A professing Christian who is selfish and self-

serving makes a mockery of his confession. And he gives occasion for the ungodly to mock God and His Word.

On the other hand, the professing Christian who humbly confesses his weaknesses and sins and is prayerfully striving to obey God and His Word occasions the glorifying of his Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). The wicked always mock and blaspheme, but that their words are only lies is made obvious by the godly actions of the Christian. Godly lives disprove the words of the mockers and show them to be false. Godly lives give a better answer than all of our words denying their words. Let our lives contradict and silence their lies.

Sober-minded young Christian men bring honor to God and to the teachings of His Word. Such honor is given now in this life, but especially in the judgment day. May awareness of this fact spur young Christian men to higher levels of godliness. 

EDITORIAL

PROF. BARRETT GRITTERS

## Polemics: Fighting Words (5)

**P**olemics will bring results. Both proper and improper, biblical and unspiritual, polemics, by the power of God, will have effects. Those who have lived in the church very long have witnessed this. Godly polemics will have good (that's not to say "pleasant") effect, because polemics is the use of God's Word to battle error, and God's Word never returns to Him "void" (Is. 55:11). Unbiblical polemics will also have consequences. The effect, according to the sovereign judgments of God, will be

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*Previous article in this series: September 1, 2012, p. 461.*

damage to the very cause the battle purports to protect—the church.

### Results of improper polemics

The hymn-writer John Newton, in his old age, wrote a letter to a young pastor advising the young man how to engage in controversy. The letter is worth reading.<sup>1</sup> In it, Newton warned of the dangers of carelessness in polemics. Those

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<sup>1</sup> Google "Newton on controversy" and you will easily find a copy of the letter. You may not agree with everything Newton says, but in the main he gives very good counsel. The *Beacon Lights* reprinted this letter in April 1980.

who conduct themselves poorly, he said, "provoke those whom they should convince and puff up those whom they should edify."

When the sword of God's Word is wielded improperly, the cause of God is damaged and the name of God, which ought to be protected, is dishonored. The collateral damage can be widespread.

Consider those who are too easily revved up by a good fight. They are probably harmed the most. The *false* accusation by David's brothers—that David visited them in the battlefield in the "naughtiness of his heart" and only "to see the battle"—*does* accurately describe

some immature men. Controversy inflames their sinful tendency to fight in pride. In controversy, their evil nature is not mortified, but fed. If this evil is not subdued, it will spread just like the leaven of heresy spreads, and most likely to their children, until pretty soon the church has a whole tribe of hot-heads, “sons of Zeruah.”

At the same time, there will be negative effect also on those who recognize and *dislike* the unspiritual polemics. They will shut their ears to the arguments and logic, as tight and biblical (in form at least) as they may be, because they are nauseated by the unspiritual nature of the battle. It’s anyone’s guess how much, but my experience is that a good deal of opposition to polemics can be traced to reaction against polemics that these more sensitive souls instinctively knew was offensive to God.

And, especially the impressionable youth will be influenced for harm. You may have heard stories from older saints who, in their youth, hiding on the landing at the top of the stairs, listened in horror to the unholy ecclesiastical debates of their parents and relatives, and were damaged by them. Of course, stories may be told of how children observed *godly* battles and were profoundly influenced for good. We thank God for them. But the negative impact of ungodly battles must not be underestimated.

In the end, and not surprisingly, improper polemics will hurt the man himself who speaks or writes irresponsibly. He will ruin his reputation, isolate himself from all

but a few like himself, and may finally end up miserably alone. When worse comes to worst, if a merciful God does not intervene, this kind will start his own little fellowship, set up a website, and then probably proceed to “excommunicate” everyone who does not see eye to eye with him. It doesn’t always get that bad. Pray that it does not. But I have seen enough of this kind to be realistic, and wary.

The Old Testament is instructive here. King David had problems of this kind with the sons of Zeruah—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Their violence was ungodly. They were “too hard” for David.<sup>2</sup> Time and again David not only had to rebuke these ruthless brutes, but had to distance himself *publicly* from them so that all Israel would know that he was not behind their approach. It may be surprising that these men are catalogued among David’s “mighty men of valor” (see, for example, I Chron. 11). They were skilled warriors, performed great things for the kingdom, led many campaigns to victory over the enemies, were zealous to fight and effective in it. But David disowned these strangely respectable thugs. In the end he cursed Joab, and had Solomon “take care of” him (read I Kings 2).

Calvin’s commentaries on the history of king David indicate he was not unfamiliar with such improper battling.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word means “cruel, severe, rigorous.” Read these stern words of David in II Samuel 3:39 and, using a good concordance or commentary, follow David’s relation with these violent brothers all the way to the end of his (and their!) lives.

<sup>3</sup> I give rather extensive quotations of Calvin’s wise applications. Perhaps these will

...if the servants of God...are sometimes badly advised, evil then is doubled, as we see here in Joab. He upheld a good cause. He was David’s captain. In brief, he was one of the leaders of the church.... (But he) treated as a game what he should have detested....

...Hence, we are constrained to fight, but let it be in spite of ourselves. And moreover, when we are involved, we must be very careful to pray to God that he will govern the hearts of his own—for today we see once again that in the army marshaled under the name of Jesus Christ and of the gospel, there are many rascals among the troops. Some of them are there to strip and pillage, and others to commit outrages; some to satisfy their appetite for vengeance; others to murder no matter how; and still others for publicity. Hence, let us learn to pray to God that he will not allow the armies which have been gathered in his name to be blackened, either by our wicked affections, or by the desire for vengeance, or by any such thing.<sup>4</sup>

...let us rise above our passions and always keep our eyes on our Captain and Protector by whom we are guided. Let us be careful, I say, not to indulge in vainglory and to confide in it.... Let us call on him to be pleased to govern us. If he has strengthened us, may he temper our zeal and keep us from throwing ourselves into excessive cruelty. Instead, may he give us grace to use our zeal modestly.<sup>5</sup>

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#### Repeatedly, Calvin *commended*

spur you to read Calvin’s fine sermons.

<sup>4</sup> Calvin’s *Sermons on II Samuel*, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> *Sermons on II Samuel*, p. 75.

what *outwardly* was commendable in Joab, but *condemned* what dishonored his master, David. In his next sermon, entitled “Disunity and War,” after praising Joab for having “compassion on his unfortunate brethren,” Calvin astutely points out that even some of God’s elect may misbehave in battles (though some may question the application of this to Joab). Some “are given over to evil and...nevertheless belong to him [God] according to his [God’s] secret decree and are eventually to serve him along with us.”<sup>6</sup> Calvin’s applications are timely when he explains these public statements of David regarding Joab’s unjust violence: “I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father’s house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread” (II Sam. 3:28, 29).

Reading Calvin’s sermons is worthwhile if only to profit from his predictable but very beautiful concluding paragraphs, in which he always teaches his congregation (us) to confess their own faults. Notice Calvin’s particular reference in the prayer to Joab’s misbehavior.

Now, let us prostrate ourselves before the majesty of our good God, recognizing all our faults, praying that he will make us feel them so much that it will cause us more and more to be displeased with ourselves. Let us pray that...in all

<sup>6</sup> *Sermons on II Samuel*, p. 88.

our battles, he will give us an invincible constancy, so that we may walk the narrow path according to His Word...making no compromise with the wicked when we are aware of their cruelty and craft. At the same time, may we have pity on them without deviating from what is taught us by our Lord.<sup>7</sup>

As a good type of Christ and an example to church leaders today, David would not allow damage to be done to his own reputation, the

*Till the Lord  
of truth and  
right returns,  
the sword of the Spirit  
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in its power.*

reputation of his kingdom, and the name of his God. This military commander sought wisdom, control, and God’s glory above his own.

### Results of proper polemics

On the other hand, how thankful we may be that God is pleased to use His Word as it is preached and explained in a godly way. Warfare, as part of Old Testament *typology*—difficult to accept because of all the physical violence—is fulfilled in the New Testament church’s polemics: fighting words. And by those fighting words, false doctrine

<sup>7</sup> *Sermons on II Samuel*, p. 91.

is eradicated, impenitent heretics are cut off, so that the leaven is checked, saints are put on guard for deception, and young people are inoculated against the pestilence of false teachings.

The history of the church is replete with examples of this great mercy of God. Athanasius’ fighting words rooted out Arianism (denial of the divinity of Christ). Polemics saved the church, for a time, from Pelagianism (the earlier form of Arminianism). God used Luther’s pen not only to expose the errors of Roman Catholicism, but to put to flight the swarms on the radical right. Although some do not like the Canons of Dordt, this creed is one of the best examples of the church using fighting words, which God has powerfully used for almost five hundred years now. The “weapons of our warfare” (II Cor. 10:4) have pulled down the strongholds of the Anabaptists, Pentecostalism, evolutionism, and dozens of other noxious “isms.” The cross-hairs have been on Freud as well as Bell, Marx as well as Hinn, the local heretic and the world-renowned huckster.

But polemics not only destroys error; by polemics every thought of believers is brought into captivity to “the obedience of Christ” (II Cor. 10:5). The Lord’s mercies are evident in so many ways.

The Word of God promised this, and not only in II Corinthians. Elders “instruct those that oppose,” confident that God “will give (some) repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (II Tim. 2:25). If God does not grant repentance, elders’ words drive off the sinner, as Paul’s

did Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13).

Till the Lord of truth and right returns, the sword of the Spirit must be used, with confidence in its power. The language is now figurative, but modern Jezebels must be thrown down to the street to be trampled by horses and eaten by dogs. The doctrine of Balaam, now threatening to destroy many, must be rooted out, lest God Himself come and take care of wicked men with the sword of His own mouth (as He warned in Rev. 2:14-16). Heresies that have names, and oth-

ers un-named, even ones yet to be identified, must be exposed for what they are, and any proponent must be put out of the church by Christian discipline. If we are afflicted with the malady of being “too nice,” we must be aware of the consequences. At the same time, we remember the cautions.

Done, and done rightly, polemics will be a great blessing to our churches. In Jehovah’s goodness, former doubters of the value of polemics may come on board, perhaps

even to encourage their pastors to preach polemically when necessary. Without fear, elders will remind their pastors of the Church Order’s Article 55; and our pastors will hear the reminders with glad hearts. Once in a while, our consistories will study together the Formula of Subscription, remembering the vows each one has publicly made. The next generation will rise up to recognize their identity as members of the church *militant*, even as they pray for their place in glory where there are only plowshares. ☞

ALL AROUND US

REV. NATHAN LANGERAK

### The Christian Reformed Church Replaces the Reformed Formula of Subscription (2)

In a previous article I began an examination of the decision by the 2012 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) to replace Dordt’s Formula of Subscription (FOS) with a new Covenant for Officebearers (CFO). I noted the history of this movement in the CRC since the 1960s and especially the origins of the current movement to replace the FOS, starting with an overture in 2003. I began an examination of the problems with this new CFO, noting that it invites, encourages, and sanctions criticism of the creeds.

In addition to that grave problem, the CFO also rejects the Reformed understanding of the authority and place of the creeds.

First, the document begins with a weakly worded sentence about Scripture: “We believe the inspired Word of God as received in the Old and New Testaments of Holy Scripture, which proclaims the good

news of God’s creation and redemption in Jesus Christ. Acknowledging the authority of God’s Word, we submit to it in all matters of life and faith.” In light of the long-standing criticism of the first eleven chapters in Genesis in the CRC, one is left wondering what this sentence means.

Second, aside from its weak wording, why is a statement on *Scripture* included in a document intended to be a sort of subscribing to the *creeds*? By including this statement the CRC has redefined what subscription is. Subscription according to the Reformed understanding is not and never was intended to be a statement about Scripture. It is a statement about the Reformed creeds. Fundamentally it is the statement that officebearers “heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in” the three forms of unity “do fully agree with the Word of God.”

With this wording the FOS presupposes the Word of God and the officebearer’s submission to the Word of God. In the matter of subscription an officebearer’s declaration of his willingness to submit to the authority of God’s Word in all matters of faith in life is not the issue. If he will not submit, he is not even Christian. Further, for one to state that he submits to Scripture is redundant and unnecessary in light of the creeds’ own

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*Previous article in this series: September 1, 2012, p. 467.*

statements on Scripture and candid use of Scripture for the establishment of all their doctrine. If the officebearer commits himself to the doctrine of the creeds, he has committed himself to submit to Scripture.

At the heart of this controversy over subscription, a point recognized by many who overtured the synod about the CFO, is Dordt's phrase "do fully agree with the Word of God." The issue is not merely having or not having that phrase in the document. Rather, the issue is the place and force of that phrase in the CFO. In the FOS that phrase is the *reason* officebearers will "diligently teach and faithfully defend the aforesaid doctrine [of the three forms of unity], without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same."

Do the creeds in their articles, doctrines, and doctrinal formulations fully agree with the Word of God, so that to disagree with the creeds is to disagree with the Word of God, so that a theological controversy in a Reformed church can be settled on the basis of an appeal to the creeds alone, and so that for disagreement with the creeds an officebearer must be deposed? This is the issue.

"Do fully agree with the Word of God" is the monumental declaration that opens Dordt's Formula and is the basis of the idea of confessional subscription, of all that follows this statement in the FOS, and of the necessity of a Reformed officebearer's signing the Formula, if he is Reformed.

What is the reason that an officebearer must subscribe to the creeds, must teach and defend the creeds, must refute and contradict all errors that militate against the creeds, and must exert himself to keep the church free from errors? The creeds "do fully agree with the Word of God."

Why may not the Reformed officebearer criticize the creeds except by way of gravamen? In their articles and points of doctrine, they "do fully agree with the Word of God."

What is the basis of the creeds' authority; why may and must the creeds bind; why is teaching, preaching, knowing, and confessing the creeds vital to the life of every Reformed church and to the office of every Reformed officebearer? Why is rejection of the creeds, ignorance of the creeds, or contradiction of the creeds fatal to an officebearer, church, and denomination? In

their articles and points of doctrines they "do fully agree with the Word of God."

In the FOS the creeds claim nothing for themselves, but only claim what Scripture teaches. Their authority can only be derivative. With derivative authority they must bind, and they may not be criticized except in the way of gravamen.

Since the creeds teach the Word of God and fully agree with it, the only attitude of the Reformed man, the Reformed church, and the Reformed denomination toward them can be one of being subject to them, while at the same time recognizing the possibility—though unlikely—that they may be changed.

The real implicit accusation of the man who refuses to subscribe to the creeds in this sense—the sense of Dordt—is to accuse the creeds of unfaithfulness to and disagreement with the Word of God. A Reformed man either subscribes to the creeds or criticizes them through the proper method of gravamen.

Rejecting this whole understanding of Dordt and the Reformed churches, the CRC now says, "We also affirm three confessions—the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort—as historic expressions of the Christian faith, whose doctrines fully agree with the Word of God. These confessions continue to define the way we understand Scripture, direct the way we live in response to the gospel, and locate us within the larger body of Christ."

Subscription in the CFO is reduced to affirming confessions as "historic expressions of the Christian faith." They are not even described as historic expressions of the *Reformed* faith. Although in response to a number of protests from within the denomination, the phrase "whose doctrines fully agree with the Word of God" was inserted by the committee of pre-advice at synod, the connection of that phrase to what follows in the FOS is lost and with it the whole binding character of the creeds. Dordt's concern with this phrase was that by it Dordt bound the officebearer not merely in a general way to conform his teaching to the creeds, but rather actually to teach and faithfully defend the doctrine of the creeds, and not to contradict it. That phrase in its connection with the rest of the Formula governs the officebearer's whole attitude and behavior toward the creeds. The issue is not whether this important phrase

is included in some way in the CFO, but how it functions in the CFO.

Furthermore, in the next paragraph the CFO takes a turn for the worse. “Grateful for these expressions of faith, we promise to be formed and governed by them. We heartily believe and will promote and defend their doctrines faithfully, conforming our preaching, teaching, writing, serving, and living to them.”

Gratefulness now is the motivating reason to teach and preach the creeds. Not because they teach what Scripture teaches, not because the articles and doctrines of the creeds do fully agree with the Word of God, but gratefulness for historic expressions of faith, which is simply a promise to be governed by these historic expressions, in separation from Scripture. Now an officebearer does not have to believe, teach, and defend the creeds *because* they agree with Scripture and because Scripture alone is the infallible rule of faith and life, but Scripture and gratefulness for historic expressions of the faith have claims on the submission of the church. Why should an officebearer teach the content of a document merely because he is grateful for it? I am grateful for Homer’s *Iliad*, but that does not mean I am going to conform my preaching and writing in the church to it.

There are other serious issues with CFO.

The CFO follows the weak and unnecessary paragraph on Scripture with a bad paragraph on the ecumenical creeds: “We affirm three creeds—the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed—as ecumenical expressions of the Christian faith. In doing so, we confess our faith in unity with followers of Jesus Christ throughout all ages and among all nations.” First, this article is redundant in light of the Belgic Confession’s statement that the Reformed faith “receives” these three creeds. Second, the issue is *Reformed* subscription. Just about anyone who says he is Christian will affirm the three ecumenical creeds. The Reformed reception of these three ecumenical creeds, however, is

not a confession of faith in unity with all who happen to have these three creeds as their confession. The Roman Catholic Church has these three creeds, but the Reformed confession of those creeds is fundamentally opposed to Rome’s. It is not a confession with Rome, but it is a confession against Rome. This comes out most clearly in the Heidelberg Catechism’s explanation of the Apostles’ Creed, which at virtually every point is opposed to Rome.

There is also the candid move by the committee to place on a par with the three forms of unity the trite poem *Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony*. By including it in the CFO with the three forms of unity and requiring the officebearer to sign it along with the three forms of unity the CRC has placed it on a par with the three forms of unity.

In glowing language the committee expressed their hope that it will “revitalize confessional identity and engagement” in the CRC. In the CFO the little poem

receives the honorable designation of “Reformed expression of the Christian faith.”

But if the three forms of unity will not revitalize confessional identity, neither will *Our World Belongs to God*. Either that or the confessional identity that it will revitalize will be as trite as the testimony itself. As a poem it is open to severe criticism for aesthetics. As an official creed, which is what the committee

wanted and essentially received because the officebearer must now subscribe to it, it is practically worthless. It is not an expression of the Reformed faith, but a product of theological shallowness that manifests a loss of doctrinal vitality; it evinces an understanding that is enamored of pretty expressions and bored with or offended by sound doctrine. As such it is also a thin string on which to hang hopes to “revitalize” any meaningful “confessional identity.”

The CFO also removes Dordt’s severe, but just, penalty for an officebearer’s contradicting the creeds publicly or privately before making such sentiments

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known to consistory, classis, and synod in the way of a gravamen or for refusing to submit to their judgment: de facto suspension from office. This was the important provision of Dordt that reinforced its view of the seriousness of confessional subscription and keeping one's vow. Removing Dordt's penalty from the CFO is other evidence that war has been declared on the creeds.

It is not, then, the act of revising the FOS as such that is so appalling for its audacity. For the CRC did not revise the FOS. It replaced it and replaced subscription as well. It is not even the bold act of replacing the FOS that is astounding. It is *possible* that the FOS could be replaced with something better. Rather, it is the bold, unashamed, and audacious replacement of the FOS along with the open admission of long-standing violations of its provisions, the public failures to discipline the false teachers, and the replacement of the FOS by a CFO that is intended to allow wide latitude from the creeds, sanctions open disagreement and assault upon the creeds by clergy and professors in the CRC, and to do that with the stated purpose to revitalize confessional identity in the church.

This new CFO is a collective refusal by the CRC

to subscribe to the creeds. Having collectively refused to sign the creeds, the CRC gives public notice that it refuses to be Reformed. To *be* Reformed is not merely to have a certain history or to have a certain document as an historic expression of faith. To be Reformed is to stand in such a relationship to the three forms of unity as is expressed in the FOS, a relationship that as of June 12, 2012 no longer exists between the CRC and the Reformed creeds.

This decision ought to serve notice to many in the CRC who still may confess and live the Reformed doctrine and faith: Your denomination has now officially parted ways with the Reformed creeds and faith. The creeds are now officially, what they have for so long been practically: "historic expressions of the Christian faith." Nothing more. Merely "expressions" to be openly criticized.

Let every officebearer and Reformed man or woman whose heart still pulses with love for the creeds, because in their articles and points of doctrine they "fully agree with Scripture," demand subscription with Dordt's form and set themselves for the promotion and defense of the Reformed faith once delivered to the saints. 

## A Critique of "Reformational" Views on Revelation (4)

# Hearing the Wisdom Spoken of in Proverbs

Since these articles have appeared over a number of months, I will summarize what has been said thus far.

Those who teach the relatively new "Reformational" theology<sup>1</sup> speak of a "Word of God" not found in the

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<sup>1</sup> Reformational theology is not Reformed theology. The for-

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*Previous article in this series: June 2012, p. 398.*

Scriptures. Denying that Scripture fully reveals to us the will of God, they say we must turn to the creation to discover many of the details concerning what God's will is.

Yet when they speak of the "creation" they are referring to more than the animals, plants, and inanimate

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mer is based on the ideas of Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd (1894–1977), and is promoted by some of the professors at Calvin College, Dordt College, Trinity Christian College, and Redeemer University College.

matter. Man is included in what they call the creation. In other words, their idea of learning from “the creation” involves taking ideas from human beings. For example, they speak of learning from the creation how to run a school. Yet what they are really doing is simply adopting many of man’s ideas regarding school administration, and then calling these customs the Word of God made known in “the creation.”

It should be evident that what they are calling “the Word of God” here is really the word of man. It is true, of course, that God does make Himself known by means of the creation. Yet what God tells us by this medium does not amount to additional principles of wisdom not found in the Scriptures. Furthermore, the ideas and theories man comes up with in areas of science, education, government, etc. are not the same as what God makes known by means of the creation. The former amounts to the word of man, not the word of God.

In a sense, what the Reformationalists are doing is similar to what theistic evolutionists have done for many years. The theory of evolution arises out of the sinful heart of man. Yet theistic evolutionists have often referred to this theory as though it were God’s Word made known in the creation. Reformationalists do something very similar. Yet in their case it is the ever-changing social customs of man that are referred to as “norms” made known in the creation to which we ought to submit.

That summarizes briefly what has been said thus far. Now we turn to consider one of the ways they attempt to prove their position.

They refer to the Wisdom of God mentioned in the book of Proverbs, and say that learning from the “creation” is the same as listening to the Wisdom spoken of in this book. Let us consider first of all what is meant by this Wisdom, and then go on to consider how the Reformationalists wrongly explain what it means to listen to Wisdom’s voice.

### **The Wisdom with God from the Beginning**

The book of Proverbs speaks of wisdom. Some of the passages speak of what a wise person does. Other passages speak of Wisdom as a person who speaks to us. The very first chapter speaks of Wisdom crying out, calling us to hearken to her:

Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you (Prov. 1:20-23).

So who is this Wisdom, and how do we hear Wisdom’s voice?

Let us begin by considering who this Wisdom is. The Wisdom that we read of in Proverbs 1 is spoken of in more detail in Proverbs 8.

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth (Prov. 8:22-27).

Wisdom here is said to be a person who was begotten of God, and who also was with God when He created all things. There is only one person who fits this description—the second person of the holy Trinity. Wisdom is referred to in the feminine in Proverbs 1 because the Hebrew word for wisdom is in the feminine gender. But it is clear that the eternal Son of God is the Wisdom who is spoken of in Proverbs.

The Son of God is called the *Word* of God in John 1 and the *Wisdom* of God in the book of Proverbs. The references are to one and the same person. John starts his gospel narrative by saying that the Word was “with God” in the beginning. This is the same language that had been used previously to describe the Wisdom of God in the book of Proverbs. In the quote above we are told that the Wisdom of God was with God when He created all things.

Yet the fact that this Wisdom is said to have been “with God” does not preclude the possibility that He also is God Himself. The first verse of John says: “and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....”

The same can be said about the Wisdom mentioned in Proverbs.

This Wisdom is said to have been “brought forth” (Prov. 8:24–25) before God created all things. From the viewpoint of His human nature, the Son of God was born many years after God laid the foundations of the earth. But from the viewpoint of His divine nature, the Son of God is eternally begotten of the Father.

### The Reformational view of the “Creational Word”

The Reformationalists have a different explanation of this Wisdom of God. One writer calls it: “the law of creation before creation.”<sup>2</sup> Another writer speaks of this Wisdom as the “creational Word of God”: “In Proverbs the creational Word of God meets us personified as ‘Wisdom.’”<sup>3</sup>

We have talked about how the Reformationalists tell us to listen to what they call “the creation.” They then cite the passages quoted above from the book of Proverbs, and claim that the Wisdom spoken of in these passages is the law in the creation that they have been talking about.

Proverbs 8 speaks of the Wisdom of God and says that this Wisdom was involved in the creation of all things. From this they argue, rather obscurely I might add, that this Wisdom is “the law of creation” or “the normative creation order,”<sup>4</sup> calling us to submit to it.

As we read on to see how they further describe this “creational Word,” we discover that the “Word” of which

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<sup>2</sup> Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 31. Wolters is a professor at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario.

<sup>3</sup> Gordon J. Spykman, *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 81. Spykman was professor of religion and theology at Calvin College, where he taught for 32 years.

<sup>4</sup> Wolters, 31.

they speak does not harmonize with the Word spoken of in John 1. Their creational Word is said to be neither God nor a creature:

The Word is the Word of God. It is therefore distinguishable from God himself. At the same time it stands transcendentally above and holds for all creation.<sup>5</sup>

The inspired apostle John says that the Word is God Himself. He emphatically states “and the Word was God.”

The fact that He is called the Word of God, does not mean that He is not God. The church has confessed the truth concerning this many years ago. The Nicene Creed states that we believe:

in one LORD JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God; Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made, being of one essence with the Father; by whom all things were made....

The second person of the Trinity is God, and is also referred to as being “of God,” since He is eternally begotten of the first person. “God of God” is

what the church has long confessed Him to be. This is the Word spoken of in John 1, and this is the Wisdom that is referred to in the book of Proverbs.

### Hearing the voice of Wisdom

It should be evident that a wrong understanding of who this Wisdom is will lead to a wrong understanding of how we hear Wisdom’s voice. Although they would deny it, the Reformational error really leads people to seek wisdom from a source other than the eternal Son of God. Proverbs speaks of Wisdom as the one who teaches us wisdom. If this Wisdom is not God Himself, then there is some other, non-divine source that we are supposed to turn to in order to find wisdom.

<sup>5</sup> Spykman, 79. The emphasis is his.

This serves to bring out how dangerous this error really is.

We and our children must listen to Christ, the true Wisdom. He speaks to us centrally through the preaching of the Scriptures, telling us the principles that we could never have known, if He had not revealed them unto us.

The natural man has no desire to listen to the voice of Wisdom heard in gospel preaching. He would much rather go out into the creation and claim to be listening to God there.

In I Corinthians 1:24, Christ is called “the wisdom of God.” John 10:27 says that His sheep hear His voice. They hear Him, they know Him, and they follow Him. Romans 10:13–15 explains that they hear Him through the official preaching of the gospel. That is where we go to hear Wisdom speaking to us.

It is true that Christ speaks to us through the Scriptures also when we search them on our own, or in communion with other saints. But Christ will guide us to understand what we are reading, only when we are submissive to His call to join ourselves to a faith-

ful manifestation of the true church, and to embrace the word of Wisdom that is faithfully preached to us there.

A true instituted church of Christ—that is where we are to go to hear Wisdom calling out to us. Proverbs 1:21 says that this Wisdom cries out publically “in the city.” The church of Christ is the city of God, where Wisdom is heard. There is where Wisdom is proclaiming God’s Word, including passages found in the book of Proverbs, and promising His Spirit to those who joyfully embrace the words that He speaks.

Very important it is that we and our children know this. We must not be fooled by those who would lead us to go out into the creation and into the midst of this world, there to speculate about what “the creational Word” supposedly is telling us.

The Wisdom of God speaks clearly in words—words that we can understand. Following His voice, and not the voice of a stranger, we and our children will receive all the wisdom we need, and enjoy the nourishment and protection that He alone can provide. 

# The Kings of Men and Their Fading Acclaim

## Ecclesiastes 4:13-16

“Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.”  
Ecclesiastes 4:13.

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*Previous article in this series: May 1, 2012, p. 343.*

The contrast in the text is introduced by the word “better.” This is an indication that Solomon is drawing another conclusion from what he has seen under the sun and drawing also from his own life and experience. He is giving expression to this “better,” not as a mere human opinion, but as the testimony of God’s Word. It is important that we keep this in mind.

In this latter section of chapter 4, Solomon draws another picture from the life of men in the kingdoms of this world. In that sense, he is speaking in general terms. He has spoken of man’s lack of comfort, which is the fruit of

sin. The point of connection with the preceding portion, in this section, is with the foolishness of the old king who will not receive counsel because of his stubbornness, and the passing vanity of the acclaim of the multitude. He has directed us to the subject of “man without comfort” in the preceding part of the chapter from an individual point of view. Man, personally, because of his own sinful flesh, destroys the foundation of communion and fellowship with his neighbor. Here he approaches a similar subject from an organic viewpoint, from the perspective of the life of men in positions of power and in the life of nations and kingdoms.

In considering this, we must also keep in mind this perspective: that behind what happens under the sun is the counsel and providence of God. These are not merely enclosed natural phenomena; they come by the hand of God who ordains the times and seasons in the life of men. There is “a time to break down and a time to build up,” there is “a time to rend and a time to sew” (Eccl. 3:3, 7). God is a God of judgment, who judges the wickedness and folly of men in His wrath and also chastens His people according to His own counsel and wisdom, who says to the young man, “...But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment” (Eccl. 11:9).

While the description, then, is a general one of the life of this world, there is also a personal element in it. Solomon does not, in Ecclesiastes, confess his sin directly, but the testimony of that confession or recognition of his sin is there. Solomon was once, in his own eyes, a poor child, not in wealth, but poor in spirit, who humbled himself before God and sought the Lord. When God asked him, “What shall I give thee?” (I Kings 3:5), Solomon prayed, after reviewing God’s dealings with his father David, “And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in, and thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” (I Kings 3:7-9). In answer to that prayer, God gave unto Solomon wisdom to rule and judge, as well as riches and long life. In that wisdom Solomon also said, “I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards” (Eccl. 2:4).

But Solomon also married many heathen wives, contrary to God’s word. Many of these marriages were political alliances that involved also an increasing resting in his own strength and power. His wives turned his heart to build idol temples outside Jerusalem, sowing the seeds of idol-worship in Judah. In the sad history of I Kings 11, Solomon is also admonished of the Lord for his sin: the kingdom would be rent because of it and his enemies stirred against him. The wise child that Solomon had been became in his sinful weakness an old and foolish king in his government. The grace and gifts of God and wisdom also to see his own weakness remained, but in his rule of Israel he had become “an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished” (Eccl. 4:13). The root of the matter? The old and foolish king is stubborn in pride. The effect of these sins was that the glory of the kingdom also began to depart.

Against the background of his own sinful weakness, Solomon draws out the contrast. The youth, poor in himself and in the things of the world, but with wisdom, is better than an old and foolish king. To make the contrast sharper, the child is set forth as coming out of prison, from the lowest place, unto honor and glory. But because the old and foolish king walks in pride, his kingdom declines. Its citizens become poor. This is the contrast between the child and the old king, “For out of prison he [the child] cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom [the old and foolish king] becometh poor” (Eccl. 4:14).

This is not, however, an isolated case, for Solomon looks at the world about him, at the rise and fall of kings and those in authority and power. He looks at the life of men, and he sees a pattern here. “I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead” (Eccl. 4:15). He looks at the child, the second, that is, the succeeding or following king, standing in the place of the former foolish king—what of him? What is the pattern among men? “There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him” (Eccl. 4:16).

The pattern is a simple one. The people once rejoiced in the king who, when he was young, was their hope and expectation. He became old and foolish. Their expectation failed. In the way of his pride he was lifted up, and his rule became the rule of one who is arrogant and stub-

born, filled with his own importance; and the citizens of his kingdom become poor.

Now a successor, a child, comes to reign in his stead. The multitudes acclaim him. He will set the kingdom in order. He will be to them a savior. He is the answer. Popularity and hope abound. But this new king too becomes old, and pride lives in his flesh also, for he is man. What then happens? The acclaim turns to disappointment. The expectation of men again fails. The popularity of the new ruler begins to wane. He is, after all, a man. The rejoicing of the one generation leads to the rejection of the next. "They also that come after shall not rejoice over him" (Eccl. 4:16).

In time the one who is lifted up may well become the oppressor who has power (Eccl. 4:1). He may manifest himself as an unjust judge (Eccl. 3:16). The reality of life under the sun is that man is flesh: he is fallen and given by nature to sinful pride. Exalt him in power and, left to himself, his heart will be lifted up in arrogance and stubbornness to have his own way in willfulness, because he is the ruler, the magistrate, the king. The text is not a diatribe against human government. God sets men in positions of power and authority. Our calling is to show due honor to all such. But the text does describe the reality of sinful men in power.

It also describes the waning glory and honor such men have. The multitudes that seek them, put their confidence in them, and praise them today are the same in every generation, and they that come after "shall not rejoice in him." They fail, and the expectation of men, their hope, is brought to emptiness, to nothing. It is vanity. Therefore Solomon adds, "Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 4:16b)—not just vanity, but "surely" this is also vanity. In the end, this too, in the life of the "living which walk under the sun," is vanity. Man's life under the sun is in constant change, and nothing genuinely new under the sun arises from man, not even in the rule of men and governments of the earth.

This time it is not truly different, for it is vanity. In the expectations of men and their rulers is to be found only

"vexation of spirit," not an abiding rejoicing. The world seeks its comfort in earthly rulers, but it is a comfort that shall fail. Earthly rulers, in their pride, exalt themselves as if they were God to determine good and evil of themselves. Such arrogance in pride God will destroy. For note, earthly rulers and governments come to vanity, because God makes it so. He judges among men. The Word of God testifies, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Ps. 146:3-5). To the rulers and judges of the world, who are as gods, the Living God says, "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" (Ps. 82:6, 7). Man is dust and he shall fail. Though created

in the image of God, yet fallen in sin, he shall also fall from his place of power and die. Man who is dust returns to "his earth" (Ps. 146:4).

There is only one answer to this vanity and vexation of spirit, and that lies in God and in the King who is Himself the eternal Son of God come in our flesh and blood, even Jesus Christ. To this need, Solomon also points us by implication. For in Christ is a King who does not become old and foolish. He governs in righteousness and

grace. He gives righteousness and eternal life. His kingdom does not fade, for it is founded in His cross, by which He has overcome sin and death. Its glory does not pass away. Its life is resurrection life from above, eternal and blessed forever. That King we would seek for. In Him is truly a hope that endures and a rejoicing that does not end. Solomon's kingdom was a fading but prophetic shadow of the kingdom that is to come in Christ. ☩

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## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

## MR. BENJAMIN WIGGER

### Evangelism Activities

Congregations in and around the Grand Rapids, MI area were asked to reserve July 19 and 20 for the annual summer lecture series sponsored by the Reformed Witness Committee of Hope PRC in Walker, MI. The lecture topic for this year's series was, "The Covenant of Grace as Manifested in the Marks of the True Church." Prof. David Engelsma spoke Thursday evening

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

on "Preaching of the Word." This speech was followed Friday evening with Prof. Ronald Cammenga speaking on the "Sacraments" and Prof. Barrett Gritters speaking on "Christian Discipline."

In evangelism news from First PRC in Holland, MI we learn that on July 27 their congregation hosted a chapel at the Holland Rescue Mission in Holland, MI. Mr. Rich Moore, a member of First, led that chapel service. This chapel served as an introduction for First as they continued the theme of that chapel with four Bible studies the four Mondays in August at the Mission. These

Bible studies, based on Ephesians 1 and 2, were also led by Mr. Moore. First's Evangelism Committee, with the approval of their Council, also sponsored a series of radio ads for an eight-week period on a local Holland radio station, WJQK 99.3 FM. In addition, Rev. Daniel Holstege, First's pastor, will be placed on a rotation of local Holland pastors to have morning meditations on that same radio station for a week at a time.

The Evangelism Committee of Heritage PRC in Sioux Falls, SD was looking for volunteers from their congregation to assist with

the Sioux Empire Fair booth they were sponsoring on August 6-11. Heritage's Evangelism Committee planned to focus their booth on their catechism material and the work of the church in training its children.

The Evangelism Committee of First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI hosted a summer singspiration entitled "God's Perfect Plan," on Sunday evening, July 29. Everyone was invited to come and sing about the assurance we have that God's ways are the best in every situation. The Majestic Brass, and a variety of others, contributed special music.

In an update from their Evangelism Society, the members of the Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI learned that their Evangelism Society hoped to continue holding chapels and Bible studies at the Holland Rescue Mission in the coming fall and winter. The Society also continues to use Sermonaudio.com to broadcast their sermons. Each week they upload the last Sunday's sermons. During the month of July, 283 sermons were downloaded to 28 different states and 16 different countries.

### **Mission Activities**

The Reformed Witness Hour has decided to air their broadcast on WPMG 91.3 FM in Carlisle, PA. This radio station reaches into Harrisburg and York, PA. A quick look at Google Maps shows that these two cities are some 200-plus miles east of Pittsburgh, the location of the Pittsburgh Mission and Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma. We are thankful for the witness we are

able to leave via radio in these areas of Pennsylvania.

The Berean PRC in Manila, the Philippines, voted unanimously to approve the call to Candidate Vernon Ibe to become their first pastor. We remember Brother Ibe and the Berean congregation in our prayers as he considers this call.

Rev. Richard Smit reported on recent floods in the Philippines that have affected some of the members of the Berean PRC and some of their contacts. Rev. Smit wrote that, "as missionaries, we remain grateful for the love and concern of the PRCA, PRCNI, and CERCS for fellow saints of like precious faith in the Philippines. Be assured that at this time we are doing well. There is significant disruption of the daily routine at the moment among some families here, and there will be the hard work of cleanup later this week and next week. May the Lord of the wind and the rain continue to bless His church even through the calamities that He sends upon us for the coming of His heavenly kingdom."

### **Young People's Activities**

We offer a special thanks to the Hope PRC in Walker, MI and their Young People's Society, for hosting this year's 72nd annual Young People's Convention. This year's convention was held at the Michindoh Conference Center in Hillsdale, MI, about a two-hour ride south and east of Grand Rapids. This year's theme was, "Led by the Shepherd," based on Psalm 23. Rev. Martyn McGeown spoke to the young people first, on the theme under the topic of "The Shepherd," followed by Rev. Andrew

Lanning speaking on "The Sheep," and Rev. James Laning on "The Blessed Relationship." Discussion groups were also held, centering in the topics of "Church Membership" and "Who Is on the Lord's Side?" Looking at the website for this summer's convention also showed some interesting activities: a 320-foot water slide, a climbing wall, and mud-pit volleyball. Makes me wonder if anyone still remembers an east/west softball game? But then, I am probably just showing my age. We thank the Lord for the convention and ask Him to bless it as a time of spiritual refreshment and encouragement for our young people. Special thanks again to Hope and all those who served as chaperones and gave their time for the success of the convention.

### **Minister Activities**

With thanksgiving to God, Rev. Cory and Lael Griess received the gift of a healthy baby girl, Lena Hope (5 lbs. 10 oz.), born on August 14.

Rev. Clayton Spronk declined the call from the Randolph, WI PRC. On August 29 Randolph called Rev. Garrett Eriks to become their next pastor.

On Sunday evening, August 19, Hope PRC in Walker, MI extended a call to Rev. Rodney Kleyn to serve as their next pastor.

The saints of the Covenant ERC in Singapore are deeply thankful to God for supplying their need for a pastor in leading Rev. Andrew Lanning to accept the call to serve as minister-on-loan to their congregation. ☺

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Wedding Anniversary

■ With praise and thanks to God, we rejoice with our parents and grandparents,

#### **MIKE and HELEN CNOSSEN,**

as they celebrated their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on August 26, 2012. We are thankful for their godly example as they raised us to trust in Him and fear His Name. We pray for God's continued blessing on their marriage. Ill John 4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

- ❖ Mark and Cynthia Koole  
Taylor, Corey, Logan, Jake
- ❖ Mike and Rachel Cnossen  
Michael, Joelle, Lucy
- ❖ Kevin and Audra Gritters  
Derek, Jared, Hayley, Alex, Luke
- ❖ Derek and Leanne Cnossen  
Aiden, Elsha, Shane, Miriam
- ❖ Peter and Megan Cnossen  
Nelle, Clara
- ❖ Phillip and Holly Cnossen  
Zeeland, Michigan

### Wedding Anniversary

■ On September 22, 2012, our parents,

#### **DUANE and SHIRLEY GUNNINK,**

will celebrate 45 years of marriage. We are thankful to God for preserving them, uplifting them, and guiding them as they have faithfully walked in His ways. We are thankful for the godly example they have been, serving each other and the church and all those around them. It is our prayer that God will continue to guide them in their earthly walk and that we, their children, may continue in the path as well. "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever" (Psalm 45:17).

- ❖ Dan and Shelley VanDyke  
Jeff, Dylan, Jared, McKenna
- ❖ Kevin and Pam Gunnink  
Brandon, Brianna, Allisa, Elliot
- ❖ John and Tracy Heys  
Dustin, Randy, Cheyenne, Callie
- ❖ Jason and Jodi Gunnink  
Danielle, Kelly, Jessica
- ❖ Aaron and Erin Gunnink  
Drew, Cristyn, Laura, Connor
- ❖ Steve and Carrie Huizinga
- ❖ Justin and Heidi Griess  
Mason, Parker
- ❖ David and Rebecca Dijkstra  
Pippa  
Caledonia, Michigan

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council of Southeast PRC extends Christian sympathy to Don and Mary Kamphuis and their family in the death of his mother,

#### **ANN KAMPHUIS.**

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope" (Psalm 16:9).

Rev. W. Langerak, President  
Ed Ophoff, Assistant Clerk

### Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Men's Bible Society of Trinity PRC in Hudsonville, MI expresses sympathy to Nathan Price and his family in the death of Nathan's brother,

#### **MR. DANIEL PRICE.**

May the bereaved loved ones be enabled to say with the psalmist, "I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16:8).

Terry Dykstra, President  
Tim Bleyenbergh, Secretary

### Bound Volumes

■ The September 15th issue of the *Standard Bearer* completes volume 88. If you would like your own issues bound, please deliver them to the RFPA office before the end of October. For additional orders, call Paula at (616) 457-5970.

## RFPA ANNUAL MEETING



September 27, 2012  
7:30p.m.  
Hudsonville Protestant  
Reformed Church

In a great follow-up from Hudsonville PRC's conference this past winter concerning postmodernism, Professor Barry Gritters will present

### **Church Membership in a Postmodern Era**

at the Annual Meeting for the RFPA. Stick around after the speech to hear more about the work of the RFPA. All are welcome to attend!