

The Standard Bearer

A Reformed Semi-Monthly Magazine • January 15, 2012

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The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

Philippians 3:8

In these few words of Holy Scripture we have a personal confession of the apostle Paul. It was written to the church at Philippi—"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (v. 3). In verses 4-6 Paul lists various things that most men would count desirable. Having these, he had every reason to be confident in the flesh. In verse 7, however, he informs us that he counted the things just mentioned loss for Christ.

In our text he broadens and intensifies that same confession. Not only have I counted those things as loss, but I *continue* to count *all* things as loss. All things have I counted as loss, not only for Christ, but for the *knowledge* of Christ Jesus *my* Lord.

Rev. Miersma is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

This confession is also intended for us, since it is part of Scripture. The "*my* Lord" must not be overlooked. We must read it in the very same form in which the Spirit of Christ elicited this confession from the heart of the apostle. We must consider it a necessary characteristic of our own heart and soul, with respect to the course and direction of our life in the midst of the world. Then we will see that only one thing is important, that we gain Christ, that only one thing is above all precious, the knowledge of Christ.

The excellency of this knowledge is expressed in its contents. The full name of Christ is used so that there can be no doubt as to the excellency of that knowledge. It expresses all His fullness, exhibits all His beauty, shows at once that there is nothing on earth to be desired above Him and besides Him.

We see this, first of all, in the name Jesus, which means Jehovah saves. It expresses all the realization of salvation. He is the central and personal revelation of Jehovah as the God of our salvation. Objectively, He redeems from the guilt of sin and reconciles us with Himself through the blood of the cross, thus making peace. Subjectively, He delivers us from the corruption of sin, cutting the shackles of death in which we are

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, \$25.00 elsewhere

Advertising Policy

The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$10.00 fee. Announcements should be sent, with the \$10.00 fee, to: SB Announcements, 1894 Georgetown Center Dr., Jenison, MI 49428-7137 (e-mail: mail@rfpa.org). Deadline for announcements is one month prior to publication date.

Website for RFP: www.rfpa.org

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held, leading us into the everlasting liberty of perfect righteousness.

This name points to Him who makes us partakers of the highest good, namely life eternal and the fellowship of friendship with the ever blessed God. We now know the peace that passes all understanding, the peace that is rooted in the blessed consciousness that our sins are washed away and no longer witness against us. To know Jesus is to know Him in whom we possess the only comfort in life and death, light in darkness, joy in the midst of sorrow, life while we pass through the valley of the shadow of death. All of our salvation is expressed in that name.

We see this, secondly, in the name Christ, the Messiah, the anointed of God, the three-times blessed servant of Jehovah, Prophet, Priest, and King. He is God's Prophet to us in that He speaks of God and glorifies Him. He is the Word, revealing the Father and making Him known in all the riches of His counsel of salvation. Through the Word we have knowledge of our redemption and deliverance.

He is also God's Priest in our behalf. Over the whole house of God He is the perfect and eternal High Priest, accomplishing our salvation by sacrificing, atoning, reconciling, and entering into the heavenly sanctuary to abide there forever. He intercedes for the brethren, blessing them with all the riches of grace.

And He is God's King over us. Having humbled Himself and having become obedient even unto the death of the cross, He is now highly exalted. He sits at the right hand of God, clothed with all power in heaven and on earth. As King He protects us from the onslaughts of the enemy, all nations being subject at His feet, to give us the victory. Nothing can stand in His way; He is King over all.

In this anointing we share, for we also are prophets, priests, and kings. We know, speak of, and glorify the Father. We sanctify the Lord God in our hearts and bring sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

The third name is Lord, for He is the One who pos-

sesses His people because He purchased them with the price of His precious blood in infinite love. He leveled to the ground, in our hearts, the throne of the prince of the world, so that He might establish His own dominion of grace in our inmost soul. He is responsible for us in life and death, now and in the day of judgment. His will is our will because He turned us by the gracious power of His Spirit, so that we no longer will to do the evil. Although Lord over all, He is more particularly *my* Lord. He is personally my Lord and your Lord, so it becomes the soul's keenest delight to make this confession. For the excellency of this knowledge does Paul regard all things as loss, for it is more excellent than any of the things of this world.

This knowledge comes to expression not only in the name but also in its nature. It is not a mere intellectual conception, a mere image of the mind, or a cold assent to the truth concerning Him. No one would surrender all things and give them up gladly (name and position, treasures and pleasures, liberty and very life) for a mere intellectual, philosophical conception. There is no glory and joy, no excellency and comfort, in a head full of knowledge about Christ if the heart remains empty of His grace. There is no soul-redeeming virtue in knowing of and about Christ if we cannot say *my Lord and my Savior*.

This does not mean that intellectual knowledge is not necessary. We cannot truly *know* Him if we do not know *about* Him. Revelation of Him must fill our *mind* if it is to fill our *heart*. What we need is a *spiritual* knowledge of *the heart*. When we know Christ the fire of the love of God is kindled in our soul. We learn to cry out, "O God, be merciful to me, the sinner." Then we despise our own righteousness, for it availeth nothing. Our souls are laid bare, so that we see the guilt of sin from which He redeems, the corruption of sin from which He delivers, the power of death from which He liberates, and the darkness of sin out of which He leads us into the light. Having that knowledge of salvation in Christ, we can say with Paul, *my Lord*.

*There is no
soul-redeeming virtue
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my Lord and my Savior.*

Your soul hungers and thirsts after righteousness, seeing Him as the fullness that fills your emptiness. You eat and drink Him by a true and living faith as the bread that satisfies your hunger and as the water that quenches the thirst of the soul (Ps. 42:1). Therefore, to know Christ and how He died for us on the cross, to have such a knowledge, is life eternal (John 17:3).

Thus far we have seen this knowledge from the viewpoint of its inherent excellency. But it is more excellent also when placed alongside of the things of this world, which Paul considers as loss. Applying this to Paul's life, we see that his own righteousness, which was of the law, was blameless, but as far as gaining Christ is concerned, it availed nothing. This included his privileges as a Hebrew of the Hebrews, his own name, position, influence, even his own earthly life.

Applying this to our life, we see that all the pleasures and treasures of this world are a hindrance to and a disadvantage in gaining eternal life and Christ. We can add up all our fame and honor, as testified by the parable of the rich fool. These things are not bad in themselves, but only in so far as we put our trust in them.

Paul did not even regard what he lost as precious. In light of what he gained, what he had lost was regarded as dung. In comparison to the knowledge of Christ, they stunk and were as refuse.

In this light, what is it that can be considered as gain? Having the knowledge of Christ, we gain Christ Himself. He is all important. What shall a man profit if he gain the whole world and lose Christ? In Christ is eternal life. In the world is eternal damnation. What would one lose if for Christ he lost all else? In Christ we see resurrection unto life. After that there are pleasures forever more, in contrast to that which passes away. There are depths of grace never fathomed, riches of love never tasted, and heights of glory never climbed. That is why Paul can say to the church that all things, *yea, doubtless*, are as dung. In this light we see that we have only a beginning of that knowledge, but we grow day by day in grace and truth. Knowing Him in part, we desire to know Him in all His fullness. Having tasted of His glory, we are not satisfied until we have gained Him completely.

Therefore, we, as well as Paul, must let the world take their dross. From the heights of faith we too can truly evaluate all things of this present world. Then we can count them as loss and as dung, if only we gain Christ. The world shall perish with its goods, but we shall live in the eternal tabernacle of God because we have Christ. Such is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. 

EDITORIAL

REV. KENNETH KOOLE

Two Books

Normally when it comes to books and book reviews we reserve the subject for the rubric *Bring the Books*, or offer it as a contribution for the *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*. For the two books to which we want to alert our readers, and especially the clergy, we make an exception.

The two books are *Wonder & Wisdom*, by Abraham Kuyper, and *Reformed Thought: Selected Writings*, by William Young.

That the first book should be the subject of some editorial comments will not come as a surprise. The author is Abraham Kuyper, and the book a translation of the concluding ten chapters of his treatise on com-

mon grace, chapters that deal with the importance of common grace for science and art.

The *SB*, of course, has a long and time-honored connection to the doctrine of common grace, or, maybe more accurately, to the *theory* of common grace. It was this very theory developed by Kuyper in one of his magnum opuses,

De Gemeene Gratie (Common Grace), that served in the end for what is known by us as “the history of 1924,” events resulting in the expulsion of three ministers with their congregations from the CRC and the establishment of the PRCA. It was the growing infatuation with this theory by many of the clergy within the CRC and the synodical refusal to see its dangers that led to the birth of this very magazine 87 years ago.

As an aside, I realize that, strictly speaking, no theologian can have more than *one* magnum opus (greatest work), but Dr. Kuyper is an exception. There appears to be more than one Dr. Abraham Kuyper. I would not put it in the category of ‘Dr. Kuyper and Mr. Hyde,’ but there is the Kuyper of historic, Calvinistic, particular grace (and his magnum opus, *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, 5 volumes, 3,900 pp.), and this ‘other fellow,’ who came under the spell of culture and politics, the Kuyper of a neo-Calvinism embodied in his theory of common grace (and his magnum opus, *De Gemeene Gratie*, 3 volumes, 1,700 pp.).

In addition, I have gracing my bookshelves Kuyper’s 4-volume set on the Heidelberg Catechism, *E Voto* (2,300+ pp.).

All this in the days before keyboards and computers. What Kuyper would have produced if he had had such available I am not sure we want to imagine.

Up to this point Kuyper’s work on common grace has been locked away in the Dutch from the English-speaking world. As some of

our readers are aware, Dr. Nelson Kloosterman, under the auspices of the Acton Institute (a conservative Reformed think tank headquartered in Grand Rapids), has begun translating Kuyper’s *De Gemeene Gratie*.

In an article in its December 10 religion section, the *Grand Rapids Press* explained the book this way:

“Wisdom & Wonder” is the last 10 chapters in the third volume of “Common Grace,” chosen for early publication because “it addresses two of the more difficult realms that intimidate Christians in modern-day conversations: science and art,” according to the book’s Foreword by Gabe Lyons and Jon Tyson.

The sections were mistakenly left out of the first edition of “Common Grace” published in the early 20th century. They appeared in a separate volume in 1905, and later were added to new printings of “Common Grace.” The massive work is hailed as one of the great treatises on how to live as a Christian in the world at large.

Nelson Kloosterman was asked by the Acton Institute to translate Kuyper’s work from Dutch into English. He translated “Wisdom & Wonder” and will oversee translations of the three volumes of “Common Grace.”

In the book’s ‘afterword’ the editors inform us that translating the three volumes is a three-year project, with the first volume scheduled to appear in the fall of 2012 (p. 183).

What the present book is intended to do, according to its publisher,

is to whet the appetite of the public for the volumes to follow.

It is not our intention at this point to critique the book. We prefer to wait until the finished work (or at least the first volume) comes out, and then offer a lengthier critique for the *SB* or the *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*, or both. It may be best that there is offered a critique by more than one writer on the three-volume set.

Our main purpose at this point is to make our readers aware that this first offering is available, a precursor of the full volumes to follow. This is an introductory offering, \$10 paperback, \$15 hardcover. These days, for a 180+ page book, that is competitive pricing.

It is our judgment that the finished work will be a ‘must read’ for all of our clergy.

The PRC is the one group known to have taken issue with the theory of common grace from the beginning, vigorously, relentlessly, unabashedly, and not only with the infamous Three Points of the CRC Synod of 1924, but with the seminal work that gave the impetus to that perspective as well, Kuyper’s lengthy treatise of the subject, *De Gemeene Gratie*.

If we are going to take a credible stand against this doctrine today, and we must, those of us called to take the lead in defending the faith over against this error will have to be acquainted with this work. One thing is sure, as it becomes available in English, a whole new group of theologians and preachers, to say nothing of a whole new generation of seminary students, is going to be

reading, digesting, and discussing Kuyper's *Common Grace*. And if the glowing tribute by those on the dustcover to this initial offering is any indicator, they will gallop off once again with their 'banners' flying.

Deja vu, indeed!

If we are going to be in a position to respond credibly, we will have to know what we are talking about, which is to say, be able to assure its newfound promoters that "Yes, we have read the book as well."

All this is to say, we have not heard the last of common grace. Not by a long shot. There is going to be a revival of interest in common grace, not simply for antiquarian reasons, but a promoting of it in order to justify the 'redeeming' of all of culture in the name of Christ. And redemption of culture these days means more interest in what the world is producing and greater interaction (even preoccupation) with its culture.

This is not what the church of the twenty-first century needs, beleaguered as it is on every side both by burgeoning immorality in society and by the anti-Christian spirit infecting the very State itself, but this is what the leading lights in Protestantism want.

All one has to do is read the list of names found on the dustcover of this volume praising not only this first sampling of Kuyper's magisterial work, but the publishing of the whole work. The names Chuck Colson, Richard Mouw, and Nicholas Wolterstorff head the list—Kuyperian common grace aficionados one and all.

They are men of influence.

And likable fellows as well.

To be candid, I can appreciate Chuck Colson and his unabashed testimony against the immoralities that are consuming modern society, and his challenging the anti-Christian policies coming out of our federal government these days. But to justify entering into fellowship with Rome on the basis of a supposed doctrinal and *spiritual* oneness that we as Christians all share together in order to attain this, and to promote unity with all who call themselves Christians in order to oppose the evils of our day, which basis for oneness and unity has everything to do with this 'common grace' that we all share, is another matter altogether.

Let us not forget that it was exactly this supposed absolutely vital need for making common cause with Rome in order to reform[!] Dutch society in Kuyper's day and to withstand the flood of immoralities beginning to dominate late nineteenth-century Western culture that galvanized Kuyper to develop (spin?) his theory of common grace to begin with.

Now the same cry, with its common grace justification, goes up again, and the republication of Kuyper's translated volumes will simply serve to bolster their argumentation.

The irony of it all is that this championing of common grace has proved in the end not to serve as an antidote to the world at all with its vain glories and immoralities, working rejection and condemnation of these things, introducing a new direction, but rather it has served to

justify an *approving of* and allowing these things into Christian lives, because in these things too, you know, some form of Divine (God approved!) grace is found.

Have these scholars not followed the history of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands and what happened to the CRC in the past century, error after error, evil after evil, all justified in the name of common grace? The seven ill-favored kine of Pharaoh's dream (common-grace cattle) coming out of the Nile to devour the seven well-favored kine (particular, saving grace)—because that's what the theory of common grace does and did!

And not in theory, but in real history!

Common grace has a way of becoming the dominating grace, the new gospel! And the true gospel of particular saving grace is swallowed whole. Having swallowed the gospel whole, the emphasis on common grace brings (has brought!) a famine to the land and to many a soul.

The gospel of saving grace is treated like a first wife who shows up unbidden at the wedding of a man who now has this second woman (wife?) 'gracing' his arm. An embarrassment, that's all. There is not room for both at the head table, that's for sure. There comes a point where the first woman this (church) man once professed to love so deeply is shown the door. And so it is in church after church and seminary after seminary that has become enchanted, enthralled with the beauty and charm of this second 'bride.'

Was it not Lord Acton who said, “The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history”? Well, perhaps not. Though it was an aphorism he would no doubt have subscribed to, we are sure.

It is apparent that those who insist on promoting common grace as the great *saving grace* so desperately needed to *save* this ungodly society of ours, the last great hope of all mankind really, will learn nothing from history, not from the lamentable history of their own mother church. And as another well-known aphorism puts it, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

Gaining such insight does not take special grace, not even common grace, just a bit of common sense. And what I am reading these days indicates that many intelligent, well-meaning churchmen, far too many, sad to say, lack even that.

We will conclude this article with a quote from one of those involved with the publishing of this book. To give a flavor of the book and a summary, he writes,

Kuyper discusses the insights of the ancient Greeks as a bit of evidence for the existence of common grace. This is especially relevant for the pursuit of truth in philosophy and science. As Kuyper writes, “Anyone who ignores common grace can come to no other conclusion than that all science done outside the arena of the holy lives off appearance and delusion, and necessarily results in misleading anyone listening to its voice.

Yet the outcome shows that this is not the case.”

[Kuyper] continues:

“Among the Greeks, who were completely deprived of the light of Scripture, a science arose that continues to amaze us with the many beautiful and true things it offers us. The names of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle have always been esteemed among Christian thinkers. It is no exaggeration to insist that the thinking of Aristotle has been one of the most powerful instruments leading Christians themselves to still deeper reflection.”

Kuyper’s point here is that there are many true and accurate things that non-Christians know and learn about the world, and that this truth is a common point of contact between Christians and non-Christians. This isn’t all there is to say, of course, and Kuyper goes on at length to develop the specific ways in which scientific endeavors pursued by Christians differ from and are similar to those undertaken by those who are “completely deprived of the light of Scripture.”

Such is Kuyper’s argument. We leave it to the reader to purchase the book and read more if interested.

But we spoke of two books, the other being *Reformed Thought* by William Young, just recently published by *Reformed Heritage Books*. Dr. Young is of Presbyterian conviction. The reason we intend to comment on this book and recommend it, especially to the clergy, is that Young is an astute, well-read theological thinker. He even has some good things to say of Dr. Gor-

don Clark and of Clark’s insistence on the use of reason in theology (logical consistency). Rather rare these days.

What is of interest to us is the sections that focus on Abraham Kuyper’s contribution to Reformed thought.

Of interest is Dr. Young’s critical view of Kuyper’s common grace theology and the resulting emphasis on the need to redeem culture.

But of special interest is Young’s critique of Kuyper’s doctrine of presupposed regeneration—in other words, Kuyper’s covenantal perspective and his view of baptized infants. This view Young charges with being inherently hyper-Calvinistic. Significantly, in this context Young brings up the name of Hoeksema and his covenantal views, placing Hoeksema (and by implication the PRC) in Kuyper’s camp, both in regard to presupposed regeneration and insipient hyper-Calvinism.

That warrants some response.

But there are a number of other issues of contemporary importance that Young raises (most in connection with Kuyper’s teachings) that are worth bringing to our readers attention for further reflection and consideration.

Our concern is that Dr. Young’s analysis of and judgments on various issues, especially as they tie in with Kuyper’s speculative doctrines, not only represent prevailing thought of many in Presbyterian and Reformed circles, but are likely to be adopted by still more.

To this we will turn next issue.



“Grieve Not the Spirit”: Sins Against the Holy Spirit (4)

Lying to the Holy Spirit, and Conclusion

Having earlier examined the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit—a sin that God preserves His children from committing—we turned our attention in our last article to various sins that God’s children could commit, and must guard against.

One such sin is that of grieving, or vexing, the Spirit. We grieve the Spirit when, rather than living as the sanctified children of God ought, we violate God’s law.

Another is that of resisting the Spirit. This we do when we reject the Spirit’s testimony to Christ in the gospel. Of this sin the unbelieving element in the church is guilty. But for a time, until he is brought to repentance, also the child of God is capable of resisting the Spirit.

To resist the Spirit continually is to quench the Spirit. This is the sin of despising the gospel and the work of Christ in His church, to the point that the Spirit no longer works in a particular congregation. The congregation that has quenched the Spirit has become apostate. But because quenching the Spirit is a process, God’s people are warned against it. Let us love the gospel, and its faithful proclamation!

The Scriptures refer to yet one more sin against the Holy Spirit: that of lying to Him.

Lying to the Spirit: Acts 5:3-9

Even children know that Ananias and Sapphira lied to the apostle Peter. Not to be overlooked is that theirs was the sin of lying to *God*, and thus to His *Spirit*.

Rev. Kuiper is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin.

Previous article in this series: December 15, p. 134.

Lying to the Spirit, Peter emphasized, was their sin. In the authority of his apostolic office, Peter said: “Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God” (Acts 5:3-4). And in verse 9, he asked Sapphira: “How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?”

Ananias and Sapphira lied against the Holy Spirit by lying to the apostles, God’s officebearers, whom the Holy Spirit called to office and through whom the Holy Spirit worked in the early New Testament church.

In lying to the apostles, Ananias and Sapphira “tempted,” or tested, the Holy Spirit (v. 9). By their lie, they tested whether there really was a Holy Spirit, whether He really worked through the apostles, and whether He really had any power in the church. Almost certainly, it was not their conscious purpose to test the Spirit. However, the apostle Peter indicates that their lie amounted to such a test, when he says that they “agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord” (v. 9).

The test results came in soon. Indeed, the Spirit worked through the apostles! Indeed, the Spirit sanctified the church of which they were outwardly members! The Spirit so worked, to the condemnation of all whose hearts were filled with Satan rather than the Holy Spirit, including Ananias and Sapphira themselves.

That Satan, rather than the Spirit, filled Ananias’ heart (Acts 5:3) indicates that Ananias himself was not a child of God. However, just as was true of the sins of resisting and quenching the Spirit, God’s children must guard against lying to the Spirit.

We would be guilty of this sin if we were to lie to the officebearers of the church, as they go about the work to which God has called them. How necessary that,

when questioned or investigated by the pastor, elders, and deacons as these seek to carry out their office in the church, we speak the truth!

Again, we would be guilty of this sin if we were to lie to the church as a whole, in which the Spirit works. Think of the vows that we make at baptism, confession of faith, installation into office: promises made to God, in the hearing of the church. Do we make these vows sincerely? If we make the vow simply because this is what is expected of us, but have not the smallest inclination to keep it, we have lied to the Holy Spirit.

Guarding against this sin, we will pray for grace both to love the truth and to speak it uprightly at all times, particularly before those whom God has called to labor in His church on behalf of His covenant.

The heinous character of these sins

All these sins against the Spirit—vexing, grieving, resisting, quenching, and lying to the Spirit—God considers heinous, reprehensible, and abominable. Scripture clearly indicates this by the judgments that were pronounced on, and fell upon, those who committed them.

The judgment that fell on the reprobate in the sphere of the covenant was particularly severe, consisting of everlasting punishment. Not so much the fact that Ananias and Sapphira fell down immediately in the presence of all, but the fact that Satan filled their hearts, indicates that they were spiritually and everlastingly dead. And Jesus promised the just judgment of God on those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit: “it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt. 12:32). In the case of the reprobate unbeliever, God’s just judgment is the continual experience of God’s hatred and wrath in this life, and the everlasting punishment of body and soul in hell after this life. What happened in this life to Ananias and Sapphira—public, final, fear-working justice—will happen again in the day of judgment.

The heinous character of all these sins against the Holy Spirit is not minimized by the fact that some who commit these sins are God’s people, who are regenerated, sanctified, and brought to heaven. For God saves us from sin, including sins against the Holy Spirit, on the basis of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, bearing

the wrath of God against all sin. Christ endured the agonies of hell, so that we who sinned against the Holy Spirit might have everlasting life with the triune God against whom we have sinned!

Marvelous, this work of the Spirit: though we have sinned against Him, He continues to sanctify us, and at last to glorify us, on the basis of the atoning work of Christ, and realizing God’s decree of election!

Though God’s children are spared the agonies of hell, they still experience God’s judgment in this life when they sin against the Holy Spirit. Quenching the Spirit, or grieving the Spirit, may bring upon us the loss of the assurance of God’s favor for a time. Grieving the Spirit by living an ungodly life may bring God’s judgment upon us in the form of disease or other earthly afflictions, daily reminders that Satan lies when he whispers in our ear that sin brings happiness. No child of God with a holy hatred for sin will minimize the severity of such judgments. Certainly those children of God who have experienced them will not minimize their severity.

These sins are heinous because they are sins against God Himself. Sin against the Holy Spirit is sin against the first table of God’s law. Certainly such sin involves transgressions of the second commandment of the law as well as the first, but the point is that to sin against the Holy Spirit is to fail to love Jehovah perfectly, with our whole being, at all times.

Emphasizing this heinousness helps us guard against a certain indifference or callousness to these sins. Fact is, not everyone—indeed, not most people—who lie to the Spirit will fall dead immediately, as did Ananias. Nor will a faithful preacher pronounce an immediate death sentence on one who sins against the Holy Spirit, as the apostle Peter pronounced on Ananias. That God delays His judgment for a time might embolden the unbeliever to continue in his sin, and leave the erring child of God with the impression that the sin was not so bad after all.

But, although God delays His judgment for a time, He does not delay it indefinitely, nor cancel it altogether. He has appointed a time for judgment, and in that day He will judge righteously.

How thankful we are that Christ died to remove the guilt of our sin, and rose again to work His new life in us by His Spirit! On the basis of Christ’s death, God

does not see us as guilty of sins against the Spirit, even though our conscience testifies that we have committed these sins. And in the power of that Spirit, we begin anew to hate sin sincerely and to love God truly.

The implication for our lives

Every child of God must guard against and avoid these sins. By nature prone to such, every child of God must fight against them, diligently using the means of grace, and living godly lives in obedience to God's law.

Our officebearers play a role in this regard. Our pastor must warn us against such sins. Our elders may also bring pastoral warnings, and must be ready to discipline any who continue impenitently in them.

Our knowledge of the positive doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and our confession of the truth about Him, will help us avoid such. When we say the words "I believe in the Holy Spirit," do we do so with knowledge and understanding? Do we meditate on the glory of the triune Godhead, including the Holy Spirit?

To avoid these sins requires us to be true and living members of a faithfully Reformed or Presbyterian church in which the Holy Spirit is honored and wor-

shipped rightly. This implication for church membership follows from the fact that the Spirit of truth guides the church into all truth (John 16:13).

To honor the Spirit, we must worship in the Spirit. This means that in our worship we receive from Him the knowledge and revelation of God that He imparts spiritually through the preaching of the gospel. To honor the Spirit requires us to hear the true gospel of salvation, and to hear and believe that which Christ did for us, for the Spirit testifies of Christ (John 15:26) and speaks not of Himself (John 16:13).

To honor the Spirit, we seek fellowship with God. The Spirit's work is to bring us into such holy fellowship; our enjoyment of this fellowship is our honoring of the Spirit's work of sanctification in us.

Those who honor the Spirit are given a great blessing, both in this life and the next. The inspired apostle pronounced this blessing upon the church in Corinth (II Cor. 13:14), and faithful pastors often use the same words when pronouncing the blessing on the church of Jesus Christ today: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." 

Belgic, Bound to Join, and an Extraordinary Situation

The doctrine of the Belgic Confession, controversial and persecuted from the days of its birth, is still controversial today, not more so than in its doctrine of church membership. This is clear from the editorial comments of Rev. Chris Connors, minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia (EPCA) and editor of that church's official magazine, the *Evangelical Presbyterian (EP)*.¹

¹ The magazine can be obtained from the editorial office at PO

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In the July 2011 issue of the *EP*, editor Connors published two book reviews of the recent book by David Engelsma, *Bound to Join*.² One by Rev. David

Box 103, Sumner BC, Queensland 4074, Australia. (SB Editors' note: Although the *Evangelical Presbyterian* is published "with the authorization of the Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia," the magazine's masthead also says, "It is understood that the views expressed by writers in this paper may not necessarily be the official views of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia.")

² David J. Engelsma, *Bound to Join: Letters on Church Membership* (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2010).

Higgs of the EPCA is highly favorable; one by Kevin Reed is highly critical.

That there should be two antithetical book reviews is unsurprising. Professor Engelsma's book involves the matter of church membership and the calling of the believer to join a true instituted church of Christ and not to leave it, as taught in Articles 27–29 of the Belgic Confession. Already in John Calvin's day, this issue occasioned controversy, as Calvin's book on the subject, *Come Out From Among Them*, demonstrates.³ Engelsma's book has been no different.

Bound to Join is instruction concerning church membership that Professor Engelsma gave in email correspondence to concerned believers scattered throughout Europe. His answers to various questions on the subject led to angry objections and sharp responses from some of the participants in that forum. Since his book has been published, he has received further harsh criticism.

What is surprising is Rev. Connor's endorsement of Kevin Reed's book review as a legitimate alternative to the doctrine of the Belgic Confession on church membership, as explained in *Bound to Join*. Connors says, "When the truth is spoken in love," the unbeliever will resent and oppose the truth. "But this book is...likely to set believer against believer... [it] will likely divide the Reformed camp." He assesses the book as "a strident defence of Church membership...packaged in absolutist language." The book is "well-intentioned but unsuccessful" (EP, 7–8). As evidence for his assertions, Rev. Connors presents the two contrasting book reviews.

He glowingly commends Kevin Reed as "a member of the East Texas Reformed Fellowship in the USA. The ETRF is a body of believers who, for conscientious reasons, are seeking to establish a confessional Reformed Church that will be faithful to Scripture alone in all her doctrine, worship and government in the place where they live." Rev. Connors also informs us that "the EPC of Australia has encouraged and assisted ETRF with advice and ministry over recent years."

Kevin Reed's review is hardly "a caution," as Connors describes it. Rather, it is a full, frontal assault on the

³ John Calvin, *Come Out from Among Them: 'Anti-Nicodemite' Writings of John Calvin*, trans. Seth Skolnitsky (Dallas, TX: Protestant Heritage Press, 2001).

doctrine of church membership that Professor Engelsma presents, in which Reed accuses Professor Engelsma of "(1) distortions regarding Calvin's treatises (which he [Engelsma] quotes selectively), (2) inaccuracies regarding church history, and (3) neglect of the collective teaching of the Reformation creeds" (EP, 12). Reed caustically refers to "the professor[']s tout[ing] his own denomination as a true church" (EP, 15); cites as "an ominous abuse of church power" that "Engelsma's own denomination imposed restrictions on officebearers regarding home-schooling of their children" (EP, 20); charges Engelsma with the implied assumption "that his denomination is the purest of them all" (EP, 20); characterizes *Bound to Join* as Engelsma's "combative, disjointed letters harping on the duty of church membership"; and throws out the possibility of the book's being used "to brow-beat persons into submission to the Protestant Reformed Church's[sic] extra-Scriptural impositions in worship and family life."⁴

Kevin Reed's purported book review is not so much a review as it is a prickly, defensive treatment of his idiosyncratic views on church membership about which he has been writing for over ten years, beginning with a treatise published in 1993.⁵ His review cannot be understood apart from his other writings on the church and church membership.

Reed's view of church membership rests on his judgment that the church situation in the United States is "extraordinary."⁶ He writes, "When the state of the church sinks to its lowest point in a nation, it is incumbent upon heads of homes to see that true religion is transmitted to posterity. Even if we have no one else to join us in worship, let us remain faithful in our own households."⁷ Such a situation he believes holds in the United States.

⁴ The July, 2011 issue of the *Evangelical Presbyterian* contains only the first part of Reed's review. The reader can find the full review at the website of the Trinity Foundation (Kevin Reed, "Church Membership in an Age of Idolatry and Confusion," Trinity Foundation, <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/Special%20Issue%20Reed%20Review%20of%20Bound%20to%20Join.pdf> [accessed Nov. 1, 2011]).

⁵ Kevin Reed, "Presbyterian Government in Extraordinary Times," Still Waters Revival Books, http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualNLS/PGET_ch1.htm (accessed Nov. 1, 2011).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

According to Reed, when possible, families should seek affiliation with other faithful families. These family groups can exist without officebearers, but the services of itinerant preachers can be sought, and “Christians in a forming church or extraordinary circumstances are still entitled to the lawful administration of the sacraments.... As we have seen, the sacraments may be administered properly within home meetings, provided there is a plurality of families to impart a public character to the meetings.”⁸

Mr. Reed can learnedly explain all the principles of church membership, but dismiss them because he claims to live in extraordinary times. The implication is that he is allowed wide latitude from the doctrine of the creeds on church membership, including no membership in a true, instituted church for years, all the while having the sacraments administered within his unorganized group.

As grounds that this is entirely acceptable, warranted, and necessary, Reed cites the history of the extraordinary times during the Reformation in France, the Lowlands, and Scotland. But in this he errs.

First, those times are not his times. The extraordinary times of the Reformation involved not only the deplorable and intolerable doctrinal condition of the church, but also the added burden of fierce persecution from the Roman church and state. Where is the persecution that has forced him to meet at night, in barns, in fields, and that threatens to take away his life and that of his family?

Second, he may not claim the Reformation history as ground for his practice because not even in those times did the reformers allow, nor themselves practice, what he proposes. This is clear from J. A. Wylie’s explanation of the situation in France:

It was forty years since Lefevre had opened the door of France to the Gospel. All these years there had been disciples, confessors, martyrs, but no congregations in our sense of the term. The little companies of believing men and women, scattered over the country, were cared for and fed only by the Great Shepherd.... But this was an incomplete and defective condition.... In 1555 congregations began to be formed on the Genevan model.... The work of organizing went on vigorously, and in 1560

⁸ Ibid.

from one to two thousand Protestant congregations existed in France.

The first French National Synod met in 1559, the same time as the king was avowing “his purpose of pursuing the Reformed with fire and sword till he had exterminated them.”⁹ It was an “incomplete and defective condition,” a condition that within a short time was remedied by the formation of thousands of congregations.

About the teachers who ministered to these as yet unformed groups, Wylie writes, “They did not dispense the Sacraments, for Calvin, who was consulted on the point, gave it as his opinion that, till they had obtained the services of a regularly ordained ministry, they should forego celebrating the Lord’s Supper.”¹⁰

During these extraordinary times the reformers wrote the creeds, summarizing Scripture’s teaching regarding the church and church membership. In these extraordinary times they labored tirelessly not promoting the exceptions, but busily organizing congregations, classes, and synods. The situation was similar in the Lowlands.

Third, Reed’s appeal to extraordinary times in the United States is illegitimate. What of the Protestant Reformed Churches? In his review, Reed has not one kind word for these churches. What about them stirs up such vitriol, even though he must admit that these churches teach the gospel?¹¹ This denomination of faithful, true churches, that upholds the truth of God’s Word in doctrine, worship, and life is not even acknowledged as possibly being a denomination of true churches, but they are acerbically mentioned and thrown in with the problem of the extraordinary situation of the church in the United States. In that attitude Mr. Reed despises the presence of Christ and the work of the Spirit in these churches.

Reed, in his resistance to the credal calling to be a member of an instituted church and his stormy defense of his own house-church, changes the teaching of the creeds, including his own Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF). He does not believe that the phrase in the Belgic Confession “out of it there is no salvation”

⁹ J. A. Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, vol. 2 (London: Cassell & Company Limited, 1899), 528–30.

¹⁰ Ibid., 525.

¹¹ Reed, “Church Membership,” Trinity Foundation, 17.

applies to the instituted church: “Engelsma applies this passage in the Belgic Confession to the *church institute*.” In explaining his position Reed cites the Scottish Confession, chapter 16, and glosses that this confession asserts “that no one is saved who is outside of Christ, and thus outside the *church of the elect* (that is, the *invisible church*).”¹² Reed allows the possibility that “if the Belgic Confession bears the construction Professor Engelsma places on it, then the Belgic Confession stands in contrast or contradiction to other Reformed creeds.”¹³

In this Mr. Reed errs. It is not only possible, but beyond doubt that in the Belgic Confession the phrase refers to the instituted church. This, too, is not the eccentric opinion of the Belgic Confession, of Professor Engelsma, or even of the Protestant Reformed Churches, but with them of Reed’s own confession, the WCF. The WCF does not apply the phrase to the “invisible church” as Reed would like, but to the “visible Church...out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.”¹⁴ That this refers to the church institute is clear because the WCF adds the word “ordinary.” There is no need to add this word if the phrase refers to the church of the elect, because out of that church there is *absolutely* no possibility of salvation. That this “visible church” refers to the institute and not to some collection of individual families is clear because the Westminster goes on to explain in the next paragraph that “unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinance of God.”¹⁵

Indeed it is in harmony with the idea that to the church institute alone belong the means of grace and that, therefore, salvation is bound up in her, that the creeds use the phrase “out of it there is no salvation,” a truth that Mr. Reed rejects.

Because he does not believe that, he disparages the institute, allowing that the functions committed by Christ to the institute alone—the means of grace, especially the administration of the sacraments—

¹² Trinity Review, 13.

¹³ TR, 14.

¹⁴ Westminster Confession of Faith, 25.2, in Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 6th ed., 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1931; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 3:657.

¹⁵ Westminster Confession of Faith, 25.3, in *ibid.*, 3:658.

belong in the power of a group of families that is not a church to demand, and to an itinerant minister to administer.

Reed’s divorce of the institute from the means of grace explains his curious reading of Calvin’s anti-Nicodemite writings and his claim that Engelsma distorts “the reformer’s ‘Anti-Nicodemite’ writings as if they were a diatribe on church membership” and misses “the reformer’s main emphasis on genuine piety, sincere confession, and right worship.”¹⁶

The reformer by contrast took it for granted that genuine piety, sincere confession, and right worship were intimately connected with the institute and membership in her.

Reed’s error in these other areas leads him to a wrong view of what characterizes church membership. He warns of “reading modern concepts of church membership back into the creeds and the writings of the Reformers.”¹⁷ The concept of church membership in the PRC goes back at least to the Synod of Dordt and before that. It is hardly modern. The same can be said for Presbyterians. But then failing to heed his own warning, Reed chides Engelsma for “cit[ing] sixteenth-century sources to discuss the *duty* of church membership in the twenty-first century, without adequately exploring ways that the *nature* of church membership has changed in the intervening centuries.”¹⁸

Should we deal with modern concepts or sixteenth-century ones? Has church membership remained essentially the same or has it so changed through the centuries that the calling of church membership changes with the centuries, and God’s truth is not forever sure? What for Mr. Reed constitutes church membership and what makes the simple definition of membership in an instituted church as it has long been understood so odious?

Mr. Reed is a modern-day Labidist, who in his dream for the pure church ends up with no church. He is also a modern-day iconoclast, who in his zeal for purity of worship causes confusion and casts out true churches of Jesus Christ. He decries individualism and independence and rushes headlong into both. Fleeing ecclesiastical imperiousness, he ends up with the tyranny of the

¹⁶ TR, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

individual, which Rev. Connors himself calls “impious.”

Kevin Reed’s book review is the latest evasion to the doctrine of church membership taught by the Belgic Confession and other Reformed creeds, a view that he is able to dismiss with a verbal flip of the hand: “we live in an extraordinary situation.”

It is amazing, therefore, that the editor of the *Evangelical Presbyterian* accuses Engelsma of extremism, but endorses the book review of Kevin Reed. Reed’s review is not the evidence of division among believ-

ers caused by the style, tone, or approach of Professor Engelsma in *Bound to Join*. Reed’s review is evidence of the hostility that the Belgic Confession’s doctrine of church membership stirs up—as Calvin’s did—among those unwilling to bend to it.

I encourage every reader to obtain a copy of Professor Engelsma’s excellent defense of church membership and of the issue of the *Evangelical Presbyterian* in which these things are discussed.

And judge. 

THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS

PROF. DAVID ENGELSMAS

Chapter Four

Postmillennialism (16)

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

The second error of postmillennialism with regard to the victory of the Messianic kingdom concerns the time of the perfecting of the victory. Postmillennialism locates the time of the perfecting of the kingdom *within* New Testament history—during the thousand years that precede the coming of Jesus Christ. This is the meaning of the millennium for postmillennialism: it is the consummate victory of the kingdom of Christ, the “golden age” of the kingdom.

An Untimely Victory

Postmillennialists affirm that the millennium will be the perfecting of the victory of the Messianic king-

dom, indeed the perfecting of the kingdom itself, by the extravagant claims they make for the millennium: conversion of the vast majority of the human race; “Christianizing” of all the world; universal, earthly peace; material prosperity for all; deliverance of mankind from crime, sickness, and even, to some extent, from death, for physical life is to be lengthened to hundreds of years. To paraphrase a contemporary secular author, “Methuselah ain’t in it.” Consistent with postmillennialism’s literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, particularly Isaiah 65:25, is Christian Reconstruction’s extension of the victory of the Messianic kingdom to the animal world. During the millennium, under the beneficent sway of Christ through His reigning saints on earth, wolves will not prey on lambs, and lions will cease being carnivorous.

The conviction of all postmillennialists that the millennium will be the perfecting of the victory of the Messianic kingdom is evident in their glowing descrip-

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tions of the glorious conditions that prevail on earth during the thousand-year reign of the saints. One outdoes the other in painting a picture of godliness, peace, prosperity, dominion, and bliss.

Edwards

Jonathan Edwards is typical. All the Old Testament prophecies of the latter-day glories of the kingdom of Messiah will be fulfilled in the millennium. The millennium will be the sounding of the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15: the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of Christ.

Most humans will then be saved, and possess “vital religion.” All heresies will disappear. The Roman Catholic Church and Islam will be destroyed. Paganism will be no more. All “visible wickedness” will be “suppressed.”

Proving that the Christian Reconstructionists are by no means the only postmillennialists to interpret Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messianic kingdom literally, so that the fulfillment is carnal, Edwards forecasts extraordinarily long life in the millennium, in realization of the prophecy of Isaiah 65:20: “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days,” etc.

The saints and Christianity will be “uppermost in the world.” The church will have (earthly) dominion.

There will be universal (earthly) peace. Wars will cease.

All (earthly) social relations will be “lovely.”

The world will then be one—a world of united nations. “All the world shall then be...one orderly regular, beautiful society.”

There will be great “temporal prosperity”: health, wealth, and long life.

What is this state of affairs but the perfect, or at least most nearly perfect, victory of the kingdom of Christ? Edwards candidly announces it as such. “This is most properly the time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth...[indeed] the principal time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth.”¹

¹ Jonathan Edwards, *The History of Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers, n.d.), 311-324. The book was published in 1773. Edwards preached the book as a series of sermons in 1739.

Reconstructionist Selbrede

Enthusiastic as Edwards is on behalf of the perfecting of the victory of the Messianic kingdom in the millennium, it falls to a leading Christian Reconstruction postmillennialist, Martin G. Selbrede, fully to develop postmillennialism’s conception of the perfection of the victory of the millennial kingdom and at the same time to indicate the intensity of postmillennialism’s determination that the kingdom be perfectly victorious in history.

Selbrede is responding to the criticism that, despite postmillennialism’s glowing account of the victory of the kingdom of Christ during the millennium (as described, for example, by Jonathan Edwards), that victory is, in fact, a poor and pitiful thing. There will still be sin and death. There will be hordes of ungodly men and women, kept under only by threat of punishment, ready in the little season of Satan’s loosing to rise up in rebellion against Christ and His kingdom.

There will be death in that world [of postmillennialism’s millennial kingdom of Christ].... There will be sin in the postmillennial kingdom.... There will be hordes of ungodly in this postmillennial kingdom, on the admission of even the most optimistic postmillennialists themselves. They will hide it. Outwardly, they will conform to the law of God.... But in their hearts they will hate God. They will be rebels inwardly against the Christ. At the end of the millennium they will rise against the Lord (Rev. 20:7-9).... What is even more distressing for the Reformed amillennial believer is that this postmillennial kingdom is supposed to be the culmination and final form of the Messianic kingdom.... As regards the kingdom of Jesus Christ, that’s it! That earthly reign by means of the church, filled with sin, death, and unregenerate reprobates who hate and curse Christ morning, noon, and night, is the climax and conclusion of Christ’s kingdom. Behold...a dismal flop! If that is the Messianic kingdom at its very highest and greatest, Christ is destined to be displayed publicly as a royal failure.... Is their earthly kingdom with its sin, death, and sinners the best that Christ can do as king? That Christ is a sorry failure.²

² David J. Engelsma, *Christ’s Spiritual Kingdom: A Defense of Reformed Amillennialism* (Redlands, CA: The Reformed Witness, 2001), 107-109. The content of the book appeared earlier as editorials in the *Standard Bearer*. Selbrede (in 1998) was responding to my criticism as it appeared in the *SB*.

Selbrede's response to this criticism is revelatory of postmillennialism's zeal on behalf of the perfection of the victory of the Messianic kingdom *within history*, and astounding. Having quoted this criticism of postmillennialism "to illustrate the seriousness of the amillennial challenge—a challenge made tenable because postmillennialists have themselves given their opponents the ammunition they needed," Selbrede takes up the challenge.

It is precisely this idea of a "dismal flop," a "royal failure," that has given pause to more thoughtful postmillennialists (e.g., Boettner, Chilton, Rushdoony, etc.), who recognized the legitimacy of this challenge, and the internal tension it represented in postmillennialism as traditionally formulated. Recognizing that a problem exists is the first step toward rectifying it. Some have taken to portraying this defect as a beneficial feature (e.g., North), others acknowledged its undesirable aspects but admitted their inability to work past the problem (e.g., Chilton). The only *fully* satisfactory solution to Engelsma's pointed challenge was the one provided by Warfield, the viewpoint defended throughout this study: eschatological universalism. Every single spear thrown by Engelsma can be shown to bounce off Warfield's shield. There is no "royal failure" in Warfield's eschatology, neither a dismal flop serving as history's capstone. The "stone cut without hands" suffers no such indignities as Engelsma envisions. God's law will one day be universally (and voluntarily) observed: no cause of grief as Engelsma rightly charges in the case of traditional postmillennial models. Engelsma's other primary concern (that postmillennialism de-emphasizes the glories of the consummation and terminates the Messianic kingdom at the Parousia) is likewise handled masterfully in Warfield's model. In Warfield's view, as rehearsed at length herein, the last enemy Christ is to conquer is Death itself, which synchronizes with the Parousia and not one minute earlier. The present heavens and earth pass away only on condition that all the law's jots and tittles have been accomplished in the earth.³

Selbrede's response to the criticism, that the highly vaunted victory of the millennial kingdom leaves much

³ Martin G. Selbrede, "Reconstructing Postmillennialism," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction: Symposium on Eschatology* 15 (Winter, 1998): 203, 204.

to be desired, and his answer to the amillennial challenge, is "eschatological universalism."⁴ What this means, according to Selbrede (leaning heavily on B. B. Warfield), is that during the millennium every living human being, without exception, will be regenerated and saved; every human will be sanctified, if not perfectly, then to such an extent that "their lives will be a perfect transcript in act of the law of God, a perfect reflection of the will of God in life"—all men will "completely... keep the completed law"; and, especially, there will be no final apostasy, as most postmillennialists have previously been constrained to acknowledge on the basis of Revelation 20:7-9.⁵

All of this, it must be remembered, is to take place on earth, within history, before the second coming of Christ.

Selbrede certainly practices what he preaches to reconstructionists and, by implication, to all postmillennialists: "It is time that reconstructionists jump the final hurdle," that is, whatever detracts from the perfection of the victory of the Messianic kingdom in history.⁶ As he himself sums up his doctrine of this victory, "[The millennium] is the period in which the world is conquered to Christ in its totality."⁷

Postmillennialism insists that the millennium will be the perfecting of the victory of the Messianic kingdom also by its teaching that with the close of the millennium the Messianic kingdom comes to an end. Thereafter, the kingdom will be, not the kingdom of Christ, but the kingdom of the triune God. According to postmillennialism, either the full and most glorious victory of the Messianic kingdom is achieved *within history, during the millennium*, or it is not achieved at all.

... to be continued. 

⁴ Ibid., 163.

⁵ Ibid., 146-218.

⁶ Ibid., 180.

⁷ Ibid., 194.

The Dialogical Principle of Worship (1)

And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 12:7-8

Introduction

Recall that in this series of articles we are to cover three great principles of public worship. In the previous two articles we saw that Scripture teaches that public corporate worship is the *covenantal assembly* gathered before the face of Jehovah God. In this article and the one that follows we see how that covenantal meeting is carried out, namely, as a dialogue between God and His people. God speaks, and His people respond. When we come to meet God face to face in the covenantal assembly, we do not just sit there before God. Rather, God brings us into fellowship in worship, so that there is a back and forth communication between God and His people.

A Covenantal Principle

This principle, called the dialogical principle, arises out of the nature of the covenant of grace itself. The covenant is a bond of structured fellowship between God and His people, a fellowship where God has

bound Himself to His church in sovereign grace and says to them, “I am your God and you are My people.” It is a fellowship where God and His own interact with one another, where there is an actual relationship of communion and love.

We see this covenant relationship in the record of Scripture. All of the Word of God is a history of the covenant. And as such it is the history of a dialogue—God’s interaction with His church. This dialogical principle, then, is not only a principle of worship but, more broadly, it is the principle of Christianity generally. Covenant history as recorded in the Word of God is God speaking or acting, and His people responding to Him and His truth verbally and in their lives. Sometimes that response is sin and sometimes it is obedience and worship. Nonetheless, it is a history of covenantal dialogue.

This is the covenant relationship yet today. There is communication, a dialogue between God and His people. It is impossible to have a relationship of friendship with no communication. There must be a sharing of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Therefore, covenant life is communicating life. It is that for the individual Christian in his day to day existence. The Christian reads God’s Word as God’s Word to him. Its promises are God speaking to him. Its commands are commands to him. The Christian prays to God in response to His Word. He speaks to God of his cares, his joys, his sorrows. He lives his days as a life of dialogue before the face of God.

It is no wonder, then, that this becomes the way in which the special meeting of God and His people is carried out. Public worship is a *covenantal assembly*, and that meeting with God is carried out as the life of the covenant itself is carried out. In this meeting, God tells

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Previous article in this series: November 15, 2011, p. 92.

us we are His beloved. He speaks to us directly of His mighty acts and gracious promises. And as His people assembled we respond to Him in prayer and song and praise. This is a Reformed and biblical worship service. It has God speaking to us and His people responding to Him, so that there is an actual covenant life being lived out in the worship service.

This dialogue is always initiated by the sovereign God. God is sovereign in all of salvation, and therefore also in the highest experience of our salvation—the dialogue of worship. It is He who calls us to worship and it is He who engages His people in this communion and fellowship. Even in worship our speaking to God is always a response to Him speaking to us. The dialogue is not between two equal parties. God is the God of heaven and earth, majestic and glorious. And we know our place, safely in His arms, yet sinful creatures of the dust before Him.

A Principle That Speaks to the Uniqueness of Jehovah God

The fact that God calls us into this dialogue and engages us in holy conversation tells us how unique Jehovah is. There is no god like the triune God of heaven and earth. The false gods of false religions are impersonal deities. The only relationship between the false gods and their worshipers is one in which the worshiper attempts to appease the god by his worship. Worship in these religions (just think of Islam) is based upon terror. Worship is offered in order to get something, not simply to celebrate the god and his relationship with his people. The worshiper comes only on the basis of law, never on the basis of gospel. There is never peace, never assurance. There is no covenant, no dialogue, no true communion. How can there be? Part of the way “sin” is dealt with by these gods is by the *payment* of worship.

But this God, the only true God, the God of heaven and earth, is a relating God of grace. He is the God

who has opened the way for communion by offering His Son upon the cross, so that in Christ His people are spotless before Him and His justice is satisfied. In this way He has opened the way for a different kind of worship than is found in the natural religions of men. We don’t have to come to worship to earn something with our God. We come because Christ has earned all already. We come because He loved His people so much that He took away all barriers once and for all, and opened the way for a life of relationship, faith, trust, reverential awe, and dialogue. He is a personal God, a God who communes with the people He loves, and does what it takes to open the way for that communion.

This unique and true God we experience in the public worship of the church. We come to fellowship with Him and to adore Him and to celebrate that He is the covenant-keeping God. In worship He speaks to us of what He has done and what He is doing. And hearing His law and gospel, we are reminded of His grace, brought back into the security of the gospel, and then respond with adoration and thanksgiving.

Scriptural Proof for the Dialogical Principle of Worship

We have said that the dialogical principle arises out of the covenant generally. Therefore when we look at worship in covenant history we would expect to find God’s people carrying out this dialogue with respect to their worship. And that is in fact what we do find. The record of worship in Scripture is that of God’s people responding in praise to God’s speaking, or acting on behalf of His people.

There are many instances of this, but let’s look at a few key passages, restricting ourselves to the Old Testament. First, Genesis 8:15ff., which is a record of the first worship of God after the world had been destroyed by the flood. After the waters recede, God tells Noah to exit the ark. Genesis 8:15-16, “And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy

It is impossible to have a relationship of friendship with no communication.

sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee." Noah exits the ark thankful for God's mighty act in delivering him and his family.

Noah then responds in verse 20. "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." Noah, with his family around him (which at this point was the church), worships Jehovah God publicly in response to the deliverance He had provided. Then God, receiving Noah's worship, Himself responds (in His heart) in the next verse, Genesis 8:21: "And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." And then He responds to Noah directly in the next few verses by speaking to Noah promises and commands. This whole event is a covenantal meeting in dialogue. God acts to save Noah. Noah responds in worship. God speaks to Noah.

Another passage that highlights this dialogue in worship is Genesis 12:7-8.¹ In this passage Abram is worshipping God with his family and his 318 servants after God brings him to Canaan. At the beginning of chapter 12 God told Abram to gather his tribe and leave his own country to go to a land God would show him. In verse 7 Abram is in the land of Canaan and there God speaks to him. "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, 'Unto thy seed will I give this land.'" Abram immediately responds to that promise of God in the next part of verse 7: "And there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him." Here Abram is offering personal worship to God in response to God speaking to him His promises. And then in verse 8 Abram responds by gathering a public worship service. "And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD." That phrase, "called upon the name of the Lord," indicates that Abram this time held a more formal public worship with his family and

¹ For this text and the next I am indebted to an article written by Copeland, E. Clark, "The Dialogical Nature of Worship in the Old Testament," in *Worship in the Presence of God*, Ed. Frank J. Smith and David C. Lachman (Fellsmere, Florida: Reformation Media and Press, 2006), 35-59.

servants.² Again, therefore, you have God acting and speaking, and His people responding to Him in praise. There is a principle, already in Genesis, that worship is in response to God's acting and speaking.

Moving forward to the temple worship in Israel, II Chronicles 29:27-28 gives us an example of dialogical worship in the nation of Israel. This passage concerns a time when Israel is a kingdom, and official public corporate worship is a regular part of life. David was the one responsible for setting up the worship services of the church held in the temple, even formulating the order of worship. David, however, was never allowed to build the temple and institute temple worship; that was left to those who followed. In the passage, Hezekiah has restored Davidic temple worship to the nation. In examining the temple worship recorded, we see the dialogical principle in a way that is most instructive for us. For here, God's people are not responding to God speaking *directly* to them in visions or appearances. Rather, at this time in Israel's history God's people are responding to what God says and does and commands to be performed *in His Word*, and worship is given in response to *that*. In this way, Israel's worship is similar to ours today.

II Chronicles 29:27-28:

And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

God acted and spoke in the sacrifices He commanded in His Word, and the people began immediately to respond to what God was doing in the sacrifice with praise and worship. There is here an example of institutionalized dialogue, where God's promises are recounted in the sacrifice, and the people respond in

² See Genesis 4:26: "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD," and Aalders' comment that "In the Old Testament 'calling on the name of the Lord' frequently refers to public worship." Aalders, Gerhard C., *The Book of Genesis*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 135. 2 vols., Bible Student's Commentary.

worship. This takes place in the actual worship service of the temple. It is an embodiment of the dialogical

principle in the order of worship. 

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

MR. DON DOEZEMA

Upon This Rock (4)

An Elect Remnant

The reader will remember that, with a view to a study of the beginning of New Testament history, we were looking first at the end of the nation of Israel in the Old, not for its own sake, but for the light that the Old sheds on the New. Of special interest to us, for this purpose, is the testimony of the prophets—particularly now, with respect to the ten tribes, the prophets Amos and Hosea. We saw that the prophecy of Amos was clear. “The eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth” (9:8). Nothing uncertain about that. Destruction. From off the face of the earth. Israel’s (that is, the ten tribe’s) doom was sure.

What is this, then, that we read in the remainder of that verse (9:8)? “...saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD.” And in Hosea:

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as a lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return... (14:4-7).

How can there be hope for Israel, if they will be destroyed from off the face of the earth?

The solution is to be found in this, that, though for

Mr. Doezema is a member of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.

Previous article in this series: December 15, 2011, p. 138.

the nation as a whole there was no hope of deliverance, God had preserved yet a remnant among an otherwise incurably apostate people. The “seven thousand” who were left in Israel during the days of Elijah had not disappeared by the time of Hosea. They were there, and would be so even to the day that the Lord would root Israel out of the land that He had given to their fathers. And the word of comfort through Hosea was that, though the true children of Abraham would necessarily be entangled in the consequences of the apostasy of the nation as a whole, they would not find themselves out of the reach of God’s mercy, nor would they find that His promises had failed. “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered...” (Hosea 1:10).

Wonderful comfort those words must have been to the elect in Israel. But were they, those words, intended only for the remnant? Or was the prophecy meant for all Israel? Undoubtedly the latter. All must hear it. Even apostate Israel. That is, even those who, while arrogating to themselves the right to determine how God might be worshiped, nevertheless considered themselves to be Jehovah’s special people. They were, so they thought, children of *Abraham*. They knew what God had promised to Father Abraham. “Look now toward heaven,” the Lord said, “and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: ...So shall thy seed be” (Gen. 15:15); and, “...in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore” (Gen. 22:17). Were God, now, to cast off Israel, so they thought, He would

be untrue to His promise. Israel as a nation, therefore, cannot perish.

In anticipation of the objections of those who insisted that God could not cut Israel off, Hosea declared in effect that, though God would disown them, yet He will maintain His promise to Abraham.

But how can that be? "...ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea" (Hosea 1:9, 10). How can God reject Israel...and be true to His promise to Abraham? The answer we find in verse 10. "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." In his inspired epistle to the Romans, Paul makes clear that this prophecy of Hosea refers, ultimately, not to the *nation of Israel* but to the *church*, composed as it is in the new dispensation of both Jews and Gentiles. "...that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee [Hosea], I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (Rom. 9:22-25). The people of Israel had imagined the power of God to be tied to the natural descendants of Abraham, but the Lord, through Hosea, repudiates such a notion. God can, if He chooses, raise up a new church. From what? In the words of John the Baptist: from "these stones" (Matt. 3:4). Gentiles. Spiritual children of Abraham. As the sand of the sea.

But then there's this, in Hosea 1:11: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head..." Does not Hosea now, in verse 11, speak also of a *national restoration*?

We do well, in this connection, to look also at Hosea 3:5: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and

seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days." And Amos 9:14, 15: "And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God."

History proves, of course, that the northern kingdom was never reestablished. The Assyrian conquest of Israel marked the end of the ten tribes. "I will destroy it from off the face of the earth." Do the prophets here, then, foretell the return of a *remnant*, not only of Judah but also of *Israel*, to the land of promise, to enjoy again peace and prosperity under one head, a king in the Davidic line? Or does this prophecy find its fulfillment *only in the spiritual reality*, the church, and not at all in a physical

return of exiled Jews and a reuniting of remnants of all the tribes of Israel under one head?

Truth is, we need not make such a sharp distinction. Old Testament prophecy, more often than not, had a kind of double fulfillment. Or, better, there were *stages* in the *fulfillment* of many of the prophecies. A prophecy could find its fulfillment in a historical event, which event would in turn point to a spiritual reality yet to unfold. Sometimes, in a particular prophecy, that *spiritual reality* is on the foreground, and at other times the *historical event*. Calvin, interestingly, saw the *latter* to have prominence in Hosea 1:11. He says that the prophet here "confines his address to the natural race of Abraham. Why? Because God commenced a restoration with that people...because he had chosen them to be the first begotten." In this verse, according to Calvin, Hosea assures the people of God in Israel that "God would at last deal kindly with them by restoring them to their first unity" and that He would "restore them from exile to their own country."

*...though for the nation
as a whole
there was no hope
of deliverance,
God had preserved
yet a remnant
among an otherwise
incurably apostate people.*

Did this ever happen? The fact that the ten tribes as such were never reestablished in the land of Palestine does not mean that no Israelites of the ten tribes ever returned from captivity. The edict of Cyrus gave permission to *all* of the people of Israel to return to Palestine (Ezra 1:1-4). It is true that the overwhelming majority of those who returned with Zerubbabel and later with Ezra were descendants of citizens of the kingdom of Judah (cf. Ezra 2:1); but it cannot be doubted that members of the other tribes accompanied them. At the dedication of the new temple, sin offerings were offered “for all Israel,...according to the number of the tribes of Israel” (Ezra 6:17). It seems, too, that in future years more people of the ten tribes returned, for at the time of Christ Galilee and parts of Perea were populated by Israelites. And, according to Keil and Delitzsch, “this population cannot be traced back either to the Jews who returned to Jerusalem and Judea under Zerubbabel and Ezra, or to the small number of Israelites who were left behind in the land when the Assyrian deportation took place.” Evidently, then, people both of Israel and of Judah participated in the restoration of the Jews to the promised land. And no longer were they divided, but under one head.

It is clear, however, that this cannot exhaust the

prophecies of Hosea and Amos that the children of Judah and the children of Israel will be gathered together; that they will return and seek the Lord God and David their king; and that they will be planted upon their land. The full realization of the promise is not to be found in Zerubbabel, or in any other earthly representative of the house of David. The prophecy must extend to Christ, *the* son of David, for in Him alone is there hope of the people being gathered. And as far as the land of Canaan is concerned, history has shown that the returning exiles were not “planted” *there*, never again to be “pulled up out of their land” (Amos 9:15). For from the return of the exiles to the time of Christ, Judea was but a pawn of the world powers. And within 40 years of their killing of the Messiah, Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple was left with not one stone on another, and the Jews were scattered.

“*Then* shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head” (Hosea 1:11). When? When the Gentiles have come in. When those of whom it was said “Ye are not my people” are made “the sons of the living God” (v. 10). “So,” says the apostle Paul, “*all Israel* shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26).

Next time: “This thing is from me.” ☞

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. BENJAMIN WIGGER

Congregation Activities

Many of our congregations hold their annual congregational meetings in the month of December. These meetings are, for the most part, usually routine, with the approval of a proposal or two, the election of officebearers, and the approval of a yearly budget on the agenda. One item of business from the South Holland, IL PRC did catch our eye however. They ap-

proved a motion to change the legal name of their church to Crete PRC, a change made necessary by their recent move from South Holland and relocation in Crete.

The Choral Society of Crete invited their congregation to join them after their evening worship service on December 11 for a Christmas Choir Program/Singspiration as they sang praises to God for the birth of His Son.

The Choir of Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI presented a concert of praise celebrating the birth of our Savior on Sunday evening, December 11.

The Choir of Faith PRC in Jenison, MI presented a concert at their church on December 11 as well. All were invited to attend as they praised our Lord in song.

The deacons of the Byron Center, MI PRC informed their congregation that they would be collecting items for their annual food drive December 25 through January 1. All items collected would be distributed to needy members in Byron Center.

All Bible society members of the Hudsonville, MI PRC were invited to their annual Combined Christmas Society Meeting on Tuesday

Mr. Wigger is a member of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

evening, December 13. Rev. G. Eriks introduced Isaiah 9:1-7, with a special emphasis on verses 6-7. Afterwards the members split up into small groups for discussion led by Rev. Eriks, Prof. B. Gritters, and Rev. J. Kortering. The evening came to a close with singing and fellowship over coffee and dessert.

Boys and girls, young, old, and middle-aged, all who were interested in decorating cookies for the young people to deliver when they went caroling to the elderly, widows, and shut-ins of the Hudsonville PRC, were invited to come together Saturday morning, December 17, at church to get it done. Cookies and frosting were provided.

The high school girls of Calvary PRC in Hull, IA were invited to their parsonage on December 8, after school, for their third annual Christmas-treat bake. Those who signed up were reminded to bring along necessary ingredients for the goodies, their favorite Christmas CD's, and an appetite for pizza, because you can eat only so many goodies.

The Adult Bible Society of the Doon, IA PRC invited their congregation to join them on December 8 for an evening of caroling and Christian fellowship at their church. Some members also arrived earlier that evening to go caroling to various members of Doon at their homes.

An evening of fellowship for the young people and young adults of First PRC in Edmonton, AB, Canada was planned for December 9. The evening consisted of walking around the legislature ground

in Edmonton listening to the Christmas concerts and enjoying some hot chocolate. Games and Christmas snacks followed at the church.

Members of First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI were reminded to reserve the evening of December 9 for a gingerbread-making party. The evening started with a taco dinner, followed by gingerbread-house construction. House-building materials were supplied, although participants were asked to bring a candy decoration to share.

Evangelism Activities

If you have not paid a visit to the website of Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI (southwestprc.org) lately, we would welcome you to do so. Much work has been put into the site by Southwest's Computer Committee, and that work is worth a look. Of special note is their newly revised Church-Life page. Southwest hopes to add even more pictures to it soon, so their congregation was reminded to smile if they saw a camera pointed in their direction. Also noteworthy are the availability of the sermon downloads.

The first set of questions and answers from Prof. B. Gritters' lecture entitled "The Prince of Darkness Grim" are now available on www.grandvilleprc.org. If you missed the lecture, the audio file is also available as a free download at the website.

School Activities

Each year the students and staff of Hope Christian School in Redlands, CA collect money to contribute to a specific cause. This past Christmas the cause was for the Dale Kooienga

Memorial Fund, which is used to help defray the medical costs of Nicole Kooienga, her new baby, Dalia, and Leah Griess of the Loveland, CO PRC. Hope School invited also the Hope PRC congregation to contribute to the cause.

The Student Council of Covenant Christian High School in Grand Rapids, MI this past holiday season again sponsored its annual gift-certificate drive to help those who have need in west Michigan PRC's. To participate, all one had to do was to send either money or gift certificates/cards from grocery stores, gas stations, etc. to Covenant in care of the Student Council, who would, in turn, give the items collected to the deacons of those churches for distribution.

Sister-Church Activities

Rev. Martyn McGeown, missionary-pastor of the Limerick Reformed Fellowship in Limerick City, Republic of Ireland, gave a lecture in Limerick on December 5 entitled, "Peter, the Papacy, and the Keys of the Kingdom," looking at Matthew 16:18 as the basis for the entire edifice of the Roman papacy, with the authority, supremacy, and infallibility of the popes, all of whom claim to be the rightful successors of Peter.

Minister Calls

Rev. C. Haak received the call to serve as the next pastor of the Hope PRC in Walker, MI. ☺

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Peace Protestant Reformed Church express their Christian sympathy to Matthew and Stephanie Medema, Grace, Micah, Noah, Jonah, Joshua, Luke, Levi, and Hope, and to David and Kim Moore and children, in the passing into glory of their dear infant son, brother, nephew and cousin,

Joseph Samuel Medema,

whom the Lord in His infinite wisdom and love took unto Himself. Our prayer is that they may find comfort in God's word: "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand...He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young...they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:10, 11, 31).

Rev. Clayton Spronk, President
Mr. Bill DeJong, Clerk

Teacher needed

■ Covenant Christian High School in Grand Rapids, Michigan is accepting applications from members of the Protestant Reformed churches to fill teaching positions for the fall of 2012. Due to the addition of the 9th grade to the High School program, teachers are needed in many areas. Applicants should be certified for Secondary Education in the areas of English, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Foreign Language, or Physical Education. Those with interest in and qualifications for teaching Bible and Religion and Academic Support are also encouraged to apply. Applications can be obtained by contacting Rick Noorman (616-453-5048 or ricknoorman@gmail.com) or Tom J. Newhof (616-893-9677 or tjnewhof@preinnewhof.com).

Conference

■ MEN, mark your calendars: Byron Center PRC will be hosting a men's conference on March 8 and 9, 2012, the Lord willing. There will be a speech and sectionals each evening on the theme "The Godly Man," based on Titus 2: 11-14. Additional information will be coming.

Classis

■ Classis West of the PRC will convene on Wednesday, March 7, 2012, 8:30 A.M., at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, CA. All material for the agenda of this meeting must be in the hands of the stated clerk no later than Monday, February 6. Delegates should be aware that an officebearers' conference on the subject "Herman Bavinck: The Theologian" is being planned for Tuesday, March 6. All delegates must inform Hope's Clerk, Mr. Peter Smit, of the details of their travel arrangements and lodging needs. Mr. Smit can be contacted at (909) 797-7933, or clerk@hopeprc.org.

Rev. Douglas Kuiper,
Stated Clerk

THE ANSWER

IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty, tolerance, lack of conviction...what is happening in our society today? Why do so many college students turn away from the Truth? What is the Emergent Church Movement? What makes Rob Bell so popular today?

Join us as we look to discuss these questions in the light of God's Word and find Truth in a postmodern world.

**JANUARY 27
7PM**

HUDSONVILLE PRC

Featuring
Rev G Eriks
Rev A Lanning

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Faith & Hudsonville PRC

Seminary

■ All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary who will be in need of financial assistance for the coming school year are asked to contact the Student Aid Committee secretary, Mr. Stefan Engelsma (Phone: 616-662-9363). This contact should be made before the next scheduled meeting, February 20, 2012, at 7 p.m. at Kaptein, Dykstra & Associates in Grandville, D.V.

Student Aid Committee
Stefan Engelsma, Secretary