

The Standard Bearer

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The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen

“But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?”

Matthew 21:37-40

The parable of the wicked husbandmen illustrates the wickedness of the Jews, who rejected Jesus Christ, the Son of God, out of their own selfish ambition. Despite the Jews' opposition to and hatred of God, and despite the raging of the world at large, Christ would yet have the victory.

Jesus introduces the parable by telling of a householder who carefully prepared his vineyard. He planted it, fenced it, built a winepress for it, and even built a tower to protect it from thieves. Having equipped his vineyard, the householder had the right to its fruits.

The husbandmen who rented the land were sharecrop-

pers, who agreed to work the vineyard in exchange for a portion of the fruits. The other portion, of course, was due to the householder.

The husbandmen in Jesus' parable are a picture of the Jews, especially the leaders who had been put in charge of God's vineyard, the Old Testament church. As husbandmen in God's vineyard, the Jewish leaders had the duty of bringing forth fruit unto God. They had been given much. They were given positions of authority in the church. They had God's written word, which foretold the coming of the Messiah. More than that, they heard the words and saw the mighty works of Jesus Christ Himself, which words and works proved that He was the promised Messiah.

Having received much, much was expected of them. As husbandmen in God's vineyard, they should have brought forth fruit to God. As shepherds in Israel, the Jewish leaders should have taught the glorious truth concerning Jesus the Messiah; instead they rejected Him. They should have been ushering people into the kingdom; instead they barred the doors. They should have been calling the people to repentance and faith; instead they themselves were hardened in their unbelief. John the Baptist berated them exactly because they were not

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bringing forth fruit. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:7-8). John the Baptist was preparing the way for the very Messiah; but they rejected him.

The Lord of the church justly requires fruit from His church. As those who have graciously been brought into the church, we have received much from God. Therefore, we owe it to Him to live lives that are pleasing to Him, to bring forth fruit to the glory and honor of His name.



Though Jehovah looked for fruit from His vineyard (cf. Is. 5:1-3), the Jews would not submit themselves to Him.

When the householder sent his servants to collect his proper share of the produce, the husbandmen wickedly rejected them. One they beat, another they killed, another they stoned. Others followed and were rejected too. Their ongoing rebellion proved that their rejection was deliberate and hateful. So much so that one wonders at the patience of the householder. One would think he would have thrown out the wicked husbandmen long ago.

All along, the husbandmen might have claimed that they had not rejected the householder. After all, the servants were not owners of the vineyard and could not prove that they were representing the householder. But the truth remains, when the husbandmen rejected the servants, they were rejecting the master. The fact that the owner himself did not approach the husbandmen makes no difference; the servants had his full authority behind them.

So it was with Israel as a nation. They rejected one prophet after another, even while they pretended to worship God. Some they beat, others they killed, and others they stoned. Obviously, when they rejected the prophets who came in God's name, they were rejecting God Himself. When they rejected John the Baptist, they were guilty already of rejecting Jesus, whose kingdom John proclaimed.

So it is today: when people reject God's prophets today, they reject the One who sent them. "Verily, verily,

I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (John 13:20).

The husbandmen's contempt for the householder was undeniable when finally they killed his "one son, his well-beloved" (cf. Mark 12:6). "But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance" (Matt. 21:38). Now the truth could not be denied; everyone hearing the parable understood the extreme wickedness of the husbandmen.

Such was the Jews' hatred of God and His Only Begotten Son. They did not merely ignore or dislike Him; they hated Him with a passion. Amazingly, they thought that killing Jesus would somehow ensure they would obtain a kingdom for themselves (cf. John 11:47-50).

We might think to ourselves that we would have been different had we lived in those days. But the truth is that, by nature, the way we were in Adam, we would have done the same thing if we had been in those circumstances. In Adam, we have all gone out of the way and rejected God. By nature, we were all wicked husbandmen who would establish a kingdom apart from God.



The wicked husbandmen in Israel would reap what they sowed. They had ignored the fact that the lord of the vineyard would surely render to them according to their deeds. So many today ignore the same truth as regards their own rejection of Jesus Christ; the judgment day is coming.

When Jesus asked the Jews concerning the fate of the wicked husbandmen, the answer was obvious: "They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons" (Matt. 21:41). In their answer, the Jews condemned themselves. Just as the lord of the vineyard would miserably destroy those wicked husbandmen, so too would God punish the wicked nation of Israel.

"Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:43-44). Whoever falls


upon the cornerstone in contempt and unbelief, proudly exalting themselves, thus attempting to make the cornerstone fit their idea of a kingdom, will be broken. The cornerstone will remain intact, while they will be smashed like a clay pot falling upon a great stone slab. Even worse, those upon whom Christ falls in judgment will be ground into dust and blown away like chaff. “Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly” (Is. 29:5). Ultimately, all those who reject Jesus must suffer the torments of hell for eternity.

More importantly, God would also bring a glorious result out of that wicked rejection.

In spite of—indeed, through—the very actions of the wicked husbandmen in Israel, God would accomplish a wonderful salvation. The wicked may rage, but God’s kingdom will prosper all the same and become a glorious kingdom. That is the explanation Jesus gives at the end of the parable: “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (Matt. 21:42). Quoting from Psalm 118, Jesus referred it to Himself. He was the True Israel, the Prince of God, who would be highly exalted.

Jesus Christ would be rejected and crucified by wicked hands and laid in a grave. But God raised Him up from the dead and has set Him as the cornerstone of the living temple that God is building. Even though we were part of the rebellious mass of sinners, God has graciously made us part of His spiritual house. “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded” (I Pet. 2:4-6).

Such is the glorious result of a wicked rejection. Even today, God takes rebels who by nature reject Him; He convicts them of their sins; He makes them part of His glorious temple; and then He causes them to bring forth fruit unto Him.

No matter what forces gather themselves together against God and His Anointed One, their evil plans will not prosper. Though apostasy abounds in the church world today, many churches rejecting God’s Only Begotten Son, yet Christ will prevail. He will establish His kingdom, using even the rejection of men to accomplish His plan. 

EDITORIAL

PROF. BARRETT GRITTERS

A (Sharp) Pastoral Warning to Students in Christian Colleges (4)

Dear Reformed Christian Young People (and their parents),

By now I hope it has become clear to you that, although the issue

Previous article in this series: November 15, 2010, p. 76.

of *church and kingdom* is important for Christian college students, it reaches far beyond the Christian colleges. The new views of God’s kingdom affect everything. These views, which make *church* narrow and *kingdom* wide, and make *church* of importance

only as it serves *kingdom* causes, affect all spheres of life. They drive mission works and church planting efforts: churches are needed to redeem culture and transform society, and *more* churches must be planted, not primarily because by

them God gathers His elect people, but because by churches the *kingdom* comes. Churches are “outposts for the kingdom.” I trust you have heard this language. Understanding this view will help you understand why some service projects and short-term mission efforts do little if any preaching or witnessing. The assumption is: “Even though the gospel is not spoken, the *kingdom* is being built.”

The implications for one who adopts this view cannot be overestimated.

By the way, and very practically, a couple of important points: 1) When someone contemplates joining a denomination, included in the subjects of consideration must be *kingdom*. What is their view of kingdom? Not only, What is their view on grace, or on marriage? but also, What is their doctrine of the kingdom? 2) Kingdom must be in view when missionaries teach those who seek membership. 3) And when the churches discuss ecclesiastical relations with other churches, this subject ought to be on the agenda. It is that important.



Last editorial, when I showed that the *historic* view of the kingdom identified it with the church, that Augustine’s *City of God* was the *church*, I promised to trace the *new* view to its source. If the church of the past, including the Reformers, did not hold this view, where did the view originate?

I will allow the proponents of the new Calvinism themselves to explain. All of them claim that be-

hind their view stands the doctrine of common grace.

No one is surprised that the *Standard Bearer* raises the subject of common grace. What I want to reveal here is the major place that Reformed churches and writers give to the doctrine today. If the doctrine of common grace were merely a Protestant Reformed bugaboo, of concern only to us whose denomination is rooted in a denial of some long-forgotten doctrine of little importance, that would be one thing. But to hear that the majority of Reformed Christians today *regularly* claim that common grace is the engine that drives their kingdom-building enterprise ought to make one notice, sit up, and give a hearing.

The proponents of the new kingdom view *openly* identify common grace as the one doctrine that supports their kingdom teaching. For

The proponents of the new kingdom view openly identify common grace as the one doctrine that supports their kingdom teaching.

them, common grace is as essential to the *new* Calvinism as the Five Points are to the *old*. Common grace supports their kingdom doctrine so fundamentally that, if this doctrine would fall away, their kingdom doctrine would collapse.

This is what in the last editorial I called the “slim pillar.” I call it a *slim* pillar partly because of its recent origin (the 1800s), partly because its proponents find no support for it in the Reformed confessions and very questionable support in the Reformers, and partly because Abraham Kuyper, the author upon whom the proponents of common grace depend, used so very little Scripture in his three-volume exposition of this doctrine.

As I said, the proponents of the new kingdom doctrine themselves say that Kuyper’s common grace is its mainspring. I will not clutter this editorial with footnotes, but all references are available for the interested reader. The quotations come from a wide variety of authors, from diverse areas of the Reformed and evangelical church world. They include Hart and Zylstra from Toronto, John Bolt from Calvin Seminary, David VanDrunen from Westminster West, Gary North of the Christian Reconstructionists, Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship/Breakpoint renown, and the popular author T.M. Moore. They could just as well, but for lack of space do not, include names like Bratt, Mouw, Myers, Plantinga, and Wolterstorff. These authors may have slightly different takes on the kingdom, but all would agree with common grace’s fundamental place.



First, the new Calvinism teaches that the kingdom is a larger sphere than the church. Fundamental to this distinction is common grace.

In the smaller sphere of church, *special* grace works, saving souls. In the larger sphere, *common* grace works, creating the kingdom. The kingdom is creation and culture Christianized by the power of common grace.

Kuyper makes a crucial distinction between saving grace and common grace.... Saving grace brings in something new for God's people.... [But] there is never anything new in common grace, which preserves and develops the original creation. Common grace plays a critical role in the historical development of culture....

The church...must address herself to the task of maximizing the gifts of common grace as far as possible, in order to serve the kingdom of God.... In so doing, the church will...manifest the kingdom of God on earth.

Second, see special grace's *relation* to common grace: *Common* grace's coronation is the ultimate goal, and *special* grace is the means to the crowning of common grace as king.

Kuyper...demands that special grace leaven common grace for its better functioning.... The Christian spirit...must modify, transform, and Christianize the various organic connections of human life upheld by common grace.... Common grace does not exist solely for the benefit of special grace, simply to provide a necessary backdrop for the history of redemption. Instead, common grace has its own independent purposes.... Through common grace, the human race constructs an edifice of human culture to greet Christ at his re-

turn. Kuyper, therefore, presents a grand picture of the fulfillment of the creation mandate through the blessing of common grace....

This grand fulfillment of the creation mandate is the "primary and independent purpose of creation" that I referred to last month. And *Kuyper's common grace* is the main functioning power for this "primary and independent purpose" of creation.

What receives emphasis, then, is not the "Great Commission" but the "cultural commission," driven by common grace. This is Chuck Colson's aim:

In addition to the Great Commission, God has given us a cultural commission: Not only are we to be agents of God's saving grace—bringing others to Christ—we are also agents of His common grace.

Colson's *Breakpoint* commentaries quote both Francis Schaeffer and Abraham Kuyper often. In one of these commentaries, one of Schaeffer's students asked where Schaeffer had gotten his kingdom/culture perspective. The answer was not difficult:

It was from his Calvinist mentors, particularly the Dutch Calvinists who had continued the tradition of Abraham Kuyper, that Schaeffer acquired his underlying theology of culture.

Third, see how the *church* relates to the *kingdom*: church exists in society for the sake of the common grace/kingdom realm:

For Kuyper, the church is *fundamentally* organism, *not* institution,

and should pervade every aspect of society precisely as an organism, working its influence on the realm of common grace. (Emphasis mine: BG)

One of the not-surprising consequences of this mind? By common grace, the Christian church joins together with the antichristian church and the non-Christian world in an unequal yoke *for kingdom causes*.

Common grace, therefore, allows a certain measure of cooperation among believers and unbelievers in cultural life....

There are areas in which, by God's common grace, we may cooperate with non-Christians in seeking to realize our Christian objectives [BG: he means "advance the kingdom"]. Hence we gladly cooperate with orthodox Jews and Moslems against all shades of atheism, and with Catholics.... If...we are offered the support of concerned Jews, Moslems, and Catholics, we willingly welcome and utilize such support.

In the end, common grace, now more important than saving grace, is crowned king.

Kuyper...*demands* that special grace leaven common grace for its better functioning. The Christian spirit...must modify, transform, and Christianize the various organic connections of human life upheld by common grace.



Helpfully, some authors are candid about the origins of this doctrine in Abraham Kuyper, not before. After

commending Kuyper's view that "the life of common grace permitted God's original designs for the world in the creation mandate to be accomplished," and that "common grace did not simply exist for the benefit of special grace," one said, "Earlier Reformed theologians, to my knowledge, never articulated things quite in this way."

Reflecting in particular on the powerful influence of *Kuyper's common grace* on Protestantism broadly, another said: "It is certain that Christianity as we have known it in America is undergoing a systemic shift." Because of Kuyper's common grace.

In conclusion, trace the development of thought: First, the kingdom is made larger than church. Common grace is the way. Then, even if the


church for a while remains the more *important* reality, common grace soon gives kingdom an *independent* purpose. Finally, *kingdom* usurps *church* and predominates: the church is only a tool to establish this greater, independent, and primary work of God. The people of God are called to do "missions" without witnessing or bringing the gospel. Mission organizations send teams to fields and include ordained pastors right alongside of the equally important social workers and agricultural experts.

One Reformed magazine so closely relates the *church's mission* and *kingdom in culture* that a recent issue is dedicated to "celebrat[ing] TV at its emerging best." The magazine is carrying out its *mission* "to express the Reformed faith theologically" and

thus "contribute to the mission of the church." By *celebrating* TV, and praising "Homer Simpson," *Lost*, and *24*, the church promotes the kingdom! The "common grace" view of the kingdom has led to this.

This is a view of church and kingdom radically different from that of our Reformed forefathers, not very many years ago. But this is what many Christian colleges are teaching as Reformed truth. The kingdom is not the church. The church is not the main thing. Our goal is Christianized culture. Christ's precious and glorious church must stand aside for this more glorious kingdom, built by Christians and non-Christians in cooperation.

All supported by the slim pillar of common grace.

Beware. 

IN HIS FEAR

REV. RICHARD SMIT

The Fruit of the Spirit (9)

Faithfulness (1)

It is important to understand what we are examining here in the seventh part of the fruit of the Spirit. The seventh part of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 is "faith." We may be inclined to think that this means saving faith, which, according to Lord's Day 7 of the Heidelberg Catechism, is the spiritual bond by which we are joined by God to Christ, the conscious activity of believing, and the catholic, apostolic, undoubted Christian truth of Scripture that is necessary for every Christian to believe.

However, that is not exactly what the word "faith" in Galatians 5:22 means as a fruit of the Spirit. There is

no denying the fact that the bond of faith, the activity of believing, and the doctrines of the faith are essential to and very involved with this virtue of "faith" in the fruit of the Spirit. In fact, one cannot separate the blessing of saving faith and the virtue of "faith" as a part of the fruit of the Spirit. Nevertheless, so that it is clear in our minds what we are discussing here, it is better that we understand that the virtue of "faith" in Galatians 5:22 means "faithfulness."

Faithfulness is a spiritual virtue of the saint by which he is loyal towards the Father and Christ with the result that the saint is also loyal, reliable, and dependable towards others whom the Father providentially brings upon his pathway in life and whom he must serve in some way in his place and calling in life. When one is faithful to the Father and Jesus Christ as revealed in

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His Word, he will be a faithful, trustworthy, and reliable Christian, member of his church, officebearer, spouse, friend, employer, employee, parent, school teacher, student, or child.



We see this virtue of faithfulness in all its perfection in Christ. In all of His labors Christ was faithful to the Father. Although Jesus did not call Himself faithful in John 17:4, yet what He says reflects the fact that He is the Faithful Servant of Jehovah. Jesus said, "I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Implied in that statement is the faithful obedience of Christ in all of His labors in spite of the constant temptations of His adversary, the devil, and His enemies to forsake the way of obedience to our Father. When the hour of His work of redemption, by His atoning death on the cross, had come, Jesus was indeed faithful. He had never disobeyed His Father. He had always done the Father's will, not His own will. He maintained a voracious appetite for the Father's commandments for His life and work so that He could say to His disciples, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).

Of course, Jesus' faithfulness is clearly revealed at the cross. He loved His own to the very end. He laid down His life for us without complaint. He descended into the depths of hell for us on the cross without retaliation against us. The clear revelation of His faithfulness in His own mind was heard in the confident cry of Jesus, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit." Had Jesus been unfaithful even to the slightest degree, He could never have uttered that confident request with the sure expectation that the Father would receive Him. If He had disobeyed His Father's will, then He could not have said, "It is finished," nor have expected that the Father would and could receive Him into His hands upon death. Nevertheless, Jesus knew that the Scriptures had been fulfilled by Him and that He had finished the Father's will. In that confidence of His own righteousness, He could expect the glory afterward. Faithful, Jesus was, right to the very end of His earthly life. Upon the basis of that faithfulness of Christ rests firmly our blessed atonement, redemption, and reconciliation to the Father!

This faithfulness continues to be one of the outstanding virtues of our exalted Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is called in

Revelation 1:5 "the faithful witness." When He speaks to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:14, Christ refers to Himself as "the faithful and true witness." In Revelation 19:11, we see the exalted Christ sitting upon the white horse, and His name is "Faithful and True."

Why is it so important that we know that our exalted Lord is faithful? First, because He did the will of the Father for our redemption in His death and resurrection in all faithfulness, we may be doubly sure that He continues at God's right hand to execute God's counsel for the establishment and fulfillment of His covenant in the same faithfulness. The gathering of His elect from the nations of the earth until His coming again shall surely come to pass. Of all that the Father has given to Christ from eternity, He shall lose not one. As many as God has ordained to eternal life shall believe, because Christ shall see to it that by His Spirit they will believe His gospel through the preaching of the gospel that He sovereignly directs and controls. All those that should be saved according to God's good pleasure shall be added to the church according to His timing and good wisdom.

Second, Christ has also revealed that as our heavenly High Priest, who prays for us, He will pray that our faith fail not. He is our faithful High Priest, who intercedes for us continuously so that our faith fails not. That faithfulness of Christ is necessary lest we perish in our sin and unbelief, and not believe and learn the faithful life of daily conversion and repentance at the foot of the cross of Christ, and a faithful life of godliness and honorable virtue. Without that prayer of Christ, by which we receive the grace and mercy for our salvation daily, we could not have the beginning of the life of faithfulness to God. Christ's faithfulness makes the virtue of faithfulness for us, in us, and through us possible.

Christ's loyalty to His church is encouraging. Because He is faithful, He promised that He will be with His church even unto the end. He will not forsake His people. He will not leave His sheep and lambs so that they are destroyed by the devil, by the world, or by themselves. He is our good Shepherd, who provides His church with the necessary gifts and means to be preserved unto the end. All of the promises that Christ declares to His church are true, and He is faithful to them and to all those in whom those promises must be realized.

... to be concluded. 


Thanksgiving

Whenever we gather to give thanks, we should remember what Scripture teaches about the activity, especially this time of year when even the ungodly claim to engage in it. Thanksgiving is essentially an act of worship performed only by faith. Although we thank each other and consider it courteous, with few exceptions thanksgiving in Scripture is directed entirely to God. Giving thanks is a sacrifice of praise, a freewill offering of the heart to express our gratitude to God (Heb. 13:15; Lev. 22:29). Entering His gates with thanksgiving is simply part of our reasonable service and payment of our vows (Ps. 50:14; 100:4). And it should describe our entire life—we must be thankful in whatever we do in word or deed (Col. 3:15-17).

Rightly, we associate thanksgiving mainly with prayer. Thanksgiving begins with prayer (Neh. 11:17). Godly officebearers like Moses, David, and Daniel regularly gave thanks in prayer. Jesus customarily gave thanks in prayer before He broke bread to eat (John 6:23), and Paul ceased not to pray thanks (Eph. 1:16). We also are told to continue in prayer with thanksgiving (Col. 4:2; Phil. 4:6). For Christians, prayer is simply the chief part of thankfulness (LD 45). But an important, perhaps overlooked, means of thanksgiving is singing. Scripture refers to it frequently. David wrote songs and appointed Levites to give thanks morning and evening by singing with instruments (I Chr. 16:4-7). Scripture says it is good to give thanks by singing (Ps. 92:1), and urges us to come before His presence with thanksgiving, making a joyful noise unto Him with psalms, and with voices of thanksgiving to publish all His works (Ps. 95:2; 26:7).

For what are we to be thankful? Everything. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you (I Thess. 5:18). Certainly this includes every good gift of creation. Only if we give thanks can we eat to the Lord (Rom. 14:6). Marriage and meats were created to be received with thanksgiving; indeed every creature of God is good if it is received with thanksgiving (I Tim. 4:3-4). But, chiefly, we must thank God for who He is

and for every spiritual benefit He grants us. The psalmists gave thanks for God's name being near (Ps. 75:1), for His righteous judgments (Ps. 119:62), and at the remembrance of His holiness (Ps. 30:4). Anna gave thanks for Jesus Christ (Luke 2:38), and the Samaritan leper for His healing (Luke 17:16). Jesus gave thanks that God heard Him (John 11:41), and hid the gospel from the wise but revealed it to babes (Matt. 11:15). Through Paul we learn to give thanks for the communion, love, earnest care, and remembrance of the saints (Col. 1:4; Acts 28:15; Phil. 1:3). We must be thankful for faith in Jesus (Phm. 1:5), our election (II Thess. 2:13), His unspeakable gift (II Cor. 9:15), obedience to the truth (Rom. 6:17), knowledge of God (II Cor. 2:14), the Word of God (I Thess. 2:13), grace (I Cor. 1:4), our inheritance (Col. 1:12), for victory through Christ (I Cor. 15:57). And that most often mentioned—give thanks for God is good and His mercy endures forever (I Chr. 16:34).

Giving thanks is the unique activity of the believer. The ungodly are unable and unwilling, for in death there is no remembrance of God or thanksgiving (Ps. 6:5). It is the characteristic wickedness of the world that when they know God, they neither glorify Him nor are thankful (Rom. 1:21). But the righteous give thanks, and do so frequently, for it is the very purpose of our salvation and reason for our existence (Ps. 140:13; Eph. 5:4). The Lord comforts Zion so that thanksgiving may be found therein (Is. 51:3). The Lord plants and builds up His church so we abound therein with thanksgiving (Col. 2:7). He multiplies our numbers and glorifies us with His goodness, so that out of His church shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them making merry (Jer. 30:19). We are enriched bountifully in everything, and the administration of His gifts is made abundant in order to bring much thanksgiving to God (II Cor. 9:11-12). Let us then give thanks unto the Lord among the heathen (Ps. 18:49), give thanks in the great congregation (Ps. 35:18), rise up at midnight to give thanks (Ps. 119:62), and give thanks unto God forever and to all generations (Ps. 30:12; 79:13). For all things are for our sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God (II Cor. 4:15). 

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RFPA Annual Secretary Report

In the Foreword to the First Edition of his book *The Sovereignty of God*, Arthur W. Pink wrote the following:

In addition to the widespread effects of unscriptural teaching, we also have to reckon with the deplorable superficiality of the present generation. To announce that a certain book is a treatise on doctrine is quite sufficient to prejudice against it the great bulk of church members.... The craving today is for something light and spicy, and few have patience, still less desire, to examine carefully that which would make a demand both upon their hearts and their mental powers. We remember, also, how that it is becoming increasingly difficult in these strenuous days for those who are desirous of studying the deeper things of God to find the time which such study requires. ...In spite of the discouraging features referred to, we believe there is even now a godly remnant who will take pleasure in giving this little work a careful consideration, and such will, we trust, find in it "Meat in due season."

It is with gratitude to God that the Board can report to you tonight that the Reformed Free Publishing Association has again provided "Meat in due season."

The Board, through the work of the individual committees, under the able leadership of our President, and by the grace of God, has again over the last year busied itself with the work of publishing, promoting, and distributing distinctive and sound Reformed literature. What follows is a brief report of the work of the past year.

Eighty-six years ago the RFPA was formed to proclaim the truth of the Reformed faith, and she did so by means of the *Standard Bearer*. North America's oldest contin-

uously-published subscriber-based Reformed magazine is currently sent to 2,316 subscribers found in 47 of the 50 states as well as Denmark, Ghana, India, Kenya, Korea, New Guinea, and Romania, to name a few. That the truth of the Reformed faith can be broadcast to so many tribes, nations, and tongues is indeed a great blessing. The Board, working with the Editorial Staff, continues to work so that this word can continue to be spread far and wide. Over the last year several changes were made to the layout and appearance of the magazine itself. Given the fact that the appearance of the *Standard Bearer* had not been updated since 2000, and only once since 1986, all agreed that it was time for a new look. These changes were made to make the appearance more readable and yet still maintain a traditional dignity. We are confident that both were accomplished. Recognizing that many today prefer to access material on-line, current issues of the *Standard Bearer* continue to be available on-line, as well as previous issues.

The Board, in conformity with our constitution to "witness to the truth contained in the Word of God and expressed in the Three Forms of Unity and to reveal false and deceptive views repugnant thereto," has been faithful to that charge in the last year as well with the publication of two works, *Contending for the Faith: The Rise of Heresy and the Development of the Truth*, and *Bound to Join: Letters on Church Membership*. Even in this age steeped in "deplorable superficiality" there is much about which to be encouraged. One example is this comment from a supporter of the RFPA here in the States: "*Bound to Join* is a clear trumpet sound for the truth about the church, its value, and our requirement to join and never leave. I have not heard or read such a clear exposition on the subject before. The book is captivating." Consider these remarks regarding the other publication of 2010, *Contending for the Faith*, which is a companion work to the RFPA's 1999 publication, *Portraits of Faithful Saints*: "Reading it now.... Well written, excel-

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lent, fascinating and faith strengthening. To God be the glory!”

The Board was also highly encouraged to see that in a year in which we published only two books, book sales for the year were up by over 25%. This was even prior to the largest order in RFPA history being filled. Recently 388 books were shipped to Northern Ireland to restock the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church’s bookstore. We highly encourage others to follow Rev. Angus Stewart’s lead and call in orders by the pallet load! The Membership & Marketing Committee also reported that the RFPA had record sales with regards to sales for non-*Standard Bearer* members for the month of June and record sales for phone/email/and new customers. As of late, many of the most recent book club members have been younger singles and newly married couples. Out of the newest 33 book club members, 11 are in the 16-23 age-group, and 9 are newly-married young couples. This is very encouraging for the Board as we see many of the younger generation refusing to be characterized by the apathy that infects so many.

We continue to receive requests from those who wish to translate our materials into their native tongue. This year we received and granted requests from individuals who intend to translate *The Reformed Faith of John Calvin* into Portuguese and separate requests to translate both *Saved by Grace* and *Doctrine According to Godliness* into Afrikaans. Also granted this past year were requests to post various portions of our publications on websites aimed at citizens of the United Kingdom, South Africa, and China.

One of the ongoing concerns again for the Membership & Marketing Committee has been the continued updating of our website. Given the response that we have received, one could comfortably say that the website redesign has been a success. Some of the notable changes include: A featured-items section, which allows for a highly visible display of new titles and promotions, a prominent button to join the Book Club, and a prominent link to the *Standard Bearer*, both current issues and previous issues. There is also a current-doctrinal-issues tab, which makes our site more than just a place to buy books. This feature gives us a voice to state our distinctive positions on current issues. One other feature of the website that integrates something new for the RFPA is a link to Heritage Recordings. As the website states, Heritage Recordings

is an audio collection of previously unpublished, historic sermons and lectures by several Protestant Reformed ministers. Although the intent is certainly to make the sermon content more widely available, the reality is that when more people come to the site for sermons, they are also more likely to consider looking at our book selection or clicking on the *Standard Bearer* link.

The RFPA also welcomed our newest staff member, Bethany Kingma, earlier this year. Bethany’s main tasks will be to manage the website, including evaluating the website for focus, clear and complete information, user friendliness, as well as professional quality. She will also copyedit website content, post changes and updates to the website as needed, assist in producing the *Update* and developing promotional materials, such as ads, flyers, and catalogs. In addition, she will be able to work as a freelance associate copyeditor should the need arise.


Looking to gain access to a new market and younger demographic, the Board instructed Bethany to create and publish a Facebook page for the RFPA. This allows the RFPA to post new books, as well as news and updates regarding current issues and books. This also gives us free advertising and allows us to progress with the growing trends.

The Board also takes this opportunity to thank our other staff members, Evelyn Langerak, Tim Pipe, and Paula Kamps, who continue to do an excellent job in seeing to it that the day-to-day activities of the RFPA run smoothly. The Board also thanks the Editors of the *Standard Bearer*, as well as Don and Judi Doezema for their work on behalf of the *Standard Bearer*.

The Finance Committee meets monthly to review the income and expenses of the RFPA. It is the Finance Committee’s job to identify any trends and react to them, whether that is fewer sales and subscriptions or increasing expenses. This year, a change in printing companies resulted in a savings of \$10,000 in production costs. The Board again reminds our constituency that your financial support is vital to maintain the daily operations of the RFPA and to keep the cost of the material affordable to as many people as possible. If you as an individual or as a member of an evangelism committee know of someone who is interested in reading our publications, but can’t afford them, please make them aware of our fund set aside for this cause. Last year, over \$850 of material was given

free to people who desire to read our material, but could not afford purchasing it.

Association members and friends, A.W. Pink described the spiritual condition of his day as deplorable superficiality. Conditions have not improved since 1930. Indeed they have worsened. Not only do we as a publisher of Reformed works have to contend with this disinterest, we have to compete with the drivel that is published to cater to it. Instead of falling victim to this spiritual lethargy, we must continue to challenge our readers to live lives of discipleship and sacrifice, and provide them with books and materials that are sharp and uncompromising in their exposition of the truth, all the while exposing the lie as the

work of the devil. The question we have to ask ourselves as we move forward is the same question that Mordecai posed to Esther when the decree had gone out to wipe out the Jewish people. “Have we been raised up for such a time as this?” In stark contrast to the question of Mordecai, however, in which he failed to name the name of God, we boldly confess the glorious sovereignty of God in the life of His church, and pray that He will keep the RFPFA faithful in the proclamation and publication of the Reformed faith so that, as we have over the last 86 years, so too we might in the future continue to provide meat in due season. 

ALL AROUND US

REV. NATHAN LANGERAK

URC Report on Federal Vision (I)

Another study report among many such reports by Reformed and Presbyterian denominations on the federal vision—the heretical movement that for more than ten years has plagued Reformed and Presbyterian churches—has arrived on the ecclesiastical scene. This sixty-page document is courtesy of the United Reformed Churches (URC).

At her 2007 Synod Schererville the URC appointed a fourteen-member committee to study the issue of the federal vision and report to Synod 2010.

That Synod 2007 appoint a study committee to examine by the Word of God and our Confessions the teachings of the so-called Federal Vision and other like teachings on the doctrine of justification; and present a clear statement on these matters to the next synod for the benefit of the churches and the consistories.¹

¹ Acts of Synod Schererville 2007, Article 72.2.

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At its 2010 Synod London, the URC received the report of its study committee on the federal vision and adopted the fifteen statements recommended by the committee.²

The committee fulfilled its specific mandate to examine the federal vision on the doctrine of justification. Its explanation of the federal vision’s doctrine of justification and defense of the creedal doctrine of justification by faith alone should be read by all those interested in the federal vision controversy. For those who are still ignorant of the federal vision, the report can profitably be read for its brief but detailed history of the development of the federal vision, naming of significant theologians connected with the movement, and numerous citations and quotations from prominent federal vision authors.

The report’s summary and critique of a number of the more egregious errors of the federal vision on such issues as paedocommunion, the church, the sacraments, and the preservation of the saints are also of some interest.

The URC report also frankly states the situation in the Reformed church world with regard to the federal vision:

² Interested persons can read the report at https://www.urna.org/sysfiles/site_uploads/pubs/pub5243_2.pdf.

The published writings of FV authors contain reformulations of the doctrine of justification and other related teachings that have not only created considerable controversy and confusion within the family of confessionally Reformed churches in North America, but continue to exercise influence in these churches, including the URCNA. When there is uncertainty within the Reformed churches regarding the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone, it is the duty of every confessionally Reformed officebearer to exert himself in propagating the truth of the gospel and opposing error of every kind (437).

And the report speaks of

the widespread controversy regarding the FV among the confessionally Reformed and Presbyterian churches in North America. This controversy has not only taken place outside of the URCNA, but within the URCNA as well (440).

Through ten or more years of development, the federal vision has created “considerable controversy and confusion” and is “widespread.” It is the duty of every Reformed officebearer to exert himself in “opposing error of every kind.” Presumably, in light of the report, officebearers should exert themselves to oppose the federal vision.

Predictably, the report with its recommendations also has been criticized by some in the URC and Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC) for being extra-confessional binding. In the same agenda in which the report appears, there is an overture from Classis Western Canada (Leduc 2010) to reduce the recommendations to thirteen and to place them innocuously in the body of the report.

Placing the (now 13) points in the body of the paper without requesting synod to officially “affirm” them would avoid the danger of extra-confessional bindings to theological formulations (Agenda 43).

In answer to requests from “several friends,” former URC and now CanRC minister Rev. Bill DeJong gave the report a searing review. About the report’s criticism of certain men by name, he says that, “the names and reputations of godly pastors were dragged through the mud.”

Who are these godly pastors dragged through the proverbial mud, we ask Rev. DeJong?

The names of John Barach, Steve Wilkins, Douglas Wilson, Peter Leithart and others are all mentioned in the report.... The men mentioned above are my friends. I know them well, some better than others. They are people with sensitive hearts and souls. They are godly husbands and fathers, with loving wives and children. They are Reformed pastors in the church of Christ whose hearts beat for the gospel. They are co-laborers in the kingdom of Christ.³

DeJong also warns that the fifteen recommendations of the report are extra-confessional binding:

A message is sent to the Can Ref that their constant warnings about adopting extra-confessional pronouncements are worthless. This point cannot be minimized. The URCNA was warned about the nine points. The nine points were re-affirmed and more points were added.

One can apparently deny the confessional doctrine of election, teach the falling away of saints, promote justification by faith and the works of faith, and send those that believe that to eternal condemnation, and be considered a good friend and colleague of Rev. De Jong, but receiving a report on a serious heresy that has infected Reformed churches gets one censured for what seems to be the only censurable sin: extra-confessional binding.

This reaction to the report by a minister in the CanRC is an indication how pervasive the error of the federal vision has become. The theology of the federal vision is not only, as some of their theologians contend, a nonissue in the CanRC, but also CanRC ministers are actively promoting this theology and its theologians.⁴

The report, therefore, has some value. It has added to the awareness of the threat of the federal vision, has elicited discussion on the federal vision, and has exposed some of the federal vision’s more obvious errors.

The federal vision is the seminal issue that faces Reformed churches today. It is an issue about which

³ http://episcopos.blogspot.com/2010/08/personal-assessment-of-2010-urcna-synod_05.html.

⁴ *Christian Renewal*, March 10, 2010.

Reformed church members may not be ignorant and on which Reformed ministers may not be silent. Silence at this point in time is culpable.

The report is flawed.

Fatally.

The fatal flaw is the seemingly studied refusal to deal with the root of the federal vision controversy, while at the same time vigorously objecting to the federal vision's doctrine of justification that is the obvious fruit of that root.

The report contends that the central error of the federal vision is the error of justification by faith and good works.

The central point of doctrine in the present controversy regarding the FV and related views is, undoubtedly, the doctrine of justification. Were it not for the way various writers within the orbit of the FV have reformulated this doctrine, it is hard to imagine that the FV would have provoked as much concern as it has. Since the grace of free justification is a principal theme of the gospel of Jesus Christ, uncertainty regarding what this grace entails must be a matter of grave concern to any Reformed believer or church (469).

First, this demonstrates that the main intention of the report was to deal with the federal vision at its perceived heart and to comment on the peripheral issues only insofar as they affect the central issue.

Second, this isolates the "doctrine of justification" as "the central point" in the federal vision controversy.

Third, the report makes the startling admission—in light of the massive scope of the federal vision errors—that were it not for their denial of justification, "it is hard to imagine that the FV would have provoked as much concern as it has." It is necessary for the federal vision to deny the heart of the gospel before anyone will take any notice.

The report's analysis that "the central point" of the federal vision controversy is its doctrine of justification is the fatal flaw of the report. The candid admission that were it not for the error on justification the federal vision would probably not have stirred up much controversy indicates the URC's unwillingness to grapple with what is the heart of the federal vision's error, its covenant doctrine.

Serious as the denial of justification by faith alone is, to identify that error as the "central issue" leaves untouched the federal vision's doctrine of the covenant of God that has allowed the errant doctrine of justification to be taught.

It is not that the report does not recognize the importance of the covenant in the theology of the federal vision. The disturbing aspect of the report is that the committee stares the federal vision's doctrine of the covenant in the face, admits that it is central to the controversy, but does not criticize it in the light of the creeds.

The FV movement, as its name indicates, *focuses primarily upon the doctrine of the covenant* [emphasis mine—NJJL]. In this respect, it is a movement that must be of special interest to the Reformed churches, which have always viewed the relationship between the Triune God and His people, whether before or after the fall into sin, as a covenantal relationship (441).

And virtually contradicting its own assessment that the central issue is justification, the report later says,

These revisions [of the doctrine of justification—NJJL] *are the consequence of a number of key themes in the FV reformulation of the doctrine of the covenant* [emphasis mine—NJJL], particularly the obligation of obedience to the law of God in the pre-Fall covenant between the Triune God and Adam, the representative head of the human race (475–76).

The federal vision's error on justification is not, and never has been, "the central point." In this controversy the Synod of Dordt should be a pattern. It can be argued that the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dordt denied justification by faith alone as surely as the Roman Catholic Church. The synod pointed this out and easily refuted them by rejecting the errors of those who taught that the covenant of grace consisted

in the fact that God, having revoked the demand of perfect obedience of the law, regards faith itself and the obedience of faith, although imperfect, as the perfect obedience of the law, and does esteem it worthy of the reward of eternal life through grace.... For these contradict the Scriptures: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a

propitiation through faith in his blood (Rom. 3:24, 25). And these proclaim, as did the wicked Socinus, a new and strange justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole church.⁵

Dordt refuted the Arminians' new and strange doctrine of justification, but that was not its main criticism of the Arminians. The synod recognized that this errant doctrine was the fruit of the Arminians' doctrine of the covenant and of salvation that taught conditional election; universal atonement; the freedom of the will; universal, conditional grace; and the falling away of saints.

In light of the federal vision, then, it should be taken for granted that in a Reformed denomination of churches the doctrine of justification by faith alone is uncontroversial. Indeed, so clear are the three forms of unity on the doctrine that any attack on it should be handled with ease, but to condemn that error without condemning the root of that error in the federal vision's covenant doctrine is futile, indeed, dangerous.

Futile because the arguments advanced will simply be conveniently sidestepped, as the proponents of the federal vision are already doing. Douglas Wilson, noted proponent of the federal vision, has already adroitly sidestepped many of the charges and stated that the report simply does not deal with the issues.⁶ James Jordan noted almost immediately after the report was received that he could sign on to the recommendations with the one exception of paedocommunion.⁷

Dangerous because the report will lull the members of the URC into a false sense of security that the URC has dealt decisively with the federal vision and are unified in their condemnation of the federal vision, which the report virtually equates with a denial of justification by faith alone.

This was the contention of the author of "Federal Vision and Justification: Unequivocal Unanimity," who commented on the URC's reception of the report and noted that

⁵ Canons of Dordt, 2, Rejection of Errors, 4, in *The Confessions and the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches*, 165.

⁶ http://www.dougwils.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7622:scratching-their-watches&catid=46:auburn-avenue-stuff.

⁷ *Christian Renewal*, Sept. 15, 2010.

some of those following certain internet discussion lists may have mistakenly thought that the Federal Vision was a 'hot-button' controversy within the URCNA, but Synod 2010 proved that the federation is united in its commitment to refuting the errors of the Federal Vision and to standing firm for the biblical truth of justification by faith.⁸

Meanwhile, the federal vision remains just as deadly because its error on the doctrine of the covenant has not been condemned and exposed.

Finally, the report is flawed—inexcusably—because it does not call the federal vision a heresy.

Inexplicably.

Tellingly.

Ominously, nowhere, not once, in the sixty pages of the report is the federal vision condemned as heresy.

This was noted as one of the strengths of the report by the chairman of the URC Synod 2010, Rev. Pontier, as reported in *Christian Renewal*: "He was thankful, however, that the word 'error' had been used instead of the 'H' word."⁹

The word *heretic* has become a vulgar word at the URC synod, to be referenced in a similar way as the disgusting F-word.

The federal vision is a heresy. It is a heresy that openly denies justification by faith alone. It is a heresy that teaches people to show up in the final judgment with their works in one hand and their faith in the other, for which they will be damned. That is a soul-destroying heresy. That is another gospel.

If the federal vision were a heresy that denied only justification by faith alone, it would deserve the severest censure. It teaches a new and strange justification like the "wicked Socinus."¹⁰

But the federal vision is much more than that. It is a heresy that boldly denies the heart of the gospel on the basis of its equally bold promotion of a conditional covenant with a conditional promise by which it boldly denies election, the perseverance of the saints, and thus by implication denies all the doctrines of grace.

⁸ *Christian Renewal*, Aug. 18, 2010.

⁹ *Christian Renewal*, Aug. 18, 2010.


¹⁰ Canons of Dordt, 2, Rejection of Errors, 4, in *Confessions*, 165.

It is a heresy that teaches a new and strange *salvation* like the “wicked” Arminians, this time in the covenant.¹¹

It is a dangerous heresy.

¹¹ Ibid.

It is particularly dangerous with regard to its doctrine of the covenant.

To the report’s analysis of this doctrine we turn next time. 

The Minister As Physician and the Seminary As Medical School (2)*

The minister’s tools

In this physician’s bag is one tool.

The one great difference between the medical doctor and the physician of souls is that the minister has but one instrument—a potent medicine, a powerful instrument of healing. It is the very word of God.

This the Scriptures make clear. “He sent his word and healed them” (Ps. 107:20). “My words are life to those that find them, and health to all their flesh” (Prov. 4:20-22).

And the heart and center of that word is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Healing is in His wings. With His stripes we are healed.

This word is miraculous in power, effectual to accomplish what no physical medicine can do. Here we see that, although the figure of a medical doctor is helpful, it is severely limited, because a man of God can do for spiritual afflictions what no medical doctor can do for the physical. By the Word of the gospel, blind men see, lame walk,

deaf hear, dumb speak. This is amazing! The paralyzed feel and move again. By the Word, the withered hand is restored. To be more plain: through the Word, made effective by Christ’s Spirit, the drunkard can turn from his ways. The gambler and wife-beater and porn addict repent and are restored. Even the homosexual can be transformed. “Such *were* some of you,” says the apostle, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified...” (I Cor. 6:11). By the powerful word of God that works effectually in them that believe (I Thess. 2:13).

I see why the Reformed Form for Ordination of the Minister says, “What a glorious work the ministerial office is, since so great things are effected by it.”

The Seminary’s Calling to Train

As you can understand, the qualifications for this occupation are high.

To diagnose is no job for an untrained man. “How bad is it? How far advanced is it? Is it hereditary, or was it caught? Was this an injury but *appears* to have another cause?”

To administer the word is also no simple task. With what dosage? At what time? How often? What *part* of the Word, which is rich and complex? (Just because the minister/physician has only one instrument of healing, does not mean that it can be used simplistically, as though a child could administer it properly.) A man does not read Psalm 77 to an impenitent sinner. Nor does he ap-

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Previous article in this series: November 1, 2010, p. 59.

* This constitutes the conclusion of the speech given by Prof. B. Gritters at the Seminary Convocation held this year in Southwest PRC in Grandville, MI, on September 15, 2010.

ply the threats of Hosea to a downcast, dying, struggling saint.

It even takes great wisdom to bring the word publicly, to this particular congregation, at this particular point in their development, with these conditions they are facing. It takes the same great care to bring the word privately.

(An aside, in that connection: Our work in the seminary is not merely to train men, but to discern whether God has given them the wisdom and discretion to be physicians of the people of God.)

But the training must be rigorous, comprehensive, up-to-date, and therefore lengthy.

Rigorous first of all. Seminary training must test the constitution of a man. Can he survive the rigors of the ministry? I qualify: The ministry is rigorous for the man who is faithful. HCH used to tell us that a sluggard could make it in the ministry. It is possible that a man fritter away his time and then wing it on the pulpit and in the catechism room if he has the gift of gab. He avoids the hard pastoral calls, does not visit the sick and aged.... But for the *faithful* man the ministry is as rigorous an occupation as can be—almost as stressful and rigorous as the calling to be a faithful mother of many children. And seminary must test a man's ability to endure the brutal and relentless demands.

To carry through the medical metaphor, seminary is like a stress test that checks the health of a heart by putting it almost to "full throttle" to see what happens. Can the man take it in this institution, or will he collapse? That is not cruel. What would be cruel would be to allow a pious man into the ministry without testing his constitution.

I remember when I was in seminary and my appendix needed to be removed in the middle of the night. I was lying on the examination table in Butterworth Hospital. Standing before me at 1 A.M. were two (I think) "doctors-to-be" who looked like they had not slept in days. Why in the world, I asked myself, would the head of the emergency room entrust me to their care? Until I realized, at some later time, that they were being put to the test: were they able to administer good medicine in the conditions

that real doctors often find themselves—almost at the end of their rope. And...were they *willing* to do it, which is no less important a question, for would-be pastors as well.

J. Gresham Machen, one great warrior for the Reformed faith, said when they established Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, "We believe that a theological seminary is an institution of higher learning whose standards should not be inferior to the highest academic standards that prevail anywhere."

Second, seminary education must be comprehensive.

The pastoral ministry is a vocation that requires a man to be as broadly educated as possible in all the areas of the gospel ministry. No pastor may be a specialist in one area, only to be grossly ignorant in another—an infectious disease specialist who knows little if anything about heart problems. We will not allow a man to specialize in practical theology, for example, to the exclusion of another important area—doctrinal theology, for example.

The pastor must be a kind of "general practitioner" who knows how to care for all the needs of the saints. All the men must know the full range of the spiritual needs of the people of God. As a doctor must learn biology,

physiology, pharmacology, pathology, kinesiology; so a soul-physician the languages, hermeneutics, exegesis, theology, church history, practical theology, New Testament, Old Testament, missions, etc.

Seminary education must also be up-to-date.

Physicians must know the latest advances in science and medicine. Who among us would trust a doctor who was trained 30 years ago but

never updated his qualifications? So in the ministry of the Word.

Now, the *medicine* is the same, always. But the *way in which* the people of God are *assaulted*, the *manner* in which diseases are spread and infections come into the people of God, and the *shape* and *form* they take, change all the time. And the minister must be aware of these things. Up-to-date in his qualifications.

In the Form for Installation of Professors, the seminary professors are mandated to issue cautions "in regard to the

...seminary is like
a stress test that checks
the health of a heart
by putting it almost
to "full throttle...."

errors and heresies of the old, but especially of the new day....” The seminary professors’ calling is laid out in here: read and read and keep reading—everything that we possibly can, so that we are aware of, and can train our students to be aware of, everything. Our calling is to do research, careful scholarship, and model that to the students.

All this says something deeper about what is required of us professors here in the seminary. It’s not so much skill as it is faithfulness. We must labor with all of the might God gives. If I may modify the adage that “Genius is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration,” perhaps I may say that “Success (spiritual success in the seminary) is 10% ability, and 90% faithfulness.”

Warnings and encouragements

I conclude with some warnings, and one great encouragement.

To the seminary faculty and Theological School Committee: First, let us not be tempted to abbreviate the training unless absolute necessity demands this. No one here wants a medical doctor whose training was truncated because of a scarcity of doctors. We want qualified physicians. Pastors, too. Second, let us give ourselves to our work in the same way that we teach the men to give themselves to theirs.... And require of ourselves the highest standards of excellence in all our work.

To us ministers, and you students who would be ministers: First, the temptation will be to heal superficially—to put a bandage where surgery is necessary, or salve when lancing is required, or ignore the necessary calling to amputate—both in the public administration of the Word and the private. That failure is rooted in covetousness: “Every prophet and every priest is given to covetousness, and (therefore) deals falsely” (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). I cannot take the time to explain that tonight, but ask you to reflect on how that may be. Second, let us take or be ready to take our own medicine. “Physician, heal thyself” did not apply to Jesus, but it applies here. Practice what you preach. That is, recognize the depravity of your own nature, the inclinations in your own flesh, the infections that rage within yourself, and the stench of your own sinfulness. Be brutally honest with yourself before God. And before you apply gospel medicine to anyone else, find for yourself that healing power that is the real Balm from Gilead.

To the people of God: First, receive as from the hand


of God Himself the physician He has appointed for you. Second, allow the physician to examine you, probing carefully, and perhaps painfully, especially at the annual family visitation where this examination takes place. Third, receive the medicine he administers, both publicly and privately. Brother elders, give good advice, and help him to administer the medicine wisely.

The one, great, encouragement

The great encouragement we need, God gives. And what an encouragement it is, to all of us, but especially to the young men: God will use the word that you preach—the word you received from Him through the blood, sweat, and tears of good exegesis and homiletics—to heal His people! He will use the word you bring to bind up their wounds, for “he hath sent me [you also] to heal the brokenhearted, to preach... recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18).

I qualify here, too. For we realize that the word we bring does not work automatically, but only as the Spirit is pleased to use it. So we pray, “Heal them, and they shall be healed; save them, and they shall be saved!” (I paraphrase Jer. 17:14). Also, realize that sometimes God makes the word you bring to be a savor of death to death. Who is sufficient for these things? But do we not remember what He said to Isaiah: “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be *healed*” (Is. 6:10).

Nevertheless, God will use His word, as He has promised, to heal the brokenhearted, bind up their wounds, make the lame to walk, the blind to see, the dead to live. He will make the withered hands work, enable those who could not speak to shout for joy. And you will hear it with your own ears.

Gentlemen, prepare well. Endure the rigors. Be patient with the length of training (although it passes far more quickly than you will realize.) And pray: Lord, heal Thy precious church, Thy blood-bought people, Thy wounded, bruised, injured, infected, but precious people. “Heal me [us], O LORD, and I [we] shall be healed; save me [us], and I [we] shall be saved: for thou *art* my [our] praise” (Jer. 17:14). 

The Place of Laity in Missions (6)

Families Moving to a Mission Field (cont.)

It has been some time now since our last article on this subject. We asked the question in the last article whether or not it is proper for families or confessing individuals in existing churches to move to a place of an established mission field? Our answer to this question is: yes. We recognize, however, that there are objections to this position. There are legitimate questions that arise in this connection.

It is for that reason we are trying to examine the issue a little more closely. Before extolling the advantages of families moving to a mission field, we need to take a look at precedent as well as the objections that are raised. In the last article we spent time examining the scriptural precedent of families moving from the established church to areas where the church had not yet been established or was in its beginning stages of development. In fact, we discovered that it was by means of this that the gospel spread as quickly and extensively as it did.

In this article we are going to examine if there is any historical precedent. I admit that much more study is needed in this whole area of historical precedent. To examine the methods of Christian missions in every era of the new dispensation is an extensive work, which would take hours of devoted study. I intend to limit myself to the establishment of the Dutch Reformed churches in America. Then I will take a look at the limited precedent found in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

In 1609 Henry Hudson, an Englishman, sailed to the New World on behalf of the Dutch East India Company. After Hudson returned to the Netherlands, the Dutch claimed all the land from the Delaware to the Connecticut rivers. A few trading posts were established there, but it was not until 1621 that the Dutch became serious about colonizing this area with their own people. In that

year the Dutch West India Company was formed, and by the year 1623 the first Dutch settlers had left their homeland and their established churches to settle in New Amsterdam (now New York). Dr. Henry Beets describes this endeavor in his book, *The Christian Reformed Church*:

It took considerable effort to entice this class of people away from their ancestral abode. Foreigners [who had] settled in Holland as religious refugees, and the inmates of crowded Dutch orphanages, were sent, perhaps willy-nilly, some of them. But some adult native Netherlanders also came from different parts of the Republic. Practically all of them professed the Reformed religion.

Since many of these settlers were members of the National Church in Amsterdam, the consistory there saw a need to send ministers to the colony. Marvin D. Hoff, in his book *Structures for Missions*, comments,

Two years after the formation of the company [Dutch West India Company—W.B.] the Consistory of Amsterdam noticed that the charter failed to provide for the spiritual needs of the new colony. They called this to the attention of the company's directors, who then committed themselves to support 'religious services both on ship-board and on land.' It was agreed that the church would select the ministers and teachers for the colony, and the company would provide for their financial support.

The first men to arrive to give spiritual help to this colony were Bastian Krol and Jan Huygens, who were "comforters of the sick." The first ordained minister, Rev. Jonas Michaelius, arrived in April of 1628.

It is obvious from this historical account that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands did not hesitate to allow members of their churches to emigrate to the New World. On the contrary, they not only encouraged them but sought out ministers of the gospel to send to America

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Previous article in this series: March 1, 2010, p. 254.

to established Reformed churches in the colonies. The Reformed faith was established in America by means of families who were willing to leave home and established churches, to brave the perils of the sea, and to reestablish themselves in our country. To be sure, there were plenty of individuals and families that came to the Americas simply out of carnal reasons. But there were also “people of refinement among those who settled on our shore, and clergymen with high spiritual purposes” (Beets, *The Christian Reformed Church*).

There was a second “wave” of Dutch immigrants to the United States in the mid-1800s. These were men and women of the Secession, an ecclesiastical withdrawal from the National Church that took place in the Netherlands in 1834. Large settlements of these Dutch immigrants were established in Iowa under the efforts of Rev. Henrik Scholte, and in Michigan under Rev. Albertus Van Raalte.

The churches of the Secession in the Netherlands, rather than frowning on these families moving to the United States with no religious affiliation there, actually encouraged it. James D. Bratt makes this observation in his book *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America*:

In the early years Seceder ecclesiastical networks became the chief means of recruitment, communication, and financing emigration. Seceder propaganda began to break down customary inhibitions against the move, and organized bodies of Seceders (at times large segments of the existing congregations) that migrated under the lead of Secessionist clergy. Thus, an ‘immigrant tradition’ became established in Seceder circles, with momentous consequences. The Dutch, like others, did not emigrate randomly but in chains of kin, neighbors, and associates.

When Van Raalte settled in Holland, Michigan with his large colony of Dutch saints, these families did not belong to any kind of an established church. Later the Christian Reformed Church was founded out of the efforts of many of these people. But Van Raalte by that time had led many other settlers to join themselves with the Reformed Church of America. This contributed in large part to the growth of the RCA in Michigan and Illinois.

Prior to the Dutch immigration of the mid-nineteenth

century the Reformed Church had begun a work in the Midwest, but it did not flourish. By 1849 there were ten congregations in Wisconsin and seven in Michigan. They were organized into the classis of Michigan and Illinois. The second immigration provided major growth for the Reformed Church.... The vast majority of these people came into the Reformed Church because of their immigration from the Netherlands, and not through the evangelistic efforts of the church—either in the East or Michigan (Marvin D. Hoff, *Structures for Mission*, p. 10).

In this second wave of immigrants from the Netherlands we are faced again with the fact that families moved away from their established churches to the United States to begin a new work of the church. These Reformed believers were neither disciplined for nor discouraged from doing this. The churches of the Netherlands even promoted this move. It is in this bold move of these Dutch settlers that our churches find their origin. God used hard economic times and the pinch of persecution to force families to move elsewhere. But look at the tremendous blessing that accompanied this move! God spread the Reformed faith from one continent to the next. Just as in the early New Testament church, so also the Reformed heritage was spread abroad into new lands!

I am sure this type of precedent can be found in other branches of the Reformation too, especially in the spread of Presbyterianism to our country. But again, to find these instances would require a more thorough investigation into the matter.

One last precedent of families moving away from established churches in order to establish a mission work and ultimately a church elsewhere is found in the history of Protestant Reformed missions. In January of 1948 Rev. Walter Hofman was sent for a period of six weeks to Lynden, Washington to conduct a preliminary investigation of a possible mission work in the area. With a little hesitation Rev. Hofman did finally conclude, “Nevertheless, we believe that with the blessing of God the possibility does exist of a congregation here after much diligent and extensive labor. The addition of a few Protestant Reformed families moving in from other communities would greatly aid our work here” (1948 Acts of Synod of the PRC, p. 27). It was noted in this same report of the Mission Committee “that the G. Buma family, former members of Doon and Bellflower, have also arrived into this area.”

Missionaries W. Hofman and E. Knott took up labors in Lynden in September of 1948. In the 1949 Acts of Synod (p. 80) it was reported, "Besides those mentioned in the previous report is the Gus Buma family from Iowa who is now settled in Lynden. Mr. Buma is a staunch supporter and will be a valuable aid to the work in Lynden. Altogether he has been extremely busy yet he has found opportunity to contact several people and distribute some literature.... Although he has purchased a farm near Lynden, he will again remove to the vicinity of one of our churches unless a Protestant Reformed church is established here."

In the next two months of 1948 other Protestant Reformed families moved to Lynden as well. Rev. Hofman reported to the Mission Committee in a letter dated November of 1948, "Our gatherings have been made up almost entirely of the four families who have moved here from our other churches" ('49 Acts, p. 81). By May of 1949 the status of the mission group in Lynden was reported, "There are at present 5 families and 3 individuals, numbering about 40 souls, which is a sizable and faithful nucleus.... The families in the vicinity claim that others from our churches in the Middle West and California are interested in establishing in Washington if a church were organized. They point out that it is practically impossible to obtain a farm in the Middle West and the trend is westward."

Lynden Protestant Reformed Church was organized in December of 1951. In a report by the Mission Committee in the 1952 Acts of Synod, page 35, a further development was noted:

As a result of our labors in Lynden, Washington during the past years, and more directly as a result of the more recent labors of our missionary, Rev. A. Cammenga, a new

congregation was organized in Lynden during the month of December, 1951. Although this group consisted of only six families and two individuals at the time of organization, their number has almost doubled since then. This remarkable growth is due mainly to the fact that other families from our churches in northwest Iowa have moved into the community after the congregation was organized. We are grateful to God Who has given us this congregation in the far West. May He continue to bestow His abundant blessings upon them in the future that they may grow in the riches of the truth of His sovereign grace.

Three observations regarding this precedent in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

First, in the earlier history of our churches, families moving to other places to establish a work or church was encouraged. I have heard from a reliable source (though I cannot prove it from the Acts of Synod since it happened prior to 1940, when our Synod first started meeting) that at least one other of our churches started in a similar way as that of Lynden.

Second, the families that did move to a place where mission work was being done were, *simply by their presence*, of valuable use to the spread of the gospel, forming a solid core of people that accelerated the establishment of the church.

One last observation gleaned from all the precedents examined in this article. When life is going well, God's people seem to root themselves in a certain area. But when God sends persecution or economic hard times, He forces families of the church to move elsewhere—and that for the good of the church and the spread of the gospel. I cannot help but wonder what God has in store for His church today, given the economic crisis in our country.



NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

MR. BENJAMIN WIGGER

School Activities

In our "before it gets too late to mention department," we want to let our readers know about an apple fundraiser the PTA of Genesis

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

PR Christian School in Lacombe, AB, Canada organized this fall. Volunteers were needed for three dates in September and October to prepare pie for distribution. Volunteers were asked to meet at Immanuel PRC armed with apple peelers, cutting boards, rolling pins, and other

essential items necessary for making pies. Genesis' goal was to make and sell 300 pies, and they met that goal, realizing a profit of over \$2,000 for their school. A quick look at the 2010 yearbook of our churches shows that Immanuel PRC has a total of 22 families, which means

that pies were probably sold to neighbors, coworkers, and family and friends of Immanuel as well. This time of year what could be better than a piece of warm apple pie, maybe with some ice cream on top, and a cup of hot coffee to warm up a cold December night?

The South Holland, IL PR Christian School held their Fall Promotional Dinner on November 5 at the PRC in Crete, IL. After dinner, Prof. R. Dykstra gave a slide presentation about the recent trip that he and Prof. Gritters made to Namibia.

Mission Activities

The Lord's Day of November 7 marked the 4th anniversary of the Berean PRC in Manila, the Philippines, as an instituted congregation. We join them in humble thanksgiving as we remember Jehovah's great and undeserved goodness to them and us in allowing us to work together for the furtherance of His church. The Berean congregation planned to have a special *merienda* (meal) between services as part of their commemoration of that anniversary.

Prof. and Mrs. H. Hanko left on October 25 for Singapore for approximately seven weeks, to labor among the saints in the Covenant ERCS. The Hankos went to Singapore primarily at the request of the CERC to speak at their Reformation Day Conference and to assist in the work there, but also on behalf of our Contact Committee. Prof. Hanko will be preaching and lecturing extensively in Singapore. May God grant to them safety, and may God bless their labors with

much fruits. En route to Singapore the Hankos also spent a week in the Philippines visiting with our missionaries, their families, and the churches there.

Young People's Activities

On Sunday evening, October 24, the Young People's Society of First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI sponsored a singspiration under the theme, "Faith of our Fathers." As the theme indicates, singing and special numbers centered on the churches' commemoration of Reformation Day. The collection taken helped defray costs for the 2011 PR YP convention.

The Young People's Society of the Doon, IA PRC invited their congregation and other nearby PR congregations to join them for a Reformation Day singspiration after their evening worship service on October 31.

The young people of the Hull, IA PRC were invited to a photo scavenger hunt on October 23. Plans called for the young people to meet at their grade school at 3:00 in the afternoon. Pizza and pop were provided afterwards.

Congregation Activities

The ladies in the Iowa and Minnesota churches were invited to the annual Ladies League Meeting on October 28, at the Hull, IA PRC. Rev. Laning spoke to the ladies on "Seeking the Main Ideas of Passages in Scripture." A collection was taken for kitchen supplies for Trinity Christian High School.

The Adult Bible Class of the Southeast PRC in Grand Rapids, MI began their new season of Bible study early in October with discussion on

Article 1 of the Belgic Confession. Before each meeting Rev. Langerak will be presenting a 1/2 hour lecture on the Reformation in the Netherlands.

Plans are under way for the 2nd Seniors' Retreat. If you like plenty of advance notice, then you should make a note that this retreat will be held, the Lord willing, September 17-21, 2012 in Sioux Falls, SD, hosted by the Heritage PRC. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn downtown Sioux Falls. Tentative plans include registration Monday evening, the 17th, and the conference ending after breakfast on Friday, the 21st. If you are a senior, or will be, reserve those dates.

At a special congregational meeting in late October, the Loveland, CO PRC gave approval to the concept of a building remodel, and of proceeding with the design work for that project.

Evangelism Activities

In our churches, October and November are months for lectures. This year was no exception. By our count, there were 15 lectures given. Hopefully CDs of some of these will be made available to reach even a wider audience.

The Evangelism Committee of the Lynden, WA PRC hosted a lecture series on the end times October 22-23. Prof. D. Engelsma spoke on "The Two Witnesses" from Revelation 11:3 on Friday evening and the "Battle of Armageddon" from Revelation 16:6 on Saturday morning. The sermons scheduled for Sunday also continued that theme.

The Bethel PRC in Roselle, IL

welcomed Rev. R. VanOverloop to their fellowship on October 22 for their Reformation Day lecture. Rev. VanOverloop spoke on "A Reformed Response to the Catholics Come Home Movement."

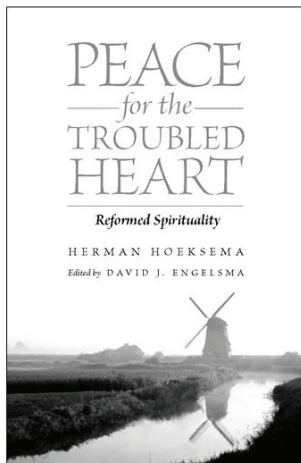
The Redlands' Tucson Subcommittee and Evangelism Com-

mittee of the Hope PRC in Redlands, CA hosted a Reformation Day lecture in Tucson, AZ on October 28. Rev. Lanning gave a lecture on the "Reformation's View of Mission Work." The lecture was held at the Comfort Suites in Tucson. There was a small group from Hope who

made the trip to Tucson Thursday morning and stayed at the hotel that night before returning to Redlands on Friday morning. Rev. Lanning also gave the same lecture in Redlands on October 29 and preached for the congregation that weekend.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



New Release!

Available early December 2010!

Price: \$28.95

Peace for the Troubled Heart is a genuinely Reformed devotional, breathing the rich experience of the believing child of God.

Comprised of 37 meditations written by Herman Hoeksema, this book addresses the theme of struggle and suffering in this life of every believer as a pilgrim of this world. Hoeksema, in his warm, personal, often poetic style, masterfully exercises the spiritual gift of devotional writing.

To order, call 616.457.5970, email paula@rfpa.org, or order online at www.rfpa.org.



Wedding Anniversary

■ With thankful hearts to our covenant God and Father, we rejoice with our parents,

UILKE and JOANNE TOLSMA, as they celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on December 6, 2010. We are grateful for their strength, love, and godly instruction throughout the years. "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deuteronomy 7:9).

- ❖ Art and Helen Tolsma
 - ❖ Fred and Netty Tolsma
 - ❖ Richard and Sharon Tolsma
 - ❖ Brian and Carolyn Tolsma
 - ❖ Irwin and Yvonne Tolsma
- 43 grandchildren
26 great-grandchildren

Edmonton, Alberta

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Hull PRC express their sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. John Huizenga and family in the death of their mother and grandmother,

MRS. JEANETTE VAN BAREN.

May our Father in heaven comfort them by His word, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25-26a).

Rev. Laning, President
Gerald Brummel, Clerk of records

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council of SEPRC extends Christian sympathy to John and Ruthanne Flikkema and Don and Gail Kuiper and their families in the death of their beloved mother and grandmother,

ELAINE FLIKKEMA.

We say with Job, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Council of SEPRC,
Ed Ophoff Jr, Asst clerk

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Mary/Martha Society of Hope PRC in Redlands expresses its sincere Christian sympathy to fellow members Beth VanUffelen, Esther Huisken, and Dawn Howerzyl in the loss of their mother and grandmother,

JEANETTE VANBAREN.

May they find comfort from Lord's Day I of the Heidelberg Catechism: "What is thy only comfort in life and death? That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faith Savior Jesus Christ...."

Rev. VanderWal, Pres.
Janine Meelker, Sec'y.

Resolution of Sympathy

■ The Council and congregation of Hudsonville PRC express its sympathies to officebearer Elder Joel Zandstra and his family in the death of his mother,

MRS. WINIFRED ZANDSTRA.

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

Rev. Garret Eriks, President
Doug DeBoer, Asst. Clerk

Wedding Anniversary

■ We give praise and thanks to God for our parents,

**EDWARD and MARY
LOTTERMAN,**

as they celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary on December 12, 2010. We as a family have witnessed the grace of God and His provision for us in these 40 years, and we pray that He will continue to bless our parents in the years to come. Our parents have been a true blessing, a godly example, and a faithful picture of Christ and His Bride. We pray the Lord's continued blessing on them in the years to come, that they may ever draw closer to one another and to the Lord. "Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm 48:13, 14).

- ❖ Larry and Amy Rypstra
Alaina, Jesse, Lydia, Corina, Jeremy
- ❖ Cornelis and Rebecca Kleyn
Rachel, Abbie, Kelsie, Justin, Jared
- ❖ Andrew and Rebecca Lotterman
Jacob, Zachary, Nathan, Micah
- ❖ Michael and Heidi Haveman
Ethan, Darcie
- ❖ Herman and Lindy Hanko
- ❖ Russell and Karisa Lotterman
Bradyn, Austin, Calvin
- ❖ Ryan and Katie Kooienga
Emma, Tyler, Meghan
- ❖ Keith and Holly Feenstra
Cody, Janelle
- ❖ Philip and Emily Miersma
- ❖ Alex and Bethany Kingma

Byron Center, Michigan

Classis East

■ Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, January 12, 2011, at the Trinity Protestant Reformed Church, Hudsonville, Michigan. Material for this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk by December 8, 2010.

Jon J. Huisken
Stated Clerk

Wedding Anniversary

■ It was with a grateful heart that we celebrated with our parents and grandparents,

JOHN and MARILYN DYKSTRA,

their 60th wedding anniversary on November 6, 2010. We are so grateful that they abide still in the steadfast knowledge of salvation through our God and Savior. They continue to witness daily His tender mercies through their guidance of us children, grandchildren, and now their great-grandchildren.

"This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I have hope in him" (Lamentations 3:21-24).

- ❖ Gerry and Theresa Dykstra
Mike and Danielle Dykstra
Eric and Tracee Dykstra
Ava
Heather, Carl, and Eileen Dykstra
- ❖ Ken Dykstra
- ❖ Wanda Kamminga
and Dave (in glory)
Shawn and Lynnae Kamminga
Shannon and Scott DenHerder
Gavin
Kendra and Mitchell Stuive
Mackenzie
Ryan Kamminga
Audra and Joseph Ophoff
Isaac
Shane Kamminga

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Wedding Anniversary

■ On October 17, 2010, our parents, **GARY and DEB BOVERHOF,** celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. We give thanks for their godly example shown to us! Great is Thy faithfulness, O Lord!

- ❖ Michael and Kate Boverhof
Alexis Jo
- ❖ Brent and Brooke Boverhof
Owen
- ❖ Joel Boverhof

Grandville, Michigan

Resolution of Sympathy:

■ The Council and congregation of Peace PRC express Christian sympathy to Mr. Menno Poortenga in the sudden loss of his wife,

MRS. BEA POORTENGA.

May he take comfort in knowing that this too has happened according to the perfect plan of our heavenly Father as we confess in Psalm 73:24: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Our prayers are with Menno and family in their grief.

Rev. Clayton Spronk, President
Barry Warner, Clerk

Reformed Witness Hour

December 2010

Date	Topic	Text
December 5	"The Final Sign of Christ's Return"	Luke 21:25-28
December 12	"The Blessing Upon Ruth's Seed"	Ruth 4:11, 12
December 19	"Mary's Miraculous Conception"	Matthew 1:18
December 26	"The Song of the Angels"	Luke 2:13, 14