

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

... in a so-called Christian nation such as ours there is, even from an outward point of view, an alarming breakdown of morality in our society, and that, too, in the crucial areas of marriage and the home. What we are seeing is the practical results of the “situation ethics” which men began increasingly to promote in the name of the “church” a couple of decades ago.

See “Frightening Statistics” — page 437

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION

## Abraham's Sojourn

Rev. H. Veldman

*"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*

Heb. 11:9-10

Abraham was called by God, unconditionally, to leave Ur of the Chaldees. He went out, we read, not knowing whither he went. He knew nothing either of the country to which he was going or the way to that country.

In this scripture we now call attention to Abraham's sojourn or pilgrimage in the land of promise. It must have been a sore trial for him when he finally arrived in the land the Lord would show him. He was a stranger in his own land! The land of



promise was a strange country to him!

The Dutch translation is an improvement upon the English. It reads, and we translate: "For he looked for *the* having foundations city (the emphasis falls upon the fact that this city has foundations - H.V.), whose architect or designer and builder is God."

A sore trial!

Did Abraham expect improved conditions in his new country? Idolatry and superstition must have been common in Ur, as is also evident from Joshua 24:2. Already some four hundred years after the flood, the true service of Jehovah must have become very scarce; the people who served the living God must have been very few. Did Abraham think that the Lord was calling him to a better home, better surroundings, spiritually better neighbors in that new country? Did he, weary of all the idolatry in Ur of the Chaldees, look forward to new surroundings in which he would be free to serve the living God, unhindered by all the godlessness around him as had been the case in his native land? Was this his hope and expectation?

How disappointed he must have been! Indeed, he came into a rather populous country. Genesis 13:7 tells us that the Canaanite and the Perizzite lived in the land. Indeed, the land into which he came was worse than the country he had left. God surely did not call Abram out of Ur to preserve the true religion as it is sometimes alleged and taught in catechism books. Fact is, the country was inhabited by heathen tribes that were very numerous and desperately wicked. All we need do is think of Sodom and Gomorrah, the wicked cities of the plain.

This is not all. Abram could not even call this new country his own. True, he did receive more definite information about the future: that he would receive a seed, that that seed would become a great nation, that all the land would be given him and his seed for an everlasting possession. However, all this lay in the future. One may ask: why did not the Lord give him the land immediately? The answer must be: Abram must live by faith, not by sight. He must wait a long time; in fact, he himself would never receive any part of it, not even to set his foot on it — see Acts 7:5. Shortly after he enters the land, he is forced into the land of Egypt because of a famine. Twenty-five years he must wait for a son, Isaac. In the meantime, he and Sarah had become old. And during all this time he is a complete stranger in the land. How disappointed he must have been when entering this new and promised land! How different may have been his expectations! This land must have been a far cry from that which he had anticipated!

Does not the same thing also apply to us? We find ourselves in the midst of afflictions. We probably

have hopes that our troubles cannot become any worse. Yet, they increase! How disappointed we may be! And, the Lord continues to call unto us: where I lead you, you must follow. Why? Because we must live by faith. The Lord does not ask us to follow Him because we see the end of the road. We must not walk by sight. He calls to us: I know the end, and that is quite sufficient. Is it not quite enough that the living and unchangeably faithful God, the God of our salvation, knows all things, also the road on which He calls us to travel?

Abraham was a stranger, a sojourner. To be a stranger means literally to dwell beside or near someone. A stranger dwells near the people of his country, never with them. Abraham was no mixer. If you had seen him you would have been able to single him out immediately. He looked and acted like a stranger. Secondly, he dwelt in tabernacles or tents, as did Isaac and Jacob. Although the whole land was his by promise, nothing was his by reality. He settled nowhere; he built no city anywhere. He chose to live in a tent. A tent, we understand, emphasizes the idea of the temporary.

How remarkable! First, this was Abraham's deliberate choice. He was a very rich man. He also has three hundred eighteen servants after he and Lot separated. Surely, he did not have to live as a foreigner. But he chose this life deliberately. How this becomes evident in the quarrel between his and Lot's servants, and later when the king of Sodom offered him of the goods recaptured from Chedorlaomer! The country was not his own, and he never tried to make it his own. Secondly, notice the life he chose to lead. He never tried to return to Ur of the Chaldees. One may ask: why leave one's country and go to another and then never try to make that new country one's own? Of course, the answer is: this is the land of the promise. To be sure, the Lord promised this land to him and to his seed. However, the realization of this promise lay in the future. God would give it to him in His own good time. This explains Abraham's sojourn. He was willing to wait until the Lord gave it to him.

And the same also applies to us. Indeed, we must surely live in the world, near the world. But we must never live with the world. We must be strangers and foreigners, live antithetically, as a people who are completely different by God's grace. . . .

What motivated Abraham, this father of believers? He looked, we read, for the city that has foundations. Now this certainly does not mean that he looked for an earthly city, the earthly Jerusalem. How impossible is this view! First, how disappointed this man of God must have been, inasmuch as he never owned a foot of land in this new land! He looked for an earthly city? Secondly, this earthly view is exactly



what the writer of this epistle is opposing throughout the epistle — see Heb. 12:22; 11:16. Thirdly, this earthly view is in conflict with this text. It certainly could not be said of the earthly Jerusalem that God was its builder and maker in that literal sense of the word. These words surely apply to the Jerusalem that is above.

God is this city's Builder or Architect. He is the Architect or Designer of the heavenly Jerusalem that has foundations, the city, therefore, that will abide forever. He planned it. It is the City of God, God's City, in which God will be all in all, everything revolving about Him and His glory, and then as centrally revealed in Jesus Christ, our Lord. And the Lord is also its Maker. Indeed, who else would be able to build this city?! This city must be built upon the ruins of sin and death, is built by the living God through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, in the way of the cross and resurrection, and by the power of God's almighty grace.

And Abraham looked for this city. He looked for it, expected it, waited for it. He had his eye of faith upon it, looked for it, not naturally, but spiritually, was homesick for it, longed to dwell in it.

This motivated Abraham's sojourn. He was a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. The life of that city was in his heart; the love of God had been shed abroad in his heart. He had been born again, from above. He was therefore a sojourner in the land of promise, was so different from all the people round about him, could therefore never mix with them. And, in the measure that he dwelt or sojourned among them, he looked for this heavenly city; his homesickness grew for the City that is above.

Need we say that the same thing must also characterize us, the people of God, and throughout the ages? Yes, this must always be said. Strangers we are and must be in the midst of the world. It should not be at all difficult to "spot" the people of God here below and as in the midst of the world. We, too, must live in tents — spiritually, of course! We must never set our hearts upon the things that are below. We must be known by the world as strangers, and also treated as such, all because we are foreigners in the world, born from above, strangers who are enroute to the City of the living God.

Indeed, how hopeless is apparently our lot! It was

surely hopeless for Abraham. He lived in the Old Dispensation, in the age of the shadows, before the coming of Christ into our flesh and blood. How far removed he was from the heavenly City!

However, our lot is surely just as hopeless! What guarantee does the afflicted, despised, hopelessly outnumbered people of God have that they will inherit heavenly life and immortality? Are not all *things* against us? Is anything for us?

This is possible only by faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Faith trusts in God, and in the word of His promise. Everything is invisible: God is invisible; His Christ is invisible; His cross (what it really is) is invisible; that He is highly exalted is also invisible. Faith, however, is this evidence, is itself this evidence. Faith takes hold of God and of His promises in Christ. We need not prove things. Of course, we can never prove these things to the world. But we need not prove them. Fact is, I believe, and therefore I know. And faith is also the substance of things hoped for. Faith itself is the ground for this hope, is itself this hope. Faith, as rooted in Christ, reaches out to the life that is above; believing, we hope and reach out to the future, are not only pilgrims and strangers, but also consider it a rare privilege of grace to be such, rooted as it is in God's sovereign and unconditional election. Besides, is it not wonderful to suffer in behalf of Christ, that all our suffering and affliction serves the glorious purpose of setting forth the power and glory of God's grace as revealed in and through Jesus Christ, our Lord?

Yes, we look for the City of our God. We consider all things but loss in the light of it. We believe all our affliction to be worthwhile. Worthwhile? Indeed, we know that all the suffering of this present time is never to be compared with the glory that shall follow. The apostle sings of this wonderful expectation in the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, and the Church of all ages has learned by the grace of God to sing it after him. And the same apostle Paul also sings of this unbelievably wonderful expectation in the fourth chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians: our present light affliction which is but for a moment works for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This is our calling, and our unspeakable privilege by divine grace.

Know the standard and follow it.  
Read **The Standard Bearer**



## EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

### Frightening Statistics!

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

Of these words of Romans 1:28 I was reminded recently by a front-page article in *The Grand Rapids Press* entitled "Census Finds Unwedded Bliss Rising," with the sub-title, "Experts Believe Nearly Half of Today's Newborns Will Be Raised by Only One Parent." Here are some of the statistics cited by the article:

—"The Census Bureau reported Tuesday that the number of couples living together outside of marriage has more than doubled during the first eight years of this decade, and increased more than eight-fold among people under 25."

—"The Census Bureau found that as of March 1978 one of every five American households consisted of just one person, up 42 percent just since 1970. Moreover, census experts have estimated that nearly half of all children born today will spend a 'meaningful' portion of their childhood with only one parent."

—"The study shows that cohabitation, or 'households which contain two unrelated adults of opposite sexes had increased by 117 percent since 1970. It found about 1.1 million such households in the country. . . ."

—"In seven of every 10 of the unmarried households, both partners were under the age of 45 in 1978. One fourth of the households had one or more children living with them."

—"The trend toward living together without legal sanction was largely a youth phenomenon. There was almost no change between 1970 and 1978 in the number of unmarried households headed by persons 45 or older. However, there was a six-fold increase among those headed by persons under 45 and an eight-fold increase in those headed by someone under 25."

—"The 1970 census found only 29,000 of the under-25 couples, compared with 236,000 in the 1978 survey." A note is added that "Some of this rise might be due to greater willingness today to disclose such arrangements to census takers." A note might also have been added that no one knows the number of such fornicating couples who do not disclose such arrangements to census takers or who cannot be traced.

—"The number of families in which no man is present rose from 5.6 million in 1970 to 8 million in 1978. In 1978, a third of these women were divorced, 29 percent widowed and 15 percent single."

—"The Census Bureau estimates that last year 12 million of the country's 63 million children were living with only one parent. This represented an increase of nearly half over the proportion in 1970. The number of children living with unmarried mothers more than tripled over the period."

A cursory consideration of frightening statistics like these makes it plain that in a so-called Christian nation such as ours there is, even from an outward point of view, an alarming breakdown of morality in our society, and that, too, in the crucial areas of marriage and the home. What we are seeing is the practical results of the "situation ethics" which men began increasingly to promote in the name of the "church" a couple of decades ago.

In terms of our Reformed confession concerning total depravity and the corruption of mankind, there is in these statistics an object lesson illustrating the truth taught in Canons III-IV, Article 4. According to that article, there remain in man since the fall "the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of natural things, and of the differences between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment." The very fact that the Census Bureau pays attention to



matters like the above and gathers statistics about them is evidence of such "natural light." And the fact that sociologists and educators are perturbed and deeply concerned about such things as the proliferation of "single parent homes," illegitimacy, teen-age pregnancies, couples who "shack up" (the Dutch call it "*hokken*") without benefit of law, etc. — this very fact, I say, though these same sociologists and educators never propose the right solution to these problems, is also evidence of "natural light" in a depraved society.

At the same time, there is here an object lesson illustrating the Canons' evaluation of fallen man's natural light and its abuse: "But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God." Those who perpetrate the above described evils in our modern society are certainly an illustration of this truth. But the leaders in the field of sociology and education who are forever treating or trying to treat the effects of sin, rather than sin itself and the cause, are also illustrations of the fact that natural man renders his "natural light" wholly polluted — and becomes inexcusable before God. Incidentally, how even from an empirical point of view — let alone Scriptural — anyone can believe in a restraint of sin in man and society by virtue of common grace in today's world is difficult to understand.

Meanwhile, there is a warning that needs to be sounded.

Our covenant homes are established in the midst of a world full of such corruptions as are described in the statistics cited. Our children and our young people grow up, begin their courtships, are married, and establish their homes in the midst of such a society. Whether we are aware of it or not, all of us come into contact with that society and its corruptions. Almost unconsciously we can be influenced by the world's life-style and thinking and language. Gradually that which was first mentioned with blush-

ing and as shocking can become so commonplace that it begins to be deemed acceptable. Do you remember when coed dormitories at colleges and universities first made the news? Shocking, wasn't it? Today they have the status of acceptability. Do you remember when couples living together in fornication first began to become a public thing? Probably it has not yet reached the status of acceptability, but it no longer creates the shock waves that it once did. It is becoming accepted. It is made the butt of ribald jokes. It is discussed as possibly having quasi-legal status in connection with what have been dubbed as "palimony" lawsuits. But do you ever hear it seriously described as living in sin and debauchery?

Take, for example, the news dispatch from which I quoted above. Did you notice the euphemisms employed in the article to refer to what is sin, to what is a vile transgression of the law of God? The article speaks of "cohabitation," of "households which contain two unrelated adults of opposite sexes," of "unmarried households." About the closest it comes to any kind of mention of breaking the law is the mention of "living together without legal sanction." And you and I can easily become accustomed to such euphemistic language, begin to adopt it into our thinking and into our own speech.

And then I have not mentioned the movies, the stage plays, the television shows, the magazine articles which deliberately flout the law of God and which flaunt the sinful life-style under discussion. These should not even need to be mentioned. To expose one's self to them is deliberately to expose one's self to hell fire!

No, I am referring merely to simple, everyday, unavoidable contacts with the world and its thinking and its life-style.

Beware that sin and its defilement do not become commonplace in your Christian thinking and outlook.

Beware that sin is no longer viewed as sin in your thinking and in your home life. Beware that the world's way of thinking and speaking does not become yours and mine. For when it does, it is but one more step to the point that the world's life-style also becomes ours.

## Fiction, Nevertheless

In a recent issue of *Clarion*, the Canadian Reformed magazine, Prof. J. Faber takes sharp exception to my criticism of his statement that in connec-

tion with the Baptism Form one can think of either "two parties" or "two elements or aspects" when the Form says, "Thirdly, since in all covenants there are



contained two parts. . . .” Prof. Faber goes back to the roots of our Baptism Form and quotes from the Church Order of the Palatinate (1563) and from Datheen’s translation of the former in 1566 in an attempt to show that he is correct in his claim. He then states in a concluding paragraph that I should answer his reference to the original Baptism Form. This I gladly do.

My reply is as follows:

1. I was well aware of the language of the Form of the Palatinate and of the alleged language of the translation of 1566 by Petrus Dathenus, having done my research on this question in some of the same sources (and others) which Prof. Faber consulted. I even have an edition of Datheen’s translation which uses the term “*partijen* (parties)” in place of the expression, “*Maer naedien dat in alle verbonden, beyde deelen sich met malkanderen verbinden. . . .*”
2. I was also well aware of the very common practice on the part of various Reformed writers of understanding the above expression as referring to parties.
3. However: a) There is not even absolute certainty as to the text of the edition of 1566. b) There is, to say the least, grave doubt as to the meaning of the expression in the edition of 1566. c) The edition of 1566 was not the synodically adopted edition of the Dutch churches. The language found in the abbreviated edition of 1578-1580 is the language which prevailed in every officially adopted version of the Baptism Form ever since 1578, the Synod of Dordrecht 1618-19 included. d) There is very good reason for the grave doubt to which I referred in “b” above, as well as very good reason to prohibit understanding the present language of our Form as referring after all to “parties” rather than “parts.” That reason is that the Form could very well have used the word “parties” if that had been what was intended; this would have been very simple. Secondly, as I wrote before, the Form never mentions who these supposed parties are, while it does spell out in what the *parts* consist.

Finally, I would point in this connection that I have the Synod of Arnhem 1930 (and thus the official decision of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands in the pre-Liberation days) on my side; and in connection with the decision of the Synod of Arnhem I have also the support of the late Klaas Schilder and Herman Hoeksema, both of whom applauded the decision of Arnhem. This appears from an article in the *Standard Bearer*, Volume 14, pp. 249-250, in which *De Reformatie* of Feb. 4, 1938 is quoted. I have taken the trouble to produce a free translation of this brief article by H. Hoeksema. It was entitled “Parties or Parts?” and ran as follows:

“In connection with the discussion about the

covenant, in particular about the question concerning the unilateral or bilateral character of the covenant, they have also been writing in the Netherlands recently about the question how the expression in our Baptism Form is to be understood, ‘Since in all covenants there are contained two parts, therefore are we by God through baptism also admonished. . . .’ The question is not only how this expression must be understood, but also which is the correct reading.

“Also for us this question is of very great interest. Therefore I think that I do our readers a service if I keep them a bit informed concerning the progress of this discussion in the old country. The brief article from the pen of Dr. Schilder which appeared in *De Reformatie* of Feb. 4 can serve this purpose, and I quote it here:

Our readers remember what I remarked over against Dr. A. Kuyper Jr. concerning the expression in the Baptism Form, that “in all covenants there are contained two parts.” Dr. Kuyper understood “parts” as “parties”; I found his (already long known) argument the opposite of convincing.

At present we point, in continuation of what we already wrote, to what has been observed concerning this matter in our ecclesiastical life; one of our readers, whom we thank for this, has also called our attention to this.

As appears in the volume “Reports,” belonging with the Acts of the Arnhem Synod 1930, and then more precisely in the “Liturgy-report,” p. 6, the pertinent committee proposed the following:

“In the 4th paragraph (of the Baptism Form) to replace the expression ‘there are contained two parts,’ (‘*twee delen begrepen zijn*’) an expression not understandable for all, by the expression ‘two parts enter into a bond.’” (or: ‘two parts combine.’ This is the Dutch expression, “*twee delen zich met elkander verbinden*,” to which Prof. Faber referred in connection with the Forms of 1563 and 1566. HCH)

This harmonizes, as you will recall, with the view in Biesterveld’s “*Gereformeerde Kerkboek*,” a view which in my opinion is unsatisfactorily supported.

According to the Acts of the Synod of Arnhem (p.18), however, the Particular Synod of Drente advised this Synod something else:

“‘In the concept-Form’ of infant baptism to drop the words ‘two parts enter into a bond’ (‘*twee delen zich met elkander verbinden*’) and to read instead: ‘are contained two parties’ (‘*twee partijen begrepen zijn*’).”

Something similar was proposed by Classis Enkhuizen (Acts, 21); they wanted to read, “two parties enter into a bond” (‘*twee partijen zich verbinden*’).

Moreover, the church of Velsen proposed as a third idea (Acts, 21): “. . . to take under consideration whether it would not be better to change the word



'parts' to the word 'parties' in the proposed change 'two parts enter into a bond' ('twee delen zich met elkander verbinden'). The lack of clarity in the presently used edition, 'are contained two parts,' resides precisely in the word 'parts.' That lack of clarity would disappear if this word were replaced by 'parties.'"

Concerning all those proposals a committee reported (Acts, 397). This committee was of the judgment that the various proposals to replace the word "parts" by the word "parties" in the Form could not be accepted, "seeing that these rest on an incorrect interpretation of the pertinent passage" (398). On this ground the committee advised to remain with the old edition (400). This also happened (Art. 166A, 2o, p.100).

It appears therefore that Dr. Kuyper Jr. thinks differently than I, and also differently than the reporting committee of Arnhem. I will gladly justify him over against the committee and myself if he can convince me. But on the ground of what I myself remarked, I continue to consider my own view correct for the present: "parts" — not "parties," but: promise and demand.

"I believe that we may be glad about the advice of the committee and the decision of the Synod of Arnhem. Apart now from the question which is the correct reading of the Baptism Form in this regard, it would certainly lead us in the wrong direction if we would read 'parties' instead of 'parts.'"

Thus far the Hoeksema-Schilder article in 1938.

I maintain my position, therefore, that it is pure fiction that we may think of either parts or parties in connection with this expression in our Baptism Form.

Nor is this a matter of minor importance. Dr. Faber suggests in his article that for him this question concerning the Baptism Form was simply a matter of Symbolics, while for me the truth of the Reformed doctrine of God's covenant is at stake. Perhaps this is

true with regard to him. Yet he himself makes it abundantly clear that the matter of "parties" in God's covenant is tremendously important to him. And he brings into focus some very crucial matters in connection with the whole subject of the covenant. For he now maintains:

1) That it is not Reformed and not Scriptural to state that man is never a party in relation to the Most High and that there are no parties (plural) in His covenant.

2) That I forget that God established His covenant *after* His act of creation or rather that the act of the establishing of the covenant is distinct from the act of creation.

3) That in His favour God made man to become a party in relation to His Creator.

On all three of these matters I am in disagreement with Prof. Faber. To enter into these matters at this time is beyond the scope of this editorial. However, I must point out two things: 1) In this light, the whole question of "parts" or "parties" is much more than a question of Symbolics, even in connection with the Baptism Form; and I am thankful that the Baptism Form's use of "parts" rather than "parties" has been maintained in Reformed churches over the years. 2) Even as I stated in my earlier editorial comment about Prof. Faber's articles on this subject, I am more than ever convinced that our differences with the Canadian Reformed run deep; they concern the very definition of the covenant of grace.

In conclusion, I remind Prof. Faber that he left a question unanswered. In his earlier article he spoke of the covenant as "the mutual relationship or agreement between God and His people." I posed the question: what does Prof. Faber understand by the expression — a Biblical one — "His people"? Does it refer to the elect, or not? It would be worthwhile to hear from the professor on this subject.





## THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

# Missions in Old Testament Perspective

*Prof. Robert D. Decker*

Several truths which have implications for missions emerge out of the Old Testament Scriptures. We noted in our previous article that the Old Testament teaches that all the nations will ultimately come into the Kingdom of God. It is also plain from the Old Testament that God did not leave Himself without witness to the whole world. In the earliest period of Old Testament history we find this phenomenon. Enoch, the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth, prophesied: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14, 15) This of course is negative. But it does indicate that Enoch preached to the entire world of his day of the final redemption of the Church and of the punishment of the ungodly who rise up against God and His cause as represented by His people in the world. And this is ever and always the message of the gospel. This same truth must be preached on the mission fields today. God is coming to judge the nations and save His elect church!

Similarly we read of Noah that he was a preacher of righteousness (II Peter 2:5) and that he condemned the world by faith. (Hebrews 11:7) Also through Noah it is clear God left a witness of His righteousness to the world. That was a righteousness according to which God saved Noah and his family and destroyed the world with the flood. God didn't just do that all of a sudden. God announced it

through Noah's preaching and building of the ark. The world knew what was coming! Again God did not leave Himself without witness to the world. That same righteousness of God must be proclaimed by the church in its mission today.

The Old Testament also reveals that there were those outside of the holy line in the narrower sense, that is, outside of the particularistic line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Israel. There was Melchisedec who lived in Canaan at the time of Abraham. He was called a priest of the most high God. As such he stands in Scripture as the typical priest, for Christ is the priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. He represented God in his community. There was also Jethro, the Midianite and father-in-law of Moses. Rahab, and Ruth the Moabitess, are other examples. Hence the line of the covenant, though for the most part confined to Israel, did include "outsiders." This is certainly prophetic of the New Dispensation when God would gather His elect out of all nations.

There is as well in the Old Testament God's revelation of an all embracing covenant to Abraham. The "seed of the woman" of Genesis 3:15 can be traced from Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, to Abraham. And we know from the New Testament (Galatians 3:6ff.) that this "seed of Abraham" is really Christ (verse sixteen) and all who are in Him by faith. This is the one seed, the Church of all the ages. Nevertheless, already to Abraham God revealed something of this. When God called Abraham He said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And



I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3) This promise, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," God repeated often. (cf. Genesis 13:14-18; 15:5; 17:4-8; 17:15, 16; 22:17, 18) The whole idea, therefore, of the covenant with its spiritual seed implies the task of missions. God's covenant embraces not just an indefinite number of scattered individuals, but the covenant embraces a seed (not seeds as of many), a people, a new humanity. This is the elect race in Jesus Christ. These must be gathered by the Son of God out of all nations by the preaching of the Word.

There is an obviously universal and prophetic note to be found in the Psalms. This, do not forget, is still the Old Dispensation. There was at this time no preaching of the gospel to the nations. Yet there is a universal note and the suggestion that in the future the gospel will be preached to all nations. Among the many examples which could be cited is Psalm 96:1-4: "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods." That remains the task of the church in its mission to declare God's glory among the heathen and his wonders among all people.

This universal note is sounded even more clearly in the prophets. Everything still finds its focus and meaning in Israel, but the universal idea is emphasized nonetheless. There is a "Day of the Lord" coming in which all shall know Jehovah and bow down before Him. This is the vision of the Old Testament Prophets, something no doubt which they did not even grasp in all its implications. The prophet Isaiah proclaims: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:2, 3) Similar passages are: Isaiah 11:1-10; 25:6-9; Micah 4:1, 2; Zechariah 8:20-23. It is striking that in all these passages the coming of the nations, the Gentiles, the heathen to Jerusalem (Mt. Zion) is spontaneous. There is no mention of any human agency. This does not mean that the Church is not instrumental in the gathering of the nations by

means of the preaching of the Word. Not at all. The emphasis falls rather on the fact that God gathers and defends and preserves His Church out of every nation. Whatever else one may say about the work of missions he must say that it is preeminently God's work! This is the fundamental principle of missions. Even in those passages where the agency of the Church is mentioned the emphasis remains on the fact that the coming of the nations is God's work. Isaiah 55:5 reads: "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee." The "thou" of the text is Israel, God's servant who shall call the nations. But the nations shall run to Israel because of the Lord her God Who is the Holy One of Israel Who has glorified her.

All of these passages are prophetic of the coming of the Great Day of the Lord. The prophet Joel speaks of this: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." This word finds its fulfillment in the cross, resurrection, ascension, and pouring out of the Spirit of Christ as the Apostle Peter preached on Pentecost. (Acts 2) But again the work of salvation is entirely God's. God pours out His spirit upon all flesh, God shows wonders in the heavens and in the earth, salvation shall be in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, even in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. The work is God's.

The motive or purpose of the gathering of the Church out of nations is the manifestation of God's glory, the honor of His name. Thus the Lord instructs the prophet Ezekiel: "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." God will save His people, not for their own sakes, but for His holy name's sake. God will do it in order that His glory may be displayed before the



heathen.

In sum, therefore, there are three principles already obvious in the Old Testament Scriptures. The first is that while salvation is centered in Israel (Jerusalem, Mount Zion), it shall not be restricted to Israel. There is a day coming (the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord) when the Church shall be gathered out of all nations. In that Day "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." The second principle is that this gathering of the church out of the nations, even though it takes place through the agency (preaching) of the church itself, is exclusively

the work of God. God gathers His elect Church. Finally, the motive and purpose or goal of this gathering of the Church out of the nations is the manifestation of God's glory and the honor of His name.

These principles must govern the Church in its mission work. In that work the Church is engaged in God's work. And the Church is engaged in God's work for the sake of the glory of His name. These same principles stand in bold relief in the New Testament. We shall examine them in depth, D.V., in subsequent articles.

## MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

# Letter to Timothy

July 1, 1979

Dear Timothy,

If we are to be effective in our pastoral counselling of Christ's sheep we must have some understanding of how God created man. This seems to me to be essential. There is, of course, a general principle involved here: practice is always based on principle. This is true in all our life, for all of life is practice which flows forth from principle. A man lives — always — according to what he believes. The same thing is true in pastoral work. The pastoral work of elders and ministers will be based upon what he believes concerning the nature of a man. If he has an evolutionistic view of man, this will determine how he works with a man when problems enter a man's life. If his labor with God's sheep is going to be according to the Scriptures, then he must understand what the Scriptures themselves say about man by virtue of his creation by God.

To learn something about this subject, we want to take our starting point with Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

It is clear from this passage that man was created by a twofold act of God. God formed him from the dust of the ground, and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Both aspects of this creative act of God are worth some attention.

What does it mean that God formed man from the dust of the ground?

I recall when I was going to grade school (I did not have the privilege of attending a Protestant Reformed Christian School, although the school I attended was a Christian School), the teacher made quite a point of it that this creative act of God meant that God formed a kind of a dust man, something similar to a child's making a snowman when the snow on a winter day is just right for packing. This dust man stood there without life until God came and breathed into it so that it stirred into life and suddenly began to walk around as a man.

This is surely not the meaning of the text.

There are others who take the position that that part of the creation of man which speaks of his formation from the dust of the ground refers to the creation of



the body; the other aspect, the formation of man by the breath of the Lord God, refers to the creation of the soul. This too is wrong. Rev. Hoeksema in his *Dogmatics*, comments on this: "In this view man is really two distinct entities, two distinct beings, a physical and a spiritual being, the two being rather mechanically united for a time. Man is really a spirit living in body. The spirit is the life of that body. In death the spirit departs from the body, and as a result the body dissolves. This crude and philosophical conception is even applied to the birth of each individual human being when it is presented as if the body is born from the parents while God creates the soul. Man, according to this view, is really not one being, but two, even as he was created by two distinct acts of the Creator." (p. 198.)

It is rather striking that when Genesis 2:7 calls the created man "a living soul," it uses the same expression which is used in Genesis 1 to describe other creatures in God's creation. For example, in Genesis 1:21 we read: "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind; and God saw that it was good." The expression in this verse, "living creature," is exactly the same in the Hebrew as the expression used in Genesis 2:7 and translated, "living soul." The same thing is true of Genesis 1:24: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so." Here again the expression, "living creature," is the same used in Genesis 2:7 when that text says: "and man became a living soul."

Quite clearly the Scriptures mean to say by this that, by virtue of the creative act of God, there is a certain resemblance between man and the living creatures created on the fifth and sixth days. The fish and birds were created from the water of this earthly creation; the animals were created from the earth. But man was also created from the dust of the ground. By this creative act of God, therefore, there is some sense in which man is like the animals.

This must not be interpreted to mean, however, that man, by virtue of his creation from the dust of the ground, was first created an animal; and then, when God breathed into him the breath of life, God made a man out of the animal. The resemblance is not to be found here. After all, God simply commanded the waters to bring forth fish and birds and God simply commanded the earth to bring forth animals and creeping things. But man was fashioned by the very hands of God. "God *formed* man from the dust of the earth." There is something about that expression which indicates that God bestowed some kind of special care in this work of the creation of

man. Almost as it were, lovingly, carefully, with great skill, God fashioned man with His own almighty fingers. It was a special act of God and produced a special kind of creature — man, the highest of all creatures, created in the image of God, created as king over the whole earthly creation. Already this expression, that God *formed* man of the dust of the earth, indicates something special about man which sets him apart from the other creatures which God formed.

Nevertheless, man, along with cows and bears, eagles and snakes, sharks and worms, can be called "a living soul." He shares something with all these creatures. He is like then in some respect.

What is this similarity?

The answer is that, from one point of view, man was created as a part of this earthly creation. He belongs to this earth, is a part of it, stands related to it, cannot escape from it, is dependent upon it; and thus he resembles all these other creatures which God called into being.

This is a very important truth which ought never to be forgotten by us. When man sinned God said to man: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Man was emphatically of the dust. He was of this earth. Here he was placed by God. Here he belongs. From this earth he can never escape.

Already here the idea of the covenant of works goes wrong. The covenant of works teaches that man, if he had remained standing in a state of rectitude for a definite period of time, would have finally been taken by God into heaven. Nothing can be farther from the truth. It is simply a fact that man cannot live in heaven by virtue of his creation. He was not created as the angels, adapted to live in the heavenly creation; he was created as a man from the dust of the ground, able to live only upon this earth. Paul emphasizes this same truth in I Corinthians 15:50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood *cannot* inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." It is true that Paul means here to say that wicked and sinful man cannot go to heaven. But he means more than that. He means to say that it is utterly impossible that we who are created flesh and blood can possibly inherit that which is heavenly. This is not only because sin entered the world; this is also because we are created of the earth earthy. After all, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." (I Corinthians 15:47)

Even the elect child of God cannot "naturally" go to heaven. He isn't created that way. The only way he can possibly go to heaven is by means of a wonderful,



powerful, and altogether miraculous wonder of grace through Jesus Christ. By this miracle of grace he is utterly transformed so that he who was created to live only in this world is now able to inherit the kingdom of heaven. This takes a complete change in his very nature which is possible only through Christ. This is what Paul is talking about in I Corinthians 15. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. This corruptible *must* put on incorruption and this mortal *must* put on immortality. Our salvation is far more wonderful than we often think.

So, Adam was created to live in this earthly creation. This was his abode. Here he was destined to spend the years of his life. He was of the dust. He was an organic part of this creation. He was connected to it in all its parts. He stood at the head as king; but the fact remains that he was inseparably related to it. He is dependent upon this creation, for he needs the air of the creation to breath, the fruit of the creation's trees to eat, the water of the rivers of this creation to drink. If he has not these things he will die. He is

dependent upon the earth just as are the animals and fish and birds. When he dies he returns again to the dust from which he is taken.

This is what is meant when Genesis 2:7 speaks of his creation from the dust of the earth.

But there is more. Adam was also created by another act of God, for God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Here is something unique. Concerning this we read nothing in connection with the creation of any other creature. God created man by a twofold act, one of which resembled the animals and birds, and one of which was unique to man.

So we must ask the question; What does it mean that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life?

But we shall have to await this part of our discussion for another letter.

Fraternally,  
H. Hanko

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## NEWS SPECIAL

### Covenant Christian School



LYNDEN, WASHINGTON

In the Spring of 1977, a group of believers of Protestant Reformed persuasion came together to discuss the possibility of beginning a distinctively Reformed, christian school in the Lynden, Washington area. The need for such a school here was outstanding in the mind of most of our Protestant

Reformed parents and they openly expressed that need to the elders of the church during family visitation that year. One of the fruits of that visitation of the homes in the flock that year was the consistory's giving initial leadership by calling that first meeting. Thus was begun the activity which



resulted in the formation of the Society for Protestant Reformed Education in Lynden, which is responsible for the operation of our school here: Covenant Christian School.

From the start, the Lord has richly prospered this work with zeal and enthusiasm on the part of the membership, in heart and spirit, in cheerful giving, and in willingness of hands to the work! We as board and society rejoice through thanksgiving in all that God has done to bring us this great gift for this covenant seed, also those gifts that came to us through your hands, dear reader, when you encouraged us in our calling by your gifts in the congregations, from coast to coast.

Soon a building was found, purchased and renovated. The old "Grange Hall" on Northwood Road, eye-sore that it was, now appears as shown above. In the lower level, there is provision for three classrooms, a kitchen, and the utilities room. The upper level contains two large restrooms, three storage areas for books and athletic equipment, and the gymnasium.

Outside, behind the parking area, we have the playground: swings, bars, tetherballs, etc. as well as softball diamond, complete with a new backstop. Going further to rear of the property is a small wooded "park" of about two acres, which includes many towering cedars.

What a wonderful, busy year that was for our people, doing much of the work "volunteer," but when September came last fall, we were able to open our doors for the first year of instruction. Mr. Kuiper and Miss Lubbers came from Michigan to instruct our children in the fear of the Lord and now the first year is already past. On May 30 we were inspired to witness the first graduating class and to hear them addressed by Rev. Kuiper from their class text: "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life." Proverbs 4:13. Earlier this spring our society took the decision to add the kindergarten and the ninth grades to the school, and we are now seeking a third teacher to help in that work. We pray that the Lord will provide someone to come and share these labors with us, because the school grows from within and without, and at present we expect 45 students in September.

It was a busy year and a good year. Glory be to the Lord!

Covenant Christian School  
John Tolsma

P.S. We are happy to report that the Lord has answered our prayers with respect to our teacher needs by sending Mr. David Zandstra as our third teacher beginning this fall. May God bless him as he begins his labors with us this fall.

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## *SPECIAL REPORT*

# Christ's Church in Christchurch and Beyond

*Rev. J. A. Heys*

Having returned home safely, in the mercy of our covenant God, and by means of planes that two days later were grounded because they were found to be unsafe for use, and having in a former contribution written about Christ's Church in Christchurch with the promise to write again after visiting the other Orthodox Presbyterian Churches in New Zealand outside of and beyond the one in Christchurch, I will

at this time give a further report of our work "down under."

From October into the middle of February our labours were confined strictly to the Christchurch congregation. But in mid-February we answered a request to come and preach in Nelson and for the congregation of which Rev. Ivo Bishop is pastor. Now Nelson is on the northern tip of the southern island,



New Zealand consisting of three islands, two relatively large islands and one small island. Christchurch is about midway on the southern larger island and on its eastern shore. Nelson is about three hundred miles northwest of Christchurch and almost as far north as one can go on the southern island at that point. It is fruit country, and when we were there in February the trees were full of apples, pears, apricots, plums, and the like. Down under and south of the equator the climate and seasons we found to be quite different from ours. And even three hundred miles north of Christchurch makes quite a difference in temperature as well. In fact New Zealand, even as in our own country, has some great extremes in temperature, although they are found in the opposite order from our northern tier of states to the southern row of them. From the southern shores of the southern island to the northern shores of the northern island there are some one thousand miles of different climate. But here the northern regions are the warmest and the southern are the coldest, being nearer to the south pole.

Nelson is nestled among mountain ranges that protect it from strong cold winds from the south. And we are told that it is a favorite place for retired — and maybe tired — businessmen to settle for their twilight years. And, indeed, the scenery is beautiful. From the kitchen window of Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Inskip, with whom we stayed, there is a most delightful view of mountain scenery mixed with fruit orchards and the backwaters of the bay. Our colored slide of it proves the point.

On Sunday morning we gathered with the congregation and preached the Word there to a very attentive audience, and our picture of the congregation reveals a group about as large as in Christchurch although many of the younger women are there without their unchurched husbands. The many children in the congregation do give hope for growth in the future, if it pleases our God to enlarge and strengthen the congregation that way.

We returned to Christchurch and stayed there until shortly before leaving for home. On February 17, 1979 we attended a Council meeting in Wellington, attended by ten men. It was after this meeting that Rev. Geo. McKenzie, pastor of the Manurewa OPC and Chairman of the Council and I made arrangements for a visit to the churches on the northern island, Wellington itself being on the southern tip of the northern island. And so on April 17 we travelled to Palmerston North (there is a Palmerston on the southern island as well) and lectured for some twenty-five to thirty adults in the Air New Zealand building. There we found brethren and sisters who were hungry for the truth and knew what the Reformed Faith is, and that they wanted it, although

they found it hard to get in their locality. Mr. A. Van Echten, at whose home we stayed, put us on a bus for Hastings, and so on April 29 we left to visit the brethren and sisters there. We found that there are only four souls left of that former OPC congregation, their pastor having left for Australia some time in the past. We broke the bread of life that night in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Neil Scott with whom we stayed while in Hastings. We encouraged them from the Word and urged them to seek out others who hungered for the truth. At the moment they listen to tapes in order to be edified and to receive spiritual food and strength. On Friday we left for Manurewa which is a southern suburb of Auckland, and we spent two enjoyable days with the Armour family.

That Sunday morning I preached for the congregation of Rev. Mc. Kenzie. Here again we found a congregation about the size of the one in Christchurch but with more young people, which always holds promise for any congregation. The Word was well received as in Nelson and in Palmerston North, and one acquires a sincere sense of pity for brethren and sisters so far removed from each other on two islands and standing alone in the midst of thousands upon thousands who have no faith at all, and among thousands of others who are not concerned as to what is preached and in what direction their church is going. And at the same time it is heartening and encouraging to see Christ's Church there and those with whom one can speak the truth freely and with agreement.

On Monday we flew back "home" to Christchurch, and that Saturday we took a plane to Wellington where we had a busy and enjoyable Sunday. We found four families that listen with joy to our tapes, read our publications, and love the truth. That Sunday morning I preached in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Van Herk in Wainuiomata, a suburb of Wellington. After our noon meal we hurried into the heart of Wellington for an afternoon service in the YWCA building where the Council meetings of the OPC in NZ are also held. This service had been advertized in the evening paper, and there were visitors. Hurry back it was again to Wainuiomata for an evening service in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vooys. A busy but enjoyable Sabbath among those who hunger for the truth where, to a great extent there is, in spite of much preaching, a "famine of the Word." Our Hope Church in Grand Rapids supplies this group with taped sermons, and Reformed Witness Hour messages, which are heard regularly and greatly appreciated. Indeed, as someone on the islands said, "This is not a time of big things." But God has today little pockets, little groups of those who love the truth and know what the truth is, and that is true all over the world. That the true church is a "little flock" we found time



and time again to be true.

Returning home on Monday, we left again on Thursday and this time by car, for another visit to Nelson, which had been requested as somewhat of a farewell visit before we returned to the States. And since we would see each other for the last time on this earth, it was a thing to look forward to, even though it had its sadder side to it. This time Rev. Bishop was in Christchurch occupying the pulpit we had been filling; and again there was rapt attention at the morning service. That evening I preached in the home of Mrs. Cook, who is exceptionally spry for her eighty some years of age, and still plays the piano with vigor for the services. It might be pointed out that ALL the OPC Churches suffered for Christ's sake to the extent that they had to give up their church buildings to keep the Reformed faith. And, either services are held in a home at night, or Bible Study meetings are held in these homes.

This left us with two Sundays in Christchurch before we would leave for home. The evening of the Sunday that we were in Nelson, and Rev. Bishop preached in Christchurch, there were the firstfruits of some of our labours in Christchurch in that Mr. Robert Dow, to whom I had been giving instruction, had been licensed by the Christchurch Session (Consistory) to preach, and he conducted that evening service. And now we were faced with "farewell" sermons in Christchurch. On the morning of May 20, using the text of Hebrews 2:1, we gave the congregation the warning found there to give the more earnest heed to what we have heard, lest at any time we drift from the truth and suffer shipwreck on the sea of life as a church. We who have heard and for years have stood for the truth of God's Word as it is expressed in the Reformed Confessions always also need that warning, and especially when we think that we are above such drifting. In the evening service we presented to them our prayer, borrowed from the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Philippians, chapter 1 and verses 9 and 10, that their love would abound yet more and more in judgment and in all knowledge so that they might be spiritually sensitive to know the truth and righteousness, and be attracted to them while loathing and detesting the lie in every form, and sin in its every shade.

A farewell luncheon was held in the Community Centre where the services were held, and that after the morning service. And a farewell meeting with the Session was held on Wednesday evening the 23rd of May. A goodly number were at the airport to see us off at 11 A.M. Thursday, May 24, and there were indeed mixed feelings on our part; but as a powerful magnet our congregation at home was drawing us; and the welcome we received at the Kent County International Airport when we arrived there will

never be forgotten. We were too weary to respond to it as fully as we would have liked, but it will never be forgotten — young and old were there; and it was so good to be with them again.

But while we were yet in Christchurch we heard so much of the brethren and sisters in Singapore — two of those in Singapore being members of the Christchurch OPC congregation — that after much deliberation, and finding that we could change our tickets homeward by stopping in at Singapore, we did, and will never regret it. We were received with great warmth and spent four unforgettable days among the members of the GLTS.

For them we spoke Saturday afternoon. The speech was followed by an hour of good, worthy questions. On Sunday I preached for them in the morning and in the evening, with a profitable question hour again at night. And what struck us with such force is the fact that although these "first generation Christians," as they call themselves, are from a different nation and race, and from an entirely different culture, they are interested so greatly in our tapes and publications and the Word of God as our men preach it. The Revs. Kamps and Slopsema and Elder Engelsma have worked hard and faithfully there and are loved by these brethren and sisters in Singapore.

It is amazing how truths that one believes, teaches, and preaches have so much more and richer meaning when one experiences those truths. We were taken by Boon Kwang and Chin Kwee to W. Malaysia on Monday to visit two churches. We were — as by Ong and Cicilia and the members of the GTLS in Singapore — royally received and treated. After a sumptuous meal which the wife of the deacon had prepared on the spur of the moment — she did not know we were coming — Boon Kwang gave thanks in Chinese, since this deacon's wife understood no English (even though through interpreters she made it clearly known to us that she knew the truth, and almost in tears told us that they do not preach the truth anymore in their churches). I did not understand one word of that prayer; but the thought hit me with force: What a great God we have Who knows not only *all* languages and every one of His sheep, but our prayers before we utter them! This I always knew, but it struck with force by this experience; and we left confident that all of God's people are in good Hands, for underneath are the Everlasting Arms. And for what more could one ask?

We commend all the brethren and sisters in Christchurch and beyond, regardless of race, color, or nationality, whose common creed is: "I believe in Jehovah, the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son," to the grace and faithful keeping of Him Whom they confess.



*BIBLE STUDY GUIDE*

## II Corinthians

### The Authority of the Word

(*Conclusion*)

*Rev. J. Kortering*

2. Paul assured the church at Corinth that when he comes, his personal dealings with them will be as open and faithful as his letter had been (vss. 7-11). His boasting of authority (vs. 8) is rooted in Paul's being an instrument of the Holy Spirit to write by divine inspiration; hence he teaches infallibly. They must realize this is not for the destruction of the church (a personal victory of Paul at the expense of others), but for their edification (salvation). Hence his conduct upon his arrival in their midst will also be with decisive authority and power not weakness and evasive speech as charged, (vs. 10).

3. The apostle glories in God that He gave him authority to care for the spiritual needs of the churches, (vss. 12-18). The false teachers measured themselves by human standards and confided in human learning, (vs. 12), but Paul measured his word and ministry by God's revelation and he trusted in that, (vs. 13). Because of this, Paul could not be accused of intruding in territory that was not his. He labored in Corinth because it was Christ's church. As a missionary apostle, traveling throughout the countries, he exercised his duty to care for the needs of all the churches in Asia Minor, Greece, and even Rome, (vss. 14, 15). His desire is that he may extend beyond Corinth, not to take over some other man's territory, but to be used by Christ to save the church and so to glory in the Lord Who alone blesses his ministry, (vss. 11-18).

4. Since Paul's authority was attacked, he now presents reasons why the Corinthian church should rely on him more than on the false teachers (vss. 1-15). He even apologizes and asks them to bear with his "folly" in asserting his qualifications (vs. 1). In verses 16-21 he points out that boasting is not a common way for a servant of Christ to speak, but he must show to them that *Christ* has used him as His servant.

a. His desire for the church at Corinth to listen to his instruction is rooted in jealous love (the kind that a husband has for his wife — he doesn't want any other man to flirt with her — so Paul was instrumental in the "engagement" of the church of Corinth to Christ and he desired her to be faithful for that marriage, (vs. 2). He is afraid that the false teachers will tempt the Corinthians to believe the lie, (vs. 3). He has reason for this concern for they already listened to these false teachers, (vs. 4).

b. Paul asserts his position of leadership among the apostles. He was among the chiefest — a reference to men like Peter and James. Rank here is not a personal thing, not even a primacy of office, but of gift and service, (vs. 5). Paul mentions his lack as an orator (one skilled with the use of words as the Greek schools emphasized), but maintains his excellence in knowledge which the church of Corinth knew very well, (vss. 5, 6).



c. He reminds them that his refusal to be financially supported by them was not a rejection of his apostolic office; rather, he did not want to burden them. He took money from other churches and worked with his own hand rather than give the enemy in Corinth occasion to accuse him of preaching for profit. This he intended to continue and he even challenged his opponents to teach without being paid, to show their sincerity, (vss. 7-12).

d. The enemy within the church must be taken seriously. They are not to be considered next to Paul, but against him. They claim to be apostles, which is not true. They are false teachers. Just as Satan tries to come as an angel of light, so they come as false ministers; but God will judge them, (vss. 13-15).

e. Paul declares his good standing with the Jews. He is a Hebrew (emphasizing the national distinction of God's people), and an Israelite (one in the Kingdom of God), and also of the seed of Abraham (in the covenant line). In all three areas, Paul excelled, (vs. 22).

f. The record of Paul's suffering for the sake of Christ's gospel established his sincerity as an apostle. First, he labored harder than any other and was blessed in it, (vs. 23). Second, he was willing to bear stripes. According to verse 24 he was beaten five times by Jews (39 stripes with a leather thong, since the law forbade 40 stripes, Deut. 25:3). In addition he was beaten with rods three times by the Romans, as happened in Philippi. Most of these incidents are not recorded in the Bible. It gives additional information about Paul's life. He speaks of imprisonment more frequently and death oft — that is, his life was so endangered that he was ready to die almost every day, (see vs. 23). He was shipwrecked three times so that once he even spent a night and day in the water, hanging on to a piece of wreckage. Since this was written prior to his trip to Rome, that shipwreck was in addition to the three mentioned here. He faced the general hazards of travel, water (crossing rivers), robbers, especially in desert regions, mob uprisings by the Jews (his countrymen) and by the heathen Gentiles as well. He had danger in cities and deserts. Worst of all was the treatment he received from false brethren, those who pretended to be followers of the Lord, but turned against him, (vss. 25, 26). He even made specific reference to his escape from Damascus when Aretas was ruler, (vss. 32, 33). All this produced weariness and pain, hunger and fasting (not deliberately for spiritual reasons, but due to lack of food), cold and nakedness, (vs. 27). We read this and we shame our faces for complaining to God for the little we suffer for the sake of Christ. Paul was a missionary who knew all the trials firsthand. In addition he carried the responsibility of all the churches; everyone sought his help. He did not

turn away, he suffered with the weak and admonished those who did wrong, (vs. 29). We can understand Paul's boasting. It is not in himself; God called him to endure and he did by God's grace. Hence God receives the praise, (vss. 30, 31).

5. If there is any doubt as to Paul's qualification as an apostle, he adds two more important points, namely, he received a vision from God and he personally triumphed over his own infirmity.

a. Paul's vision from God (chapter 12:1-6). This is not a reference to his conversion experience (14 years ago would not coincide). It was a special revelation from God to Paul in such a way that Paul did not know if he was bodily taken up to heaven or if it only involved his inner soul. He did realize he was taken up to the "third heaven," synonymous with Paradise in verse 4, representing the presence of God, see Luke 23:43 and Rev. 2:7. The first heaven was made up of clouds, the second heaven was the stars and space, the third heaven was the abode of God. In this vision, God revealed to Paul divine secrets which he was forbidden to tell. Undoubtedly Paul served in a special capacity and needed special assurance of glory which God gave to him. We have the Bible and can receive this assurance from Paul as coming from God. We join Paul in giving glory to God for His faithfulness.

b. God gave Paul a thorn in the flesh to humble him and teach him to depend upon God for all things (vss. 7-10). It is good to learn with Paul the pitfall of boasting. The thorn served him well. It refers to some physical affliction that Paul had. Some suggest it was a deformity in bodily appearance; others suggest it was a speech impediment. It does little good to speculate. One thing is true, Paul felt he could be a better missionary without it, so he prayed God to remove it. He saw in it an attempt of satan to tempt him. He prayed three times, following the example of Jesus in the garden. Yet, the answer came, he would have to bear it, but God's grace would enable him. In this he could well glory, arise above it and see a good purpose of God in it. It taught him to depend entirely upon God and not to trust in self. How wonderful it is when we can learn to glory in our affliction. The grace of God makes all the difference.

6. Paul's concluding assurance of his calling as an apostle and that he seeks the good of the Corinthian church, (chapter 12:11-13:14). He points out to the Corinthians that as far as his work is concerned, all the proof of his apostleship is connected with his work: he patiently preached, he did signs and wonders (vss. 11, 12). As a church they responded well, only they needed parental attention (vss. 13, 14). This was given them also through Titus, not with guile and deceit as charged, but unto edifying, (vss. 15-19). In this way Paul wanted to prevent the need



for further correction which might result in open conflict. He would rather see them live a life of obedience, (vss. 20, 21).

They must realize that even though he comes this third time, he will not come in weakness, he will not spare them if they sin, he will establish right with witnesses, and by doing this remove evil through confession and maintain truth and right, (chapter 13:1, 2). Self denial is not weakness. It follows the example of Christ, Who gave Himself to the cross. One who believes in Christ will follow Christ. A reprobate will glory in himself. Paul maintains he is willing to be considered weak for their strength. Edification is the key word here (vss. 3-10). This section is a beautiful expression of one who truly seeks the welfare of the church even though it means self denial.

Paul bids farewell by exhorting them to be perfect, united, strong in the Lord in love and peace. This should be expressed by greeting one another with the holy kiss. In such confidence he pronounces upon them the trinitarian blessing from God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, (vss. 11-14).

#### SUGGEST THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. What can we learn from Paul as to how to deal

with sufferings for the sake of the gospel? Why not give up? Wherein lies the strength to carry on?

2. Summarize the method Paul used in dealing with the corruption in the Corinthian church. And how can we use it today?

3. Consider the different ways that the hope of life after death encouraged Paul to carry on his ministry. Why is this so? How is it true for us today?

4. Evaluate the instruction given on Christian giving. What are the main points? Consider how they relate to our method of giving. Can they be harmonized with church budgets, free will offerings, fund drives, sales, and bazaars, etc.

5. Paul received a vision from God to strengthen him in his ministry. Does God still give such visions today? Give reason.

6. Why is it so important that Paul stressed he was an "ambassador of Christ." Consider its significance over against the attacks he was withstanding and also his willingness to defend his ministry and not give up.

7. How did Paul's thorn in the flesh help him rather than hinder him as an apostle? Draw similar comparisons with your own particular sufferings and limitations.

## ALL AROUND US

# Out of the Mouth of . . . WHOM?

*Rev. G. Van Baren*

*The Banner* has, in past months, presented a series of articles entitled, "As Others See Us." To date, they have had one liberal Lutheran, one Roman Catholic, and one avowedly liberal (denying even the blood of atonement) man write. The last is Dr. Duncan Littlefair of the Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Of himself, Dr. Littlefair writes in his article, "Our position is so radically different that I understand and can accept the declaration of many Reformed people that we are not a church and not Christian."

Concerning the practice of obtaining this sort of material from men such as those mentioned above, I need not say much. Objections have been raised by Christian Reformed brethren concerning this practice. Certainly it encourages the false ecumenism of our day. Young people would be particularly vulnerable. If they can read these men in their church magazine, why not worship in their churches? But Scripture also points out, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Or, in I John 10, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into



your house, neither bid him God speed." One would think that this Scriptural principle also applies to church magazines.

However, all the above leads me to the point of this article: some of the remarkable things that Dr. Duncan Littlefair, avowed modernist, has to say about the Christian Reformed Church. I could not help but think of Titus 1:12, 13 where Paul wrote, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, 'The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.' This witness is true." So also, though one could not expect the truth from Dr. D. Littlefair, yet he says some strikingly true things in his assessment of the C.R.C. One can only marvel at some of them. If the late Rev. H. Hoeksema had written that kind of article, and when he did say similar things about the C.R.C. when he was alive, there seemed but few in the C.R.C. who would listen. When the Association of Christian Reformed Laymen deplored the direction their church was going in an article recently in their *Bulletin*, Dr. Bratt of Calvin College took extremely strong exception in a letter to "voices" in the *Banner*. But now Dr. Littlefair says it — the outspoken liberal among liberals. First, he observes what he saw in the C.R.C. in earlier years:

Through all the years I have been in Grand Rapids, the Christian Reformed Church has been a powerful religious organization based on clear, strong principles unswervingly maintained. Your consistently strong and intellectually sound presentation of Calvinistic principles and Biblical faith has made your impact on our community deeper and more pervasive than any observer could readily describe. You have taken pride in the "narrow way," and it is largely because of this, I think, that you have contributed so greatly to the quality of life in this community. You have not been seduced by the lure of the secular world to accommodate yourself to modern needs and modern conditions. You have not compromised for the sake of being modern or popular or more attractive. You have nurtured religious passion. Your people care about the religious life, and this religious concern has infused the total community.

This passion, ironically, has been of great value in my work and in the life of the Fountain Street Church. You have been a major factor in the rather unusual "success" of our church. The rigorous religion you espoused created a religious environment in Grand Rapids which made what we did at Fountain Street much more significant. People in Grand Rapids paid attention to religion. When they could no longer accept your kind of religion, Fountain Street Church was there with a well-grounded radical alternative. You made it necessary for people to make a choice; we were there to give them an alternative.

Then Littlefair continues by evaluating the C.R.C. as it exists today.

But now, alas, the Christian Reformed Church appears to be in the process of losing its integrity and dissolving into just another church attempting to hold on in a world that cannot accept its presuppositions, beliefs, or philosophy. The winds of change blowing for so long are now blowing through the Christian Reformed Church. Your young people are not so ardent. They slip away more easily when they get away from home. Divorce is becoming more common and more acceptable. And what can be done about it? Extra-marital affairs are openly discussed in your official publication. Secular counseling is recommended in preference to pastoral counseling or prayer. Dancing is common. Movies, even the most secular and pornographic, are carefully reviewed in *The Banner*. Sunday observance is not what it was. Evening attendance at church is slipping noticeably. You are having to wrestle with the terrible "problem" of what to do with women in the church. Some of your ministers are quietly moving into less demanding Presbyterian or Congregational churches. Christian schooling for your children is easier to avoid. More and more of your members are playing the social-ladder game, moving to more social but less exacting churches within the denomination.

Now Littlefair proceeds to analyze some of the recent attempts to "improve" the gospel of the church through all kinds of acts of "salesmanship." Says he:

And then there is Robert Schuller, smiling prophet from your fellow Reformed denomination! He is not merely waiting in the wings. He is front stage and center. He makes tours to tell the more backward brothers how to commercialize their churches! And the brothers are eager to hear. Some of your local affluent lay leaders even send local clergy on free junkets to the "Center of Power" to learn how to organize parking lots, package the product attractively, make it comfortable for the prospect, lure him into the church, and then sell him the gospel. After all, if you can sell soap effectively, why not religion? Since the latter is even more important than soap, it must follow that it is even more important to do what you have to do to sell it. If you can succeed in getting the prospect in at the gate long enough to sell him Jesus, the effort must be considered worthwhile and thoroughly valid.

So we begin all the slippery compromises that bleed religion of its integrity, significance, and worth. Being successful becomes more important than being right. Attractive techniques are more effective than discipline or doctrine. What a shame to have the Christian Reformed Church beginning to join the popular but totally undistinguished mass appeal of Aimee Semple McPherson, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, Billy Joe Hargis, Billy Zeolli (Why are there so many 'Billies?'), Rex Humbard, and Oral Roberts.

Finally, Littlefair presents his own conclusions:

And I think I understand what's happening. As one's philosophy and world-view becomes more and



more outmoded and unable to meet the needs of the modern world, the normal reaction is to decorate, sentimentalize, and compromise in the hope of holding on. While this is going on the secular world is blamed for luring the young people from the path of truth and virtue, even as that same secular world is invited in, covering up the truth of the situation with seductive appeal. I, like you, have watched the Liberals pursue such practices for many years.

But now I see your own traditional belief structure shaking under the accumulated weight of changed and changing understandings of the world. The eternal truth wavers, and the pressure of your church

to change is irresistible. I don't see how you can avoid the slide. It is, as I have pointed out and as I think you inwardly know, already well on the way. Nevertheless, I am genuinely sorry to see you lose the vigor, clarity, integrity, and distinctiveness of your traditional position.

With the statement of the apostle Paul, I think I too need only say, "This witness is true." Nor ought we smugly sit back and gloat. The dangers grow that we too slide along the same course taken earlier by the Christian Reformed Church. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, beware lest he fall!"

## Education and Big Government

One encounters often, lately, reports of the attempts of government to take over the regulation and control of the private and parental schools. Increasingly, it seems, that big government bases its claim to regulate on the fact that, however remotely, the school has received some sort of government aid. It need not even be direct aid — if any of the students attending that school may have received some aid to go there, then the school itself is to be under the regulations of government. A report of one such action is given in the *Grand Rapids' Press* and written by columnist George F. Will. He reports:

Grove City College's troubles began, as many Americans' troubles do, with a letter from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. It began: "Dear Recipient" and ordered the college to sign forms confirming compliance with Title IX regulations against sex discrimination.

Such confirmation is required of institutions receiving federal aid. But Grove City insists that it neither seeks, nor receives any aid, and it assumed the letter was a simple mistake. Alas, HEW's mistakes rarely have the virtue of simplicity.

The college's president says: "I was told in strong terms that they would 'bring us in compliance one way or another.'" And he began receiving "insistent,

harassing and threatening" calls from HEW.

...When HEW acted, about 140 Grove City students were receiving federal tuition grants. HEW argues that such aid to students who choose to use it at Grove City constitutes aid to the college.

The college argues that this is a petty justification for extending HEW's jurisdiction to an institution that has made substantial sacrifices — in terms of direct aid it has not sought — in order to remain outside such federal jurisdiction. . . .

...The administrative law judge who ruled that he is powerless to overturn HEW's claim of jurisdiction, also emphasized that, "There was not the slightest hint of any failure to comply with Title IX, save the refusal to submit an executed assurance of compliance. . . . This refusal is obviously a matter of conscience and belief."

The judge held that HEW has "total and unbridled discretion" in requiring compliance forms. The college is challenging this in court. . . .

One can only wonder when our own schools will feel the increasing pressure of government requiring of us observance of regulations which we, in good conscience before God, can not obey. The time might not be far away.

THE STANDARD BEARER is a thoughtful gift for a "Shut-in".



## Book Reviews

**THE EPISTLES OF JOHN**, by I Howard Marshall; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978; 274 pp., \$10.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This commentary is a part of "The New International Commentary on the New Testament," edited by F. F. Bruce. It is published to replace the first commentary written for this set which was originally written by Alexander Ross and included a commentary on James.

The commentary has some strengths and some weaknesses. Its strengths are: 1) It includes an important introduction which aids considerably in an understanding of the three epistles of John. 2) It is, on the whole, conservative; i.e., it proceeds from the premise that Scripture is the inerrant Word of God. 3) It relegates all technical discussions to the footnotes so that anyone can read the body of the text with profit, while the student of Scripture who is also able to handle the Greek and can understand more technical problems will find the footnotes helpful. 4) It is, generally speaking, a thorough discussion of the text.

Its weaknesses are: 1) The author apparently believes in universal atonement in some sense. In his explanation of I John 2:2 he writes: "Nor is that the full extent of the wonder. With one of his typical afterthoughts John adds that the efficacy of this sacrifice is not confined to the sins of his particular group of readers. It reaches out to all mankind. The universal provision implies that all men have need of it. . . . The possibility of forgiveness is cosmic and universal." This interpretation affects other parts of the exposition, as, e.g., the author's explanation of I John 2:15, 16. 2) There is not always a proper attempt to explain a text in the light of other texts within the same epistle. This becomes clear, e.g., in the author's discussion of 1:10 where John writes: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"; and 3:9 where John writes: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." 3) The text suffers from less than full exposition of several important passages in the epistles. But this is, of course, partly a matter of judgment. What I consider important, the author of the commentary may consider of secondary importance.

If the commentary is read carefully, I recommend

it highly to those who are looking for good commentaries for their homes or for helps in Bible study for society.

**Reformed Dogmatics**, Heinrich Heppe (translated by G.T. Thomson); Baker Book House, Grand Rapids Mich.; 721 pages, \$9.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema)

Heinrich Heppe (1820-1879) was a German Reformed theologian and church historian. He was a graduate of Marburg, where he then became a professor in 1850.

Heppe's aim in writing and compiling this book (which first appeared in German in 1861 and in English in 1950) was to expound the orthodox system of doctrine in the Reformed church faithfully and without addition. "All the written sources I could lay hands on," wrote Heppe, "I have carefully researched and compared, in order to transmit the thought material brought to light and disseminated by the acknowledged representatives of Reformed orthodoxy. . . . The extracts of the sources which I have imparted for the illustration of Reformed Church doctrine are (particularly in the fundamental *Loci*) given so copiously and so fully that the reader can himself test the reproduction of the Reformed system which I have given him."

The value of this book lies exactly in the fact that Heppe consulted all the written sources he could lay hands on. He quotes profusely the writings of the Reformers of the sixteenth century, but also the writings of Reformed thinkers of the seventeenth century, those who are frequently referred to as "scholastics." The result is that this work constitutes a compendium of Reformed theology as it had developed up to Heppe's time. The student of dogmatics can refer to this work and can learn from it what almost every Reformed theologian of note thought concerning a given subject in the area of dogmatics. This is, therefore, an excellent source book.

All our ministers and seminary students should add this book to their libraries. Baker Book House is to be congratulated on reprinting this important source book in the field of dogmatics and on making it available at a very reasonable price.



**COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS**, by J. Armitage Robinson; Kregel Publications, 1979; 314 pp., \$12.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

This commentary is a Kregel reprint and part of the Kregel Limited Addition Library. The author, an Englishman, lived from 1858-1933.

The commentary is divided into four basic sections. The first section contains a brief introduction to the book in which is contained material concerning authorship, date of writing, circumstances, etc. The second section is a translation of the Greek text along with a commentary on the text. The third section is the Greek text itself with many linguistic, syntactical, and grammatical remarks. The fourth section is a discussion of several Greek words which appear in the epistle.

Although, generally speaking, the commentary is written from a theologically conservative viewpoint, its expository material is somewhat too brief to be of any great help. More particularly, the key concepts in the book are treated very briefly and very superficially. There is, e.g., little discussion of the great truth of election as Paul treats it in chapter one; there is almost no discussion of the sovereignty of grace in the first ten verses of chapter 2.

The value of the book is to be found in the fact that the first two sections can be easily used by anyone who wishes a brief and succinct discussion of the book of Ephesians; while the last two sections are of some value for ministers and students of the Greek text. Considering the amount of work which went into the printing of the book, it is well worth its price.

### NOTICE!!!

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in regular session Wednesday, September 12, 1979, at the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, the Lord willing. Material for the Agenda of Classis must be in my hands thirty days before the convening of Classis.

Jon Huiskens, Stated Clerk

### NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Isabel, South Dakota on September 5, 1979, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. Delegates in need of lodging or transportation from an airport should notify the clerk of the Isabel Consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Rev. R. Van Overloop has informed us that their new address, as of August 3, will be:

REV. R. VAN OVERLOOP  
5008 SUNNY DELL DRIVE  
HUEYTOWN, ALABAMA 35020

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Rev. M. Schipper has informed us that their new address (temporary) is:

Rev. M. Schipper  
2021 Arnold, S.W.  
Wyoming, MI 49509  
Phone: 452-1945

### EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

The four candidates, Ron Cammenga, Carl Haak, Ron Hanko and Steve Houck wish to thank all those who remembered them with cards and gifts and other expressions of concern at graduation.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." (Psalm 103:8).

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Adult Bible Society of Faith Protestant Reformed Church (Jenison, MI), express their sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Erne Miedema in the passing away of her mother, MRS. ISABEL ELHART.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4).

Rev. W. Bruinsma, Pres.  
Mr. R. Noorman, Sec'y.-Treas.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Society of the Hull, Iowa, Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. John Hoekstra, in the loss of her brother, MR. LEO TE PASKE.

"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait I say, on the Lord." (Psalm 27:14).

Martha Ladies Aid Society  
Mrs. Nellie Brummel, Sec'y.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 2, 1979, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, MR. & MRS. TUNIS JANSMA, will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. We are grateful to our heavenly Father for keeping them for each other and for us, their children and grandchildren.

It is our prayer that the Lord will bless and keep them and cause His face to shine upon them and grant that they may continue to live together in godliness and holiness.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." (Psalm 103:17)

David and Diane Bonestroo  
Daniel, Doreane, and Dean  
Robert and Marlys Brands  
Randall  
Rachel Jansma  
Terrance Jansma



## News From Our Churches

Rev. Arie den Hartog has declined the call extended to him by the congregation of our Southeast Church in Grand Rapids. Their new trio consists of candidates Ronald Cammenga, Carl Haak, and Ronald Hanko.

The consistory of our church in Hull, Iowa has made a trio consisting of Rev. A. den Hartog and candidates Cammenga and Haak.

Hope Church in Walker, Michigan held a special congregational meeting on the evening of June 25. From a trio of Rev. den Hartog, Rev. Jason Kortering (a former pastor of the congregation), and Rev. James Slopsema, a call was extended to Rev. Slopsema. A proposal to expand the church by eleven feet was defeated. The proposed expansion would have enlarged the coatroom and narthex area.

Hope's pastor, Rev. Ronald Van Overloop, accepted a call from our church in South Holland, Illinois, to labor as home missionary in the Birmingham, Alabama area. Rev. Van Overloop preached his farewell sermon in Hope Church on July 1. A farewell program was planned for Thursday evening, July 19. Rev. Van Overloop is scheduled to be installed as Missionary at a special worship service in South Holland on the evening of Friday, July 27. Rev. Van Overloop is then scheduled to preach both services in South Holland on Sunday, July 29, D.V.

Our congregation in Loveland, Colorado has extended a call to Rev. Marvin Kamps of Doon, Iowa.

Rev. G. Van Baren and Rev. M. De Vries visited with the group in Skowhegan, Maine who have requested organization as a Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. Van Baren and Rev. De Vries are serving on a committee appointed by Classis East. In Rev. Van Baren's absence, Rev. Wayne Bekkering, pastor of our church in Houston, Texas, and Rev. C. Hanko preached for the Hudsonville congregation on June 17.

The Ladies' Society of Hudsonville sponsored their annual Senior Citizens' picnic in Hagar Hardwood Park on Tuesday, June 19. This is the time of year when many church picnics are scheduled. Some of our western churches schedule their annual picnics on

July 4th. That makes a double holiday!

Professor Robert Decker lectured in our church in Holland, Michigan on June 26. His topic was "The Church's Calling to Missions and the Believer's Calling to Witness." The lecture was scheduled earlier in South Holland.

The Young People's Societies of our churches in the Northwest Iowa - Minnesota area held their Spring Banquet in Doon, Iowa on June 11. Rev. Marvin Kamps was the scheduled speaker.

In addition to the 'Summer Society' now meeting in Hudsonville, Hope in Walker, Michigan is holding a summer Bible Study Class for all ages on Tuesday evenings. Their topic for discussion is the Sermon on the Mount, beginning with Matthew 5. Faith Church in Jenison, Michigan has scheduled a summer series of classes on Wednesday evenings. Rev. Bruinsma is leading these classes on the topic of the History and Doctrines of our Churches.

Our church in Randolph, Wisconsin scheduled a public lecture in their church on Tuesday, May 29. Rev. Herman Veldman spoke on the topic of "Prayer." Refreshments followed the lecture.

Randolph began their yearly family visitation the first week in June. The theme of this year's visits is "The Importance of Personal and Family Devotions."

Our church in Holland, Michigan celebrated the 50th anniversary of the congregation with a special program on July 3. In honor of this occasion, a special booklet was produced. The booklet was dedicated to Rev. Marinus Schipper as the only living charter member of the Holland congregation. The booklet contains a history of the congregation, a message from their pastor, Rev. John Heys, and greetings from Rev. Schipper, Rev. Jason Kortering, candidate Ronald Cammenga, and seminarian Deane Wassink, all sons of the congregation.

The South Holland bulletin included this 'thought for contemplation' from the pen of John Calvin: "After God has bestowed all things freely upon us, He requires nothing in return but a grateful remembrance of His benefits."

K.G.V.