

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

... the fact is simply that there are in the power of men no solutions to the problems of life. This is a fact. Men's theories, men's skills, men's diagnostic procedures, men's experience, men's cleverness at handling life's problems — all mean nothing at all. Only Christ can heal the wounded soul and bring the balm of Gilead to the hurts of life.

See "My Sheep Hear My Voice. . ." —
page 303

CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
Jesus' Death Watch	290
Editorials —	
The IRS and Private Schools	293
Congress, the IRS, and Our Schools	294
Our Schools and the Proposed IRS Rules	296
Translated Treasures —	
Pamphlet on the Reformation	
of the Church	297
From Holy Writ —	
Exposition of Galatians	299
The Lord Gave the Word —	
Missions	301
My Sheep Hear My Voice —	
Letter to Timothy	303
All Around Us —	
The IRS and the Private Schools	306
Canadian Reformed — Orthodox Presbyterian	307
"... Whose Heart the Lord Opened"	307
Guest Article —	
Faithfulness to Scripture in the Church	308
News From Our Churches	312

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MEDITATION

Jesus' Death Watch

Rev. H. Veldman

"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate. . . ."

Matt. 27: 62-66.

How beautiful and attractive is Scripture's account of the funeral of our Lord! It is surely a bold act of faith on the part of Joseph and Nicodemus, at this

time when all seemed lost, to assert their faith in the crucified Christ of Nazareth. And how wonderful it is that this Crucified One should be laid in a new tomb

in which no man had ever lain.

And now the sabbath day has dawned. The disciples of Christ rest, but only as according to the divine commandment. The enemies of the Saviour, however, are active. Matthew speaks significantly of the chief priests and Pharisees, the same satanic leaders of the people, the highest development of the church, in whose hearts the hatred of the Nazarene burns so feverishly. Early in the morning they appear before the Roman governor with a strange request. They ask that the grave be made sure. To be sure, there was also a temple watch. However, they ask for a Roman watch. They desire the strongest watch. The tomb of Jesus of Nazareth must be made sure.

A WICKED WATCH

Wicked, in the first place, is the appearance of these leaders of the people of the Lord before Pontius Pilate. It was, we read here, the day after the day of preparation. Matthew does not merely intend to say that it was now the sabbath, but he calls special attention to the fact that it was the day after the day of preparation. O, how these rulers had prepared themselves for the sabbath! Upon this day of preparation they had murdered the Christ. And now He was not even for one moment out of their thoughts. That day, the day of the preparation, they had been busy making their plans. And now they go to Pilate early that sabbath morning. They do not go to him in a body. The text tells us that they gather before Pilate. So, there they meet one another. And they must have gone to the governor early; they surely would avoid being seen of men. Hence, what a wicked transgressing of the commandment of the sabbath day, to meet in that spirit before Pilate — one, mind you, who is uncircumcised. This secret appearance before Pontius Pilate surely bodes no good. Matthew describes these wicked leaders who cannot rest until they use the first opportunity available to speak with the Roman governor.

Secondly, their wickedness appears from their accusation of Jesus before Pilate. They refer to Him as “that deceiver.” How disdainful they are, even in their language! They do not even mention His name. Besides, they call Jesus a deceiver. Fact is, *they* are the deceivers. They are the white walled sepulchers. They do not obey the law; they transgressed it even in this early morning hour. They condemned Jesus in the Sanhedrin without a ground. And now they call Jesus a deceiver. Had this teacher of Galilee ever revealed Himself differently than He is? How wicked they are! Pilate they address as “Sir, lord.” Jesus’ name does not come over their lips. They are the deceivers, always using the law for their own profit and advantage.

Finally, their godlessness comes into sharper focus

when we note the purpose of their coming to Pilate. Apparently they fear the disciples of the Nazarene. Did they not say that that deceiver had said that He would rise again in three days? Would not His disciples attempt to steal His body and then spread the rumour that He had risen from the dead? Would not this last error be worse than the first? However, this interpretation is surely impossible. On the one hand, they certainly need not fear the disciples. Is it not striking that, whereas the disciples never thought of Christ’s resurrection, of Jesus’ word that He would rise again, these enemies did think of this word? How ridiculous this request must have sounded to Pilate, that the grave of the dead Nazarene must be guarded! Besides, what would the disciples do with a dead body? A Messianic expectation, centering in a dead Christ, is surely as dead as a dead Christ himself.

The deep, wicked principle of this request is obvious. Yes, the Saviour had declared in their presence that He would rise again in three days. Had He not spoken of the breaking down of the temple and that He would rebuild it in three days? Is it not wonderful that, whereas the disciples had not understood and remembered this word of Jesus, His enemies did remember it? What did they fear? This, that Jesus might rise from the dead! Indeed, at the cross they had been filled with terror. Now, however, they had somewhat recovered themselves. O, they had worked out their plan carefully. They will appear before Pontius Pilate with a hypocritical request. Indeed, the terror of Good Friday had not left them completely. They feared that this Jesus might fulfill His word. Fact is, literally Christ had never told them that He would rise from the dead in three days. But they had surely understood Him. So, a guard must be posted at His tomb. Besides, the tomb itself is sealed. A cord is drawn around the stone, and to it is affixed the seal of the Sanhedrin. Indeed, these enemies of darkness have done what they could to prevent Jesus from issuing from the grave. His issuing from the tomb is the worst that could possibly happen to these enemies.

This occurs throughout the ages.

Indeed, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is for the world a most terrifying fact. His resurrection is surely God’s seal upon Him, His seal of approval, and also His seal of condemnation upon them that hate Him. If Jesus be raised from the dead, what may the world expect from the living God?

And what a watch is placed around that grave throughout the ages! How the spiritual leaders of the people are constantly engaged in keeping Jesus in the tomb! Yes, He may live on in the hearts and minds of the people, as a Washington or a Lincoln. He may and is presented as a Christ with human ideals. But, He must remain within the tomb! The world craves a

human Jesus, with human ideals, which do not conflict with their passion for sin and iniquity.

A FOOLISH WATCH

What a folly on the part of these Jewish leaders! On the one hand, if the Lord cannot rise from the dead, why place a watch before His tomb? Then this watch simply does not make sense. But, this watch becomes so unbelievably foolish if we bear in mind its purpose. To keep one in the grave who cannot rise again is indeed an act of folly. But, to keep one in the grave who is able to break the bands of death is surely ridiculous. He who is able to destroy the power of death and the grave is surely able to destroy any power that might attempt to prevent His issuing forth from the tomb. Such an one can step forth of His tomb even if he lay buried in the heart of the greatest mountain or in the depth of the deepest sea.

How foolish is this effort throughout all the ages! Presuppose that the resurrection of Jesus were a fable, a legend, a myth. It is said that Jesus is not God, that He is merely a man, that therefore His resurrection is impossible. But, if this be true, why should these powers of darkness then concern themselves with a watch to keep Him in the grave? He was crucified, dead, and buried; He cannot rise out of His tomb; why, then, does the world not simply leave Him there?

However, if Jesus can arise from the dead, then this attempt becomes all the more ridiculous and foolish. Then Gamaliel surely had a wiser insight when he later declared that if this cause be of God they could do nothing about it. If Jesus be God, able to destroy the power of death, then all the attempts to deny and oppose this resurrection are surely unbelievable folly. Then the story is told that the disciples stole the body of Christ while the soldiers slept. And throughout the ages Jesus' resurrection from the dead is merely a story which is the product of the imagination of the disciples. However, let it be proclaimed that the Saviour is indeed risen, that He is now glorified at the right hand of His Father, and that He is coming again, returning upon the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead.

How must we account for this folly? Sin cannot be

explained merely rationally. O, it is true that keen minds throughout the ages have attempted to keep Jesus in the tomb. Sin, however, is always a matter of the heart. Sin is always the wicked, deliberate, malicious attempt of the carnal man to deny the living God and the things of His covenant. Sin hates God, hates His Christ, puts forth every effort to maintain itself in the midst of the world. That world will always deny God and His Christ.

A SIGNIFICANT WATCH

Indeed, is it not holy irony that the same world which would guard the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ is the first witness of His resurrection? Jesus has risen from the dead. And the world knows this! The grave is empty, watched by the strongest power upon the face of the earth. Do they accept this fact? Do they acknowledge this resurrection of the Christ? Do they repent upon bended knee? This they should do. However, this they refuse to do. To the contrary, they will invent stories, absurd stories, put forth every effort throughout the ages to keep the Nazarene in the grave. Why? Because of their hatred and wickedness. And so the world is revealed in all its wickedness. Sin must be revealed in all its ungodliness as committed against the alone holy God. And God will be justified when He judges and condemns. The theodicy will be maintained, God's vindication and justifying of Himself.

This watch also has significance for the church of God. That empty tomb is a glorious testimony for the people and the church of God. That grave, guarded by Roman soldiers, representing the greatest power of the world, is empty! And even as our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the tomb, emerged, as it were, through the power of the godless world, we may believe that there is no wicked power anywhere which is able to prevent our being united with Him, Who loves us even unto death and will surely give us all things in blessed fellowship with Him.

The world keeps watch at the tomb.

However, we need not fear.

He is the Prince of life and glory, and presently the eternal Resurrection Morning will dawn, and all things will be made new.

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EDITORIALS

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The IRS and Private Schools

Late last year there was a considerable hue and cry raised about some proposed new regulations concerning the tax-exempt status of private schools. Since the category of private schools is a broad one, which includes any non-public primary or secondary school, be it religious or non-religious, be it church controlled or parent controlled or operated by a private corporation, our own Protestant Reformed Christian schools would also have fallen under the proposed new regulations.

The purpose of the rules was to remove the tax-exempt status from what are called "segregation academies," schools which were formed — and there are many of them in certain parts of the country — to counteract desegregation in the public schools. The rules were aimed especially at schools which were either opened or significantly expanded during a period of local school desegregation. Loss of tax-exempt status would mean that contributors could not deduct donations from their tax returns, and it could also mean (although this is a state and a local matter) that school property could be taxed.

I no longer have the originally proposed rules before me. But they were very stringent, and they were of such a nature that it is safe to say that if the IRS chose to apply them to any of our schools, the inevitable outcome would have been the loss of tax-exempt status. Schools were presumed to discriminate if their minority enrollment did not meet certain levels in relation to the local school-age minority population. And the burden of proof under those earlier proposals would have been on a school to show it had met four of the following five tests: minority scholarships, minority recruitment, minority teachers, increasing minority enrollment, and other evidence of good faith.

However, those original rules which, if maintained, were to have gone into effect in late 1978, were challenged. According to an Associated Press dispatch

in *The Grand Rapids Press*, the IRS proposals drew over 100,000 letters of protest, a record number of complaints in the history of the IRS. And after hearings were held about the matter, the proposed rules were somewhat modified.

According to the same AP dispatch mentioned above, as well as according to a Religious News Service dispatch carried in recent issues of *The Presbyterian Journal* and *Christian News*, the revised guidelines proposed by the IRS embody the following elements:

1. They give "greater weight to each school's particular circumstances than did the earlier proposal in determining whether a school is racially discriminatory."
2. The revised procedure "sets forth standards to be applied to two categories of private elementary and secondary schools: those that have been held by a court or government agency to be racially discriminatory, and those whose formation or expansion is related to public school desegregation in the community served by the school, and do not have significant minority students enrollment."
3. "Under the new proposal, a school formed or substantially expanded at the time of public school desegregation will be classified as 'reviewable' if it has an insignificant minority enrollment and its formation or expansion is related in fact to public school desegregation in the community."
4. "A school classified as 'reviewable' will be considered racially discriminatory unless it has undertaken actions and programs reasonably designed to attract minority students on a continuing basis."
5. The dispatch also states: "The new procedure does not require a minimum number of specified actions to be taken in every case, but provides greater flexibility for a school to show that it is operating on a racially nondiscriminatory basis."

The same RNS dispatch referred to above reports a mixed reaction from some interested parties to the proposed revised rules. A Roman Catholic representative is reported to have called the proposed revised procedure "a substantial improvement" because it "demonstrates a degree of flexibility." On the other hand, a Baptist spokesman, Dr. James Wood, was dissatisfied because the new proposal fails "to resolve a fundamental First Amendment issue." The First Amendment is the so-called freedom of religion amendment. Dr. Wood is quoted as saying that the proposed revision "does not resolve the fundamental issue we raised at the December hearings, namely, the jurisdiction of the IRS over student enrollment in schools operated by churches and synagogues for their own members." The dispatch goes on to report as follows:

"Does the government have the right to tell such schools that it should have any voice in the enrollment in schools established to serve their own religious community? Our answer is no," Dr. Wood said.

"The point here is not racial discrimination or racism," he said, "because enrollment in religiously operated schools is generally based on the membership pattern" of the supporting church, synagogue or mosque.

Also, the Baptist official asserted, the IRS, in an effort to be conciliatory, proposes to give in the revised procedures "preferential treatment to certain types of church schools, such as Catholic and Amish."

This amounts to "discrimination by the IRS" in favor of such schools, since they are singled out to the exclusion of others, Dr. Wood said. "The law must be non-discriminatory in all groups, not just Catholic and Amish," he said.

The IRS spokesman said public comments on the proposed revision should be submitted to the Internal Revenue Service by April 20.

Exactly what the alleged preferential treatment for certain types of church schools, such as Catholic and Amish, may be was not reported. My guess would be — and it is only a guess — that it has to do with the fact that certain religious groups have traditionally and for many, many years, long before the matter of

racial integration became a public issue, operated their own schools for purely religious reasons, while in recent years and in some religious circles there has been a proliferation of private schools, partly because of gross dissatisfaction with the deteriorating public schools and partly, undoubtedly, because of racial integration being pressed in the public school systems. If this guess is correct, then I would also guess that our schools would also fall in the category of those entitled to preferential treatment. For it can without difficulty be demonstrated that Reformed people have for centuries held to the principle and the practice of Christian education for their children. The Church Order of Dordrecht enunciates this, for example.

For the rest, however, we agree with the spirit of the remarks attributed to Dr. Wood in the above report.

It seems rather obvious that there is only a difference of degree, not one of principle, between the first regulations and the revised regulations. Further, the difference is not very great. It seems obvious, too, that these regulations, if applied to our schools, could prove to be very detrimental from a financial point of view. We are not saying that the obstacle represented by these regulations, should they be applied, is insurmountable. This we do not believe. If need be, we could always operate without this tax-exempt status and operate as a regular, for-profit corporation; some have suggested that there might even be certain advantages in this. Nevertheless, the potential is present in these proposed regulations to make things difficult for our schools. Whether the revised regulations will be maintained remains to be seen. And whether, if maintained, these regulations will be applied to our Protestant Reformed Christian schools also remain to be seen.

Meanwhile, it is not too late to let our voice be heard. The deadline for comments on the revised regulations is April 20. Any individual may address objections to the Internal Revenue Service on this subject. But I would particularly urge our school boards to consider communicating their dissent. Perhaps they could even do so unitedly through the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies.

Congress, the IRS, and Our Schools

An indication of the importance of this whole matter of IRS proposals affecting private schools, as well as an indication of the widespread concern about the ultimate effect of these proposals, lies in the fact

that the whole question is being taken under advisement by a sub-committee of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. The Ways and Means Committee in

the House is the committee in which tax legislation originates, and thus the committee which could initiate legislation to control the Internal Revenue Service's actions with regard to private schools.

In the March 7, 1979 issue of *The Presbyterian Journal* a report on congressional hearings held in February appears under the title "Congressional Group Looks at IRS Ideas." This report is substantially the same as a Religious News Service report carried by *Christian News* of March 5, 1979. The first-mentioned report is as follows:

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The scene of battle concerning Internal Revenue Service proposals affecting private schools has shifted from IRS itself to a congressional subcommittee which is taking a hard look at IRS's right to issue the controversial rulings.

The public hearings were called here after more than 70 members of Congress urged Rep. Al Ullman (D-Ore.), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, to schedule them.

IRS commissioner Jerome Kurtz, in his testimony before the congressional committee, continued to defend the proposals as "a reasoned response to the need for standards under which decisions can be made which are correct and defensible in litigation."

The IRS proposals would lead to the revocation of tax-exempt status for private and church-related schools which do not meet IRS guidelines for enrollment of minority students. Thousands of protests have been registered in response to both the original and the revised IRS proposals (*Journal*, Dec. 20 and Feb. 28).

In this second round of public criticism, the commissioner found himself more beleaguered than before.

Dr. Arthur Flemming, chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and former president of the National Council of Churches, had supported the IRS's original proposal, but criticized the compromise revisions as being too vague to accomplish any useful purpose.

And a spokesman for the National Education Association (NEA) said that organization supports the termination of tax exemption for "private schools that practice discrimination on the basis of race or ethnic identification, age, sex, or physical condition." The NEA, he said, wants exempt status lifted even if a private school's admission policies act indirectly to increase segregation in the public schools.

But again, as in earlier hearings last December, IRS was much more severely criticized by a broad cross section of spokesmen who see in the agency's proposals a serious threat to religious liberty for the schools involved.

Dozens of speakers — including several Congressmen — urged the sub-committee to inaugurate measures which would rein in IRS.

Speaking for Liberty Lobby, E. Stanley Rittenhouse said: "IRS has become a dictatorial power all its own, holding in its hands the power of life and death over every tax-exempt private and church-related school in this country."

"Since IRS is a creation of the legislative branch, and since you have the constitutional authority to do so, I urge you members of Congress to reject totally these proposed procedures and bring to a halt this usurpation of authority by IRS."

Representatives of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, various Lutheran, Baptist and Jewish groups, the Christian Legal Society, and a number of Christian school organizations all spoke against the proposed procedures.

Questioning IRS's motivation in the proposals, attorney William Ball asked the committee to "probe deeply into the question why this heated pursuit of private and religious schools by IRS when racial segregation, a quarter of a century after the Supreme Court school desegregation decision, remains a problem in the public schools of the North."

Now Congress is notorious for moving at a snail's pace, especially, it seems, when it comes to anything pertaining to tax legislation. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Congress has the power, if it chooses to exercise it, to rein in the IRS. And perhaps in the light of the fact that the zealots for social change and for conformity to certain standards of racial integration in virtually every sphere of life, public and private, are not so numerous and so powerful in Congress as they once seemed to be — perhaps if worst comes to worst, the IRS can be stopped by Congress.

At any rate, it certainly will not do any harm to let your Representative and/or your Senator know that you want this intrusion by the IRS into this private and sacred domain of our life prevented.

An interesting and perhaps significant sidelight to this whole controversy was reported at the end of the article cited above. It concerns a school of higher education, Bob Jones University, which, if I recall correctly, has been doing battle with the IRS for some time. The basic issue was the same: non-conformity to government and IRS standards of racial integration. The weapon which the IRS employed was also the same: denial of tax-exempt status. If I recall correctly, Bob Jones University is also one of the few private colleges and universities in our country which has refused all federal funding. Apparently Bob Jones University took its battle with the IRS to Federal District Court and won. Here is the report:

In an unrelated action in federal district court, a Greenville, S.C., judge has ruled that IRS does not

have the authority to revoke the tax-exempt status of Bob Jones University just because of that school's prohibition of interracial dating and marriage by its students.

Judge Robert F. Chapman said in a 28-page ruling that IRS's denial of tax-exempt status "penalized the plaintiff for the exercise of its religious beliefs."

The effect of IRS's arguments against the university, said the judge, "is to strengthen those religious organizations whose religious practices do not conflict with federal public policy and to discriminate against those religious groups whose convictions violate these secular principles. The unavoidable effect is the law's tending toward the establishment of the approved religions."

We find Judge Chapman's evaluation of the IRS's arguments to be very perceptive and also pertinent to the present case concerning the IRS and private primary and secondary schools. Perhaps — if it is not overthrown by a higher court on appeal — his decision might even have some value as a judicial precedent with respect to the current controversy.

This is also proof that it is possible to do battle with the IRS in the courts of our land and to win. One of the problems is, of course, that it takes considerable resources to wage such a battle; but if it is a question of principle and one which involves ultimately the right of existence of our schools, let us do battle!

Our Schools and the Proposed IRS Rules

A few remarks concerning this entire matter are in order, I believe.

First of all, we make a few remarks concerning the practical aspect of the proposed IRS regulations.

In the first place, it remains to be seen what direction the IRS will take if the new regulations are allowed to stand. I have an idea that the regulations are not aimed primarily at schools of the kind which we maintain, but, as I suggested earlier, at the type of private schools (religious or non-religious or pseudo-religious) which proliferated at the time when integration of public schools became the law of the land. Especially in certain parts of the country undoubtedly a goodly number of schools were established with the avowed purpose of escaping integration. I am not now concerned with the right or wrong of such schools; nor am I concerned as such with the right of existence of such schools as private, not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations. I am merely stating that it may very well be that the guns of the IRS will be trained especially on such schools, and that traditionally religious schools and school systems of long standing will escape IRS attention, at least for the time being. In other words, the danger may not be *immediate*.

Nevertheless, in the second place, we do well to be ready for an attack. If the regulations are approved, the principle is there and the machinery or weaponry is there for an attack on any and all private schools, including our own.

I have already suggested that we use whatever means are available to us in fighting this attempt to impose these new regulations by protesting both to the IRS and to Congress. And if it becomes necessary,

let us also fight the matter in the courts of the land. These means are available for us to use, and it is right to use them. Nor, as the Bob Jones case indicates, is it impossible to win against the IRS in court, especially when it comes to a case involving constitutional liberties which have long been maintained in our country.

Secondly, however, some remarks concerning principles are in order.

In the first place, we ought to take warning from the current events that there are some powerful forces at work against our schools. There are the forces of the public school movement and especially the teachers' unions. Some of these organizations are mentioned in the reports quoted in the two previous editorials. They hate the private school not only, but they hate the Christian school. They see these as a threat, both educationally and financially, to the public school. This accounts for their violent opposition to parochialism — and we shared the opposition, but not for their reasons. This accounts, too, for their present support of the proposed IRS regulations: they see these as a means to thwart the private school movement. Besides, there are power-intoxicated forces in the federal government who are apparently bent on compelling everyone and every organization, even private and religious organizations, to conform to their standards with regard, for example, to non-discrimination and racial integration. Their policy seems to be: conform, or we will do our utmost to destroy you. In the third place, there are powerful forces of religionists, representatives of the false church, at work who have the same aims and who identify their social gospel ideas with true

religion and who would gladly see the demise of any religious movement, church, school, which does not conform to their ideas. In effect, they would gladly see the establishment of religion in this country, provided it is their – Antichristian – religion.

We may expect that these forces will become stronger, not weaker. And we may expect – I do not know how soon it will be – that eventually they will make our place as Christians smaller and smaller, and finally impossible, here in the world. We must be prepared! We must not begin to compromise!

In the second place, we ought to see that what is really at stake in the current conflict is the right of private, parental education. The aim is not merely to deprive us of tax-exempt status; the latter is the weapon. The aim is to destroy the private school, to deprive it of its very private character and right of self-determination. And I call your attention to the fact that this is a right which has long been recognized in this country, and in some states (Michigan among them) it is recognized in the constitution. But more than this, is the *duty*, the God-given duty, of parental education. It is the duty, the sacred calling, of covenantal education which is involved. It is not the calling of the government to educate our children or to interfere in that education. That is *our* calling as parents before the

face of God. No government may interfere with that or try to make it impossible. That is a principle.

In the third place, it is certainly true (whether with regard to church schools or with regard to our parental Christian schools) that the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion is involved in this conflict. In that connection, it is rather ironic that the IRS is so concerned about minorities when they are racial minorities, but altogether overlooks the fact that our Christian schools – and is that not especially true of our small Protestant Reformed schools? – are *minority schools*! Only, of course, they are schools of a *religious* minority. But again, while that constitutional guarantee is of great importance, what is even more important is that the maintenance and confession and application (with reference to education) of our Reformed and Christian principles are at stake in this conflict. Then we may not and then we cannot and then we shall not forsake, by God's grace!

Again: let us be spiritually prepared for the battle!

(Editor's Note. It wasn't a conspiracy, but pure coincidence. I had completed my editorials, and Rev. Van Baren's regular article for this issue arrived in the mail. Lo and behold! His first title and mine were exactly alike! You know what they say about great men's minds. . . .)

TRANSLATED TREASURES

Pamphlet on the Reformation of the Church

Dr. A. Kuyper

11. In which way the office in the church of Christ works in the New Dispensation.

The office was instituted originally in the apostolate as one single office. "Just as the father has sent me, so send I you." "And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." The teaching office, the ruling office, the office of alms, all were concealed in that one apostolic office. Ananias and Sapphira laid their offering at the feet of the apostles, and the apostle of the Lord immediately rejected that offering; but not because that offering did not belong

at his feet, but because they lacked the smell of charity before the Lord. Also the holy apostle Paul collected money again and again on his journeys for the impoverished Jerusalem church. Thus originally the apostles ministered the Word and served tables. This shows that the three or four offices¹ which later

¹Kuyper speaks here of three or four offices because there is some question in Reformed churches whether the professors of theology in the seminary hold a separate office. This latter was the view of Calvin and it reappears in our church order in Article 2. Our churches, however, have always maintained that the office of professors of theology is part of the office of the minister.

came to separate development in the church did not stand alongside of each other as independent offices, but, in the nature of the case, formed one single office, and ought to be seen and understood in their unity. Thus unity lies in the unity of the King's majesty. Just as during the Lord's sojourn on earth the preaching of the gospel was not alongside of the healing of the sick, nor the rule of His disciples alongside of the feeding of the hungry, but just as both this preaching and this ruling of the disciples and this wonderful demonstration of love were all three expressions of the one and the same anointing, so also, in the nature of the case, there is only one work which, through the instrumental ministry of one office, even though divided into different branches, still now proceeds from the King toward His church. Where in the midst of the heathen world new churches are arising, the missionary still displays that unity of the office in his person since he is preacher, elder, and carer for the poor all at the same time.

Division in this one office began first through the spread of the church in connection with the limitations in those who were clothed with the office. Thus we see from Acts 6 that for this reason and no other the distinct deaconate was separated from the apostolate. It was, as we read, because "the number of the disciples was multiplied," and because this spreading of the church prevented the apostles from treating every concern with the required exactness, that gave rise to murmuring. And this murmuring moved the apostles to recognize, not: "it should not be that we as apostles should busy ourselves with material things"; but rather: "it is not proper that we should neglect the Word of God to serve tables." Thus as long as the service of tables was still of such small extent that the ministry of the Word received no damage, the deaconate and preaching were together in one office. But as soon as the spread of the church expanded the ministry of tables in such a way that the Word was damaged, the apostles created a separate office for the ministry of tables. Or, better yet, they made to shoot out from the stem of their original office a separate shoot in the deaconate. This was a circumstance therefore of importance because it appears from this how accurate, according to God's Word, our Church Order is in Article 25. The same is true in our liturgical formula for the installation of elders and deacons which recognizes the deaconate as an office. And this is also confessed in our confession, namely, that deacons "with the shepherds and overseers" of the congregation "form as it were a council of the church." This is no less important because this loosening of the deaconate from the apostolate puts in our hand the unsought key by which to solve easily the ancient contention for mastery which the office of teaching attempted to exercise over the

office of elders.

This dispute still continues, as is well-known, over the question whether the minister is the proper officebearer and the elder only his helping instrument; or rather that both, teaching and ruling elders, standing on a completely equal footing as instruments of King Jesus. Just as first the deaconate loosed itself from the apostolate, thus the teaching and ruling office of elder also gradually split for a similar reason. The Jerusalem church originally had a gloriously outstanding consistory, composed of twelve apostles, who were at the same time teaching, ruling, and ministering instruments of King Jesus. In consequence of the expansion of the church, presently seven deacons were added. And these nineteen persons would undoubtedly have proved to be perfectly capable of exercising the kingly authority of Christ in His church if a congregation had only existed in Jerusalem and the calling of the apostolate had been limited to Jerusalem. But this was not the case. Churches had to be established everywhere, and because it was impossible that each of these churches possess 12 apostles, the official ministry of local teachers separated itself from the world apostolate. And because the number of these teachers remained very small in most churches, the local office of government had, again in an entirely natural way, to separate from this local teaching office as a local official ministry, existing in complete equality of rank alongside of the teaching office and the deaconate. The office of professor remained, after that threefold development of the office, for a long time hidden in the teaching office. This lay in the nature of the case. As long as the opposition of heretics and the defense of the truth took place exclusively on practical and ecclesiastical grounds, this important task was still entirely the responsibility of the minister in his ordinary preaching and epistles. But when later the struggle with heresy became more technical, the shepherd or ministers would have had to leave behind the ministry of the Word in order to save the church in a more technical way. Wherefore, because this was not good nor could take place, the doctorate gradually, and as if by itself, shot out a shoot from the official stem, and the minister of the church was henceforth only a shepherd. A shepherd, although always to be understood not in the current sense as if the preacher is a teacher on the pulpit and a shepherd only in family visitation; but shepherd with the understanding that in the first place on the pulpit and further with each official action, the flock is pastured.

Attention ought to be paid to two things which follow from this. In the first place, our attention ought to be fixed upon the undeniable fact that the four offices of "shepherd, elder, deacon, and teacher"

may be regarded as four stalks on one root; and must therefore never be considered as four cuttings rooted separately alongside of each other, each in its own earth on its own root. The office of shepherd in Jesus' church is therefore at the same time the office of ruling. The ruling elders, though kept distinct from the ministry of the Word, must watch for the purity of the ministry of the Word. And just as the deaconate must be abundantly busy in the comfort of the Word (and therefore in far and away most churches sits with the official council of the church) the deaconate stands in the middle of the ministry of the Word, and ought at the same time to be merged with the ruling organism of the churches. Finally, as much as the deaconate is more particularly the office for the manifestation of Christendom which exists not in words, but in power, nevertheless none of the three remaining offices stands outside the ministry of mercy, and each office would be forfeited that did not let light shine before men.

The other observation is that in this division of offices in the visible church on earth there only repeats itself what is seen in the Messiah-office of Christ. Just as that office of Messiah is one in origin, nature, and scope, and for all that does not divide itself into the three-fold office of prophet, priest, and king, so also the office of the visible church on earth

is one in stem and root but divided in operation. Our chief Prophet and Teacher speaks more particularly through the office of shepherd and teacher. Through the presbytery our eternal King rules in a narrow sense. And through the deaconate the mercies of our eternal High Priest are revealed in a special way. But even as it can be asserted with equal right that the ministry of the Word testifies prophetically, priest-like, and rules in a kingly way, and even as both other ministries have a part in each of the three offices of Christ, so these three stalks are intertwined on earth in the visible church, and the right knowledge of each office is lost if men lose from sight the unity of the root of all three.

Our conclusion, therefore, can be no different than that the ecclesiastical office on earth is nothing more nor less than an instrument of the office of Messiah to the end that He Who has received a name above all names on earth and throughout eternity in the midst of the Father's elect performs prophesying, ruling, teaching, and mercy. A concentrated office thus proceeds from moment to moment from the one office of Messiah which is called to preach the Word in the office of shepherd, to plead through the doctorate, and to bring to dominion over sin through the consistory, and to work against that misery which is the fruit of sin in the office of deacon.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Galatians

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE MOST INCREDIBLE SLANDER OF PAUL'S PREACHING REFUTED — Continued (Galatians 5:11, 12)

Paul would yet be preaching the need of being circumcised in order to become a member of Christ? Once more a bloody rite, which prefigured the blood of the Cross, would need to be practiced in the Christian Church? One would first need to become a believer in the Old Testament sense before he could be a believer in the New Testament church as did the Jews insist who came in to spy out our liberty in

Christ Jesus? (Gal. 2:4) Preposterous, indeed! Then Paul would be denying the very truth of the Gospel! Paul's would be worse than was the position of Peter when he separated himself from the Gentile Christians and ate with those of the circumcision who had been called from the Jewish faith. (Gal. 2:11 ff) He would be, indeed, breaking down what he had once built. (Gal. 2:18) He would have ceased to live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved him and gave Himself for Paul on the accursed tree. (Gal. 2:20)

What! is the offence of the Cross ceased?

In a former paragraph we have spoken of this "offence of the Cross." This deals with the very heart of the Gospel; it deals with the chief cornerstone upon which the entire temple of God's church is constructed and made firm. In the midst of all the unbelief of Israel the word of Jehovah was to Isaiah, that he would not be afraid with the fear of those who would put their trust in a false alliance with Assyria, an alliance which was tantamount to a conspiracy against the LORD. Ahaz and the nobles of Judah would call upon the help of the Assyrian king against two kings who would overthrow the throne of David in Jerusalem. Rezin king of Syria (Damascus) and Pekah, son of Remaliah, would overthrow the dynasty of David's house and place another on David's throne who was not a son of David. It was in that historical situation that the word of the Lord came to Ahaz that this would never come to pass. God would fulfil His promise to David as spoken by Nathan the prophet, that he would raise up a Son to sit upon David's throne forever. (II Sam. 7:1-17) How would this be realized? A virgin will conceive and bring forth a Son and shall call Him IMMANUEL, God with us. (Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:31, 34)

It is in this connection that the Scripture brings in the stone of stumbling, the rock of offence, in Isaiah 8:14. Instead of placing their trust in a foreign power such as Assyria, of which Sennacherib is king, they must sanctify the Lord God in their hearts. They must trust in Him and wait for His salvation alone against all the enemies. All the plans of the unbelievers shall come to nought. They shall not stand! Only what the LORD shall do shall stand. The mighty word of God comes to Isaiah and instructs him not to walk in the way of this unbelieving, conspiring people. God shall be for a "Sanctuary" to all who trust in Him. As one commentary has it, "All, who sanctified the LORD of hosts in their hearts, He surrounded like temple walls; hid them in Himself, whilst death and tribulation reigned without, and comforted, fed and blessed them in His gracious presence."

But there is another side to this. All who do not sanctify the LORD in their hearts, do not place their trust in Him alone, these do not have the LORD as their sanctuary, where they dwell under the shadow of the almighty; but for them He is a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence. Upon this stone they are dashed to pieces. Thus it shall be for the unbelievers in both the houses of Israel. God's work in Zion is like a stone. For God will build the temple of His church on a foundation of which the chief cornerstone is Christ Jesus in His death and resurrection. Now this stone is elect and precious. (Isaiah 28:16; I Peter 2:6; Matt. 21:42; Rom. 9:33) Thus He is to us who believe. He is not the offence of the

Cross to us. He is the Rock to which we come as living stones to be built up a spiritual house, to bring forth spiritual sacrifices unto God. (I Peter 2:3)

Now the offence of the Cross is that God lays the stone in Zion on which all of salvation rests. This is realized on the Cross. Here the Stone is rejected by the builders, the Jewish nation; He is condemned to die on the Cross. In the determinate counsel of God it was by wicked hands that Christ was crucified and slain. (Acts 2:23) But God raised Him up and set Him at His own right hand! And so, in the wisdom of God, the rejected Stone became the chief cornerstone. (Psalm 118:22; Matt. 21:42) The evil husbandmen said, This is the heir, let us kill him and let us seize his inheritance. Yet thus the stone was laid in Zion. And that is the stone of offence. That is the Cross! And this Cross is *the* rock of offence to all unbelief. In their heart and conscience they are condemned in all their religiosity and empty rites. They are crushed by this Stone forever, Isaiah says, "and many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken and be snared and be taken captive!" (Isaiah 8:15)

Now, can this "offence of the Cross" ever cease? Can it ever be made of none effect, even in the highest heaven and in deepest hell? Will the reality of that awful cry of the Jews ever cease: His blood be upon us and upon our children? (Matt. 27:25) The offensiveness of Paul's preaching was exactly that He preached this Cross, this stone laid in Zion, as did all the other apostles. (Acts 4:10, 11) These leaders winced under this preaching and exclaimed, "and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (Acts 4:28b)

Now Paul is accused of a very great sin. He would not have kept that which was entrusted to him, this riches of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, this mystery which was hid in God from the ages and is now made known in Christ Jesus? (Eph. 3:8-11, I Peter 1:18-21) If Paul preached the need of circumcision, then he would in one sentence make all that is glorious in the Cross of Christ to fade, and all the riches would be turned into abject poverty and shame. Once more we would have rags and not the white raiments of righteousness to clothe the shame of our nakedness.

PAUL'S SOLEMN WISH FOR JEWISH DISTURBERS OF THE FAITH (Galatians 5:12)

There are heights of holy zeal and indignation which cold and fleshly souls cannot understand. Such is the case with this zeal of God's house which consumes Paul at this point. He is filled with the glow of his great love for the truth of the Gospel. He can only magnify his office as a true steward of the riches in Christ Jesus.

There are certain disturbers of the faith of the church. In Gal. 1:6, 7 he had also spoken of these, who pretended that they were preaching "another Gospel" than Paul preached. There Paul had called upon their heads the "anathema" of God. This should come upon his own head too and even upon a Gamaliel, should he preach another Gospel than Paul had preached in their midst. They were those who would trouble the saints. They would overturn the Gospel of Christ.

Now Paul does something very great, it seems to me. He would have these mere cutters of the flesh who really do not "circumcise" in the Scriptural sense, as a sign and seal of the righteousness which is by faith (Rom. 4:11), but who merely cut off "foreskins," go all the way. In Phil. 3:2 he calls these the "concision." (*kata tomeen*) For we, who believe in Christ Jesus and put no trust in the flesh are the true circumcision. We have the circumcision of Christ which is without hands, in the putting off of the body of sin. (Col. 2:11) Yes, these would-be evangelists of law should not simply circumcise themselves, but should *mutilate* themselves. The term in the Greek really can only mean this self-mutilation. The verb is "apokopsontai," 3rd person, plural, indicative, middle voice of *apokoptoo*: to cut off, to amputate. Yes, might they "even" do that. Then they would go really all the way in their fleshly circumcision. At least it wouldn't be a little circumcision. This interpretation is advocated by a host of interpreters. See Meyer's Commentary, page 231, and Lightfoot, page 207.

We have the interesting "Note" on page 244 of Meyer's Commentary, which we here quote,

"The common interpretation of the Fathers, confirmed by the use of the language of the LXX., is not to be rejected only because it is displeasing to the delicacy of the modern times." (Jowell) The American section of the Revision committee,

following the French rendering of Deut. XXIII:1, recommends the euphemism, "Go beyond circumcision" as the preferable mode of expressing this idea of the verb in a version for general circulation. Both Lightfoot and Eadie emphasize that such mutilation was a part of the rites of the worship of Cybele, and as such the allusion would have been understood at once. The idea conveyed is that circumcision, when no longer fulfilling its original design as an ordinance adumbrative of Christ and His blessings, had no more validity than such degrading prescriptions of the heathen, and that the sole difference is in degree and not in kind. The application of this principal here is intense irony. The explanation of Sabday is certainly remarkable, that while the interpretation here maintained is the true one, Paul is writing under the strain of passion, and his anger uses an expression that indicates "one of very few flaws in a truly noble and gracious character."

Only when we see that Paul places such men under the divine curse can we understand that Paul, in using this phrase, is walking on the higher ground of his calling, and expresses what deepest implication and consequences of those, who insist that the New Testament Christian must be circumcised to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

What is worse: to fling the Lord's anathema upon such disturbers of the faith and subverters of the Gospel, or to wish these men to go all the way in their folly of mere cutting of the flesh? To ask this question is to answer it!

For such are the men of unbelief, "who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved; to fill up their sins always: but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost"! (I Thes. 2:15, 16)

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missions

Prof. Robert D. Decker

Several years ago the *Standard Bearer* carried a series of articles written by Rev. C. Hanko and the undersigned on the subject of missions. A brief

history of missions was given and some principles of missions were enunciated. For some reason this rubric was discontinued. Because our churches are increas-

ingly active in missions it was decided by the *Standard Bearer* staff to revive this rubric. The undersigned was appointed its editor. The purpose of this rubric shall be twofold. There will be articles on the subject of the Biblical (Reformed) principles of missions. The mission committee will be asked to submit articles from time to time in order to keep our people informed concerning the mission work of the churches. In addition our missionaries will be asked to submit articles informing our people of the work they are doing in the various fields at home and abroad. It is our prayer that all this will serve to make our people the better informed on the subject of missions and on the work of our churches. Thus our people will be the better able to support this work of Jesus Christ with their prayers and offerings.

The science of missions is of comparatively recent origin. In fact, until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was little scientific investigation of missions. This is true generally among the churches but more especially within the Reformed tradition. Even less is found here. Two names are worthy of mention in this connection. Thomas Aquinas wrote a treatise in which he discussed the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles and how this differed from preaching to the Jews. Voetsius of the Netherlands made a worthy contribution to the subject in a work dealing with the ground, reason, and object of mission endeavor.

What may be the reason or reasons for this? The late Herman Hoeksema in his syllabus on missions suggested that the church from the very beginning of its New Testament history simply spontaneously engaged in missions. The Apostles went out preaching into all the world as sent by Christ Himself (The Great Commission) and under the impetus of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. The church after the times of the Apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, simply continued the work assuming correctly that the Great Commission had not been fulfilled by the Apostles. This same point is made by our fathers in the *Form Of Ordination Of Missionaries*: "That unto the *Heathen* also these glad tidings must be brought appears plainly from Matt. 28:19: 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.'" It is not at all strange, therefore, that the church felt no particular need to investigate the ground, nature, scope, and object of missionary endeavor.

A second reason lies undoubtedly in the fact that there is no essential difference between preaching the gospel in all the world and preaching it in the established church (congregation). This point too is recognized by the *Form of Ordination Of Mission-*

aries: "Although all ministers of the Word have in common, that to them is committed the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the Sacraments, the government of the Church, and the maintenance of christian discipline, yea, all that, according to the Word of God belongs to the office of pastor and teacher; and although from the difference of field of labor no difference is resulting, concerning office, authority or dignity, since all possess the same mission, the same office and the same authority, yet notwithstanding this, it is necessary that some labor in the congregations already established, while others are called and sent to preach the Gospel to those without, in order to bring them to Christ." The point is that the Gospel preaching is just that, no matter where it occurs. Therefore apart from dogmatic investigation concerning the meaning and significance of the preaching of the Gospel there was no special investigation done in the science of missions..

Even in more recent times there is very little worthwhile material on the subject. There is a mass of rather useless material coming from Arminian-fundamentalist circles. Roland Allen, writing out of the Anglican tradition, has produced some worthwhile volumes. Apart from the contributions of J. J. VanOosterzee, R. B. Kuiper, J. H. Bavinck, H. R. Boer, R. R. DeRidder and H. Hoeksema there is little in the Reformed tradition. There may very well be an implied criticism of the Reformed churches by virtue of this fact. Perhaps the dearth of material indicates that there was not, among the Reformed churches, the proper emphasis placed on this aspect of the church's calling and task in the world. Of late this has increased and more of a study is being made of the science of missions. This is to the good and it is well that we investigate the whole field. If for no other reason we ought to do this because the subject of the church's calling, task, and place in the world is a very live issue in our times and there is a good deal of bad ecclesiology being advocated.

Various names have been suggested for this subject and it is well that we briefly examine them. There is the name, Apostolics. This emphasizes that the missionary is sent out to the task of preaching the gospel to the nations. This has some merit for this emphasizes the official character of the work, something which can stand emphasis in our day. The danger, however, of using this term lies in the fact that it may suggest some kind of apostolic succession idea. Missionaries certainly are not direct successors to the Apostles. Another term, preferred by Dr. A. Kuyper, is prosthetics. This term, derived from the Greek, means to emphasize the fact that the church must grow in the world. By mission work the church is increased in numbers. Missions adds to the church. J. H. Bavinck correctly criticizes this term on the

ground that missions and missionaries do not add to the church. Only God adds daily to the church such as should be saved. God does that through the means of the preaching of the gospel by the missionary, but God does it nonetheless. (Cf. Acts 2:41, 47; 11:24) J. J. VanOosterzee uses the term *halieutics* to refer to, "The theory of the extension of Christianity among the nations of the world not yet Christianized." (*Practical Theology*, p. 588) This term is derived from the Greek word which means to fish. It has some merit for it is derived from Scripture. Jesus said to the Apostles, "I will make you fishers of men." (Luke 5:1-11) Nonetheless the term is too narrow in scope to be used as a designation of the subject.

We prefer the term Missions. This is the word most commonly used throughout the ages. It is the word used by J. H. Bavinck. (*Introduction To The Science of Missions*) We prefer this term because it expresses all that is necessary to express in regard to this subject. The idea of the church or missionary being sent is contained in this term. And this is an essential part of missions! Our Lord personally called and sent the Apostles, appearing to them after the resurrection. Christ sends the Church today inasmuch as the church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets with Christ as the chief cornerstone. Thus it is through the church that Christ sends the missionary to preach the gospel. Apart from the sending of the Lord through the church the missionary has no right, no authority, and no strength to preach the gospel to the nations. This is precisely too why missions must be conducted by the church and not apart from the church by a mission society. Only the church has been authorized to preach the gospel. Christ did not give apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastors and teachers to societies for missions. He gave them to the church. The church alone has the authority to preach and that authority is Christ's. Only by means of a preacher who is sent

by Christ will the people of God hear Christ, believe on Him, and call upon Him and be saved. (Romans 10:14, 15) That is the mission of the church. We prefer this term too because it expresses the idea that the missionary is sent outside of the sphere of the established church, sent out to the nations. This distinguishes missions from the preaching done in the established church. This is literally what Jesus told the apostles and, therefore, the church, to do: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16) In that great task Christ promises to be with His church to strengthen her and guide her even unto the end of the world. (Matthew 28:19, 20)

What then is missions? It may be defined as: that work of God in Christ by which, through the official ministry of the Word by the church, He gathers His elect in the New Dispensation out of all nations of the world, both Jew and Gentile, with a view to the realization of the manifestation of His glory in the New Heavens and Earth.

In succeeding articles we shall examine the elements of this definition in some detail. But before we do that, we are going to examine the Scriptures to find the Biblical ground for missions. This is crucial, for both the principles and the practice (methods) of missions must be Scriptural. May God bless our humble efforts for the good of the churches.

We wish to close this introduction by observing that Christ is definitely calling our churches to the task of missions. He is opening doors for us both at home and abroad. We ought to be very thankful for that! We ought to be thankful that God is using us for this great work. Great things indeed happen by means of the preaching of the gospel! The elect are brought to faith and salvation. The wisdom of this world is made of no effect. Christ comes. Let us as churches then, to whom so much has been given, get on with the task. Let us be zealous and faithful in the work.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to Timothy

April 1, 1979

Dear Timothy,

Although you have asked me to write to you concerning the pastoral labors of a minister of the

gospel and particularly concerning the work of dealing with the problems and troubles which beset the people of God, I write to you concerning these

things with a great deal of hesitancy. This hesitancy is born of the conviction that the man has not yet been born who knows always the best way to deal with the problems which he confronts in the lives of God's people. There are, as you know, many times when a feeling of almost utter helplessness sweeps over us and we scarcely know how to do the work to which God so clearly calls us.

I write of this because you must understand that I do not have nearly all the answers to the problems which a pastor faces. If my reluctant consent to write about these things be construed on your part as an admission that I know all the solutions, then you will be sadly mistaken.

There is a point here, however, which ought not to be overlooked. I know that you, as does any conscientious pastor, have this same sense of helplessness when you are confronted with serious problems among members of your flock. But this is not necessarily bad. I am reminded of what the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in II Corinthians 12. You will recall that he talks in the early part of the chapter about visions he received of the third heaven. He adds to this brief biographical narrative, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." You recall how Paul prayed three times that this thorn in the flesh, this messenger of Satan, be taken from him. But the Lord would not answer that prayer, at least in the way Paul desired. The Lord said instead: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul comments on this answer of the Lord and says, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong."

In other words, God sent this messenger of Satan to buffet Paul in order that he might remain weak in all his labor on behalf of the gospel. He had to be weak, or else God could not use him. Why was this? The answer is that only when he was weak did the power of Christ rest upon him. Only when he was weak was he really strong, because then his power was not his own but the power of Christ.

This is important. We may take it as a general rule that only when we perform our work with a sense of our own helplessness will we be fit instruments in the hands of Christ. If we are strong, then we are strong only in our own strength. And then we are of no use to Christ, and we will be of no use to God's people in their troubles. But when we are weak, then we have

no strength of our own, and then only the strength of Christ pervades us and what we do.

This has both an objective and a subjective side to it.

From an objective point of view, the fact is simply that there are in the power of men no solutions to the problems of life. This is a fact. Men's theories, men's skills, men's diagnostic procedures, men's experience, men's cleverness at handling life's problems — all mean nothing at all. Only Christ can heal the wounded soul and bring the balm of Gilead to the hurts of life. Only Christ can restore and make whole again. Only Christ can bring about solutions to life's problems. And this is because of the dread power of sin which lies at the root and heart of all the troubles and problems which we face. If sin is not removed, the problems remain and the troubles continue or grow worse. But what man is able to remove sin from the heart and life of his fellow man? What man can reach into that heart and change it? What man has the power to cleanse from sin and from the guilt of sin? The cross is the only power. And that power is to be found only in our merciful Highpriest.

The subjective side of this is that a pastor who is worthy of the name does his work in this consciousness. It is true, of course, that God is pleased to use men and that Christ works His perfect work through human agency. And central to this all is the preaching of the Word — a work entrusted to those who are called to be pastors. But this does not alter the fact that the faithful pastor knows that he is, after all, nothing but an instrument — indeed, sometimes little more than a passive instrument. Paul writes of this in another place to these same Corinthians: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." I Corinthians 2:1-5.

It remains therefore a fact that the pastor who goes to his sheep in the confidence of his own ability to handle the situation and to solve the problem goes in the wrong spirit and will be of no use to Christ. But the pastor who goes in the consciousness of his own weakness and with a deep sense of his inability to accomplish anything at all is the man whom God is pleased to use.

You see, God must have the glory, and He alone. The saints must stand not in the wisdom of men, but

in the power of God. The power of Christ must rest upon him. And the saints must clearly see this that healing and restoration are wrought by the effectual working of Him Who is the only Shepherd of His sheep.

While we are on this subject, it might be well to spend just a little time on that whole matter of the qualifications of a pastor who must do this type of work of which we speak.

Again, I do not want to enter into a discussion of *all* the qualifications of a pastor. This is a subject discussed also in Poimenics class in Seminary, and you have had that training. But there are a few things which I do want to say about this.

In the first place, a pastor must be a *minister* of the gospel. He is a minister of the gospel also as he performs his pastoral functions. I am sometimes afraid that this is lost from sight in the Church today. A minister already in Seminary is offered special courses in all areas of pastoral work. He can pick up courses, e.g., in youth counselling, in what is called "a ministry to the unmarried," in counselling the mentally ill, in working with the aged, etc., etc. All kinds of courses are offered. And some seminaries even grant degrees in various fields such as these so that one who obtains such a degree becomes an "expert" in his particular field. Or, if he has not succeeded in getting these courses while in Seminary, he is offered such courses while active in the ministry; and the offerings come from various institutions, clinics, counselling centers, and such like.

Now I am not, as such, opposed to certain courses which could be offered to help the pastor in these areas of his labors. But there are dangers. One danger, quite obviously, is that he becomes an expert in one field only, a specialist. He, in pastoral work, is like the doctor who specializes in diseases of the foot. And this particular doctor does not particularly care if his patient is dying on the examining table from a heart attack as long as the fungus on his foot is being properly treated. That is one danger. The other danger is that the pastor forgets that he is a minister of the gospel. He so thoroughly studies his own specialty that, in order to justify this specialization, he invents techniques, procedures, diagnostic methods and treatments which are adaptable to his own narrow little corner. And through all this, the fact that he is a minister is somehow forgotten. A pastor is a minister of the Word. That is, he is called

and sent by Christ to bring Christ's Word as Christ's ambassador. This Word is then the Word of Christ which comes with all its power to destroy sin and work everlasting salvation.

This must not be construed as meaning that the minister is the only one who is able to help God's people in their troubles. There is a certain role which the people of God as a whole have. While we shall have to discuss this in more detail later, it is not out of place to point out now that we are all called to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. We are called, says James, to pray for one another that we may be healed; for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

But the point here is that the congregation functions in her calling as an organic unity. Behind the work of the minister in his preaching on the Lord's Day stands the congregation through which the minister is called. And his work bears fruit only when God's people support that Word preached through their prayers and through submitting to that Word. Behind that preaching stands the congregation which searches the Scriptures, studies God's Word and lives with the constant testimony of that Word on its lips. Without that the preaching is ineffective. Behind the elders stand the saints who help one-another in the difficult pathway of life, who support the elders, who pray for them, who approve of their work when censure is performed, who really exercise discipline themselves through the office of elder. Behind the deacons stand the people of God who not only give of their gifts to help the needy, but who are themselves filled with works of charity and benevolence. And so, behind the pastor stand those who belong to the Church of Christ and who in the communion of the saints bear one another's burdens. Without that the work of the pastor will never survive.

But all that does not alter the fact that the pastor is a minister. He brings the Word of Christ. He has no other calling than this. This is his first and foremost qualification. He may be sure that if he brings any other word than that of the Scriptures, his work will accomplish exactly nothing. No matter what may be the situation which he faces, he must *preach*. He must say, Thus saith the Lord. Only then can he work.

Fraternally,
H. Hanko

THE STANDARD BEARER

is a thoughtful gift for a "Shut-in".



ALL AROUND US

The IRS and the Private Schools

Rev. G. Van Baren

Some time ago we presented reports of the attempt of the IRS to require of private schools proof that they were not established for the purpose of evading the regulations concerning racial discrimination in the public schools. If such proof was not given, these schools would lose their tax-exempt status. The difficulty with the requirement was that it placed the whole burden of proof on the private school. It had to prove itself innocent according to the regulations of the IRS if its tax-exempt status would be continued. In addition, the IRS proposal failed to take into consideration the many other possible reasons for a racial imbalance within private schools.

The proposal drew unprecedented response from the public. The result was that the IRS backed off for review and revised proposals. Had it not done so, the real prospect was that Congress would have rejected the proposal. However, the revision which appears to be a reasonable modification, in fact does not change the main thrust of the ruling. I quote from *Human Events*, February 24, 1979 on this:

The Internal Revenue Service has released its amended version of the proposed regulations affecting private schools, and just as opponents had feared . . . , the new edict includes changes that *appear* to be improvements over the earlier proposal but do not eliminate its major flaw: the requirement that many schools will be assumed guilty of racial discrimination until they prove themselves innocent to the IRS's satisfaction.

As previously reported, the trouble with the earlier proposal was its arbitrary — and legally dubious — assertion that schools should be presumed guilty of racial discrimination until proven innocent simply because they (1) fail to meet a quota of minority enrollment, and (2) were either founded or substantially expanded at about the time that public-

school desegregation plans were being carried out in the same communities. Such so-called "reviewable" schools would then be compelled to meet an array of costly affirmative-action requirements, or else lose their tax-exempt status and their right to receive tax-deductible contributions — the life-blood of many such schools.

The new proposal, which appears in the February 13 issue of the *Federal Register*, seems to be much more reasonable because it adds a third factor to the definition of the affected so-called "reviewable" schools — namely, that its "creation or substantial expansion was *related in fact* to public school desegregation in the community" (emphasis added). But while at first glance this would seem to indicate that the agency would have to produce some evidence of discriminatory intent on the part of a school before placing it in the suspect "reviewable" category, closer inspection reveals that this is not the case.

Instead, Sec. 3(03)(c) of the new ruling states that the formation or substantial expansion of a school during a period of public-school desegregation will ordinarily "be considered to be related in fact to public-school desegregation," but that the agency will magnanimously "consider evidence" that such activity was not in fact so related.

In short, despite the newly deceptive wording, the burden of proving their innocence remains with the schools as much as ever.

Because the new wording looks more reasonable, however, it may be much more difficult to get the necessary votes in Congress to prevent this power grab. On the assumption that this would happen, opponents had hoped to get congressional hearings scheduled on the regulations before the new version was published. However, as we revealed in our February 3 issue, Chairman Sam Gibbons (D.-Fla.) of

the House Ways and Means Oversight subcommittee agreed to hold up the probe until IRS was ready. Those hearings are now slated for February 20-22.

The IRS, which received some 130,000 letters against the original proposal, is now inviting comments on the new version. Address: Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Attn: E:EO, Washington, D.C. 20224. The deadline for the new comment letters is April 20.

One might do well to communicate to the Commissioner as well as to one's congressmen to express objection to the proposed ruling of the IRS on the tax-exempt status of private schools. Such letters should contain specific objections as: (1) that this proposal places the burden of proof for innocence on the schools and (2) fails to recognize properly that racial imbalance is often due to other factors than a desire to discriminate.

Canadian Reformed-Orthodox Presbyterian

These two denominations, the Canadian Reformed (liberated) and the Orthodox Presbyterian, have been discussing closer ties of fellowship. *Calvinist Contact*, Feb. 2, 1979, reports:

The Canadian Reformed Church has strengthened her ties with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church as a result of a meeting in October between committees of both denominations. The meeting was the result of some three years of correspondence between the churches.

A delegation of five men, members of the Committee for Ecumenicity, represented the Canadian Reformed Church at a meeting in Philadelphia with members of the OPC Inter-Church Relations Committee.

The Canadian Reformed delegation came with a

proposal for ecclesiastical contact with the OPC, the result of a decision taken by the Canadian Reformed Synod of Coaldale, 1977.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church Committee will recommend to its General Assembly later this year that it consider the Canadian Reformed Church to be a "church in ecclesiastical fellowship". If approved, it would result in an exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies, joint action in areas of common responsibility, communications on issues of common concern, and the exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.

A discussion on church government and confession was postponed until a future meeting to be hosted by the Canadian Reformed Church.

"... Whose Heart the Lord Opened"

From *Christianity Today*, January 19, 1979, comes a report of the high-powered approach for the establishment of new congregations. It concerns the efforts of the Reformed Church in America:

An old church denomination has a new approach to church-planting. The result has been the formation of three new congregations in Dallas, Texas. The 350-year-old Reformed Church in America broke from traditional methods of church mission with its "Dallas Project." The 155 persons who attended the first services last month were the fruit of a complex program of statistical research, telephone surveys, and media promotions.

... The Dallas Project came from a \$6 million,

five-year church growth drive within the 215,000-member body. Concerned about decreasing membership figures, church leaders set a minimum goal of twenty-five new churches a year. They were particularly interested in areas that had no Reformed Church influence.

Dallas was selected for the initial thrust of the church growth drive only after extensive demographic research had been made of several U.S. cities.

... With a Dallas advertising agency that "helped sharpen the process," Paulsen designed a media strategy for the Dallas Project. He used the newspapers and radio to promote a telephone survey of 4,500 persons in the northern suburbs of Dallas.

Volunteers from Reformed churches staffed the telephone lines, introducing themselves as members of the denomination of Norman Vincent Peale and television pastor Robert Schuller — an attempt to get name recognition. Then the respondents were queried about church attendance. If they had no affiliation with a local church, they were invited to join a new Reformed Church congregation.

With information gained from the telephone surveys, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, marketing studies, and commuter patterns, the project staff members determined where to plant the first churches. Facilities were rented in the Dallas suburbs of Plano, Carrollton, and North Dallas. These were areas “that were growing more rapidly than existing churches could respond to,” said Paulsen.

Initially, the objective of the project was to establish three congregations of 1,000 members each. But their goals have changed. “The people that we’ve talked to say they want to attend smaller churches where they’re known by name and where their contributions are counted as worthwhile,” Paulsen said.

From the three-year, \$800,000 budget, the project will purchase media spots to promote the Reformed Church drive. A series of ads ran in Dallas newspapers and on radio to promote a Christmas Eve service in a North Dallas Holiday Inn — the central meeting place for the new congregations.

Pastors of the three new churches were selected by

a task force of Reformed Church laymen and pastors from a long list of applicants. . . .

Paulsen, 36, denies that the Dallas Project ignores the human element by way of a calculated, Madison Avenue approach. “Having done the research carefully, using the available resources, we now are freed to be as completely human in Christ as we can be,” he said.

That means must be used to promote the truths of the gospel seems undeniable. The approach reported above, however, appears utterly foolish. It is not a question of ignoring the “human element by way of a calculated, Madison Avenue approach.” One rather gets the impression that there is the ignoring of the “Divine element” in mission work. There seems to be no confidence in the power of the cross and the work of the Spirit. The “Madison Avenue approach” appears to be the better method of establishing the church of Christ. One wonders about the work of the missionary Paul when the Spirit directed him where to go. Think of what he could have accomplished with 6 million dollars and Madison Avenue! Yet the Scriptural report is far, far more impressive. When Paul, for instance, went to Philippi, he began preaching first at the river side to a small group of women. The fruit of that work was assured because of the work of the Spirit: “And a certain woman named Lydia . . . which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”

GUEST ARTICLE

Faithfulness to Scripture in the Church

Rev. R. G. Moore

An outstanding feature of the Scripture’s teaching concerning the church is the importance of faithfulness to the truth of God’s Word, and to the sound doctrinal preaching of the Word. The life of the church is dependent upon Christ’s Word. But today there is a forsaking of true Scriptural preaching and

teaching. This is detrimental to the church, and in fact brings it to destruction if persistently followed. It is well that we consider our ways also, in the light of the teaching of God’s Word concerning the church. As we consider this truth of the church, we do not treat or even say anything that is new, but are

reminded of the instruction of Christ to His Body.

The church is, first of all, the body of Christ. In Eph. 1:20-23 we see the church so called. God "hath put all things under his (Christ's) feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." And this same testimony is found in Col. 1:15-20, where Christ is described as the firstborn of the church. "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." Further, the church is pictured as the branches, with Christ as the vine in John 15:1-5. And in I Peter 2, the church is spoken of as a temple, which figure is used also in Eph. 2:19-22. Finally the church is called the church of the firstborn in Hebrews 12:22-23.

In these texts we are given to understand that the Church of Christ is one organic whole, and a unity with a definite number of members. The church is not merely a crowd of people. Nor is there a question who will be in the church, or a matter of chance how many shall be in the church. God has determined her in Christ from before the foundation of the world. And He in Christ surely gathers her as the body of His Son. The church, then, is not dependent upon the persuasive powers of its ministers or its members for its growth and size. May we remember this when we may be tempted to use attractive figures of speech or cute little stories to teach something about God and the things of His kingdom. The church is not nourished and built up by such. Rather God calls His church as a body, as a temple, as a whole with a definite number of members. And without fail He gathers that church. Not one member is gathered that ought not to be, nor is one left out that should be there. God Who determines His church in Christ from before the foundation of the world, saves that church through the blood of His Son. And He has determined in Christ to gather that church by the means of the preaching of Christ and Him crucified and raised. Only then does the sound preaching of Christ have any place in the gathering and instruction of the church. Let us not then attempt to instruct the members of the church with anything less than the expounding of the Word.

The importance is illustrated by the figure of the vine and branches by which Christ instructs us. Christ is first, the head, and from Him the body draws its life. The church is the church exactly as they are ingrafted into Christ and draw there all from Him. Through the Spirit and the Word of Christ the church receives its life and energy. Apart from Christ, the church (branches) is not. Thus, the church is gathered and sustained only where the word of Christ is truly found, which nourishes and strengthens His members.

We shall consider this truth a bit more in detail. the church chosen of God from eternity in Christ, is

gathered in time from the whole human race, from every nation, tongue, and tribe, from the beginning of the world unto the end. Thus in every generation the church exists, the body of Christ is gathered and becomes manifest on earth. And so it shall be until the time that the last member of the body of Christ is born and gathered by Christ into His body, cf. John 10:26-30. God eternally knows and determines that body of Christ; and thus also it is He that determines the end of time when the last of His children are gathered. The body of Christ shall surely be perfected and made complete!

This gathering of the church in Christ is the wonder-work of God by grace in time. He separates His children from the wicked world and delivers them unto Himself, holy and without blame, to enter into His eternal fellowship and glory. Indeed, it is a wonder of God's grace. For in the gathering of His church, He builds His temple out of material altogether in itself unfit. For we are sinners, dead in sin and trespass. More wondrous it is than creation. For the human race is, in Adam and in its own sin, guilty and damnable. Out of such, God's church is gathered into the communion of the justified and righteous. We who were in the midst of death, unable to dwell in the holy presence of our God, are gathered by Christ's Spirit and Word into the fellowship and communion of our covenant God. This gathering can then be attributed alone to God's grace, cf. Eph. 2:1-10. Hence, to follow the ways of rationalism, gadgets, moral stories, or in any other way to follow the invention of man in order to appeal to the church is utter nonsense. And it surely can avail no good. Alone does serious, faithful preaching and instruction, well demonstrated from the Scriptures themselves, serve the welfare of that Church. For alone is there comfort and the message of forgiveness found there. And only then, in the faithful exposition of the Bible, is Christ heard unto salvation.

Further, the Scripture clearly teaches that the gathering of the church is the work of God's grace. It is not of man, though God uses us as His instruments. It is God in Christ Who gathers. "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, o Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name; thou art mine." Is. 43:1. Or again we read, "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." Rom. 9:24-26. Not only does the text show here that it is God alone who gathers the

church, but also that the church is one — both in the old and new dispensation. There are many texts to which we could turn, but we will quote but one more: “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.” I Cor. 1:9.

The divine calling, whereby the church is gathered out of the world, takes place always through Christ. He has the words of eternal life! It is the Son of God by His Spirit and Word, Who gathers His own church out of the whole human race. God always speaks through His Son and by the Spirit. And this divine calling comes to us through the preaching of the Word. The gospel is clearly not ours, but is Christ’s. It is His Word. He reveals it, and He is its contents. And Christ speaks it unto the gathering of His church! It is not, then, Christ and the church, not Christ and the minister, but Christ through the instrumentality of the church and his ministers whom He has prepared, ordained, and called to preach, that calls His church and gathers her.

Also at this point we see how important it is that we do not tamper with His word. Today man is busy attempting to change the meaning of Christ’s word. Man is saying that what was true in Paul’s day or in John’s day is no longer true or applicable today. Thus man overthrows the word of Christ about reprobation, about the wrath of God against sin and the sinner, about women’s blessed place of silence in the church, about the Genesis account of the creation of the world in six twenty-four hour days, etc. They would use the excuse that doing this they make it easier to gather the church, and may even point to the growth of their numbers following this course of action. However, when the word is so changed, Christ is not preached or is not preached to the extent that the word is so overthrown. The result is that the church shall not be gathered there. And, without repentance, Christ will altogether remove His candlestick from her that so walks.

On the other hand, when the Word is by grace maintained purely, when the church and the preacher are led by Christ’s Spirit to have the Scripture speak, as a two-edged sword, condemning sin and the sinner, and thus leading to Christ and His cross and resurrection as the only object of our trust and comfort — then is Christ gathering and blessing His church and His people.

As the church is so gathered, a unity in Christ becomes manifest. This is because the church is one. “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another.” Rom. 12:5. And also we read, For as the body is one and hath many members, and all members of that body being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are

we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” I Cor. 12:12-13. And yet again we read, “there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all.” Eph. 4:4-6.

Hence, we see that there is only one church, God’s elect of all ages, who as true members of God’s church are perfectly united together in a bond of spiritual unity and fellowship, so that they are formed into one spiritual body. In time this church becomes manifest from place to place in local congregations, in which her members walk together in agreement and harmony with one another, spiritually united in the bond of peace in Christ. This they have now in principle only, because of sin and because in this life there are always the tares with the wheat. Nevertheless this spiritual unity is the characteristic of Christ’s church already now.

This means that we do not look to the movements toward mere outward unity of this ecumenical age, as a fulfilment of the unity of the church. There are many which still call themselves church, and who devise to manifest a unity between churches by eliminating all the differences between them. And in the process throw the true doctrines of God’s Word to the winds in order to unite. Or there are congregations that try to unite all their members by ridding themselves of the antithetical preaching and the antithetical character of the Word in instruction and christian discipline. But this is absolutely wrong. The church must always be distinctively standing in the truth. A mere outward unity does not accomplish the true spiritual unity of the church. It is not the true unity of the body of Christ!

Christ alone establishes unity in His church. It is not by man or by the inventions of man by which he might try to make the church united. Man cannot cause unity; by nature all he can do is disrupt everything. For man is by nature selfish and seeks only his own good. Thus the true manifestation of the church of Christ is established alone where it pleases Christ to dwell by His Spirit and Word in the hearts of His own. Christ by the pure preaching of the Word, and by the operation of His Spirit, brings His children to repentance and ingrafts them into His body. And there is the unity of the church manifest in the fellowship of His people with their God and one another in and through Christ, Jesus, our Lord.

This unity is, therefore, not natural. For that which is natural is of sin and darkness. But the unity of the church is spiritual. And then this unity transcends all natural ties — it cannot be based upon

family ties, nationality, or race; but it is based upon the oneness of the Spirit of Christ, Who bestows the fulness of Christ upon the members of His body. Christ gathers the elect under His word to fellowship with the Father. His life dwells in the church and the members of the same are separated from the world as Christ's peculiar body.

From what has been said, it is obvious that God's children, with the calling of Christ to be gathered together in unity of Spirit, do so alone on the basis of the Word of Christ. In the first place this means that they are not united by outward means, but alone by the faithful preaching and instruction of the Scriptures. The church does not desire less doctrine — but

she has ever the need to grow in the knowledge of Christ. It is strict adherence to the Scripture in the preaching, catechism, writing, and in the labors of pastoral care and discipline which unites God's people. Not coffee hours, social gatherings, poems, stories, or the works of man. God's children seek union not in the way of less doctrine and less antithetical preaching, but in the way of ever growing in the doctrine of Christ. And though the church becomes ever so small (and she will in this end of time) she dare not seek realization of her unity in any other direction than that of growing in the knowledge of Christ her Head. May God grant us grace to be so faithful to the Scripture in all we undertake as the body of Christ.

NOTICE!

Classis East will meet in regular session on May 9, 1979 at the Faith Prot. Ref. Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least 10 days prior to the convening of this session.

John Huiskens
Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!

The League of Eastern Men's and Ladies' Societies will meet at First Church, April 10. Rev. Lubbers will speak on "Angels in the Holy Scriptures." All men and women are welcome to attend.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society "RUTH" of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker) express their sympathy to one of our members, Mrs. J. Buiter, in the loss of her father, MR. G. BYLSMA.

"For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations." Ps. 100:5

Rev. R. Van Overloop, Pres.
Mrs. P. Zandstra, Secy.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 2, 1979, our beloved parents, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Dykstra, will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary. We, their children, are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the years they have had together, and for the covenant instruction we have received. We pray for God's blessing upon them in the years to come.

Mr. and Mrs. Tunis Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Dykstra
Don Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Rich Dykstra
27 grandchildren
17 great-grandchildren



News From Our Churches

Professor Herman Hanko has declined the call extended to him by the congregation of our Southeast Church in Grand Rapids to "come over" and be their pastor.

Rev. Marvin Kamps, pastor of our church in Doon, Iowa, and Mr. Dewey Engelsma plan to leave on March 19 for Singapore. The brethren are taking this long journey to the other side of the globe at the invitation of a group of young Christians in that far away land who desire to learn more of the Reformed faith.

The Council of our Southwest Church in Grand Rapids has decided to send Rev. H. Veldman to the Skowhegan, Maine, area in order to investigate the mission field there. Rev. and Mrs. Veldman left the third week in January. They plan to labor there for a period of about three months.

The Council of our Hope Church in Walker, Michigan, and the Mission Committee of our churches jointly care for Rev. Robert Harbach and the field in which he labors as home missionary. As a part of the responsibility of oversight and to encourage our missionary in his difficult labors, these two bodies sent Rev. Van Overloop, pastor of Hope Church, and Elder Jon Huiskens to Victoria, B.C., for a week. The Hope Council concluded the announcement of this trip with the prayer "that this also may be used for the strengthening of our witness of the truth in the mission field."

Sunday preaching services continue in Charlotte, Michigan, under the direction of the Mission Committee and our Kalamazoo Church. Pulpit supply is being furnished by the students and professors of our Seminary.

Rev. Kenneth Koole, pastor of our church in Randolph, Wisconsin, preached the Sundays of February 11-25 in Bradenton, Florida. During his absence, seminarians Ronald Hanko, Carl Haak, and Ronald Camminga "filled the pulpit" in Randolph. The services in Florida are being sponsored by First Church in Grand Rapids. Rev. Koole was followed in Bradenton by Rev. Joostens, pastor of First Church. Professor H. Hoeksema is scheduled to follow Rev. Joostens.

The Council of Hope Church has approved a change in schedule for their Sunday School. Sunday School will meet from June 10 through November 4. There will be a Christmas program given and practices will be held on December 16, 22, and 23. This

replaces the October through April schedule.

In order to assist in the support of the seminary students who are members of Hope Church, the Council has appointed a "Seminary Student Aid Fund Committee." In order to meet the financial needs of the students, the committee has to raise \$911 per month. This is done through freewill offerings from the congregation.

The Sr. Young People's Society of our First Church scheduled a program on the work of our churches in Jamaica. The program featured the revised pictures of Mr. C. Prince, some musical numbers, and refreshments. The program was scheduled on March 15 in Southeast Church.

The Federation Board of Young People's Societies sponsored a Dutch Psalm Sing in First Church on Sunday, March 18. The theme was "Het Vasthouden van't Geloof van onze Vaderen." No translation available.

Rev. Lanting, pastor of our church in Loveland, Colorado, and Rev. J. Kortering, pastor of our church in Redlands, California, did quite a bit of traveling in early March. In addition to attending the meeting of Classis West, they performed their function as Church Visitors by conducting Church Visitation in our churches in Houston, Texas; Pella, Iowa; Randolph, Wisconsin; and South Holland, Illinois.

The new sanctuary and organ of our Faith Church in Jenison, Michigan, was dedicated on February 28. The program featured suitable music, greetings from Faith's former pastor, Rev. Joostens, a report from the Building Committee and a Charge to the Congregation by Faith's pastor, Rev. W. Bruinsma. Technical printing processes permitting, this issue features a picture of the new Faith Church, crowned with January snow.

K.G.V.



Faith Protestant Reformed Church