

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . As God's chosen, redeemed saints we are renewed by the Spirit of Christ. We can say with the apostle Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

. . . Christ in His Spirit has come to abide with us forever.

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## MEDITATION

## The Gift of the Comforter

Rev. C. Hanko

*"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."*

John 14:16, 17

The Comforter.

Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God. Ye believe also in Me.

It was after the celebration of the Last Supper

that our Lord spoke these words to His troubled disciples. Considering the circumstances, they certainly had reason to be troubled. The deep furrows of sorrow were plainly evident on the face of their Master as He anticipated the approaching hours of



shame, derision, cruel accusations, unjust condemnation, painful crucifixion, and, worst of all, the bitter agonies of being forsaken of God before another day would come to its close. Yet He was privileged to look beyond His death to His glorious resurrection, His triumphal march into the heavens and the glory that awaited Him with the Father.

He, and only He, could comfort them, even as they were His chief concern at the moment. Having loved His own, He loved them to the end.

Indeed, their souls were like a tempestuous sea that can find no rest, as conflicting thoughts fought for mastery within them.

Their Master would be taken from them. He would die; die in the hands of His enemies!

Yet how was this possible? Was He not the Christ, the Son of the living God, who had power over the winds and the seas, over sickness, demons, and death? Could He not subdue any power that would attempt to harm Him?

Still worse, foremost in their minds was the thought that the time had come that He would establish His kingdom, restore the throne of David and deliver Israel from the Roman oppression. This was to be the hour of His triumph. Yet now, particularly at the Supper, He gives every evidence of approaching His death, departing from them, that they will see Him no more.

Worse than that, they believed and confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, who had come to save His people from their sins. Somehow, they could not understand how, but somehow He would establish an earthly kingdom and thus bring His church into glory. Now that their hopes were shattered as far as an earthly kingdom was concerned, how could He still be their promised Savior? How well did they recall that agonizing moment at Capernaum when the multitudes turned their backs to Jesus to follow Him no more. Jesus had put the question to them, "Will ye also go away?" It took only a brief soul struggle for them to respond, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." All their hopes of eternal salvation centered in Him. As guilty, lost sinners they had found their refuge in Him.

And now their hopes seemed shattered by a single blow. Their sorrow knew no consolation. Conflicting thoughts gave them no rest.

They were like children who were told by their father, "Mother and I are leaving you now. We shall not forget you. But you won't see us again." Or like a bride at the eve of her wedding day being told by her prospective bridegroom, "I love you,

but I am leaving you. I will still care for your needs, but the time for our parting has come."

Let not your heart be troubled.

In the darkness of your night of sorrow cling to Me in faith. Trust Me. I *must* leave you, even though you do not understand. I seek your eternal welfare, for I am going to heaven to prepare a place for you in Father's House with its many mansions. To that Father House I am the Way, because I am the Truth and the Life. Anxiously, verging on despair, Philip pleads, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." It was virtually in answer to that urgent request that our Lord answers: "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter." My Father will send you One who will stand next to you, as it were. He will be My advocate, for He will tell you of Me, explain to you why I must go, why also this dark hour for you and for Me is a necessary part of My Work of salvation to bring you to glory.

Another Comforter!

Another, yet not different. He is one that is added, as it were to Christ. Even as the Father and the Son are One, so also the Son and the Spirit are One in Essence. For the three persons of the holy Trinity, though distinct in persons as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are one Being. The Son is the replica of the Father. He reveals all the fulness of the Godhead through the Spirit. The God of our salvation sent His Son into the world as Immanuel, God with us. The Son, who is fully and completely God, took on our human nature, becoming fully and completely man in the person of the Son. For thirty three years He dwelled among us. Our eyes saw Him, our ears heard Him, our hands touched Him who is the Light and the Life. Apart from Him there is no light, no life, only emptiness, horrible darkness of death. The disciples had witnessed His power over creation, even over sickness, death, and hell. They had marvelled at His power working through them as they performed miracles in His name. They had witnessed the wonder of grace when wretched, guilty sinners went their way in peace upon His word. It was the power of His Word that privileged them to confess, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Now again He spoke His Word, soothing their troubled hearts: I will not leave you comfortless, like orphans. I will come again in the Spirit.

For the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth.

Jesus had said, "I am the Truth." He is the true and living God as the Son, who bears the image of the Father. Eternally the Spirit of the Father rests upon Him, and the Spirit of the Son proceeds from Him to the Father, bringing the three persons into intimate communion of life. Moreover, the Son of



God is the Christ, who came into our flesh to tabernacle among us and to reveal the Father, the fulness of God's perfections and glory unto us. He is the Way of salvation, the Way to Father's House with its many mansions, because He is the only true and complete Savior, the Truth and the Life. At the time of His baptism, when He began His public ministry, the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove to qualify Him for His earthly ministry which brought Him to the cross. As the Captain of our salvation He went through the gates of hell, even through death and the grave, to arise triumphantly and to be exalted at the right hand of the Father in the highest heavens. It was the anticipation of that glory that made it possible for Jesus to speak of another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth.

I will pray the Father.

Christ is now our Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary before the throne. He prays without ceasing day and night. He prays for all those given to Him of the Father, that they may receive from Him every spiritual blessing to bring them with Him in His glory.

Thus upon His exaltation He prayed that the Father would bestow on Him the Holy Spirit to qualify Him for His mediatorial work as our Intercessor before the throne, to carry out His work of salvation in us.

The Father heard Him and granted Him this Spirit, who, in turn, was sent into the church on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit, now as Spirit of Christ, our exalted Lord, came to dwell in us as Christ's Advocate. He made His presence known with the sound as of a mighty, rushing wind, with tongues of fire resting upon the heads of all those present in the room, and with endowing them with power to go out among the crowd that had gathered to speak to each one in his own tongue, proclaiming to him the mighty works of God: the cross, the resurrection, and the glory that follow.

Suddenly, as in a moment, the light dawns. The minds of the disciples are enlightened, their hearts are put at ease, their sorrow is turned to gladness. For they hear the Christ speaking to them through the Old Testament Scriptures, now interpreted for them by Christ's Spirit. The Spirit does not speak concerning Himself. He speaks of the Christ. As the Lord Himself had said, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13,14). They heard the voice of the Lord speaking to them, interpreting the Scriptures,

applying it to their hearts and lives, so that they receive every spiritual blessing which Christ receives for them from the Father. Christ and the Spirit are one.

Wonderful gift!

No, the world cannot receive that gift. You and I, as we are in ourselves, have no right to that gift. The world, apart from Christ, lies in the darkness of sin and death, under the righteous judgment of God. They are like a blind man who is still in darkness even though the sun shines brightly round about him; even worse, because they are willfully blind.

How were the disciples different? They were chosen of God, renewed by the Spirit, called to be Jesus' disciples. The Holy Spirit was with them, speaking to them through the Old Testament Scriptures and, more particularly, through Jesus. They heard the words of eternal life. And they believed in God. They believed also in the Christ. On Pentecost the Spirit of the risen Lord came to dwell *in* them. Christ was no more *with* them, but now He was *in* them, in a far more intimate communion of heavenly life.

The same applies to us. As God's chosen, redeemed saints we are renewed by the Spirit of Christ. We can say with the apostle Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." We have the complete Scriptures that reveal to us the fulfillment of all God's promises. We live in the day of the Lord, awaiting His return with the clouds.

Christ in His Spirit has come to abide with us forever. Now we still see in a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face. Now we know in part, but we are looking forward to the day when we shall know as we are known in Father's House, where a mansion is being prepared for each of us.

For sorrow like a pilgrim,  
May tarry for a night,  
But joy the heart will gladden  
When dawns the morning light.

*The Standard Bearer  
make a thoughtful gift  
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## EDITORIAL

# On Synod's Agenda

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

The Synod of 1984 of our Protestant Reformed Churches will convene, the Lord willing, on June 13, one week later than our Synods usually meet. This year our Hull, Iowa Protestant Reformed Church will be the site of Synod's meetings. That we meet in Iowa this year is convenient because of the fact that there are no candidates to be examined; usually when there are examinations, it is more convenient, especially for the students, that we meet in the Grand Rapids area. That there will be no examinations should also result in a briefer Synod, since normally the examinations take up the first three days of Synod's time.

Judging from the printed Agenda, too, this year's Synod should not be lengthy. There do not appear to be any items of an unusual nature, nor any protests or appeals which appear to be time-consuming. Many of the reports are rather routine. Perhaps the largest part of Synod's time and energy will be devoted to mission matters.

Let me briefly take you through the Agenda, so that you may have some idea as to what will be considered by our broadest assembly.

The first committee report in the Agenda is from the Catechism Book Committee, a committee responsible for maintaining an adequate supply of our catechism books and distributing them to our congregations. This is one of those "unsung" committees whose work is nevertheless necessary and important. This committee is asking for replacements for two brethren who have served for some twenty years, the brethren John Prince and John M. Faber, to work with the remaining long-term member, brother Seymour Beiboer.

Next comes a rather lengthy report from a committee appointed by the Synod of 1983 to give advice concerning the feasibility of adding four ecumenical creeds to our present *Psalter* and to advise Synod on the matter of adding historical introductions to these creeds. This matter will undoubtedly require a considerable amount of Synod's at-

tention. While we are on the subject, I may mention also that there is a protest from the Consistory of South Holland (approved by Classis West) against a decision of 1983 to include with these ecumenical creeds the Creed of Chalcedon. This protest will have to be weighed by Synod.

There are especially two items of a positive nature in the report of the Committee for Contact With Other Churches which will require Synodical action. One item is that of establishing sister-church relationships with the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore. The second matter is that of contact with the independent Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland (Pastor George Hutton), with whom the Evangelism Committee of our South Holland Church initiated contact. The Contact Committee asks Synod for authorization to pursue closer contact with Rev. Hutton and his congregation and to explore the possibilities of establishing sister-church relationships. Other than these two items, there is not much of a positive nature in the report of the Contact Committee. It is especially disturbing that there appears to be little initiative on the part of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia toward continuing contact with us and toward establishing any kind of relationship between our denominations. There is one more item which appears later in the Agenda but which belongs in this category. I refer to an invitation from the Reformed Ecumenical Synod to send official observers from our denomination to the RES Chicago which is convening on July 31 of this year. It would have been better, I believe, if the Contact Committee had had opportunity to advise Synod on this item. Our churches have received such an invitation before and have found it necessary to decline it. Before Synod reaches a decision on this matter, past decisions will have to be researched.

From Classis East there are two overtures which come to Synod with classical disapproval. The first is an overture that Synodical committees of pre-



advice be appointed in advance of Synod's sessions. The second is an overture to change the method of determining Synodical assessments. From Classis West there are no major items for Synodical consideration other than the protest from South Holland already mentioned above. From both classes there are, of course, the annual subsidy requests from needy churches. These always require considerable time and attention on the part of Synod and its advisory committee on financial matters.

From the Emeritus Committee there are no major proposals. Frankly, I sometimes wonder whether our retired ministers are receiving adequate support; but this is the business of the local consistories, not that of the Emeritus Committee. This year the Finance Committee reports that it had no occasion to take any action.

The report of the Foreign Mission Committee, as might be expected, is largely about the work of Missionary den Hartog in Singapore. For the most part, we have been kept informed about this work via the *Standard Bearer*; there is no new information in the committee's report. An item which Synod will have to consider is the committee's request for permission to send emissaries to Singapore.

By far the longest report is from our Domestic Mission Committee. It is impossible in the available space to summarize this report in any great detail. Let me briefly mention the items in this report with which Synod must deal: 1) The matter of the closing of the Birmingham, Alabama field and the possible future labors of Rev. van Overloop (who at this writing is also considering a call from our Loveland congregation). 2) The matter of our mission work in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania. This is a work which was initiated in August of last year at the request of a group of brothers and sisters there. At the request of the Mission Committee and Hope (Walker) Council, Candidate Kenneth Hanks has been working in Blue Bell since last fall. Besides the reports of the Mission Committee on this work, there is also a request before Synod from the Blue Bell group requesting organization. The Mission Committee's advice on this request is divided. 3) There is a brief report on the work in Ripon, California and a recommendation to continue the work in this field, where Rev. Houck is currently working. 4) There is a report concerning the work of Rev. Heys in Wellington and in Palmerston North, New Zealand, along with a recommendation that our churches continue to give help to the brothers and sisters there on the same basis as heretofore.

While on the subject of the Mission Committee Report, I wish to mention an item which has been

troubling me for some time, namely, the lack of reports and information concerning our domestic mission work. At present the only reports which we receive are those found in the Agenda once per year. With exceptions, these reports contain little detailed information. Besides, the Agenda is sent only to consistory members. This means that all year long our churches receive virtually no information of any kind concerning our mission work. In my opinion, this ought to be changed. Our churches are expected to support our mission work financially. We are also expected to pray for our missionaries and their labors. How can we do so intelligently and specifically when, for the most part, we — and I mean officebearers as well as our membership at large — do not know what is taking place in our various mission fields? This, I believe, is a problem which ought to receive consideration and which needs a solution.

The last item in the printed Agenda is a report of the Stated Clerk. His report contains good news and bad news. The good news is that our long awaited new edition of our Church Order is ready (price as yet unknown). The bad news is that he received no report from a committee to index decisions of past Synods.

There are two reports in the Agenda concerning Theological School matters. First of all, there is the report of the Student Aid Committee. In addition to its usual work of making recommendations as to financial aid for our students, this committee had the task of studying the matter of repayment of aid by those who do enter the ministry. On the latter item the committee makes a thorough report. The annual report of the Theological School Committee is rather routine and contains no earth-shaking proposals.

The final item in the Agenda is that of voting for Synodical committees. There is nothing to report on this item, except that until now we have not streamlined the procedure of nominating and voting.

May the Lord bless our coming Synod, and may the Holy Spirit guide the delegates in their deliberations and decisions.

*Take time to read  
and study the  
Standard Bearer.*



## THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

... OF THE ...

## PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES

4949 IVANREST AVENUE, S.W.

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PHONE: (616) 531-1490

May 13, 1984

Dear Brothers and Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ:

We are nearing the end of another school term, and we thought it well to end the term as we began it, by communicating with you via our Standard Bearer. Without such communication the seminary tends to be somewhat isolated from the churches, while it is nevertheless the school of the churches and wants to be remembered as such.

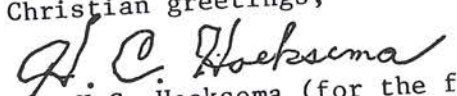
We reported at the beginning of the term concerning our student body and its "international" flavor, and we need not repeat that information. As you perhaps remember, this year we have had one pre-seminarian and three second-year seminarians from our own churches. Our big news in this letter is about the progress of the latter--and you may take this as an official announcement. Beginning June 1, Messrs. Russell Dykstra, Steven Key, and Charles Terpstra have been licensed to "speak a word of edification" in the churches under faculty supervision. This is indeed a milestone for them in their seminary training, as well as an occasion for joy for the faculty. These young men already have some pulpit assignments during the month of June; and undoubtedly many of you will have the opportunity to hear them from time to time during the summer months. We wish them the Lord's blessing as they go out among the churches.

A second item of interest concerns our new word-processing equipment. Last year synod authorized the Theological School Committee to use some of our special funds for the purchase of such equipment. Early in the second semester this equipment was received. And although there is much to learn with respect to using it (and this involves "teaching old dogs new tricks"), we are already making good use of it and enjoying its time- and work-saving features. In fact, this letter is being prepared with the use of one of our units. Undoubtedly during the summer months we will have time to learn and to take advantage of more of the many uses to which this equipment can be put.

Again this year we have been pleased about the many contributions to our Library Fund by individuals and organizations. At present this fund is prospering so well that it is not necessary to support it from the synodical budget. Prof. Hanko is in charge of the library, and he is assisted by a student librarian. During the past term we have again added a goodly number of books to our collection, and we have spent more than \$1500.00 on what we think are quality additions to our library.

Finally, we call attention once more to the urgent need for new students at our school. We want to impress upon you the urgency of this need. Bear in mind that the training of a student requires four years of pre-seminary training and four years of seminary training; and at present there are no new students on the scene. We ask that you bring this need before the throne of grace and pray that the Lord will send us suitable young men to be trained for the ministry of the Word in our churches.

With Christian greetings,

  
Prof. H.C. Hoeksema (for the faculty)



## MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

### Our Order of Worship

*Prof. H. Hanko*

We propose in this article to discuss the matter of congregational singing as it forms an important part of the worship service. Our purpose is not, however, to discuss at length the whole question of Psalm-singing vs. the use of hymns. Our churches are committed to Psalm-singing in the worship services, and we hope and pray that this will continue to remain the case as long as there are Protestant Reformed Churches upon the earth.

Without going into the so-called hymn question, there are a number of other questions which are worth discussing in connection with the singing of the congregation.

Throughout the Scriptures there is evidence of the fact that singing must form a part of the worship of God. Singing is not one of those elements of worship which can be either excluded or included in the worship services at will. Singing does not lie in the area of liberty. We are enjoined by Scripture to worship God through song. To exclude this element of worship would be in direct violation of Scripture and would be an act of disobedience.

We need not bring into this article all the Scriptural proof for this assertion. It is sufficient to remember that the Psalms themselves were written, for the most part, to be used in the temple for purposes of worship. It has been argued that this can hardly be adduced as proof that the congregation is commanded to worship God through song, because of the fact that the Psalms were prepared for the use of "singers" in the temple services, and that the congregation of the nation of Israel did not itself participate in the singing. While this may be true, it must not be forgotten that the church in the Old Testament was, after all, living in the dispensation of types and shadows, and that the Spirit of Christ had not yet been poured out upon the church. The saints in the Old Testament did not yet function in the office of prophet, priest, and king. For this reason, all the saints in the Old Testament

could not possibly take the active part in worship that is taken by the New Testament saints. Now the Spirit has indeed come from Christ to dwell in the church. All God's people are prophets, priests, and kings. And this is also expressed in the worship of the congregation.

But there is other proof. The two well-known passages in Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians are proof of this. In Ephesians 5:18, 19 we read, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." And in Colossians 3:16 we read, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

It is evident especially from the passage in Colossians that the Scriptures refer to singing in the fellowship of the saints, for the text speaks of "teaching and admonishing one another" by means of singing.

Even the church in glory is pictured as singing in a mighty choir the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev. 15:3); and the 144,000 are described as singing a new song before the throne which no man could learn but the redeemed (Rev. 14:3). When the Scriptures describe the life of the church in glory as singing together in praise to God, it follows that singing ought also to be a part of the worship of the church on earth.

That singing should be a part of the worship of the church ought not to surprise us. Music in itself is a wonderful gift of God which can, in a unique way, be used for the purpose of praise to God. While I know very little about music, it is obvious to anyone who has any feeling at all for music, that it can be used in God's service in a unique way, a way different from any other means of praising



God. This is perhaps true because music, more than any other method of expression, appeals to and expresses the deepest emotions of the heart. Music is an intensely emotional mode of expression. This is not to say that it does not involve the mind and the will as well — i.e., if it is music pleasing in the sight of God. But the fact remains that by means of music our emotions are stirred in a way in which nothing else can move us. And music can be a means of expressing the deepest emotions of our hearts in a way nothing else can accomplish.

It is just because music is such a wonderful gift of God that it can be so horribly abused as it is in the world. The general rule is that the greater the gift which God gives, the greater can be its debasement also. And because of the power which music has in our emotional life, the more dangerous to our spiritual well-being is the corrupt and depraved music of the wicked.

Add to the music the poetry of lyrics, the poems of the Psalms — the very Word of God, and there is scarcely a more beautiful and profound way to express our heart's thoughts, desires, longings, fears, and emotions than through the instrumentality of music.

The Psalms are eminently suited for this. The Psalms express all the truths of the Christian faith as found throughout the Scriptures. There is not one doctrine in all God's Word which is not expressed in the Bible's Psalter. Thus the Psalms can be used for confession of the truth in song. The Psalms also are thoroughly God-centered. This is, in my judgment, one of the chief differences between the Psalms and most free hymns. Most hymns tend to be at best wrongly Christ-centered, and at worst man-centered. But this is not true of the Psalms which begin and end with God. They are ideally suited, therefore, for praise and adoration. Further, the Psalms are, more than any other book in the Bible, a spiritual biography of the Christian in all his life in the world, in his battles and struggles, in his grief and joy, in his longings and desires, in his temptations and victories. It is not an exaggeration to say that there is no single experience in the life of the Christian which is not described in the Psalms.

That this is true is because, fundamentally, Christ is singing in the Psalms. Some of the Psalms are explicitly Messianic, as, e.g., Psalm 22, Psalm 2, etc. But all the Psalms refer implicitly to Christ in all His work as our Mediator. And because Christ was singing in the Psalms, the Psalms were written under the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ. This is why the believer finds in the Psalms a reflection of his own entire life as a child of God. He belongs to Christ and is part of Christ's body. Christ, as it

were, sings through Him by the Spirit Whom Christ has given to the Church. In what better way then, can the child of God worship than by singing the Psalms? With them he can confess his faith; he can pray; he can express all that lies within his heart as he pours out his soul before his God; he can lift up his voice in praise and adoration to the God of His salvation Who alone is worthy of all praise and glory. Anyone of God's people will testify that, the older he becomes, the more precious become the Psalms to him.

Because singing forms such an important part of the worship service, the singing must also be congregational singing. It has become increasingly common to introduce into the worship services choirs and soloists. This is to be abhorred. The worship services are not the place for demonstrations of singing skills and the particular musical abilities of gifted musicians. There is certainly a place for this in the organic life of the church, and we have plenty of opportunities to hear choirs, soloists, quartettes, trios, and other musical groups in the many programs that are rendered in various programs. But in the worship services, the congregation joins together to lift up her voice to God in communal worship. This should not be taken away from the saints, and to the extent that it is, the worship service is impoverished.

There is something about this congregational singing which is a unique expression of the communion of saints. This will, of course, be perfectly realized in glory. In a perfect choir, there is a perfect harmony of parts (sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses) of differences in qualities of voices, of timbre, of resonance, etc. As this wide variety of different voices is blended together in one glorious harmony, there is a beautiful picture of the organism of the body of Christ in which are such a large and wide variety of saints, but in which there is a perfect unity of the one body of Christ — made one by the Spirit of Christ Who dwells in all the members. But the basic unity is the unity of one faith, one hope, one calling. And this unity comes to expression as the saints together join their voices in one song of praise to God. The congregation is very close when together they sing.

There are a few other ideas which we wish to discuss in connection with congregational singing, but these will have to wait for a later article.

*Take time to read  
and study the  
Standard Bearer*



## ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

# Creation: a World-view

There has been in the news recently reports of attempts made in several states to have "creation-science" taught alongside of the view of evolution. The theory is that "creation" can be taught as science just as easily as can evolution. Both would, presumably, be presented on the basis of "scientific facts" — not at all on the testimony of the Bible. However, there are obvious difficulties with such an attempt. It is, first of all, a compromise with the truth. How can any teacher in honesty present both views as possibly equally valid — and instruct children to take their pick? How could an evolutionist give a fair view of creation — or a creationist of evolution? But also: how could creation be taught — without reference to Scripture? Scripture itself declares that the belief that God framed the worlds is a matter of faith. But another question arises: can "creation-science" be taught in one discipline — while it is ignored in others — as history, mathematics, etc.?

An interesting comment on this subject is found in *Christian News*, April 16, 1984, in which the writer, Peter J. Leithart, states:

The aspect of creationism that draws the heaviest criticism from evolutionists is probably its attempt to win a place for creation science in the public schools. Evolutionists contend that creationism is a religious position, and therefore has no place in public schools. Creationists counter with the argument that creationism can stand on its scientific merits alone, without reference to the Creator.

In many circles, this battle has been waged on the wrong field and with the wrong weapons, with the result that neither position is satisfactory. Clearly, we do not take our stand with evolutionists who strive to ban God from education. Yet, it seems strange to this writer that we cannot stand unhesitatingly with a program to put a "non-religious" creationism into public schools.

The problem underlying the creationist effort is the myth of neutrality. They claim that neutral observation of the "facts" will yield a creationist viewpoint. However, such a neutrality is impossible for creatures made in the image of God. By virtue of their creation

in His image, men are either for God or against Him, in all areas of life (see Matt. 12:30). There is no such thing as "neutral observation." . . .

Moreover, creationism in the science classroom will do little to ensure us a happier future. Creation is a world-view, not just a position regarding the origins of the universe. It implies a particular view of man, of the nature of reality, of moral values, and so forth. Creation may be taught in the science classroom, but will the history teacher point to the finger of God in human affairs? Will the math teacher teach creationist mathematics? Will the health teacher teach creation health? Will the teacher of psychology teach that rebellion against the Creator is man's deepest psychological problem, and Jesus Christ, man's salvation? Christian education involves the application of biblical teaching to every discipline. Limiting Christian faith to the laboratory seems as misguided as limiting it to homeroom prayer . . .

And we respond: Amen! If anything is learned from the above, it must be that the only possible way of incorporating what the Bible teaches concerning creation (and all other truths) is to have parentally controlled schools. The whole problem is not that prayer is ignored in public schools, nor that Scripture may not be presented there, nor that "creation-science" is not offered — but that the state erred first of all by intruding itself into the realm of education. Education is a parental responsibility — and when rightly fulfilled, there is no question about subject-matter or manner of approach. Let us, then, be encouraged to continue in the necessary effort of providing our children with such an education as is in harmony with our baptismal vows.

*The Standard Bearer  
makes a thoughtful gift  
for the sick & shut-in.*



## What Are We Listening To?

Too many of our young people, it seems, are fascinated with the songs which are popular on radio and TV today. What are they listening to? Are we aware of the words that are entering their ears? Let each examine what he hears — and consider: is it pleasing to God and does it honor His Name? If not, what are we listening for? A sobering presentation was given in *Christian News*, Feb. 13, 1984, which quoted from *Human Events*:

The other day I was sitting at my desk paying the bills and tapping my foot to a pleasant little tune by Melissa Manchester called "Nice Girls Do" when I suddenly realized that what "nice girls do" is have sex if it's with the right guy in "the right situation." Well, as you can imagine, my ears perked right up at that. You should perk your ears up, too.

Tune in to a popular music station for a few hours and listen carefully to the words you hear. Perhaps you'll hear Olivia-Newton-John telling you to "get physical" and communicate "horizontally." Perhaps you'll hear Billy Joel singing a catchy little ditty about how Catholic girls are oppressed by the Catholic obsession with chastity. Perhaps . . . a duet with Barbara Streisand that urges women to leave their husbands when they get bored with them.

. . . Maybe you'll hear Debbie Boone — a squeaky clean singer if there ever was one — singing about

how someone lights up her life . . . gives her hope to carry on . . . and fills her nights with song. That is certainly one of the most beautiful love songs of recent years, but she ends the song with the penultimate slogan of hedonism: "It can't be wrong when it feels so right."

There has been much written about the epidemic of teenage pregnancy; about what a bad thing it is for society and for the teenager; and about how we had better give Planned Parenthood more money so they can solve the problem. What I haven't seen is much discussion about why the problem has become an epidemic. The answer, of course, is perfectly obvious. Popular culture forces our children to think about sex wherever they turn. Physical sex permeates the popular music, jiggles from our television sets, and fills our movie screens. Advertisers seem to believe that sex can sell anything, so they push sex as hard as they push the product. And many parents, impatient for their children to grow up, seem intent on pushing them into situations where they will be confronted by these factors . . .

May we recognize the evils of our day — and the temptations which confront adults — but especially, their children. May the separation between light and darkness also show itself in what we hear and what we enjoy.

## New Constitution for the R.E.S.

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod will be meeting this summer in Chicago. One of the items which will be considered is the request for a revision of their constitution. Reasons are given for that request. A summary is presented in the *R.E.S. News Exchange*, March 6, 1984:

"We need a new statement of purpose, new articles on authority and membership; we need new regulations; we may need a new name. We need to reach clarity on what conciliar discipline is and where its bounds lie; we also have to devise new and effective

ways in which Reformed churches deal Christianly and effectively with each other . . . We should spell out what our ecumenical calling is, and how and to what extent the RES can be an instrument to fulfill that calling."

With these words the RES Interim Committee summarizes the reasons why it is asking RES Chicago 1984 to declare that the Synod's Constitution should be revised. Besides giving reasons for the changes, it proposes guidelines for revision and the appointment of a constitutional revision committee.



The Interim Committee claims that there is a spiritual crisis among the RES churches which has structural and constitutional consequences. Indications of the crisis include the termination of membership by a number of churches, deep disagreements on doctrinal and social issues, and the questioning of the membership qualifications of two member churches. The difficulties that have arisen, the Committee claims, concern not only membership in the Synod, but "confessional integrity and ecumenical witness." In other words, the issues relate both to how we deal with one another as churches of the same Calvinian tradition and how we perform our responsibility toward the world church. "The full scope of the crisis can be seen when we consider that the points in dispute concern no less than the basis, the purpose, the authority and the membership of the RES . . . . The crisis concerns our faith and doctrine as well as our ecumenical calling."

According to the Committee, "we need new imaginative ways of dealing with one another in a non-abrasive, pastoral, healing way." It also finds that the Reformed churches have not assumed their full rightful place in the midst of the one holy catholic and apostolic church. Our task among the member churches, the Committee contends, is to strengthen them in their confessional integrity and their ecumenical calling. The ecumenical calling of the Reformed churches is to learn from churches of other traditions "for their greater edification and to contribute to their (and our) continuing reformation . . . ."

All of the above seems to say that there is a desire to make the R.E.S. even less distinctive than it already is, and open it further to closer ties with other ecumenical organizations. Perhaps one ought not draw conclusions too quickly — still, the above quotation does not seem to bode well for the future "Reformed" character of the R.E.S.

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## BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# II Peter — True Knowledge in Christ

*Rev. J. Kortering*

The background for Peter's first epistle was the Roman persecution that threatened those who were converted to Christianity, whether Jews or Gentiles. To them Peter wrote concerning their hope in God. As pilgrims they must expect tribulation and realize that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the eternal weight of glory in Christ Jesus. Now, at a later date, Peter directs his attention to the enemy that was rising from within the church. False teachers were raising their ugly heads and spewing forth their pernicious doctrines. By both warning and instruction, the Holy Spirit led Peter to emphasize the blessed knowledge of God which is in Christ Jesus.

### THE AUTHOR

One would think that authorship of this epistle would be a simple matter, yet it is one of the most disputed. He begins, "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). Furthermore, we read, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you" (3:1). Who else could that be but Peter?

During the fourth century, the church councils established the sixty-six books of the canon of Holy Scripture. In doing this, they sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that they would choose only those which the Spirit had written by infallible inspiration and reject the others. Among the spurious books, that is, letters or gospels written by fakes but had the names of apostles attached to them, were two attributed to the apostle Peter, but not written by him: The Gospel of Peter and The Apocalypse of Peter. Still others were written by apostles or church fathers and considered edifying, but not inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Some church fathers considered this second epistle of Peter as spurious, e.g., Didymus of the fourth century. Others did not want to go that far. They recognized the problem and placed this letter in the category of disputed books, e.g., the historian Eusebius. The arguments have continued all through history. Calvin, for example, doubted that Peter was the author. We can summarize the



debate by referring to Harrison's *New Testament Introduction*.

1. The early church fathers seldom quoted from II Peter. (Neither did they outright reject it as spurious. Eventually it was included in the New Testament by the church councils, even though they were well aware of the controversy over it.)

2. There are differences in style and vocabulary between I and II Peter. (This is true. Some suggest that it may not be due to different authors, but rather that the one author, Peter, used different secretaries. Others suggest that the subject matter is different and that demands different style and vocabulary.)

3. The reference in II Peter 3:15, 16 to a body of Pauline writing and to the "other Scriptures," i.e., to the Old Testament books, demand a much later period of time when these existed as a distinct grouping. (Such a reference merely refers to the existence of some books, not necessarily to the completed canon.)

4. A discussion takes place as to the relationship between Jude and II Peter. Comparisons are made between II Peter 2:11 and Jude 9; II Peter 2:17 and Jude 13. Some say II Peter depends on Jude; and others reverse this; still others say both II Peter and Jude rely on some third source. (Similarity between letters does not assume dependence and, even then, does not destroy its authenticity.)

5. The heresy which Peter treats in this letter is Gnosticism, an error that did not arise in the church till a later century. (The seeds of these errors were already present in the first century.)

We believe that the following considerations indicate that there is good evidence for accepting Simon Peter as the author of this letter.

1. He calls himself Simon Peter (1:1). If this were a spurious letter, the author would carefully copy I Peter so as not to be detected. In I Peter he calls himself "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ."

2. The author condemns falsehood and hypocrisy, chapter 2. It would be difficult to imagine that he himself would use deceit in the writing of this book.

3. He makes personal reference to events in his life that closely parallel Peter's life. He witnessed the transfiguration (1:16-18). Christ had prophesied Peter's death (John 13:36); the writer mentions that his death is not only approaching, but was also predicted by Christ (1:14).

4. He was well acquainted with Paul (3:15). Paul also mentioned this fellowship in Jerusalem in Galatians 1:18.

We have already considered the details of Peter's

life in connection with our study of I Peter.

## OCCASION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

According to 1:1, Peter addresses this letter to "those that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ." He mentions that this is the second letter that he is sending them (3:1). They are then the same scattered saints mentioned in I Peter 1:1, 2. Some were Jews who believed, others were converted Gentiles (1:1).

He wrote this letter about two years after the first epistle, perhaps about the year A.D. 66 or 67. During the interim, things had changed somewhat in the churches. The persecution by the Caesars became more localized around Rome. A new threat arose, namely, a pernicious philosophy that emphasized the supremacy of the intellect (a form of Gnosticism), rejected the second coming of the Lord, and as usually follows such a rejection, advocated sinful practices. Peter saw these false teachers as gaining entrance in the churches and increasing in influence.

To deal effectively with their presence, Peter warned the believers to be on their guard against them. He also set forth the true knowledge which is in Christ Jesus. He makes reference to knowledge some sixteen times.

## A BRIEF OUTLINE

1. *Introduction* (1:1). He identifies himself as Simon Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. He also describes his readers as "Those that have obtained like precious faith."

2. *The nature of the true knowledge in Christ* (1:2-21). He pronounces the apostolic blessing (1:2) and mentions that grace and peace come through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ (1:2). This knowledge is given by the power of God (1:3), and rooted in the promises that make us partakers of the divine nature (1:4). He lists seven steps that contribute to the fruitful development of knowledge: faith, virtue, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (1:5-8). In this way they will make their calling and election sure and gain entrance into the everlasting kingdom (1:9-11). Peter expresses a deep need to remind them of this truth, since he soon will die (1:12-15). This knowledge of the return of Christ is not based on fables, but on revelation from God Himself as witnessed in the transfiguration of Jesus and by the written word (1:16-18). This Word of God is sure, and each passage must be interpreted in the light of the whole Bible, since prophecy came not by the will of men, but holy men spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them (1:19-21).

3. *False doctrine is a threat to true knowledge*



(2:1-11). False prophets were present in the Old Testament times; they are going to be present in our times as well; they bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them (2:1). Their method of operation is deceitful: they use feigned words, but actually speak evil of the truth. They make themselves worthy of damnation (2:2, 3). Since God punishes evil, He punished the fallen angels, the world before the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and will punish those who are evil in our days. Meanwhile, He also preserves the faithful as He did the good angels, Noah, Lot, and all that live godly (2:4-9). Peter describes these heretics as brute beasts, sensuous, evil speakers, spots on their feasts, adulterers, covetous, and like Balaam they forsake the right way. They are like a storm, a tempest, a cloud, they speak great words and promise liberty, but bring men into bondage (2:10-19). Their end is worse than the beginning: it would be better not knowing the truth at all than, knowing it, to return to the lie like a dog to his vomit and a sow to the mire (2:20-22).

4. *Hope is evident in true knowledge* (3:1-18). He writes this epistle having hope that God will stir their souls to see that the return of Christ was prophesied and that heretics are to be expected (3:1, 2). These heretics are like scoffers who think that the constancy of natural law is proof that judgment cannot come. They are ignorant of the flood which brought universal judgment (3:3-7). The Lord is coming, but His clock is based on His eternity and He will not come until all the saints are saved (3:8-10). The knowledge of the destruction of the whole world should make us sober and cause us to look diligently for Christ's return (3:11, 12). We must look for a new heaven and earth which is so

wonderful that hoping for it should make us holy, patient, and willing to listen to God's Word and thereby grow in grace and knowledge. To that God all glory must be given (3:13-18).

#### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Review the proof that Simon Peter is the author of this epistle.
2. The heresy that was taught by these false teachers included a denial of Christ's return and a justification for living in sin. Do you see a relationship between these two evils?
3. Reflect on those passages that describe these false teachers (chapter 2). How can we discern who these heretics are in our day, especially since Peter warns that more of them shall appear as the end approaches?
4. The true knowledge of Christ is crucial for our being steadfast unto the end. How does this account for the attacks on the Bible and on preaching in our day?
5. Explain the importance of 1:19-21 for a proper method of interpreting the Bible.
6. What does it mean that the heretics deny the Lord that bought them (2:1)?
7. What comfort is there for us that God does know how to deliver the just from temptation, e.g., Noah and Lot (2:5-9)?
8. Belief in a universal, catastrophic flood is crucial to belief in the end of the world. Explain (3:3-7).
9. How does the study of God's Word in general and this letter in particular help prepare us for the return of Christ?

## IN HIS FEAR

# Servants of the Lord in the Christian Home

*Pastor Arie den Hartog*

In the past few articles we have been considering the truth that God's people are the servants of the Lord. The Lord is pleased to use His people for the realization of His purpose: the advancement of His

kingdom and the glory of His own name. We have been made the servants of the Lord through the wonder of the grace of God. No man by nature is the servant of the Lord. By nature men are rebels



against the Lord. They seek only themselves, to live in lust and wickedness for their own vain glory. We are to be the servants of the Lord in every single area of our life. The most important area in which we are to serve the Lord is in the church of God. But it is definitely not the only area where we are to serve the Lord. The second most important sphere in which we are to serve the Lord is the Christian home.

In our modern age men hardly serve the Lord in the home. They have rebelled against the Lord and sought to overturn all the ordinances of the Lord for marriage and the home. They have sought to revise all of these ordinances according to their own vain human philosophy in order that they can use marriage for sin and wickedness. They seek in marriage only the lust of the flesh and the pride of life and the glory of man. They justify themselves in making and breaking marriage as they will. Ungodly women do not want to serve in the role which God has given to them in subjection to the Lord. Many even refuse to get married at all. They refuse the Lord's calling to bring forth and raise children in the fear of the Lord. If they have children at all they only train them to be as evil as themselves according to the standards of greatness and glory of the world. Professing themselves to be wise in marriage they have become fools because they refuse to acknowledge and serve the Lord. As a result the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked and there is confusion, strife, enmity, and conflict. Many of the world's marriages end in divorce and misery.

The Christian recognizes and acknowledges that marriage is the institution of the Lord. Therefore those who enter into marriage must serve the Lord in it. Because marriage is the Lord's institution the Lord determines everything about the marriage of the Christian. The Lord has ordained whom we should marry and if we follow His guidance as His servants He will bring to us the partner He has chosen for us. The Lord has ordained what the role of each partner should be in marriage. He has ordained that the husband should be the head of the wife and that the wife should be subject unto her husband. The Lord has ordained that father and mother should rule over their children and that children should obey their parents. The Lord has ordained that marriage should be a lifelong relationship of love and faithfulness between one man and one woman. He has ordained that marriage should be a relationship in which a man and woman become one flesh, living in union and communion with one another in all of their life. All of these things are absolutes for the Christian in his marriage. We serve the Lord in marriage when we submit ourselves to all of the ordinances of the

Lord. Though the world may ridicule all of these ordinances and set them aside for human philosophy, the Christian abides by them for the Lord's sake. In this way the Christian obtains the blessing and favor of the Lord upon his marriage. God has ordained that marriage should be a reflection of the love and faithfulness of Christ for His church. We serve the Lord in our marriages when we strive by the grace of God to reflect that wonderful love and faithfulness in all of its rich aspects. God has been pleased to make the Christian home the sphere where He especially realizes His covenant with believers and their children. We serve the Lord in our marriages when we seek faithfully to fulfill our covenant obligations for the glory of the Lord.

Do we consider marriage from the view point of serving the Lord? Marriage is not only for the advantage and pleasure of man. Surely God has made marriage for man's good. There are great joys and blessings in marriage for man. When God gives to man a godly wife of His choosing He gives to him perhaps the most precious earthly gift imaginable. But there is a higher purpose for marriage. God is the ultimate purpose of all our life as Christians. To serve Him, to do His will and to please Him, to bring glory to His name, this is the great desire and calling of the Christian. Together husband and wife must serve the Lord in marriage, each assisting the other.

This perspective on marriage will have great consequences. The great desire of young people should be to set up godly Christian covenant homes. This is the Lord's purpose for man. Though God has ordained for some in His wise and good providence that they should remain single, and He also has a wonderful calling for such to serve Him in a special way, in most cases to refuse to marry, as many in our day are doing, is to rebel against God. When the Christian seeks a marriage partner he does not merely look for the most handsome or pretty, the most popular, or the one who can provide great material wealth and honor among men in the future. The chief consideration of the Christian from the beginning is to find a Christian partner with whom he can serve the Lord together in a Christian home. All the rest is secondary. This implies careful evaluation of prospective partners according to the standard of the Word of God. The Christian always asks, will such a man or woman make a good Christian husband or wife who can assist me in the service of the Lord.

God has ordained that in marriage husband and wife should serve one another. When they do that according to the God-ordained order they also serve the Lord. God gave to man a woman to be his help meet. The Lord created woman suitable for this role. This means the woman's great calling in mar-



riage is to serve her husband in subjection unto him. She does not do this as man's slave, but willfully and joyfully and in love. In doing this she also serves the Lord. That is what the apostle Paul means when he says in Ephesians, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands *as unto the Lord*." This requires humble service. It requires self-sacrifice and meekness. This is exactly the opposite of the modern, 20th century woman of the world who is often egotistical, self-seeking and rebellious. They seek only their own glory, and their own wicked lusts and cravings. The Christian woman with a sober and quiet spirit serves her husband. She is in the sight of God of great price. Her glory and honor is of the Lord and not of men. She is a tremendous testimony in the midst of a wicked age. God has said that it is not good for man to be alone. He needs a companion and partner to help him in his great calling to serve the Lord. The godly woman serves as such for the glory of the Lord and the welfare of her husband.

The husband must also serve the Lord in marriage. Though he has been made to be the head of his wife he must serve her. That may sound contradictory but in fact it is not. We see this especially in our Lord Jesus Christ. Though He is the Lord of His people He became their servant in order to save them. So also it must be with the Christian husband. God made woman in such a way that she needs a head to rule over her. That is inherent in her nature. The husband serves the Lord when he rules over his wife for her advantage. He is a rebel against God when he is a cruel tyrant over his wife and when he rules over his wife for his own advantage and glory and for her misery and destruction. The woman has a unique and wonderful calling before the Lord in marriage. She needs her husband to help her in fulfilling that calling. Her calling in marriage is far too great for her to fulfill by herself. She is constantly in need of her husband's assistance. Also on the part of the husband this requires self-sacrifice and humility. In Ephesians 5 Paul says that the husband must give himself for his wife. That involves complete self-sacrifice. One cannot possibly give more than himself. The husband serves his wife and the Lord when he nourishes, cherishes, supports, and provides for his wife. If he does not do this he is a worthless infidel. The godly husband serves the Lord when he rules over her in order to lead her in the way of sanctification according to the Word of God.

Man and wife have the great calling to serve the Lord in marriage by bringing forth children. When those of the world refuse to do this they are rebels against God and they again seek themselves and not the Lord. The godly woman recognizes that she is the handmaid of the Lord. Perhaps the most

beautiful example of this is one of the greatest women of the Bible called Hannah. She greatly desired to have children. She prayed unto the Lord and confessed that she was the handmaid of the Lord. Her desire was not carnal. If the men and women of this world do have children it is usually for carnal and selfish reasons. They look at children as an extension of their own pride. They raise them for the glory of men. Hannah, the handmaid of the Lord, desired to have a son that she might give him to the Lord to serve in His house. When godly men and women seek to have children they seek to fulfill the mandate of the Lord from creation to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. When a godly couple seeks to have children their highest motives are to bring forth the children of God's covenant. This takes tremendous sacrifice on the part of the godly couple. For the woman it involves great suffering and hardship. But the godly couple confesses that they are the servants of the Lord, and they humbly offer such sacrifices and willingly bear such suffering and hardship. And the Lord greatly blesses His servants with Christian families. These families are the source of great joy and satisfaction for the godly couple.

Godly parents are servants of the Lord in the home when they raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord so that they too will grow up to be servants of the Lord in His church and kingdom. There is no other institution in the world that can do this. Though the Christian school can assist the parents in this great task, it still remains chiefly the home where this is to be done. The Lord intended that it should be so. Certainly no worldly institution can in any way perform this great task. Parents as servants of the Lord must teach their children the truth of God's Word. They must teach their children by precept and by true godly example what it means to fear and serve the Lord. All of this takes a lot of work. It requires great sacrifices on the part of the parents. But all these things faithful and devoted servants will do for their beloved Lord and master. Many of the greatest leaders in the church and kingdom of God are a legacy of Christian homes in which they were raised. The majority of the people of God in the church today can testify to their training in Christian homes. I myself thank the Lord daily for the training which I received from my faithful parents.

There are a number of other areas in which Christians serve the Lord in their homes. Perhaps we can mention just one more in closing. The truly Christian home is a house of hospitality. It is open to fellow Christians and members of the church. Christians serve the Lord by receiving their fellow saints into their homes in order to befriend them and encourage them and share with them the bless-



ings which the Lord has given to their home. The Christian home is a wonderful sphere of Christian hospitality also for non-Christians or new people that might visit the church worship services. How many have been added to the church of God in part because of the Christian hospitality shown to them in the homes of the members of the church? Who

can measure the blessed Christian fellowship and the joy of the Lord that is communicated to others through the Christian home? Surely the Christian home is one of the greatest areas in which we can serve the Lord. May the Lord in His grace make us His faithful servants in our homes.

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## ***GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH***

# **The Return to Scripture: Preparing the Way**

*Rev. T. Miersma*

The Middle Ages were characterized in our last article as a period in the history of the church in which there was a famine of the hearing of the Word of God. Social and political chaos had followed the Germanic invasions of Europe, and out of that chaos emerged a church, centralized in the papacy, with great temporal power and influence, capable of lording it over the minds and consciences of men. The Word of God was withdrawn from circulation, and learning and even literacy itself declined and were preserved mainly in isolated monastic communities. Spiritually the church declined, directing its energies into worthless philosophical speculation or mysticism.

The result was a Christian church which was increasingly corrupt. Offices in the church became posts of political and worldly power, sought for earthly advantage and bought and sold as positions of wealth and power. Spiritually the church was truly in darkness. This does not mean that there were no men of faith and godliness in the church, for in every age God preserves a remnant who love the truth, treasure it in their hearts, and in faithfulness proclaim it. But they were just that, a remnant.

In order for reformation to take place, a return to Scripture was necessary. This could not take place of itself. Certain elements were needed which gradually emerged in the latter part of the Middle Ages. These formed the building blocks upon which a return to Scripture could be based and were to make the Reformation of the sixteenth cen-

tury possible. These events, changes, and developments must be seen in the light of God's providence as He, the Lord of history, directs the affairs of men for the welfare of His church and her reformation.

In the 500 years following Gregory the Great the papacy gradually rose to supreme political power in Europe. Under the leadership of Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085) and Innocent III (1197-1216) the papacy was elevated to such heights that it was able to force even kings and emperors to submit to its will. As the whole foundation of the papacy was laid, not upon Scripture, but upon tradition and the doctrines of men, a return to Scripture under these circumstances was impossible. Indeed, a return to Scripture as the sole authority for faith and life was a direct threat to the papacy. The papacy had served a purpose in the years of upheaval in filling the vacuum left by the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West. It had preserved the heritage of the early church, both good and bad. It had also been the means to bring pagan Europe under the influence of Christianity, albeit a Christianity buried under a mountain of superstition and vain traditions.

But if the church were to be renewed and if Scripture were again to grip the minds and hearts of men, that supreme power of the papacy could not endure. Under the providence of God there arose out of the chaos of medieval Europe new nations which gradually grew in power and strength. Further, the Crusades, the attempt to recapture the Ho-



ly Land and wrest it from the power of the Muslims, also fueled this development for they served to break down the isolated barriers of many of the small feudal kingdoms of Europe. The Crusades aided the consolidation and concentration of power into the hands of a few kings. The Crusades broke down the walls of an isolated and provincial Europe. Peasants who before had lived out their whole lives in small communities under the thumb of a local feudal lord were suddenly thrust out of their small world to march across the continent of Europe. Such men could not be content to return to the narrow life they had known before. Commerce and trade also reawoke in Europe, and with it the need for a more centralized government. Nations began to emerge as kings consolidated their power, nations which could rival the temporal power of the papacy.

The papacy and the clergy as a whole had become more and more corrupt in their abuse of power and had degenerated into open immorality, so that the power and wealth of the clergy and their immoral lives became an object of abhorrence and ridicule. The papacy began to become the political plaything of kings vying with each other for power so that for a time the seat of the papacy was moved to France. The result was a schism in the church with two popes, each claiming to be the rightful pope and pronouncing judgments from heaven upon the other. Church councils were unable immediately to heal the breach, and Europe was divided in its allegiance. When finally the breach was healed, the papacy which emerged was more corrupt than ever, seeking to rival even ancient Rome in its immorality. For such a papacy true spiritual leadership was impossible. At last men began to question the Biblical and traditional claims of the papacy and to find them empty and false. By the days of Luther the papacy had lost not only its temporal power, but even the moral force to impose its false claims or to put a stop to reformation.

A second building block in the return to Scripture was the return of learning in general to the darkness of Europe. The monasteries had long preserved the remnants of the past by making it their business to copy the existing books so that they became more and more accessible. Along with this, the schools of the monasteries and cathedrals, originally intended to serve the training of the clergy, gradually developed and expanded into universities and institutions of general learning. Moreover, the Crusaders returning from the East brought with them, among their treasures and spoil, many manuscripts and books, including classical Greek and Roman works, acquired from the Arabs and from the Eastern church. Further-

more, in the East, the church had more and more fallen before the advancing threat of Muslim Turkish armies with the result that many fled to the West, bringing with them a knowledge of the Greek language as well as early manuscripts. With the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 this process was complete. An era of new learning and study in science, literature, and the arts followed which is called the Renaissance. This revival of learning had its center in Rome. It was by no means a reformation, but rather a return to classical and pagan ideas of the ancient Greeks and Romans. It was thoroughly worldly and man-centered, directed to the development of worldly culture. Nor is it surprising therefore that it was also promoted and encouraged by the popes of that period who were thoroughly worldly men. The Renaissance served to spread new ideas throughout Europe and to create a more independent frame of mind.

While the Renaissance was in the service of man and not God, yet in God's providence it was to serve the church and her reformation. For the humanism of the Renaissance, with its emphasis on man and human freedom would not be bound by the laws and traditions of the church, for it recognized no authority above man himself. In such a climate the church in all its abuses was laid open to mockery and ridicule. The tyranny of the church over men's thoughts and lives could not continue. This created an environment in which the reformers could work, returning to the Scriptures without the stranglehold of the church's tradition being placed upon them.

Moreover, with the renewal of learning and education came a renewed interest in the original languages of the Scriptures. For the humanists of the Renaissance, in their search for the culture of antiquity, and regarding the Scriptures as another such form of ancient literature, went back to the languages of the past. They began also to challenge traditional accepted interpretations and particularly to overthrow the allegorical method of interpretation which had severed Scripture from history and faithful grammatical exegesis.

In this changing climate dissent became more marked and open. Throughout the Middle Ages there had always been groups which had dissented and differed with the church. Many of these groups were heretical sects or survivors of earlier heresies. They were largely stifled by the church through its temporal power and through persecution, sometimes systematic and brutal. But there had also been those who on truly Biblical grounds had opposed the church's corruption and superstition. These too had been largely suppressed or, where possible, absorbed by the church and included



under her umbrella by pressure and compromise. But with the changing climate, the church's ability to crush dissent declined. Kings and princes would no longer serve merely as the tools of the pope.

To that growing dissent belonged not only the humanists of the Renaissance, who in cynicism mocked the church and her theology, but also men who spoke out of genuine spiritual concern for the truth. The famine of the Word of God had created a spiritual hunger for the truth in the hearts of the

remnant of the church. The arid ritualism and spiritual life of the medieval church could not satisfy the needs of those who hungered after the Word of God. Thus dissent grew throughout the Middle Ages and unwittingly paved the way for reform. In all these developments we see God at work, leading His church, and laying the foundation for a return to the Scriptures as the sole foundation of the church of Jesus Christ.

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## QUESTION BOX

# Farm Programs, Etc.

*Rev. C. Hanko*

A reader asks:

Should a Reformed Christian sign up with the Farm Program, for instance, like the Payment in Kind, PIK, like we had in 1983? "Every man should eat of the fruit of his labor."

Allow me to remark at the outset that I have personally been so far removed, for such a long time, from the problems involving farmers that it is a bit difficult to understand and evaluate the various farm programs that have arisen during the past few years.

As I understand the PIK, the farmers were allowed in 1983 to take a certain amount of their land out of cultivation, and were given free of charge 80% of their average yearly yield per acre for every acre in the program. The land idled was to be devoted to conserving use, but might not be machine harvested. The purpose of this program was: 1) To reduce the large stockpiles of wheat, cotton, rice, corn, and grain which was in government storage. 2) To reduce the over-production of these commodities, thus raising the market price. 3) In this manner to save the farmer some expense on farm machinery, seed, fertilizer, and the like. At the same time giving him the opportunity to improve the land idled.

To quote from "An Initial Assessment of the Payment in Kind Program," issued by the U.S. Agriculture Department, "PIK and other acreage reduction

programs were initiated against the backdrop of serious and worsening farm surpluses. Weak domestic demand, declining exports, and record large 1981 and 1982 harvests had increased stocks, lowered commodity prices, depressed farm income, and boosted Government expenditures. PIK participants, in exchange for idling a portion of their cropland, will receive compensation in-kind from the crops held by the Commodity Credit Corporation or in the regular and farmer-owned reserve programs."

Obviously our lives have become very involved and complicated. There was a time when the government did not interfere with obtaining our livelihood. Market prices were controlled by the law of supply and demand. Even then, as I recall, sincere Christians asked about the propriety of such things as insurance, especially life insurance, lightning rods on buildings, inoculation of pigs. The very word insurance, protection against the loss of property, seemed to suggest a lack of trust in God.

Today our problems have become more involved. PIK is only one of the many problems we face. The government involves itself in many of our daily affairs, so that we now have social security programs, medicare, and various relief programs. Medicaid has been introduced as a form of government benevolence, replacing in many instances the work of Christ through Christian charity and the deacons. We have food stamps, relief for afflicted



areas, as well as grants and scholarships for those who wish to obtain a higher education. The government enters into practically every sphere of our lives as a constant threat of socialism and a foreboding of the antichrist.

Much can and has been said pro and con on these various issues. The question is, in how far can we as Reformed believers go along with these programs. Where do we draw the line? Instead of taking a stand for or against cooperation in these various programs, consistories have avoided making precept upon precept and have to a great extent appealed to our Christian liberty, leaving participation up to the individual conscience.

There are, nevertheless, serious considerations that may not be ignored.

The result of many government programs is that the rich have grown richer and the poor continue in their struggle for their daily bread. Our reader is correct when he says that God requires of us that we shall work for a living, eat by the sweat of our brow. Hard work has never hurt anyone. Work is not a curse, but a blessing when done in the fear of the Lord. There are many get-rich-quick schemes that are an abomination to the Lord and a devil's attempt to deceive the elect. We can mention such things as State lottery, give away programs on TV, sweepstakes, etc. All of these make a strong appeal to man's covetous nature, his pride, and his greed.

For each of us the question arises whether we

can participate in the various government programs and at the same time commit our trust solely and completely in the Lord. Do we rely on God's providence? Do we live in the consciousness of God's almighty and omnipresent power whereby He upholds and governs all things? Are we always aware of the fact that large crops and crop failures, prosperity and adversity, riches and poverty, health and sickness, yea, all things that befall us in this vale of tears, come not by chance, but from the almighty and merciful hand of our heavenly Father? Do we conscientiously say: If the Lord will and I live, I will do this or that? Do we earnestly and sincerely live out of the hand of God, so that we earnestly ask: Give us this day our daily bread?

Finally, we must all give account of the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil. In other words, we must give account of our stewardship before the great white throne. We will not be asked, what did you do with your time, your life, and your possessions? But rather, what did you do with *God's gifts entrusted to you*, health and strength, home and family, field and crops, yes, with your whole life from the time that you were born until the time that you died? "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

Note: There are a few more questions for the question box, which will be answered in the very near future.

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## GUEST ARTICLE

# The King James Version of the Bible (III)

Rev. Steven Houck

## THE RULES AND METHODOLOGY FOLLOWED

Great care was taken to give the translators guidelines to follow in their work of translating. If all these men were going to work together as a harmonious whole, they would need some very strict rules to follow. The scheme for the entire work was set down in the form of fifteen specific rules. To name just a few: 1) The "Bishops' Bible," the official version of the church, was to be as little altered as the truth of the originals permitted. 2) There were to be no marginal notes with the excep-

tion of explanations of Hebrew and Greek words. 3) There also were to be Scripture references in the margin. According to Scrivener, there were 8,422 marginal notes in the 1611 edition of the King James Version. In succeeding editions, thousands more were added. 4) Proper names were to be as near to the common usage as possible. 5) Old ecclesiastical words such as "Church" were to be used. 6) Words with varying interpretations were to be rendered in accordance with patristic tradition



and the analogy of faith. 7) Other translations were to be consulted such as Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, the "Great Bible," and the "Geneva Bible."

Along with such rules as these, the procedure that was to bring together into one work the translations of all these various men and companies, was strictly set down for them. First of all, each translator was to work individually on a translation of the section. After that was done, each man's work was brought to his company as a whole. Evidently the head of the company would read the passage from the "Bishops' Bible." Whenever one of the translators wanted something changed or had something to say about the translation, he would present his own work. In this way the work of each was compared with the others and the company as a whole worked out one translation. When each book of the Bible was finished, they would send it to each of the other five companies to be reviewed. If the latter companies found anything objectionable, they would note such places and send it back to the originating company with their reasons. If there was a disagreement, it was to be settled by an editing committee later. If there was a passage that was especially difficult, all the learned men of the land could be called upon to make a judgment.

According to England's delegates to the Synod of Dort, after each company had finished their work they sent it to a committee comprised of two men from each company which reviewed and revised the whole work. Last of all, Thomas Bilson and Miles Smith put on the finishing touches and saw it through the press.

It must be noted in particular that the work was done very carefully. They did not rush themselves. They say in the Translators' Preface, "Neither did we run over the work with that posting haste that the Septuagint did, if that be true which is reported of them, that they finished it in 72 days; neither were we barred or hindered from going over it again having once done it, like St. Jerome...." These men were not afraid to go over their work again and again until they were satisfied that they had attained the best possible translation. If they followed the procedure which was laid down for them, each part of the work must have been closely scrutinized at least fourteen times.

They understood very well the nature of the book they were translating and therefore took great pains to do it right. Some of the translators began their work as soon as they were appointed in 1604. The entire body was engaged in the work by 1607. The new version was finally published in 1611 from the press of Robert Barker, who retained the

right of printing for nearly a hundred years. Thus you can see that some men diligently labored six or seven years, while the main body worked for three or four years.

It must be noted further that the King James Version translators were very concerned to have an accurate translation of the originals. They proclaim on the title page, "Holy Bible, containing the Old Testament and the New: newly translated out of the original tongues...." That proclamation is true. For these men have given us, for the most part, a word-for-word translation of the originals. They did not follow the principle of dynamic equivalence (whereby you translate the ideas rather than the words), as do most of the modern translators. Thus they have produced a very accurate and faithful translation as far as the original words are concerned.

They were so concerned about it that they even took over the very phraseology of the Hebrew. We find in our Bibles all kinds of Hebrew expressions and concepts that are not natural to the English way of speaking. In fact, it can even be said that the English of the King James Version is not the English of the 17th century, nor of any century. It is an English that is unique, for it is biblical English—an English formed by the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible. It is biblical English because the translators were more interested in being faithful to the originals than in making their translation in the street language of the day, as do translators today.

That they sought an accurate translation is further indicated by the fact that they italicized every word that did not have a corresponding word in the original. How many modern Bible versions do that? Moreover, to insure the fact that the reader understands the meaning of certain original words, they added 4,223 marginal notes that gave the literal meaning of the original word, and 2,738 notes with alternate translations. The result is that in the King James Version we have an accurate translation that puts the others to shame.

In the 3rd place we must note the fact that the translators gave the King James Version a majestic quality that raises it high above all other translations. They recognized God to be God—a God of glory and majesty. Therefore they were careful to translate His word in such a way that it would be filled with His majesty. That is another reason why the English of the King James Version is not the English of the 17th century. The translators deliberately chose words and phrases that were no longer used in general conversation even in their day, in order that they might set it apart from all others. All you have to do is compare the language of the Dedication to King James at the front of your



Bible with the Bible text itself, and you will see the difference immediately.

They tell us that the King James Version is no longer useful because its language has become obsolete, but what they do not realize is that its language is not a type of English that was ever spoken anywhere. Oh, it was such that the people could understand it, but it was, nevertheless, a particular language deliberately chosen to make the King James Version a version that reflects the reverence and respect which is due unto its Divine Author. In that respect, they succeeded too, for there is no version that even comes close to the beauty and majesty of the King James Version.

### THE SOURCES USED IN TRANSLATION

The particular English of this version is also due to the fact that the King James Version is at the same time both a new translation and a revision of previous translations. It is indeed a new translation that goes back to the original languages. The translators had editions of both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament available to them. Miles Smith writes, "If you ask what they had before them, truly it was the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Greek of the New." The age in which they lived was bursting with knowledge. Since the fall of Constantinople (1453), the West had been flooded with scholars, and knowledge had increased tremendously. There was renewed interest in the ancient tongues, and as a result the originals were there for them to use.

The Hebrew text had been remarkably preserved by God. At the time the translators were ready to begin their work, they had no fewer than ten printed editions of the Hebrew Old Testament available to them. There was the Complutensian Polyglot of Cardinal Ximenes, published in 1517, which contained the Hebrew text (the fifth complete O.T.) as well as the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Septuagint translations of it. They had four editions by Daniel Bomberg (1516-17, 1516-17, 1521, 1525-28). The last of these was popular with the Reformers. The "Standard Edition" was considered to be that of Jacob ben Chayim—the Second Rabbinic Bible. Besides these, there was the Antwerp Polyglot (1572) with the Hebrew text of Arius Montanus, and the Latin interlinear translation of Pagninus.

The Greek text was readily available in the Complutensian Polyglot (1514), the five editions of Erasmus (1516-1535), the four editions of Robert Stephanus (1546-1551), and the ten editions of Theodore Beza (1560-1598). They also contained the editions of Aldus (1518), Colinaeus (1534), and Plantin (1572).

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the King James Version translators went back to the primary sources. Thus they could ask the reader, "If truth be (is) to be tried by these tongues (the originals) then whence should a translation be made, but out of them." Indeed, they recognized the fact that the final authorities in this work were the Hebrew and the Greek texts.

Yet, the King James Version is not a totally new work. In terms of literary units (phrases and clauses), the King James Version is about thirty-nine percent new translation. Sixty-one percent of the phrases are taken over from older English versions. In fact, the King James Version can be considered the fifth revision of the work of William Tyndale, who first translated the New Testament from the Greek. Before Tyndale there was the translation of John Wycliffe (1380) and the translation of John Purvey, but they were translated from the Latin Bible. Tyndale was the first to go back to the original languages.

The first revision of Tyndale was done by John Rogers and is called the "Matthew's Bible" (1537). Under the auspices of Thomas Cromwell, Myles Coverdale revised the "Matthew's Bible" to produce the "Great Bible" (1539). In 1560 the Protestants in exile at Geneva produced the "Geneva Bible" which was the third revision of Tyndale. Finally in 1568 the English bishops prepared what is known as the "Bishops' Bible," which was the version from which the translators were to make their revisions, according to the command of King James.

In actuality they used all of these versions plus many other translations such as the German and French Bibles as well as many commentaries such as Calvin's and Beza's. In their own words, "Neither did we think much to consult the translators or commentaries, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch...." Of all the English versions used, more of the phrases and clauses found in the King James Version come from the "Geneva Bible" than any other—about 19 percent. While it is said that five-sixths to nine-tenths of the general content comes from the translation of William Tyndale.

(to be continued)

*Remember a friend  
today with a gift of  
The Standard Bearer.*



# Book Review

**DRENTHÉ IN MICHIGAN**, H.J. Prakke (Translated by the Dutch-American Historical Commission); Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, MI; 84 pp., \$8.95, paper. (Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema)

This little book was originally written in Dutch and published in the Netherlands in 1948. Its occasion was the centennial of Holland, Michigan (and the surrounding settlements). Now we are remembering the sesquicentennial of the Secession of 1834. And the colonization of 1847 was, of course, accomplished by Secessionists who emigrated from various parts of the Netherlands.

Some of the colonists in 1847 were from the province of Drenthé, and they settled in the area of what became the little village of Drenthé, still in existence today, in the vicinity of Holland. The book traces the origin in the Dutch Province of Drenthé of the settlers in Drenthé, Michigan. It tells about their part in the Secession, about their reasons for emigrating to Michigan, about their part in the early work of settling in the Holland area, etc.

All in all, the book is very interesting and also informative, especially for one who is interested in this segment of church history and in the history of the Dutch colonization in this area.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the H.J. Lanning mentioned in the book as one of the colonists of 1847 was the great grandfather of a member of our Hudsonville congregation, Mr. Kenneth Lan-

ning. The latter at one time lived on the original Lanning farm in the Drenthé area, and he still possesses the original deed of that farm. He is, therefore, a direct descendant of the Afscheiding (Secession) as it took place in Sleen, Province of Drenthé, The Netherlands. It always makes a book more interesting when one can connect it to people that he knows.

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 10, 1984, our beloved parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. JOHN DYKSTRA, will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Lord for the faithful covenant instruction and godly example which they have given us and continue to give. We pray that they may always experience the blessings and loving care of our faithful Heavenly Father.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children: to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." (Psalm 103:17, 18)

Don and Cindi De Jong  
Daniel, Christiana, Carl

Dan and Lori Pastoor  
Bradley, Nathan  
Doug and Debbie Dykstra

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 10, 1984, our parents, MR. AND MRS. TED LOOYENGA celebrate, the Lord willing, their 35th wedding anniversary. We are thankful for the Christian parents God gave us to love and instruct us in His ways. We pray that God may bless them in the years ahead.

"To God be the glory."

Joe and Mary Brummel  
John and Pat Sperry  
Larry and Kathy Looyenga  
Robert and Kathy Looyenga

Randall and Lindy Looyenga  
Greg and Nancy Feenstra  
Douglas, Mark, and Karen Looyenga  
and 14 grandchildren

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 26, 1984, the Lord willing, MR. AND MRS. ROBERT MOELKER will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandson, are thankful to our heavenly Father for blessing us with God-fearing parents. We would like to thank them for the years of love and covenant instruction they have given us. We pray that God will continue to bless them and always keep them in His care.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." (Psalm 103:17, 18)

Henry and Arlene Westhuis  
Henry James

Miss Amy Moelker

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 21, 1984, MR. AND MRS. FRED ONDERSMA will, the Lord willing, celebrate 45 years of marriage. We, their children, are thankful to God for the heritage of a covenant church and home. May they continue in the work God has laid out for them with zeal and the hope of His coming.

"O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." (Psalm 34:8)

Robert and Kaye Moelker  
Gary and Rose Moelker  
Larry and Judy Meulenberg

13 grandchildren  
1 great-grandson

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 16, 1984, the Lord willing, GERRIT AND ELEANORE BOL will celebrate 40 years of marriage. We are thankful to our Sovereign Lord that in His providence their marriage was blessed with children, and that they sought to teach us the ways of the Lord. Our prayer for them is (Romans 9:23), "And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory."

Their children and grandchildren,  
David and Barbara Bol  
Kristin, Matthew, Kara  
Mark and Ruthellen Hoeksema  
Stephen, Michael, Sarah, Philip

J. Patrick and Priscilla MacGraw  
Molly, Daniel, Megan  
Jonathan and Barbara Bol  
Nathaniel, Audra, Adam

## WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 8, 1984, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. CLARENCE KUIPER will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. We, their children, thank our heavenly Father for them and for the love and Christian instruction which they have given us.

We pray that God will continue to bless them in their life together and keep them in His care.

David and Lori Kuiper  
Jill, Sara, Joey  
Richard and Beverly Kuiper  
Jeffrey, Daniel  
Gary and Joyce Noorman  
Lisa

Donald Kuiper  
Steven Kuiper  
Judy Kuiper  
Joan Kuiper



## News From Our Churches

May 15, 1984

First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan has made a change in the singing of the doxology. After the morning service, they sing Psalter No. 197, and after the evening service they sing the words of "May the Grace of Christ Our Savior" to the tune of Psalter No. 222.

This past Lord's Day, Rev. Kortering led in the ordination and installation service of Candidate Barry Gritters, at Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. Gritters preached his inaugural sermon that evening, after which the congregation held a Welcome Program for him and his family. May Rev. Gritters and the congregation of Byron Center continue to experience God's blessing as together they seek to praise Him in all things.

Rev. Houck has suffered a back injury. He lost all strength in his right leg and lost all feeling from his kneecap down. After a couple of days flat on his back, Rev. Houck started to gain strength and feeling in his right leg. The doctors told him that he did not need an operation but that he must lie flat on his back for two weeks. His family is adjusting well to this affliction.

In addition to Rev. Houck's back injury, one of the couples of the group in Ripon has left. Certainly this has been discouraging to our missionary and to the small group of saints there. Rev. Koole came up to preach one Sunday. Otherwise they are listening to sermon tapes for their worship services. The concern of Rev. Houck is that these two circumstances may greatly hinder the work in Ripon. Therefore, let us remember Rev. Houck in our prayers, trusting that God will work all things to His glory and the gathering of His Church.

Loveland Protestant Reformed Church called Rev. Van Overloop to be their pastor. In addition, they also approved the proposal of the consistory to authorize spending money to prepare plans and cost estimates for the construction of a new auditorium with a basement.

Rev. Jon Smith presented a lecture on the topic, "The Scriptural Teaching of the End Times," in Edgerton, MN. Rev. Cammenga presented a lecture on the topic, "Women In Church Office." There was a good turnout for Rev. Cammenga's lecture, with many visitors present. If you would like a cassette taped copy of Rev. Cammenga's lecture, send \$2 for each tape to Hull Protestant Reformed Church, P.O. Box 497, Hull, IA 51239. Rev. Veldman spoke on the subject, "Evangelism in the Light of the Reformation," in Wyckoff, New Jersey. Rev. Engelsma gave a lecture in Randolph, Wisconsin on "The Place of the Woman in the Church."

The Council of South Holland Church from time to time adds to the Church Library, books that it thinks worthwhile for the congregation to read. They recently purchased *The Beauty of Reformed Liturgy* (paperback, 73 pages), on the proper order of a Reformed worship service and its elements.

The Evangelism Committee Newsletter of South Holland Church had this to say about Rev. Hutton's visit. "We trust that Rev. Hutton's coming to visit us will result in a closer relationship between the Protestant Reformed Churches and the saints in Larne, Northern Ireland.

"Commenting upon his request for a supply of the pamphlet, 'Evangelism and The Reformed Faith,' he writes: 'We have found that this little booklet is . . . an excellent though brief explanation and defence of true biblical evangelism . . . We hope to send a copy of it to a number of ministers over here . . .'

". . . He concluded his letter by . . . thanking the congregation for our remembrance of him in the past, stating that 'I can truly say that I have been very conscious of the prayers of God's dear people over these past number of weeks especially.'

"Thus is realized how the saints, though separated by many miles, can be a hand and foot to each other, and thus be 'fellow-helpers to the truth.' III John 8."

DH