

# THE *October 1, 2005* STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Volume 82 ◆ Number 1

# Doers of the Word

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

*For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

*For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

*But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

James 1:22-25

**J**ames has had a great deal to say about the word of God.

It is by the word of God that we are born again to be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

This word of God therefore we are to receive. We are not to repudiate the word, especially as it is preached to us. We are rather to embrace it with a believing heart. Practically, this means that we must be quick to hear the word,

slow to speak out against it, slow to become angry when it rebukes us.

Continuing in the same vein, James now instructs us to be doers of the word. Those who receive the word are swift to hear it. But this is not enough. They must not just be hearers of the word; they must also be doers of the word.



## The perfect law of liberty

Notice that the word of God is identified in this passage with the law of God. First James speaks of being a doer of the word (v. 22). Then he identifies the doer of the word as one who looks into the perfect law of liberty (v. 25). The word of God and the perfect law of liberty are the same in the mind of this inspired writer.

It is significant that James identifies the whole word of God as law.

It is common today to make a division between law and gospel. When that is done, the idea is that the law is found in the Old Testament, whereas the gospel is found in the New Testament. And since we are no longer under the law but

under grace (Rom. 6:15), the Old Testament really doesn't have much value for us today. It belongs to the old covenant that God established with the Jews.

Contrary to this notion is the identification of the whole of God's word as law. The implications are obvious. The law and gospel are inseparably connected. In fact, the law is an integral part of the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. And that gospel with its law is found on every page of Scripture. The gospel of the New Testament is also the gospel of the Old Testament. In turn, the law of the Old Testament is the law of the New Testament. It is true that many of the requirements of the Old Testament law have been fulfilled in Christ, so that their Old Testament form falls away. Nevertheless, the essence of the Old Testament law remains with us until this day (Belgic Confession, Art. 25).

This law contained in the word of God is described as being perfect. We read of the perfect law of liberty. It is perfect in that it is complete. In other words, the law found in the word of God contains the complete will of God for our

*Rev. Slopsema is pastor of First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*

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### EDITORIAL OFFICE

Prof. Russell J. Dykstra  
4949 Ivanrest  
Grandville, MI 49418  
(e-mail: dykstra@prca.org)

### BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer  
Mr. Timothy Pipe  
P.O. Box 603  
Grandville, MI  
49468-0603  
PH: (616) 531-1490  
(616) 538-1778  
FAX: (616) 531-3033  
(e-mail: doezema@prca.org)

### CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger  
6597 40th Ave.  
Hudsonville, MI 49426  
(e-mail: benjwig@juno.com)

### NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

The Standard Bearer  
c/o B. VanHerk  
66 Fraser St.  
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

### UNITED KINGDOM OFFICE

c/o Mr. Sean Courtney  
78 Millfield, Grove Rd.  
Ballymena, Co. Antrim  
BT43 6PD Northern Ireland  
(e-mail: cpraudiostore@yahoo.co.uk)

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lives. We are not to turn to any other source to find the will of God. God's will is not to be found in the news media or the advice columns of your newspaper. The psychology and philosophies of this world are not the key to knowing the will of God. God has revealed his will for our lives fully and completely in the law that is recorded in Scripture.

And this law is liberating.

This is evident from the fact that it is called the law of liberty.

The viewpoint of many today is that to be under a law is to be in bondage. True freedom is to do whatever you desire without the strictures of any law. However, the word of God calls God's law the law of liberty. In it you find your freedom.

God's law is our freedom only because of the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Apart from the gospel of Christ the law is only bondage. Without the gospel the law becomes a means to earn your way to heaven. It requires of you perfect

obedience and condemns you should you fail in that obedience. That can only bring bondage. For no one can keep the law of God perfectly. The law would condemn us all. This is what the Jews discovered under the yoke of the Pharisees in Jesus' day.

But when the law is placed in the context of the gospel, it serves to liberate us. It does so, first, because God uses the law to show us our sin and the need for the Savior. The law convicts us of our sin and drives us to the cross of Jesus Christ, where we find forgiveness and reconciliation with God. At this point the law serves yet another purpose. It becomes the rule for grateful living. God confronts the forgiven sinner with His law and calls him to express his gratitude by keeping the law. This inspires the reconciled sinner to turn once more to Jesus Christ to find

the strength to keep God's law. He cannot keep the law perfectly; but in Jesus Christ he begins to keep all the commandments of God. In this the sinner finds deliverance from the bondage of sin and the true freedom of salvation.



#### **Looking into the perfect law of liberty**

James compares the law of liberty to a mirror. First, he speaks of one who beholds his face in a glass. This glass is really a mirror, which in Bible times was not made of glass but of polished metal. Then James speaks of one looking into the perfect law of liberty, thereby comparing the law to a mirror in which we see ourselves.

It is not difficult to see how the law of God serves as a mirror. The law sets before us the requirements of God for our life. When confronted with that law, we are forced to examine ourselves in its light. And when one is honest in this self-examination, he sees himself for what he really is. It is as though he were looking into a spiritual mirror.

What a person does next determines whether he is only a hearer of the word or also a doer of the word.

One that is a hearer and not a doer is like unto a man that beholds his natural face in a mirror, then goes his way and immediately forgets what manner of man he was. He looks into the mirror of the law. He does that when he sits under the preaching. He does that when he reads the Bible for devotions. He does that when his parents bring him the word and apply it. What he sees is not pleasant. As he gazes into the mirror of the law, he sees his sins and shortcomings. He has sinned in his marriage, in his home life, in his work, in his schooling, in his recreation.... But then he goes his way and immediately forgets what he saw.

The word of God that was brought to him or that he read is quickly forgotten. His sins that were exposed to him by the word of God have just as quickly left his thoughts. There are more important things in life. The word of God did not bring him to his knees in sorrow. It did not bring him to the cross to find forgiveness. Nor did it move him to turn from sin unto God. He was only a hearer of the word and not a doer.

In distinction from this, a doer of the word is one who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues therein. And being not a forgetful hearer, he becomes a doer of the work.

This doer of the work also looks into the perfect law of liberty, even as does the one that is only a hearer. He sits under the preaching of the word. He studies his Bible at home and in the fellowship of the saints. He is instructed in the word by his parents and teachers. The word of God and its law also serve as a mirror for him, to see his sins and many faults. In this respect he is no different from the one that is only a hearer.

How he differs is that he is not a forgetful hearer. Rather than quickly glancing into the mirror of the law and going his way, he continues to gaze at himself, inspecting himself very carefully. Leaving the figure and speaking of the reality, he is one that continues to meditate and reflect on what he saw of himself in the law. The sins that he has come to see in his life disturb him deeply. He is filled with a grief that brings him to his knees in prayer to find the forgiveness of the cross of Jesus Christ. But this isn't all. One cannot be forgiven without becoming grateful. And so this forgiven sinner desires to serve God according to the law as an expression of his gratitude. This he cannot do perfectly, at least not yet. But in Jesus Christ he begins to turn from his sin to serve God according to all

*Apart from  
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the law is  
only bondage.*

the commandments of God. And so he becomes a doer of the work.

This is what we must be.

Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.

This is possible only by a true and living faith in Jesus Christ.

In the next chapter James compares a living faith to dead faith. A living faith is a true and genuine faith. A dead faith is only an imitation faith. The difference between the two is that the one produces good works and the other does not.

A true and living faith produces good works only in response to the word. It is through the power of the word that one is brought to a true faith in Jesus Christ. The word is also the power to lead us in our faith to the cross

to become doers of the word.

The difference between a doer of the word and a hearer only is that one has a living faith, whereas the other has only a dead faith. The one's faith is genuine; the other's faith is imitation.



He that is a doer of the work shall be blessed in his deed.

He shall find the blessing of God's friendship and fellowship. This is a fellowship that will extend on into eternity and there be perfected.

He shall also find the blessing of peace and harmony in his family and church.

What of the man who is only a hearer of the word? He is not so

blessed. He is one who continues in the way of his sin. There is no blessing in the way of sin but only misery and destruction.


And we are warned.

Be not deceived.

Do not be deceived into thinking that you can be happy without God's blessing, because the pleasure of sin will satisfy your soul.

And above all do not be deceived into thinking that somehow you can continue in the way of your sin and still receive the blessing of God.

The way of sin is the way of misery and destruction. This is also the end of all those that are only hearers of the word.

Let us in faith be doers of the word that we may receive the blessing of God. 

## Editor's Note

Since the new volume year begins with this issue, we take the opportunity to inform you of some of the changes and plans for this year. First of all, we are delighted to report that two of the writers who took time off from their regular rubrics are returning to the staff. Prof. David Engelsma will resume his writing on eschatology in "Things That Must Shortly Come to Pass." Because errors in eschatology abound, a solid explanation and spirited defense of the amillennial position is vitally important for the church in these last days. For that reason we are very pleased to have Prof. Engelsma take up the pen for the *SB*.

We are also pleased to inform you that Prof. Ronald Cammenga, newly appointed professor of theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, will be resuming his work on the Church Order. He is determined to finish the articles on the Church Order. This too is of value for the church, to have continued discussion and defense of the Reformed

Church Order in a day when proper order in the church is often neglected or ignored to the peril of the church.

Two other writers appeared in the *SB* in the last volume but did so on a trial basis. Having written a few articles, they were willing to become writers officially, and the *SB* staff approved them. Mrs. Jan Miersma, wife of missionary Thomas Miersma (Spokane, WA), joins Rev. Bill Bruinsma (with some reprints from Dr. Abraham Kuyper) in the rubric "When Thou Sittest in Thine House." The staff also added Mr. Brian VanEngen as a writer for the rubric "Church and State." Mr. VanEngen is an attorney and a member of the PRC in Hull, IA.

Finally, Rev. Bill Langerak, pastor in the Southeast PRC (Grand Rapids, MI), will write for the popular rubric "A Word Fitly Spoken."

The staff approved the schedule of writers (twenty other men) and rubrics (eighteen rubrics in all) and reappointed the three editors

to their joint editorship. The editors take this opportunity to welcome the new and the returning writers and to extend a hearty thank you to those who contribute so faithfully to the *SB*.

For the coming year we are planning some special issues. The next issue (Oct. 15) is the annual Reformation Day issue. It will be devoted to the pre-reformer John Wycliffe. We are also planning a special issue on the Protestant Reformed Seminary. This and more, in the next volume, the Lord willing.

We covet your continued prayers for the *Standard Bearer*. We give heartfelt thanks to God for the provision of writers, for the continued interest in and support of the *SB*, and above all for keeping the magazine faithful to its stated purpose, namely, a Reformed magazine devoted to the defense and propagation of the Reformed faith. In His strength, we commence another year.

—RJD 



## In Loco Parentis – Covenantal Schools in Action

One of the most significant blessings that God has given to the Protestant Reformed Churches is the system of Protestant Reformed Christian schools. My experiences as a father, my personal observations as a pastor, and the testimony of Scripture concerning the instruction of covenant youth all confirm that conviction.

Reformed, Christian education is a central blessing of God's covenant of grace. The covenant is the foundation of the Christian school. Exactly because God has established His covenant with *believers* and their *seed*, believing parents are duty bound to rear their children in the fear of the Lord. An inestimable aid to the parents for teaching their children the fear of God is the faithful Christian school.

Parents and teachers work together in this glorious task of training covenant children. For this reason it is essential that the right relation exist between parents and teachers. In fact, it is safe to say that where faithful, believing parents and teachers maintain the proper relationship, they can expect the Lord's blessing on their endeavors. On the other hand, where the relationship is wrong, the work is doomed.

That right relationship is captured in the Latin phrase *in loco parentis*, which means "in the place of the parents." As the translation indicates, the phrase describes the particular relationship between parents and teachers where the teacher performs his labors in the place of the parent. It indicates that the teacher neither replaces the

parent nor takes over the responsibilities of the parent. It indicates likewise that the teacher is not a lowly lackey doing what the parents do not want to do. Rather, the teacher stands in for the parents, performing the noble, God-given task that the parents would do if it were possible.

Behind this concept of *in loco parentis* are two realities.

The first is that God demands of parents that their covenant children be trained to His specifications. This training of covenant children includes both their rearing and their instruction, tasks that go hand-in-hand. Parents are expected to "train up the child" (Prov. 22:6), and to "command" their children to "keep the way of the Lord" (Deut. 18:19). They must give instruction, reproof, and chastisement (Prov. 1:8, 9; 29:6). Fathers, upon whom the first responsibility lies, are admonished to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Believing parents take this obligation of the covenant seriously. They are vitally interested in the full and complete development of their children — spiritually, intellectually, and physically. They take their goal from God's Word, namely that the child of God "may be perfect (complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17). Their children must know God, know His creation, and be equipped to serve God with a life of gratitude. The responsibility for this training rests on the parents.

The second reality is that parents have higher spiritual and edu-

cational goals for their children than they as parents can ordinarily accomplish alone. For a variety of reasons, many parents find it impossible personally to teach all that their children need. One reason is that the father spends many hours away from the home at work, and his work is demanding. Thus father can teach but little. The result is that virtually the entire load of teaching would fall on mother, who already has the duties of running the home, caring for the needs of the entire family, and being a faithful help for her husband. She has more than enough work already. In addition, most parents cannot do justice to all the different subjects that their children ought to learn. The world has changed much from the days of Israel when fathers and mothers trained their children in the home and on the farm. It is estimated that the sum total of information possessed by man doubles every couple of years. Although it is neither possible nor necessary that anyone absorb *all* this additional information, it does demonstrate that to live in today's world, children must learn far more than their parents did just thirty years ago.

Believing parents recognize the importance of imparting knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to their children. To serve God, children must know God and His creation. That teaching begins with the most basic elements — teaching them to read and write, add and subtract, and spell. The child must learn good grammar, see something of the wonder of living creatures in biology, and stand in

awe before the glory of the solar system in the universe. He must see the sovereign hand of God controlling all the events of men and nations, and how all things serve His purpose of gathering and preserving His church. And through this instruction, the child must be equipped to serve and praise God.

This goal demands thorough instruction in all the disciplines, instruction which has Christ at the center, by whom and for whom all things exist. The task is staggering. It requires dedicated preparation and full-time study. Parents become convinced that they need help in realizing their goals, or, more properly, God's goals, for their children (*His* children).

For this reason, the parents hire trained and dedicated godly teachers to stand in their place. By so doing, parents do not relinquish their God-given responsibilities. Hence they place strict requirements on the teachers. "You must do what I cannot because of time, or ability, or lack of preparation. You have the abilities, the education, and we trust are prepared to teach the curriculum from a biblical perspective." If that is not enough of a burden, the parents have more demands. They insist: "You must instruct our children as we would, if we could. Teach them with the love, patience, and understanding that believing parents ought to have. Treat them as covenant children. Give them the knowledge of God, the same Jehovah whom we love and serve. Demand of them obedience to God's commandments. Teach them a godly walk and set before them the Reformed world and life view." And the teacher agrees to this.

That is *in loco parentis* in action.

The question arises, How is this possible? How can this work?

The answer is, Only when schools are truly parental schools, and when parents are deeply involved in their schools.

Understand, *in loco parentis* is not automatic. It is does not gov-

ern the relationship of parents and teachers in all schools.

Certainly it is not found in government-run schools. In such schools, the state and, increasingly, the federal governments are in control, not the parents. The government raises the necessary tax money. The laws of the land determine what shall be taught. The state hires the teachers and informs them how they must teach. Parents are out of the process, except for a kind of support role.

*In loco parentis* is dead in the public school. This system denies everything that undergirds parental education. It denies that the parents have the responsibility to train their children. It rejects the notion that teachers must teach both *what* and *as* the parents desire. Rather, the state decides these matters by decree. Believing parents find the education in the public school deficient — not so much because the education is usually inferior academically, but because Christ is lacking in it all. As for the public school teacher, he is but a paid servant of the state doing what the parents are averse to doing themselves.

However, parents who see the importance of the right relationship between parents and teachers will not be content merely to have their children in a Christian school. Far too many Christian schools have quietly

disposed of the principle of *in loco parentis* by making the teacher sovereign in the sphere of the school. The school was no longer considered an extension of the home and thus under the authority of the parents, but a separate sphere. Connected with this was a drive to remove the Reformed confessions and the Bible as the basis for the school. The remaining authority in such a school is the trained teacher, the professional, with a school board and society to

approve the budget and rubber-stamp the desires of the faculty. This philosophy of education is taught in many a Christian college. In such a school, *in loco parentis* is dead.

That, however, is not the only way to damage the principle of *in loco parentis*. It should be obvious that where a difference in doctrine and practice exists between the teachers and the parents, the heart of this relationship is cut out. If a Protestant Reformed father sends his children to a Christian Reformed or Baptist school, the teacher is not teaching the children as that father would. Rather, if the teacher is faithful to his own confession, he will inculcate the doctrines, lifestyle, and world and life view that his church maintains.

No, *in loco parentis* exists rightly in parental schools that faithfully maintain the truth confessed by the parents. Within the covenant, parents gladly shoulder their God-given responsibility. They band together, form a society, and establish a school founded squarely on the Bible and the Reformed confessions. The parents, joined by the covenant community, the church, faithfully raise the needed funds every year, make the rules, set the

curriculum, and hire the teachers. And if need be, they fire a teacher that is not performing *in loco parentis*. Obviously, steady, continued, enthusi-

*Steady, continued, enthusiastic involvement by the parents is necessary for the principle to work.*

astic involvement by the parents is necessary for the principle to work. Right understanding of the place of teachers and high regard for the same is necessary on the part of parents and teachers alike. Beware, parents. Beware, teachers. This relationship is easily lost if you parents lose your heart for the work, lose touch with the school, and speak of it in terms of "they" instead of "we," and of "their school" instead of "our school." As for the teachers, serious damage is done

to the principle if you become haughty, and consider yourselves more knowledgeable about the needs of a particular child — more knowledgeable than the parents of the child themselves(!).

*In loco parentis* is a principle worth striving to maintain. In such a school, teachers and parents are unified in their goals. They may not always agree on the application to every child and circumstance. Yet they are agreed that the goal is to rear the children in the fear of the Lord, to teach them to know God and walk in His commandments, and to equip them to serve God in this world as His friend-servants.


When *in loco parentis* is the guiding principle, parents send their children to school confident that students will receive a thoroughly Reformed education. Parents and teachers agree upon this before the school year begins. Parents need not worry that the child may be taught evolution, or a social gospel, or Arminianism, or Christian reconstructionism. Parents have the assurance that the teacher will strive not only for academic excellence, but to teach every subject in the light of Scripture. By their representatives, the school board, the instruction is observed and the requirements maintained. Obviously, if it becomes evident that the instruction is not both Re-

formed and striving for academic excellence, parents collectively have the right to dismiss the teacher. Parents must be certain that what is taught at home — reverence for the Word of God and godly living — will not be contradicted at school, but rather reinforced.

What a blessing!

But what a blessing also for the teacher to know that, because he is one with the parents in faith, doctrine, practice, and goals, he has their confidence and support. He does not wonder, as he prepares the history lesson, whether some parents might object to his demonstration that God rules sovereignly over all events in history — including wars, evil kings, genocides, famines, and church splits. He will not have an angry parent calling him with objections when, in teaching the history of Abraham, he demonstrates that God's covenant with Abraham is a sovereign, particular, unconditional covenant of grace in Christ. Furthermore, the teacher knows that he is expected to discipline biblically, that is, with the rod and reproof, as the parents do. And he can trust that the parents will strive not to criticize him, but to honor him before their children, for he is their servant, *in loco parentis*. To cut down the teacher is to do damage, serious harm, to the very work the parents ask him to do.

Yet the greatest benefits of *in loco parentis* in a Reformed, Christian school accrue to the children. Where *in loco parentis* does not govern the relationship between teachers and parents, the student is in a position not unlike a child with divorced parents. Father and mother will assuredly have different goals, lifestyles, and religious practices, and thus are frequently at odds. Both do their best to influence the child and draw him to their views. These contrary influences do harm to the child. But in the case of a teacher/parent relationship, it results in differences between the teacher and the parents that tug at the student.

On the other hand, when this principle is known and diligently maintained, there is blessed harmony. The student can grow and develop in peace. The instruction he hears in school is in harmony with that received in the home and the church. In such an environment, the covenant child — young or old — is nurtured in the truth, and grows deep roots, not being whipped and pulled by winds of contrary instruction. He does not have two masters, between which he must make a choice daily. He has one Master, the Lord Jesus, who uses parents to teach him the way that he should go, and teachers who stand *in loco parentis*. 

In Memoriam

Rev. Arie denHartog

## Pastor Cheah Fook Meng

**G**od in His mysterious, but perfect, wise, and good purpose took Pastor Cheah Fook Meng out of this life on August 29, 2005. After eleven days of

*Rev. denHartog is pastor of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church in Grandville, Michigan.*

grievous struggle with dengue hemorrhaging fever, Pastor Cheah died at the relatively youthful age of only 41 years. For those who were left behind, his death is the occasion of great sorrow. Pastor Cheah's wife, Lee Choo, is now left a widow. She has been a wonderful example of the sustaining grace

of God and a great encouragement to others.

Pastor Cheah will be sadly missed, especially by the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church, of which he was pastor. He led CERCS for nine years. CERCS is still a young congregation. Pastor Cheah's preaching, pastoral admo-

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nitition, encouragement, and leadership were a great blessing to this church and has brought her to where she is today. The Lord added several new members to the church through the labors of our brother. Children have been instructed in the precious truths of the Word of God and are now grown up to be mature young people in the church.

Pastor Cheah was by the sovereign grace of God converted from the Buddhist religion in his youth. He was the only one chosen from his pagan family to be recipient of such marvelous grace that delivers from the darkness of paganism into the glorious light of the knowledge and salvation of the Lord. Already before becoming a minister he testified to his own family and friends of the grace of God. Later he married Lee Choo, also an only convert of her family. Before his conversion he was a social worker. Marvelous is this grace of God when those whom He saves are raised to the high office of the ministry of the Word to preach the gospel of grace to the pagan nation and peoples from among whom they have been saved. This occupation is far more glorious than any mere secular occupation can be.

Pastor Cheah was trained for the ministry in the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America from 1993 to 1996. The Protestant Reformed Churches count it a privilege to have been involved in and having supported this training.

Very recently I had the opportunity of serving in the Evangelical Reformed Churches in Singapore for three years as minister-on-loan. During this time I worked as a co-laborer with Pastor Cheah. So I knew him as a brother in Christ, personal friend, and fellow servant of the Lord. We served together on a number of denominational committees. These required many hours of tireless work on the part of Pastor Cheah. Meet-

ings often involved a great deal of study and preparation, much "plowing of new ground," as so many things were still in their beginning stages in ERCs. Meetings were often very long and arduous, extending at times beyond midnight. The Evangelical Reformed Churches, as a small Reformed denomination in the midst of a pagan world and where there are few other Reformed churches, have been given a great amount of work to do.

A major denominational work in which Pastor Cheah also served was the Asian Reformed Theological School (ARTS). This school is still in its beginning stages, and Pastor Cheah helped in these crucial stages. Pastor Cheah served as one of the regular lecturers in ARTS. Curriculum had to be developed. Courses were being taught for the first time. This young pastor was given the opportunity and responsibility to train men, even from other countries, for the service of the Lord in His church.

On several occasions we traveled together to Myanmar and India for mission work and to conduct training seminars for church leaders. Pastor Cheah did major work for the extension program of ARTS in Myanmar to train young theological students to ground them better in the truth. We remember with thankfulness to the Lord the zeal and interest he had for this work and the personal sacrifices he made for it. Earthly glory and riches were not what he worked for. He was one of the first, along with Pastor Lau Chin Kwee, to bring the Reformed faith to the saints of God in Myanmar. This work was fruitful to help establish two Reformed churches in Myanmar.

During the years of our working together with Pastor Cheah, we were thankful for some of the particular areas he focused on and which were the

burdens of his ministry. He greatly desired to bring the Reformed faith to others of his countrymen. In this connection he sought to preach and teach in such a way that the Reformed faith could be clearly understood by recent converts and those young in the faith. Several things are necessary for this. One must be able to bring the profound doctrines of salvation in a basic, simple, clear manner. At the same time, one must be careful to maintain the distinctive Reformed faith without losing it in an attempt to be overly simple. Even in a place like Singapore, departure from the Reformed faith is very evident. The Reformed faith is so radically different from the false presentations of the gospel by so many churches. Each culture has its own nuances. So also does the Chinese culture prevalent in Singapore, which must be considered in the preaching of the gospel. We are thankful for the gifts God gave to Pastor Cheah for this kind of a ministry.

Pastor Cheah also had a good rapport with the young people in both congregations of the ERCs and so was often asked to speak for their meetings.

After this life the Lord will reward His servants with the rewards He merited for them on His cross. They will enter into the everlasting glory of His kingdom. Our prayers are that the Lord will




*Pastor Cheah and Lee Choo*



continue to sustain and comfort Lee Choo and that He will establish the work of Pastor Cheah for the good of His church and the glory of His

own name. May the Lord preserve the churches Pastor Cheah served in the heritage of the Reformed faith, and grant that they may continue to be a witness to the truth,

in Singapore as well as in the lands where He might give opportunity for the preaching of the ministers of the ERCS. 

*Search the Scriptures*

*Prof. Herman Hanko*

## *The Charter of Christian Liberty (2)*

# *An Exposition of the Book of Galatians Introduction (cont.)*

### **The Occasion for the Epistle**

**A**ssuming that the Galatian churches were comprised of the churches that were established by Paul on his first missionary journey, it is worth our while to refresh our minds on the history. The apostle visited the churches of Galatia on four different occasions. His first visit was at the time of their establishment during the first missionary journey. His second visit came on the return trip of his first missionary journey, when he confirmed “the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of Christ” (Acts 14:21, 22).

The third visit came at the very beginning of the second missionary journey, during which journey the apostle brought the gospel to Macedonia. This second missionary journey was preceded by the visit of the apostle to Jerusalem to take part in the deliberations of the Jerusalem council, at which coun-

cil the question of the circumcision of the Gentiles was brought up (Acts 15:1-35). The final decisions of the Jerusalem council were carried by Paul and Barnabas and delivered to the Galatian churches (Acts 16:1-5). During this visit Paul also picked up Timothy to take him along on his further journeys.

The final visit to the Galatian churches was at the beginning of the third missionary journey (Acts 18:23). Paul continued on from Galatia and Phrygia to Ephesus, where he spent a great deal of time working both in the city and the surrounding country. After the riot in Ephesus and Paul’s departure from that city, he traveled to Macedonia and came finally to Corinth (Acts 20:1-3).

It was most likely after Paul’s final departure from the Galatian churches that trouble arose over the teachings of the Judaizers. The reports concerning the controversies that troubled the churches of Galatia must have reached Paul while he was in Macedonia, perhaps while he was in Corinth, where he spent the winter before returning to Antioch in Syria and Jerusalem. It was probably also true that Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians while in Corinth.\*

The controversy sparked by the

Judaizers raged in all its fury during Paul’s work in Ephesus and during his trip down the Macedonian peninsula to Achaia and Corinth.

Paul’s labors in the Galatian churches during his first missionary journey produced fruit from both the Jews and the Gentiles (Acts 13:43; 14:1). Some of these

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\* The controversy over the time when this epistle was written is long and drawn out. Basically there are two positions. One holds that the controversy broke out early, before the Jerusalem council, and that the epistle was written, therefore, prior to that major meeting in Jerusalem. The other position insists that the epistle was written near the end of the third missionary journey, while the apostle was wintering in Corinth, and prior to Paul’s departure from Corinth to Antioch in Syria, the calling church of his labors. I have no intention of entering into the pros and cons of each position. It is my judgment that the latter position is probably true. Anyone who wishes to look at the question more closely can find much material on it, including Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Times* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965); W. J. Conybeare & J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1951); William Hendrickson, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Galatians* (Baker Book House, 1968).

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*Prof. Hanko is professor emeritus of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.*

*Previous article in this series: September 1, 2005, p. 466.*

converted Jews were the cause of the grief to which the apostle addressed himself in his epistle.

The Jews, really wherever the gospel was preached, but also in Galatia, found it impossible to break away entirely from the Old Testament and from the Old Testament notion that the Jews occupied a favored position in the eyes of God. God had set His love on Israel. He had chosen Israel in distinction from all the nations of the earth. He had favored Israel with great honor and blessing. Aware of this, Paul writes to the Romans concerning his brethren according to the flesh, "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (9:4, 5).

The elite status that the Jews occupied in the old dispensation was a status that the Judaizers wanted to retain in the new. It was their considered opinion that anyone who wanted to be saved had to become a Jew. And there was only one way to become a Jew, namely through the rite of circumcision, for circumcision marked the Jews as God's covenant people. These Christian Jews were not opposed to the salvation of Gentiles as such. Indeed, already in the old dispensation thousands of people from other nations were brought into Israel and were incorporated into the nation. And this incorporation was accomplished by means of circumcision.

It obviously was not quite that simple. The great battle, fought already at the Jerusalem council and now continued in Galatia, was not over a mere rite. By insisting on the favored status of Israel as God's covenant people, and by insisting that circumcision was the only way to become a true Israelite, the Judaizers were also insisting that the church of the new dispensation

had to go back to the old, to the dispensation of types and shadows, to all that was implied in Israel's "favored status," to the dispensation of the law, which regulated Israel's life as a nation set apart, and, therefore, to salvation by the works of the law. This heresy, as Paul points out in the epistle, is the real core of the matter. To be circumcised is to make the cross of Christ of none effect, and it is such because it means justification by the works of the law: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:2-4). Paul's epistle is a powerful and unforgettable refutation of this pernicious error.

The Judaizers did not teach that salvation is only by the works of the law. They were members of the church. They were believers, or so they professed to be. They taught the need for the cross of Christ and faith in Him. They were Christians, followers of Christ. But they wanted circumcision. And in wanting that, they wanted the works of the law to be added to faith in Christ.

It was the same error, in a somewhat modified form, that was adopted by Rome and from which God delivered the church through the Reformation. It is the same error so widely promoted today by leaders in Reformed and Presbyterian circles who once more are pleading for the doctrine of justification by faith and works. It is, as a matter of fact, the error of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism, into which heresy Rome fell with its doctrine of salvation by faith and works. It is the error of Arminianism in all its many forms, a defense of salvation by faith,

which is man's work, and by the works that man is compelled to do if he is to be saved.

How can anyone doubt that this is an important epistle? It stands towering over man's proud and foolish claims to acquire salvation by what he does. And from the pinnacle of that tower thunders forth the great doctrine of the

*... this epistle stands towering over man's proud and foolish claims to acquire salvation by what he does.*

Reformation: Justification by faith alone.

Without any doubt this epistle, more than any other, is passionate, fiery, fierce, weighted down with emotions of anger, and driven by deepest feelings of animosity against all who teach the heresy that the enemies in the Galatian churches taught. Paul was moved in the very depths of his soul. His exposure of the enemies of the gospel is ruthless. His defense of justification by faith alone is a roar that comes from the depths of his heart. His condemnation of the dreadful evil of teaching any other gospel but what he teaches is sharp, uncompromising, and imprecatory.


Combine this with the truth of inspiration and one has some sense of God's attitude towards such damnable heresies. Paul's emotions lie open for all to sense in their enormity. But those very emotions were used by the Holy Spirit to write a book that fires its cannon shots with perfect accuracy against the error promoted by the Judaizers, but also against their base motives, which inspire them to lead people and churches astray. God pours out His anathemas (Paul's word) against those who corrupt His truth by denying Him as the sovereign and only Savior of the church.

I have called this commentary "The Charter of Christian Liberty." I thought about the name, "The Magna Carta of Christian Liberty," with its obvious reference to the

historical document that became the basis for English common law. The name derives from the first verse of chapter five: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be

not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Salvation by the works of the law, even when added to faith, is dreadful spiritual bondage. Justification by faith alone sets the be-

liever at liberty, true liberty, the liberty of heaven itself. Woe to those who lead the church back to bondage. May blessing be upon all who proclaim the gospel of justification by faith. 

## All Around Us

Rev. Gise VanBaren

### Divorce rates are down...

**B**ut there is no cause for rejoicing. The Grand Rapids Press, July 15, 2005, headlined its article on the subject: "Americans dodge divorce by skipping marriage." The figures presented are shocking indeed. Geoff Mulvihill, with the Associated Press, wrote:

The divorce rate in the United States is falling, and a new study offers an explanation: More people are shacking up instead of getting married.

In a report released today, the co-directors of the National Marriage Project, a nonpartisan institute at Rutgers University that promotes marriage, said couples who get married are more committed to each other than those who just live together.

The study analyzed data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other researchers.

Nine of every 1,000 married women in the United States divorced in 1960, according to the study. The rate increased to more than 22 per 1,000 in 2004.

Meanwhile, the number of unmarried, opposite-sex couples living together has climbed from 439,000 in 1960 to more than 5 million now.

And the marriage rate has fallen over the past three decades: Seventy-seven out of every 1,000 single women got married in 1976; last year, the number was fewer than 40 per 1,000, the study found....

Of interest also is the fact that seven states still have laws against

"cohabiting." But these seem routinely violated without consequence. *USA Today* reports:

The almost 1 million unmarried heterosexual Americans who live together in Florida, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, Virginia and West Virginia are violating state laws against "lewd and lascivious" cohabitation.

Such laws are remnants of an earlier era; North Carolina's is vintage 1805. And although they remain on the books, anti-cohabitation laws are rarely enforced.

But a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of North Carolina's statute is making its way through the courts and is drawing new attention to these old laws.

"The idea that government criminalizes people's choice to live together out of wedlock in this day and age defies logic and common sense," says Jennifer Rudinger, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina, which filed suit on behalf of Debora Hobbs.

Hobbs is an unmarried woman who lost her job with the Pender County Sheriff's Department because she and her boyfriend live together....

The American Civil Liberties Union filed suit in March to overturn the North Carolina law; the case probably will be scheduled for a hearing this fall, Rudinger says.

Hobbs "is continuing to live with her boyfriend because she believes it's her constitutional right," Rudinger says.

One of the individuals mentioned in the above article was quoted, "You should be allowed to live like you want to live."

One can only wonder how far such reasoning will go. Will one claim the right to live in cohabitation with a minor? Some would insist, "But there are good laws against that." Yet, not so many years ago the same was true of fornication—it was against the law of the land (as well as contrary to God's laws). Not long ago there were laws against the practice of homosexual acts. But that is no longer true. There was a time when divorce was granted by some states only on the ground of proven adultery. But no more. Now most states will grant "no-fault" divorces.

All of this represents a devilish attack on the institution of marriage—and upon the covenant that God establishes with His people in the line of continued generations. What is being destroyed in the world has also affected the church. The very sins condemned in Scripture are now being condoned and even approved within many of the mainline Christian churches. Satan's attack has seemingly been devastatingly effective. Many would insist that these deviations are in fact one's "constitutional right." The laws of the land are increasingly made to conform to the imagined "constitutional rights" of the individual. It has reached a point where many believe that those who oppose the murder that is abortion should not be appointed or approved for judgeship on the Supreme Court. This would mean that any Christian who faithfully adheres to the Word and law of God is automatically disqualified. When the morality of Scripture is forsaken, then

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*Rev. VanBaren is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.*

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each can do what is deemed right in his own eyes. The devastating consequences are becoming increasingly evident. The marriage vow "until death do us part" has been increasingly interpreted to mean, "until I find someone more desirable and attractive to me." The wrenching consequences were expressed in the *Rocky Mountain News*. Betsy Hart, of the Scripps Howard News Service, not only writes about her own sad experience, but presents a spiritual testimony with it:

It's that time of year for wonderful wedding celebrations. In many ways I think that this June, after 17 years of marriage myself, I am more committed than ever to the sacredness and significance of marriage, something I've written about so many times. So then this June finds me living a terrible irony: I'm passionate about the importance of marriage—but my husband has, sadly, ended our marriage and I will soon be divorced.

Dear readers, it's because my commitment to marriage, and to my husband and our children, was all real that I worked hard to save my family, and to help my husband want to stay within its folds, for his sake as well as ours. I loved him. I believed we were close, and that I was loved and

faithfully cherished in return.

But I was wrong. So, when he finally left, my shock and grief were total. Yet, I know the children and I will be OK.

I fully believe that God is sovereign in this, and is even (somehow) using these terrible events for his own honor and the ultimate well-being of my children and me.

...In the wake of my discoveries there were times when my pain and anger were overwhelming to me. But through this terrible ordeal, I've also come to see more than ever that sin is powerful—and blinding. And in turn, this has convinced me that my husband chose to leave his family not because he *could* see clearly, but precisely because he *couldn't*.

Such thinking is at odds with today's "divorce culture," which seems to consistently paint marriage break-ups as at some level rational, not wrenching and destructive (which is why it *has* to deny that there are so many innocent victims of divorce). In contrast, having the understanding that I do I can have genuine compassion for my husband—compassion which is completely compatible with my appropriate anger over what he has done.


The writer concludes:

Sadly, the prevailing divorce

culture does not seem to consider divorce a profoundly destructive thing. I do. And I don't just mean for the individuals involved, especially the children. I mean for our culture as a whole.

Yet I also know that my own tragedy does not have to define me, or my children. I don't know what the future holds. But I do know that God's mercies are new every morning, and so even now I can look forward to every new morning with increasing joy and hope in the future.

Hardly ever does one find the sadness and difficulty of divorce so eloquently expressed. Less often still does one find that expressed in the secular press from a positively spiritual viewpoint.

One might conclude that Satan surely has been succeeding in his endeavor to destroy marriages and families not only within the unbelieving world, but increasingly also in what is called church. The fornication of shacking up together is no longer condemned by an unbelieving world, and increasingly not by the churches either. The biblical definition of marriage is considered no longer applicable in our modern society. With Scripture we cry out, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" 

*In His Fear*

*Rev. Daniel Kleyn*

## Women and Missions (1)

*Rev. Kleyn is pastor of First Protestant Reformed Church in Edgerton, Minnesota, who will be installed as the new pastor of First PRC of Holland, Michigan on October 12, 2005.*

*(Note: This article is based on a speech that was originally given for the Combined Ladies' Meeting of the Doon, Edgerton, and Hull Protestant Reformed Churches.)*

**T**he subject we have before us is a significant one for us to consider. It is so because of the fact that our churches are busily involved in the work of missions. Presently we have five mission fields, and five ministers serving as missionaries. We also have many other opportunities as churches to establish mission fields and to do mission work. The Lord has been pleased to use us for the

spread of His truth to many places throughout the world.

In a way, this subject is of special interest to you women who are here this evening. That is because of the fact that the congregations of which you are members are very directly involved in the foreign mission work of our churches. Two of the congregations are calling churches: Hull for Ghana, and Doon for the Philippines. In addi-

tion to that, the three ministers and six elders or ex-elders from the three congregations in this area constitute the Foreign Mission Committee of our churches. And this committee meets every month in order to supervise the denomination's work of foreign missions.

But the subject is significant for all, for the mission work of our churches is the work of every member of our denomination. It is not simply the work of the calling churches and the mission committees and the missionaries and missionary assistants who are on the fields. It is true that most of the work is done directly by them. But you must understand and remember that they do that work on your behalf. The work of missions is, therefore, also your work. Every individual who is a member of our churches is involved in doing that work. And for that reason, also, you all have the calling before God to be interested in and to be involved in the spread of the gospel through missions.

Let us consider, then, what role you have as women in the churches' work of missions.



To begin with, we take a brief look at what mission work is. It is important to understand this, especially in light of the fact that there are many misconceptions today concerning it.

Many have the idea that a significant aspect of mission work, if not the only thing, is to help out the poor by providing their earthly needs. We must bring the gospel, but we should also be actively seeking to raise the standard of living of those to whom we bring it. This often becomes the focus in mission work. The result is that mission work is redefined, at least in people's minds, as doing service projects for others, or going on a "mission trip" to a third-world country in order to repair buildings, or build homes, or hand out

such things as clothing and money.

However, this is not mission work. Mission work is not to provide financially for the poor around the world. But mission work is the work of preaching the gospel. Mission work is not helping out the poor materially, but helping out God's people spiritually. Mission work is not delivering people from physical poverty, but is the work of preaching the gospel that delivers from spiritual poverty.

It is important that we keep this always before our minds. The work of the church in missions is to preach the gospel. We have been commissioned by Christ to bring the Word of God to those who have not heard it before, or who are currently not hearing it. We are to bring, not money, but the words of eternal life. We are to provide, not physical food, but spiritual food. That is the work of missions.

It is for this reason that the work of missions is the official work of the church. Mission work is not done by some parachurch organization. Mission work is not conducted by a self-appointed missionary. Mission work is not carried out by a group of "mission minded" people. The great commission was given to the church. And the fact that it was given to the church means that the church does the work of missions. It is official work that is done through the church calling missionaries, sending these missionaries to the fields, and supervising the work that is done on the field.

That is also why mission work is carried out by the men of the churches. You all know that. We do not have women missionaries. We do not have women as officebearers who can serve on the councils of the calling churches. We do not have women on the mission committees. The men are the ones who have been given headship and rule in the church of Christ, and they are the ones who

are called to exercise that rule also in the churches' work of missions. Mission work is done chiefly by the men of the churches.

This raises the question, then: What about you who are women? What is the role that you have in the church's work of missions? If it is indeed true, as it is, that mission work is the work of every member of the church, how can women be involved in that work?



Your primary responsibility as women — and let me point out and underscore the fact that this is not only your primary responsibility, but also an indispensable work that you must be doing — that primary responsibility is that you support the preaching of the gospel. Your calling as women in the work of missions is really no different from the calling of any other member of the church. It is the calling that you have as those who occupy the office of believer in Christ. In that office, your calling is no different from that which all the men and children and young people in the church have. Every believer has that obligation. And it is the obligation, as I said, to support the preaching of the gospel. You are to give wholehearted support to the preaching — supporting it, first of all, within the congregation of which you are members, but then also supporting it on the mission field.

That support begins with a sincere interest in the preaching that takes place on the mission fields. It means that you have a desire to see the blessed truths of the gospel proclaimed to others. You desire that because you know from your own experience the blessedness of the truths of the gospel as the Spirit works them in your hearts and lives by means of the preaching. You long for others to hear that gospel so that they too might know the joy of that blessed salvation.

Another reason for your inter-

est in the preaching of the Word of God is your desire that the church of Christ be gathered from every land throughout the world. You know Christ's church is a catholic church. You know the elect are present in every nation under heaven. You therefore realize that the most important thing that has to happen in the history of the world is the worldwide preaching of the gospel so that the elect of Christ are gathered and saved.

Christ tells us that in Matthew 24:14. Giving us one of the signs of the end of time, Christ said: "And this gospel of the kingdom


shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The end will come when the gospel has gone forth throughout the world and has been used by Christ to save His church.

As members of the church who hold the office of believer in Christ, and as those to whom God has given and entrusted the truths of the gospel, we must be interested in seeing the gospel go forth. We should long to see Christ's one work in time and history accomplished — the salvation of the elect.

For then Christ Himself will return and bring His church to glory.

That ought to be true of us all. Nothing should be more important to the believer than the salvation of the last elect. With that and the return of Christ in view, we must be vitally interested in and fully supportive of the preaching of the gospel.



There are many practical ways in which you are able, as women, to support the preaching. The Lord willing, we will consider them next time. 

*Grace Life for the Rising Generation*

*Rev. Mitchell Dick*

## "Ye Grace Life...Saints"

**I**n several inspired epistles the apostle Paul is moved to address folks, even whole congregations, as "saints." He does that, for example, in I Corinthians. There it is, I Corinthians 1: 1-3: "Paul ... unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called...saints."

Now this title "saints" we should ponder presently. Ponder for grace life. Maybe not for the church's canonization of you, or dogs being named after you, or for folks seeking your help from heaven. But for Father furthering your saintliness — making for grace life saints.

### Really...

First then, it's yours. The title "saints," that is. Paul writes, God through him, to a Corinthian congregation in the first century A.D.

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*Rev. Dick is pastor of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Standale, Michigan.*

He calls them saints. And if he and He can call them saints, I believe a young Grace Life person of the church today, and even Rev. Dick, can be called a saint.

For consider that Corinthian congregation. The two epistles to it are not full of praise. They aren't even faint praise. But they might cause you to faint. That Grecian group appears anything but saintly. In fact, I Corinthians reads like a letter to a church gone wild, or perhaps never tamed. The gospel declares and establishes the unity of the body of Christ; Corinthians is a classic study of a church divided (I Cor. 1). God calls for praise of His own name; the Corinthians were glorying in their gifts (chapters 12, 14). The fruit of the Spirit is love; the Corinthians must hear that song (chapter 13) and start dancing to it and stop taking their brethren to courts and suing for \$253 million (chapter 6). Christ's Elders are to stand for His own holiness; Corinth's were slackers (chapter 5). The preaching of

the gospel is the power and wisdom of God; the Corinthians were acting as powerless fools, inclining their itching ears, some of them, to Greek philosophy (which denied the resurrection, I Cor. 15), following the urgings of Aphrodite (Corinthian goddess of love), many of them (I Cor. 6:15-20). The Christian religion is marked by holy spirituality; Paul rebukes the Corinthians for never having gotten off the ground (chapter 3).

And yet...

*Saints!*

And that, therefore, means even you, Grace Life reader!

Not, of course, because you are any better than those crazy mixed up Corinthians. You might have thought I was going to say that. I don't know why. But you might have. The reason, however, is because you are *just like them*. And therefore there is hope. For it is, after all, folks like sinners God makes saints.

To be sure, it is to be hoped that from many/most/all of the ex-



tremities of Corinthian sinfulness many/most/all of you have been kept. But to be sure, you are, after all, possessed of a Corinthian nature, and capable of Corinthian evil, and showing sometimes and sometimes often just how capable you are. And even that you are excellent in evil and in the evil of hiding it!

What's worse, you've had the whole New Testament, and godly parents, and the preaching of the gospel, most of you, since you had ears. And godly traditions, and a glorious heritage of the faith. The Corinthians did not. You do. But you deny it.

Now isn't that something? Now isn't that *shameful*?! You are glad when the sermon's over. And more glad listening to country. She's stuck up. He acts more like Samson (at his macho worst) than a saint. You get an "A" in Essentials *and* in beer drinking. Godzilla among us may know more about putting a ball through a hoop than positive godliness—and we cheer more readily two points than true piety. Some who call themselves Christian among us might think (!) it their liberty to fellowship and frolic with unbelievers in chatrooms. We seem to have no problem with the 21<sup>st</sup> century American-Corinthian fashion of dressing down (to loin cloths) at the beach and trying to dress up an ugly woman who is also mad (known in pages past as Modern American Dating). And the sin is often not so overt. But just as God-denying and despicable. All of us, for example, are *so full of care*, wondering *so much* about the future, about relationships, about our calling, about our worth, about what other people think or might think, and about accumulating stuff that, and therefore, we constantly take the good Lord's name in vain. As if God's existence as the *heavenly Father* of Grace Life people were the construct of a creed. As if *spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus* were not our chief joy.

As if *His grace* were *so* uncommon that it was there only for us to argue with Arminians about, and not for us to live godly by, and to believe in its sufficiency, and to take comfort in even in our evil day....

What wretched sinners we!

Still...*Saints!*

Corinthians then. You now. *Saints!*

### Real saints...

And real saints at that! The kind who are really "holy ones," or, as Paul says, who are "sanctified," and that in virtue of their being "in Christ Jesus" (v. 2), in fellowship with Him (v. 9). The kind to whom "grace and peace" have come, and do come (v. 3).

This means pure. This means you saints are purified from sin's dirt. This means freed from sin's dominion as well as from its defilement. This sainthood is a purity of everything about us: of heart, mind, soul, and body, for as the Corinthians so are "ye" (and not just a part of ye, or even a part of thou) saints. This, this sainthood, is holiness and renewal after the image of God. It is being now the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is being now set aside by God, as saintly Levite-priests of old, for service not only *in*, but *as* the temple of God (I Cor. 6:19). This means separated or called out of the world and the world's corruption, even as the "church" is called "called out" ones. Saints.

### In our world...

Called-out saints, separated-from-the-wicked-world saints, and yet *in* the world are ye saints. The saints to whom Paul wrote were not, after all, in heaven. They were in Corinth. And their address was not the monastery of Corinth, or the nunnery. Rather, it was in Corinth—right in it. And so are we—not of the world, but in it. Here we are, saints on the corner of Lake Michigan Drive and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. Here you young people are, in class at the university. On-the-

beach saints. Playing-volleyball saints. Working-to-pay-tuition saints. Even in-church-worshipping saints. But look! There are the mothers-in-the-kitchen saints, and being saints right there, and father saints helping. Saints painting. Saints plastering. Saints preaching. Saints in Corinth. Saints in Grand Rapids. Saints everywhere—sainted to be the saint-lights of the world.


But now, think of that! Corinthians were saints in their city, their century. We are in ours. What an amazing thing! For America may have George Washington as a father, but her mothers are many—Corinth, and Canaan, and Sodom, and Gomorrah, to name a few. Mother Corinth, given over to her gods and especially to the goddess of pleasure and sex, Aphrodite—how proud she would be of her daughter! Sex sex sex...*everywhere!* In the city. In the country. In the suburb. On the TV. In the ads. On the internet. At the checkout counter. In the clothing departments. Selling cars. Seducing souls. Deluding young people, middle age people, and the viagra old. Destroying marriages and homes. But more. Not just sex dirt. All kinds of pleasure-madness dirt. And philosophy dirt. And postmodern dirt. Leaving the nation without principles or purpose. Luring the church to apostasy. Slouching even saints toward Sodom. *And here we are in the middle of that...lured, slouching...yet saints!*

Must be a praise to grace. Must be gospel here. God in Bethlehem's manger. The saint. The blood of God's Son shed for sinners. You God's child in this world. Saint child. Sinful. Struggling. Bleeding on God's behalf. Saint...

Listen to *that*, fellow sinner. Not to a devil declaring to you *just* your sin and unworthiness and *just* the hopelessness of your attempts to be more saintly. Listen to God's Word: *saints*. That is listening to

and believing the Word *Jesus*, and God's Word grace. That is believing what God says. That is giving glory to the God who is faithful.

And who, because He has called you unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, shall also confirm you unto the end...*saint!*  
More presently.

Please ponder.  
For piety.  
And calling upon Jesus.  
All around. 

*Taking Heed to the Doctrine*

*Rev. Steven Key*

# The Means of Grace

**I**n considering the gathering of the church, we saw how Scripture reveals that gathering as God's work exclusively. It is the wonder work of divine, sovereign grace. It is the work of particular grace.

That is evident in what the inspired apostle writes to the church at Thessalonica in II Thessalonians 2:13-14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

You will notice immediately that God's gathering of the church is a fruit of sovereign election. The fact that God has "from the beginning chosen you to salvation" comes to manifestation in the gathering of His church "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." To accomplish this mighty work, God "called you by our gospel," writes the apostle. It is this aspect of the gathering of the church that we take up now.

This work is emphatically the work of the Holy Spirit. Our Heidelberg Catechism emphasizes that in Lord's Day 25, Question and Answer 65. "Since then we are made partakers of Christ and all His benefits by faith only, whence doth this faith proceed? From the Holy Ghost, who works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments."

The subject before us is the means of grace. Perhaps it is better considered as "the means of faith." That is the approach of the Catechism. We speak of the means by which the Spirit works and confirms faith in us who are the redeemed.

We stand before a very important practical subject. How is faith mine? How do I keep it? How does it grow? The answer, we find in Romans 10 and elsewhere, is that the Holy Spirit works and sustains and nourishes that faith by the use of means.

## Means, a Natural Phenomenon

Means are things created by God and used by Him to have certain effects upon our lives.

Through such means God works constantly and in the same manner. He always produces the same effect by them, and never produces that effect without them.

Our physical lives are depen-

dent upon such means.

By means of food and drink our physical life is sustained and nourished. Without food and drink we die. God will not uphold a person's life in this world, except that person receive that which God has given for nourishment.

Such is the created order of things. And because God uses means in this way, it is possible for us to use those means. If God did not bind Himself to the use of a particular means to achieve a particular purpose, we could not use them. If, for example, by means of bread God would strengthen us today and kill us tomorrow, we could not possibly use that bread for food. If water provided necessary hydration for our bodies one day, but the next day was poison, we could not drink water. But for our sakes God has bound Himself to the use of particular means to accomplish particular purposes that He Himself has ordained.

It follows from God's use of means that God has bound *us* to the use of those means. To ignore the means that God has established, perhaps with the argument that God is certainly powerful to sustain our lives without them, is grievous sin. It is a profane tempting of God. And God punishes with death the rejection of His good gifts.

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*Rev. Key is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa.*

### **True Also in the Spiritual Realm**

What is true in the physical realm is also true with respect to our spiritual life.

We have to remember that Christ and our salvation belong to another world than ours, the spiritual and heavenly world.

Means of grace, therefore, are those means God has ordained to bring us to Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep. That beautiful Bridegroom, and the blessedness that belongs to the things heavenly, are by God's grace adapted to us, brought to us in such a way that we can hear them and see them and taste them. Such indeed is the preaching of the Word, and such are the sacraments.

The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel, and confirms it by the use of the sacraments. By those means the Spirit nourishes our hungry souls with the Bread of life and satisfies our thirsty souls with the water of life eternal in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Constantly* does the Spirit of Christ work and strengthen our faith by those means.

There is a figure often used in Scripture to depict this wonder, that of a shepherd feeding his flock.

In the Song of Solomon, chapter 1, verse 7, when the bride (Christ's church) sings, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest," she is looking at Christ as a Shepherd. She desires to know where Christ feeds His flock. That flock is His people, the sheep of His pasture, the elect whom He has purchased as His own and called by His grace. That flock, therefore, is distinct from all the world's goats and wolves. But that flock is exposed to many dangers and to the cruelty and barbarity of ungodly enemies, even the devil himself.

So the Father says to His Son in Zechariah 11, "Feed the flock of the slaughter; Whose possessors

slay them, and hold themselves not guilty," and Christ turns to the flock and replies, "I will feed the flock of the slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock."

Christ's sheepfold needs food and rest. He knows that. He came as the good Shepherd to save His sheep, to call them, to feed them, to protect them. In the shelter of the fullness and sufficiency of His grace He gives His sheep everything that they need. He does so by the use of means — the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

By those means of grace He abides with us by His Spirit, the Comforter. By His means of grace He walks with us through the fire and the water, seeing that we are not burned, nor overcome (Is. 43:2). He props us up with His everlasting arms and gives us hope, reminding us of His love by His words of promise. For those means are ordained and appointed for this end, that they may direct our faith to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, as the only ground for our salvation (Q & A 67, Heidelberg Catechism).

### **Why Only Two?**

While we speak of the means of grace as two, namely, the preaching of the gospel and the use of the sacraments, we realize that God uses many other means to lead His people to the ultimate goal of their salvation.

Certainly God uses as such means our own Bible study and prayer. He uses the godly instruction that parents give their children. He uses the encouraging words of the saints, the fellowship around His Word in the Bible studies of the church. In the broadest sense, all things are means unto our salvation. For Scripture teaches us that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

But the expression "means of

grace" does not refer to the means that God uses in a general way.

Rather, we speak of the "means of grace" with reference to those means that have been given to and instituted in the church by Christ Himself, and that belong, therefore, to the church's ministry. That is why our definition is limited to the preaching and the sacraments.

As we go on, the Lord willing, to consider the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, there are a couple things to bear in mind.

### **The Relationship of the Means**

The preaching of the gospel is the chief means of grace.

On the basis of Romans 10 and I Corinthians 2 and other passages, the Reformed churches distinguish themselves historically with their emphasis on preaching rather than on the sacraments. Even when we administer the sacraments — whether baptism or the Lord's Supper — the preaching still has the dominant place in the worship service. It must. For the preaching of the gospel is the means whereby the Holy Spirit first brings faith to consciousness. The call to faith is by the gospel.

Furthermore, the preaching of the gospel is the means to strengthen and nourish and to enrich that faith. Not the sacraments, but the Word is the means that expounds to us the riches and fullness of Christ.

Besides, the sacraments are always dependent upon the preaching of the Word. The sacraments are seals added to the Word for the sake of confirmation, and therefore they can never go beyond the Word. Furthermore, without the Word the sacraments have no meaning. They cannot even strengthen faith apart from the preaching.

That is not to belittle the sacraments that Christ has ordained. But the point is: The preaching of the Word is the primary means of



grace, while the sacraments are seals added to the Word preached for the sake of confirming that Word.

### **The Power of the Means**

The other thing that we must bear in mind before we begin our study of each of the means of grace is that the power of grace is not in the means as such. The power of the means is in the Holy Spirit Himself, the Spirit of the exalted Lord Christ. The means themselves accomplish nothing. But God uses those means by the Spirit of Christ to work faith and to strengthen faith in those who belong to Christ's sheepfold.

Preaching is not a question of


the intellectual power or persuasiveness of the sermon. Preaching is a matter of Christ speaking! The power of the means is in the Holy Spirit applying the Word to the heart, so that — in fulfillment of John 10:27 — His sheep hear His voice and follow Him. Nor is baptism or the Lord's Supper a means of grace merely in the eating and drinking. It is a means of grace only in the Spirit's application of its spiritual significance of those signs and seals.

And that means that these are means of grace only for the living children of God.

There must be life before there can be nourishing and strengthen-

ing of life by the eating and drinking of the Bread of Life, who is Christ.

Oh yes, the preaching and the sacraments do have their effect even on those who are spiritually dead, the unbelieving and disobedient. They are a means to harden and to expose their enmity against God.

But for you who live, and therefore who sorrow over your own sin, believing that God alone can and has fulfilled His gospel promise, punishing your sins in the bitter and shameful death of His own dear Son, for you both the Word preached and the sacraments point you and draw you to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith. 

## *News from the RFPA Board*

**T**he construction of the new home for the Reformed Free Publishing Association (RFPA) is well under way! We broke ground in early July and the block walls are going up as this article is being written. The Lord willing, we will complete the project by the end of this year. This is an exciting time for the RFPA as we look forward to a home of our own for the first time in eighty years.

The RFPA was formed in 1923 to finance a monthly periodical enabling Revs. Hoeksema and Danhof to present their views against common grace when the doors to the CRC magazines were closed to them. This was the beginning of the *Standard Bearer* that we all read and enjoy today. In the early years of its existence, the RFPA published about a half-dozen theological books and pamphlets but, after that, focused primarily on the *Standard Bearer*. Much time elapsed until the next book was published. In 1966, Hoeksema's *Reformed Dogmatics* was edited and published by the RFPA.



*Standing in the future office area, volunteers work to backfill and grade in preparation for concrete. The office area will overlook Georgetown Center Drive near 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Baldwin in Jenison.*

For many years, the RFPA operated out of the basements and kitchens of various willing people in the Grand Rapids area. In 1998 an agreement was reached with the Theological School Committee to set up shop in the basement of the seminary. This, combined with a

reorganization of the board and staff to operate more as a business, led to quick growth and increased capacity for book publishing. At last the RFPA could receive mail at their own address and had ample storage space from which to fill orders.



*A bulldozer levels the warehouse area. The warehouse is 2400 square feet, allowing ample room for book storage on pallet racks.*

The Membership and Marketing subcommittee of the RFPFA has busied itself in promoting the books and *SB* utilizing professionally printed catalogs, memberships in international book conventions, listings in large Christian bookseller catalogs, and building up the Book Club. The RFPFA also operates an expansive website that is playing an ever-increasing role in sales and international orders.

Eventually the RFPFA began to outgrow the basement of the seminary. Our current inventory of over 75,000 books has overflowed from our storage racks into the aisles and walkways of the seminary basement. The seminary, needing additional space at the same time, asked the RFPFA to find other quarters in which to operate. In 2005 the Board of the RFPFA submitted a proposal to the Society for the construction of a new building.



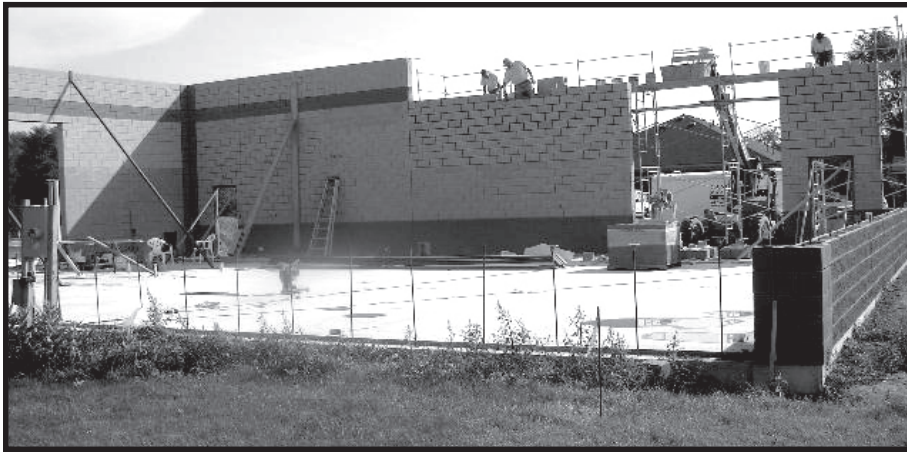
*As the block is laid, the service door frame to the shipping area is set in place. The 16' x 24' shipping area will hold a limited inventory of each of our books, from which we can easily fill orders.*

The building will be built to fit our publishing operations, enabling us to receive materials, prepare and mail publications, store inventory, and maintain office support functions in a more efficient manner. The building will provide us excellent facilities for meetings. The location and design will also afford increased visibility and opportunity with retail customers. The new facility will therefore serve the needs of both the *Standard Bearer* and book publishing, support future growth, and carry the RFPFA into the future.

The RFPFA, in its work, has always depended on the generous donations of its support base. No less has that been true with respect to this building project. It was the generosity of our supporters that made it possible for us to make a substantial down payment at the very beginning. Almost \$175,000. And an additional \$50,000 was received in response to the informational letter we sent out in May. That is humbling. Through your gifts, God has indeed prospered us "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think." We are well over half way to our goal of \$370,000. We take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to all who have contributed to this cause and encourage those who have not done so to consider seriously our need. We hope to collect the remaining \$145,000 before the completion of the project in order to minimize our operational expenses. Tax-deductible contributions for our Building Fund may be sent to the current RFPFA office at 4949 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, MI 49418.


After eighty years the RFPFA continues to publish and mail twenty-one issues of the *SB* annually to subscribers throughout the USA and in numerous foreign countries. We currently publish, each year, three new book titles and reprint existing titles as inventory requires. The repeated testimony of our readers is that they





*The block walls in the warehouse are 18 feet tall.  
A mezzanine will be built on top of the shipping and conference room areas  
providing additional storage.*

are blessed by our publications. We are greatly encouraged by this evidence that the Lord is pleased to use our little efforts for His glory and for the spiritual profit of His people. A privilege it is indeed for the RFPA Board to be busy in this kingdom cause, and for all of us to support it with our gifts and prayers.

Yours in Christ,  
Jon Rutgers, Treasurer  
Board of the RFPA 

*When Thou Sittest in Thine House*

*Abraham Kuyper*

# Children Are an Heritage of the Lord

## The Blessing of Children

**C**hildlessness is a disappointment to the married woman, which grieves and in some measure even brings shame.

Later on, this troubled feeling grows less, when more and more it becomes clear that such is the will of the Lord; and years go on; and no one considers it any longer unnatural to find her without child; and other occupations are sought and found; and God Himself has reconciled her to her childless estate.

But in the first years, first this deferment of hope, and presently the staying away of everything that can prophesy the fulfillment of that hope, is hard.

Many a youthful woman's heart has suffered bitterly under it. Sometimes after five or more years this bitter grief is taken away. But not always. There are many for whom this sorrow of soul keeps on, and who all their life are bowed down under it.

In that one bitter word of childlessness there is such depth of sorrow.

Almost at once that uneasy feeling regarding the plant on which fruit is sought, but no fruit is found, and what of such a plant has once been said: Why cumbereth it the ground?

Then the void with respect to her own heart and womanly sense. To have a child of one's own, "flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone," is a luxury which naturally constitutes the dream of the young married woman.

There the heart went out to. There expectation adapted itself to. What had the impressionable mind

not pictured to itself with regard to it. And then the disappointment. Every time again that bidding and waiting. And always yet nothing but death within.

A man who marries has no other expectation than that after a year or more a descendant, a continuation of his own family, a child of his own blood, shall be born, a child from her whom he loves, and whose love in that child shall be braided together with his own.

And now month after month passes on, and every time it is evident that such is not the case, and that his hope also is first deferred, and presently dismissed.

And though from love the husband hides this sore grief from his wife, yet she feels, and realizes, that he would be so happy to have it otherwise. And more still than by her own lack she is put to shame by the void in *his* happiness.

And as a climax of woe there are *the others*.

*Reprinted from When Thou Sittest In Thine House, by Abraham Kuyper, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1929. Used by permission of Eerdmans Publishing Co.*



Young women, married almost at the same time she was, and who one after the other received the blessing of children from God. And every time it is reported again of one of her friends who had been confined, the old wound smarts anew.

And those other women-friends oftentimes make it yet more painful, by talking about her every time again, and inquire after and of her, whether she is not in expectation.

This is laughed off with a friendly reply. But the wound is opened anew, and the woeful pain of disappointment is suffered afresh.



This sadness of disappointed hope, as it expresses itself with the childlessness of a young married woman, is a witness that has worth.

The voice of nature speaks therein, which is no other than the voice of Him who thus created this womanly nature.

It shows that to receive a child is a blessing of God — one of those richest blessings which He thought out for a woman; something that is hers to make her happiness perfect.

Without child she has not reached her destiny; and only when she may press her infant to her heart and may nurse it with her own mother-milk she feels so deeply that in this respect at least her destiny is reached.

If in this age more and more a demoniac power gains entrance, which seeks to avert the coming of a child by sinful practices, as though children were a curse from which escape is justifiable, that bitter feeling of disappointment with a childless marriage remains in the name of the Lord a protest against this demoniac tendency and a seal to the word of the psalmist that children are an heritage of the Lord.

But this protest also goes out toward another side.

There are many young women who at first were so ardent in their desire after a child, but who, when God increases the number of their little ones, begin to be afraid of what at first is hailed with joy, and with the discovery of new pregnancy are filled with fright and dismay.

There can be a just cause for this.

There can be such a degree of bodily weakness that new pregnancy brings danger with it. Business can be so bad that the increase of her family fills her with concern. It can also be that she does not feel capable to meet the ever-increasing demands, as her already grown-up children need her direction and help.

And much of this can be reversed.

But there is also a complaint about that “being pregnant again” among women with whom these causes do not exist. With whom it is simply a matter of weariness of the wealth of children. They were bent upon having the joy a child brings. But that want has now been met. And therefore it must end.

For that having children is still something else than a satisfaction of one’s own desire. That there also is a duty in it, a calling on the part of God, such women do not realize.



“Children are an heritage of the Lord,” sings the psalmist, altogether from the fundamental note of revelation, which always presents childlessness as a bitter lot, and numerous little ones as a blessing of the Lord.

Heritage here means that it is God who gives us our children, because He creates them.

What you obtain by heritage is something that comes to you from someone else; that of yourself you never would have had; in which His work and His power bore fruit; and of which the fruit is now given you.

Even a “portion of inheritance,” not in the sense as though it were an inheritance that lawfully came to you, and to which you could lay some righteous claim; but such an heritage as from an altogether sovereign disposition on the part of the testator is given to whom He wills.

The saying *An heritage of the Lord* thus implies two things: First, that the child you receive is fruit of the creative power of God, and second, that it is given you from sovereign free grace.

Yea more still, because it does not say: Children are an *heritage of God*, but since it reads: Children are an *heritage of the LORD*, i.e., an heritage that comes to you from Jehovah, the God of *the Covenant*, this saying at the same time indicates the tie which binds you and your children together and encloses you together in the covenant of grace.

So that “heritage of the Lord” hangs together with the promise of “You and your seed,” and points not merely to the child-joy and child-blessing of this life, but also to the high and glorious calling that a woman on earth may be mother of God’s elect, and from her reins may bear not merely for this world and for the grave, but also for heaven.



Mockery is made of this, indeed, in light-hearted ways, and he who with his many children has difficulty to make ends meet is easily enticed to say recklessly: “A fine kind of a blessing, so many children, when you scarcely have bread for them.” But such words say nothing.

In part such complaints are explainable, because the duty which we have to make good to our children is one of such long duration, one so continuous, and one embracing so much. And not infrequently sickness and adversity and perverseness in the behaviour of our children can make the performance of this long-drawn-out duty very burdensome.

But explicable or not, all such sayings are unholy. He who so speaks or complains forsakes his faith and stands at the wrong viewpoint.

You are not in the world to follow your own desire or inclination, but to serve the Lord your God in the work He has given you to do.

What that work is is His, and not yours, to decide, and though He calls you to be nothing more than a drawer of water and hewer of wood, if He calls you to it, you must also in this your divine calling be faithful and happy.

But when this same God calls you to spend your gifts and your powers in the care and training unto eternal life of living beings, of human children, of beings created after His image, of the highest there is on earth, and therefore of beings whom He has elected eternally to glorify His name, then a divine calling is thereby laid upon you which far excels in excellency all other trouble and labor.

Nothing on earth is superior to man. Far above all gold and diamonds a human infant glistens in worth and significance because God created it after His image.

And when God the Lord commits to your care not merely one child, but several children, and gives them to you as *your* children, and thereby builds up your house and generation, who then shall complain, who shall not glory, and feel himself honored of His God?



You receive these children for only a short time.


They are little beings with an eternal destiny. From these your children there shall presently unfold a new generation, and after that a third generation, and so on. And personally, too, these little ones are such wondrous creatures of your God that, while everything passes away, your children are immortal and have an eternity before them.

Of the thousand times thousand years of their existence, they stay with you and thus under your care but for a little while. Sometimes they leave your house before they have fulfilled six times three or less years. And when they stay longer, it is always yet oh so short compared with the eternity that awaits them.

And now they are given to you,

in the time of their life in which they are most susceptible and receptive of impressions. The clay is still soft, and easily takes the form which you impress upon it. And for these years they are committed to you, that you should give them a bent toward good, prepare them for the struggle that awaits them in the world, and give them sense and taste for that glorious, that ideal, that spiritual world, which is with God.

Is not this task beautiful? Is not this calling heart uplifting and inspiring? And is it not your heaviness and dullness of spirit that, amidst the multiplicities of life, makes the beauty of this calling to be lost in the weariness of your cares?

Therefore God's Word is so encouraging and good for you. For when in your faithlessness and infidelity you sometimes complain: "Oh, those children," it always tells you again in the name of your God: Do not complain, but give thanks, for your children are for you *an heritage of the Lord*, if you but have the obedience of faith in your children also, to see the costly, sovereign gift of God's grace. 

## Report of Classis West

Classis West met in regular session on Wednesday, September 7, in the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, IL. An officebearers conference was held the day prior to Classis on the subject, "Our Denominational Seminary." The conference introduced the Seminary to our western officebearers and highlighted the officebearers' duty to impress upon able men, young and older, to consider preparing for and laboring in the office of the ministry of the Word.

The meeting of Classis was chaired by the Rev. Ronald Hanko. Classis completed its work by noon on Wednesday.

Pulpit supply was arranged for three vacant churches in Classis West for the next six months. First-Edgerton, First-Edmonton, and Loveland were given pulpit supply appointments for an average of three Sundays per month. Classis sent a request to Classis East for assistance in supplying First-Edmonton's pulpit in February 2006. If all of the pulpit supply assignments are fulfilled as scheduled, then all of our ministers in Classis West will be absent from their home pulpits for four Sundays in the next six months.

Rev. Daniel Kleyn tendered his resignation as stated clerk of Classis West due to his acceptance

of the call to First PRC of Holland. We thank Rev. Kleyn for his able service to Classis West for the past five years. In his place, Classis appointed Rev. Richard Smit to serve as stated clerk. Classis appointed Rev. Douglas Kuiper to complete the term of Rev. Kleyn on the Classis Committee.

The expenses of Classis totaled \$8,372.32.

Classis plans to meet next in Loveland, CO, on March 1, 2006, the Lord willing.

Rev. Richard J. Smit,  
Stated Clerk of Classis West 

### Denomination Activities

**R**ev. R. Cammenga was installed as Professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament on August 31 at Faith PRC in Jenison, MI. This year's Seminary Convocation Exercise was combined with Rev. Cammenga's installation. Prof. D. Engelsma led the worship service, preaching a sermon based on Titus 1:9 entitled "An Orthodox Professor." Prof. R. Dykstra read the form and conducted the installation. Prof. R. Decker introduced the six seminary students: 1<sup>st</sup> year, Mr. Nathan Dykstra and Mr. Cory Griess; 2<sup>nd</sup> year Mr. Heath Bleyenbergh; 3<sup>rd</sup> year Mr. Nathan Langerak; and 4<sup>th</sup> year, Mr. Andrew Lanning and Mr. Clayton Spronk. The service came to a close when newly installed Professor Cammenga gave the benediction. Remember the seminary in your prayers as it begins its fall semester of instruction.

Classis West met September 7 at South Holland, IL PRC. An officebearers conference was planned for the day before on the theme, "Our Denominational Seminary: Committing the Truth to Faithful Men." Rev. A. Brummel gave the keynote address, entitled "A Trained Ministry: The Basis and Benefits of Seminary Training." This was followed by six sectionals throughout the day dealing with overviews of different departments of study in our seminary, the responsibility of churches and consistories in training men for the ministry, and the position and task of a professor of theology.

### News from Singapore

**T**he Lord in His inscrutable wisdom took from this life Rev.

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

Cheah Fook Meng, the pastor of the Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore, at the age of 41. He was taken to glory after several days of struggling with dengue fever. We sorrow together with his wife, Lee Choo, and the members of our two sister churches. Rev. J. Kortering was asked to come to Singapore to conduct the funeral service. Rev. and Mrs. Kortering will, the Lord willing, be staying in Singapore for the next couple of months. Also, Rev. K. Koole and Prof. R. Decker, members of the Contact Committee of our churches, went to Singapore to express the sympathy of our denomination and to help in any way they were able in this time of great difficulty and distress for the churches there. Let us remember our sister churches in Singapore in our prayers.

### Evangelism Activities

**T**his summer, as part of their evangelism outreach, the congregation of the Peace PRC in Lansing, IL sponsored a public lecture on "Christian Stewardship," in their church building on August 26. Rev. R. Hanko, pastor of the Lynden, WA PRC, was the featured speaker.

Christianity on Campus, the ongoing ministry of the Grace PRC in Standale, MI to Grand Valley State University, began in early September with a booth at what is called "Campus Life Night." Through their display and conversation at the booth, Grace hoped to sign up many students on their mailing list, and also and especially to have them join them in their discussions this year. Hopefully as well, this leads to some, even many, coming to weekly worship services at Grace. The following Thursday night, at the first meeting, Rev. M. Dick, pastor at Grace,

introduced the year with a discussion of the Bible, God, and Creation.

The Reformed Witness Committee, made up of the Doon and Hull, Iowa PRCs along with the Edgerton, MN PRC, is once again this year sponsoring a Bible Study at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. Bible study will be taken from the book of Acts under the theme, "Spreading the Gospel."

The Evangelism Committees of both the Hudsonville and Trinity PRCs in Hudsonville, MI jointly sponsored a booth at this summer's Hudsonville Fair. This booth was manned each hour of the fair by members of either congregation. Opportunity was given to some 70,000 who attended the weeklong fair to avail themselves of all kinds of free literature, sermon tapes, and general information regarding both congregations.

### Congregation Activities

**S**unday evening, August 28, Rev. R. Cammenga preached his farewell sermon as pastor of Faith PRC in Jenison, MI. Rev. Cammenga chose to leave the congregation at Faith with the exhortation by the apostle Paul found in Acts 20 under the theme, "Paul's Parting Confidence."

Members of the Loveland, CO PRC were asked in a recent bulletin if they were interested in playing in a handbell choir. The only requirement was that one be able to count timing in music.

The Loveland congregation also approved plans at a recent congregational meeting to do some remodeling work in their parsonage as well as some needed repair work in their church basement.

The annual Inspirational Meeting to begin the society season at First PRC in Holland, MI was held September 7. Rev. C. Haak spoke



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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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on "Hiding God's Word in our Hearts."

### Minister Activities


**R**ev. D. Kleyn accepted the call to become the next pastor of First PRC in Holland, MI. By accepting that call he also declined the call extended to him to serve

our churches as missionary to the Eastern United States working primarily in Pittsburgh, PA.

Rev. W. Bruinsma declined the two calls he was considering, the first to become the next pastor of the Loveland, CO PRC and the second to serve as pastor of the congregation at Covenant PRC in

Wyckoff, NJ.

Rev. S. Key has received the call to serve as pastor of Faith PRC in Jenison, MI.

Candidate John Marcus has been extended a call from the congregation of First in Edmonton, AB, Canada to become their next pastor. 

## Announcements

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

We rejoiced with our parents and grandparents,

**ALBERT and JEAN BUITER**, as they celebrated their 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary on September 23, 2005. We give thanks to God for the many years He has graciously given them together. We are also grateful for their love and dedication to our family throughout the years. Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless them and supply all their needs in the future and grant them many more years together. "O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart" (Psalm 36:10).

- ❖ Dave and Cheryl Dotson  
Joshua, Jori, Jimmy
- ❖ Albert Wayne Buiter (in glory)
- ❖ Karen Buiter

South Holland, Illinois

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church express their Christian sympathy to our fellow office bearer Mr. Darrel Huisken and his family in the death of his brother,

#### MR. LARRY HUISKEN.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:6.

Rev. denHartog, President  
Gary Boverhof, Clerk

### REMINDER:

The last issue of the volume year has been distributed. If you desire to have your copies bound, please bring your entire set (October 1, 2004 – September 15, 2005) to the seminary by October 15. The cost of binding your own SBs is still \$13.00.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 19, our parents, **GLENN and BETTY KOTMAN**, celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We thank God for their Christian example and the guidance and love they have shown us. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them in their marriage. "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations" (Psalm 89:1).

- ❖ Matt and Jodee VanOverloop  
Collin, Annika
- ❖ Jeff Kotman
- ❖ Brian Kotman

Hudsonville, Michigan

### NOTICE:

New bulletin clerk for Randolph PRC:  
Corrie VanderVeen

W11909 County Highway P  
Randolph, WI 53956  
(920) 326-1960

e-mail: [corrievanderveen@yahoo.com](mailto:corrievanderveen@yahoo.com)  
Please make a note of this in your 2005 Yearbook.

## Reformed Witness Hour

### Topics for October

Date	Topic	Text
October 2	"Much More Than Enough"	Exodus 36:5-7
October 9	"Live As Gospel Light"	Matthew 5:13-16
October 16	"A Little Maid's Testimony"	II Kings 5:1-5
October 23	"Not by Might, But by My Spirit"	Zechariah 4:6
October 30	"The Reformation and Returning to the Gospel of Grace"	Acts 20:24