

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

If we are content with our needs, we will be satisfied when the costs of children keep us from possessing the good things in life. We will find greater delight in our children than in houses and lands. We will know that we labor for eternity when we take care of our children, instead of laboring for things which pass away with the using. And when we and our children are finally safe in glory we will praise and honor Him Who has given them to us.

See "Moral Aspects of Medical Technology"

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MEDITATION

James D. Slopeema

Taken By Temptation

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God if faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

I Corinthians 10:13

We often find ourselves in situations where we are sorely tempted by the powers of darkness. Sometimes we are required to struggle with these difficult temptations for a long time. And when we do so we may find that these temptations are leading us further and further away from God. Instead of making progress against these temptations we are slowly slipping. This may cause us great

alarm. But these temptations are so powerful and overwhelming! What are we to do?

We must remember that there has no temptation taken us but such as is common to man.

And we must always keep before us the fact that God is faithful Who will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the tempta-

tion also make a way to escape.

Armed with this truth we must take God's way out of temptation that we may overcome and be victorious.

* * * * *

The saints in the church of Corinth had been taken by temptation.

It would appear from the context that the saints of Corinth were especially tempted by the sins of idolatry and fornication.

The members of the church of Corinth were primarily Gentiles who had been brought up in paganism. From childhood on they had been brought to the temples of Corinth to worship the idol gods and to partake of the feasts held in honor of the gods. As they grew up they were also introduced to the fornication and drunkenness that always accompanied the worship of idols.

But now that they had been converted to Jesus Christ they found that it was not so easy to forsake these sins of the past. For these sins were very pleasurable to the flesh. Having once tasted these pleasures it was not so easy now to abandon them. Besides, many of their family members and former acquaintances were still in the darkness of unbelief and thus were still walking in idolatry. Turning from idolatry therefore often meant denying father and mother, brother and sister, children and spouse. It meant a disruption of their social life as they abandoned former friends. It even meant persecution on the part of family and former acquaintances.

So severe were these temptations that Paul says the saints of Corinth had been "taken by temptation." This means that the temptations of idolatry had laid hold of them, had seized them and wouldn't let them go. The saints of Corinth were in the throes of temptation. The original indicates that this had been going on for quite some time. All this very strongly suggests that the saints of Corinth were more and more yielding to these temptations. They found the temptation to return to their old ways overpowering so that more and more they were returning to the idol temples to enjoy the pleasures of sin. From a human point of view they were in real danger of being led away from the faith into sin and destruction. Perhaps the saints themselves were alarmed by it all. But they were trapped, it seemed. The temptations of idolatry were overwhelming and they were simply being overcome by it all!

We also are easily taken by temptation.

There are a number of things that can tempt us.

There are for example the pleasures of sin. Sin itself is very pleasurable, at least to the flesh. Those sins which are especially pleasurable to man are the sins of immorality and drunkenness. Although any sin can be the source of great pleasure to the flesh. And these pleasures of sin are a constant source of temptation to the child of God to leave the way of God and to follow the way of sin that he may enjoy sin's pleasures.

Then there are the temptations that arise out of the desire to have the approval of men. We ought to be concerned only with God's approval. But we are all too often concerned with what man thinks of us. We covet the approval of our fellow man. Some will do almost anything to be accepted by their peers. And this becomes a constant source of temptation when our "friends" and associates mock the way of godliness, encourage us to follow them in the way of sin, and condition their friendship on our willingness to walk with them in every abomination under heaven.

We are also tempted by the difficulties and hardships of life. When times are hard the temptation is to take the world's way out which may not meet God's approval. When we suffer we are also inclined to become dissatisfied with God's dealings with us so that we become bitter against God. Some in bitterness have even stopped serving God. Others in the midst of sufferings are simply inclined to give up on God. It doesn't pay to serve God anyway!

Very easily we are taken by these and other temptations. Very easily temptation seizes hold of us and won't let us go. We find that they are so overpowering that we are falling victim to them again and again. Time and again we vow never again to fall into the sins into which we have been led by temptation. But before we realize it, temptation had led into the same shameful sins again. As we are being led further into sin and away from God, we become alarmed. Our very spiritual existence is being threatened! Temptation has taken hold of us and won't let us go! What are we to do?

* * * * *

The Word of God is very comforting and reassuring in this situation.

First, there has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.

When they are in the throes of temptation, God's people often imagine that their situation is unique. No one has faced the troubles they have. No one has had to deal with the circumstances they face. Hence, no one has faced the temptations they do or been tempted quite so severely as they have. This is true of the saint who is tempted to escape life's prob-

lems with a bottle. This is true of the saint who struggles with bitterness against God because the way of God in his life is very hard. This is true of the saint who is struggling with depression and all the temptations that accompany depression. This is true of the saint who is tempted to find an unbiblical solution to some problem in his life . . .

The result of this mentality is devastating. For if our situation is truly unique then there is no one who can understand, there is no one who can really help, and more than likely there is no way out. Our situation is hopeless!

The Word of God however assures us that there has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. That means that no matter what your situation is, no matter how severe the temptations are that you face, countless others have been in the same situation. And not only have they been in your situation, but they have also emerged victorious. Countless numbers of God's people have been taken with the exact same temptations you have and have overcome them!

How important this is to the saint taken by temptation! This means that he is not alone. There are others that understand what he is going through. And there are others who can help him, others who have been in his situation and learned to overcome. But most importantly, this means that the situation in which he finds himself is not insurmountable. The temptations that have taken him can be overcome. Countless others have done it!

But there is more. God is faithful. And He will not allow you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

God is faithful. What a wonderful truth that is! That God is faithful means that He always keeps His promises. You can depend on God to keep His Word. The promise God has given in His Word is that He will keep His people in the hour of temptation. The powers of darkness may assail His people. But he will always keep and preserve them. And to this promise God is faithful. He will never allow His beloved to perish in the face of temptation.

Consequently, God will not allow His people to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape.

Notice, that the Bible here speaks of what God will or will not allow. This is completely in harmony with the rest of Scripture. God does not tempt His people. God is not tempted with evil; neither tempts He any man (James 1:13). All temptations arise out of the powers of darkness that seek our destruction. However, God is sovereign over temptation so that every temptation that assails us

is completely under God's control.

And God Who controls all will not allow His people to be tempted above that they are able to bear. Oh, He may allow them to be led astray into sin for a season. But He will never allow them to be overwhelmed and crushed by temptation so that they are led eventually to destruction. Always God will see to it that His people are able to bear their temptations, that is, carry them without being crushed.

And God will accomplish this by providing a way of escape. No matter how overwhelming temptation may be, God will always provide a way out so that we are able to bear it. Sometimes God's way out is to change the circumstances of life in which we find ourselves so that the temptation is removed or at least diminished in intensity. But most often God's way out of temptation is to strengthen us by His grace so that we can bear it. Strong as temptation may be, God's grace is stronger and will eventually give us the victory. Whichever way God chooses, there is in every temptation a way of escape that we may bear it and not be overwhelmed.

* * * * *

When taken by temptation, let us not therefore despair. Our temptation, severe as it may be, is only such as is common to man. Countless others have suffered the same temptation and overcome.

And we too can overcome. For God in His faithfulness will not allow us to be destroyed. He will always provide a way of escape.

Only let us be diligent to use God's way out of temptation. In the hour of temptation let us seek the irresistible power of His grace that we may be victorious. God's grace is to be found in the pure preaching of the Word and the sacraments. God's grace is to be found in diligent study of His Word. God's grace is to be found in earnest prayer. And quite often when taken by temptation we will find this grace of God only through the help of our fellow saints who bring us the Word, pray with us and for us, and carry us in their love.

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

This issue of our magazine will be reaching you a bit later than usual. It was delayed in order to bring you, as soon as possible, a report on Synod of 1986 and on Seminary Graduation. To make room for the special items, some of the usual departments have been omitted. Our August issue will be a special theme issue.

* * * * *

When you go on vacation this summer, don't take a vacation from your family devotions!

Here are a couple new addresses for those who correspond with our Singaporean friends:

Mr. and Mrs. J. Mahtani,
#12 - 10, River Valley Close,
Singapore 0923,
Republic of Singapore

Pastor and Mrs. Lau Chin Kwee,
Blk. 240, Serangoon Ave. 2,
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EDITORIALS

Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, 1986

This year's synod met in the beautiful and commodious new building of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. By decision of Synod of 1985, the synod this year was scheduled to convene on Tuesday, June 10, which implied that the pre-synodical service, under the auspices of First Church, fell on Monday evening. The Rev. J. Kortering, president of last year's synod, led this service; his sermon, based on Joshua 1:8, 9, will be included in the printed Acts.

On Tuesday morning synod convened. The officers elected were: Rev. D. Engelsma, president; Rev. J. Slopsema, vice president; Rev. B. Gritters, first clerk; and Rev. R. Cammenga, second clerk. Advisory committees were appointed, assignments given to them, and that was the end of synod's treatment of the Agenda, except for committee meetings, until Friday morning; for the next two and a half days were devoted to the examination of our three seminary graduates, Messrs. Russell Dykstra, Steven Key, and Charles Terpstra. On

Tuesday afternoon each of them delivered a sermon on his choice of two assigned texts. All day Wednesday was devoted to a thorough examination in Dogmatics. The greater part of Thursday was devoted to examinations in Old Testament History, New Testament History, Church Polity, and Church History. Besides, the students were required to submit written examinations on assigned passages for Old Testament and New Testament Exegesis. Early on Thursday afternoon they were examined in Practica by the Rev. J. Kortering. About mid-afternoon the young men were unanimously declared candidates for the ministry in the Protestant Reformed Churches. This was a joyous occasion for them, for their loved ones, for the synod, and for the rather large number of visitors present on this occasion. Elsewhere in this issue you will find an account of the graduation program. It was late afternoon when all of this was finished, and so synod adjourned until Friday morning.

With synod being occupied with the examina-

tions, all of the advisory committees had to do their work in evening meetings. By Friday morning Committee II, whose main assignment was Theological School matters, was ready to report. Committee I, which was assigned all mission matters, was not nearly finished with its assignment. Hence, synod turned to the report of Committee II.

As was stated, the Report of the Theological School Committee was the main assignment of Committee II. This committee has more than a routine report. It brought to Synod an extensive plan for the school during the interim years when we will have no students in the seminary department and (at present) only one student in the pre-seminary department. Included in these plans were: 1) Advance education in their respective fields for Profs. Decker and Hanko. This was approved by synod. 2) Plans for special courses at the seminary, both for ministers and the general public. These were also approved. Undoubtedly there will be further announcements and explanation of these matters by the Theological School Committee in the future. Committee II also was assigned an overture from Prof. Hanko to correct the translations of certain key articles of the Canons before the *Psalter* is reprinted. This overture was approved, and a committee appointed to review the proposed changes and to report to Synod of 1987.

Next on the program was the report of Committee III. To this committee was assigned all matters pertaining to our contact with other churches. The Contact Committee had presented to Synod an extensive report concerning several important items. Let me summarize the more significant items and the synodical decisions:

1) Synod decided to send fraternal delegates (Rev. G. Van Baren and Rev. J. Kortering) to the Bible Presbyterian Church of Larne, Northern Ireland. I will not spell out their entire mandate, but summarize it. These delegates are empowered to conduct Church Visitation (if asked) along the lines of Article 44 of the Church Order. They are to discuss and propose guidelines for discipline upon the request of the BPC of Larne. They are to preach and lecture, upon request, at Larne. And while they are in the U.K., they are to contact other churches with whom we have some contact.

2) Synod instructed the Contact Committee to begin to make preparation for a conference to be held with the BPC of Larne, the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore, and the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand in 1990, D.V. The Contact Committee is to submit recommendations to the Synod of 1987.

3) The Evangelical Reformed Church of Singa-

pore had been invited to send delegates to our synod this year. On Monday, June 16, these delegates (Pastor Lau Chin Kwee and Elder Ang Leing Huat) were welcomed and seated at synod, and they participated in several sessions. It was indeed pleasant to meet the brethren again and to enjoy their fellowship. The Contact Committee reported to synod concerning a problem between us and the ERCS regarding their attitude toward the OPC of Christchurch, New Zealand and their admitting to their pulpit the Pastor of Christchurch. The visit of the ERCS delegates also made possible a face-to-face meeting with the Contact Committee about this matter. Synod also approved the possible sending of two delegates to the ERCS, should we receive an invitation.

4) Synod decided to establish sister-church relations with the little Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand in Wellington. They were also advised that as a sister church the calling of one of our ministers belongs to the rights and privileges of sister-church relations. Later, however, synod rejected by an 8 to 7 vote a proposal to grant this little flock the financial aid necessary to enable them to call a minister — something without which they cannot survive, of course. Still later in its sessions synod apparently relented somewhat and instructed the Contact Committee to try to raise the necessary funds (outside of synodical assessments) to help the PRC of New Zealand.

5) Synod also had before it a protest of Mr. G. Feenstra having to do with preaching in non-sister churches by our representatives, Prof. H. Hanko and Rev. D. Engelsma, during their trip to the U.K. in 1984. This protest was deemed legally before synod. The protest was rejected on one point, as not being contrary to synodical decisions of 1978. It was upheld on another, as being in violation of the Contact Committee constitution. Meanwhile, the Contact Committee was also instructed to study, clarify, and, if need be, correct the constitutional item involved (and, of course, report to the Synod of 1987).

Committee III was also assigned the matter of the *Psalter* Reprinting Committee. This committee failed to make a timely report to synod, and therefore nothing could be treated. Synod took cognizance of the fact that Rev. Haak is now in Lynden, Washington. It decided to replace him with Mr. Chas. Kregel as chairman and decided to add the name of Mrs. Eunice Kuiper to the committee. It is important for our churches that significant progress be made on this matter before the Synod of 1987.

Meanwhile, Committee I had completed part of its report. In fact, consideration of the report of

Committee III was interrupted to begin consideration of Committee I's report. Committee I was assigned a disproportionately large part of the Agenda — all mission matters, both foreign and domestic. While records are not kept on these matters, this committee undoubtedly must have broken all records for meetings of advisory committees. They also did thorough work and served synod well on several difficult items. This brief report will not reflect in full the amount of work done by the committee. They had several items which were not difficult and time-consuming. Among these were the following:

1) In connection with the report of the Foreign Mission Committee, synod decided to inform the churches that the work of the Rev. A. den Hartog in Singapore is drawing to a close. If he has not received and accepted a call before December 15, 1986, he and his family will be brought home at that time. Synod also expressed "the churches' deep appreciation to Rev. den Hartog and family for their faithful labors in Singapore, labors which by the grace of God resulted in the establishment of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore." A provisional budget was adopted in this connection.

2) Synod decided that there is no need for another missionary to replace Rev. den Hartog as missionary in the near future. But it also instructed the Foreign Mission Committee to investigate, in conjunction with the ERCS, possible future fields of labor in Singapore and Malaysia.

3) Synod also approved, without reservation, the continuation of the mission labors in Modesto, California (Rev. S. Houck), Northwest Chicago (Rev. R. Van Overloop), and Norristown, Pennsylvania (Rev. K. Hanko). Later it also approved budgets for these fields, one of which (Norristown-Blue Bell) is entirely self-supporting.

It was matters pertaining to the Jamaica Field which were the most time-consuming both for Committee I and synod. Early in its work Committee I discovered that the report on Jamaica in the Agenda was inadequate and incomplete, and gained from synod authorization to investigate further in the Mission Committee records and to try to gain an accounting of various monies spent in Jamaica the past year. Out of the committee's investigation and report came several negative decisions of synod. Synod disapproved of several building projects in Jamaica as unauthorized and contrary to previous decisions of synod re policy in Jamaica. It called a halt to all building expenditures, except for emergencies, and set a limit on these of \$500. It instructed the Mission Committee to furnish a complete accounting of the past year's building projects. Synod also required an account-

ing of several other unaccounted for or unauthorized expenditures from the Mission Committee. Further, synod decided:

1) Not to call a second missionary for Jamaica this year, but that a minister co-worker be sent for a period of 6 to 9 months, in accord with previously decided policy.

2) That emissaries not be sent to the island "unless there be a clearly defined need, which need be demonstrated to the Synod of 1987."

3) That the Mission Committee, the calling church, and the missionary shall produce "a well-defined plan for the Jamaican field, based on the policy of 1983, and report to the Synod of 1987."

4) That Prof. Decker (professor of missions) and Rev. den Hartog (upon his return) be provided as advisors for the formulation of such a plan.

It is clear, therefore, that synod wanted the work in Jamaica to continue, but in an orderly fashion and according to a clearly defined plan and with full accountability.

To Committee IV were assigned all financial matters, such as subsidies, budgets, treasurer's report, and assessments. This committee also had a large task, and can really not complete its work until all other committee reports have been considered, since it must keep tab on the various expenditures approved by synod throughout its sessions. In connection with Committee IV's report we may mention the following items:

1) Synod received from Classis West the gift of a large estate, with the stipulation that this shall be a perpetual fund of which 70% of the earnings each year shall be used to subsidize the Emeritus Fund.

2) Synod approved subsidies for the needy churches as requested.

3) Synod approved a per family assessment for 1987 of \$434.00 — a considerable increase over the current assessment, due partly to increased expenditures and partly to the fact that the surplus in some funds was exhausted and partly to the fact that there was an under-assessment for the current year.

Faith Church, Jenison, Michigan, was appointed the calling church for 1987.

Late on Thursday afternoon, June 19, synod finished its Agenda. This was a very busy synod. After the examinations were completed, synod put in five full and busy days. May the Lord bless the decisions made.

This is, of course, only a very brief and partial report, unofficial in nature, of the activities of synod. For the complete report we refer you to the Acts, which will soon be distributed. HCH

Seminary Graduation, 1986



Graduating, l to r: Jaikishin Mahtani, Russell Dykstra, Charles Terpstra, Steven Key.

For the delegates to synod the Seminary Graduation Program on Tuesday evening, June 17, was a refreshing change of pace; and for the large audience, in which all the area churches were represented and which more than filled the auditorium of First Church, it was a most enjoyable evening.

For the graduates, of course, this evening marked the achievement of the goal for which they had been striving for several years.

There were four graduates: from our own churches, Messrs. Russell Dykstra, Steven Key, and Charles Terpstra, who received a regular diploma, and who were the first graduates from our four-year program; and from the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore, Mr. Jaikishin Mahtani, who received a special three-year diploma.

The main item on the program, which featured several special musical numbers, was the graduation address by Prof. Decker, "The Minister's Great Joy." You will find a transcript of his address elsewhere in this issue. A special feature of the program was a presentation by the two delegates from Singapore, Pastor Lau Chin Kwee and Elder Ang Leing Huat. They presented to the seminary a beautifully inscribed, decorative pewter plate. The inscription is as follows: "Presented To The PRC Seminary In Appreciation Of The Excellent Ministerial Training To Our Brothers Lau Chin Kwee ('80-'82), Jaikishin Mahtani ('83-'86) From The Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore, 17th June 1986."

May the Lord bless our graduates and soon provide them a place of labor in His church! HCH

SEMINARY GRADUATION ADDRESS

Robert D. Decker

The Great Joy of the Ministry

The life of a minister of the gospel is not easy. In fact, it is very difficult. The ministry involves a great deal of hard work. Sermon preparation takes much time and effort. To prepare two *good* sermons

each week is no small task. Catechism classes must be taught and Bible study societies must be led. There are various pastoral labors which must be done: visiting the sick, comforting the sorrowing,

family visitation, etc. The minister is called upon to chair consistory meetings, serve on committees, do a certain amount of work for the denomination. In addition there is the work of writing for various church magazines and a certain amount of lecturing.

All of this work must be done while the minister and his family live in the proverbial "glass house." There are always people who carefully watch the minister's every move. Some are quick to criticize. Pastors are sinners like everyone else. They display all kinds of weaknesses. Some take advantage of this.

There are all kinds of disappointments and griefs. Always there are those who oppose the truth of the gospel. Discipline often results in people leaving the church. Numerical growth can be frustratingly meager. Some of the youth leave for other churches.

All of this, along with the everyday trials of his personal life, must be borne by the minister. The Apostle Paul, who suffered far more than any of us probably ever have or will, spoke of this:

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice I was beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? (II Corinthians 11:23-29)

But all of this you who graduate will experience soon enough.

I wish to stress the JOY of the ministry. The ministry of the gospel is after all the highest calling to which a man can aspire. To pursue that calling in college and seminary; to pass the oral examinations before the Synod and be declared a candidate for the ministry of the Word; to have the call of Christ confirmed by one of the congregations and to be ordained into the office of the ministry of the Word; that in itself affords great joy. That God should use you and me — weak, sinful, earthen vessels — that in itself is a great blessing, a wonderful gift of grace, a great joy. But there is a greater joy for the

minister. And while it is a difficult, even frustrating work sometimes, there is a unique joy which the faithful minister experiences. It is to that greater joy that I wish to call your attention.

In What Does This Greater Joy Consist?

The Apostle John speaks of this greater joy in the fourth verse of his Third Epistle: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." The Apostle regards Gaius (cf. vs. 1) and the saints as "my own children." They are his own children because the Apostle is their minister. He taught them the truth of the gospel and he loves them in Christ, cares for them, leads them in the truth, admonishes and disciplines them when they wander. He comforts them and encourages them. John is their spiritual father and they are his own children. In the deeper sense, they are his own children because they are GOD'S children: elect in Jesus Christ, washed in Jesus' blood from all their sins, born of the Spirit. God's beloved, precious children they are, and God has entrusted them to the care and nurture of the Apostle. The Apostle is, therefore, accountable to God for the spiritual care of his own children.

John is deeply conscious of this. Notice, the letter is addressed to "... the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth." Gaius is John's "beloved" (cf. vss. 1, 2). Just who this Gaius is we do not know. Probably he was an elder in one of the churches of Asia Minor. The Apostle wishes him prosperity and good health both physically and spiritually. And, the Apostle rejoices to hear the testimony of the brethren that Gaius walks in the truth (vs. 3). In fact, the Apostle confessed, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my own children (all of them, R.D.D.) walk in truth." John puts it negatively for emphasis, "I have no greater joy." Nothing makes him happier than this that he hears that his dear children are walking in the truth. This is his great joy.

His children are walking in the truth. The truth is reality over against the lie. The truth is that which is real, the very opposite of what is unreal. That which is unreal is the lie. The truth always opposes the lie, that which is false. Then too, the truth is always the faithful presentation of reality, and that too with respect to all things: God, Christ, the church, the world, the past, present, future, heaven, earth, all things.

This means God is the truth. Scripture says, "He is the rock, his work is perfect . . . a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32:4). Truth is one of the virtues of God; it belongs to His divine being. That God is the rock means He is unchangeable, and that too in justice, for "just and right is he." The truth, therefore, is the un-

changing, ever faithful, just God. God is the eternal reality before all things, the Creator of all things. God is the truth because He never changes, never denies Himself or contradicts Himself. Always God remains the same. The Lord Jesus Christ is the truth. He is the Word, the eternal, only-begotten Son who came in the likeness of our flesh. Jesus is the reality of all the types of shadows of the Old Testament Who gave Himself to the cross for our sins. Christ is the complete, perfect revelation of God as the God of our salvation. He Himself said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The Holy Spirit is the truth. As the Spirit of Christ poured out into the church He comforts us by leading us into all the truth. He is the Spirit of truth Who imparts to us the life of Christ.

That eternal truth is revealed in Scripture. Holy Scripture is the inspired (God-breathed) revelation of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Not merely is Holy Scripture the account of men's religious experiences or encounters with God, nor is it the witness of men to God, but Holy Scripture is the *very Word of God*. Scripture is, therefore, the truth, the whole truth, the truth about everything, the truth about all of reality. Scripture is the only truth. There is no truth apart from Holy Scripture. Scripture is the only source of the truth. Everything apart from Scripture is of the fallen creature and is, therefore, distorted and corrupted by the lie. Because Holy Scripture is all of this it may not be contradicted. All that speaks against Scripture is the lie. Nor may Scripture be doubted. We do not approach the Bible to see whether it is true. Nor do we approach Holy Scripture in the spirit of the new hermeneutic to see what is true and what is not. We approach Scripture in the faith that everything we find in it is the absolute truth of God in Jesus Christ.

The truth of Holy Scripture is summed in the Reformed Confessions: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession of Faith, and the Canons of Dordrecht. These Confessions systematically set forth the truth of the Bible. This is the truth. The truth is, moreover, the truth of Scripture as set forth in the Confessions as taught by the grace of God in the Protestant Reformed Churches and in those churches of like precious faith with us.

The Apostle's spiritual children were walking in the truth. Walking means, literally, regulating their lives and conduct in the sphere of the truth. The truth governed their lives. This implied that they *knew* the truth. They knew what the Scriptures taught. They were knowledgeable in the doctrines of Holy Scripture. They *believed* the truth. The truth was in their hearts. They were convinced of the truth; it meant everything to them. Nothing was more important to them than the truth. They would

gladly suffer and even die for the truth. And, these saints *lived* the truth. It was manifest in all of their daily life.

All of this applies to the minister. Christ gives pastors for the care of the church (Eph. 4:11-16). Just as God gives children to the care of their parents and calls parents to train and provide for those children, so God calls pastors to teach, govern, discipline, and care for His children in Christ. The people of God are, in this sense, the spiritual children of their pastors.

The pastor's great joy consists not in the real or wrongly perceived honor the office of the ministry affords, nor in a big salary, a beautiful parsonage, a prestigious pulpit, or in being wined and dined by his parishioners. His great joy consists in that he hears that his children are walking in the truth. This is his greatest joy. Nothing gives him greater satisfaction. He has no greater joy!

How Is This Joy To Be Attained?

To attain this joy a pastor must be a faithful minister. This means he must be a man of God. The pastor himself must walk in the truth. He must know the truth, believe the truth, and live the truth. He must be at pains not to contradict the truth he preaches by an ungodly life. He must be an example of godliness to the believers. In this way the pastor will experience this great joy. The joy of salvation will flood his own soul. He will be at peace with himself because he is at peace with God. There is joy and peace in believing and in nothing else! To be a faithful minister the pastor must be a man of prayer. God's faithful ministers are men of prayer, much prayer. The chief Shepherd, Jesus, needed much prayer. How much more don't we?! Ministers must pray without ceasing for grace to do the work, to preach and teach, for wisdom to shepherd the flock of God.

A pastor must be a man of the *Word*. He must always bring the Word of God. God's people who are in affliction whether of body or mind need God's Word and the "prayer of faith" of the pastor. Only the Word of God can fill the terrible void caused by the death of a husband, wife, parent, child, or dear friend. The Word of God must be brought to the wayward, for only the Holy Spirit of Christ through the Word can convert the sinner. A pastor must bring the Word to the families of the congregation and to individuals who need answers to life's perplexing problems.

In all of this remember that just because we are ministers of the gospel who are college and seminary graduates does not mean we have all the answers. We do not! But God's Word does! Search the Scriptures prayerfully and daily!

If you, who graduate tonight, wish to attain this great joy you must be *preachers* of the Word. The Word of God you must preach. Do not come into the pulpit with your own word or the words of mere men. The words of men are vain, empty, futile. They are of no effect. Only God's Word can save. This is Scripture. Hebrews 4:12 teaches: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Likewise we learn from II Timothy 3:16, 17 that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Because this is what the Word of God is, the Apostle goes on to say, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . Preach the word . . ." This is your calling.

This means you make a colossal blunder if you ignore what you have been taught: the original languages of Holy Scripture (Hebrew and Greek), Hermeneutics and Exegesis, Homiletics, Catechetics, Dogmatics, the history of God's church and of the dogma of the church. Not only do you make a colossal blunder if you ignore these studies, you commit a heinous sin. Study! Work at it! Make it your own. Give yourselves wholly to the task. Yes, it is hard work. There is little or no glamour in the study. It takes a great deal of self-discipline.

The fruit of this work will be that the congregation, your spiritual children, God's children will

walk in the truth. Many will not. The Word of God has that effect too. It is a savour of death unto death in them that perish. But God's children will walk in the truth. They will know the truth, believe the truth, and live the truth. NOTHING affords a minister greater joy! How can one describe the joy the minister experiences when he is given the firm handshake of the elders after he has preached the word?! How can one describe the joy the minister experiences when he observes the children growing in grace under his preaching and teaching and when he sees the youth standing before the congregation to confess their faith in Jesus Christ?! How does one describe the joy the minister experiences when he brings the word of Psalm 4:8 to the lady facing major surgery: "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for thou Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." She was so fearful that she was visibly shaking, but her husband tells the pastor that she did not even need a sleeping pill that night?! How does one describe the joy the minister experiences when he brings the Word to the saint whose body is wracked by the pain of cancer and he dies in peace?! How does one describe the joy the minister experiences when he hears of God's people walking in the truth in their homes, at the job and in all of life?! There is NO GREATER JOY for the minister.

Finally, I leave you with the admonition the late Rev. Gerrit Vos left me in a personal letter which I received in the first year of my ministry: "Of all the things I counselled you, my son, remember this: Be humble. There is a humility which is feigned. That's abominable in God's sight. Be humble from the heart and God's people will bear you up in their arms."

CORRESPONDENCE AND REPLY

Clare De Graaf

Crusade Evangelism, Alive '85, and Arminianism

(In response to two, separate recently published articles in *The Standard Bearer*, by Professor Decker and the Editor, Rev. Hoeksema).

Much has been said in this publication about ALIVE '85, the evangelistic crusade held in

September of 1985, which was sponsored by 146 churches of which 104 were Reformed or Christian Reformed. As chairman of the ALIVE '85 committee, I would like to address some of the concerns expressed by Professor Decker and Rev.

Hoeksema.

First, Dr. John Guest, the evangelist of ALIVE '85, confirmed in writing prior to his being invited to speak that he agreed completely with the teaching expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dordt, and the Belgic Confession, and that he believed and taught the doctrine of God's sovereignty in election.

Secondly, we do not believe that crusade evangelism and altar calls are inherently Arminian. In Acts 2:37 when Peter finished his great evangelistic sermon on Pentecost, the crowd responded with these words:

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

It is important to note that Peter did not attach as a condition for baptism and salvation that they believe in the doctrine of election, or point out to them that their question: "What shall we do?" was Arminian in nature. We have to believe that these new believers at the time they were baptized (which was the same day they heard God's call to repentance) knew only the basic gospel story and yet we read that 3,000 *souls* were added that day. Later in that chapter we read that "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship . . ." I think it is safe to assume that it was *after* their salvation that they were taught the deeper truths of Scripture and grew to understand that — in fact, they had not chosen Christ or salvation, but that God had chosen them before the world began.

Using this great example, John Guest called people to acknowledge their sin and the fact that they could not save themselves by their own merit, and to believe that Jesus Christ was the only way to eternal life. The people who desired to make that commitment publicly — like the believers on Pentecost who were baptized that day — were asked to come forward as an expression of their desire to follow Jesus. However, one very important difference must be noted: the Holy Spirit speaking through the author of the Book of Acts confirmed that 3,000 souls were saved that day but at ALIVE '85 we cannot know for a certainty the number of true conversions that took place. In fact, those who came forward were called "inquirers" because we might never know for certain whether they were just inquiring or whether they had truly been moved by the Holy Spirit to a saving faith. We never publicized figures as to the number of "decisions" made, or people "saved." Our joy was to proclaim Christ, not count bodies.

Mr. De Graaf was one of the organizers of Alive '85.

After the meetings every "inquirer" was given material to help them to mature in their faith and given the Book of John. Every inquirer was also referred to a pastor of a participating church for further instruction which included explaining to them that God had planned their attendance and their response, and that they should praise their Heavenly Father for such love. No Arminianism. Pure Gospel and pure Calvinism.

There is, however, an inherent danger in crusade evangelism which Rev. Decker and Rev. Hoeksema correctly alluded to. That is in the area of follow-up and aftermath. Are we absolutely certain that each person clearly understood the truth of God's choosing them? Did many not seek further instruction? Was that instruction incomplete or unclear? The answer to those questions is that, although we made every reasonable effort to do so, we praise God that the miracle of rebirth and salvation is not dependent on the completeness of our teachings or follow-up, but that He has provided Holy Scriptures, His church, and the Holy Spirit to teach the truly regenerated person all that is necessary to live a Christ-centered, fruitful life. Rarely does a week go by that we do not hear from pastors or inquirers of how lives have been changed, professions of faith made, and Bible studies flourish because God worked through the ministry of ALIVE '85.

What about those who came forward recommitting their lives to Christ? Nearly one-half of all inquirers professed to be Christians already, so for them it was publicly stepping forward to say that they desired to live lives more in accordance with what they knew to be God's will. Did they need to do this publicly? Most whom I have met have said that their going forward closed and sealed a life of apathy and lukewarmness in the exercise of their faith. Were they choosing God? No, God had moved them to recognize the barrenness of their lives, they desired to make public that confession, and rededicate their lives so that they could be molded and used to build His kingdom on earth.

In closing — when I speak to inquirers six months after ALIVE '85 and see the joy, excitement, and growth in their lives; their hunger for the Word; and the praise they give God for their new life in Christ, it convinces me with absolute certainty that the benefits far outweigh the dangers, and confirms that God moves people in ways we still do not fully understand and uses methods with which we sometimes feel uncomfortable, to carry out His great plan of reconciliation.

Reply to Mr. De Graaf

This reply was written in consultation with Prof. Decker, who twice wrote about "Alive '85" (cf. issues of Dec. 15, '85 and Feb. 15, '86). My editorial

(April 15, '86) was not a critique of "Alive '85," but of *The Banner's* editorial characterization of John Guest's return visit to Shawnee Park Christian Reformed Church as "Reformed Revival." Just a few comments in response:

1) If John Guest subscribed to the Three Forms of Unity, he is doubly dishonest. First of all, he is a dishonest Episcopalian: no true Episcopalian could subscribe to our Reformed creeds. And, secondly, he is a dishonest evangelist: for he obviously contradicted our creeds in his crusade evangelism. See below.

2) It borders on blasphemy to speak of Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost as a "great evangelistic sermon" in the current sense of the term "evangelistic" and to suggest that John Guest followed Peter's example. In Peter's sermon you will find nothing of man and what man must do, but everything of God and God's work and of the exalted Christ and of His pouring out of the Spirit. Nor do you find anything in verse 37 in the nature of a plea or an altar call: only the *demand* of repentance and baptism.

3) John Guest stands condemned by the company he keeps: Billy Graham, Luis Palau, Leighton Ford.

4) As Prof. Decker has pointed out, Guest speaks

Arminian language. Let me repeat just one example, quoted from *The Banner*, Oct. 28, 1985: "Some of you are going to make a decision tonight that could change your life, help you change your church, and help your church change the world. That's the order [in which] it has to happen . . . Come and give your life to him. Do not leave this place without surrendering your life to him." This is obviously Arminian language. Is it *our* decisions which change our lives? It is Reformed to say that sovereign, irresistible grace changes men's (elect men's) lives. Cf. Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 10-12.

5) Neither Prof. Decker nor I criticized crusade evangelism in the area of follow-up, as far as I can tell in rereading our articles. Rather do we maintain that crusade evangelism is *per se* to be condemned as Arminian in nature and historically Arminian in its roots.

6) Finally, I remind you once more that this inroad of crusade evangelism into the Christian Reformed Church is the fruition of the general grace doctrine and its general, well-meant offer of the gospel which was adopted in 1924 by the Christian Reformed Church. Some in the CRC may still criticize it, but they have no solid ground for doing so in the light of 1924.

HCH

Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention: 1986

Rev. David Engelsma

The 46th annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention, hosted by the young people of South Holland, IL will be held from Monday, July 28, through Friday morning, August 1, in South Holland and on the campus of Valparaiso University, in Valparaiso, IN.

All Conventioneers will register at the Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland (16511 South Park Ave.) on Monday, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM. The first speech will be given in the auditorium of

the Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland. Activities are planned in the area for the evening. The young people will spend the night in the homes of the Congregation.

On Tuesday morning, the Convention will move, by bus, to the campus of Valparaiso University. Valparaiso University is located at U.S. 30 and Route 49 in Valparaiso, IN, some 40 miles southwest of South Holland. This large (310 acres), lovely campus, associated with the Lutheran Church, has

all the facilities necessary for a Convention — modern residence halls; meeting rooms; a chapel; and leisure time facilities, including those for tennis, basketball, softball, bowling, billiards, swimming, jogging, and many other activities.

The Convention theme is "Being Reformed in 1986: Heritage and Calling." Our purpose is that, by God's mercy, the young people will be reminded of their glorious heritage — the Reformed Faith — and will be stirred up to an energetic carrying out of the calling that comes to them with this heritage. Rev. M. Kamps, Rev. B. Gritters, and Rev. J. Slopesma will develop and apply the theme in three speeches on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings. By means of discussion groups, the young people will be able to respond to the speeches and to learn from each other.

We are making a special appeal this year to our older young people (young adults) — high school graduates and older, into the 20's — to attend the Convention. Many (unfortunately, we think) have dropped out of Young People's Society and the Convention; and we are urging them to "drop in,"

again. We are planning certain activities for them, by themselves, as well as separate discussion groups for them.

Everyone attending the Convention, without exception, must register. A pre-registration form can still be obtained by calling us at (312) 895-8549, or (312) 596-3113.

Adults who might desire to stay in the area during the Convention are invited to call us, to try to arrange lodging for them (campground, motel, etc.). We will do what we can to help.

Our one, great goal with the Convention is the glory of our Holy God, in Jesus Christ. Therefore, we require all who come to have this purpose in their hearts. We expect godly behavior of every Conventioneer. Everyone must know and be determined to keep the few, basic rules that appear on the pre-registration form; and parents ought to impress upon their sons and daughters that they obey them.

See you in South Holland?

TRANSLATED TREASURES

Dr. A. Kuyper

A Pamphlet Concerning the Reformation of the Church

(Kuyper has been talking about the role which the magistrate must take in the work of church reformation. In the last paragraph he spoke vehemently against Article 36 of our Belgic Confession which gives to the magistrate the right to exterminate heresy. Although Kuyper does not deny that the magistrate is called to enforce both tables of the law, he insists that the magistrate has not the right to punish the heretic with capital punishment.)

63. Concerning Reformations Which Already Exist and Their Distinct Character.

Because the Reformation of the sixteenth century is usually considered to be *the* Reformation, many live under the impression that there is no mention made either in Holy Scripture or in history of other reformations.

This is a false idea.

Reformations are always happening, even if not as thoroughgoing or as significant in consequences as the Reformation which is connected to the names of Luther and Calvin.

Attention must be given to this.

If people are accustomed to consider the Reformation of Luther as the only real Reformation, this then is the consequence: "Reformation" is regarded as something which happened only once and there is nothing further to say about it. If, on the other hand, one realizes that "reformation" has been a constant phenomenon in the history of

Jesus' church so that again and again, after error and degeneration have crept in, recovery by reformation is tried and is often successful, then the idea of reformation begins to live again for us, speaks to us, and of itself poses the question: "Can my church also be raised by reformation from her deep fall?"

This in turn impels us to look at the distinct reformations which Holy Scripture and history mention and at the same time to point out the character, to shed light upon the significance, and to bring out the earmark which each of these reformations bore.

To accomplish this we speak separately, first of the reformations which are preserved in Holy Scripture and, after this, of the reformations which are mentioned in the history of the church.

This distinction must not be neglected. This is true because in our opinion even our best historians, overlooking this distinction, actually have brought about not a little confusion in the ideas concerning reformation.

Indeed, who will deny that the danger is very real to take as a standard for our reformation of the church that which is mentioned of reformation in Holy Scripture? But this would be erroneous. For example, in the instance where the maintenance of the Mosaic political, social, ceremonial, and family laws are required to be kept by everyone, we would err if we explained the whole of this series of laws (even though they are in Holy Scripture) as still binding on us in any literal sense. We should insist upon the fact that distinction must be made between the principle ideas of these laws and their special application, and thus between their moral and ceremonial implications. First of all, holy discretion is required so that the question is asked in connection with these reformations of Holy Scripture: which elements of these reformations are connected with Israel's own peculiar life as people of revelation, and which elements bear a general character — in order then to choose only this latter as a rule of conduct for ourselves.

Four elements ought especially to be pointed out in these reformations of Holy Scripture.

1) As long as such a revelation still continued, some men of God received a direct communication, an assignment and calling from heaven in a sense in which such an assignment and calling no longer come to anyone.

2) In the Israelite state the giving of the law was of direct divine origin so that transgression of the law even in the smallest respect concerned sin in an absolute sense, while now ecclesiastical regulations have their origin in human insights and thus lack that absolute character.

3) In Israel the king was not only a citizen but also an ecclesiastical figure who, as a bearer of the Messianic image, possessed an office in the church just as much as the priest or prophet. Also this has fallen away because Jesus Himself is now King of the church. All the conclusions for our magistrates which one would want to draw from the work of David and Solomon, of Josiah, Joash, and Hezekiah are therefore defective.

4) In Israel men could shed in streams the blood of idolatrous heretics, as Elijah did. They could employ capital punishment against teachers of error as often as God the Lord gave a direct command for this, as He did to Elijah and Moses. The theocratic character of laws made this absolute punishment necessary and at the same time justified it. Now that both this direct giving of the law and this direct command are absent, the imitation of Elijah's way of treating the Baal priests becomes a horrible injustice.

Those of our brethren who wish to appeal in the future to the Old Testament as an example and directive for church reformation shall have to reckon with this fourfold distinction. Indeed, they must bear in mind that as Franciscus Junius expressed it: "The maintenance of a shadow image, after the reality itself has come, is not only inadvisable and purposeless, but in fact is sin." (Cf. Junius, *The Observance of the Mosaic Law*, in ed. Anst. 1882, p. 336-392.) To continue to offer heifers and rams after Golgotha is to minimize Jesus' unique offering. Thus it also detracts from the sovereign kingship of Jesus over His church if one grants to an earthly magistrate the same power over the church as David's successors possessed, who were only predecessors of Christ, Who is now ascended into heaven and exercises divine and continual administration from heaven.

After these preliminary observations our summation of Biblical reformation can be short.

Already before Israel appeared as a people, we hear of four incidents in which the church of God was reestablished after a decline, or was kept from total degeneration through separation.

The first of these reformations happened by the separation of the children of Seth from the sons of Cain. In the days of Enoch, so we read, men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

The second tremendous reformation worked by God Himself, took place by a deluge when all the corrupted people drowned in the flood, and only the ark, with its precious treasure of the church of the Lord, floated and after a short time returned the church to the earth.

The third all-controlling reformation came about

through Abraham when he, at God's command, brought out the church of God from the generations of Terah which had become idolatrous and transferred the church to the land which God would show him.

Finally, the fourth reformation was carried out by the separation of Jacob and Esau. Also Esau was born in the church of God and received the sacrament of the covenant of his body. But evil crept in and the church of God would have degenerated entirely if the Lord had not, by separating Jacob and Esau, pushed away the Edomites in their sins in order to free His church with Jacob.

All four of these reforms came about in such a way that they bore less the character of something done by man than the character of God's own work. They are reforms which therefore cannot serve as examples for us because mankind no longer, as then, coincides with the church. God's administration takes other paths than it did at that time.

After these four reforms which came before Israel, the reforms which happened in the nation of Israel took place and they can be divided into two categories according to whether they fall before or during the kingly administration.

Those reforms in Israel which came before the kingly administration are four in number.

First, the deliverance of the church of God from the doom with which Egypt's government threatened it and by the transfer of the entire church from the land of Goshen to the wilderness.

Secondly, the reformation by Moses brought about after the establishment of calf-worship by Aaron.

Thirdly, the different reforms which were wrought in the nation by Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and the other judges.

Fourthly, the reformation which Samuel pursued and which he in part brought about.

The character of the last three mentioned reforms

was a rooting out of the wrong, a spiritual awakening of the people and a forceful victory over unrighteousness. Yet it was again and again wrought by men of God who have received a particular mandate to do this.

The reforms which were brought about by the kings are seven in number: those under Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Manasseh in Judah, under Jehu, and under Ahab through the work of Elijah in Israel.

These reforms were repeatedly brought about by the terrible outbreak of idolatry and godlessness among the people. What Scripture informs us concerning this defies description. Sometimes the sacraments were not administered for years. All keeping of the law fell into disuse. All kinds of idolatrous worship were openly perpetrated in villages and cities, even in Jerusalem. Moral corruption knew no bounds. Holy things were mocked. God's faithful servants were killed. Reckless corruption penetrated even into the temple and the priesthood.

And against these horrors the kings rose up five times: Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Manasseh, while also Asa's and Joash's names are mentioned with thanksgiving and honor.

In Israel Jehu was the only king who rose up with Hezekiah's zeal against the corruption of the church, while the reformation under Ahab did not proceed from the king, but from Elijah and was actually against the king.

In connection with these seven reforms which pretty well bear a similar character, it is worth noting that they did not lead to a break with the existing church, but happened by the lawful, God-ordained offices of the church. They did not lead to a renewal of the form of the church or a change of the worship, but extended exclusively to a rooting out of idolatry, a checking of immorality, and a restoration to honor of the neglected church worship.

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WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Herman C. Hanko

Moral Aspects of Medical Technology (7)

Contraception has become so common that the whole practice is hardly called into question any more. Even in the one denomination which forbids the use of contraception, the Roman Catholic Church, over half of the members are reported to practice it. For many years it has been hailed as a major medical breakthrough, which will succeed in curbing the earth's population. It has been rigorously promoted as a valuable tool of population control. The doomsayers who have bombarded us with propaganda about terrible times of overcrowding and famine on our planet have looked to contraception as the answer to the world's woes.

Recently, however, especially among Western countries, an entirely different note has been sounded. So successful has contraception been, along with legalized abortion, that now leaders in Western countries especially are beginning to fear that their efforts have gone too far. In the December 16, 1985 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* this whole matter was discussed at some length. The article begins by saying:

A growing "baby bust" that is destined to reshape the nation well into the 21st century is now generating intense controversy over the politics of fertility.

Never have U.S. birth rates been so low in this decade. If present trends continue, deaths in the U.S. will exceed births by the year 2034 and the population will decline sharply — a development that some experts fear will jeopardize the nation's economic and political might around the world.

The 3.7 million children born in the U.S. last year represented a slight increase over 1983 because of the large number of women of childbearing age. Yet a

woman today will have an average of only 1.8 children, 52 percent below the peak years of the baby boom and too low to maintain the current population.

The so-called birth dearth is even worse in Europe. West Germany has the lowest birth rate, with an average of fewer than 1.3 children per woman.

This will, according to *U.S. News and World Report*, create all kinds of problems. For one thing it

is likely to have dramatic consequences for the economy. Without more children to follow the baby-boom generations, the "Graying" of America will accelerate with 1 out of 5 people 65 or older by 2035. Social Security and private pensions funds will be severely stressed. By then, according to one estimate, there will be only 1.5 workers to support each Social Security beneficiary — compared with 3.4 workers today.

Certain industries will feel the effect of a shrinking pool of young people much sooner . . . This will slow the rate of home building.

A similar situation confronts firms that manufacture desk-top computers. They also look to young people coming into the workplace to expand sales.

Shortages of young workers may even curb innovations . . .

And worst of all, if present trends continue, America will cease to be a world power. Not only will a shrinking pool of young men be sufficient to keep the armed forces at their necessary strength, but

when you have a smaller tax base, it is more of a strain per capita to provide for the national defense, particularly if you have an adversary whose population is growing and whose per capita tax burden for weapons is consequently diminishing.

How true it is that wicked men can never do anything right when they flaunt the law of God.

But all of this presses upon us the question of the

place of contraceptives in the life of the child of God.

We have pointed out in an earlier article that some forms of contraceptives are wrong in the nature of the case, because they are not in the truest sense of the word contraceptives, but are really instruments of abortion. This is true of so-called intra-uterine devices, which, while not preventing conception, prevent the implantation of the fertilized ovum in the uterus of the mother. The result is that the fetus is aborted, though this takes place very shortly after conception. The same thing is true of the "morning-after" pill. It is designed, not to prevent conception, but to prevent the newly conceived baby from developing in the womb of the mother. These must be condemned out of hand as part of abortion techniques. And since we have discussed this subject in other articles, we will not speak of them here.

By contraception I refer to whatever means are used to prevent the conception of a child. This may range from various types of materials used to prevent conception, through sterilization procedures, to what is usually called the rhythm method.

There are three points which need to be made at the outset. The Scriptures give us no warrant to condemn the use of contraceptives or contraceptive procedures out of hand. This is evident from two considerations: 1) Various contraceptives, such as "the pill," can be used for medicinal purposes to correct various malfunctions of the body, even though they, at the same time, make conception impossible. 2) There are circumstances when parents have no choice but to make use of contraceptives, especially when the life of the mother is threatened by pregnancy.

The second point that needs to be made is that God's people are called upon to live consciously and responsibly before God in every area of their life, including marriage and bringing forth children. People are not to breed as animals, by instinct; they are to use marriage and sex within marriage as gifts of God to His glory, consciously seeking the honor of God's name also in this important part of their life.

The third point is that intercourse itself is a gift of God to be used by husbands and wives within the marriage state as an expression of their love for each other. It can be and is an expression of love entirely apart from the conception of children. This is clear from the fact that to hold to a different position would simply mean that husbands and wives who are unable to have children or who are beyond the age of child-bearing would then not have the right to engage in intercourse.

All of this means that contraception belongs to

the realm of Christian liberty and the rightness or wrongness of it must be judged on the basis of the motives in the hearts of those who make use of these methods.

We all know that liberty can easily become licentiousness. Paul speaks of this in Galatians 5:13: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Liberty becomes an occasion to the flesh when young people outside the marriage state engage in fornication, but use contraceptive methods to avoid the consequences of pregnancy. This is an abomination to the Lord, and no fornicator can enter the kingdom. Liberty becomes an occasion for the flesh when married people engage in adultery and use contraceptive methods to prevent pregnancy. This too is an abomination to God and will surely bring upon the sinner God's just wrath.

But even within the marriage state the use of contraceptive methods can be and is judged by God to be wrong and sinful when their use is for the wrong motives. Those motives may be many and we mention only a few of them. It is part of the "climate" of our sophisticated age not to have large families. I myself well recall how shocked some people were when I or my wife told them we had eight children. Besides, children are a bother and a nuisance. It is not fun to have howling babies in the house, to have to get up in the middle of the night to feed them, to mop up their vomit when they are sick, to put up with their incessant demands, to rinse out their dirty diapers, etc. There are people who do not want to have children because the "strain" of bringing them up is too great. There are people who do not want children because they are too expensive to feed, clothe, educate, and prepare for life. There are parents who do not want to have children because children keep them from vacations, parties, skiing holidays, bowling, and all kinds of pleasure which their souls crave. There are parents who do not want children, at least not very many, because the mother wants to work. The parents like the extra income because it enables them to buy the good things of life. All these motives are sinful and God hates them. To use contraceptives for such purposes is evil and brings God's disapproval.

The Bible takes quite a different view of life than this. The purpose of marriage is to bring forth children; specifically, the purpose of a covenant marriage is to bring forth covenant children. While God does not always make that possible because some parents are prevented from having children, nevertheless, the institution of marriage is for that very reason. When God joined Adam and Eve in marriage, He added this word to the institution:

"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

Covenant parents bring forth covenant children. Covenant parents are deeply impressed with their calling and obligation, not only to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, but to bring forth children, for God has given them the great privilege of bringing forth the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. In a wonderful and mysterious way, God uses covenant parents to bring forth that number of elect whom He has chosen from all eternity, whom He has given to Christ, who are redeemed through the blood of the cross, and who are destined to live in covenant fellowship with God through Christ in the new heavens and the new earth. God will, of course, see to it that His church is born. He has His own elect number, engraved on the palms of His hands. Not one shall fail to be born, to be saved and to be brought to heaven. Covenant parents, conscious of this and conscious of the privilege of bringing forth this church, understand that marriage is the institution which God has provided for this church to be brought forth.

Godly parents, therefore, consider children to be a great blessing. How different this is in the world, where children are a curse and a bother. Children are a heritage of the Lord, and blessed is he whose quiver is full of them. In the covenant family, children are like olive plants round about our tables and the parents who are blessed see their children's children and peace upon Israel.

So true is this that in the Old Testament we have many instances of godly women who saw their barrenness as a curse and who prayed earnestly for children. They did this in the consciousness that in having children they would have a part in bringing forth the Christ, Who would be their Savior. This has not changed in the New Testament. A woman is still saved through child-bearing. None of us can be saved unless all of God's people are saved. The whole body of elect goes to heaven, or none goes. Christ will not return until the last elect is born and brought to repentance, as Peter teaches in II Peter 3:9. In eagerness for the return of Christ and the full salvation of heaven, God's people bring forth children. And they do so, greatly in awe that God has given them such a wonderful privilege.

In the light of all this must contraceptive methods be considered and used. It is, you see, a matter of the motive; but God knows the heart and judges every man according as he does things out of a true faith, in keeping with the law of God, and to God's glory.

There are times when contraception is necessary. When parents, in deciding when to have a child or another child, want to wait a bit for good

and spiritual reasons, abstinence is the honorable way. You will say that this does not always work and is by no means "safe." That is true. But the believer stands in the consciousness of the fact that God gives us our children, and that ultimately each child fashioned in the womb is a work of God delicately and carefully done according to God's own counsel and will.

There are times when other methods must be used. When the believer faces these times, he does so prayerfully and carefully, asking always, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" He is clearly concerned about the approval of God. Husbands and wives know that God's blessing on their marriage is indispensable and they live in the great fear that they will find themselves displeasing to God in this important and blessed part of their life. But they know that when they decide that God has so arranged the circumstances of their life that they must put off having children or refrain altogether, God will bless their decision.

Pharaoh attempted to impose birth control upon the Israelites while they were in Egypt when he commanded all the baby boys to be drowned in the river. Israel refused to obey the king in this respect and did all they could to continue to have children and to hide them from the king when the children were born. The mid-wives cooperated in this. And God blessed them. The bringing forth of children was more important than the king's command.

It does indeed cost a lot of money to have children, bring them up, and educate them in the fear of the Lord. But we easily put a higher priority on earthly possessions than we do on children; and then we sin. Paul urges upon the church: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:6-8). The Lord has promised us that He will provide for all our needs. His promise has never failed. If we are content with our needs, we will be satisfied when the costs of children keep us from possessing the good things in life. We will find greater delight in our children than in houses and lands. We will know that we labor for eternity when we take care of our children, instead of laboring for things which pass away with the using. And when we and our children are finally safe in glory we will praise and honor Him Who has given them to us.

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

Good Morning, Alice (12)

Gise J. Van Baren

It was in August of 1981 that additional help was obtained for Alice. Though each family member had a day of the week to assist, that no longer was sufficient. The demands on John's family were becoming too great again. So a nurse was obtained who could come two days a week. The nurse was Barb — one could not have asked for a better — and Alice enjoyed her help and presence (though at first she refused to concede a need for a nurse). Often it was Barb who would read the notes of Alice's "friend," and would read with her the passage of Scripture listed on the bottom of the note. Thus, together these would be encouraged for whatever would arise in that day.

Good Morning Alice:

It's Saturday morning again — where do the weeks go? This morning there's a slight drizzle outside. I hope it's not slippery and freezing over; I have some driving to do!

You know, Alice, after that text we talked about yesterday, we really need a Psalm like this one. When I truly examine myself and realize my great sin, I know that without Christ I am in the depths; and when I know that God would hold those sins against me, I know I could never stand.

God graciously guided David to write this knowledge in Psalm 130 and then to go on and explain God's forgiveness in verse 4 and then the result of that forgiveness — David's yearning for God in verse 5 and 6. So often when I read the Psalms, I think: how could David know just how I feel? Here he says so plainly that when I see my sin, I long for God's forgiveness and yearn for His nearness. It's at those times that I feel very near to God and that I "wait" for Him and it is my desire to "see" God.

The beautiful thing about the Psalm is that David doesn't stop at his own needs and his own salvation, but desires that salvation for all Israel. Do I yearn for the salvation of all God's elect?

I've found in a new way just today that when I do that, the petty little things I have against a person seem to slip away into the background.

Again, thanks for being you, Alice. I'm afraid more

and more you are turning into a listening post for my spiritual needs rather than my encouraging you! Don't use my little devotion as yours, because you probably need something entirely different than I do, and not knowing you, I can't fill that need.

Do spend time alone searching God's word and you will find so much comfort!

With love, Your friend

Please read Heb. 4:15

Any sort of speaking was now almost impossible for Alice. For one who loved to talk, this was a real problem and extremely frustrating. Alice had to repeat herself again and again to be understood — but at times it was even then impossible to know what she was trying to say. Two nephews managed to program a small computer so that, with the bump of a button, a letter of the alphabet could be selected. Or she could select certain phrases ("I'm thirsty"; or "How are you?" etc.) with the same button. Alice did use this for entertainment a few times, but she refused to use it regularly. Either it was perceived as too complicated or it required too much effort. Perhaps if it had been simplified even more for her, this could have proved useful.

Good Morning Alice:

I'm sorry I got this mail mixed up — now you'll get two notes in one day!

It's later again this morning, and beautifully sunny. Do you ever just sit and really look outside? That's one way I'm afraid I do waste a little time! This morning, the sun is shining on the new snow and it looks like diamonds sparkling. How could a little six-pointed fleck of white sparkle like a diamond? And when you stop to think that the two feet of snow and three-foot drifts are all made up of only those six-pointed flecks, and every one individually different, you can't help but see how great our God is.

Although I've never experienced a great trial, the verse for today always makes me feel "comfortable." Our high priest is touched with every infirmity that we have ever had. He knows how I feel. He knows my temptations because He was tempted Himself. He knows my sorrow — He sorrowed over Lazarus. There is nothing that I experience that I may say no one else has had to suffer this! He bore all our suffering and we may come to Him at any time with any need and He

understands. *Nothing is too little to bring to Him if we come in sincere need — and when we come, we will find grace to help.*

In His love, Your friend

Please read Zephaniah 3:17

Moving Alice from her bed was also becoming an increasingly great problem. John had had his own back problems. Yet he bore the greatest share of the task of moving Alice from her bed to the wheelchair. He did know how to do this best of us all. But Alice was becoming simply a dead weight. For some time, a Hoyer Lift had been available. But as with the other innovations, Alice at first refused to have it used. Perhaps she considered it one more concession that she was losing strength. But the day came when the lift had to be used. The first time it was in fun. We managed to place the canvas support under Alice and made a big production of hooking this up to the chains of the lift. Slowly, slowly, it was raised — until Alice was swinging freely above the bed. Then she was raised higher and moved about the room. Now the younger children must be called! Alice could "show off" to them in her new "swing." After that, Alice was willing to have the lift used regularly.

Good Morning Alice:

I've spent some time looking over the verses we've shared together, and as I thought, many of them are from the Psalms. They are so comforting. But since I've been writing you, I've found so many verses all through Scripture that are just bursting with comfort and joy. Quite often they are right after admonishment or warning. If you read all of Zephaniah 3, you will see this. I especially like verse 17, but maybe another verse speaks more to you.

God is in the midst of us, Alice. He is here with us at all times. And not only that, but He rejoices over us with joy. Can you imagine? This is just beyond my understanding, sinner that I am, but nevertheless it is there. He rejoices over us with joy.

Oh, if we could only always keep that in mind, we would surely be closer to God, closer to each other, and know that there is nothing that we lack.

May you feel that joy of the Lord today, Alice.

In Him with you, Your friend

Please read Psalm 71:16

We were becoming increasingly concerned about Alice's eating difficulties. Frequently, she now would have a choking spell with even the smallest pieces of food. In early November she was still going out occasionally for lunch (she had even been taken out for supper by friends from Illinois), but she hardly dared to eat anything. She was afraid of triggering yet another episode of choking. But she

could not surely live long on the little that she did manage to swallow.

Good Morning Alice:

I almost feel nothing can follow yesterday's verse. If we could only keep that in front of our minds, we would be much more thankful, whatever comes our way. I guess the verse I chose for today is, for me, kind of a response to yesterday's.

My God is here near me; He is mighty; He rejoices over me. That is not something that is just a known fact to me, but a living experience. Now what my response would be is described perfectly in Psalm 71:16. Now I will go in the strength of the Lord. I will make mention of His righteousness. I will really strive to go into this day with that strength in my mind.

When I do that, I will not be impatient when my son wants help for the third time when I'm trying to write a letter. Then I will be patient and loving when my husband asks me to get something when I'm doing the dishes and I think he can much easier get it himself. Then I will resist reading a book I know wouldn't be right.

Then I will not be lazy in being strict with my children even though it's the easy way out. Then I will not waste my time as I so easily tend to do, but will go in His strength, in joy, to do those things I know God commands me to do. Above all, in His strength, I will desire to come to Him more often in prayer to continue to receive that strength.

I know these things don't fit your life, Alice, but when you put this note down, think for a while of the ways you can go in the strength of the Lord in this day. In the strength of the Lord, you can give every effort to help those helping you even when it seems to take too much effort. You can share a joyful smile even when it hurts.

You can learn more of your heavenly Father by reading and reading His Word even when it's so much easier to do other things. You can, in His strength, have patience with your loved ones even when they can't understand your needs and desires.

Go with me today, Alice, in the strength of our Lord, remembering He is near and He is mighty.

With all my love, Your friend

Please read Psalm 119:71

Even such a "little" thing as drinking was affected. Alice was not getting all the fluids she needed. She could no longer drink from a glass or cup. She had always so enjoyed her single daily cup of coffee. But now she was able to do this only with great difficulty through a straw. The cup had to be in exactly the correct position, the straw adjusted in a specific way, then she might eventually manage to suck up a little of the fluid. It was painfully evi-

dent that this was not adequate. There were times when, after a half-hour of effort, Alice had not obtained more than a swallow of liquid. One would watch the fluid rise in the straw — half-way, three quarters of the way, and finally, if all went well, some trickled into her mouth. But when surgery was mentioned to have a tube put into her stomach, Alice so dreaded the idea that she made an extra effort to take in a little more food and liquid by mouth — yet it was not enough.

Good Afternoon Alice:

The kids are napping and I have a few quiet minutes to write you. There was just no time this morning because we all overslept a little and had to rush just to get necessary things done. Not a nice way to begin the day.

Have you thought about the verse I wrote you to read? (Ps. 119:71).

At first when I read it, I thought it would make more sense if it would be that I learn Thy grace or mercy. But then I remembered the beautiful explanation Rev. J. Heys once gave of the law of liberty. I may share that with you later, but the thrust of it was that only in obeying the law are we free.

I think that fits this verse beautifully. It is good for me to be afflicted because it has taught me to turn to God more and more and abide in the blessed freedom of obedience to Him.

May you, in your affliction, experience that freedom today, Alice.

With love, Your friend

Please read Luke 10:42

Book Reviews

THE GREAT REVERSAL, Ethics and the New Testament, by Allen Verhey; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984; 246 pp., \$13.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

It does not come as a surprise that Verhey, in his analysis of the ethics of the New Testament, adopts a higher critical approach, because he has made his higher critical views public for several years. This, of course, makes the book of little value to one who receives the Scriptures as God's infallible rule for faith and life.

The blurb accompanying the book reads:

There is no denying, writes Allen Verhey, that churches today are called to discern the shape and style of life "worthy of the gospel of Christ" in the twentieth century. Even in the face of changing situations and new moral problems to address, the contemporary church stands self-consciously in a tradition of which the New Testament is a normative part.

In this major new study of New Testament ethics, Verhey examines first of all the ethic of Jesus, for it is there that the tradition begins. He then analyzes the different forms in which the early church handed down the memory of Jesus' words and deed in the development of a moral tradition. Next he deals with the tradition as it came to canonical expression in the New Testament writings.

In the last part of the book Verhey focuses on the use of the New Testament in the continuing moral

tradition of the church, surveying proposals for the use of Scripture, identifying the critical methodological questions, and defending a "modest proposal" for the use of Scripture.

A couple of brief quotes from his "modest proposal" will illustrate what higher criticism does to ethics.

One may pass, for example, from Scripture to moral claims concerning dispositions and intentions appropriate to the eschatological unity of male and female in Christ. One may not, according to the proposed authorization, move directly from Paul's rule concerning the silence of the Corinthian women to action-guiding claims concerning the behavior of women in congregations today. Such a use would be inconsistent with Paul's own discernment and with the authorization proposed. Paul's concrete moral conclusions may still be the right ones today, but they may not be claimed as right simply because they are found in the New Testament. They must be shown to be right by a contemporary calculation of means and consequences under the aegis of the Christian identity and perspective, under the governance of dispositions and intentions and principles that cohere with the reign of God disclosed and guaranteed in the resurrection and are known in and through the New Testament. (p. 185).

The gobbledegook aside, Verhey is simply saying that the New Testament is not our norm for life.

The conclusion of the matter is:

1. Only if the use of a Scripture passage is coherent with its intention is that use in moral argument authorized.

2. The use of Scripture in moral argument a) is not authorized with respect to claims concerning an autonomous, impartial, and universal ethic; b) is authorized with respect to claims concerning Christian moral identity and its perspective, dispositions, intentions, and principles at the ethical-principle and post-ethical levels of moral argument; and c) is not authorized with respect to claims at the moral-rule level of moral argument.

3. If and only if the use of Scripture is coherent with the message that God has already made His eschatological power and purpose felt in raising Jesus from the dead, is it authorized.

4. Only if the moral claim is consistent with justice is the movement from Scripture to moral claim authorized. (p. 196).

CLASSIC SERMONS ON FAITH AND DOUBT, compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe; Kregel Publications, 1985; 152 pp., \$7.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

Kregel Publications has begun a new series of books entitled, "Kregel Classic Sermons Series." Three books have been published in this series: the volume now under review, one entitled, "Classic Sermons on Suffering," and another entitled, "Classic Sermons on Prayer."

In this volume, some of the better known preachers whose sermons are used are, Alexander MacLaren, G. Campbell Morgan, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Martin Luther, John Henry Jowett, and John Wesley. There are twelve sermons in all.

It stands to reason that in such a variety of sermons from so many different preachers, the quality of the sermons also varies considerably. Some of the sermons are excellent, some only so-so, and some of little value. Nor are all the sermons, by any means, faithful to the Scriptures. Nevertheless, the good sermons in the book make the purchase of this book worthwhile, and certainly the general subject (Faith and Doubt) is of considerable interest. The book makes nice devotional reading.

Report of Classis East

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, May 14, 1986 at Holland. Each church was represented by two delegates. Rev. M. Joostens was the chair of this session.

The main item of business at this meeting was the consideration of an appeal from a brother who had protested a consistory's decision concerning the remarriage of a divorced person. The consistory's position (summarized) was that since the person in question had been married to a divorced person, the marriage was no marriage at all but an adulterous relationship. The only legitimate marriage is the first marriage; any other "marriages," even though conducted by the state, are to be considered adultery and no marriage. If the person, then, confesses the sin of adultery, that person is free to marry. The appellant contended that the consistory erred in allowing the person the right to marry. The appellant's position was that the person was indeed married, he was married legally by the state, which has the authority to marry, and therefore, the person must be considered as married, though sinfully, and now has the status of being divorced. The scriptures are clear, argued the appellant, that divorced persons may not remarry. Classis East sustained the appellant. At the risk of being too brief, the following (summarized) was

adopted: (1) The appellant was sustained in his position that "the marriage of divorced person(s) is marriage before God and the Church, and though a sinful marriage, it is a legal union established by the State, which is the servant of God." The grounds: (a) The Lord God has given to the State the authority and is His means to join persons in marriage. (b) The Lord God recognizes as marriage when the State even sinfully joins in marriage divorced persons. (There were appended references to scripture, the Church Order, and the marriage form.) (2) The appellant was sustained in his position that a man divorced from a woman previously married and divorced has not the right to marry another for he is married and a proposed marriage would constitute remarriage while one's spouse lives. The grounds: (a) The marriage of divorced persons is adultery. (b) The appellant's interpretation of John 4 is correct, viz., that the sixth man was not her husband but this has no bearing on her relationship to the other five. Authoritative commentators — Calvin, Lenski, Edersheim, Hendrickson, Meyer — all take this position. (The grounds are more lengthy, containing scriptural references, etc., so the above is to be considered as summary and should not be quoted.)

In other items of business, Classis heard reports from the Stated Clerk and the Classical Committee. Southeast and Covenant requested classical appointments and the following schedules were adopted: COVENANT: May 25, June 1 - Rev. G. Van Baren; June 8 - Rev. K. Hanko; June 15, 22 - Rev. M. Kamps. SOUTHEAST: May 25 - Rev. B. Woudenberg, June 1 - Rev. R. Miersma, June 8 - Rev. R. Flikkema, June 15 - Rev. W. Bekkering, June 22 - Rev. M. Joostens. Both consistories were advised to seek supply from students, the seminary, or other available ministers for the summer months.

Expenses amounted to \$738.72. Classis will meet next on September 10 at Kalamazoo.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Huiskens
Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church, on behalf of the congregation expresses sympathy to the Albert Griess family in the death of their daughter, sister, and aunt, MRS. LENNIE HENDERSON.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21)

Rev. Ron Cammenga, Pres.
Frank Van Baren, Clerk

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Houston, Texas on Wednesday, September 3, 1986, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. Material for the Agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk thirty days before Classis convenes. Delegates in need of lodging or of transportation from the airport should inform the Clerk of the Houston Consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk
Classis West

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 24, 1986, our parents, MR. AND MRS. RALPH PASTOOR celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. As children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren we are grateful that we are blessed with God-fearing parents. Our prayer is that He will continue to bless and keep them in His care.

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

Bob and Joan Noordyke	11 grandchildren
Bob and Evie Pastoor	14 great-grandchildren
Jim and Mary Gerritsen	

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 26, 1986, our parents, MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR BULT celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. We rejoice with them and are thankful to our Lord for covenant parents who sought to teach us the way of God. We pray that they will continue to experience the blessings of our faithful God in the years that He may give them.

Nancy Groot	Charles and Joanne Bult
John and Nancy Bult	23 grandchildren
Arthur, Jr. and Janet Bult	11 great-grandchildren
Gordon and Elaine Ondersma	

46th Annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention

July 28 - August 1, 1986

On the Campus of Valparaiso University

Valparaiso, Indiana

(Junction of Indiana 49 and U.S. 30)

Theme: "Being Reformed in 1986: Heritage and Calling"

Speakers: Rev. M. Kamps, Rev. B. Gritters, Rev. J. Slopsema

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