

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Many today that call themselves evangelists would reject Jonah as a proper tool to bring sinners to repentance and unto faith in Christ. The method as well as the tool God chose would be rejected by them. Jonah would be put out of office and be told to seek employment in some other field of work. But the method worked, and the tool did not spoil the end that was sought; because that method was chosen by the all-wise God, and that tool was in His almighty hand.

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION

Cornelius Hanko

# Desiring The Best Gifts

*Ques. 113. What doth the tenth commandment require of us?*

*Ans. That even the smallest inclination or thought, contrary to any of God's commandments, never rise in our hearts; but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole heart, and delight in all righteousness.*

*Lord's Day 44, Heidelberg Catechism*

One thing have I desired!

That will I seek after!

That I may consciously dwell in the presence of

my God all my days!

To keep my eye focused upon His glorious majesty, His infinite perfections, virtues, praises!

And to extend needy hands to Him, the Fountain of every good and perfect gift, that out of His fulness I may receive abundant grace, even one gift upon another!

My needs are so many. The desire to live is still present with me. Along with that, I need to breathe, to eat, to drink, to be active, and to rest.

I need to think, to plan my day, to do my work, to be a part of my family, to have friends and companionship in the communion of the saints.

Also my spiritual needs are so many, for which I covet the best gifts of love and devotion to my God.

For among all my many and various needs, this is the greatest: that I may know Thee, the only true and living God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent! Covenant fellowship with God, along with His approval and blessing, always remains my greatest need: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord forever!

Coveting belongs to my very being as rational, moral creature, which is so deeply dependent upon my God!

I am reminded of the rich young ruler, who came to Jesus with the burning question in his soul, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered: Keep God's commandments, particularly the commandments of the second table of the law. The young man remembered that this was what the scribes had taught him as far back as he could remember. He had always tried to keep the letter of the law all his life, but it had not given him the peace with God, which his soul so greatly desired.

Then Jesus told him to sell all his earthly goods, take up his cross, and become His disciple. "One thing thou lackest," Jesus had said; that one thing is required by the tenth commandment, reminding you that you shall love the Lord your God with your whole being, for keeping the commandments is a matter of the heart!

The young man went away sorrowing. Never before had he realized how strongly his heart was attached to his earthly possessions. How difficult it would be to put them all away. Yet we may believe that by the grace of God he did it. For Jesus had compassion on Him.

Our holy coveting has turned to sin and is now corrupted by sin!

Our first parents coveted the fruit of the forbidden tree in paradise.

Cain was jealous of Abel, hated him and killed him.

Joseph's brothers envied him and sold him as a slave into Egypt, where Potiphar's wife lusted after him. After all, he was an attractive young man.

David lusted after Bathsheba, even though he had many wives. Before all was said and done, he had committed adultery, murder, theft, and virtually every other sin.

Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard as his own, and left it to his wife to dispose of Naboth, so that he could claim the vineyard.

Judas was a thief. He sold Jesus to the enemy for thirty pieces of silver. He tried to spare his life by joining the enemy, yet he ended up hanging himself and dashing headlong into hell.

This list becomes endless. For obviously covetousness lies at the root of all sin. It is the root of all evil! For sin is more than giving in to bad influences, more than bad habits. Sin is a matter of the heart!

Scripture speaks of sin as 'missing the mark'. The mark, the target of our lives is set by God, because He is God! We always miss the mark, because we always, often even deliberately, aim in the wrong direction!

Our hearts are evil, filled with carnal lusts. Jesus warns us, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man," (Mk. 7:21-23).

Paul tells us that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," and "to be carnally minded is death," (Rom. 8:6, 7).

John in his epistle speaks of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life as so many manifestations of the love of the world, and the things of the world, which love is contrary to the love of God.

The tenth commandment reaches down to the root of our sins, condemning not merely the outward act, but the wicked, corrupt nature.

The final command of the law is very specific!

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." A man must not covet the woman God gave to someone else. Likewise, a woman must not desire the husband that belongs to another woman. God joins to every man his own, divinely appointed wife, and to every woman her divinely chosen husband. This is for life, even until death brings the parting. No one shall relinquish his or her mate to another. This

is simply a divine ordinance that man may not ignore. Yet what happens? A neighbor's wife is so much nicer, so much more appealing than a man's own wife. A neighbor's husband is far more affectionate and considerate than a woman's own husband. Sometimes mates are exchanged. Sometimes the one leaves the divinely appointed mate to seek out or to lure one that is more desirable. All sorts of lustful sins are committed within and outside of the marriage bond. We know, better than God does, whom we should love. The root is covetousness, which God hates, even as He hates idolatry!

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass," (Deut. 5:21). Today we would say, thy neighbor's house, his car, his land, his job, his motor home, his cottage, or any of his many earthly treasures. This can readily reveal itself in selfish greed. The rich man of the parable is a good example of that. We read, "The field of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly." That was God's work. Yet the man gloated as if he had himself to thank for the wonderful crop. He planned to build bigger barns to store his immense crop. And then he would say to his soul — his soul, mind you — "You've attained! You are well insured for many years to come. Eat, drink, and be merry; forget about that miserable Lazarus who lies at your gate!" But God said . . . "Thou fool!"

No, money is not the root of all evil. But the *love* of money, the covetous nature is!

Why does a drunkard or a drug addict ruin his health and his reputation, steal and kill to satisfy his cravings, and bring disaster upon himself and his family?

Why does a person bring untold grief upon his parents, his wife and children by carrying on with another woman, or vice versa? Why is the divorced person still dissatisfied?

Why does the thief begin with petty stealing (maybe a nickel or a dime that stings his conscience at the time) and end up with a crime that ruins his business and sends him to jail?

Why does a person enjoy being dissatisfied, always craving more than he or she has, always complaining, never content? Why does the spend-thrift waste his money, and the miser greedily cling to it?

But why add more? The answer is that covetousness is a matter of the evil heart and the corrupt nature! From the heart are the issues of life!

How do we escape from this evil? Will some new, firm resolution deliver us? Will an external reform hold control of the heart? Jesus speaks of sweeping the house clean of one devil, and thereby

preparing it for seven even worse devils. He also tells of devils that cannot be driven out, except by close communion with God. There are selfish, carnal lusts that cannot be overcome except by humbling ourselves as needy, helpless creatures before the face of our God!

In all sincerity our prayer must arise to heaven, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" (Psalm 139:23, 24)

My God says: Be thou holy, for I am holy! Be thou perfect, for your heavenly Father is perfect!

That does not mean that I can make this a nice ideal in my life. Nor does it mean that God is pleased with an imperfect faith and an attempt at holiness. Pretty good is not good enough!

The holy, righteous God has the right to require of me that I love Him with my whole being in everything! And that I extend my love to my neighbor, to be concerned about his welfare as much as my own!

And I? I see it now. I am evil, born in sin! I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor! O wretched man that I am! Nothing less than sincere sorrow and daily repentance can please God!

My only escape is in my Savior Jesus Christ, who was my Savior on the cross and is now my Savior in heaven! I begin to understand what Paul meant when he said, "For to me to live is Christ!" Christ is the reason for my life, Christ is the source of my life, Christ is the power within my life, Christ is the purpose of my life. He is my goal in all my life! Only in Christ can death be gain for me!

At the feet of the apostle I learn to say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content!" Yet I must learn it anew time and again!

True thankfulness is extending needy hands to heaven, pleading for grace that Christ may be my all in all!

One desire: My God! In Christ Jesus!! Forevermore!!! AMEN.

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### **JESUS LEFT ALONE** (continued from page 181)

We rejoice in learning of any small handful of believers on this or that island, or in this or that heathen nation, who stand as we do in the truth of the Gospel. We rejoice where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name. There you are, perhaps on some small island of the sea. Suppose the whole world population turn against you! What of it? If God be for us, who can be against us? If God places us on His side, we need not worry who or how many are on the other side. God is enough.

## EDITORIAL

# Ecclesiastical Rebellion

A recent issue of *The Banner* (12/1/'86) carried reports of two instances of ecclesiastical rebellion. No, *The Banner* did not call them ecclesiastical rebellion. That characterization is mine.

The first instance is reported on page 22 under the heading "Eastern Avenue Invites Women to Pulpit," as follows:

Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, has told its classis that it has had and plans to continue to have "women preaching for services occasionally."

In the statement, made to Classis Grand Rapids East on Sept. 18, Eastern Avenue said that the church wishes to "recognize the ordination to the ministry of women from other denominations, and particularly those with whom we are in ecclesiastical fellowship." Rev. Marchiene Rienstra and Rev. Neva Evenhouse have each preached at the church. Both women are ordained in the Reformed Church in America.

The statement said that Eastern Avenue is "officially committed to the use of women's gifts in all church offices and (that) this is an important way to experience and affirm that commitment."

The church also said that it hopes to show children a "male-female partnership in preaching the gospel as well as in other church offices" by having women preach. The classis received the church's statement "for information."

In the same issue of *The Banner* there is a report, both in the Editorial, p. 6, and in the News, pp. 22, 23, of a public meeting called by a committee of the Eastern Avenue consistory about the question "whether that church should elect a female elder or call a woman theologian as an associate minister." A committee of the Eastern Avenue consistory "is asking whether the only way to make any further progress toward opening all offices in the Christian Reformed Church to members of female gender would be to present the ordination of a woman to classis and synod as a test case." The latter question, the reader should remember, arises in connection with the fact that the Christian Reformed Synod of 1985 determined that the headship principle implies that "only male members of the church

shall be admitted to the offices of minister and elder." Editor Kuyvenhoven at that meeting stated that "he believes all church offices should be open to women but that ordaining a woman elder at this time would probably split the church." According to the report, "He called . . . for patience and dialogue between churches" rather than making a test case.

It should be noted, however, that Eastern Avenue has already created a so-called "test case." True, it has not ordained a woman minister or elder. But it has recognized the ordination of women in the RCA by inviting two female ministers of that denomination to its pulpit. There is no principal difference between this and ordaining its own female minister or elders. To justify this by an appeal to the fact that there is ecclesiastical fellowship between the CRC and the RCA is a thinly veiled ruse. After all, the Eastern Avenue Consistory has control of its own pulpit, and its action was deliberate. Besides, Eastern Avenue informed Classis Grand Rapids East that it is "officially committed to the use of women's gifts in all church offices."

Here, therefore, is an instance of flagrant rebellion, of open defiance of an ecclesiastical decision. Eastern Avenue not only violated the decision of the Synod of 1985, but it did so knowingly and deliberately. Further, it deliberately called the attention of its classis to this violation. In other words, it threw down the gauntlet to that assembly.

And what did Classis Grand Rapids East do? Apparently nothing more than receive the statement of Eastern Avenue for information. In other words, the classis filed it and ignored it, which means that the classis is tolerating this act of rebellion.

I cannot refrain from remarking parenthetically that things have certainly changed in Classis Grand Rapids East. I can recall another Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church (not the current one, which is after all the reorganized church of 1924, the so-called "ninety-two.") And once upon a time, though without any proper grounds and though Synod had *rejected* a proposal of discipline in the

case, Classis Grand Rapids East suspended and deposed from office an entire consistory and its pastor on the grounds of "insubordination to proper ecclesiastical authority." Times have changed! Now Classis Grand Rapids East, though confronted by a genuine instance of rebellion, does nothing but receive for information.

The same issue of *The Banner* reports a second instance of ecclesiastical rebellion. This one is at the other end of the liberal-conservative spectrum in the CRC. On October 23 and 24 there was a consistorial conference called by the consistories of Lynwood, Illinois, Dutton, Michigan, and First Rock Valley, Iowa Christian Reformed Churches. This conference involved 18 Christian Reformed Consistories. It adopted several resolutions "for recommendation to the various churches. *The Banner* did not quote these resolutions in full. However, an official press release by the recording secretary of the conference, the Rev. Stuart C. Pastine, appeared in both *Christian Renewal* and *The Outlook*. It is not my intention at this time to comment on all the resolutions, and therefore I will not quote all of them now. Perhaps in a later issue I shall do so. However, there are two resolutions concerning synodical quotas (the same as our Protestant Reformed "synodical assessments"). These are as follows:

4. We encourage all consistories to withhold financial support for those synodical agencies which undermine our confessional integrity.

*Ground:* God alone is Lord of the conscience and no one may be forced to support causes which violate his conscience.

5. However, we encourage consistories to continue to support those agencies which are worthy of their support.

*Ground:* Participation in the denomination obligates a congregation to contribute toward the services it receives from the denomination.

Here you have a second instance of ecclesiastical rebellion, or rather, of recommending and formenting ecclesiastical rebellion. To me it makes no fundamental difference whether one speaks of "quotas," as is the vogue in the CRC, or of "assessments," as is the usage in our Protestant Reformed Churches. The reference is to the obligatory financial support of denominational causes, i.e., the work of the churches in common. Concerning these resolutions it should be noted:

- 1) That No. 5 speaks merely of "the services it receives from the denomination." This is surely incorrect. While services received may be included, in general assessments or quotas are for the work of the churches in common — for example, missions, seminary, etc.

- 2) That they are contradictory. No. 5 states that to contribute to denominational causes is obligatory. No. 4 encourages consistories not to meet this obligation.

- 3) That the principle here is that of *individualism*. Every individual consistory may determine for itself whether to pay or not to pay synodical quotas. In addition, the standard of determination is apparently that of *conscience* — let your conscience be your guide. A proper standard would be that of the Church Order in Article 31 of the Church Order of Dordt, namely, "the Word of God and the Church Order." But even then, it is obligatory on any consistory not simply to withhold financial support, but to go the orderly way of protest and appeal. And if, after exhausting all appeal, a consistory finds itself in such fundamental disagreement with the denomination that it cannot conscientiously support it, it has come, it seems to me, to the end of the road. If a consistory tolerated the same kind of individualism in its local congregation, such a consistory simply could not operate.

- 4) That they leave the impression of coercion. No, this is not stated. But it sounds suspiciously like something that was suggested in a speech at the annual meeting of the Reformed Fellowship: "... insisting on an accounting to consistories by every agency we support — 'no answer, no bucks.'" (*The Outlook*, Dec., 1986, p. 15) And this is simply not the ecclesiastical manner.

- 5) No. 4 assumes without proof — and this is a serious indictment — that there are "synodical agencies which undermine our confessional integrity." I have no doubt that there are such agencies. But for a Christian Reformed consistory, a constituent part of the denomination, to assume this and to act on such an assumption is quite a different matter than for a non-Christian Reformed editor to say it.

All of this, of course, confronts the Christian Reformed denomination with a problem. Will the CRC in its broader assemblies — classes and synod — simply ignore such ecclesiastical rebellion? Will it wink at it and thus passively permit it? Or will it somehow officially make allowances for it? Then the result will inevitably be that the CRC becomes a modalities church, in which various wings will co-exist in a state of toleration — unless, of course, one of these wings does not want to countenance such "peaceful co-existence." The alternative, it seems to me, is that ecclesiastical steps are taken to counteract such rebellion, whether on one side or the other. It seems to become increasingly clear that there are those who have no expectation that Editor Kuyvenhoven's suggestion of "patience and dialogue" will solve anything. HCH

# “Good Morning, Alice”

Gise J. Van Baren

Every Christmas, Alice made a great deal of giving presents to her nieces and nephews of high school age and younger. When she was well, she found pleasure in shopping for each present — and watching later the reaction of each child who received it. This last Christmas that Alice was with us, she would also give presents — but the parents were instructed by her to buy presents for their own children with money she provided. The children must be told that the present was from Aunt Alice.

The family Christmas party was held at John's house so that Alice could enjoy this in the comfort of her own bed. She couldn't talk, of course, but how her eyes would light up in observing the reaction of the children to the presents they received — and she herself smiled joyfully at presents she also received (though most of them she perhaps could never use). The thought came to mind too: would Alice be here on another Christmas to celebrate it with us?

*Good Morning Alice:*

*Yesterday I looked through the verses we have shared together and I was really surprised that I've not shared my thoughts on Ps. 46:10a. It has always been a very favorite verse and although I now have many more, thanks to these notes, this one will always mean a lot to me. I guess that's because it's something very necessary for me. It's like I always know God is God, and I know He controls all things, but with all the world around me, and in my sinful flesh, I get too busy and just don't acknowledge it — don't think on it, and thus I do not experience the joy and comfort and strength that that knowledge brings.*

*The Psalm begins: God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble. But, if we don't acknowledge that and have it consciously before our minds, if we aren't still, we will not experience that help.*

*So I have to tell myself: "Be still"; erase all other thoughts from my mind, and desires from my heart, and know and experience that God is God and then I know that refuge and strength and comfort.*

*In His love, Your friend*

*Please read Phil. 4:6-7*

Alice spent most of her time, during the last months of her illness, in bed. This is how we saw her so very often. We realized that this was part of

the inevitable progression of her disease. We failed to realize at that time how deeply all of this impressed itself upon the minds of the little nieces and nephews who saw her. Alice and her bed seemed to be part of the "normal". Later, at the funeral home, little niece Janis, who so often had run into her room to awaken her, asked, "But where is Auntie Alice's bed?"

*Good Morning Alice:*

*Some years ago I heard sermons on these verses and I really benefited from them. There are so many wonderful words of instruction and encouragement here.*

*Be careful for nothing; careful here means: anxious. We are not to be anxious or to worry about anything. I do that all too often. Usually it's worrying about the teenage kids or about not getting things done as I should and so many things.*

*I know everyone gets upset over different things — some about money; some about illness; but we may not!*

*The verse does not say try not to fret about your life or things that happen to you; it says "Be careful for nothing." Do not worry. Give it all over to the Lord. It sounds impossible, and humanly speaking, it is. But we are told it is possible. We are to turn everything over to God. That doesn't mean just big things. That means if my son is late in getting home, I can — no — I must bring it to God in prayer, and know He is in control.*

*If I just can't accept something God has placed in my life, I must continually bring it to Him in prayer and again know that He is in control. I must make everything known to Him and He will give me the peace to know that whatever His answer is, it is best for me. This isn't easy to learn, but I'm trying to learn it.*

*I know that as I do give everything over to Him, He will guard my heart and my mind and give me peace, a peace that I cannot understand, and yet I know it's there.*

*Strive with me, Alice, to give every worry, every problem, every rebellious thought, every "why" over to God in prayer.*

*And in as much as we do that, we will experience that un-understandable, wonderful warm and comforting peace of God filling our hearts.*

*In His love, Your friend*

*Please read Psalm 27:1*

Through this difficult period, the relatives tried



to keep Alice as comfortable as possible. With bed-ridden patients, bed sores are often a problem. Alice had the added difficulty of being unable to move herself — not even an inch now. She could feel everything. She would quickly become sore by lying in one position for any length of time. One big improvement for Alice was the purchase of a thin air mattress with an attached air pump. Air would be forced through different sections of this mattress so that there was constant change of pressure on the contact points of her back. Little waves of air constantly rippled along her back. Again, Alice at first insisted that this mattress was completely unnecessary — though she soon came to appreciate it greatly. It helped to prevent the bed sores and did relieve the soreness of lying in one position for long times, especially through the long night.

*Good Morning Alice:*

*What a beautiful sunny morning.*

*And what a beautiful text.*

**THE LORD IS MY LIGHT**

*without Him all is darkness.*

**AND MY SALVATION**

*without Him I would be lost forever.*

**WHOM SHALL I FEAR**

*I am His, I am saved; no one can do anything to take that away.*

**THE LORD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY LIFE**

*I am weak, but in His love, I am strong. My life without Him is only failure — with Him is strength and life itself.*

**OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID**

*Who or what can harm me when I am His? Whatever comes into my life, I am safe in His care.*

*Think today of what that light, salvation, and strength means in your life, Alice.*

*With love, Your friend*

*Please read Ps. 27:13-14*

One of the last of the family anniversaries Alice joined in celebrating was the 25th wedding anniversary of brother Gise and his wife Claire (on Feb. 1). Alice came to their home with the other relatives. Though she could not move, she was still able to sit in her wheelchair for short periods of time. We could see that she was uncomfortable in the chair now, though she was not ready to admit it. Much of the evening was spent putting pillows, first under one leg, then under the other. Still, she managed to stay for several hours, and apparently enjoyed herself, too.

*Good Morning Alice:*

*You know Alice, with these notes I've sent, I'm sure I've repeated myself many times already. I know I've*

*talked about heaven when someone near to me died, but these verses are so wonderful, I know they will encourage you as they do me.*

*What would this life be, if we didn't have the hope of seeing our Lord in the land of the living?*

*Can you imagine the emptiness, the horror of life, if we didn't know what awaited us at death?*

*These verses should really be memorized!*

*I would "faint" if I didn't believe that my death will be my beginning. The beginning of my real living — without sin and suffering and doubt, and with my Savior forever.*

*That's why I can wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and as I do, He strengthens me more and more to know Him and wait on Him. Not just for Him — for His return in my life, but wait on Him, leaning on Him for all my strength and hope.*

*In Him for Whom we wait, Your friend*

*Please read Psalm 149:4*

Literally hundreds of letters and cards had come to Alice by now. Each one she cherished, and many had to be pinned to the bulletin board for a time. Every one of them had to be read and saved. How she enjoyed too the continuing visits from relatives and friends — many of these travelled from Illinois to see her. Many did favors for her — one finished an intricate piece of needle work for her, a sailing ship, which hangs still on the wall at John's house. It was truly communion of saints expressed in a visible way.

*Good Morning Alice:*

*Once in a while I find that yesterday's verse meant so much that it's hard to find one to follow it. After thinking so much on dwelling in the land of the living, what more can we want? But we still have the rest of our lives to live here, and all of Scripture is our guide and our comfort.*

*Today's verse is another one that a sinner can hardly understand. How can I, looking at even one day, or one hour, of my life, understand how God can take pleasure in me? Only through the shed blood of our Savior can God take pleasure in us.*

*And not only that, but He beautifies the meek with salvation. Now I am by no means a "meek" person, but I know that this meekness means a repentant humble spirit towards God and through Christ. I do have that.*

*And then, knowing these truths, and remembering them, I can, as verse five says — be joyful in glory and sing aloud! And so can you, Alice, for even when others can no longer hear your singing, God can and does, and will continue to beautify you with salvation.*

*With love, Your friend*

*Please read Jeremiah 29:13*



## TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Herman Veldman

### The Apostles' Creed (11)

We were busy in our preceding article with a discussion of the basic purpose of the providence of God. And we called attention to the fact that this basic purpose is certainly not to realize the kingdom of God in the postmillennial sense of the word. Neither is this basic purpose to be viewed as maintaining a sort of interval period. It was particularly the latter conception with which we were busy as we concluded our article. We noted that it surely was not the devil's intention to destroy this world, as the theory of common grace contends in this view. And it certainly was not the Lord's intention to maintain an original creation ordinance or idea. This view is emphatically refuted by the passages we quoted, Eph. 1:9-10 and Col. 1:15-19. And now we continue with our discussion.

Thirdly, whereas the Lord would maintain His original creation ordinance through common grace (as this theory maintains), this implies that He will maintain this original creation ordinance as long as His operation of a common grace functions. When the Lord withdraws this common grace, the world will plunge into ruin. But why should the Lord withdraw His common grace? What happened? Did the will of the sinner finally prevail over the will and desire of the Lord that He should finally withdraw the operation of His common grace?

Finally, it simply is not true that God interceded with His common grace, checking the power of sin which enables the sinner to do much good, exerting a good, wholesome influence upon man. Fact is, we are all conceived and born dead in sin and in misery; fact is, God's curse descended upon the earth and upon the human race; fact is, mankind is ever developing in sin and iniquity, even as we read it very clearly in Romans 1.

What is the purpose of God's providence? This: to glorify Himself in the highest possible manner,

in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord, in the way of sin and grace. This is the purpose of God's providence: to establish His kingdom in Christ Jesus, in everlasting life and heavenly immortality, and that all things may serve that purpose, including sin and all the powers of evil and darkness. The Lord never retraces His steps, never moves in a circle, knows no detour; all things lead to His glory and this occurs in and through Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord.

And now we also understand the wonderful fruit of this providence of God, as expressed in Answer 28 of Lord's Day 10. Now we may be patient in adversity. Patience is not stoicism, indifference, forced subjection. Patience is that power of the grace of God whereby we, also and particularly inwardly, are willing to endure all affliction and adversity and persecution for God's sake, knowing that all things work together for good unto the glory of God's Name. And now we can also be thankful in prosperity. Mind you, not thankful *for* prosperity, thankful merely for the good we receive. But we can be thankful *in* prosperity. When the Lord prospers our way, makes our way "voorspoedig," makes it possible for us to conduct our worship services, maintain our own schools, our mission endeavors, to exercise our calling as the people of the living God, we shall be thankful to God, knowing that it is He Who enables us to function as His people in the midst of the world.

How wonderful this is! Are not all things against us? Is not that which we eat and drink weighed down by the curse of God? Is it not true that dying we die, and that we are headed inexorably for and into the grave? Is it not true that the people of God are hated and persecuted, that the powers of sin and evil far outnumber us, that affliction and distress are our lot in the midst of the world? Is it not therefore true that if there be a divine providence, a divine government, that the Lord appears to be against us, that He is leading us inex-

orably into the grave, that He allows the forces of darkness to play with us as a cat plays with a mouse, according to their hearts' desire? And all these things work together for our good? Does not faith take hold of that which the eye cannot see, the ear cannot hear, which can never enter into the heart of man? Does not faith take hold of something which is humanly quite impossible? Do we not believe that all things work together for an everlasting and immortal glory that is heavenly? And this surely means that this is a glory which lies hopelessly beyond our reach? Yes, we are patient in adversity, but this adversity never leaves us as long as we continue in this valley of the shadow of death. We are thankful in prosperity, but we look forward to a city that no human eye can see. We believe in life everlasting, but it can be attained only through death. Indeed, how wonderful, how unspeakably wonderful is this providence of God!

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How can we speak of, believe in this providence of the Lord which lies completely beyond all human understanding? It has been revealed!

First, it is revealed in Christ Jesus.

How can we believe something which no eye can see, no ear can hear, no heart can grasp and discern? How can we speak of this providence of God when there appears to be nothing in life to substantiate or imply it? To what can we possibly cling? After all, the Christian is a thinking, discerning Christian. He surely knows what he believes. He can and must give an account of what he believes. But how can he know? And then we say that he knows this, first of all, because of what is revealed in God's Word concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

What we believe is expressed in Article 1 of our Apostles' Creed. We read: "I believe in God, the Father, Almighty." And then we read in Answer 26 of Lord's Day 9: "That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." So, this almighty Creator and Governor of the universe is our Father in our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, all this is revealed in Christ Jesus. He alone is our sole ray of light, our only beam of hope. He entered for us into all our misery and guilt and distress and afflictions. In fact, He entered into an unfathomably great and profound misery, far beyond all our human understanding. He bore the wrath of God upon all our sins and trespasses. But this is not all. Appearing as the Servant of Jehovah in the midst of the world, He was also the Man of Sorrows as far as the world is concerned. He was despised and rejected of men, hated by all. If ever a person's position was hopeless in the midst of the world, His was hopeless. He was God's servant, perfectly and preeminently.

And yet, was there ever one as maligned and maltreated as He? Yet He was glorified. He was raised from the dead and for this there is indisputable evidence. The Lord saw to it that there is not an event in the history of the world which is supported by greater proof. He was glorified at the Father's right hand. In Him life was called out of darkness, immortality out of mortality, incorruption out of corruption, honour out of shame, light out of darkness. All that we read in this wonderful Lord's Day, in connection with the providence of God, is revealed in Him, the Captain of our salvation and the Finisher of the faith.

Secondly, we read in Answer 28: "since all creatures are so in His hand, that without His will they cannot so much as move."

When we speak of the providence of the Lord we make a three-fold distinction. First of all, God's providence is the preservation of all things. This refers to the almighty and everywhere-present power of God whereby He sustains, as by His hand, every living creature in harmony with each creature's particular nature or being, the flower as flower, the tree as tree, etc. Then, we also speak of God's government. This refers to the providential power of God whereby He leads and guides all things to their divinely appointed end. And, thirdly, the providence of God also includes what is known as cooperation. This word is not exactly a happily chosen word. When we speak of cooperation, we certainly cannot mean that the Lord and man cooperate, that they labor and function together, that each does his part, although it is conceded then that the Lord certainly does the greater part. However, cooperation means that every moral-rational creature, whether willingly or unwillingly, is active, consciously active, but as under God's almighty, everywhere-present and sovereign control. We now call attention to this cooperation.

We call attention, first of all, to some scriptural passages. In 2 Samuel 16:5, 10, in connection with Shimei we read: "And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who then shall say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" In Genesis 50:20 we read: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Indeed, Joseph's brethren had thought evil against Joseph. But the Lord had meant it unto good to bring to pass to save much people alive. And then we read in Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." To be sure, Jesus was taken, crucified and slain by wicked hands. Nevertheless, He was delivered by the

determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Two truths are mentioned here: God's determinate counsel and the sinner's wicked action.

We must surely maintain the following. First, the sinner is and remains a moral-rational being. We distinguish between sovereign freedom and moral freedom. We also speak of man's responsibility. Responsibility must never be confused with sovereign freedom. Man's responsibility can never mean that the sinner is able to choose either the good or the bad, and that therefore he is held responsible because, being able to choose the good, he chose the evil. He certainly chooses between the good and the evil. The winner always chooses. This is scriptural. But this does not mean that he can choose both. This can never be man's responsibility because we are all conceived and born dead in sins and in trespasses. Responsibility (notice the word itself) is man's ability to respond, his ability to re-

spond to God's revelation of Himself, if only we bear in mind that he can only respond with an emphatic No, the rejection of the living God. He always chooses between the good and the evil, but he can never choose the good, only the evil. Man, or the sinner, if you will, remains a moral-rational being. When he sinned, as in Adam, he did not become an idiot, did not lose his power to think and reason. He does what he does because he chooses to do it. And in this choosing of the evil (he can never choose the good) he is never forced, coerced, never compelled to act contrary to his own will and desire. He always does what he does freely, is never forced or driven. He never acts contrary to his desire.

The Lord, however, is and remains sovereign. To this, however, we must call attention in a following article.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

*John A. Heys*

# A Mighty Cry For Salvation

It worked!

The method the all-wise God chose, and used through His servant Jonah, succeeded in getting the elect in Nineveh to repent, turn from their evil ways and cry out for salvation. There was no "free offer" proclaimed unto these Ninevites. No "altar call" was voiced. Neither God nor Jonah pleaded with the Ninevites to accept the "gospel invitation". The love of God was not held up before their eyes and used as the approach to attempt to get conversion and faith. Instead there was an announcement of God's holy wrath because of sins committed, and a warning of a certain visitation upon these sins. But it worked! A goodly number of Ninevites did repent, did turn from their evil ways and the violence of their hands. And mightily they cried to God, seeking salvation.

This is amazing when you consider that the preacher God sent did not want to work there, and with all his heart wanted the city destroyed. He did not go there in the hope that a goodly number would be converted and that the city would not be overthrown. These Ninevites were not a people that wanted fellowship with Jonah's people. They sought no friendly relations with them. Instead they were a hostile people that threatened Israel's life, and would like to introduce their idols and evil life into Canaan. This preacher was of the firm conviction that the best thing that could happen to this people was that they and their city were wiped off the face of this earth.

Many today that call themselves evangelists would reject Jonah as a proper tool to bring sinners to repentance and unto faith in Christ. The method as well as the tool God chose would be rejected by them. Jonah would be put out of office and be told to seek employment in some other field of work.

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But the method worked, and the tool did not spoil the end that was sought; because that method was chosen by the all-wise God, and that tool was in His almighty hand.

This ought to be revealing to us today. It ought to say much to us in this day and age when the approach to the sinner is a distorted emphasis upon God's love — which is claimed to be resting on every man, woman and child in the world — and God's holy wrath against sin and the sinner is only whispered, if it is mentioned at all. Most of the time the hatred of God against the sinners whose names were not written in the Lamb's book of life from eternity is emphatically denied.

O, God hates sin, but not the sinner, is the stand of so many today. Sin is just something that hangs in the air somewhere and is not attached to the person. It does not come out of and is not rooted in the evil thoughts and desires of man. It is not really his work, so that he cannot be blamed. God loves the man we dare to call a sinner, and hates only his sin. The cry is that Jesus Himself said in John 3:16 that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And to them this means that God loves every single man, woman, and child in the world. But wait a minute. Is that not saying too much? Is Satan, in John 12:31, not called the prince of this world? Surely, if God loves everyone in the world, He will love its prince. By all means get that heretical idea out of your heart and mind! Hold on to Psalm 5:5: "The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity". Take careful note of how God approaches these sinners in that great city of Nineveh. He tells Jonah to tell these people that they are sinners and that He will overthrow them if they do not repent, turn from their evil ways, and confess Him to be their God. That preaching will bring to the faith and to repentance those sinners whose sins were paid for in the blood of God's Son.

Why will this kind of preaching work sincere sorrow for sin and a cry for God's mercy? Because God chose it and uses it. Conversion does not depend upon the man who preaches it. It depends upon God Who chose that method, and speaks through the man He called to preach that truth. You can pick up the brushes that a noted artist uses, and make use of his oils, but that does not mean that your painting will be beautiful like his. He can pick up the brushes and oils you use and paint therewith that which makes your picture look crude and off-color. It is not the tool, but the one who uses the tool. It was not Jonah, but God who planned Jonah's sermons and spoke through him. It was God, Who by His Spirit spoke in the hearts of the elect Ninevites (while Jonah's words entered their ears and fleshly minds) Who wrought this

repentance.

And it is interesting as well as significant to note how Scripture here presents the success God gave to Jonah's preaching. We read in Jonah 3:5, "So the people of Nineveh believed God." It was Jonah who told them that God would overthrow Nineveh in forty days. And undoubtedly the elect in Nineveh believed Jonah when he cried this out to them. But believing the preacher is one thing. Believing God is quite another thing. Many today believe preachers who say that the bread and wine in the sacrament turn into the actual flesh and blood of Christ. But that will do them no good, and it will do them great harm. The question is not what man preaches but what God says through him, when he preaches what God has bidden him to preach.

These Ninevites believed in God, and that means that they believed that HE is God, and that their idols were not gods. The Hebrew states that they believed in Elohim. He was their God, and they believed that there was no God beside Him. For Elohim means The Almighty One. Their idols therefore are worthless, have no might, and it is folly to trust in them. And because they believe in The Almighty One, they are sure that He can and will overthrow their city, if they do not repent and flee from their sins. It means that they believe that they should keep His law and walk in ways pleasing in His sight. Therefore it also means that they are keenly aware of having displeased Him with all their evil, and that they deserve to be punished by Him.

From the king's question: "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?" it is evident that Jonah in no way and to no degree even hinted at the truth that God would show mercy to those who sincerely repented and turned from their sins. Had Jonah done so, the king would never have presented that question to his citizens. The king, however, was correct in commanding his people to cry mightily to God for forgiveness and for escape from punishment. That is quite in order, when there is sincere sorrow for sin and a turning away from it.

Now the sincerity of the Ninevites became evident in their fasting, wearing sackcloth and sitting in the ashes. All this was not an attempt to buy salvation, or earn it by their works. That would only be adding to their sin. Trying to buy anything from God is breaking the second commandment, and therefore also a breaking of the first commandment. When we sin, no matter what the sin is, we always break the first commandment and have before us another god than Jehovah. It is having a god who is not Elohim, the Almighty One. It is having a god of our own imagination, who allows these

evil deeds. And as far as the Ninevites are concerned, it would have been making a god in their imagination, whom they can change by their cries and external deeds. Then they believe in a god over whom the sinner has power. He is not the Almighty One, for man can overpower him and change him and his mind by man's deeds. No, the sackcloth and ashes together with the fasting were not to influence the Almighty One, but evidences of the sorrow in the hearts of the elect, because they had displeased God and rebelled against Him.

Fasting, sackcloth and ashes symbolize sadness, grief, and lack of joy and happiness. They meant that the smile on God's face, His favour upon them, meant more than all the earthly treasures and pleasures. They meant that the elect Ninevites were so concerned with being pleasing in God's sight that they found nothing pleasing in the things of this earth and of this life. The main thing was getting right with God! What concerned them was, as the king expressed it, escape from the fierce anger of the God against Whom they sinned. Yea, these were manifestations of the fact that they confessed that they did not deserve the things of this earth and of this life. These were signs of their acknowledgement that they did not deserve life, that they were guilty and had been using the things of this life and of this earth sinfully.

And is it not because we covet, and are breaking that tenth commandment, that we break all the rest of the second table of the law? Is it not true that our lives are such that we worship and live for delicious foods, dainty clothing of the latest style and fashion? Is it not true that we are so occupied with earthly things that God is pushed out of our minds and lives? Do we live for Him, or for a good time here below? What comes first in our lives? It happened years later, but Paul wrote it, because this situation always existed in the world since man fell. Paul writes in Colossians 3:1, 2, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on the things on the earth." And did Jesus not say in His Sermon on the Mount, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for

your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Matthew 6:24, 25. And even before that He said in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is — there will your heart be also." The hearts of these elect Ninevites was not on the things of this earth, but on peace with God. And we should duplicate their behaviour today, instead of feasting and competing with the world in dazzling attire and ornamentation. We, too, have glaring evil ways and far more room for sorrow than for laughter and fleshly glee.

Crying mightily unto God goes hand in hand with such spiritual grief. Without it the fasting, wearing sackcloth, and sitting in ashes are mockery. Because the king commanded it, many unbelievers did go through all these motions, lest they be punished by the king, not by God Whom they did not love, and in Whom they did not believe.

Now crying mightily does not mean making a lot of noise. The Baal prophets did that when they wanted Baal to send down fire upon their altar and bullock. But we read of Elijah in I Kings 18:36, 37 that he merely *said* ". . . Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel . . ." And no sooner had he ended his calm prayer for fire, and it came down. Here, too, in Nineveh it was not the loudness of the cry of these penitent sinners, but the strength of desire, and the strong conviction that He is God and able to save them, that their true penitence produced. It was a cry of an intense, great desire.

We are not going to overwhelm God by loud and frequent prayers. He is the Almighty One. He warned Nineveh that it would be overthrown, if they did not repent. But He Himself will not now be overthrown by loud cries. If the king meant that, he was only advocating more sin. No, the mighty God will work in His elect a powerful desire for a salvation that they do not deserve. His almighty power will become manifest in a mighty cry which He works in them. His might wrought this amazing change in the elect Ninevites. There was spiritual might behind it and in it.

#### **JESUS LEFT ALONE** *(continued from page 191)*

heaven" (Matt. 16:17). The philosophers will say of our Gospel, The whole world denies it! Then the world without the Gospel's saving power is as bad off as can be. There is always a Tom Fool who will say, The Bible is not true! But the Bible is true, and you may answer the fool with, "Let God be true and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). Others will say that we ought to have an updated "social gospel," a new theology, the effect of which is to liberate men

from poverty and hunger. However that may be, our stand must be, "though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). The world may reply, "If that's your stand, you stand alone against the whole world." Then so be it. For every preacher of the Gospel and every Christian can say, Ye may and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, for the Father and His Christ are with me. *(con't. page 172)*

# THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

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December 16, 1986

Dear Brothers and Sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ:

The fact that we have no seminary students and only one pre-seminary student does not mean the Seminary faculty has little or nothing to do. Prof. Hoeksema is teaching Dutch Grammar to our pre-seminarian, Leonard Holstege, who is in his sophomore year at the college level and to two others interested in learning Dutch. Prof. Hoeksema is also writing his Old Testament History Notes and working on a new book on the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches. In addition to his Wednesday evening class on the Canons of Dordt Prof. Hoeksema plans to offer a seminar on the theology of G. C. Berkhouwer for ministers of the Grand Rapids area. This class will meet on Tuesday mornings beginning in January. Both Prof. Hanko and Prof. Decker are busy working on their Master of Theology degrees at Calvin Theological Seminary. Prof. Hanko is studying in the area of Church History and Prof. Decker in Homiletics (The Art and Science of Preaching). This provides the opportunity for these men to do some in depth study which will prove beneficial for their teaching. Prof. Hanko will be teaching, D.V., an evening course on the office and duties of deacons beginning in January. Beginning in the fall of 1987 Prof. Decker will be teaching a course on the office and duties of elders and/or a seminar on Preaching for the local ministers. All three professors enjoy occasional preaching assignments.

The library, under the direction of Prof. Hanko, continues to expand. Each year from \$1500.00 to \$2000.00 is spent on new books for the library. At this rate, we believe, our students in the future will be able to do most if not all of their research in our own library. We are grateful to those who have contributed to this important part of our seminary.

While there are several young men who have indicated an interest in pre-seminary studies, our urgent need for new students remains. We covet earnestly your prayers that God will provide "faithful men" who can be trained "to teach others also." (II Timothy 2:2)

With Christian greetings,

The Faculty (per Prof. R.D. Decker)

## WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Herman C. Hanko

# Moral Aspects of Medical Technology (12)

In our discussions of the moral aspects of medical technology we have come to the point in which we must judge in Scripture's light the various ways in which medical science has made it possible for childless couples to have children.

Many different techniques have been developed, techniques which we described in our last article. We shall briefly mention them once again to bring them before the minds of our readers.

Artificial insemination of the wife is one such technique. Sometimes the semen of the father is used and is called artificial insemination by husbands (AIH); sometimes semen of others is used, especially if the husband is infertile, and is called artificial insemination by donors (AID). For wives who are unable to conceive children, but who are able to carry a fetus, surrogate mothers are used. Here too various techniques have been developed. Sometimes the surrogate mother is impregnated with sperm from the husband of a childless couple; sometimes she is impregnated with donor sperm. In this case the surrogate's own ovum is used so that the conceived child is parented by the surrogate mother and either the husband of the childless couple or by a donor. When conception takes place, the embryo is transferred to the womb of the wife who could not have children of her own. If a wife is unable both to conceive and to carry a fetus, then a surrogate mother is used for the entire pregnancy. When the child is born, it is given to the childless couple who made (and paid for) the arrangements and it becomes their own, no matter with what technique it may have been conceived. In connection with all the methods which are employed in these processes, sometimes *in vitro* fer-

tilization is used: the conception takes place in a test tube and the resulting embryo is transferred to the womb of a surrogate mother who carries it to term. This *in vitro* fertilization may take place either with the husband's sperm or with donor sperm, either with an ovum from the childless wife, an ovum from the surrogate mother, or a donor egg.

In order to facilitate these procedures, sperm banks have been set up around the country from which frozen sperm can be purchased. In some countries experimentation has been carried on with freezing embryos so that their growth is stopped, and at some later time they are unfrozen, implanted in a womb and made to grow to maturity. It is reported in the news media that several children have already been born through the use of this latter technique. The great appeal of it for many is that large banks of frozen embryos can be stored in deep underground vaults so that in the event of nuclear warfare which would destroy the population of the earth, these frozen embryos would be available to assist in repopulation. All this presupposes, of course, that some member of the human race survives, that this surviving member knows where these frozen embryos are stored, and that there are sufficient women around to carry these embryos to term.

We have talked before about the great grief and sorrow which childless couples experience, especially within the Church and covenant of God. And the question arises whether it is legitimate for God's people to make use of these methods to enrich their homes with children. The danger is very real not only because some childless couples are almost desperate for children, but also because we live in an age when we are so enamored of the mighty "miracles" of medical science that we almost worship medicine; and the result of this is



that we take the position that if it is medically possible, it is legitimate — also for the child of God. The argument runs along these lines. God has given medical science for the benefit of the Christian as well as for the benefit of ungodly men. We are called to make use of doctors and medicine to prolong life and to enrich life, to increase our age span and to raise the quality of life. Because medicine is a gift of God, we can use it in God's service. Hence, (and it is here that the logical jump is faulty) if medicine is capable of doing something, we ought, with gratitude to God, make use of it. If medicine can cure cancer, we ought to make use of it. If medicine can perform open heart surgery to correct heart defects, we ought to make use of it. In fact, this is our calling before God. If medicine can give us children when ordinary methods of conception and birth fail, what could be more right in the sight of God than to make use of these techniques to have a part in the bringing forth of the seed of the covenant? We ought to be thankful that God has given doctors and scientists such knowledge that we can use what they have discovered and perfected in the bringing forth of children for God's kingdom. So the argument runs.

But is this line of argumentation justified? That is quite another question.

Before we offer our own analysis of these techniques, it is well that we take a look at what others have said. We know that all these things are approved of and condoned in the world among ungodly men — although it is important to remember that even in the world men of cooler brains and wiser heads have held up a restraining hand and suggested that we had better be careful before we plunge ahead into unknown and unexplored areas of medical science. But Christian ethicists have also pointed out some serious evils in these practices, and we ought to hear what they have to say.

We turn first of all to the problem of surrogate motherhood. In an interesting article by Barbara Roessner, which originally appeared in *The Hartford Courant*, we have an opinion of one who approaches the whole question from less than a Christian perspective. We quote at length from this article, for it brings up points which Christian ethicists have also faced.

Mary Beth Whitehead was trying to maintain her composure under the intense questioning of her television interviewer. She was trying to explain, in a quiet and quaking voice why she had agreed to be a surrogate mother and why, after giving birth to a 9-pound, 2-ounce girl, she reneged:

"My head was telling me one thing," she said, "My body was telling me something else."

William Stern is the father of the baby. It was his sperm with which Whitehead was artificially in-

seminated and it is to him and his infertile wife that Whitehead contracted, for a fee of \$10,000, to put head over body, mind over heart, intellect over instinct and relinquish the infant at birth.

Instead, the head, the mind and the intellect succumbed and she absconded with the child.

Stern, who I'm sure has no less visceral a bond with his offspring, won a court order for temporary custody. Now he is in Superior Court in Bergen County, N.J., trying to hold Whitehead to her initial contract and, failing that, to win permanent custody of the baby. For the first time, the courts must decide whether a contract for surrogate motherhood is enforceable, whether such a contract violates laws against baby-selling and whether a woman can sever her parental rights before giving birth.

Now I would call the baby girl by her name, except that she doesn't have one. She has three. To Whitehead, she is Sara Elizabeth Whitehead; to Stern, she is Melissa Elizabeth Stern; to the court, she is a dehumanized Baby M.

To me she is the ultimate casualty of head vs. body, mind vs. heart, intellect vs. instinct, Stern vs. Whitehead. To me, she is the victim of a conflict that ought never to have occurred.

The term surrogate mother is in itself an embodiment of the conflict. A surrogate, by definition, is a substitute. But is a woman who carries a fetus for nine months, in Whitehead's case, gaining 51 pounds, enduring high blood pressure and phlebitis, and then gives birth to and nurses her baby (as Whitehead did) a substitute mother? She's as close to the real thing as a woman can get, it seems to me. She is, simply, a mother.

The experts on so-called surrogate mothering — the ones who run the centers that link the surrogates with the infertile couple, provide the medical, legal and psychiatric counseling and, no doubt, make a decent buck in the process — say they are offering a much-needed option to barren couples desperate for children. And they've got a point.

Although I am lucky enough to have had a child of my own, I am not unfamiliar with the awful anguish of infertility. I've seen friends subject their bodies, and their hearts, to the endless probing of thermometers and needles and the like. But I still can't fully grasp why they are so bent on reproducing themselves.

Is adoption, even with its years-long wait, really such a terrible alternative to propagation?

Surrogate mothering is only a more extreme form of this war between intellect and instinct that reproductive technology has wrought. Women who want to bear children without male partners, for example, can purchase the sperm of anonymous donors.

And fertile couples who become pregnant are routinely offered tests to determine the sex and health of their fetuses; implicit in this is the option of aborting a fetus that doesn't meet their, or society's standards. And as much as I advocate its continued

legalization, I believe abortion violates women's, and men's souls.

In the case of *Stern vs. Whitehead*, I sympathize with both sides. But for a woman to think she can lease her uterus without emotional and psychological consequences denies her essential humanness. For a man to think he can artificially impregnate a surrogate and then lay sole claim to the offspring is equally inhuman.

Women are not wombs for rent. Men are no semen in a jar. And, finally, babies are not products.

John Jefferson Davis in his book *Evangelical Ethics* also points out the legal problems that are involved in surrogate motherhood. While he points out that the legal complications are many and involved, he refers to two possible legal problems in detail. The one is the legal problems involved when a surrogate mother refuses to give up the child, as the article quoted above also demonstrates. The other is the problem of legal liability in genetic problems. He writes:

(What are the legal ramifications of) the birth of a deformed child, health complications, or the death of the adopting parents prior to the child's birth?" That these problems are not merely theoretical was dramatically demonstrated in the case of Christopher Ray Stiver, a baby born to Judy Stiver of Lansing, Michigan after Alexander Malahoff, a 46-year-old accountant from Middle Village, New York had agreed to pay \$10,000 for the surrogate child produced with

his sperm. Young Christopher, unfortunately, was born with an abnormally small head (microcephaly) and may suffer mental retardation. Malahoff disavowed the child and threatened to sue the Stivers for having intercourse during the insemination period. Blood and tissue tests later showed the child's genetic make-up to be different from Malahoff's. Said Mrs. Stiver after the tests were announced, "I'm probably a little disappointed, but I'll have to live with it."

While it is possible that in the future the courts will be able to lay down some guidelines for settling the legal problems which arise out of surrogate motherhood, these problems seem to be too great to be solved with any kind of justice for all involved. And the impossibility of solving these problems legally no doubt arises from the fact that a violation of the law of God in the conception of children results in impossible legal tangles which have no solution whatsoever. And this is characteristic of the world in which we live. With its great sins and its flaunting of God's holy law, the world gets itself into impossible messes from which there are no doors of escape. No laws, no matter how skilled the jurists, are able to settle problems arising out of a disregard for God's ordinances.

But John Jefferson Davis also addresses the problem of surrogate motherhood from a moral perspective. This will have to wait for another article.

## ALL AROUND US

Robert D. Decker

# Reformed Churches in Netherlands Unite Presbyterian Churches in the U.S. Fail To Unite Roman Catholicism Remains Unchanged

## *Reformed Churches in Netherlands Unite:*

*The Reformed Ecumenical Synod News Exchange* (December 9, 1986) reports:

Despite numerous objections, which belied the actual outcome of the voting, the combi-synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) and the Netherlands Reformed Church (NHK, State Church, R.D.) approved a document which declares that the

two denominations are now in a "state of reunion." Objections were raised especially by representatives from the Reformed Alliance (GB) in the NHK. Ten members of the Reformed Alliance declared in an open letter that the GKN should confess guilt for their breakaway from the national church in the late 19th century. (*Afscheiding*, 1834 and *Doleantie*, 1886. These two secession movements merged to form the GKN in 1892. R.D.) The decision, which was taken with an

overwhelming majority, does not obligate local congregations that do not feel comfortable with each other to pursue union on the local level.

In 1990 the two denominations will be asked to decide on the structural form of the future church. The combi-synod also admitted the Evangelical-Lutheran Church as participant in "Together on the Way."

The actions of the combi-synod need ratification by the synods of the two denominations. At the time this goes to press the GKN synod has given the ratification, but the synod of the NHK, not yet. When ratification is made by both synods, "Together on the Way" will become an irrevocable fact.

This action was a long time in coming and inevitable. Now that it has happened, however, it makes one sad. In effect the GKN wherein are the spiritual roots of most of us has repudiated the courageous stand our Reformed fathers, H. DeCock, A. Kuyper Sr., *et. al.*, took in 1834 and 1886 and 1892.

One wonders whether the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church will follow suit.

### ***Presbyterian Churches in the U.S. Fail To Unite:***

At its General Assembly last June the Orthodox Presbyterian Church voted against the "Joining and Receiving" (J & R) of the Presbyterian Church in America. Now the *Presbyterian Journal* (December 3, 1986) reports:

Another invitation by the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to become part of the PCA is apparently doomed.

The invitation, approved by the PCA's general assembly in Philadelphia last June, needs the approval of three-fourths of the denomination's presbyteries before being forwarded to the OPC. But by late November, with half the presbyteries having acted on the measure, 10 had already voted no. One more negative vote would kill the issue.

Many have seen the invitation as merely symbolic in any case, since a virtually identical proposal was rejected by the OPC earlier this year. And that point has been raised repeatedly in debate on the floors of the more than 20 PCA presbyteries which have acted on the matter.

In some cases, even those who favor some kind of union of the PCA and the OPC have argued against renewal of the invitation. Two prevalent themes have been that (1) it's too soon to get back into the issue, and (2) the OPC should be spared the divisive influence such a renewed invitation would bring to that church . . . .

The Editor of the *Presbyterian Journal*, William S. Barker, urges the PCA to "keep the vision alive." In the same issue of the *Journal*, Barker comments:

. . . Whatever the outcome of the PCA presbyteries' vote on J & R, perhaps more can be accomplished towards a spirit of unity through fellowship at the concurrent General Assemblies to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan this coming June. There will be one joint worship service of the five NAPARC denominations present at Calvin College (NAPARC stands for North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council. The Chr. Ref. Church is a member, R.D.) . . . . Probably of greater significance, however, will be the opportunity for PCA elders to visit the OPC Assembly, and vice versa. Perhaps the stereotypes will merely be confirmed, but you owe it to our own profession of the Lord's desire for loving unity to pursue such fellowship.

Let's keep the vision for a strong, continent-wide, sound Presbyterian church alive. Those of us in the PCA should keep the door open to the fellowship and unity professed just 13 years ago.

Observing all this from the outside, we have two observations: (1) while there are some differences between these two denominations, they are not significant enough to keep them apart and (2) these two churches, we think, will eventually unite. It just will not be as soon or as easily accomplished as first thought by those who promote union in both denominations.

### ***Roman Catholicism Remains Unchanged***

There are those, even in Reformed circles, who would have us believe that the church of Rome has made significant changes in recent years. These argue that there should be more "dialogue" between Protestants and Catholics. Some in Reformed churches want to delete from the Heidelberg Catechism Q. & A. 80 which calls the "popish mass . . . a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry." Kenneth S. Kantzer writes:

In Protestant eyes, the Catholic church fosters a Marian piety that can only be called idolatrous — despite disclaimers such as that made by Pope John XXIII. Consider the following explicit declarations:

\*Pope Pius IX (pope from 1846 to 1878): "God has committed to Mary the treasury of all good things, in order that everyone may know that through her are obtained every hope, every grace, and all salvation. For this is his will, that we obtain everything through Mary."

\*Pope Leo XIII, writing near the turn of the century: "As no man goes to the father but by the son, so no one goes to Christ except through his mother."

\*Cardinal Saint Alfonsus de Liguori, in *The Glories of Mary*, reproduced by the Redemptorist Fathers in 1931: Mary is called "the gate of heaven because no

one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through her." In prayer Mary is addressed: "All power is given to thee in heaven and on earth." Hence, "at the command of Mary all obey — even God."

\*Pope Pius XII, writing in 1953: "It is the will of God that we should have nothing which is not passed through the hands of Mary."

\*Contemporary Roman Catholic scholar Edward Schillebeeckx: ". . . Christ is the Mediator between God, the Father, and men; and . . . Mary is the Mediatrix between Christ and us."

Of course, it would not be fair to hold the Catholic church responsible for extravagant claims made for Mary by her devoted but untaught worshippers. But none of the persons cited above was untaught (three were popes). Also, as the more recent statements indicate, the official Catholic appreciation of Mary remains inappropriately high to this day . . . ." (*Christianity Today*, Dec. 12, 1986)

Kantzer continues in the article to remind us that

the Roman Catholic Church still maintains as official doctrine several other heresies concerning Mary, viz.: The Immaculate Conception of Mary, The Perpetual Virginity of Mary, and the Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary. These heresies, Kantzer points out, are not based on Scripture, but on the Catholic error which teaches that Christ promised, ". . . infallibility to his church, to Peter and all his successors (the popes, R.D.) at Rome."

Kantzer is correct. Let us not be duped! Rome has not changed. The Church, according to Rome, and not Scripture is the final and ultimate authority. Mary is worshipped. The mass remains an accursed idolatry.

Thank God for Martin Luther and his fellow reformers! Above all let us thank God for His only-begotten Son, Jesus Our Lord and Savior: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

## THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Ronald L. Cammenga

# Confession of Faith (1)

One of the most joyful occasions in the church is the public confession of faith of the young people. For the pastor and elders there is no more joyful occasion than when young people come to the consistory room to make confession of faith before the consistory, when that confession is approved, and when young men and young women stand up in the congregation publicly to acknowledge faith in Jesus Christ. This joy is shared by the parents of the young people, and by the whole congregation, who witness the confession.

Joy over the confession of faith of our young people is due to the fact that their confession of faith is an outstanding evidence of positive fruit on the labors of the church. Many prayers have been of-

fered on behalf of these youths. Much labor has been bestowed in their instruction, by parents, by Christian school teachers, by pastor and elders. Confession of faith is tangible evidence that these labors have not been in vain, but have been blessed by the Lord.

In the next several articles in this rubric, it is our intention to discuss confession of faith. The first couple of articles will be of an introductory nature. In subsequent articles it is our intention to discuss the significance of confession of faith by examining the three questions in the back of *The Psalter*, which are asked at the time of public confession of faith.

## CONFESSION NOT A MATTER OF "JOINING THE CHURCH"

A common misconception in connection with

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confession of faith is that by public confession one "joins the church." Public confession is viewed as the act of being "received into the church." As long as one has not made confession of faith, he is essentially not a member of the church.

There have been serious results in churches which have fostered this conception of confession of faith. This view has been carried out to excuse the living of a blatantly wicked life on the part of those who have not yet made confession of faith because, after all, they are not yet really members of the church. These young people go to movies, attend dances, take part in wild parties, become drunken, and make public spectacles of themselves, but the elders do nothing because these young people have not yet become members of the church. Since they have not yet made confession of faith, and probably not yet had the "experience" that precedes confession of faith, they need not be expected to live the holy life of a member of the church in full communion.

The view that confession of faith is essentially a matter of "joining the church" is seriously mistaken. It is a view that is fundamentally Baptist and ought not to be the way confession of faith is viewed in a Reformed church. The fact is that by virtue of their baptism the infants of believers are already members of the church. That is brought out very clearly in the first question that is asked parents at the time they present their child for baptism: "Whether you acknowledge, that although our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are subject to all miseries, yea, to condemnation itself; yet that they are sanctified in Christ, and therefore, *as members* of His church ought to be baptized?" The Heidelberg Catechism, in Q.A. 74 teaches that baptism is a sign of the truth that the infants of believers are "also admitted into the Christian church . . . ."

Confession of faith is emphatically not to be viewed as an act of joining the church. Instead, the significance of public confession of faith is that those who are already members of the church publicly acknowledge that membership and publicly assume the duties and privileges involved in that membership. A baptized member of the church is an undeveloped and immature member. During his childhood and youth he matures, not only physically and psychologically, but also spiritually. At the time when he arrives at spiritual maturity, the time when he understands the privileges and obligations of church membership and is ready willingly to assume these, he ought to make confession of faith.

We may draw on an analogy to make our point clear. Our children are members of our country. They are as much citizens of the United States (or

Canada, Singapore, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, or whatever other country) as we are. No one would deny that my three-year-old daughter is a citizen of the United States, as much a citizen as I am. But children are immature citizens, citizens who because of their immaturity do not enjoy the rights and privileges, nor have the same obligations, as mature citizens. Although fully members of our country, our children may not vote, hold office, obtain a driver's license, and it is not expected of them that they pay taxes. This analogy may be applied to the church, which is the kingdom of God. There is a difference in the kingdom of God between those citizens who are young and immature and those citizens who have arrived at years of discretion and may be considered to be mature members of the church.

#### A PRIVILEGE AND A RESPONSIBILITY

For those young people who have arrived at years of discretion, public confession of faith is both a sacred privilege and a solemn responsibility.

The young person who makes confession of faith ought to count it a great privilege that he may make confession of faith. What a privilege of grace that God in His goodness caused him to be born to believing parents and brought up in a covenant home! What a privilege of grace that he should for many years come under the means of grace, hear the preaching of the gospel, and receive instruction in the truth! What a privilege that he should be able to identify himself with the cause of God and of Jesus Christ in the world! What a privilege that he should be able to confess the name of Christ with the mouth! We don't deserve these blessings! We have no right to have faith or any of the blessings of salvation which are ours through faith! Confession of faith is a privilege of the highest order, a privilege of grace.

Besides being a privilege, confession of faith is also a responsibility. It is not only an honor to be able to confess our faith publicly, but it is also our duty before God.

There are those who question or deny this responsibility of making public confession of faith in the church. There are many denominations which maintain that the church does not have the right to require such a confession. This is the position of those who are advocating paedocommunion today, that is, child communion, that children ought to be granted the right to partake of the Lord's Supper. A few centuries ago, the Arminians in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands denied that the church had the authority to insist on a public confession of faith in the congregation prior to admittance to the Lord's Supper. These people point out that nowhere does Scripture ex-

PLICITLY require this confession of the young people when they arrive at years of discretion and before they are allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. How can this practice in our churches be maintained, therefore? And on what grounds do we base the responsibility to make public confession of faith?

#### **BASIS FOR PUBLIC CONFESSION OF FAITH**

The basis for public confession of faith, although not explicit in Scripture, is certainly implicit. Public confession of faith is one of those things which, to use the language of *The Westminster Confession Of Faith*, ". . . by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture . . ."

The responsibility to make public confession is based, first of all, on the general calling that the Scriptures place upon God's people to confess His name in the world. Many passages of Scripture could be cited which bring out this calling. Christ Himself says in Matthew 10:32, 33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." In Romans 10:9, 10 the Apostle writes, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

There certainly is nothing strange or un-Biblical

in the fact that the church should require of adult members a confession of faith. This is something to which the Word of God everywhere calls us. Confession of our faith is simply part of the Christian life.

A second reason why Reformed churches have always insisted on a public confession of faith by the young people has to do specifically with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The question whether the church has the authority to demand a confession of faith is closely bound up with our view of the sacrament. Those in the past who denied this right to the church maintained what is called "open" or "free" admission to the Lord's table. They maintained that attendance at the Lord's Supper is exclusively a matter of the personal conscience of the individual attending. Whether or not he would partake was his private decision. Those who maintained the right of the church to require a public confession of faith of those who would come to the Lord's Supper did so because they maintained that attendance at the Lord's table, besides being a personal matter, was also subject to the jurisdiction of the church. They emphasized the duty of the consistory to "fence", that is, to supervise the administration of the sacrament.

Next time we will discuss this matter of the supervision of the Lord's Supper by the consistory, and the implications of this for public confession of faith.

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## **GUEST ARTICLE**

*Robert C. Harbach*

# **Jesus Left Alone**

In the sixteenth chapter of John's Gospel we have two sections: (1) warning (1-6), and (2) encouragement (7-33). In the latter section we have these words, "Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (16:31-32). Jesus' "disciples (had) said unto Him . . . 'Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask

Thee; by this we believe that Thou comest forth from God.' Jesus answered them, 'Do ye now believe?'" (v. 29:31). Do we, you and I, hear the word of God purely preached every Sabbath day? Do you realize that in the preaching of the word *Christ* speaks to you? Do you appreciate the fact that after every sermon and worship service the Lord looks for faith as a result of His speaking in the preached word? Since faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, do you hear Him

say at the end of every service, "Do ye now believe?" For without faith it is impossible to please Him.

The disciples had spoken somewhat over-confidently when they said, "Now we are *sure* that thou knowest all things . . ." Many today, if you ask them, "Do ye now believe?" are likely to answer, "Sure, I'm a believer; I have a strong faith — you could never guess how strong!" But just a moment: "God hath dealt to every (Christian) man a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). Do you know the measure of your own faith? Are you sure you are not believing in your faith, and taking that for faith in Christ? Beware of trusting in your faith, for it is only faith in *Christ* which is saving. Further, does the company you are in determine your faith, so that in good company you boast of your faith, while in bad company you have no faith of which to boast?

Do you now believe? Peter would be inclined to answer, "O, of course, Lord, both right now and for a long time already I've believed." "Though *all* men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended . . . Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not *deny* Thee . . . Likewise also said all the disciples." That was self-flattery springing out of pride. None of them had the caution to say, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (Mk. 9:24). All the apostles thought they could stand firm under fire. But "they all forsook Him and fled" (Matt. 26:56). When pressured by the enemy, they were scattered, and He was left alone. Later, disillusioned, they said, "but we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Lk. 24:21). Sometimes even the standard bearer faints (Isa. 10:18), and then the armed men are demoralized and waver. When we feel strong and confident to stand, we must pray that we be given grace to take heed, lest we fall (I Cor. 10:12).

"Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own." So Jesus warned, "to humble them, to destroy their self-confidence" (Pink). It was; their confidence was shattered, themselves scattered, every man to his own, his own "safe-house," or hiding place. Each would seek his own secret place of survival. From the fury of the enemy there would be cover for all but Christ. All would escape the lash, the cross, the scar; but not Christ! "The hour . . . is now come that ye . . . shall leave Me alone." This was Christ's hour, the hour of the power of darkness. When Truth was in royal robes, enthroned on the mount, He had many a friend. But now that Truth must fall in the valley of the shadow, not a friend stands with Him. Not even a minority voice was

heard at the last moment against the thunderous vocal majority. Like the early bloom of Spring, they were all blown away. Not even the beloved disciple John remained. They left Him alone, "every man for himself." Their ruthless enemies took Him off to prison and death, where Peter, speaking for them all, had said he would go, and gladly (Lk. 22:33). But *He* went there bound, beaten, and alone.

His comfort assured in this moment was this, though "ye shall leave Me alone, yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." They had fled. They were all gone. But Christ was not gone. They had left Him standing alone; but there *He* stood. No one could budge Him from eternal purpose. He came to save, and He shall save His people. He came to redeem, and now Christ hath redeemed us from the curse. He came to overcome the world, and His victory shout is, "Be of good cheer! I *have* overcome the world!" They fled, to leave their work hardly begun. But He stood fast, and was so sure of Himself, with such confidence in His God, that He could say in His prayer just before the cross, "I have *finished* the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (Jn. 17:4).

"I am not alone." The present tense stands out with its stress on certainty. Jesus used it often. "I *am* the Son of God" (10:36). "I *am* the living bread that came down from heaven" (6:51). "I am not of this world; I am from above" (8:23). I "came down from heaven"; I am "the Son of Man who is in heaven" (3:13). "I *am* the Good Shepherd. I know Mine and Mine know Me (10:14, Greek). "I am not alone, for the Father is with Me."

Yet it did not *appear* to be so. But things are not what they seem. It may be that everybody does actually leave you. Father and mother may forsake. God may seem to leave you. But He never does! He never forsakes His own. Concerning Abraham going with Isaac his son to offer him as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah, the record is that "they went both of them together" (Gn. 22). So the Father, when He was about to offer up His only begotten Son to death, was with Him; they went both of them together; and although Jesus on the cross had cried, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?", we must notice that He did not cry, *Father*, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The Father, with His *permanent, powerful, and supportive* presence, never forsook, but was always with, His only begotten Son. But it was God, who, from the cross, temporarily withdrew His *gracious* and *comforting* presence, because Christ was then substituting Himself in the place of elect sinners, bearing away their sins.

The decrees of God were all back of Christ; and only He can open the Book of the Decrees. But it is the God of the divine decrees who is with Him. Not



only twelve legions, but all the angels of God are behind the cross; and the God of the angels is with Him there. Not only the Providence of God, but the God of Providence is with Him. Every creature, the whole universe, may sing, "the Father is with me." The sparrow, when it falls in death, in effect, says, "the Father is with me" (Matt. 10:29). The stars of light, singing praise to the Lord, can say, each of them, "the Father is with me" (Psm. 148:3). The creature, Space, can say, The Father is with me and *in* me. Time can say, The Father is with me and *moves* me. To think of a world with no Creator-God over all is a failure to face reality. There is no world existing and moving by itself with no all-controlling God above. Such a world is a horrible nightmare! But all too often we live on this earth as though that were the only kind of a world there is: one with no Sovereign Director above. We put God out of His own universe, so that we may then live and sin as we please without ever having to worry about being called to account in judgment. But no; the whole world with its myriad creatures is like a vast universal choir singing with one voice, "Blessing

and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13). So that the picture of reality is not, "there is the world, and that's it — period," but "there is the world, inseparably connected with and subservient to its Creator and Upholder!"

How does this word of Jesus apply to you? God's promise to His people is, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good, but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me" (Jer. 32:40). Is that God's promise to you? Do you stick with Him through thick and thin, come what may? True, the current today runs the other way; but let that current go; it is petering out anyway. Someone may say, O, but the scientists tell us that gospel is something for little children and little old ladies, but it is not scientific. Let them say. But the scientific is what man is able to learn from things here below; our Gospel is from above. It is divine revelation. "Flesh and blood (or science) hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in

*(continued on page 181)*

## News From Our Churches

*Ben Wigger*

January 15, 1987

Rev. den Hartog and his family have returned to the United States, and the Lord willing, the family will be moving to Randolph, Wisconsin where Rev. den Hartog will take up his labors as pastor of the congregation there.

In preparation for their move there, the congregation recently held a general housecleaning of the parsonage.

And also in connection with the return of the den Hartog family to a much colder climate than Singapore, the students of Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville, Michigan, collected money in what has become their annual Christmas collection, to aid the den Hartog children. The thought behind the collection this year was that after having been in Singapore so long they needed much clothing, sporting goods, and other items. It was hoped that the money collected would help them adjust to life back in the States. And according to one source, over two hundred dollars was raised by the students of Heritage.

Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville,

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Michigan, and Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School in Hull, Iowa, recently were forced to conduct special building fund drives for the express purpose of reducing some of their load of debt. Heritage received \$36,710.00 in cash and pledges, while Hull raised \$10,430.00 and an additional gift of \$2,000.00 was given from the Ladies' Guild of Hull. We can all be very thankful that not only has our Heavenly Father given us Christian Schools, but that He has also given us the means to support them.

The congregation of Byron Center has made plans to hold their church's Sledding and Snowmobile Party for January 31, although looking out the window right now there is *no* snow anywhere in West Michigan. This can change in a hurry, however.

Up here in the North, winter can seem to last forever and perhaps you will find yourself longing for a chance to get away to the warmer climate of sunny Florida. If you do get down there this winter, you are invited to spend Sunday at the Protestant Reformed Chapel in Bradenton. This chapel meets twice a Sunday, at 10:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M., at the Bradenton Christian School, 3304 43rd St. West,

Bradenton, Florida. Rev. C. Hanko is the pastor there, and for more information about the chapel and its activities, or directions on how to get there he can be reached at 813-755-7344.

This year the congregation in Kalamazoo, Michigan, had Christmas cards for the missionaries on the table in the foyer of the church, with the idea that all of the families of the church sign them. When this was completed, the cards were sent out. It seems like a rather nice idea. Perhaps it even helped these missionaries through the holiday season even though they were apart from families and friends back home.

The night of December 21, the Federation Board of our Young People's Societies held their annual Christmas Singspiration in Hudsonville. Mr. Phil Van Baren had opening remarks and led the large crowd in prayer. He then turned the remainder of the hour over to the very capable leadership of Mr. Jim Vander Kolk as director and the accompaniment of Miss Betty Haveman at the organ and Mr. Gerald Miedema at the piano. Between singing from the Psalter and a song sheet of Christmas carols the audience was favored with special numbers. First Mr. Gerald Kuiper sang a solo, "Angel Voices Softly Singing," which was followed by a duet, "Star of the East," sung by Mr. Jim Dal-ing and Mr. Randy Van Dyke. Later a flute duet of "O Holy Night" was given by the Misses Heather

and Heidi Kreuzer. And it should also be noted that during the singspiration the children were also asked to come to the front and sing "Away in the Manger." The collection was for the 1987 Young People's Convention. Rev. G. Van Baren closed the hour with prayer.

Christmas Singspirations were also held in many of our other churches as well, some of which were Hull, Edgerton, and Randolph.

From Southeast in Grand Rapids we find that at their last congregational meeting they approved a proposal involving various remodeling projects including the extension of their church narthex.

The Church Extension Committee of First Church in Grand Rapids has prepared a very attractive brochure about their church which was mailed the first week in December in the neighborhoods around their church. Over 3,000 copies were sent to homes in the area.

The Free Christian School in Edgerton, Minn. presented their school Christmas Program the night of December 19.

### NOTICE!!!

The Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School of Walker, Michigan is in need of a teacher/administrator for the forthcoming 1987-1988 school year.

Any teachers interested in applying for this position please write the school at 1545 Wilson Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49504; or contact Clare Tinklenberg — (616) 457-3212 or Rich Van Baren — (616) 531-8048.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Church, on behalf of the congregation, expresses heartfelt sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Victor Solanyk in the death of his brother, MR. IGOR SOLANYK.

Our comfort is "... that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28).

Rev. Ron Cammenga, Pres.  
Mr. Larry Nelson, Clerk

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

January 16, 1987, marks the 30th wedding anniversary of MR. AND MRS. JIM SCHIPPER. Their children and grandchildren wish to express their thanks to them and to our God for the covenant home they have provided and pray His blessing in the years to come.

"And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." (Jeremiah 32:39).

Randy and Lindy Looyenga  
Brent and Jared  
Dan and Julie Kaiser

Gordon Schipper  
Jill Schipper

### NOTICE!!!

#### TO ALL TREASURERS OF OUR PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES

All monies designated for the Jamaican Minister's Travel Fund should be sent to: MR. CLARE PRINCE, 7435 PINE GROVE, JENISON, MI 49428.

### ATTENTION TEACHERS!!!

Hope Christian School of Redlands, California is in need of a teacher for Grades K-3 for the 1987-1988 school year. Teachers and prospective teachers interested in applying for this position please write to: Hope Christian School, 1309 E. Brockton, Redlands, CA 92374, or phone Ed Karsemeyer (714) 793-7166 (home) or (714) 793-1504 (school), or Bill Feenstra (714) 793-3597.