

The **STANDARD BEARER**

— A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE —

An important part of the unrepachable life of the believing young person concerns dating and marriage. "The young people ought to have a concern for the continuation of God's covenant, and therefore ought to have serious thoughts toward dating and marriage. Are you seeking a wife or husband? What kind of wife or husband are you seeking? Is it of the utmost importance to you that your prospective spouse be a believer? Is it a concern of yours that that prospective wife or husband be or become a member of the Protestant Reformed Churches?

See The Strength of Youth, page 413

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MEDITATION

James D. Slopsema

Loving One Another

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 13:34, 35

Jesus is eating the last passover supper with His disciples. Within a few short hours He will be arrested, condemned and crucified. And then He will

be with His disciples no more.

Jesus has a parting command for His disciples. They must love one another. Even as He has loved

them, so must they in His absence love one another. By this all men shall know that they are His disciples.

Although this command was given the small number who formed the inner circle of Jesus' followers, this command nevertheless applies to the whole church. Are not these few disciples gathered with Jesus in the upper room representatives of the church of entire new dispensation? To the church and all her members Jesus commands: love one another. As I have loved you, so all love one another.

This love is above all what Jesus expects from the church in His absence. As our Lord Jesus expects many things from us. They are all set forth in His Word, the Bible. But at the heart of it all is this commandment: love one another. This above all is what our Lord requires of us. For this is His parting commandment.

* * * * *

What is this love which Jesus requires the members of His church to have for one another?

Love is the attraction that two or more have for one another on the basis of what they have in common. Love is attraction that people have for one another. This attraction is based on what people have in common. The more they share in common the more they are attracted to each other.

What do the members of the church have in common that would attract them to each other?

From a natural point of view there is often very little. The church of Jesus Christ is catholic, universal. Her members are from every tribe, tongue, and nation, from every walk of life. From a natural point of view there is often very little to draw them together in love.

Yet, there is one thing that every true member of the church does possess, and that is the great salvation of God in Jesus Christ. They all are the recipients of the gift of faith which brings them all into spiritual union with Jesus Christ. By their faith they all possess the new life of Jesus Christ. They are all new creatures in Christ who love and serve Him as their Lord. And this is what brings the members of the church together in the bond of love. Possessing the great salvation of God as new creatures in Jesus Christ, they are spontaneously attracted to one another. They are drawn to each other with cords of love.

This love shows itself in a most wonderful communion and fellowship. Being drawn together in love, the saints of God seek each other's company.

They delight to be with one another. They desire to share together what they have in common in Christ. Their pleasure is to work together for the cause of Christ. Being drawn to each other in Christ they also are very much concerned with the welfare of each other. When one weeps, they all weep. When one rejoices, they all rejoice. They seek to help one another, to bear one another's burdens. For they love each other.

Although this love is something that spontaneously exists among the saints, Jesus nevertheless gives command: Love one another.

This command reflects the reality that we do not always love one another as we ought. There are often ill feelings, bitterness, and even outright hatred to be found among the saints. Instead of seeking one another's company, the saints will often avoid each other. Instead of working together in the cause of Christ, they will often in jealousy or bitterness work at cross purposes with each other. Often there is little concern with the welfare of one another in the church.

So much was this true in Jesus' day that He calls His command to love each other a *new commandment*. Certainly this command to love was not new in the sense that it had never been given before. The command to love is the very heart of all that God requires of us in His law. This commandment to love one another was new, however, in the sense that the church in Jesus' day had long ago lost sight of this commandment. She had fallen into a dead formalism in which she kept the law of God outwardly but not in love to God or the neighbor. Consequently, this command to love was altogether something new.

Is this commandment also new to you?

How easily the church loses sight of the command to love. This is due to the sinful nature that is present and operative in the lives of every child of God. From the viewpoint of the work of God's grace in our hearts, they would love one another. But because of our sinful nature, they often fall far short.

Let us crucify our sinful nature. Let us walk in the newness of life we have received from Jesus Christ as new creatures so that we love one another.

* * * * *

We are to love one another even as Jesus has loved us.

There are especially two things that characterize Jesus' love for the church.

First, Jesus in His love for the church is so deeply concerned about her that He is willing to sacrifice

anything necessary to assure her well-being.

Certainly Jesus seeks the well-being of His church. In love He seeks nothing less than to glorify her forever with Himself in heaven.

And Jesus in love is willing to do whatever is necessary to assure the glory of the church. He will sacrifice whatever is necessary. He is willing, if need be, to make the supreme sacrifice. And that is exactly what He did at the cross. The salvation of the church requires that He take her sins upon Himself and to pay for those sins by bearing the agonies of hell. This He did on the cross.

In fact, as Jesus tells His disciples to love each other as He loved them, He was just a few short hours away from the cross. Already He had sent Judas Iscariot away to set in motion the activity that would lead to His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. What great love Jesus has for the church!

The second thing that characterizes Jesus' love for the church is that He loves her even though she is difficult to love. Certainly the disciples who represent the church were not always so easy for Jesus to love. They were much inclined not to listen to Jesus when He had something to say contrary to their perspective and wishes. Selfishly they sought the place of pre-eminence of Jesus' kingdom. Presently they would all forsake Him. One would even deny that He knew Jesus. How difficult to love these disciples it must have been. And you understand we are essentially no different than these sinful disciples. But, nonetheless, Jesus loves us. He loved us even unto death!

So, too, must we love one another in the church.

Jesus' love for us is to be the pattern of our love for each other.

That means that we are to love even the brother and sister in the church who is hard to love.

Yes, there are some in the church whom we find so difficult to love. There are those with whom we have very little in common from a natural point of view. There are those who have mannerisms and personality traits that are so annoying to us. There are those who disagree with us, who do not appreciate us, who are inconsiderate of us, who have even hurt us through their sinful behavior. And we are much inclined to turn away from them, to despise them and, yes, even sometimes to hate them. We show this sometimes in the way we treat them and talk about them.

But we are to love them. Has not Jesus loved us with all our frailties? And so we must look beyond all the idiosyncrasies and faults of our fellow saints and see them as new creatures in Jesus Christ, who shares with us the great salvation of God. And seeing the great work of God's grace in them we are to

be drawn to them with cords of love.

If we will love each other as Christ loves the church, then we must also be genuinely concerned about the welfare of our fellow saint. We must be concerned about his desires, his wants, his needs, and above all, his salvation. We must busy ourselves in promoting his welfare, even if it requires that we sacrifice for his sake. We must be ready for the sake of the brother or the sister to sacrifice our time, our energy, our desires, if needs be, even our all.

Then we love one another even as Jesus loves us.

* * * * *

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

A disciple is one who is a student of another. He sits at the feet of a great teacher to be instructed. Not only that, but a disciple also embraces the instruction he is given. And he confesses what he has been taught. But, perhaps most important, he lives as his teacher has taught him to live, following the very example his teacher has set.

So is it with Jesus' disciples. A true disciple of Jesus studies diligently all that Jesus has taught. His teachings you will find in the Bible. They are the sole content of the Bible. A disciple of Jesus also embraces His teachings. He confesses Jesus' teachings. And according to these teachings he strives to order his own life, following at all times the example Jesus Himself gave.

Quite in harmony with this, Jesus informs us that the one thing which above all identifies us as His disciples is that we love one another.

For is not the heart of Jesus' teachings that we love? Has not He also given us the very pattern of love in His own life? Yes, by all means, if we love one another, all men will know that we are His disciples.

In turn, those who will not love the saints of God as Jesus does can not claim the distinction of being Jesus' disciples. They may know the Scriptures backward and forward. They may give a beautiful confession with their mouth. They may even proclaim the truth with great eloquence. But if they know not how to love in the church, they have no claim to being a disciple of Jesus. Nor will others recognize them as such.

Let us love one another in Jesus Christ.

Let us love all those who manifest themselves to be the saints of God, even though they have many sins and weaknesses.

Let us love them even as does Jesus Christ.

That all men may know that we are Jesus' disciples.

Editor's Notes

We are happy to announce that the *Standard Bearer*, beginning with the current volume, is now available in microform from University Microfilms Inc., 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. It is also possible that in the future all our past volumes will also be microfilmed and become available in this form.

* * * * *

For the benefit of those who may be traveling this summer in the vicinity of any of our Protestant Reformed Churches, we are publishing again a directory of our Protestant Reformed Churches. We have not yet received information concerning our new Lacombe, Alberta congregation. However, such information can undoubtedly be obtained from the contact telephone number of the Edmon-

ton Church.

* * * * *

We had hoped to carry a report in this issue concerning the 1987 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches. However, at this writing synod had completed its work only on mission matters (Advisory Committee 1). Synod decided to continue labors in all three home mission stations (Northwest Chicago, Norristown, Pa., and Ripon-Modesto, Calif.). Synod also decided to call a second missionary for Jamaica. An overture to change the position of our churches as to the time of baptism for adopted children was rejected. Since our next issue is a special issue, there will be no further report on Synod of 1987; by the time of our September 1 issue the news will be stale. HCH

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Ronald L. Cammenga

Confession of Faith (7)

In the past several articles we have discussed public confession of faith. We have used as our guide the three questions that are asked of those who make confession of faith. We want to conclude this discussion by calling attention to certain responsibilities which a confessing member of God's church has. Some of these we have already referred to in passing.

AN UNREPROACHABLE LIFE

Perhaps the most important calling of a confessing member of the church is to live an unrepachable life in the midst of the world. Even the world

must behold the good works of the people of God in order that God may be glorified in the day of visitation, I Peter 2:12. Never must the believer give the enemies of God's cause an occasion to blaspheme.

Are you living this kind of life, young people? Are you able to say that by your conduct you are a witness of Jesus Christ? Are those with whom you come into contact on the job or at college able to discern that you are a Christian? Do you refrain from taking God's name in vain? Do you refuse to attend the movie, listen to rock music, and participate in wild partying and dancing? Do you keep yourself from fellowship with unbelievers?

An important part of the unrepachable life of the believing young person concerns dating and

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marriage. The young people ought to have a concern for the continuation of God's covenant, and therefore ought to have serious thoughts towards dating and marriage. Are you seeking a wife or husband? What kind of wife or husband are you seeking? Is it of the utmost importance to you that your prospective spouse be a believer? Is it a concern of yours that that prospective wife or husband be or become a member of the Protestant Reformed Churches?

The Christian of himself is not able to live this good life in the world which is pleasing to God. In order to do this, he needs strength from God Himself. God gives His child that strength day by day through the reading of the Scriptures and prayer. Do you read God's Word and do you pray? There ought to be time every day in the life of the Christian young person for private devotions. You ought to read a few chapters of the Bible. By reading three chapters a day, you will be able to read through the entire Bible in about a year. And you ought to pray, formulating your own prayer in which you confess your sins and lay your needs before God's throne of grace.

SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY AND THE POOR

An important calling of the confessing member of the church is to contribute to the support of the gospel ministry and the poor. Do the young people recognize this calling? Does the cause of God and His kingdom come first in their lives, before their own needs and pleasures?

It is the calling of every member of the church to contribute to the support of the ministry of the Word. In most churches this is done by paying the budget. I believe the budget system to be very worthwhile, nor have I ever heard a valid objection lodged against it. The confessing member of the church must fulfill his responsibility by paying his budget, and by doing so before buying groceries, gas for his car, or indulging in recreation. This is simply obedience to the Word of Christ, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33).

Many passages of Scripture bind upon the child of God the duty, a blessed duty, we might add, to support the ministry. One of the most outstanding passages is found in I Corinthians 9. There the apostle teaches that those who sow spiritual things ought to share in the carnal things of the people of God, and those who minister about holy things ought to be partakers of the altar. He sums up the matter in verse 14, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

In addition to supporting the ministry, the member of the church has the responsibility to con-

tribute to the relief of his poor fellow brothers and sisters in the church. Passages of God's Word which speak of this calling are simply too numerous to mention. In connection with giving to the poor, the Apostle Paul says in I Cor. 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him"

Besides the cause of the support of the ministry and the poor, the members of the church are privileged to support other aspects of God's kingdom. Contributions may be made to the Christian schools, to missions, to various Christian institutions of mercy, or to such causes as *The Standard Bearer* and *The Beacon Lights*.

If the young person is going to be able to contribute to these causes as he should, it is important that he learn to be a good steward and exercise the necessary self-discipline to put first things first in his life.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Because Reformed churches adhere to Presbyterian principles of church government, the members of the church share in the government of the church. An important aspect of this is attendance at and participation in congregational meetings.

This applies only to the male confessing members of the church. It is our position as churches, a position that is expressed in our *Church Order*, that only men are to participate in the congregational meetings of the church. Many churches which in the past followed this same practice have abandoned it. These same churches today are opening the offices to women. History has shown that allowing women to participate in congregational meetings has led to the opening of the offices to the women, and in fact has been used as an argument in favor of allowing the women to serve in the offices.

Biblical principles move us to forbid women the right to vote at the congregational meetings of the church. The congregational meeting is an official gathering of the church. For a woman to vote at a congregational meeting is for a woman to exercise some authority and to enter into the government of the church. This is prohibited.

The young men who make confession of faith ought to take seriously their responsibility to attend the congregational meetings. At times only routine matters appear on the agenda and it becomes easy to get into the habit of skipping these meetings. We ought not to do this. It is a sacred privilege to be able to participate in the affairs of the church, a privilege that saints of God in other ages did not en-

joy as we do today.

Even though the calling of the young women in the church is not the calling to hold office in the church or to exercise authority, this does not imply that they have no calling, or that their calling is not important. Ordinarily, God's will for the young women of the church is that they marry, bare children, and guide the household (I Tim. 5:14). Are the young women content with this position which God has given them? What is their attitude toward marriage, motherhood, and being a housewife? Do they look forward to these things? Do they understand the important place God has given them in the continuation of His covenant in the line of the generations of His people?

MAINTAINING THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

One of the most important callings of the member of the church is to maintain the unity of the church. It is easy enough to tear the church down, to live in bitterness or open hostility towards certain members of the church. The member of the church is called to preserve the peace and unity of the church.

The Apostle Paul expresses this calling in Eph. 4:3, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." He goes on to point out that if we are going to keep the church's unity it will be necessary for us to be lowly and meek, longsuffering towards one another, forbearing one another in love.

It is important for the member of the church to recognize that he is only one member of the body of

Christ, which is made up of many other and different members. He is called to live not only to the glory of Christ Who is the Head of this body, but he is also called to live in harmony with all the other members of this body.

An important aspect of this calling to maintain the unity of the church is the willingness on the part of the members of the church to go the way of Matthew 18 if a brother or sister in the church has sinned against them. Do you know the way of Matthew 18? And are you determined to follow the way of Matthew 18 if you are sinned against?

As simple as it is to understand the instructions of the Lord in Matthew 18, it is one of the hardest things in the world to carry out. It is very difficult to go to the brother when he has sinned and confront him with his sin, and do it in the right way. Instead, what usually happens is that we back-bite and slander, or simply ignore the sin and pretend that it never happened. If we love the brother and if we love the church, we must be faithful to carry out the steps of Matthew 18. This will gain the brother, and this will restore the unity of the church which has been broken by sin.

Now may God bless all the young people of His church who have made confession of your faith or who are contemplating making confession of your faith. May you be blessed and may you be a blessing in the life of our churches. Through you may the cause of our churches, which is the cause of Christ, be preserved in the years to come!

ALL AROUND US

Gise J. Van Baren

The Only Answer For AIDS Secular Humanism — a Religion

The Only Answer for AIDS

It is interesting to discover, in the increasingly frequent articles about AIDS, that there is but one way identified to remain AIDS-free. Many will speak of "safe sex" as though one can find methods of violating God's laws with impunity still. Others

find different methods of avoiding the consequences of sin. Still, it is very interesting and noteworthy that there is a generally universal recognition that there is but one sure way of avoiding this dread disease. Dr. Paul Donohue, a syndicated writer who appears regularly in the

Grand Rapids' *Press*, stated in the March 23, 1987 edition, after pointing out the various ways in which AIDS is contracted (and ways in which it can not be contracted):

You won't get AIDS if you share a longstanding monogamous and drug-free relationship with a partner who is also AIDS-free. That's the only what to have 100 percent protection from this fatal illness.

Interesting! He could as well have stated: obey God's law without compromise, and this terrible disease can not strike you. But man does not want that kind of answer — and it appears that even in the face of certain death, many are not willing to consider this 100 percent preventive measure.

Secular Humanism — a Religion

A lower court decision in an Alabama case has attracted the attention of the national press and created a degree of consternation within the hearts of many in the public school systems. Though one would think, given the climate of today's thinking, that this decision will ultimately be overthrown, it is a decision with which we would basically agree. Its main thrust is that secular humanism, as admittedly taught in most public schools and in their text-books, is a religion. That is, of course, true — but a truth which most public school educators would refuse to admit. Therefore, the decision of Judge Hand is of such great interest, also to us. I quote a bit of this decision and the reasoning behind it as presented in *Religious Freedom Reporter*, Mar./Apr. 1987:

A federal district court has ruled that secular humanism is a religion for first amendment purposes and that textbooks used by the Alabama public schools advanced that religion in contravention of the establishment clause. In accordance with its findings, the court enjoined the use of the offending textbooks except as reference sources in comparative religion courses treating all religions equally

. . . In developing an appropriate definition of religion, the district court noted that the Supreme Court had never given an absolute definition of religion under the first amendment. On the basis of its examination of several high court decisions addressing the nature of religion, the court found four relevant considerations. First, the concept of neutrality requires that constitutional protection be extended to all religious beliefs without reference to their "theological foundations or idiosyncrasies." Second, the nature of religion is largely dependent upon the popular perception of religion. Third, governmental definitions of religion can not constitutionally be structured to hinder or prohibit the growth of new beliefs. Fourth, government is entitled to set

reasonable boundaries on religious acts necessary to enable it to carry out its essential functions. While finding that overt sponsorship, seemingly placing the state's imprimatur on specific religious acts, violates the establishment clause, the court noted that laws incidentally agreeing with or assisting particular religious belief were legitimate expressions of the value afforded free exercise rights. It further recognized that the state could encourage free exercise rights or permit religious expression in public forums without an establishment clause violation. The court also noted the prohibition on state evaluation of the validity of any religious belief.

In light of the foregoing, the court reasoned that a proper definition of religion could not require an examination of the validity of the religious beliefs or practices involved. Moreover it concluded that the state could not employ content based definitions of religion but instead was required to evaluate the factors common to all religious movements to determine how "to distinguish those ideologies worthy of the protection of the religion clauses from those which must seek refuge under other constitutional provisions." It stressed that a definition of religion must be expansive enough to "encompass systems of belief that are equivalent to (traditional systems of belief) the believer."

The court identified four areas concerning which beliefs which were properly characterized as religious made assumptions: "1) the existence of supernatural and/or transcendent reality; 2) the nature of man; 3) the ultimate end, or goal or purpose of man's existence, both individually and collectively; and 4) the nature of the universe." The court emphasized that while a religion need not include a belief in a deity or in supernatural existence "a religious person adheres to some position on whether supernatural and/or transcendent reality exists at all, and if so, how and if not, why." It thus distinguished a religion from a "comprehensive world-view" or "way of life" which, although similar, do not address those issues addressed by religion. The court also concluded that examination of such considerations as the sincerity of adherents' commitments, group organization, hierarchical structure and the practice of ritual and worship were relevant in determining whether a belief was religious.

Evaluating secular humanism under these criteria, the court found that all witnesses testifying for the plaintiffs with regard to its nature had agreed that it was a belief system constituting a religion which: "makes a statement about supernatural existence a central pillar of its logic; defines the nature of man; sets forth a goal or purpose for individual and collective human existence; and defines the nature of the universe, and thereby delimits its purpose." Specifically the court commented that secular humanism purported to establish a "closed definition of reality" in which everything was knowable solely through the use of the human intellect. It characterized as the most important belief of the religion "its denial of the transcendent and/or supernatural,

that there is no God, no creator, no divinity." The court identified its belief in man as "the product of evolutionary, physical, forces . . . purely biological and (having) no supernatural or transcendent spiritual component or quality;" its definition of man's individual purpose as to seek personal fulfillment through the free development of his rational intellect, and his collective purpose as seeking "the good life by the increase of every person's freedom and potential for personal development." The court also found that humanism had an established moral code and an identified source of morality — one existing in humans and human relationships but not having a spiritual or supernatural origin. Other characteristics cited as evidence of secular humanism's religious character included, its proscription on attitudes and conduct interfering with personal freedom and fulfillment, the hierarchial structure of some secular humanist groups and their proselytizing activities. The court concluded that secular humanism was "religious for first amendment purposes because it makes statements based on faith-assumptions."

Having defined secular humanism as a religion, the court stressed that it was subject to all the protections and prohibitions of the first amendment religion clauses including prohibitions on its promotion and advancement within the public schools . . .

. . . The court concluded that the omissions contained in some textbooks were sufficient to constitute a violation of the constitution. Specifically it noted the lack of both historical references to religion and references to the role of religion in the daily lives of Americans. Commenting on high school history texts,

the court concluded that "The student could reasonably assume, absent other information, that theistic religion is, at best, extraneous to an intelligent understanding of this country's history. The texts reviewed are not merely bad history, but lack so many facts as to equal ideological promotion . . ."

As one might expect, cries are ascending about "censorship" of books. Those who would have nothing of the Bible nor of the ten commandments because this is "religion", now deplore the statement of the court on the claim that it is "censorship" of books. The court, however, is correct. One can not have it both ways. If "religion" is to be excluded from public schools, then logically and consistently secular humanism must be excluded too.

The "solution" to the dilemma, of course, is one which neither the courts nor people generally will recognize. Parents themselves have the responsibility to instruct, or see to the instruction of their children in harmony with their "religion". This would remove the government from the realm of schooling. But this "solution" appears inconceivable in our present society. In the meantime, Christian parents must recognize too that the court is correct in stating that the public schools do teach religion (though the Bible is excluded). To send one's children there is to have the world teach its religion to covenant seed. Is it any different than if the children of Israel would have sent their children to the temples of Baal for instruction by those priests?

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Ronald H. Hanko

God Is Perfect (1)

In many ways the tenth commandment stands apart from all the others. Its unique importance is demonstrated, for example, by the statement of Paul in Romans 7:7: "For I had not known sin except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." In I Timothy 6:10 he again sets it apart from the all others and shows its importance by telling us that the love of money, covetousness, the sin forbidden in the tenth commandment, is the root sin.

This distinctive character of the tenth commandment is evident in its demand. All the other commandments, though they have implications for our inward life, are directed primarily at our outward life, our speech and actions. In forbidding covetousness (also called concupiscence or lust in Scripture) the tenth commandment deals with a sin that by its very nature is a matter of our inward life and heart. By directing its attention solely to our in-

ward life, the tenth commandment reminds us of something that is only implied in the other commandments: that obedience to God is fundamentally a matter of the heart; or in other words, that mere outward conformity to the law of God does not in itself constitute obedience.

This is critical to understanding the tenth commandment and to seeing the particular aspect of God's glory in which the tenth commandment is grounded. It, like all the others, is not arbitrary, but a revelation of the glory of God Himself, and an application of that glory to our life. Like all the others it teaches us to be holy as God is holy.

In looking for that principle, the first thing we must see is that the tenth commandment does not merely forbid our lusting after, or wanting things we do not have. That, in itself, is not even necessarily wrong. The faculty of the soul to want certain things is in-created by God and is not in itself bad, as is clear from those passages of Scripture which use such words as "lust" or "covet" in a good sense (Deut. 12:15-21, I Cor. 12:31). What the tenth commandment forbids is unlawful desiring, and unlawful desiring is wanting anything apart from God, or against God. Particularly that involves wanting what God has not given or will not give. This is the reason the tenth commandment speaks of the things that God has given to our neighbor and not to us. It is not wrong to desire a wife, unless, of course, God has made it clear that we must be eunuchs for the kingdom's sake, but He has forbidden us to want the neighbor's wife, likewise his house and his possessions.

Here the tenth commandment is very closely related to the first. In Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5 Paul even identifies covetousness as idolatry. Obviously, loving or desiring anything apart from God is only a species of idolatry. In fact, the only real difference between the two commandments is that matter of direction, that the first is directed to our outward life or worship and confession, the tenth to our inward life. Along with that, there is also the obvious fact that the tenth commandment relates especially to our every-day life in the world and our attitude toward the things of the world.

Because covetousness is principally the same as idolatry, James calls it adultery in chapter 4:1-4 of his Epistle. Just as idolatry is spiritual adultery (Hos. 1:2) so also is covetousness. It is a "departing from the Lord." Along the same lines, the man in the parable of the rich fool is a fool in his covetousness, because in everything he says and does regarding his possessions he takes no account of God,

and therefore says in his heart what the fool always says, that there is no God (Luke 12:13-21, Ps. 14:1).

All this helps us get at the basic principle of the tenth commandment. Inasmuch as it is essentially the same as the first, so, too, its principle is really the same: the important Biblical truth that God is ONE. In the tenth commandment, therefore, the law of God makes a full circle, beginning and ending with the same truth, the most basic and important truth of all God's self-revelation.

Nevertheless, the tenth commandment is grounded in a slightly different aspect of God's oneness. The first commandment, if we remember, was based on the truth that God is the one only true God, and that beside Him there is no other. The tenth is grounded in God's simplicity or perfection, another aspect of His oneness.

Remember now that the tenth commandment requires that our whole life, including the inward life of our thoughts, desires, and motives be in obedience to God's law. In requiring this, the commandment requires of us perfection. Our obedience must be whole and entire, lacking nothing, that is, perfect. That this is the Biblical meaning of perfection is clear from James 1:4 where James explains the word "perfect" with the phrase "entire and lacking nothing." Likewise, Leviticus 22:21ff describes a perfect sacrifice as one without blemish, lack, or imperfection. And it is in harmony with this idea that the Heidelberg Catechism explains the tenth commandment as requiring that "even the smallest inclination or thought contrary to any of God's commandments never arise in our hearts, but that at all times we hate all sin with our whole heart, and delight in all righteousness" (XLIV, 113).

That this demand for perfection is indeed the requirement of the tenth commandment is nowhere so clear as in Jesus' conversation with the rich young ruler. This man claimed to have kept all the commandments of God from his youth and since Jesus himself does not question his outward conformity to the law, there is no reason for us to doubt this man's words. Nevertheless, Jesus shows that he was still not obedient, by pointing out his covetousness. Jesus told him to sell all he had, not because it is always necessary to have nothing in order to follow Jesus, but because this man's possessions were his first love. He was covetousness as he showed when he left Jesus for his possessions: "he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (Matt. 19:16-22). That is indeed a significant revelation of where he stood in relation to God as far as the desires of his heart were concerned. Even more significant for us, however, is the fact that Jesus says to him by way

of getting at his covetousness, "If thou wilt be perfect . . ." That is the great demand of the tenth commandment.

We understand, then, that the tenth commandment does not just require perfection, but that we be perfect as God Himself is perfect, and because He is perfect (cf. Deut. 18:13, Matt. 5:48). That God is perfect means that His glory is complete and entire, lacking nothing. There is no contradiction or disharmony, no disunity in God, and He is not divided against Himself in any way. In dogmatics this is usually called the simplicity of God, as we read in the Belgic Confession; "we all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth, that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God" (Art. I). The word "simple" has in this connection its older meaning of uncomplicated, pure, and unmixed, and refers to the same thing that Scripture calls God's perfection. Perhaps the most profound statement of God's simplicity in all of Scripture, but one which at the same gets the idea of it across to us most powerfully, is found in I John 1:5; "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

That God's simplicity is an aspect of His oneness is clear with a little thought. It refers to His oneness, not as the only God, but as He is one in and of Himself, in all His words and works (Deut. 32:4, II Sam. 22:31). It is also a very important truth.

It is not too much to say that the truth of God's simplicity is the underlying foundation of all consistency in doctrine and the development of the truth. For example, it is this attribute of God which is the most powerful argument against the idea of God's love for all men, particularly against the idea that He reveals in the gospel such a love for all men as desires their salvation, while at the same time not providing in His sovereign power all that is necessary for their salvation, thus showing an unwillingness to have all saved. God's simplicity means there is no such contradiction in Him. He cannot both love and hate the wicked and desire

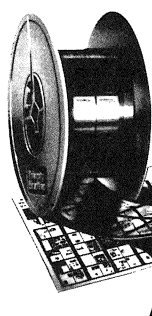
their salvation while at the same not willing their salvation in His decree of election. He is perfect!

As important as that truth is for doctrine and dogmatics, it is even more important for the comfort of God's people. Deuteronomy 32:4 tells us that because His work is perfect, He is the Rock of His people, the Rock of their salvation (vs. 15), the Rock that begat them (vs. 18), and the Rock that first delivered them into the hands of their enemies and then delivered them (vss. 30-43). II Samuel 22:31 adds its own testimony to this, by reminding God's people that He is a buckler to all that trust in Him because His way is perfect.

As much then as we love this truth concerning God (and we love or ought to love it very much in our Protestant Reformed Churches, for it is not only our comfort as believers, but an integral part of our history), by so much will we love the tenth commandment and its demands as the way in which we can with all our heart show our appreciation for what God has revealed of His perfection, and confess our love and faith in His perfection in a living and practical way. So once again we see that true obedience to God's law, is not mere conformity to a code of ethics, not a matter finally of "do and don't," but of whole-hearted conformity to God's own glory and perfection. The "must" of God's law can never be for His people anything but the "must" of their own love for Him who called them out of darkness into His own light.

Here that "must" is the requirement that our life be without contradiction in the service of God, that our heart and life be one and undivided in obedience to Him, and that there be no contradiction between the outward conduct of our life, and the motives and desires of our hearts. Far be it from us that we serve Him with hands and lips while our hearts are far from Him, our desires toward the world and the things of the world, and we be full of covetousness. We must be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

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GUEST ARTICLE

Ronald J. Van Overloop

Effective Personal Witnessing (1)

Within the sphere of Reformed believers there has always been a segment who have held as suspect all aspects of evangelism (both mission work and personal witnessing). It is contended that evangelism has historically been the occasion for many departures from the Reformed faith. It is also contended that if one is truly Reformed, then he cannot expect effective and successful missions. It is falsely assumed that one must be Arminian at least in his methodology if not in his theology if he is to be effective in the work of evangelism.

The baby must not be thrown away with the dirty bath water. Get rid of the dirty water of bad practices and sad histories, but keep the baby of Biblically defined and commanded evangelism.

In fact, the real hope, encouragement, and liberty for all forms of evangelism is found in the God-centered gospel, which is one of the chief characteristics of the Reformed faith. The doorway to a hopeful and joyful witness is found by focusing on the sovereign God as man's Creator and Redeemer.

It can not and may not be denied that there is a lot of dirty water in the church world. There is in the human nature a carnal fascination for size and success. American society is especially keen on having things big. In the church world, too, there is an emphasis on the numerical growth of a church. The really large congregations are held up as examples, and their methods are emulated. Books, pamphlets, and seminary courses on church growth have great popularity.

The Reformed believer does not respond to this carnal fascination with size. He confesses that size is not one of the marks of the true Church. On the contrary Scripture warns against the fascination with large numbers in the history of David and Israel being chastened sorely when David numbered the people (II Samuel 24).

However, this does not cause the Reformed believer to dismiss church growth altogether, nor does he despise it. Rather, following the direction of Scripture, he looks for healthy church growth. He is not suspicious of evangelism. It is not something carnal, but it is highly spiritual. It is the Lord Who adds daily to the Church the ones being saved (Acts 2:47), so if one loves the Lord, then he loves the salvation of His people, and he loves and values the growth of His Body, the Church. He will pray for the growth of the Church, delight in it and look for it.

* * * * *

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has given five foundational principles for evangelism and witnessing.

1. The supreme object is to glorify God, not to save souls.
2. The only power that can do the work is the Holy Spirit, not our own strength.
3. The only medium through which the Holy Spirit works is the Scriptures (Paul always "reasoned out of the Scriptures").
4. The preceding give the true motivation: zeal for God and love of neighbor.
5. There is the constant danger of heresy through false zeal and unscriptural methods.

If one would hold to and follow these principles, then one would be free from fear that evangelism, missions, and witnessing are too dangerous to conduct. At the same time one would be secured from heresy.

* * * * *

To witness is clearly Biblical. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). To witness is also clearly Reformed, for one of the reasons given why the Christian must do good works is "that, by our godly conversation, others may be gained to Christ" (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 32). The idea of

witnessing is that of Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

It is not just for the super-Christian or for the officebearer to witness. It is the responsibility and privilege of every Christian.

Also, it is not a question of whether or not we witness, but of what kind of witness we are giving. The idea is that our life and speech are our greatest and most effective witness to those about us. Many conceive of witnessing in terms of a neat formula, a set of questions, a friendly personality, eloquence of speech, or such like. However, there is no substitute for holiness of life. Such a holy life is one of prayer for the salvation of others (Romans 10:1). It is a life of humility, a willingness to decrease that God might increase (John 3:30). A holy life is one of kindness (I Corinthians 13:4). Such a holy life is one of confidence in the Spirit's use of the gospel as the power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Such a holy life consists of unashamedly defending the honor and glory of God in our life and speech, especially to our neighbor.

* * * * *

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones warns us of the constant danger of heresy through false zeal and unscriptural methods. Therefore, one must be careful to understand and remember the relationship between witnessing and the preaching of the gospel.

The official and lively preaching of the Word of God within the Church is the chief means of grace. That preaching of Christ crucified, risen, and exalted is the wisdom and power of God unto salvation (I Corinthians 1:20-24). Faith comes through this proclamation of the gospel (Romans 10:14-17).

The Holy Spirit powers this preaching into the hearts and lives of believers. The life, conversation and conduct of the believer carries the message heard on the Lord's Day throughout the week to his neighbors. So it was with the persecuted, Jerusalem Christians who "went every where preaching the Word" (Acts 8:4). We might call this preaching in the broader sense. The word "witness" conveys the same idea better, for it frees one from the danger of thinking that those who witness (i.e. all believers) have the right to be called preachers in the same sense as those who are trained, called, and ordained into the ministry of the Word. But while it is wise to use the word "witness", let it not be forgotten that the Scriptures place great importance and power on the witness (the holy life) of the believer.

To avoid the danger of heresy through false zeal and unscriptural methods, it must be remembered

that the ultimate goal of all witnessing is to bring the object of the witness under the weekly preaching of the Word.

One more thing must be said about the relationship between preaching and witnessing: it is the preaching which instructs, admonishes and inspires the believer in the proper motives, contents, and methods of witnessing. The messages heard on the Lord's Day give the believer the contents and inspiration to live a holy life (witness) in gratitude to God for the salvation experienced.

* * * * *

There is also the danger of making a separation in one's mind between one's life in the church and one's witnessing.

Acts 2 makes it very clear that there were certain characteristics of the Church to which the Lord added daily such as should be saved. Verses 42-47a describe the life of the church to which Christ added. There is a very definite and close relationship between the Lord's adding and the spiritual condition of the congregation. The church that grows possesses a normal, healthy, spiritual condition. And every member plays an active role in this healthy condition. This passage makes it very clear that, while distributing tracts or going door-to-door may have a place in the life of the individual believer, these are not the first and most important thing. It is vital that each member actively give himself or herself to living in the congregation the healthy spiritual life of the Body of Christ.

That healthy spiritual condition consists of three things in the passage in Acts 2. First, it consists of a steadfast continuance in the apostle's doctrine. This means that the whole congregation has a lively interest in the Word of God, coming eagerly and expectantly (not reluctantly) to the preaching services.

Secondly, the healthy spiritual condition of a growing church consists of the fellowship of the members among themselves. Over against the constant pressures to lose or corrupt this fellowship each individual believer consciously strives to express his or her fellowship with the fellow-saints.

And thirdly, the healthy spiritual condition of a church consists of the presence of the "fear" of and for God in every soul. This shows that their continuing steadfast in doctrine is not dead orthodoxy or formalism, but a love of God and His truth.

So the individual believer who loves the Lord and His Church, and who is anxious about his calling to be a witness, will labor mightily within his present congregation to be faithful to doctrine, zealous in the worship of Jehovah, and at peace with his fellow-saints.

It is obvious that one may not conceive of witnessing apart from his responsibility to the Church of God.

In a future issue attention will be given to the proper motivation, Scriptural methods, and the encouragements given for witnessing.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Herman C. Hanko

Moral Aspects of Medical Technology (17)

Genetic Engineering! What high hopes this holds for the future of man! It has the potential to create heaven on earth and loose man once and for all from the chains of ignorance and poverty which hold him in his dark prison!

We have discussed in our last article what men have already accomplished through genetic engineering and what they hope to accomplish in the future as the genetic code is broken and the secrets of it are learned.

We have to discuss one other aspect of genetic engineering before we move on with our discussion. This has to do with what is called "cloning." A description of this is found in an article by Charles E. Curran, a Roman Catholic moralist, entitled, "Moral Theology and Genetics." It is published in a book edited by Stephen E. Lammers & Allen Verhey, "On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics." He writes:

Science can now remove the nucleus from a fertilized frog's egg and replace it with a nucleus from one of the cells of a developing embryo (part of the problem is that the genes must not be already differentiated, as is the case in most cells). The fertilized cell thus develops into a frog which is the genetic twin of the frog from which the nucleus of the cell was taken.

By means of cloning is it theoretically possible to make as many of one kind of creature as one wishes, each creature being exactly identical to all

the others. It has been suggested that such procedures could be used to develop people who are half apes and half men with extra long arms to pick fruit in orchards, to develop whole castes of people with sub-level intelligence to do menial labor which none of us likes to do, to perfect in this way human robots who will do all the drudgery in life while men of greater intelligence can enjoy life's pleasures. Genetic engineering holds out all sorts of prospects for a better life. It sounds like Huxley's prophecy come true: humans and sub-humans produced on laboratory assembly lines for specific tasks in life — the sub-mental for drudgery, the super-intelligent for the enjoyable parts of life.

In this article we propose to discuss the moral aspects of this technique and look at them from the perspective of Scripture. Before we do this, two things must be said.

One is that some may argue that this is hardly worth discussing because the hopes of scientists are still future and they may never be able to realize the dreams of which they speak. Genetic engineering, while holding out great hope, is a thing of the future. So why worry about it? Why ought the Christian to concern himself with it? He will never need to face the moral issues which are brought up by it.

Two things have to be said in this connection. One is that I have learned over the course of the years not to underestimate what science is able to do. Forty years ago I would have insisted that any

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man who claimed that man would land on the moon was stark, raving mad. But men have landed on the moon. Thirty years ago I would have laughed at any one who said that someday we would have to face the problems of surrogate motherhood. But today these problems are being fought in the courts. Twenty years ago the idea of conception in a test tube seemed preposterous. But today it is being commonly done in this land and other countries.

When God prevented men from building the tower of Babel, he said, "Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: *and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.*" God stopped them then, for many centuries had to elapse for the church to be gathered and Christ had not yet come. But now we live near the end and the restraints of sin are being taken away so that God allows man to do whatever he imagines. We have to face this horrible fact, for it is necessary before the Lord returns so that the full horror of the sin of man may be revealed and God be shown righteous in all His judgments.

The second thing that needs saying is this. Even though science has not yet succeeded in doing what it hopes to do in the whole field of genetic engineering, now is the time to consider the moral implications of these things. If we foolishly wait until these things are upon us, we will find it very much more difficult to come to conclusions on these matters in the light of Scripture, for we will become caught up in the stream of them and swept along without having the time or opportunity to weigh their moral worth. When we take upon ourselves the responsibility to drive a car we ought, at the outset, determine that we are going to abide by the laws of the land; we ought to have a clear conception of what we will do if the brakes on the car fail at any given time; we ought to have an idea ahead of time what actions we can take under various emergencies. The time to do this is not while we are hurtling down a mountain road with useless brakes. The precipice will be the end of the ride.

We ought, I think, to have a clear understanding of what scientists have in mind. I found such a description in an article by Joseph Fletcher included in the recently published book edited by Stephen E. Lammers & Allen Verhey which I mentioned above. The article of Fletcher is written under the title: "The Ethics of Genetic Control: Some Answers."

One must understand that Joseph Fletcher is a proponent of the new morality; i.e., of a morality which holds that anything is right as long as it seeks the greatest good of the greatest number — "good,"

of course, being defined by Fletcher himself. He is in favor of adultery, artificial germination, birth control, incest, genetic engineering and every conceivable vice which has been considered or committed under the sun — although, of course, with various restrictions. He has nothing but scathing words for those who hold to a morality rooted in the law of God. Concerning cloning he says:

There is no ethical objection to cloning when it is *morally* (that is, humanely) employed. Artificial virgin births and cloned "multiplets" promise real benefits not only to human beings but to the "green revolution" also. Whole orange groves are sometimes copied tree by tree, from a single high yield tree. Herds of meat and coat animals cloned from a champion Kenya or Kazakhstan sheep could increase our meat supply two or three times in just a couple of years. Fish farming in controlled waters is another option; we need not rely altogether on delicate ecobalances. What men can do by cloning with their plants and animals they could and sometimes should do for themselves. There is no moral reason why we must follow biological heterogeneity in all human beings, whenever homogeneity can serve a constructive purpose.

Speaking concerning genetic engineering for disease control, he writes:

Producing our children by "sexual roulette" without preconceptive and uterine control, simply taking "pot luck" from random sexual combinations, is irresponsible — now that we can be genetically selective and know how to monitor against congenital infirmities. As we learn to direct mutations medically we should do so. Not to control when we can is immoral. This way it will be much easier to assure our children that they really are here because they are *wanted*, that they were born "on purpose."

What is particularly frightening about a man like Fletcher is his insistence that genetic engineering be made a matter of coercion. He writes:

A worrisome side to the practice of control is whether it should ever be imposed or must always be voluntary. If people could be relied upon to be compassionate we would have no reason to even consider mandatory controls. But there are too many who do not control their lives out of moral concern; they are self-centered about what they do or neglect to do, even though they may be "cagey" about it. Large families and a pious disregard of genetic counseling, like refusing to undergo vaccinations until it is made a matter of police enforcement, show how the common welfare often has to be safeguarded by compulsory control or what Garret Hardin calls "mutual coercion mutually agreed upon."

Coercion is a dirty word to liberals, but all social controls — e.g., the government's tax powers — are really what the majority agree upon, however reluctantly, out of enlightened self-interest and a *quid pro quo* willingness to give up something to get something better. It might be protection of overpopulation, for

instance. Ideally it is better to do the moral things freely, but sometimes it is more compassionate to force it to be done than to sacrifice the well-being of the many to the egocentric "rights" of the few. This obviously is the ethics of a sane society. Compulsory controls on reproduction would not, of course, fit present interpretations of due process in the fifth and fourteenth amendments to the Constitution. Here, as in so many other ways, the law lags behind the ethics of modern medicine and public health knowledge.

Not only is this frightening in the extreme, but we can well believe that the day is not too far distant when these "laws" will be put into effect. Anyone who does not have children in the way the state prescribes (all according to high ethics and true morality) will be severely punished by legal penalties.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Jason L. Kortering

Numbers — The Wilderness Sojourn (Concluded)

We are in the midst of outlining the section of the Book of Numbers that covers the second numbering of the people and related events (beginning at chapter 30). Moses reminds the heads of each tribe that if a man vow or swear an oath, he must do as he has vowed, for the Lord's honor is at stake (30:1-3). The same holds true for a woman, only her father or husband had the right to disallow the carrying out of the vow (30:4-8). The same thing applied to a widowed or divorced woman (30:9-16). We now have the record of the vengeance that Israel was instructed by the Lord to place upon Moab. See Numbers 25:16-18. Moses instructed the people to produce 1,000 armed men from each tribe, a total of 12,000. Phinehas was to lead this conquest. Upon divine instruction, all the males were killed, the women and children were taken captive. They burned all the cities and castles, but took as spoil all the cattle, flocks, and goods (31:1-12). Upon their return, Moses expressed anger at the captivity of the women, since they had caused Israel to commit fornication. He instructed them to kill all the married women as well as young sons. After this slaughter, they had to remain outside the camp seven days for purification

(31:13-20). All metals that could be purified by fire had to be placed in the fire and all the rest of the spoil had to be washed in purification (31:21-24). The spoils had to be divided along these lines: half given to the men who fought, half to the congregation. Of the half given to the soldiers, one of every 500 captives and animals had to be given to Eleazer for a heave offering to the Lord. Of the half given to the congregation, one of every 50 captives and animals had to be given to the Levites for their portion. The numbers then are given, indicating a tremendous booty, e.g. 675,000 sheep alone. There were 32,000 women taken captive (31:25-47). The officers over the army of Israel came to Moses and offered on behalf of the soldiers an oblation unto the Lord for their safety in battle. Not one was killed. They returned unto Jehovah of the booty they had taken 16,750 shekels of jewels. These were brought to the tabernacle as a memorial (31:48-54).

3. The land east of the Jordan was distributed among the tribes (32:1-42). The children of Reuben and Gad had much cattle and they took note that the land of Gilead was suitable for cattle. They requested of Moses that that land be their inheritance (32:1-5). Moses reminded them that their fathers were among those who discouraged Israel from taking the land the first time and as a result spent 40

years wandering in the wilderness until all died except Joshua and Caleb. Were they refusing to help Israel take the land? (32:6-15) Their answer was that they would secure their cattle and families, but the men would help fight and take the land west of Jordan (32:16-19). This proposition was acceptable to Moses as long as Reuben and Gad would swear unto the Lord to fulfill this promise (32:20-33). Subsequently, Reuben, Gad, and some of Manasseh built cities for their families and folds for their sheep and cattle (32:34-42).

4. We have inserted here, a summary of the journey that Israel took from Egypt to Canaan (33:1-56). Mention is made of the departure from Rameses in Egypt, Succoth, Etham, all the way to Sinai (33:1-15). This is followed by mention of cities from Sinai to Kadesh (33:16, 17). The record of the cities visited and places in which they stayed during the 40 years in the wilderness is given (33:18-36). This is followed by the record of cities visited from Kadesh to the Plain of Moab (33:37-49). Listed are many cities not mentioned anywhere else and consequently unknown. The chapter closes with extensive instruction given to drive out all the inhabitants from the land of Canaan and utterly destroy all that pertain to their idol worship. Their individual portion of land shall be determined by lot, based upon the size of the tribes. If they fail to drive out the people, they shall be as pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides to vex them (33:50-56).

5. General instructions are given as to their conduct upon entering the land of Canaan to possess it (34:1-36:13). A general description of the land of Canaan is given, from the southern border from Edom, near the Salt Sea, northward toward Mount Hor with the Great Sea on the west and the Jordan River on the east. The eastern part of the Jordan was to be possessed by Reuben, Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh (34:1-15). The land was to be divided by Eleazar and Joshua along with princes from each tribe (34:16-29). The Levites were assigned special cities among all the tribes, a total of 48 cities. They were instructed to live in them with their families, and a measured portion on the outskirts was for their animals (35:1-8). Among these Levitical cities, six were to be designated "cities of refuge". If anyone accidentally killed another person, they could flee to them for safety and a fair trial. Some instruction is given to help determine who should be judged a murderer, worthy of death. They also served as a place of dwelling for the stranger and sojourner. Three of them were to be on the east side of Jordan, three on the west (35:9-34). Specific request is made by the tribe of Manasseh that upon the instruction given that the daughters of Zelophehad would inherit the land since there was

no male heir, if they should marry, they should marry within their own tribe (36:1-4). Moses approved this request that if they marry it should be within the tribe in order to preserve the land within the tribe. This the daughters of Zelophehad had done (36:5-13).

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

Two thoughts stand out in our mind as worthy of emphasis as we summarize this marvelous book.

First, God is uncompromising in His holiness. By holiness we mean that God is consecrated to Himself as the highest and only good. His glory is of prime consideration in all things. Anyone or anything that would presume to stand in the way of God realizing His purpose with His people will be destroyed. The history recorded in the Book of Numbers demonstrates this both in the area of God's dealings with His enemies which are without (complete destruction of nations, men, women, and children; for they curse God by their idol worship), but also consider the enemies within (plagues that came upon the congregation and repeatedly killed tens of thousands). It is a fearful thing to stand in the presence of the holy God.

Second, one cannot study the Book of Numbers without identifying personally with the children of Israel in their wilderness sojourn. The spiritual symbolism of this history is directly related to the exodus from Egypt. As Israel was delivered from the house of bondage by a mighty hand of God, so we are delivered from the dominion of sin by the blood and Spirit of Christ Jesus. Between Egypt and Canaan however, lies the wilderness. During the forty years of sojourn, Israel demonstrated one thing, loud and clear, they were not worthy of entrance into Canaan. If they would ever arrive, it would be the sheer grace of God, which is His unmerited favor upon His people in Christ. His favor is evident so abundantly. He provided for all their natural needs (imagine two million people spending forty years in a wilderness and having all their natural needs supplied). That alone is a wonder of sovereign power. More so, however is the measure of His love for such an undeserving people. It is a wonder they were not all destroyed for their complaints and rebellion. Only in Christ is there any hope. The same is true for us. We must not point the finger too quickly at Israel without examining our lives carefully. We too conclude: saved by free and sovereign grace alone!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How was the numbering of the people of Israel before and after the wilderness sojourn different from David's numbering the people (II Samuel 24)?

2. Page through the outline (or better still the Book of Numbers itself) and cite examples of Christ's presence in the midst of Israel during their wilderness sojourn. How can we apply this to our life?

3. How can we explain the survival of so many people during the wilderness sojourn of forty years? Give examples that God miraculously provided for them. What can we learn from this?

4. Here follow a few thought-provoking questions. The people of Israel numbered 603,550 males over 21 years of age at the beginning. At the end they numbered 601,730. How many men died on an average every day during the 40 years? Could so many men die and yet produce so many sons to replace them? What does this say to us in our lives?

5. How do we explain the seeming brutality of

killing whole nations, including women and children? In some instances women and children were taken captive and divided among the families of Israel. Wasn't this cruel? May we do anything like this today as we deal with our enemies?

6. Reflect upon the history of the church and cite instances of unfaithfulness and rebellion, much like Israel in the wilderness. You may desire to do this in your own family or personal life. Why is it important to be specific?

7. The covering for sin is treated throughout the book of Numbers. Give a few examples and show that the spiritual principle is true for us as well.

8. Do you think that the majority of the congregation of Israel was ungodly? Is there any proof one way or the other? What does this have to say about the church today?

Book Reviews

HERMENEUTICS, AUTHORITY, AND CANON, edited by D.A. Carson & John D. Woodbridge; Zondervan Publishing House, 1986; 468pp., \$14.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

The battle over the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture goes on and the result is a continual stream of books which flow from the ecclesiastical press. This book is a part of that stream.

It is somewhat difficult to evaluate a book of this sort because of the different writers who have authored chapters — Woodbridge, Bromiley, Frame, Silva, Van Hoozer, Carson, Moo, Blomberg, Dunbar — and the different subjects and approaches which the authors take. This review, therefore, will do three things: give a listing of the subjects treated; call attention to some specifically significant chapters; and make some general remarks about the book as a whole.

The subjects treated are: Recent developments in the controversy over inerrancy, the Bible's different literary forms, the place of historical reconstruction in critical approaches to the Scriptures, the problem of harmonization, the question of the New Testament's use of the Old, the role of

the Spirit in Scripture and its use, an analysis of the enlightenment on the doctrine of Scripture, Karl Barth's view of the authority of Scripture, the canon of Scripture.

If anyone is interested in recent developments in the field of redaction criticism, Chapter 1 by D.A. Carson is of great help. David G. Dunbar has an interesting chapter on the foundation of the canon, which I found helpful. John M. Frame's chapter on "The Spirit and the Scriptures" is important and, on the whole, sound.

It is obvious that the book is not written for those who have no technical training in hermeneutics and who do not know anything about the vagaries of historical criticism. There is something about this very fact which makes one perk up his ears. Long, detailed, involved, and highly technical papers, articles, and books have been written on the subject of how to interpret the Bible. But if there is even a modicum of truth to what all these treatises have to say, the fact is that the Bible is put out of the reach of the people of God who have no technical training in these fields. This is always, to my mind, the one great danger of exhaustive

studies of all these points. God wrote his Word, through the inspiration of the Spirit, for men behind the plow, women who turn to it in their homes, that they may know how to bring up their children, little lambs in God's flock, sick, distressed, dying saints who have never heard terms like historical-literary criticism, redaction criticism, *sensus plenior*, and the like; and who would not be interested in them even if they did hear the terms. One does not talk of *sensus plenior* to a saint struggling with the fierce temptations of Satan. And if one does, he has failed miserably as a pastor to God's sheep. If the ability to understand the Bible is tied to knowledge of such a technical nature, God's people might just as well put the Bible in their closets. We are back to the Middle Ages, only now with a priesthood of scholars who alone can make the Bible clear for those who have no education in this area.

These problems have been answered — after a fashion. Some claim that we must speak of a multi-levelled meaning of Scripture. I.e., Scripture has a surface level meaning which is accessible to almost anyone who can read. But beneath this simple level are other levels of understanding, each somewhat deeper, and each available only to those who have studied a particular branch of hermeneutics, be it linguistics, Jewish studies, archeology, redaction criticism, or the like. But then, of course, we have really lost the perspicuity of Scripture, and it is highly questionable whether even the surface-level meaning is trustworthy.

Others have said that we must write about all these technical matters because it is responsible Reformed apologetics to answer the attacks which are being made on Scripture. With this, of course, I agree. But it is precisely here that I have my major quarrel with most apologetes, even the "conservative" ones, and particularly the gentlemen who have authored this book.

One aspect of this quarrel is that the critics of Scripture are answered *on their own grounds*. I.e., the "defense" of Scripture becomes a rationalistic defense, answering critical objections with critical arguments. In doing this we have let the enemy choose the battlefield as well as the weapons and we have forgotten that the whole doctrine of Scripture is an article of *faith*. A responsible apologetic is important. But I never hear anyone saying that only a true and living faith in Christ can defend the truth of Scripture. If one takes this approach, then two things (of tremendous importance) happen. The analysis of the enemies' (and I use the word "enemy" advisedly) attack is one thing, but the defense is simple and straightforward. No need arises then to write lengthy documents in defense

of the Bible's teaching on this point. And the child of God who turns to God's Word for help and guidance in this troubled world can be confident that he will find in his Bible all he needs for all his salvation.

This is characterized as "simplistic" and "unscholarly." I do not believe that it is; but the charge troubles me not at all. Give me a Bible I can carry with me to the hospital to bring to God's dying saints; give me a Bible that I can preach from the pulpit so that even the little children sitting in the pews can understand it; give me a Scripture which is truly a lamp unto my feet and a light upon my path. I have need of nothing else — and neither do God's people.

That leads me to the one great objection I have against this book. It is, for the most part, a concession to redaction criticism. This is not surprising. I keep hearing even "conservative" Bible scholars who profess faith in Scripture's inerrancy relying upon this current fad in Bible interpretation.

Without attempting to go into detail on what this redaction criticism is, it is sufficient to point out here that its whole approach is the approach of studying the Scriptures from the viewpoint of their human authorship. Don't get me wrong. All believe in divine authorship. But all also believe in human authorship. And in redaction criticism the human authorship gets all the attention.

A few remarks about this.

While we believe, of course, that God used human men to write the Scriptures, the question is principally *how* these men were used. It is often presented, at best, as some kind of cooperative venture — although even then all the emphasis is placed in discussions on the human author. (In the present book, the chapter by John Frame is the exception.) We believe an analogy exists between the way in which Scripture was inspired and the way in which God saves His elect people. The basis for this analogy is that both the salvation of the elect and the inspiration of Scripture are parts of the one wonder of grace. He who is Arminian in his theology will also emphasize too much the "human element" in Scripture. And he who emphasizes too much the "human element" in Scripture does so from an Arminian perspective. When it is emphasized as it ought to be that salvation is solely the work of God through grace, then it will also be emphasized that Scripture is God's work.

It has been argued that redaction criticism is nothing more than the application of grammatico-historical exegesis to the Biblical text. And grammatico-historical interpretation has been recognized as the true method of interpretation

from the time of the early church. In answer to this two points have to be made. Even more conservative redaction critics concede that redaction criticism can be carried to extremes — and indeed this is true. But a method which can be carried to such an extreme that it destroys Scripture is surely a method to be distrusted. It is also true, however, that the grammatico-historical method of interpreting the Scriptures must be put within the framework of the *spiritual* method. By the latter I mean simply that the final goal of interpreting Scripture is to learn the meaning of the Holy Spirit as He speaks through Scripture to God's people.

It is this latter that we never hear anything about. We hear a great deal of what Paul said, or Peter wrote, or John included in "the corpus of Johannine literature;" but we never, somehow, get around to what the Spirit says. We have a Pauline eschatology and a Petrine soteriology; but we never seem to get around to a theology which the Holy Spirit gives to the church as the revelation of Jehovah God. We are called earnestly to study the audience which Luke addresses and the people to whom Matthew was concerned to inform about Jesus; but we have no time left over to discuss what the Spirit says to the child of God wending his spiritual pilgrimage in this world of sin and death.

And it all comes down to such an obsessive preoccupation with the human element that the divine element is forgotten, overlooked, ruled out, or whatever. Scholarly or not, give me a Bible which is God's Word to His struggling saints in all walks of life, in all life's problems — a Word in which they can find treasures of untold worth and which will be their comfort and hope until they see their Lord face to face.

CHINESE THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, 1985. Available from Foundation for Theological Education in Southeast Asia, c/o Marvin D. Hoff, 86 East 12th St., Holland, MI 49423. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

This is the first volume of a new theological Journal which is written by Christians in China and devoted exclusively to the Church in China. The opening paragraph of the "Editor's Notes" reads:

The Chinese Theological Review (I) is the product of a desire to make available to a wider readership a broad spectrum of current Chinese theological writings. Its aim is to be a link between the Christian community in China and those abroad through the more widely current medium of the English language, providing to those outside China a vivid picture of Chinese Protestant thinking as it has been evolving over the last five years. At the same time, through both current writings and by the inclusion of a much earlier piece, the Review seeks to show the back-

ground as well as the underlying continuity of developments as reflected in the self understanding of Chinese Christians.

This issue of the Review contains speeches, essays, sermons, and a confession of the Chinese Churches. It is fascinating reading and gives more light on the churches in Communist China than anything I have read in the ecclesiastical press. It explains in some detail the basic Three-Self Patriotic Movement of which so much has been written: self-government, self-support, and self-propagation. It explains how the church in China stands related to the Communist (and atheistic) state government. Most of the articles have as their purpose to emphasize that in the past ten years or so every effort has been made by the Chinese churches to develop a truly indigenous church.

One can get a great deal of insight also from these writings into the theology of the Chinese churches, and the distinct impression is that the theology of these churches leaves much to be desired. This is undoubtedly due in large measure to the fact that the church is consciously a supporter of the present communist regime (with nothing but scorn for the "gang of four"), that it presses hard for a true Chinese ecumenism — one denomination only within China, and that it still reacts with great fury against what is called imperialistic and colonialistic mission work of the past.

For its insight into the Chinese church we recommend it.

THE EVANGELICAL-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE ON MISSION, 1977-1984; A Report edited by Basil Meeking and John Stott; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986; 96 pp., \$4.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This dialogue on mission referred to in the title was a series of three meetings which took place over a period of seven years. The first was held at Venice in 1977, the second at Cambridge in 1982, and the third at Landevennec in France in 1984. Some of the participants with more familiar names were: Prof. Peter Beyerhaus, Dr. Orlando Costas, Dr. David Hubbard, and Rev. John Stott. They discussed such topics as Revelation and Authority, The Nature of Mission, The Gospel of Salvation, Our Response in the Holy Spirit to the Gospel, The Church and the Gospel, The Gospel and Culture, The Possibilities of Common Witness.

On p. 11 we read concerning the report:

This report is in no sense an 'agreed statement', but rather a faithful record of the ideas shared. It is not exhaustive, for more questions were touched on than could be described in this brief compass. Yet enough has been included to give a substantial idea of how the dialogue developed and to communicate something of

Directory, Protestant Reformed Churches

(For our readers who may be traveling or may wish to visit one of our churches in their area.)

<p>Covenant Prot. Ref. Church 454 Pulis Ave. Franklin Lakes, N.J. (Meeting in United Methodist Church) Services: 11:30 & 7:00 Phone: (201) 790-4732</p> <p>Byron Center Prot. Ref. Church 8840 Byron Center Ave. Byron Center, MI (Meeting in Byron Center Chr. Jr. High School) Services: 9:30 & 5:00 Phone: (616) 878-3255, 534-1927</p> <p>Hope Prot. Ref. Church 1580 Ferndale, SW (Corner of Riverbend & Ferndale) Walker, MI Services: 9:30 & 7:00 Phone: (616) 453-3253, 453-2524</p> <p>Kalamazoo Prot. Ref. Church 4515 Green Acre Dr. Kalamazoo, MI Services: 9:30 & 6:00 Phone: (616) 381-3385, 349-4420</p> <p>Randolph Prot. Ref. Church 229 Hammond St. Randolph, WI Services: 9:30 & 2:00 Phone: (414) 326-5642</p> <p>Hull Prot. Ref. Church 1204 Third St. Hull, IA Services: 9:30 & 7:00 (May to Sept.) 9:30 & 1:30 (Oct. to April) Phone: (712) 439-1326, 439-1283</p> <p>Hope Prot. Ref. Church Isabel, SD Services: 9:30 & 2:00 Phone: (605) 466-2450</p> <p>Hope Prot. Ref. Church 1307 E. Brockton Ave. Redlands, CA Services: 10:00 & 7:00 Phone: (714) 792-0307, 792-4923</p>	<p>First Prot. Ref. Church 2800 Michigan St., NE (1/2 Mi. SW of I96/M44 interchange) Grand Rapids, MI Services: 9:30 & 6:00 Phone: (616) 247-0638, 245-4339</p> <p>Southwest Prot. Ref. Church 4875 Ivanrest Ave., SW Grandville, MI Services: 9:30 & 7:00 Phone: (616) 532-6876, 532-4846</p> <p>Faith Prot. Ref. Church 7194 20th Ave. Jenison, MI Services: 9:30 & 7:00 Phone: (616) 457-5848</p> <p>First Prot. Ref. Church 290 E. 18th St. Holland, MI Services: 9:30 & 6:30 Phone: (616) 396-8303</p> <p>Pella Prot. Ref. Church 410 Franklin St. Pella, IA Services: 9:30 & 7:00 Phone: (515) 628-4747</p> <p>Doon Prot. Ref. Church 6th Ave. & N. 2nd St. Doon, IA Services: 9:30 & 2:00 Phone: (712) 726-3382</p> <p>Loveland Prot. Ref. Church 709 E. 57th St. Loveland, CO Services: 9:30 & 6:00 (Oct. to May) 9:30 & 7:00 (June to Sept.) Phone: (303) 667-1347</p> <p>Lynden Prot. Ref. Church 108 Beernink Lane Lynden, WA Services: 10:00 & 8:00 (summer) 10:00 & 2:00 (winter) Phone: (206) 354-4337</p>	<p>Southeast Prot. Ref. Church 1536 Cambridge, SE Grand Rapids, MI Services: 9:30 & 5:00 Phone: (616) 452-7047</p> <p>Grandville Prot. Ref. Church Wilson Ave., SW Grandville, MI (Meeting in Grandville High School) Services: 9:30 & 7:00 Phone: (616) 538-2575</p> <p>Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church 5101 Beechtree Ave. (1 Blk. East of Public High School, 32nd Ave.) Hudsonville, MI Services: 9:30 & 7:00 Phone: (616) 669-0755</p> <p>South Holland Prot. Ref. Church 16511 South Park Ave. South Holland, IL Services: 9:30 & 6:00 Phone: (312) 333-1314, 596-3113</p> <p>Trinity Prot. Ref. Church 214 Barker-Clodine Rd. Houston, TX Services: 9:30 & 6:00 Phone: (713) 492-0844</p> <p>Edgerton Prot. Ref. Church 3rd & Maple St. Edgerton, MN Services: 9:30 & 7:30 (March to Nov.) 9:30 & 2:00 (Dec. to Feb.) Phone: (507) 442-4441</p> <p>First Prot. Ref. Church 11533 135th St. (Mt. Zion Lutheran Church) Edmonton, Alberta, Canada Services: 11:15 & 3:00 Phone: (403) 455-9803 (also a service in Trinity Lutheran Church, 5259 49th St. Lacombe, Alberta, 7:30 P.M. on 2nd & 4th Sundays of month)</p>
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it without creating misunderstandings or false expectations.

The dialogue, we are informed, was "born out of desire to find a common ground between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics in their endeavors to be more faithful in their obedience to the church's mission." And, "In recent years both Roman Catholics and Evangelicals have concentrated their attention on evangelism, and statements from both constituencies reveal a measure of convergence in the understanding of the nature of evangelism. This report is offered as a stimulus to further local encounters in dialogue between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics on a crucial aspect of the church's work in the world."

We encourage our readers to read this important book so that they may keep informed on the pressing issues of modern ecumenism.

WORLDLY SAINTS (The Puritans As They Really Were), Leland Ryken; Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 281 pp., \$14.95 (cloth) [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema]

If you have the rather common picture of the Puritans as a sour, dour, seldom-smiling people who normally walked about with faces so long (as Billy Sunday put it) that they could eat oatmeal out of the end of a gas-pipe, and who were rather Anabaptistic in their world-and-life view, then you should read this book and allow yourself to be disillusioned.

The reader should not be misled by the word *worldly* in the title. The term is not used in a pejorative sense, as though the Puritans were carnal and guilty of loving the world in the sense in which I John 2:15 warns God's people, "Love not the world . . ." But it is used in the sense of depicting the Puritans as living the full-orbed life of the world, but from their Christian principles. They did not believe in world-flight, in other words.

The author lets the Puritans speak for themselves in this book. The author has taken most of his data from Puritan written sources, and he quotes a very broad range of both English and American Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — in other words, lets the Puritans speak for themselves — on a wide variety of aspects of life. His purpose is to depict as fairly as possible the strengths and weaknesses of the Puritan movement. Here are the chapter titles: 1. What Were the Original Puritans Like? 2. Work 3. Marriage and Sex 4. Money 5. Family 6. Puritan Preaching 7. Church and Worship 8. The Bible 9. Education 10. Social Action 11. Learning From Negative Example: Some Puritan Faults 12. The Genius of Puritanism: What the Puritans Did Best.

Perhaps a weakness in the book is the fact that it attempts to cover too much ground. On the other hand, this may also be a strength: for it saves the book from being too limited in scope and from becoming tedious. It appears to me that the quotations are rather fairly and judiciously chosen.

All in all, I found the book very instructive and stimulating. I can recommend it for a broad range of readership.

BUILDING A CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW, GOD, MAN, AND KNOWLEDGE (Vol. I), Edited by W. Andrew Hoffnecker; Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1986; 340 pp., \$14.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.)

The contributors to this book are mainly from Grove City College where the faculty have engaged in lengthy discussions and writing on the subject of this book. The blurb tells us:

Not since the Reformation have Christians been as concerned as they are today to develop a biblical view of all of life. The importance of such an outlook cannot be overstated. Writes W. Andrew Hoffnecker in the preface, "Underlying all that we think, say, or do are basic assumptions that form what we call a 'world view' Nobody is without such fundamental beliefs, and yet many people go through life unaware of their presuppositions The result is that people generally fail to recognize how their world views govern every dimension of their lives."

This volume focuses on fundamental questions such as: How do we know that God exists? How does God relate to His creation? Is man "the measure of all things?" Are people basically good and ultimately perfectible? On what basis can we know what is true? What is the role of reason, experience, and biblical authority?

The authors examine how leading thinkers have addressed these questions throughout Western history and compare their ideas with clearly presented biblical teachings. In so doing, this book unveils the roots of much modern thought and challenges readers to formulate their own understanding upon the bedrock of God's revealed Word.

The book is primarily historical, but its value lies not only in the historical material it has brought together, but in the evaluation of the thought of past thinkers. It is an important book for students on a college level.

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

Report of Classis East

May 13 & 14, 1987
Southeast Protestant Reformed Church

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday and Thursday, May 13th and 14th, 1987, at the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. Each congregation was represented by two delegates with the exception of Kalamazoo on the second day. Rev. R. Miersma presided at this session.

Classis had one major item before it, namely, the protest of an individual against a decision of the January, 1987 classis which decision said that the protest he submitted against his consistory was not legally before since it had not been finished in the minor assembly (his consistory). Classis reversed itself and now considered the material. The matter dealt with whether a father, divorced from his wife and who has custody of his children, is obligated, as the law says, to allow his children to visit an unbelieving former spouse. Classis did not sustain the protestant but decided that the consistory was right in advising this member to obey the law of the land and, therefore, must allow his former spouse her right to have her children visit her. Classis decided that the brother failed to distinguish be-

tween fellowship and common decency in dealing with one walking in sin (II Kings 5:17-19; Matthew 5:43-48) and that the law requiring this visitation is not sinful (I Corinthians 5:9-11; I Corinthians 7:12, 13).

Classis was informed of three more appeals to synod re the Wyckoff matter. Classis again decided that the appeals were legally presented to synod and since all the principles had been dealt with earlier, did not enter into the material again.

Classis heard several requests for discipline to members of two congregations.

Classis bade farewell to Rev. R. Miersma as he will soon take up his work in New Zealand. His work and the people there were remembered in the prayers at the classis.

The expenses of classis amounted to \$1,070.00. Classis will meet next in Hudsonville, on Wednesday, September 9, 1987.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Huisken, Stated Clerk

News From Our Churches

Ben Wigger

July 1, 1987

In our churches summer is a slow time. Many of us take our vacations at this time of the year. Church life could be described as light. In contrast to this trend, Southeast P.R.C. is holding a Summer Bible Class for a period of six to eight weeks. Their pastor, Rev. Key, will lead this class which will continue study in the book of Ephesians.

Southeast's Council also reported to their congregation that due to requirements of the building inspector and increased size of the narthex, the cost estimate for their remodeling project has increased.

Southeast is by no means the only one of our churches in the middle of a building project. It seems that many of our congregations are presently struggling with weighty decisions on just what to do in the way of building.

The congregation in Lynden, Wash. was unable

to come to a decision on a proposal to purchase new property and build some time in the future. They will attempt to resolve the question at a later congregational meeting.

Byron Center's building plans are also on hold for the time being. Because of the financial commitment necessary from the entire congregation in a project this size, Byron's council wanted at least a two-thirds majority of its members in support of the building plans. Although a majority voted in favor, there was not the required two-thirds majority.

The congregation of Southwest adopted a proposal to get firm plans and bids for their second building phase. This phase would add an auditorium to the present building.

Grandville's congregation was invited to meet with their building committee and representatives of an architectural firm to discuss future building plans.

Ben Wigger is an elder in the Prot. Ref. Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

Just because it is July does not mean it is too late to add our congratulations to all of our graduates. May the Lord lead each one of you in such a way that the instruction you received may be used in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not," Prov. 8:33.

The Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. A dinner was planned in the church basement, to be followed by a program. The program revolved around the theme taken from Proverbs 22:6 — "Train up a child."

It is always interesting to see the many different ways our young people come up with ideas to raise money for the annual convention. Loveland scheduled, during June, a Bike-a-Thon, the first time I can remember coming across that particular event. According to their bulletin, the bike trip was to cover about twenty miles. So it was more than just a short trip around the block.

On June 10th Loveland also sponsored a public address by their pastor, Rev. Ronald Cammenga on the topic "Reformed Worship".

Everyone in South Holland was encouraged to attend a public lecture in their church. Rev. den Hartog spoke on "What We Can Learn from our Singaporean Mission".

It seems that many of the people our missionary, Rev. Bruinsma, works with in Jamaica need eye glasses. They simply cannot afford the cost so they go without. First Church in Grand Rapids took up a collection of discarded eye glasses recently with the intent of sending them to Jamaica. It is likely that some of these people would be able to find a pair that would fit and greatly improve their vision.

June 11, Hudsonville's congregation met to consider a proposal presented by their council to purchase a 3-manual, 47-rank, Custom Digital Allen Organ. Earlier that week the congregation was given the opportunity to hear this organ at the Westfield Organ Studio in Grand Rapids.

Those who heard the organ that night agreed that it sounded great. According to experts, of which I am not one, this particular organ's sound can not be distinguished from that produced by a pipe organ.

The proposal passed. Installation will possibly be completed sometime this fall.

Rev. Engelsma has declined the call extended to him from our Holland Church. Holland has since formed a new trio consisting of Rev. Dale Kuiper, of Isabel, S.D., Rev. Kenneth Koole of Redlands, Calif., and Rev. Barry Gritters of Byron Center. The Lord willing, a congregational meeting was to be held June 22 to extend a call.

Houston, Texas consistory made a decision regarding the taking of collections. The deacons will wait to take the offering until after the pianist has played the first verse of the offertory. This decision was made in order that it may be easier to make the offerings part of the worship of God commanded us in his Word.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of Southeast Protestant Reformed Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society, Grand Rapids, Mich., extend our sincere Christian sympathy to Mr. & Mrs. Peter Faber in the death of his mother, MRS. CATHERINE FABER.

"The Lord knoweth the days of the upright and their inheritance shall be forever. (Psalm 37:18)

Ted Pipe, President
Bonnie Velting, Secretary

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Pella, IA on Wednesday, September 2, 1987, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. All material for the Agenda is to be in the hands of the Stated Clerk 30 days before Classis convenes. All delegates in need of lodging or of transportation from the Des Moines airport should notify the Clerk of the Pella Consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church of Grandville, Michigan, wish to express their sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Faber in the death of his mother, MRS. CATHERINE FABER.

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart." (Psalm 24:14)

Dr. Roderick Kreuzer, Pres.
Mrs. JoAnne Bult, Sec'y.