

**A Reformed  
Semi-Monthly  
Magazine**

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# THE STANDARD BEARER

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Jeremiah uses the figure of a traveller who comes to a crossroad (the ways). One of these ways is an ancient path; the other relatively new. This traveller stops and closely examines the two ways. Not knowing for sure which is the old path and the good way, he asks those nearby who have knowledge of these paths. Receiving the necessary information, he then proceeds to take the old and proven way.

See: *Meditation*, p. 194

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## Meditation

James D. Slopsema

# Walking In The Old Paths

*Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.*

Jeremiah 6:16

James D. Slopsema is pastor of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan.

Jeremiah was a prophet of God to Judah in the last years of Judah's existence as a nation.

Judah was walking in apostasy. It was Jeremiah's calling to rebuke Judah for her unfaithfulness and to warn her of impending judgment.

These warnings fell on deaf ears. Judah continued in her evil ways, paying no attention whatsoever to God's word.

Of this terrible fact God now reminds Judah.

The Lord had said, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.

The Lord had even promised that by walking in the old paths Judah would find rest for their souls.

But Judah had said, "We will not walk therein!"

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There are paths which God has ordained for man.

In fact, there is a path ordained by God for every area of man's life. There is the path God has ordained for marriage. There is the path God has ordained for rearing children, a path ordained for the use of one's time, another path of the use of one's riches, still another for the way we entertain ourselves . . . .

These paths, which are revealed to us in the Bible, are paths which God has ordained for man from the very beginning of time. Hence, they are called the old paths.

Because these old paths are ordained of God, they are also called the good way. They are good and pleasing in the sight of God. They meet with God's approval.

Down these paths God has led his people through history. This, too, explains why they are called the old paths.

Of themselves, of course, God's people can not and do not walk in these paths. For of themselves God's people are no different from the rest of fallen humanity. They are corrupt and depraved, dead in sin.

But God wonderfully changes His people by His grace. Through a new birth in Jesus Christ He transforms His people and leads them in the good way He has ordained for them. He leads them in the good way in their marriages, in their homes, in their work, in their play . . . .

These old paths are contrasted to new paths which are not mentioned by Jeremiah, but are nevertheless assumed.

The new paths are paths which the ungodly have devised in their own wickedness.

The ungodly can not and will not walk in the old ways of God. Hence, they have devised new ways in which to walk, ways which are directly contrary to

God's ways. For every area of life they have devised a new way. They have a new way for marriage, a new way for the rearing of children, a new way for entertainment, for the use of their time, for the use of their money . . . .

Needless to say these new ways are not good, but evil. They are contrary to the ordained ways of God, and thus are displeasing to God.

The members of the church often follow these new paths of sin. Judah, to whom Jeremiah prophesied, was walking in these new paths. Jeremiah spoke again and again of the idolatry, the immorality, and the defrauding of the poor that characterized Judah. And it is no different today in the church. Many walk not in the old paths of God but in the new paths of the world.

There are two things that explain this sad reality in the church.

On the one hand, not all who belong to the church visible are true members of Jesus Christ. They are still dead in sin, capable only of setting their feet upon the new paths of sin.

However, even the true members of the church are often weak. The work of grace in them is far from complete. The power of sin is very much present in them. They have a sinful flesh that often leads them to stray in to these new paths which God hates.

\* \* \* \* \*

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.

Jeremiah uses the figure of a traveller who comes to a crossroad (the ways). One of these ways is an ancient path; the

other relatively new. This traveller stops and closely examines the two ways. Not knowing for sure which is the old path and the good way, he asks those nearby who have knowledge of these paths. Receiving the necessary information, he then proceeds to take the old and proven way.

This has been the command of God to Judah.

Judah as a nation often found herself at the crossroads. Before her lay the old paths of God, the good way. But before her were also the new paths of sin blazed by the world.

The instruction of the Lord had been that when she came to these crossroads she must not just blindly plunge down just any path, but she must stand in the ways and see. In other words, she must stop and investigate these paths.

And because Judah had over the years become ignorant of the ways of God, she must inquire of those who knew. She must turn to the prophets God raised up, and the few faithful priests, and ask, "Which are the old paths? Where is the good way?"

And being instructed by those who knew the old paths, Judah must walk in them.

The same instruction of God also applies to the church today.

We often find ourselves at the crossroads. In our marriages, in the rearing of our children, in our entertainments, in the use of our time, money, and opportunities, in all of life, there is often more than one path open to us.

Then we must not simply plunge down one or the other, taking perhaps the course of least resistance, or the course that will provide the most excitement or pleasure. No, we must stand in the ways and see. In every instance we must stop and care-

fully investigate. Which is the old path and the good way? And which is the new path of the world?

Should we not be able to discern the one from the other, we must take steps to learn. We must turn to the Word of God where God has revealed the old paths and we must study. We should also turn to the elderly saints of the church who have found from experience which are the old paths and the good way.

Having discovered the old paths, we must walk in them. Certainly we may not set our feet on the new paths of sin and evil. In every part of life we must be walking the old paths of God.

To do this consistently day after day requires more than human strength. It requires the strength of Jesus Christ. This great power is found in diligent prayer, in daily use of God's Word, in the encouragement of one another as saints of God.

\* \* \* \* \*

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

God had spoken words of judgment to Judah for taking the new paths. He had warned her that should she persist in these new paths, He would send an army from the north to take her away from the land of promise into captivity.

What a terrible judgment that would be! For Canaan in the Old Testament was an earthly picture of heaven. And, therefore, apart from Canaan, Judah could not enjoy God's blessings. In turn, being deprived of Canaan would be a picture of being eternally disinherited with respect to the greater, heavenly Canaan.

But God had also promised rest, should Judah repent and turn back to the old paths of God. He would preserve Judah from her great enemy to the north who had already started to trouble her borders. He would secure her place in Canaan. And in a secured Canaan, Judah would not only enjoy the rich blessings of God but would also have in the earthly Canaan a token of greater blessing to come in the heavenly Canaan.

But Judah had refused. Her response to the Lord had been, "We will not walk therein!" And so as we know from subsequent history, God's judgments came to Judah in the form of a dreadful captivity.

But what a wonderful purpose God realized in this judgment. He cleansed Israel of the carnal element that had come to dominate her, at the same time preparing them for final judgment. But the true spiritual seed was chastened. They were brought to their knees in repentance so that they turned from the new paths back to the old paths of God. And having been so corrected, God also led them back to Canaan to enjoy His blessing.

We, too, must learn from this.

As we by grace walk in the old paths of God, we, too, will find rest.

Canaan has long ago lost its significance to the church. God's blessings are no longer attached

to Canaan. Nor is the hope of life eternal dependent on possessing the earthly Canaan. God's rest is entirely spiritual. It consists of God's most blessed friendship and fellowship, both in this life and in the life to come.

But God's rest is found by the church only as she walks the old paths and the good way. Should she persist to follow the new paths of the world, there will be judgment. God will not allow the church to enjoy the new paths of the world. Those who will walk the new paths will find only trouble and sorrow.

As in times of old, God will use this judgment to prepare the carnal element of the church for greater judgment. But He is also bringing the true, spiritual seed to repentance that they may learn to set their feet on the old paths.

Stand ye therefore in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. □

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## Whose Catechism? "Church" Or "Churches"?

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### Whose Catechism?

In the *Church Herald* (magazine of the Reformed Church in America) of January 1, 1988 there appears an article from the pen of Dr. Howard Hageman entitled "The Eternal Youth Of the Heidelberg" (p. 31). The purpose of the article is to call attention to the fact that January 1988 marks the 425th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. He writes as follows:

"Since everyone is celebrating anniversaries of every conceivable kind these days, why shouldn't we celebrate one of our own? It might help us with our identity crisis!

"I have thus far not seen so much as a syllable of reference to it, but January 1988 marks the 425th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism — and I think that's an event worthy of celebration. The first edition of the Heidelberg Catechism gives the date of January 19, 1563, as the time of its official proclamation.

To be sure, those responsible for its composition had been at work throughout 1562 and are supposed to have finished their task in December of that year and received princely approval from Frederick III at that time. But it was in January 1563 that it was given to the press for publication."

The writer then goes on to praise what one Dutch theologian has called "the eternal youth of the Heidelberg," and to account for this so-called eternal youth.

Now I certainly have no objection to remembering our Heidelberg Catechism and to praising it for its "eternal youth." Nor do I object to celebrating an anniversary, though I suggest that if we begin to celebrate quarter-century anniversaries in connection with every significant event in Reformed church history or the publication of every significant bit of Reformed church literature, we might end with some kind of celebration almost every year. And then celebrations begin to lose their significance. Nor do I see how a celebration of this kind might help the RCA with its alleged "identity crisis" — whatever that may mean. Perhaps the RCA's identity might be better helped by faithful preaching and teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism.

However, I must confess to being somewhat offended, as well as shocked, by a statement at the end of Dr. Hageman's article. The concluding paragraph reads as follows:

"I have no idea of the form the celebration should take, but I hope there is one. Perhaps it is something we could share with our Christian Reformed friends, since we are the only American churches which share the catechism, although it is tucked into the confessional collection of the Presbyterians. Here is a good way to begin to find out who we are. Happy birthday, dear Heidelberg!"

I refer, of course, to the words "since we are the only American churches which share the catechism."

When I read this, I rubbed my eyes in disbelief. For without difficulty I immediately thought of several other American denominations which share the Heidelberg Catechism. First to come to mind, of course, was our own Protestant Reformed Churches. Then I thought of the Reformed Church in the United States (German Reformed) who can trace their history in this country back to the colonial days when the RCA became established here. Then there are the Free Reformed Churches, the Netherlands Reformed, and the Canadian Reformed. In fact, I dare say

that in at least some of these the Catechism is not only shared, but more faithfully taught and preached than in either the RCA or the CRC.

I will not judge the reason for this error on Dr. Hageman's part — whether it is ignorance, or a momentary lapse of memory, or the notion that the rest of us do not count as churches, or that somehow we are not American.

But correct he is not. □

HCH

### **“Church” or “Churches”?**

In “Voices” (*The Banner*, December 28, 1987) there appears an exchange between the Rev. Rein Leestma, a Christian Reformed minister in Lynwood, Illinois, and Dr. Richard R. De Ridder, of Calvin Seminary. It concerns the old questions in the area of Reformed church government, whether the Christian Reformed denomination is a *federation* of churches (as Leestma maintains) or constitutes one church (as De Ridder maintains, and as the singular name of the denomination, Christian Reformed Church, would seem to indicate).

It is not my intention to enter into the dispute between Leestma and De Ridder, except to make two remarks: 1) It seems to me that Dr. De Ridder falsely accuses the Rev. Leestma of independentism, when he writes: “The Christian Reformed Church is not a federation of churches. What Rev. Leestma is pleading for is a form of congregationalism that affirms that every local congregation is a law unto itself and has the right to act independently.” I can find no evidence of this in Leestma's letter. Further, among Reformed people a careful distinction has always been made

between independentism, which indeed means that every congregation is a law unto itself and that decisions of broader assemblies are merely declaratory, and not binding, and what is usually referred to as the principle of the *autonomy* of the local church. 2) It is difficult to understand what Dr. De Ridder, in seemingly contradictory fashion, means when he writes: “A congregation is a fully constituted church of Christ. But this does not mean that it is the church.” Yet in the course of history, it seems to me, the Christian Reformed Church has increasingly assumed the stance, from a church political point of view, which Dr. De Ridder assumes, the so-called hierarchical or collegialistic stance. The tendency has been to view the denomination as the church and the individual congregations as so many branches of that one large church. And this is certainly wrong, both historically and principally. I do not purpose to comment directly on the De Ridder-Leestma disagreement more than this.

I do, however, wish to make a few remarks with regard to our own churches in this connection, without transgressing the domain of the department editor of *Decency And Order*.

1. This exchange reminds me of the “es” battle which went on in the era when the late Rev. Hoeksema was our editor and when the late Rev. H.J. Kuiper was editor of *The Banner*. Almost as often as Kuiper would write about the Christian Reformed Church (singular), Hoeksema, if he quoted Kuiper, would add in parentheses the words: “should be Churches, HH.”

2. This was historically connected, of course, with the origin of our Protestant Reformed Churches. Usually when we think of our origin we think immediate-

ly of the common grace controversy; and this is correct and also fundamental. Often it is forgotten, however, that there was a fundamental issue of church government involved also. In the years between 1924 and 1926 Classis Grand Rapids East and Classis Grand Rapids West took the stand that a classis has the right and the power to suspend and depose officebearers; and this was confirmed by the Christian Reformed Synod of 1926.

3. The name of our denomination is Protestant Reformed Churches (emphasis added) in America. The plural of our name denotes precisely the fact that our denomination is a *federation* of autonomous churches who operate under the so-called presbyterian-synodical form of government. We should not call our denomination “Protestant Reformed Church” nor allow others to call it that. We are the Protestant Reformed Churches. This is not a quibbling about words or letters.

4. At stake is the principle of the autonomy of the local church. The authority and power to preach the Word, to administer the sacraments, and to exercise discipline reside strictly in the local congregation (consistory).

5. Classis and synod have only derivative authority, that is, those rights, powers, and duties which the federated churches have agreed to give them and which are spelled out in our Church Order. Further, every classis or synod is strictly temporary; it goes out of existence when it adjourns. This is not true of a consistory.

6. The decisions of classis/synod are indeed binding within the church-federation, unless they be proved to conflict with the Word of God and the Church Order. But a local congregation/consistory which refuses to abide by decisions of the broader (not higher) assemblies cannot be disciplined

by classis/synod; it can only be set outside the church federation.

More, much more, could be written about this. For over the centuries these matters have been the subject of much study and much controversy in Reformed churches. Both the so-called Liberated and the Synodicals made history in this

regard in the 1940s, for example. But the history of this question goes way back to the beginnings of the Reformed churches in Europe. Presbyterianism has also made history in this regard and has followed another track.

But let this suffice. □

HCH

*From Holy Writ*  
George C. Lubbers

## Exegetical Sketches on Micah 6:1-8 (2)

The LORD, the high and lofty God, continues to speak in His controversy with His people, whom He addresses as "my people". Let us continue to listen attentively to the LORD'S earnest plea as established in justice and mercy.

The verse reads: "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim to Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD," Micah 6:5. When we study this text, we notice that the following elements call for our believing consideration.

First, the manner of God's address to Israel. It is a serious address, a loving call carefully to read the sacred Scriptures and to take to heart the manner of Jehovah's mighty dealings. We really have the truth expressed here in verse 5 which John writes when he says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not," 1 John 3:1.

Secondly, the particular matter for Israel to remember is how the enemies of God and of His people consulted together, "against the LORD and his anointed." It is an attempt to drive a wedge between God and His people. Would that God would curse Israel, and not bless them, as He had promised to Abraham and to his seed!

Thirdly, there is the lesson which Israel must learn from this saving history, which elapsed be-

tween Shittim and Gilgal, that we may know the righteousnesses of the Lord.

Lastly, we must not overlook that the remembrance of God's dealings with Israel is really the fine point in God's controversy in court. The question at issue is really: *God's covenant dealings and faithfulness!*

God proves beyond all contradiction that He has never wearied Israel with arbitrary dealings with them. He has kept His word!

Let us look at these propositions seriatim.

Let us notice, first of all, the seriousness of God's address here. God has made His covenant with Abraham of old, and this covenant is that He will save them completely from all their sins in the blood of the Lamb. And Balaam, the soothsayer, must answer Balak that he cannot curse Israel, because God maintains His covenant promise.

*George C. Lubbers is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.*

Balaam does this in the form of parables. He tells Balak in the most lofty and poetic strains that God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent. He asks Balak in rhetorical form: "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Now Israel, and we with them as the Israel of God, must never forget these words of God through Balaam's mouth!

True, Balaam is not a believer; he did not at all have faith that works by love. He is really in the service of the arch-foe, the devil. But God had put these words in Balaam's mouth without putting them in his heart. That makes these words all the more remarkable. It is the same as when God uses the dumb ass to speak God's word, and that, too, to convey a message of hope of the greatness of Israel throughout the entire history of the world.

"From Shittim to Gilgal" is a striking reference to God's faithfulness to a very sinful people who are saved by sovereign grace!

Secondly, we should observe that God calls Israel's attention to an episode in Israel's history when God's faithfulness was called in question. The issue really was God or other gods. There is a vain attempt made by Balaam to marshal the powers of darkness against the Lord of hosts. Yes, Balak, in his fear and desperation, calls the assistance of a soothsayer, a man who divined by his gods. However, the Lord had not given Balaam the remotest inkling that He would allow Israel to be cursed. Israel need have no fear. Had the Lord not demonstrated at the drowning of Pharaoh and all his hosts in the Red Sea that He is a man of war? Moses surely did not

sing amiss, "The LORD is the strength of my song, he is become my salvation . . . The Lord is a man of war: the LORD is his name!" The Lord was ever such that fear and dread fell upon the mighty dukes of Edom and the mighty men, and all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away. Did not Rahab tell the spies of Israel, "I know the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you," Joshua 2:9. The Lord Himself remembers His own mighty deeds. He would have His people do the same.

Thirdly, we should notice that the LORD singles out the great deeds of His saving grace from Shittim to Gilgal. The distance from Shittim to Gilgal is very short. The meaning of this crossing of Jordan, as a wonder of God, looms very large. It is a brief history and a merciful display of what we might call sin and grace. It was a bringing of Israel into the typical rest. It was a giving them the land of promise, which God had sworn unto Abraham by oath. (Gen. 13:14-18; 15:12-18)

When this history is studied, we notice that Balaam answered Balak that the great deliverance and glorious future of Israel belonged solely to the LORD. It also shows that there is no power to stay God's hand. God tells Israel very solemnly that they must remember, and never forget this little important piece of history. They must not merely remember a few details of this history, but they must study what God performed there in His covenant faithfulness to a people who were in themselves worthy of being destroyed in the righteous judgments of God. Does not the text say, "so that you may know the righteousnesses of Jehovah?" The Hebrew text here is very explicit and significant. There are

two elements here which are set forth in bold relief. These are the verb "know" and the term "righteousnesses." The term "righteousnesses" is called in Hebrew *tsedagoth Jaweh*. The Dutch translation is correct here. It translates it in the plural number. That is the way in which the Hebrew has it too. This righteousness belongs peculiarly to Jehovah in His covenant relationship to His people. That the term is used here in the plural seems significant to me. When Scripture speaks of the abundance of God's mercy, we read of the *mercies* of the LORD. Thus we read in Psalm 89:1: "I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever." Thus also in Scripture we often read of God's wonders in the plural, to indicate their great number and magnitude. We read in Psalm 89:5: "The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD; thy faithfulness to all the congregation of the saints." Thus also here the Lord speaks of these righteousnesses, indicating the multifirmity of the graces of Jehovah to His people. Upon each of these manifestations of God's righteousness we see stamped indelibly what the LORD has wrought in covenant faithfulness and love.

Let us look at this history between Shittim and Gilgal.

In this history we can *know* the ways of the LORD. The verb in the Hebrew means to know with spiritual-experiential knowledge. The Hebrew tense used refers to a constantly knowing. Yes, Israel, by studying this history, while believing, will know once and for all Jehovah's righteousness. Interestingly, the Septuagint translation has the verb *gnoosthee*. Also this verb in

the Greek refers often to experiential knowledge. The aorist tense used refers to a knowing of the Lord's righteousness as an accomplished fact. It is important for faith and life to see this. But it is equally important for us so that we may grasp and understand the fine point in the Lord's controversy with His people. It touches the very heart of God's covenant dealings, as He opens His heart to us, His people.

And we ought to notice well that in this all the bottom line is that Jehovah is our righteousness. This He demonstrated from Shittim to Gilgal. That is why the LORD refers in His controversy to what Balaam answered from Shittim to Gilgal. For here in Israel's crossing of Jordan, He fulfills majestically what Balaam answered Balak from Shittim to Gilgal (Numbers 23, 24).

He did this in a twofold sense in the midst of Israel.

Not every one in Israel went awhoring after the idols and the abominations of Moab-Midian as recorded in Numbers 25. Those who committed the twofold whoredom, physical and spiritual adultery, were all destroyed at Baal-Peor. The fierce anger of the LORD had to be appeased. Yet even here the judgment of the Lord was the expression of a righteous and holy will. God is no sadist; he metes out justice so that each receives his due, and

so that has its pedagogical effect in the church. Wherefore He sent a plague in the camp of Israel which resulted in the death of 24,000 people. However, He never allows the righteous to perish with the wicked. The truth of Psalm 91:7-10 stands: "a thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: *but it shall not come nigh thee*. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of *the wicked*." It is of this righteous dealing of God with Israel that Moses speaks in Deuteronomy 4:2: "but ye that cleaved to the LORD our God are alive every one of you this day."

Furthermore, the LORD had a different righteousness with the *heads* of the houses of Israel. These had to be killed and hung up before the LORD against the sun. Thus the fierce wrath of God was turned away from Israel. It was an act of putting away sin and folly out of Israel. This was particularly striking in the case of Zimri, a prince in the tribe of Simeon, who was slain by the javelin of Phinehas, the high priest, son of Aaron.

Such was church-excommunication under Moses.

Yes, it is true, according to the parable of Balaam, as he says, "The LORD hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel," Numbers 23:21. We must never

overlook that this is not because of our righteousness of works before the LORD, but that it is due to the gospel-truth: "The shout of the king is in their midst." It is all of grace. By grace are ye saved through faith. Not of works, lest any man should boast!

Notice that when Israel crossed over Jordan, they followed the ark of the covenant from a distance. Upon this ark was the mercy-seat on which the blood of sprinkling was sprinkled. Yes, Israel entered into the land as a righteous people in Jehovah, their righteousness. They did not really enter into the land as the final rest under Joshua the son of Nun. This must wait until Jesus comes, Who out of God became for us wisdom of God, righteousness, sanctification, and complete redemption.

This Jesus is called in Jeremiah 23:6, 33:16 "Jehovah our Righteousness." Here is a God Who never wearies us, but who cries in Jesus: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are weary, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Such is the lesson which we learn when we study Israel's history from Shittim to Gilgal. □

## NOTICE!

The Southwest Protestant Reformed Church of Grandville, Michigan, is in need of \$100,000.00 to finance the construction of their sanctuary building project.

Those interested in loaning \$1,000.00 or more for periods of five, ten or fifteen years at an interest rate of 7½ % are requested to contact Mr. Phil Lotterman, 871 Rushmore St., Jenison, MI 49428 for particulars. (Phone (616) 457-0005.)

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## Decency And Order

Ronald L. Cammenga

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# The Lawful Calling

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"The lawful calling of those who have not been previously in office, consists:

First, in the ELECTION by the consistory and the deacons, after preceding prayers, with due observance of the regulations established by the consistory for this purpose, and of the ecclesiastical ordinance, that only those can for the first time be called to the ministry of the Word who have been declared eligible by the churches, according to the rule in this matter; and furthermore with the advice of classis or of the counselor appointed for this purpose by the classis;

Secondly, in the EXAMINATION both of doctrine and life which shall be conducted by the classis, to which the call must be submitted for approval, and which shall take place in the presence of three delegates of synod from the nearest classes;

Thirdly, in the APPROBATION by the members of the calling church, when, the name of the minister having been announced for two successive Sundays, no lawful objection arises; which approbation, however, is not required in case the election takes place with the co-operation of the congregation by choosing out of a nomination previously made.

Finally, in the public ORDINATION in the presence of the congregation, which shall take place with appropriate stipulations and interrogations, admonitions and prayers and imposition of hands by the officiating minister (and by other ministers who are present) agreeably to the form for that purpose." *Church Order*, Article 4.

### INTERNAL-EXTERNAL CALL

Article 4 deals with the lawful call to the ministry of the gospel. Strictly speaking, the article concerns itself with the call to the ministry of the Word. Nevertheless, there are important principles set forth that apply to the calling to any office in the church.

The call to office is usually distinguished as the external call and the internal call.

The internal call refers to the inward, personal conviction of a man that he has been called by God to the office of the ministry of the gospel. The internal call would include such things as: a desire to serve Christ in the of-

fice; love for the church of Christ and the desire to serve the church; the possession of the necessary gifts for the ministry; the available means to be able to pursue preparation for the ministry.

The external call refers to the objective call of a man by the church to serve that congregation in the office of the ministry of the Word. It is with the external call that Article 4 is concerned. In this article the *Church Order* declares that no one may enter upon the ministry apart from the lawful call by the church.

There is a very close relationship between the external and the internal call. They belong together and are to be considered as the two aspects of the one call of God. In order to be called of God, a man must be called *both* internally and externally. A man called to office by God never has only one aspect of the call. One who has been genuinely called by God internally will also eventually receive the external call. A man who is never called externally by the church never had the internal call, although he may have supposed that he did.

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Although the internal call and the external call are closely related, it is the external call that is decisive. This is the point of Article 4. This is so, first of all, because this is the seal of God upon the internal call. And this is so, secondly, because only those who have been called externally by the church may be permitted to take up the actual work that belongs to the ministry of the gospel.

In connection with the external call, what must be emphasized is that the external call constitutes the call to office *from God*. Only God calls and appoints to office in the church. But a fundamental principle of Reformed church polity is that God does this through the call of the church. The call from the church is to be regarded, not only by the one to whom that call comes, but also by the church that extends the call, as the call of God Himself. This truth is emphasized in the very first question that is asked of those being ordained into the ministry: "First, I ask thee, whether thou feelest in thy heart that thou art lawfully called of God's Church, *and therefore of God Himself*, to this holy ministry?" (*Form Of Ordination Of Ministers Of God's Word*)

#### **ELECTION TO OFFICE**

Article 4 indicates that four distinct elements make up the lawful call: election, examination, approbation, and ordination.

Various methods of election have been used in the past by Reformed churches:

- a) Election by the consistory with approbation by the congregation.
- b) Election by the consistory without the approbation of the congregation.
- c) Election by the consistory from a nomination made by the congregation.
- d) Election by the congregation from a nomination made by the consistory.

e) Election by the consistory with the approbation of the civil magistrate.

f) A free election on the part of the congregation.

Two methods of election are specifically sanctioned by Article 4: election by the consistory with the approbation by the congregation of the one elected, or election by the congregation from a nomination made by the consistory. This last method is mentioned as a possibility in that part of the article which deals with "approbation."

Article 4 does justice to two important principles that govern the calling of officebearers in a Reformed church. The first principle is that the consistory, as the overseers of the congregation, is to supervise the appointment of officebearers. Van Dellen and Monsma state: "... the Bible attributes a guiding control over elections and power of appointment to the officebearers." (*The Church Order Commentary*, p. 24)

The Scriptures certainly support this position. In Acts 6:3, in connection with the appointment of the first deacons, the apostles state "... whom *we* may appoint over this business." In Acts 14:23 we read about Paul and Barnabas that "... *they* (had) appointed for them elders in every church . . ." Paul exhorts Titus in Titus 1:5 to "... appoint elders in every city as I gave thee charge." Very clearly the Scriptures teach that part of the government of the church entrusted to the elders is their oversight of the election of officebearers, particularly the ministers of the gospel.

At the same time, Article 4 safeguards a second important principle of Reformed church polity. That principle is the right of the congregation to have a

voice in electing and approving of her own officebearers. In the Reformed system of church government, the congregation participates in the appointment of officebearers. Here, too, the teaching of Scripture is clear. In Acts 1:23 the 120 believers, as a body, participated in appointing a successor to Judas Iscariot. In Acts 6:1-7 the congregation at Jerusalem chose the first seven deacons. In II Corinthians 8:19 Paul speaks of Titus as having been "... chosen *of the churches* to travel with us . . ."

#### **THE PREFERRED METHOD OF ELECTION**

As far as the preferable method of election, the method of election by the congregation from a nomination presented by the consistory is to be preferred. This was the method advanced by Calvin. This is the method commonly followed in our own churches. Of the two methods permitted by Article 4, this method does the most justice to the right of participation by the members of the congregation.

In its prescriptions for the election of a minister, the *Church Order* especially opposes "free elections." This practice is becoming increasingly accepted in Reformed churches today. But this practice is expressly contrary to the *Church Order*. This practice is to be condemned because it ignores the responsibility of the consistory with regard to the election of officebearers. Wm. Heyns states:

*It is especially in open defiance of the Church Order and contrary to the Word of God, when in a Reformed Church office-bearers are elected by 'free ballot' of the people. Such may be considered the right way in the Churches of the Independents, or wherever the opinion prevails that the government of the Church belongs to the people, but there is no room for it in a Reformed Church. (Handbook For Elders And Deacons, p. 77)*

In this part of the fourth article, mention is made of certain "regulations established by the consistory" for the actual election. The reference of the article is to purely local regulations which each consistory might adopt as it sees fit in order to facilitate a smooth election pro-

cess and to assure that all things are done decently and in good order. Such regulations might include the following: that a majority consists of over half; that a majority consists of a majority of the total number of votes cast, blank votes and votes for persons not on nomination being subtracted from the total number of ballots; that in case more

nominees than are needed for the office receive a majority of votes cast, those with the highest majorities shall be elected; that election of officebearers shall be done by secret ballot; that absentee or proxy votes shall be received on the first ballot only. □

## All Around Us

Gise J. Van Baren

# "The Reverend's' last stand" The Conservatives' Alternatives

### "The Reverend's' last stand"

An interesting defence of the title "Reverend" in addressing the minister of the Word is presented in the *Calvinist Contact*, Sept. 25, 1987, by Rev. Carl D. Tuyl (the periodical explains: "Pastor Carl is a reverend in the First Christian Reformed Church of Kingston, Ontario).

*There is among us of late a sort of linguistically reformatory movement which attempts to banish the title "reverend" from ecclesiastical vocabulary. Some grammatically enlightened persons in our midst have discovered that "reverend" is an adjective that requires an accompanying noun. There are always people who regard the purification of life as their calling. Unable to bring about much purification in other areas, they sublimate their efforts in the field of language.*

*One could, of course, call the minister "reverend Sir," which, although grammatically correct, would require a degree of civility which for many is too difficult to achieve.*

*So the linguistic purists have cast about for suitable substitutional nomenclature, and have hit upon "pastor," which has a nice, non-threatening sound to it, especially when used in combination with a given name, such as in "Pastor Gilbert," "Pastor Erwell," or "Pastor Pete."*

*Before the title "reverend" joins other noble appellations as "your honour," and "your worship" in obscurity, I would like to ease my conscience by attempting at least one apology to save the old familiar*

*adjective, which in my admittedly naive understanding of language could be allowed to stand by itself . . .*

*I would, first of all, like to say that not all language demands grammatical purity. Poetry would probably die a sudden death if it was compelled to adhere to strict rules of grammar. Shakespeare himself starts one of his sonnets with this line: "I never saw that you did painting need . . ."*

*. . . The great linguist and orator Winston Churchill was once reminded by a rather junior member of parliament that sentences ought not to end with a preposition, upon which the Great One replied: "That is something up with which I am not going to put" . . .*

*The grey-haired veteran of the ministry of the gospel, who baptized generations of children, married their parents and buried their grandparents, and who was respectfully called "reverend" by the latter because of the God he served and represented, must not be called: "Pastor Bill." There is something derogatory in that, like calling your grandmother Sis. It is in my mind akin to the boorishness of that American journalist who called out to Her Majesty the Queen: "Hey Liz!" Even that canon of linguistic purity The*

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Oxford English Dictionary mentions instances as far back as the early eighteenth century where the adjective was used by craftsmen of the language without being attached to a noun.

The ambassador of a country is not called "your excellency" because he or she is such an excellent person, rather because of respect for the country represented in that person. The judge is called "your honour" because of respect for the court, not for his person. The title "reverend" in Presbyterian and Reformed usage does not want to imply any quality in the bearer of that title, but rather it acknowledges with reverence and respect the Almighty in whose name this person speaks from Sunday to Sunday.

To be sure, to call that person "reverend" is committing a grammatical mistake. Reverend is an adjective that does require a noun to which it can attach itself. The community that does reject the old title, however, lives quite contentedly with many other linguistic monstrosities. "Reverend" simply became the fall guy upon whom all the fervor of linguistic reformation was heaped.

The title "pastor" is an illegal alien in the Reformed vernacular. It is reminiscent of pre-reformation times when members of the clergy were so called. It is also borrowed from Lutheran usage where the title was not so much parachuted in, as it was preserved as a venerable relic of earlier times. Or it is copied from circles where worship is exercised with manifestations of hysteria.

The word has, moreover, a rather one-sided connotation: shepherd. There might be a hidden theological motivation in the new term. A shepherd is supposed to lead his flock to green pastures without any effort on the part of the flock itself. When the Dutch speak of a minister as "shepherd" it is never separated from the title "teacher." Those two terms were inseparable: shepherd and teacher. The newfangled insistence on "pastor" may just be a sub-conscious rejection of the teaching aspect of the ministry. Attendance at the second service, which traditionally is the teaching service, could support that observation.

With these paragraphs, then, I consider to have acquitted myself of the self-appointed duty to protect the title "reverend." It is probably done in vain, like trying to create appreciation for the second service conducted by "Pastor Jack."

Well, what do you think? □

## The Conservatives' Alternatives

The "conservatives" in the Christian Reformed Church increasingly face the question: What can be done to stem the tide of "liberalism" which is sweeping their churches? Dr. Lester De Koster, in *The Outlook*, Nov. 1987, presents not only the problem, but his own proposed solutions. The proposals present a tone of desperation. Some solution, no matter how radical, must be sought. While I would not want to discourage the "conservatives" in their battle for the faith once delivered to the saints, a word of caution ought to be uttered. Dr. L. De Koster himself, when editor of the *Banner*, years ago warned (though in a different connection) of the impossibility of mixing oil and water. Still, his solution below appears to be doing just that: having a mix of water and oil within the walls of one denomination.

Lester De Koster writes:

*There is anxiety in the Christian Reformed Church.*

*Some attach theirs to women in office; others to various speculations on the Calvin campus; still others to boondoggling at synods and Establishment manipulation of the denomination to serve its own hobbies. There is also a general concern that preaching is at low ebb, with commitment to the Forms of Unity steadily eroding.*

*These anxieties surface in predictable ways. Some few congregations have opted out; others talk of it. A rather large number of members have identified with the Committee of the Concerned, and a number of churches have been represented at meetings in the Lansing, Illinois, Lynwood Church to share frustrations.*

*But, as other denominational experiences suggest, there is little hope for the restoration of a lost theological unity among us. Between the "Bible prohibits women in church office" interpretation of the Word, and the "Bible does not prohibit women in church office" there is no middle ground. "Did God say?" offers but two exclusive alternatives: Yes or No. While something like, "You take your interpretation and I'll take mine" opens the way to the loss of biblical authority altogether.*

*For many believers the road to ultimate schism portends a forbidding journey.*

*Some lack the initiative or the energy or sense of the imperative even to contemplate a denominational split. Their more ardent fellows are as frustrated with them as with the Establishment.*

*Others have an instinctive distaste for rending the Body of Christ so long as it retains some evidence of life. Perhaps the on-going presence of boards and agencies is some assurance that not all is in jeopardy. The ecclesiastical machinery functions, and the steadily increasing demands for quota support suggest that at least some things are afoot.*

But what then? De Koster presents the option of local churches insisting upon the pure preaching of the Word in their midst. Trouble is, the Seminary (Calvin) of the "Establishment" is in control of the liberals. And one can attain the pulpit in the C.R.C. only through Calvin Seminary (at least one year of training there). So, what hope is there for obtaining proper preaching and proper preachers from that institution? Then the churches ought to take graduates, say, from MARS (Mid-America Reformed Seminary), examine them, and install them in office (contrary to the rules of the Church Order). De Koster considers, also, some of the problems of such action.

*But, Establishment repercussions? Threats, even?*

*Probably.*

*Especially some who might wink at the Church Order and synodical decisions as suits their own convenience could present themselves as aghast at your "violation" of "God's" order. Classes and synods may be lined up against you. But faced with the loss of your quota payments, the Establishment will find ways to re-think the matter. Dare them, and if they cut you off, use the money to hire another pastor of your choosing.*

*But let a few courageous congregations exercise their right — and it indeed is their right! — to fill their pulpits according to conscience, and the denomination will settle into a more amiable atmosphere than has prevailed for a long time. Live and let live! We have found room for all sorts of "congregationalism" under our tent so far; room will appear for this variety too!*

*But some congregations might follow this lead and at once call and ordain women as their ministers?*

*Probably so. But is it not entirely predictable that some synod will soon endorse that anyway — and synods thereafter will be deaf to petitions for correction of the error? Don't be too surprised if, after the pulpit is synodically opened to women, the Establishment mind looks to making a "team" ministry mandatory. It's happened in other once-orthodox bodies . . .*

Much as I do admire Dr. De Koster's way with words, even when so sharp and cutting, the article does convey a tone of desperation. The proposal as presented can ultimately only end in anarchy within the denomination — when everyone does what is right in his own eyes. Is this not a prescription for disaster? What will happen to a generation of children which

grows up within that denomination? Who will instruct them in its grade schools, high schools, and college? It does not take a great deal of imagination to know that within a brief time, most will go along with the "Establishment". If things are as bad as De Koster presents them, then the solution to the problems these face should be very clear. □

## The Day of Shadows

John A. Heys

# A Wife Taken And Salvation Given

Of Boaz we read in Ruth 4:13 that he "took Ruth, and she was his wife." And it is interesting to note the fact that the Hebrew word here translated as "take" is in our King James Version of the Bible translated as "take away" no less than 793 times. That is about four times as often as it is translated simply as take, receive, fetch, bring, or several other words which are used once or twice in a slightly different way.

It certainly cannot be denied that Boaz took Ruth away from this nameless and shoeless kinsman who refused to marry her. This kinsman, as we saw last time, lost his name and had to give Boaz one of his shoes. And all this was true because he did not take Ruth to be his wife. As far as taking away is concerned, he might only take away Ruth's widowhood. When he refused to do so, he had to give Boaz the right to take her away from him. It had to be done in a legal, righteous way; and he, Boaz, as another kinsman, did have the right. The word "take away" here in Ruth 4:13 in no way means to steal, or to take away in the way of breaking God's law.

Being more interested in his earthly possessions than in keeping God's ordinances, this nearest of kin to Naomi and Elimelech took off his shoe and gave it to

Boaz as a sign of granting Boaz the right to have her as his wife. It was all above board, and was even witnessed by the dwellers in Bethlehem and in that region to be a legal procedure.

There is, however, no denying of the fact that Boaz took Ruth away from this kinsman and unto himself. That word here translated as "take" is translated 62 times as receive; and Boaz certainly received Ruth. And when Boaz received Ruth as his wife, that nearest of kin had his name taken away. In Ruth 4:21 the name of Boaz appears as the man in the line of Abraham to David out of which Christ was born. He is listed as one of the great, great grandfathers of Jesus. This nearest of kin lost his name in that list. He did not simply

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give a shoe away and the opportunity to marry Ruth. He lost an honourable name and position in the line of God's covenant.

Now all this happened in the day of shadows; and the shadow we see here is that of a most blessed reality that we should never, never overlook. Boaz took Ruth to himself and they became one flesh. Wonderfully, this was a shadow of the reality that Christ would come and take His church to Himself as His bride, so that she can live with Him in His house of many mansions. He takes her away from Satan and the firm grip that he has upon us. This He did in the very legal way of buying us by His precious blood from the awful punishment which we deserve, and from the spiritual death into which we fell with Adam. What is more, He came through His Spirit to give Ruth, born in the heathendom of idolatrous Moab, faith in Jehovah, the one and only true God. He brought her to the promised land where she might meet Boaz. In fact He led her steps exactly and directly to his land in her first search for food. And now He brings her where she may be used to bring forth the line of David's generations that will bring Himself forth in His virgin birth realized in Mary. He took upon Himself our flesh and blood so that He could take us to be His royal bride that will live with Him forever in the coming Kingdom of Heaven that will be established on the new earth when He returns in glory.

What is more, Christ takes from us the name sinner and gives us the beautiful name Bride of Christ. At the right time and in the proper way He takes our souls out of this Moab in which we now dwell, and brings them to be with Him, waiting for the day when our bodies shall be

raised from the dead, be made glorious, even as His now is; and we will live with Him forever in the land God promises His church.

We now, on this side of His cross, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, and able to see what God wrought in that line from Boaz, Obed, and David, and the virgin Mary, can say with absolute confidence that Christ "took us, and we are His bride". We should never look merely at the shadow. We should look up to Him Whose shadow falls upon the earth in this book of Ruth. It is well that we look at Ruth and Boaz. It is necessary that we look at Naomi and Elimelech and their sinful departure from the promised land, so that we ourselves are reminded of how unworthy we are of being taken as Christ's bride. But never must we fail to see God's grace and what He in that grace has wrought for us in His own Son, and our own absolute incapability even of desiring such a wonder of His grace.

In that light also we ought to note that here in this book of Ruth, right after we read that Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife, the viewpoint changes, and we read very little about her after that moment. We read of what God did: He "gave her conception", and that is why it can be added that "she bare a son." It is the last time that in this book we read of any of Ruth's words or actions. Yes, the women speak about her and call her Naomi's daughter-in-law, and state that she loved Naomi and was better to her than seven sons. In fact, we do read that a son was born to Naomi. And then in the genealogies listed, Boaz is mentioned and not Ruth. Of course, there is no room for her to boast. But then there also was no room for Naomi, Boaz, and David to boast. All comes from God; and although we do not always see

that, nevertheless He is on the foreground and should be praised and thanked. All the strength to produce and bring forth that child came from God, Neither Ruth nor Boaz can boast of what they did. Neither can we claim to have done anything in our own strength. We are here because it pleased God to have us born and to exist to this very moment, and to have faith in Him.

Ruth does get her name mentioned much later in Matthew 1:5 where we read: "... and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse." And so much later in the history of this world, our names will be called to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. But boasting and pride must always be set aside. The book of Ruth tells us what God did in His sovereign grace, not what man contributed to His kingdom. There is a beautiful story written in this book of Ruth; but we must look at it in the light of the whole of Scripture, and as that which God wrought. We should with David declare, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable," Psalm 145:3. And early in life our children ought also to be taught to see God and His marvellous works of almighty power and of grace in Christ.

In this brief book we do read God's name 21 times — both as The Almighty One, Master, and Jehovah, as far as the Hebrew words are concerned — to say nothing of the pronouns which refer to Him and His works. His works are on every page of Holy Writ; and we ought to see, even when sins are exposed, that all things come out of God's eternal, unchangeable counsel. We should also keep constantly before our minds that this counsel of God,

this eternal plan, causes everything to happen that will realize the day when Christ shall take us to be His bride, and we will live with Him in the new Jerusalem. With both hands we ought to take hold of the truth which Paul writes in Romans 8:28. ALL things DO work together for GOOD to those that love God. Nothing ever works against God's return and the wedding feast of the Lamb. In all things we are more than conquerors, and have been served by the wicked world, whether we see it or not and whether they see it or not. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us and take us out of the line of the elect who, in God's eternal counsel, have their names written in the Lamb's book of life.

The wife of Mahlon, Ruth, could not bring forth a son and heir. If, humanly speaking, she was physically fit for this work, then God took Mahlon away from her before such a gift from God was looked for by Naomi. Chilion likewise was either incapable of making Orpah fruitful, and she was not capable of bearing a son, or he too was taken away by God before she could conceive and produce an heir for Elimelech. And now, God does not perform some repair work by getting Boaz to take Ruth, and by enabling her to bring forth Obed. With God there are no mistakes and absolutely no repair work. Eternally He had Christ and His bride in mind as coming in exactly the way He came, and in the line of the patriarchs mentioned here in the last few verses of the book of Ruth, and of those which we who read in Matthew 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38.

And not only did Boaz take Ruth as his wife, but at once he served the purpose for which he took this woman who was so much younger than he was, and who came from wicked Moab as

a widow. One cannot anywhere in Scripture read of the approval of birth control. We do read of how in His holy wrath God killed Onan who "spilled it on the ground," Genesis 38:9. And surely abortion is strongly condemned in Holy Writ. Do we not read in Ruth 4:13 that God gave Ruth conception? Does that not mean that He gave her the beginning of a child, the beginning of an human being, and not merely of that human being's body but also of the moment when that which was conceived obtained a soul? It was not merely the beginning of a piece of Ruth's flesh. It was the moment when a body and soul, a human being came into being. When John the Baptist had been conceived only six months before Mary came to greet Elizabeth, he, not merely a piece of flesh, leaped in his mother's womb. The moment of the beginning of that person is the moment when conception begins. And all killing of that which has been conceived is murder, and fills the Holy God with the indignation He showed when Onan refused to perform his duty. When one tries to end what is one's duty in that way, one sins as surely as when one reaches out and ends a conception.

Then, too, that we are living in the end of time, and that the judgment day is not too far away is also evident — although men will deny it — and the fury of God's wrath upon Sodom and Gomorrah for its homosexuality is speaking loudly today. We have no objection for medical research to heal and to cure those who by a blood transfusion are afflicted with AIDS. But who is so foolish as to believe that when the world comes up with a cure, so that the sin of homosexuality and of lesbianism can be practiced without what Scripture calls the punishment upon a sin, that we are not rushing to

the judgment day, even as Sodom and Gomorrah did? God is not fooled. No one escapes His punishment. And man today is simply trying to escape punishment, while actually he is making a sin more publicly and widely practiced, with a greater torment for it in hell, than men in days gone by brought down upon themselves. The flood came in Noah's day. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone in Abraham's day. The whole world will be destroyed soon when Christ returns and crushes the head of the serpent and all his seed.

But to return to what we are taught in the book of Ruth, although we are not told, and need not be told, Boaz and Ruth rejoiced in the gift of a son. Naomi revealed her joy, and it is recorded here when we read that she took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. She, whose sons died before they could bring forth grandchildren, and had lost all hope of being blessed with a grandson who believed in God and could keep the name of her dead husband upon the land which he inherited, receives one who will be in the line that brings forth the Christ. How true it is in her life that all things work together for good to those that love God, as Boaz did, but also Naomi and Ruth. Death, over which man has absolutely no power, took away Naomi's husband and sons. And yet God, Who not only has death completely in His hand, but also has spiritual life in His hand to give to whomsoever He will, reached down into idolatrous Moab and brought Boaz a god-fearing wife and Naomi a covenant grandchild who would serve such an important work of bringing forth descendants from whom

God's Son would be born in our flesh. What a gift of God unto us! What an evidence as well that He will father His people out of other nations and hold before our eyes the fact that one is a Jew only when one is such inwardly, and becomes such inwardly by His grace.

The book of Ruth begins with a sad picture of famine and sin, of death and a door closed on begetting covenant seed. But what a bright and beautiful picture it is wherewith the book of Ruth comes to a close. Boaz takes Ruth to be his wife, and

she bares a son. But look beyond this and see the salvation which God gives us in Christ, Who was born in that line of Boaz, Obed, and David.

We take blessings to ourselves because God gives us the strength to do so. But we take blessing to ourselves also because God is so very faithful to His promises. Having promised us through Jacob that the sceptre would not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, God brought Ruth to the promised land and moved Boaz to take her

as his wife, so that Christ could and would be born in Bethlehem, and salvation with all its blessings might be given us. Think highly of Boaz and Ruth. But think far more highly of God, Who gave them the strength to do what He brought them into being to perform, and used them so that our salvation was earned, and will be a blessed reality for us when He sends His Son to bring us into that of which Canaan was only a type and shadow. □

## *Walking In The Light*

*Herman C. Hanko*

## **Euthanasia (3)**

The problem of euthanasia is a difficult and complex one, partly because the term is used for so many different procedures and under so many different circumstances. Generally speaking, the term can refer to withholding of that which is necessary to sustain life. But one can withhold life support equipment such as respirators or heart-lung machines; one can even withhold food and water, whether given by mouth or given intravenously.

That is one kind of euthanasia, usually called passive euthanasia. But there is another kind which can be called active euthanasia in which a person is given some substance which will terminate life. It is actually putting people out of their misery by terminating their life. A complication of this is the removal of life-support equipment when a person can be kept alive by it, but will inevitably die without it. Is it right "to pull the plug," even when the person on life-support equipment is in a coma?

The circumstances are also complicating factors. Usually the question of euthanasia arises in connection with the very young and the very old, with those just born or with those whose bodies are debilitated through disease and old age. Babies are born

with various diseases for which there are no cures, or with mental and physical handicaps of such seriousness that they will never be able to live a normal life. Sometimes babies are born whose lives can be saved only by putting them on life-support equipment; but it may be that on such equipment they will be able to live indefinitely, while the time will never come when they can be taken off such equipment. Ought older people be put on life-support equipment when they have a terminal illness? Ought medical treatment be begun or continued even when the best hope is that death will be postponed a few years? And to complicate such a situation, ought death be postponed a few years when the remaining years will be years of great pain, years in

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

which the body wastes away, years of suffering for the sick and for the family of the ill?

These are only some of the complicating factors. Are doctors always able to predict with certainty what will be the end of one with disease? Or of one who has suffered brain damage? Every one knows of cases in which doctors predicted imminent death, only to watch such a "terminally-ill" person live for years and die of some other cause. Every one knows of severe cases of brain damage in which doctors predicted that the person would remain a vegetable, only to discover that the person has not only regained consciousness, but, with much help and love, has been able to regain a normal life in his or her family and among friends. Doctors are not always right, as they themselves would be the first to admit. Ought one's decision to use or not to use life-support equipment take into account the fallibility of doctors?

Add to all these problems an additional problem which is increasingly being discussed in medical circles: the astronomical cost of such medical treatment which is necessary to support life. Not only is the cost far beyond the ability of most people to pay, but it is increasingly true that the cost is far beyond the ability of many medical insurance companies to pay. The result is that certain decisions have to be made strictly on the basis of cost factors. Some people are allowed to die while others are kept alive, and costs determine the decision.

Such a list of difficult questions grows longer the more one thinks about the problem. And there are no easy answers.

That is, there are no easy answers for the Christian. Sometimes the world seems to think that the answers are easily come

by. In our last article we mentioned an interview with our present Surgeon-General, himself a Christian and professed Calvinist, in which he discusses many aspects of euthanasia. I want to refer to some of the things Dr. C. Everett Koop said in this interview and quote from him. The interview is found in the September 25, 1985 issue of *Presbyterian Journal*.

In the first place, he warns against a liberal movement in this country which is actively promoting euthanasia. In answer to the question: "How would you define euthanasia?" Dr. Koop said,

*Euthanasia means happy death. If we stick completely to the terminology, I would be very pleased to practice "happy death" for my patients who are dying, which means I would keep them comfortable, I would keep them pain free, I would love them and nurture them until they leave this world.*

*But euthanasia today does not mean that. Euthanasia is masked in terms such as death with dignity. It is implied in the Living Will. What it means is that you do anything you can actively or passively to hasten the demise of someone who is considered to be either a nuisance or no longer productive . . . .*

In answer to the question: "In 1976 you published 'Right to Live, Right to Die.' You warned then of euthanasia. After nearly ten years, is the warning still appropriate?" Dr. Koop answered:

*I think there is a statement in the book you mentioned, and I certainly have used it many times in lectures, that the euthanasia forces are abroad in our land as they never have been before. That is just as true today as it was then except that they are abroad in our land in much more subtle ways.*

*They have changed the wording of the Living Will so it opens the door to euthanasia a little wider. You have people talking about durable power of attorney. It sounds so magnificent until you realize what people are accomplishing by it.*

*You get into the not so subtle things about societies like Hemlock and the publication in Scotland about how to go about preparing for your own suicide.*

*There's the subtle approach of the news media publishing not just editorials*

*on the subject but news accounts of relatively insignificant occasions which sound as though policy were being established.*

*Last fall for just a two week period, I tore out of the ten major papers in the country all the articles on euthanasia. I was amazed first of all at the quantity, but I was also amazed at what people reported that I thought was more editorializing than reporting.*

*If three doctors met in an obscure town in France and said they felt that old people should be eased out of this life, the headline was, "Doctors Think Patients Should Have Right To Die." So What? The whole hype of the media is that this is here; it's gaining momentum; it's snowballing; and if you want to be with it, you've got to get on the bandwagon . . . .*

What Koop says here is true. It was not so many months ago that *Readers Digest* carried an article, very sentimental and moving, in which the glories of euthanasia were extolled by means of an actual description of a case.

Another question asked Dr. Koop was: ". . . Are there other strategies of the euthanasia movement?" To this Koop responded:

*Yes, several things. In emphasizing the finiteness of resources, they have gotten across to a whole segment of the elderly population that somehow because they are living, they are depriving someone else of a prior right to those resources. And I think that is a most reprehensible thing to have gotten across to elderly people.*

*It's done so subtly, and it's done by the media in the way you and I have just been talking. When I was doing research for Whatever Happened to the Human Race?, I went to nursing homes and talked to people who felt the pressure. Old people were apologizing to me for using a bed, for being alive, for taking medication, because they "knew" somebody else deserved it more. I think that's pitiful.*

*One of the things that is so ironic to me is that while we are talking about the fact we can't afford people to live in a nursing home with this kind of care, we have panels come out and say we should start a whole new project on the artificial*

heart. It just doesn't make sense. While one half of the scientific world is saying we can't afford to care for these non-productive elderly people, the other half is saying we are so excited about the artificial heart — let's try it.

The so-called "Living Will" has been suggested as a way of getting out of this dilemma. A Living Will is a statement drawn up by a person, similar to a will, and legally binding in many states, in which a person specifically requests not to be given any extraordinary treatment in the event of serious illness or injury. Dr. Koop warns against this also and the dangers of it.

*I think the problems are in two categories. There is the very commonplace changing of the mind of individuals who thought the Living Will was great before they were in a situation where it would be used. And now they are not so sure, but they might not know how to reverse it.*

*The other thing is that if you have a Living Will, it sends a signal that you don't want anything done. What the patient might have had in mind when he wrote it is extra-, extra-, extraordinary care — pumping on his chest 15 times so he'll be brought back to life only to die the next day, or a respirator to keep him going for six hours in great discomfort when he might have died by himself earlier.*

*But medical personnel may interpret the Living Will so as to assume the patient doesn't want his life prolonged by any means. If they treat the patient ag-*

*gressively and prolong life, they might be sued for not following directions.*

*The counterbalance to that is the person who doesn't have a Living Will and who might under ordinary circumstances in the hands of a good physician be allowed to slowly pass out of this life as he is dying. He may be overly resuscitated and put on life support equipment because again, fear of litigation is such that the doctors don't want him to go without the extra effort.*

*You and I could be in the same accident — you, a young man with a Living Will and I, an old man without one. As a result of the above, you might die and I might live.*

These are some of the problems which have to be faced in a discussion of the rightness or wrongness of euthanasia. □

## Taking Heed To The Doctrine

Ronald H. Hanko

# The Humanity of Christ

### 2. The characteristics of Christ's human nature.

Because of various errors that have arisen in the history of the church there are certain characteristics of Christ's human nature that have been emphasized in church doctrine. These are worth our study, not just because of the errors they contradict, but because each of them helps us understand the wonder and significance of Christ's humanity for our salvation. There are usually five of these characteristics or attributes that are given, the reality, completeness, weakness, sinlessness, and centrality of Christ's human nature.

(1) A real human nature. That Christ has a real human nature would seem to be beyond question, and yet in the history of the church it was exactly this truth that was first and often denied, especially as a result of the influence of pagan philosophy. Many of the early heretics, some of whom are mentioned in Article IX of the Belgic Confession, particularly men like Marcion and Manes, not only denied the deity of Christ, but also His real humanity. They proceeded from the idea, borrowed from Greek philosophy, that evil is not a matter of bad actions and wrong choices but that material, created things are themselves inherently evil. Salvation, therefore, consists

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not in redemption from sin, but in deliverance from this material world, especially from our material bodies. Thus these men felt that a union between the spiritual Son of God and our flesh was not only unworthy of God, but unthinkable in light of the essential badness of this creation and of the body.

These men taught, then, that Christ's incarnation was only an appearance, and that He did not actually become man. He simply took upon Himself for a time the appearance of a human body. For this reason these men and their followers were called Docetists (from the Greek word which means "to seem" or "to appear"). They were not a separate sect, however, but were found in many different heretical groups in the early church. The Manichaeans, for example, to whom Augustine belonged before his conversion, taught that Christ's human nature was only a phantom. And so Augustine himself says in his *Confessions*: "I was afraid, therefore, to believe Him to be born in the flesh, lest I should be compelled to believe Him contaminated by the flesh" (V, x, 20).

The church saw clearly that this teaching destroyed the gospel, for if Christ's humanity is not real, then all He did as a man, including his suffering and dying, is not real. Cyril of Jerusalem gets to the heart of the matter when he says: "If the incarnation was a phantom, salvation is a phantom also" (Catechetical Lectures, V, i, 9).

We know that this is the teaching of Scripture. Jesus Himself assured his disciples several times, both before and after his resurrection, that He was not a ghost or phantom (Matt. 14:26, 27, Lk. 24:39). Also

passages such as Hebrews 2:14 very emphatically declare that He took our flesh and blood. In fact, these passages speak so clearly that many of the early heretics were forced into the same position of many false teachers today, that of denying that such passages are part of the Word of God at all.

Now there would seem at first thought to be little need for such a passionate defense of the reality of Christ's humanity today, since, if anything, it would seem that the tendency today is to emphasize His humanity at the expense of His deity. But this is not the case. The errors of Docetism are to be found in the church today and she must still fight for this truth.

For one thing, as Berkhouwer points out, belief in Christ's humanity involves much more than a mere acknowledgement of the fact that there was a man Jesus:

*One must not think that the acknowledgement of the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth is identical with the confession of the church touching the human nature of Christ. The acknowledgement of his historicity is not half of the Christological dogma (The Person of Christ, p. 198).*

And insofar as any detracting from the significance of Christ's humanity is really a form of Docetism, much of modern Christianity is docetic, having little real understanding of the necessity and value of Christ's humanity.

There is, for example, an implicit devaluation of Christ's humanity in Anabaptism and Dispensationalism, for in order to maintain a distinction of covenants in the Old and New Testament they are forced in one way or another to cut off Christ as the Saviour of the church from His Old Testament roots and thus they deny His real connection with humanity. Historically the Anabaptists have done this by denying that Christ's nature was actually received from the virgin

Mary (Belgic Confession, Article XVIII). Perhaps today it is more commonly done by making His humanity little more than a matter of sentiment and sympathy.

Roman Catholicism also de-emphasizes the humanity of Christ, as for example in its official explanation of a passage like Mark 13:32, where it denies that Christ's knowledge was in any way limited, explaining the passage simply as a reference to Christ's withholding the knowledge of the time of His coming from His disciples. Perhaps this de-emphasis of Christ's real humanity is connected (as it was with the Docetists of old) with the Roman Catholic teaching that evil is in things, and that flesh itself is inherently bad, a teaching which is seen most clearly in the Romish practice of holy orders. The fact remains, however, that the Roman Catholic Church has so entirely pushed the humanity of Christ into the background that it has been left without any human intermediary between God and man, and has had to invent its Mariolatory and Hagiolatory (worship of saints) to fill this void.

Of greater significance is the fact that most Christians today deny the reality of Christ's humanity by denying the permanence of the incarnation. Most pastors and teachers in the church would be surprised to find how few of their people know or understand the truth expressed in Question and Answer 36 of the Westminster Larger Catechism, that "He *continueth* true man forever." This is part of the reality of Christ's humanity. His coming in the flesh was not something temporary, i.e., a mere appearance — as the old Docetists taught — but a permanent assumption of our flesh. Yet many have the idea that the in-

carnation ended with the resurrection of Christ, so that He is no longer a man like us.

Scripture teaches that the glorification of Christ through His resurrection and exaltation is the glorification of His humanity, not the loss of it. It is not just the Son of God who sits enthroned in glory and honor, but the Son of man (Lk. 22:69), and it is also the Son of man who shall come again at the end with power and great glory (Lk. 21:27). And it is the Son of man who rose from the dead the third day and ascended into heaven (Lk. 24:7). This is, of course, the only explanation of the resurrection, for as God He can neither die nor rise again.

Again, the reality of our salvation depends upon the reality of His humanity also now that He is in heaven. It is because He intercedes for us as the Son of man that we also have boldness to enter into the presence of God (Heb. 4:15). The Belgic Confession reminds us of this most beautifully when it says:

*But this Mediator, whom the Father has appointed between Him and us, ought in no wise to frighten us by His majesty, or cause us to seek another according to our fancy. For there is no*

*creature either in heaven or on earth who loveth us more than Jesus Christ; Who, though He was in the form of God, yet made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of man, and of a servant for us, and was made like unto His brethren in all things (Article XXVI).*

The Heidelberg Catechism also shows how the hope of eternal life for all Christians rests on the humanity of Christ, for "we have *our flesh* in heaven as a sure pledge that He, as Head, will also take up to Himself, us, His members" (XVIII, 49). Here, of course it is the reality of our hope that depends on the reality of His humanity, but our hope is also part of our salvation, as Paul assures us in Romans 8:24.

Perhaps the present lack of understanding at this point is to be traced to a lack of emphasis on the reality of sin. Just as the early Docetists did not really believe in sin, but taught that evil was in material things, so the church today has largely taken the same position by its teaching that the only evils in the world are the evils of poverty, war, inequality, and such like things; and thus she has no real need of One Who became man to pay for man's sins. It is at least worth considering that this is the reason for the lack of any real emphasis

on the humanity of Christ, even while the church still appears to hold to that truth.

Certainly it is true that with all the emphasis of modern theology on the humanity of Christ, one feels almost instinctively that a real appreciation of this truth is nevertheless missing entirely. So the church's battle for this truth is not finished. It is a battle to be fought on every side. And we may not forget that in fighting this battle we are fighting for the gospel and for the reality and assurance of our own salvation. That alone can give us courage and conviction.

Nor may we forget that various other doctrines such as the doctrine of the virgin birth, the doctrine of the covenant (i.e., Christ's birth as the seed of the woman and of David), the doctrine of His exaltation and intercession are inseparably related to this truth, and that in fighting for them we are also fighting for the true gospel, the good news that Christ was made man, like us in all things, that He might suffer and be glorified on our behalf. □

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## Book Review

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**The NIV (The Making of a Contemporary Translation)**, Kenneth L. Barker, Editor; Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing Co. (Academie Books); 177 pp. (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema]

This little book is a memorial volume, written in memory of the late Dr. Edwin H. Palmer, who was executive secretary of the NIV Committee on Bible Translation. Dr. Palmer died on September 16, 1980.

The authors of the various chapters of this book are fourteen of the original translators of the NIV, including Kenneth Barker, the editor. The nature of

the book is apologetic, i.e., it is an explanation of various aspects of the NIV which is at the same time a defense.

It is not my intention to offer a chapter by chapter summary and critique of this book. The value of the book lies, of course, in the fact that it is "right from the horse's mouth," i.e., its explanations and defenses are by the translators themselves. Yet I was singularly unimpressed by some of the defenses. For example, Chapter 11, which attempts to explain the NIV's departure from the usage "only begotten Son"

and its substitution of "one and only Son," left me wholly unconvinced — in fact, more firm in my opposition. All in all, the book did not remove my objections to the principle of dynamic equivalence.

One more item. The late Dr. Palmer wrote the last chapter. He begins the chapter by stating, "I love the King James Version." But at the end of the chapter he writes concerning the KJV: "Do not give them a loaf of bread, covered with an inedible, impenetrable crust, fossilized by three and a half centuries. Give

them the Word of God as fresh and warm and clear as the Holy Spirit gave it to the authors of the Bible. . . . For any preacher or theologian who loves God's Word to allow that Word to go on being misunderstood because of the veneration of an archaic, non-understood version of four centuries ago is inexcusable, and almost unconscionable." A bit extreme, to say the least!

Nevertheless, I recommend this book from this single point of view: from it you can learn where the NIV and its translators "are coming from." □

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## Report of Classis East

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January 13, 1988

Classis East met in regular session on Wednesday, January 13, 1988 at the First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. All the churches were represented by two delegates. Rev. B. Woudenberg was the chairman for this session.

Classis received reports from its stated clerk, its classical committee which included the submission of a Ministerial Certificate of Dismissal and Testimonial for Rev. R. Miersma who is now in New Zealand, and from the church visitors.

Faith Church requested classical appointments for its evening service (Rev. Bekkering, it was reported will occupy the

pulpit for the morning service.)

The following schedule was adopted for Faith: January 31 (a.m. service) — Van Baren; February 7 — Kamps; February 14 — Key; February 21 — Woudenberg; February 28 — Gritters; March 6 — Slopsema; March 13 — Joostens; March 20 — Kortering; March 27 — Van Baren; April 3 — Kamps; April 10 — Woudenberg; April 17 — Key; April 24 — Gritters; May 1 — Slopsema; May 8 — Joostens; May 15 — Kortering.

Holland also requested classical appointments. The following schedule was adopted for Holland: January 24 — Woudenberg; February 7 — Joostens; February 14 — Kortering; February 21 — Van Baren; March 6 — Woudenberg; March 13 — Gritters; March 20 — Kamps; April 3 — Key; April 10 — Slopsema; April 17 — Joostens.

The committee appointed at the special meeting of classis on November 18, 1987 to assist Faith Church gave its report. This committee was continued at the request of Faith Church.

Covenant requested permission to contact the churches of Classis East for collections for their building program. A similar request to contact the churches in Classis West, via a letter to synod, was also approved.

Subsidy requests for 1989 of \$23,600 for Covenant and for \$7,000 for Kalamazoo were approved.

Voting always occupies a great deal of time at the January classis. Elected to three-year terms are delegates *ad examina* were Rev. M. Kamps (*primus*) and Rev. S. Key (*secundus*). Rev. G. Van Baren was elected to a three-year term on the Classical Committee. Revs. C. Hanko and

J.A. Heys were appointed as church visitors with Rev. H. Veldman as alternate:

Elected as synodical delegates were the following: MINISTERS: *Primi*: M. Kamps, J. Kortering, J. Slopsema, G. Van Baren; *Secundi*: B. Gritters, M. Joostens, S. Key,

B. Woudenberg; *ELDERS*: *Primi*: D. Doezeema, D. Engelsma, C. Prince, G. Wassink; *Secundi*: G. Bol, G. Hoekstra, D. Lotterman, J. Van Baren.

Classis was in closed session for a brief time to consider a matter of discipline.

Expenses amounted to \$985.00. Classis will meet next on Wednesday, May 11, 1988 at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan. □

Respectfully submitted,  
John J. Huiskens  
Stated Clerk

## News From Our Churches

Ben Wigger

February 1, 1988

First, another in our series of church profiles.

The Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan, was organized in 1927, following a break with the Rev. Danhof and his congregation. At first there were eleven families; and they held their first services in the Y.M.C.A., then in a store building, and later in a duplex, which also served as a parsonage. Kalamazoo's first pastor was Rev. Wm. Verhil, who came in 1932. He was followed by Rev. J.C. Kooistra, and by Rev. H. Veldman in 1941. During these years a better meeting place and parsonage were found.

When Rev. Danhof and his congregation returned to the Christian Reformed Church, some families sought membership in the Kalamazoo Prot. Ref. Church,

bringing the total number of families to thirty-five. A new church building was completed in 1948. In 1950 Rev. Veldman left, and was soon replaced by Rev. E. Knott.

When Rev. Knott and most of the congregation left in the controversy of 1953, the future of the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo was uncertain. For a while two families traveled to Grand Rapids as often as possible and met with First Church. But in October 1954 seven families were reconstituted as the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church. These families began meeting in a building owned by a Seventh Day Adventist group. In 1958 Rev. A. Mulder accepted their call.

But more troubles were ahead. Rev. Mulder resigned his position, influencing a few families to leave along with him. In 1963 Rev. Harbach accepted the call from Kalamazoo and became their sixth pastor. He labored faithfully for ten years until he became Home Missionary in 1974. During these years the congregation purchased a small church building on the north end of town.

In 1976 Rev. B. Woudenberg began his ministry in Kalamazoo, and by God's grace he remains there as pastor today.

The congregation numbers about twenty-five families and holds its meetings in their new church building on Greenacre Drive. This building was finished in 1982.

The members of the congregation are variously employed. There are several Upjohn workers, salesmen, and office workers, a dairyman, a policeman, and several retirees. Several members are eighty years old or older. There is an Adult Bible Society; a Men's, a Women's and a Parents' Society as well. There are also more than thirty children. 1986 was especially joyous, when two families were blessed with the birth of twin boys.

Kalamazoo can testify that God leads His church through many adversities and difficult times. But they can also assure all of us that God also preserves that Church to the end. Thanks be to Him!

Now for some other news you might like to know.

The Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Isabel, S.D. recently

*Ben Wigger is an elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.*

formed a trio consisting of the Revs. Steven Houck, Thomas Miersma and David Engelsma. From that trio the congregation in Isabel called Rev. Engelsma to come over and be their pastor.

We also found that, the Lord willing, Rev. Heys and his wife will have left for New Zealand on February 5 to install Rev. R. Miersma as pastor in Wellington, New Zealand.

Also, in the last week of December, Missionary-Pastor Steven Houck of our Modesto, Calif. field suffered a heart attack. We understand that soon after this attack he underwent successful balloon surgery and has returned home again. He was also scheduled for a tread-mill test on the 13th of January. This test would show just how well the balloon surgery had succeeded. Results of that test will have to wait until our next news column. Let us remember this servant of the Lord in our prayers. Perhaps you would like to send him a card. His address is: Rev. Steven Houck, 1109 W. Rumble Rd., Modesto, CA 95350.

Rev. G. Van Baren and his wife invited Hudsonville's widows, widowers, "senior citizens" and any others who would desire to attend, to a showing of pictures of their recent trip to England on Tuesday, Dec. 29.

The Protestant Reformed Christian School in Loveland, Colorado, held their annual all-school program on Tuesday evening, Dec. 22. All parents, grandparents, and friends of the school were cordially invited to attend.

Adams St. Christian School Mother's Club met January 7. Their guest speaker for the evening was Mr. Vern Huber. He spoke on "Parent-Teacher Communication Through Conferences".

The Ladies' Circle of the Doon Protestant Reformed Christian School held a supper-bazaar in early December. Supper was served first, followed by a bazaar.

The congregation in Pella, Iowa, was unable to hold services December 27 due to some inclement weather. They had an ice storm during the night Saturday and into Sunday morning, followed by snow Sunday night. Needless to say, travel was quite difficult, and since many of the church members live outside of town, services were cancelled.

At Southeast Church's recent congregational meeting a proposal was passed to re-carpet the sanctuary.

And there was a Young People's Christmas Mass Meeting December 20 at Southeast Church. □

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Study Society of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of a faithful member, MRS. AGNES PIPE, whom the Lord took home to glory on January 3, 1988.

The Society expresses its Christian sympathy to her children and grandchildren.

"In God is my salvation and

my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God." (Psalm 62:7)

Pastor Steven Key, Pres.  
Mrs. J. Kamminga, Sec'y.

### NOTICE!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Church will meet in Redlands, CA on Wednesday, March 2, 1988, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. All delegates in need of lodging or of transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of the Redlands Consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory and the congregation of the Lynden Protestant Reformed Church express their sincere sympathy to Mr. Swietse Vander Muelen in the death of his wife, MRS. ALICE VANDER MUELEN, on December 19, 1987.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15)

Rev. C. Haak, Pres.  
Wilbur Stuit, Clerk

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Study Class of the Lynden Protestant Reformed Church extend their sympathy to their brother and fellow-member, Mr. Swietse Vander Muelen in the death of his wife ALICE VANDER MUELEN.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Corinthians 5:1)