

THE STANDARD BEARER

A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." -Matthew 9:37, 38



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In This Issue . . .

Our readers could not have missed the ever-increasing note of urgency sounded in every expression of concern within our churches that our seminary needs students. What with five current vacancies in the churches, to say nothing of a mission field soon to be left vacant, and opportunities arising on a number of different fronts to be of service both in our own country and abroad, the need for more laborers can only be described as acute.

It may be, however, that the appeals are seen to be directed specifically toward *young men*. Young men are, of course, most emphatically *needed*. But, what Prof. Decker aptly points out in the Meditation article in this issue, is that what the church so desperately needs is . . . *Hannahs!* Only in that way, he writes, will God give us students in our seminaries and, eventually, preachers in our pulpits.

Not at all, of course, is he suggesting that the "burden" lies solely on *mothers*. Mothers no doubt occupy a most influential position in this regard. But I believe the Professor is speaking about a *spirit* which should *pervade our homes*. What kind of mate do we seek? Why do we desire children? How do we rear them? What comes first in our life? The admonition of Christ, quoted on the cover, comes to the *church*. And methinks He speaks not simply of prayers we utter, but of lives we live. Prof. Decker's Meditation gives one pause for thought.

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The church has three great needs: children, "Hannahs," and prayers.

The church needs children who are dedicated to the Lord's service and who will grow up to be preachers. The church needs children because God has established His covenant with us and our children. God's promise is to us and our children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. God is the covenant God Who saves His elect in Christ in the lines of their generations. The church needs children because the future of God's covenant and cause are at stake!

Because the church needs children it needs "Hannahs" — God-fearing, pious mothers! God has given women a large and indispensable place in His church. That place is to bear and bring up the children of God's covenant. Without godly mothers God does not maintain and extend His covenant of friendship in Christ Jesus!

God uses means to maintain His covenant. The means are especially the prayers of God-fearing mothers.

We have a shortage of students in our seminary, which means we will have a shortage of ministers in the churches. This is a very sad situation. Indeed, God is blessing us with a great deal of work in the cause of His Kingdom, and He has given us the heritage of the truth of His Word. And we have only a very few students studying for the ministry. Why this is I do not know. What I do know is that God will give us students in our seminary and eventually ministers in the churches only by means of the fervent prayers of godly "Hannahs"!

The incident of our text took place at the end of the period of the judges. This was a bad time in the history of Israel. In those days there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes. In these times Elkanah lived. He was a Levite who lived in Ephraim, according to I Chronicles 6. Elkanah had two wives Hannah and Peninnah. The latter bore him children and mocked Hannah who was the favorite of Elkanah. Hannah and Elkanah represented the faithful remnant of apostate Israel, as is evident in the fact that they worshiped annually at the tabernacle in Shiloh, and from the concern of Hannah, her prayer for a man child and her vow, and from God's answer to her prayer.

Hannah had no children and was deeply troubled by this. The Scripture informs us that Hannah was loved by Elkanah. When it became apparent that she could not bear children, Elkanah took matters into his own hands and married Peninnah. Peninnah bore him sons and daughters, but that did not satisfy Hannah. Peninnah not only had sons and daughters, but she provoked Hannah by mocking her for her barrenness. And Hannah, though deeply loved by Elkanah, remained troubled. When they went to worship at the tabernacle in Shiloh she wept sore and did not eat.

Why was she so troubled? From a natural point of view we can understand. God-fearing women such as Hannah want children. They too weep, for that is a very difficult fact for them to accept. And certainly this is part of the reason for Hannah's grief. But there is more to her sorrow. We must remember that this is the Old Testament era. Canaan was God's country, a picture of heaven. Here God was pleased to live in covenant friendship with His people. Should a man die without a son his inheritance was given to another and his name and place in Canaan perished. To be barren, therefore, was considered a terrible reproach and a sign of God's disfavor. Hannah, God-fearing woman that she was,

knew all of this, and this too troubled her deeply. But even this is not the deepest reason for her grief. Her concern was not to satisfy her longing for children. Nor was it merely that Elkanah's name and place be preserved in Canaan, for that would happen through his sons born by Peninnah. Hannah's concern becomes obvious from her prayer and vow to the Lord.

Notice her confession: "For this child I prayed!" Hannah, a woman of faith like Sarah, Rebekah, the mother of Samson, and later Elisabeth, was looking for the Messiah to come. And God had shut up her womb. Hannah represented a tiny minority in Israel. These were times when the carnal, ungodly element in Israel was in control. Eli was weak at best. His sons were completely profane. These were times of apostasy, bleak and dark.

So Hannah prays to Jehovah an effectual, fervent prayer. "I have prayed," she says. That word, prayed, refers to intense supplication, humble, earnest imploring. She was in bitterness of soul and wept sore. In her deep sorrow Hannah poured out her heart to Jehovah, literally begging the Lord for this child.

Notice she prays not merely for a child, and not for a baby girl, but for a man child. Hannah wants a special man child and vows that if God looks upon her affliction and gives her a man child she will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head. This child must be a Nazarite. A Nazarite could not shave, drink wine or strong drink, or touch a dead body. By his life and appearance, a Nazarite testified to Israel that they must come out of the world of sin and consecrate themselves to the service of God. For this child Hannah prayed.

Truly this was a remarkable prayer of faith for a son who would be a picture of true, spiritual Israel. He would not be a Nazarite outwardly but a true Nazarite who would proclaim by his very life: "be as I and come out from the world and its corruptions and serve Jehovah." So Hannah prays for a believing son. Only God can make him a believer, which means that this son must be an elect in Christ from eternity, saved by the blood of the promised Seed. And he must be a Nazarite. In these times of anarchy and oppression, Israel did not need any more "Elis." Israel needed a deliverer so that God's covenant promise could be realized. Hannah saw this. Out of her deep sorrow and great concern for God's cause she begs the Lord for this special son.

Jehovah heard her prayer!

She prayed to Jehovah Who is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, the "I Am that I Am." Jehovah never changes. Jehovah is true to His word of promise. Jehovah is the covenant-making, covenant-keeping God of our salvation. Jehovah gives Hannah this child.

Because Jehovah heard her prayer, Hannah names him Samuel, which means "asked of God." This is what this child shall be all his days, "asked of God."

True to her vow, Hannah brings Samuel to Shiloh after he is weaned. The Jehovah has given me my petition; therefore also I have lent or returned him to the Lord, she says.

What a beautiful confession Hannah makes! As long as he lives he shall be the one returned to the Lord. Hannah dedicates this son to the Lord's service for his entire life. And Jehovah did great things through this child. Samuel served as judge, prophet, and priest in Israel. He was privileged to anoint David. And it was through David that God

delivered His people from their enemies. Through the son of David, our Lord Jesus Christ, God delivered all of His own from sin and death!

In her prayer and vow Hannah stands as a worthy example for us today. Times today are even worse for the church. Apostasy abounds. Not only are many truths denied, but Scripture itself is denied. This means God is denied! God's Word is twisted to say whatever men want it to say. Ungodly living abounds as well. Nothing is considered wrong or sinful anymore, so it seems. Sometimes we too wonder and worry. Will Jehovah's cause and covenant triumph?

The answer is yes. Our God is Jehovah, and He has saved us in the blood of His Son our Lord. Jehovah has promised to preserve us and all His church and bring us to glory. Jehovah will not fail! He is true to His Word.

But God uses means. The church needs children. Not just children, nor merely children so that we grow in number and become influential. The church needs children not just to satisfy its own interest and desires. The church needs special children, Nazarite children, believing children. The church needs children who will be separated from the world of sin and dedicated to the Lord's service for life. The church needs children who will by God's grace grow up to be elders and deacons, Christian school teachers, Sunday School teachers. The church needs children who will become faithful fathers and mothers. The church needs children who will become saints who represent God's covenant in the world, who fight the good fight of faith. The church needs children who will, in whatever their calling, believe, defend, and live the truth to God's glory.

The church needs very special children. It needs sons to be returned to the Lord to serve Him for life in the highest calling a man can have, the ministry of the Word! God has saved us and He will preserve us to the end. But God uses means to do this and the means is chiefly the preaching of the Word. Without preachers there is no church!

God has done in His wonderful grace great things for us. He has given us that rich heritage of the truth, the Reformed faith. The faith of our fathers is living still! What will happen to that precious heritage without preachers? God has given us open doors to preach the Gospel. What will happen to missions without preachers!? God has given covenant homes, Christian schools, and countless blessings of His covenant. What will happen to our children and grandchildren without preachers? How shall they hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and be known of Him and follow Him into life

eternal if there be no one to preach the Word to them?

Yes, the church needs preachers!

For this reason the church needs "Hannahs." The church needs godly women who are concerned about God's covenant cause, women who humbly and with tears beg the Lord for sons and daughters to be returned to the Lord's service for life.

And especially does the church need "Hannahs" who will humbly beg the Lord for sons — godly, believing sons, gifted sons to be dedicated to the Lord. The church needs "Hannahs" who will pray for sons to be trained in God's fear in order to be returned to the Lord for lifetime service in the ministry.

This is God's word to all of us!

Young women, you need God-fearing husbands with whom you can pray for and receive from God children of His covenant and for His service, sons to be dedicated to the ministry of the Word!

Young men you need that kind of wife — a wife like Hannah who will cheerfully help you in God's service and will fervently pray out of deep concern for God's cause and covenant for children to be returned to the Lord!

Mothers, the church needs you desperately! The church needs your fervent prayers for children to be dedicated to the Lord! Are you praying for this child?

To all of us, whether we be old or young, married or single, Jesus said: "The fields are white with harvest and the laborers are few. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth reapers." Jehovah hears those prayers and He will send forth reapers to gather the harvest of His elect out of the nations. Jehovah will preserve His church and covenant in the world. Jehovah's name will be glorified!

In that faith let us one and all pray without ceasing for children to be returned to the Lord. □

Editorial

The Demise of the RES

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod died last year. It was only 42 years old. The cause of death was a kind of ecclesiastical AIDS — a fatal inability to counteract life-threatening diseases in the body. For a congregation, this is the inability to excommunicate

Rev. VanBaren is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

impenitent sinners. For an assembly like the RES, it is the inability to exclude from the organization member churches that maintain doctrines and practices that conflict both with the rules of the organization and with the Word of God. Homosexuality played a prominent role in the RES's death. One of the member churches, The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN), has publicly approved the

homosexual practice of its members, declaring that practicing homosexuals have the right to the Lord's Table and to church office. Although it has admonished the GKN for this, and although the GKN has adamantly refused to recant, the RES declined again last year to request the GKN to resign its membership in the RES. The motion that would have expelled the GKN failed.

Signs that the RES was terminally ill have been evident for some time. It could not make its criticism of membership in the apostate World Council of Churches stick, but rather tolerated membership in the RES on the part of the churches that also affiliated with the WCC. It could not exclude a church that openly and officially denied the fundamental doctrine of the infallible inspiration of Holy Scripture. It could not muster enough strength of holiness to condemn and cast off from itself the abomination of homosexual practice. It could not enforce its own rules, something that even self-respecting clubs and societies in the world think it necessary to do. It could only engage in pious prattle and empty warning like some churchly Eli with wicked, stubborn sons. The death of the RES, therefore, came as no surprise.

There is something uniquely pathetic, if not disgusting, about a church assembly that does not have the courage of its convictions, to discipline or exclude the heretic or unrighteous, just as there is something pathetic about the human body that lies exposed to the ravages of every invading germ. The RES could not say no to the clearest attack upon the Word of God and to the vilest violation of God's Law. The GKN on her part, a brazen hussy, eats, wipes her mouth, and says, "I have done no wickedness." The "REC News Exchange" of November 8, 1988 reports, amazing to relate, that the reaction of the GKN to the events at RES Harare 1988 was extreme anger at the mistreatment of the GKN and at the failure to defend "the homosexual brothers and sisters in the church." Only narrowly did a motion to withdraw from the RES fail. I am reminded of an incident at RES Chicago 1984. Knowing full well the objection

of the RES to women office-bearers in the church, the GKN included among its delegates a woman minister and a woman elder. In the roll-call that opened the sessions, the Moderator referred to the woman minister from the GKN as "Mrs. So-and-So," whereupon that formidable female sprang to her feet and, in a voice that reverberated throughout the building, roared, "The Rev. Mrs. So-and-So." The Moderator then meekly repeated her title; and the RES meekly seated her without dissent.

It was not, however, the refusal of the RES to exclude the GKN that signaled the death of that body. It was not even the implicit acceptance of homosexuality, of the denial of Scripture, and of membership in the WCC that constituted the RES's demise. Nor was it that several more churches resigned, or suspended, membership in the RES because of the refusal to put out the GKN — the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; the Reformed Churches of New Zealand; the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (CGKN); and the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA). Neither was it the change of name from Reformed Ecumenical Synod to Reformed Ecumenical Council.

But the death of the RES was its revision of its "Constitution," specifically the "Basis" of the RES in Article II. The "Constitution" adopted in 1972 expressed that the basis of the RES was Holy Scripture "as interpreted by the Confessions of the Reformed faith," which confessions are then named. The "Constitution" went on to say that "the Confessions of the Reformed faith are accepted because they are in accordance with the divine truth as revealed in Scripture." The crucially important phrases, as every Reformed man and woman knows,

are "... Holy Scripture as interpreted by the Confessions" and "... are accepted because they are in accordance with the . . . Scripture." These phrases bind every subscriber to the Reformed Confessions without possibility of equivocation (although wicked men can still lie); and they constitute an organization, Reformed (although it may fail to maintain its basis in practice). By its original "Constitution," the RES was based squarely on the Reformed Creeds and, therefore, could rightly claim to be *Reformed* — a *Reformed* ecumenical assembly.

This was important to the RES in the past. In his opening address to the 1953 Synod of Edinburgh, the Rev. G. N. M. Collins said:

We who meet in the membership of this Reformed Ecumenical Synod have pledged ourselves to the Reformed Faith as expressed in the great historic Confessions of our Churches. To that Faith we must bear witness. Our pledge requires it; our age demands it. It has proved the correction of a wandering humanity before; in God's hand it will prove so again. (Acts, 1953, p. 5)

Writing in the RES booklet, "The Reformed Ecumenical Synod: A Venture in Confessional Ecumenism," in 1965, Collins asserted that "it was the aim of its (the RES's — DJE) founders that it should be a distinctly Reformed ecumenical movement . . . It was with this in view that the Synod resolved to restrict its constituent membership to Churches which unambiguously adhere to the historic Reformed Confessions" (p. 1).

That it be distinctly Reformed, according to the Reformed Confessions, is important to the RES (now REC) no longer. It has changed its basis. It has elided the words, "as interpreted by the Confessions of the Reformed faith," from its confession that Scripture is the basis; and in the place of the original acceptance

of the Confessions "because they are in accordance with . . . Scripture" it now has merely "the subordinate standard . . . shall be the Reformed faith as a body of truth articulated in (the various Reformed Confessions)." These changes have effectively, if subtly, removed the RES from the basis of the Reformed Confessions (or, should we say, removed the basis from under the RES). The basis now is the Bible interpreted as every church or every delegate chooses to interpret it. Lip service is indeed paid to the Reformed Confessions as a "subordinate standard," but even so it is carefully stated that this "subordinate standard" is not the Confessions themselves, much less all the doctrines taught in the Confessions, but rather "a body of truth articulated" in the Confessions. We may be certain that the intention is to allow every church and every delegate to the REC to determine for himself (and herself!) just exactly what the body of truth is that is articulated in the Confessions and just exactly what the articulation of that body of truth may be.

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod is dead. The reason is not merely its change of name. The reason is that it is no longer a confessional organization. It is no longer Reformed.

This was the purpose of the GKN when she proposed revision of the "Constitution" in 1981. It was the GKN that instigated the revision of the "Constitution." Feeling the pressure on herself from some of the churches in the RES because of her radical departure from the Reformed faith as set down in the Confessions, the GKN asked that the "Constitution" be revised. What she had in mind became clear in the proposal of the GKN that the reference to the Reformed Confessions in the revised "Basis" read as follows:

In their confession in today's world the member churches feel connected with their forefathers who have confessed their faith in (the various Reformed Confessions). (Acts of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, Chicago, 1984, p. 298)

" . . . feel connected with their forefathers!" This is the creedal subscription of the GKN! The RES did not give her this. But what it did give her is not a whit more effective to bind the RES (now REC) and the member churches to the Reformed Confessions than that limp, silly "feel connected with their forefathers."

The RES lost confidence that the doctrines contained in the Reformed Confessions are the very truth of God's own Word, Holy Scripture. It determined to dissociate itself from the position that to be Reformed is to be committed to the historic Reformed Confessions as the expression of Scripture. This comes out also in the sections on "Purpose" and "Membership" in the revised "Constitution." Whereas the original "Constitution" spoke of the purpose of giving "united testimony to the Reformed faith," the revision rather speaks of a testimony to the "biblical faith." The original limited membership to churches which "profess and maintain the Reformed faith and subscribe to the Basis as expressed in Art. II," which "Basis" was Holy Scripture "as interpreted by the Confessions of the Reformed faith." The revision grants membership to all churches which declare allegiance to "the Reformed faith as a living and ever-reforming heritage." For the REC, "Reformed" is only some descent from the forefathers, a faint memory of by-gone days, and the activity of always reforming. "Always reforming" is perhaps the chief mark of the Reformed church for the REC, "always reforming," e.g., by abandoning the

doctrine of Scripture in Articles 3-7 of the Belgic Confession for that of the GKN in its booklet, "God with Us . . . on the Nature of the Authority of Scripture," and by repudiating Paul's condemnation of homosexuality and lesbianism in Romans 1:18ff. for the GKN's approval of both in its "Homophilia."

It will become abundantly evident from the actions and publications of the REC in the future that it is no longer Reformed. Indeed, the REC already begins to show its colors in the publication of the papers of the RES conferences in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1988, *Christ's Rule: A Light for Every Corner*. A more dismal collection of papers trumpeting as Reformed every wind of doctrine now blowing across the ecclesiastical landscape has never been bound between two covers. The REC's *Christ's Rule* is wide open to the charismatic movement, including the "power evangelism" of John Wimber. It urges the adaptation of the faith to various cultures (one professor suggests replacing the elements of the Lord's Supper with porridge and sweet beer). It does not shrink from approving syncretism (the unholy mixture of Christianity with pagan religions). It very strongly encourages the notion that no one can ever know what truth is. It pours contempt on the Reformed faith ("the ghetto-mentality of confessionalism"; "our hanging on for dear life to our theological formulations . . . may be precisely the greatest obstacle . . ."). An exception is the paper by W. H. Velema, a voice crying in the wilderness.

The day of the Reformed faith is far spent!

To the Protestant Reformed Churches and the other denominations that are determined to be Reformed according to the Confessions comes the urgent admonition, "Hold fast what you have!"

This is not a call to isolation. The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, on the ad-

vice of the Rev. Herman Hoeksema, decided in 1952 to accept the invitation of the RES to send official visitors to the RES Edinburgh, 1953. Among the grounds were that we have a calling to witness of the truth wherever the Lord calls and that it is a healthful experience to rub elbows with others of the Reformed persua-

sion (cf. the *Acts*, 1952, pp. 83ff.). This spirit may never be lost among us. For it is the spirit of the Reformed faith itself, which seeks to manifest, and enjoy, the unity of the church. But the unity of Christ's church is the unity of the truth, i.e., Holy Scripture as interpreted by the Reformed Confessions. □ -DJE

Letters

Rutherford and Resistance

I found the special issue of *The Standard Bearer* dealing with "The Reformed Faith on Civil Government" (Dec. 1, 1988) both interesting and beneficial. This is indeed a subject of practical importance for Reformed Christians today and particularly so for those who live in a situation of civil and political unrest, as is presently the case in Northern Ireland. During the past twenty years in our country, there have been massive public demonstrations against government policy, province-wide strikes organized by our elected representatives (one of which brought down our local government assembly), campaigns of civil disobedience, and an alternative parliament established. The differing reactions to these events by Christians have resulted in much division within churches and even amongst families. One positive aspect of this has been to drive Reformed Christians to search the Scriptures and the teachings of the

Reformed theologians of the past for guidance. As our background is Presbyterian and has its roots in Scottish Presbyterianism, it is not surprising that the teachings of the Scottish divines on civil government have had much influence here and, I suppose, upon a large part of Presbyterian churches throughout the world.

While I agree that the articles in the special issue are Reformed and in harmony with the Reformed confessions and the teachings of Calvin, they do not give the full picture of Reformed thought on this subject. I feel that the views of the Scottish divines developed in the fires of persecution are worthy of consideration. I refer in particular to Samuel Rutherford's great work, *Lex Rex or the Law and the Prince*, considered by many to be the best ever written on civil government. We may not agree with all of Rutherford's arguments, e.g., his statement:

The authority of the king is a trust originating indeed with God, but reaching the king by the suffrages of the people. It is a trust, not a gift, and if the trust be abused it can be properly recalled by the people, for they are the fount of power. A king is essentially a living law; an absolute man is a creature they call a tyrant, and no lawfull king. If the king have not the consent of the people, he is an usurper, for we know no external lawfull calling that kings have now, or their family to the crown, but only the call of the people.

Nevertheless, I believe that Rutherford sets forth important principles that can be applied by the Reformed Christian, particularly in situations that are not black and white. It is in these "grey" areas where the "power" is not clearly recognizable, e.g., war, civil war, and the removal of the higher power by the lower powers, that we face the greatest difficulties as to our calling.

I am interested in your views on the teachings of Rutherford and other Presbyterians on this subject. In particular, are they a development, as many would claim, of the teachings of John

Calvin and therefore reconcilable with the views expressed in the special issue, or are they a departure from the Reformed Faith and Scripture itself and therefore to be exposed and repudiated as error?

John Clarke
Larne, Northern Ireland

Response

We have asked Mr. Clarke to present Samuel Rutherford's views on resistance (views that have had great influence upon Presbyterianism especially in the British Isles, as Mr. Clarke points out) in an article to be published in *The SB*. Our answer to Mr.

Clarke's question will await this article. Interested readers in the U.S. can obtain Rutherford's book (which despite the title is written in English) from Sprinkle Publications, P.O. Box 1094, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801. □ -Ed.

The Cost of Christian Education

The GKN and the REC "The Presbyterian"

All Around Us
Rev. Gise VanBaren

The Cost of Christian Education

My attention was called to an article in *The Banner*, October 10, 1988, which points out the great cost of Christian education. Though some of the figures used do not apply to our own system of education, there are important points which were stressed.

To check what percentage of income parents have spent on Christian education, I did a little digging into records of tuition costs and wages for the years 1945, '55, '65, '75, and '86 What I found may surprise you.

If net income . . . is used, the cost of Christian education is now approximately 40 percent of the average wages earned by parents who have three children in elementary school. And today's parents still

send their children. That's the good news. All who worry that the current generation lacks commitment can stop worrying. They have it! . . .

To put it another way: wages and most living expenses today are about nine times higher than they were in 1945. If tuition and the financial help from the church had risen at this same rate, the full cost for three children in elementary school would now be \$1,350, with the church still picking up about 40 percent of that cost through the "sliding scale" (a system, determined by the school board, that reduces the tuition per child paid by parents of more than one child). Instead, tuition for three children in 1987 was \$6,588, and many churches have no commitment to the sliding scale in their annual budgets.

One might argue that the average wage of Christian Reformed Church members is higher than the figures for the area shown by the United States Chamber of Commerce, and perhaps this is so. But the trend remains the same — Christian education takes ten times the share of in-

come today than it did forty years ago, six-and-a-half times as much as it did thirty years ago, two-and-a-half times as much as it did twenty years ago, and almost 50 percent more than it did just ten years ago.

Our school systems on the grade school level still have the "sliding scale" for tuition. This means that the parents with but one child in school are generally paying more than the actual cost of education of the child, while those with two or more children in school pay considerably less than the total cost. I am convinced that this is a good practice to follow, though the parents with one child in school might claim the arrangement to be unfair. It is, in fact, a good business arrangement since this enables all parents to keep their children in the Christian school. If parents with two or more children of grade school age could no longer keep these children in Christian school because they were unable

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to pay the *full* tuition for each child, that income would be lost to the school. Then parents with one child in the school would pay even more tuition to make up this deficit. So a "sliding scale" for tuition is of benefit for the school and all the parents concerned.

But of great concern to the whole church is that Christian education be affordable. It is true that Christian parents are to put first things first. Surely these ought not to insist that they have the luxuries of this life — then be willing to pay for tuition if there is anything left. Jesus has something to say about that in Matthew 6:33.

Still, with the cost of Christian education continuing to increase (and requiring a greater and greater percentage of net income), there should be additional help found to assist struggling parents. The churches regularly take collections. Drives are conducted to pay for part of the cost of education. Perhaps more ought to be done to provide additional help. What would you suggest?

The GKN and the REC

The Reformed Ecumenical Council (formerly: Synod) had considerable controversy in its last meeting this year in Harare. On the line was the question whether the GKN (Reformed Churches of the Netherlands) could remain members of the REC in light of the fact that these churches have accepted practicing homosexuals as members and have taken a very liberal position on the infallibility of Scripture. The REC decided that the GKN could remain members in spite of their unreformed positions. Several denominations resigned membership in the REC as a result (including the Orthodox Presbyterian Church). After that meeting, the GKN itself narrowly

defeated two motions to withdraw or suspend membership in the REC. A report of this action is in *Calvinist Contact*, November 25, 1988:

After a full day of heated debate, the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (GKN) narrowly accepted the advice of the delegates to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (now REC), Harare, 1988, to remain members in the Reformed Ecumenical Council. Two motions put forward to withdraw and suspend membership were both defeated by the synod, and the delegates' advice was accepted by a vote of 37 out of 73 delegates.

A number of delegates in the GKN synod were incensed by what they called the mistreatment of the GKN in Harare. They also charged that the GKN delegation to Harare had not adequately defended the GKN, and in particular had not defended homosexuals in the church. The opponents of the REC within the GKN synod first proposed an outright withdrawal because of the shame to which the GKN had been subjected. This proposal received only 17 votes. A second proposal to suspend membership and give the Deputies for Ecumenical Affairs the chance to evaluate membership critically received 32 votes.

It is only a source of amazement that there are those in the GKN who dare speak of the "shame" to their church when it is subjected to criticism because of their stand on homosexuality and on their interpretation of Scripture. The "shame" is, of course, that the GKN could dare follow its present course — and still call itself "Reformed." □

"The Presbyterian"

There is a little magazine, *The Presbyterian*, published by Tony Horne (9 Church Road, Thornbury, Bristol, BS12 1EJ, England) that arrives in my mail every two months (six issues a year). Mr. Horne is expending great effort (as well as expense) to promote the cause of Presbyterianism in

England. It is his desire to have established in the Bristol area a Presbyterian church to which he could belong (he currently is a member of a Reformed Baptist congregation). In discouragement, and for other reasons, he had decided to discontinue publication of this worthwhile magazine at the end of this year. However, a number of his readers have persuaded him to change his mind. He writes:

Since the publication of the last issue the Editor has received a number of letters expressing regret at the closure of the magazine In the light of this development it is proposed to continue publication in 1989 and the Editor is grateful to all who have faithfully supported the work over the past year. It is hoped that the small increase in subscription will not act as a deterrent and that interest in our glorious Reformed Faith and Presbyterian distinctives will not be diminished.

I, for one, am extremely pleased to hear of Mr. Horne's decision. He prints many worthwhile articles in his little magazine. Some of the articles come from our *Standard Bearer*, or our *Theological Journal*. The most recent issue contains an article by the Rev. J.A. Heys and a book review by Prof. H. Hanko. It also has a recommendation to purchase the books by the Rev. G. Vos and *Meditations on the Psalms* by Rev. J.A. Heys. In fact, Mr. Horne regularly promotes our literature in his magazine. But there are other informative articles about and for Presbyterians that are of interest to us as well. For those who would desire to receive this magazine, both to be instructed by some excellent articles as well as to help promote a Reformed Presbyterianism in England (a worthwhile "mission" work), send a money order for \$14.00 to the above address. □

Guest Article

Rev. Robert Harbach

Christ the Sheepfold Door

- I. The Door of the Fold
- II. The Folded Sheep
- III. The True Shepherds
Who Enter by the Door

In this tenth chapter of John's Gospel we have double revelation: first, the door revelation (1-10), and, second, the shepherd revelation (11-18). Verses 1-5 contain an *illustration* of the door revelation; verses 6-10 contain the *interpretation* of the door revelation. The illustrative part puts before us the under-shepherds and the porter (1-3a), then *the* Shepherd and the sheep (3b-5). There are interesting figures of speech in the passage. There are the fold, the door, the porter, the thief, the sheep, the shepherd, the hireling, the wolf. Christ is the door. Who is the porter? who is the thief? the wolf? the hireling?

Strictly speaking, this double revelation is not a parable (v. 6, KJV). The word is not *parabole*, a word which John never uses, but *paroimia*, which the KJV translates *proverb*, as in 16:25, 29. "These things have I spoken unto you in *proverbs*; but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in *proverbs*, but I shall show you plainly of the Father . . . His disciples said unto Him, 'Lo, now speakest

Thou plainly; and speakest no *proverb*." Neither does Peter ever use the word *parable*, but instead this word *proverb*. "But it is happened unto them according to the true *proverb* . . ." (2 Pet. 2:22). What is meant by this word *paroimia* is, *figure of speech*. Take note that Jesus spoke this parable (proverb) "unto them." This refers us back to verse one, "Verily, verily, (amen! amen!) I say unto *you*." The pronoun, in turn, reaches back to 9:34-41. The two pronouns, "them" (v. 6) and "you" (v. 1) refer to "the Pharisees" (9:40).

The Lord is telling the Pharisees that though they arrogantly claim to be spiritually clear-sighted and farsighted, they are really blind and unfit for the office of shepherd in Israel. The man born blind was an example of a true sheep of Christ's flock: he would not listen to the voice of strangers, but he did know the true (good) Shepherd's voice. What Jesus is doing here is denouncing the Pharisees as *false* shepherds. So this Good Shepherd Discourse arose immediately out of the miracle of the healing of the man born blind and its effects of chapter 9.

We may look at the picture this way: Jesus, after the labor of that day (9:4), leaves Jerusalem for Bethany calling attention to the flocks returning from their mountain pastures under the care

of their shepherds to the sheepfold for the night. The sheepfold was a rather large, stone-walled corral, which, for the night, enclosed the flocks of a number of shepherds. In the morning the shepherd entered the fold, being admitted by the porter, calling his own sheep by name, and leading them out. He does this by putting forth his own sheep, usually by calling the name of the herd leader, putting it forth, as it would never make any initial move of its own accord. Then the rest of the flock would follow in its train, the shepherd leading them all out (10:2, 4).

In the night scene, the flocks are folded, the door is secured by the porter who is sentinel at his post for the night. He is a watchman on the walls and at the door guarding against a possible "thief and robber" who, bypassing the entrance, might attempt pole-vaulting the wall. "But he that entereth in by the door is (Greek) a shepherd of the sheep." The scene then reveals a thief, a robber, and a shepherd (1, 2). In the morning the porter opens to the shepherd who identifies himself at the door and is admitted to take charge of his flock for the day. He then guides his own sheep to the particular pasture he has found for them. Keeping in mind that double revelation,

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Christ is the door of the sheepfold, and He is the chief (master) shepherd.

Christ is the door of the sheepfold. He did say (v. 7), "I am the door of the *sheep*." But we must exercise care in answering the question whether the central idea of the figure is that of the door by which the sheep, or by which the shepherds enter the fold! The latter is the specific idea, missed by most commentators. For the contrast is not between sheep which enter the fold, and sheep which do not, but between a person who enters by the door, and a person who climbs up some other way. The idea in general is the sheepfold door by which both sheep (at night) and shepherds (in the morning) enter.

The "porter" is, literally, *door-keeper* (masculine gender). The hierarchical high priest's courtyard may have a *portress* (feminine gender), John 18:16, 17, but the doorkeeper of the sheepfold is a male, not a female. Jesus does not interpret this figure. But the door is not Michael the archangel, nor some lesser angel, not Abraham, nor Moses, so revered by the Pharisees, nor, very definitely, the virgin Mary, and absolutely not *Peter*, so revered in Roman Catholic tradition as porter at the gates of heaven. Jesus, at verse 9, says with an absolute, divine assertiveness, "I am the door." Sheep are not at all very assertive. A shepherd dog is very assertive. The humble do not exercise a bold assertiveness; the proud do that. But that is a unique, an exclusive assertiveness. No one else does, nor may assert this. "I am, exclusively, the door." As we said, the door in the first place is specifically for the *shepherds*. Neither shepherds nor sheep can get into the fold any other way.

The sheepfold and pasture (v. 9) are spheres in the visible kingdom of grace. Some of these spheres are the covenant home, the covenant school, and the Christian church. The minister of the Word moves in and out of these spheres preaching the Gospel. As shepherd he in this way finds (provides) pasture. "I am the door; by me if any one (who is a shepherd — masculine) enter in he shall be safe and sound, and shall go in and out and find pasture." The sheep do not do this. The shepherd always attends to finding pasture for the sheep (Acts 1:21; Num. 27:15-17). Moses had prayed that the Lord would set a man over the congregation of Israel who, after his (Moses') death, would go before them, to lead them out and bring them in as a shepherd does with his sheep. Joshua was qualified by the Holy Spirit to be this undershepherd, and was ordained to the task and given a charge to enter faithfully upon it and get on with it. So, at Joshua's word, the flock of Israel went out and came in, he and all the children of Israel with him (27:21).

The sheep cannot get into the sheepfold any other way than by a shepherd who leads them in through the door. The walls of the visible church may be undermined or overleaped, but getting into the fold of the spiritual church is only by the door. "By (through) Me," through the mediation of Christ, men enter the sphere of the covenant (and not merely come under the administration of the covenant). "By Me if anyone (who is a shepherd) enter in, he shall be saved, that is, 'be safe and sound' (Thayer's Greek lexicon). Otherwise, he himself shall be a castaway (1 Cor. 4:27).

No one can enter among the occupants of the fold as a shepherd, no one can lawfully claim to *be* one of these

shepherds of the sheepfold, except one who enters through Christ as the door. No one can take up the calling of a faithful undershepherd of Christ's spiritual flock but one who enters by the door. This one alone has the qualifications Christ alone gives. This one alone has received the call required by the Chief Shepherd. Only such a shepherd is in his calling safe and sound (Cf. Matt. 22:13).

The folded sheep are distinguished from persons "not Christ's sheep" (10:26). They are Christ's own (10:14). These include not only Jewish but Gentile elect (10:6).

The nation of Israel was like the organism of a seed. There was an Israel (the seed) within Israel (the shell). There were descendants of Abraham who were children after the flesh; the rest were children after (according to) the Spirit. The latter were "Israelites indeed," "Jews inwardly." They had not only the circumcision of Abraham, but the faith of Abraham. "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself" (Psm. 4:3). "The sheep" in that day of our Lord were "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," now redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, "as of a lamb without spot and without blemish" (1 Pet. 1:18, 19). They were then "a little flock," a Jewish flock, which Jesus referred to as "this *flock*" (10:16, Gk), which with the Gentiles would form "one fold" under the "one shepherd."

True shepherds always enter the fold to tend their sheep by the door (v. 2). False shepherds, apostate ministers, do not enter by the door. They intrude themselves into the ministry by having climbed up some other way. The honor of shepherds they took to themselves, not being called a God (Heb. 5:4). These were the Pharisees, the "you"

and "them" of verses 1, 6. They were thieves and robbers. Thieves steal by stealth; robbers steal by extreme force, even by the violence of murder (v. 10). Judas was a thief (12:6); Saul of Tarsus was a robber/murderer (Acts 9).

Who is the shepherd of the sheep? Be careful at this point, for although Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd," we must not

refer these words to Him. Looking at verse 2 more carefully we see that the original reads "*a* shepherd." Three human persons are in view: *a* thief, *a* robber (so the two are not one and the same), and *a* shepherd. Besides, *Christ* does not enter the fold through Himself as the door! Jesus is contrasting what a shepherd does and what false shepherds do. Christ as the

shepherd is not brought into the record until verse 11. "A shepherd of the sheep" refers to one of the subordinate shepherds of the sheep. They are the official shepherds of Israel, like the seventy disciples, the twelve apostles, the ministers of the early New Testament church. □

(To be continued, D.V.)

The Day of Shadows

Rev. John Heys

Idolatry and Heresy Introduced

The shadow of a lion cannot hurt you the way the lion itself can. The shadow of a tornado likewise cannot work the devastation that the tornado itself brings. These shadows may fill one with fear; but they shed no blood, and cause nothing to be blown to pieces.

Likewise the thorns and thistles, in the land into which Adam and Eve were driven after God spoke the mother promise, in no way and to no degree compare with the punishment of hell, which God has in His Word revealed to be the punishment that will fall upon the sinners for whom Christ did not die. And we had better take hold of the truth that the curse, under which the earth and its inhabitants lie today, is only a shadow of what

lies before the seed of the serpent. War may bring awesome devastation. Some diseases may produce excruciating pains. But all of this is but a shadow of what lies ahead when Christ returns upon the clouds of heaven, and those for whom He did not die are cast into the lake of fire.

There is, however, another shadow which appeared and which we should see, when Adam and Eve walked away from the tree of life, where they had covenant fellowship with God before they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They walked out, as sent by God, and were driven out by Him according to Genesis 3:23, 24. But let us not overlook or minimize the truth that we find in Genesis 3:21: God "made coats of skin, and clothed them."

Take note of the fact that God made those skins, and that it was He who clothed Adam and Eve.

He put those skins on them and did not simply present them so that they could put them on. Salvation from beginning to end is God's work. What a beautiful shadow we have here! Here is the first shadow of the cross of Christ. He is The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. God shed blood to make those skins for Adam and Eve. God realized death for the salvation of His people. Death and blood there in that garden foreshadowed Christ's death and the shedding of His blood on Calvary. And take careful but strong note of the fact that those skins were placed upon them before they were driven out of the garden. As we lie under the curse, as it rests upon this earth, we can and should rejoice in the truth that we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Those coats did not declare that our sin is covered and hidden from the eyes of God. Not only can He see

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us underneath those coats, as far as our skin and bodies are concerned; but He looks even more deeply and sees the thoughts and desires in our minds and hearts. That Adam and Eve were covered with skins means that God clothed them with the righteousness of Christ. Those coats were a shadow of Christ's righteousness that makes us beautiful in God's eyes.

Similarly, the ark in the tabernacle built in Moses' day, and in the temple built in Solomon's day, had a covering of solid gold on which the blood of a lamb was sprinkled. Under that solid gold covering was the law of God. And that mercy seat, as that solid gold covering was called, did not hide the sins which the elect committed. It did not keep God from seeing that law and our lawlessness. As the holy God that He is, He would not do a thing like that! No, the blood of the lamb, which represented Christ, covered that law in the sense that in God's mercy the righteousness of Christ is given His people; so that the law underneath does not condemn them, but declares that they have perfect love to God and to their neighbor. And Adam and Eve left that garden of Eden clothed with Christ's righteousness so that, even though they were driven from that which was a shadow of the coming new Jerusalem, they would enter into that holy city, where fellowship with God will be far more wonderful than that shadow thereof, which they enjoyed before they fell into sin. All their sacrificing outside of that beautiful garden, the cherubim with a flaming sword being between them and that garden, manifested their faith in being covered by Christ's blood.

Such was not the case with Cain and the offering which he brought, as recorded in Genesis 4:3-7. In the first place, it is not even called a sacrifice. Rather we find the Hebrew word which means a present, a gift. It is true that we read the same thing about Abel. He brought an offering, and did not come with a sacrifice. But Abel's was a thank offering for that salvation which we have through the blood and death of Christ. He was concerned about sin, and came with a lamb, because he was thankful that God does forgive through the shedding of blood. It is true that offering up fruit brings death to that fruit. But it is not shedding of blood. Cain did shed blood, the blood of his brother Abel; but he had no interest in or thought even of salvation from sin through the shedding of blood.

But before we get into this shadow of what the world does, and in the days of the antichrist will do universally, let us take note of the fact that we have here in the book of Genesis a very striking fact. After Adam and Eve were driven out of the garden, very little is stated about them. What is revealed presents us with more evidence of Eve's faith in God than of Adam's faith. Not once do we read of Adam using God's name. Eve does. When her firstborn son was born she said, "I have gotten a man from Jehovah." That is the Hebrew text. In Genesis 5:3 we read, "And Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." Now this was after Abel's death. He did not use God's name as Eve had done. At least it is not recorded. Still more, in Genesis 4:25 we read this of the birth of Seth: "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me

another seed instead of Abel." Eve again uses God's name.

Take note of the fact that she called him another seed instead of Abel. Cain was also her seed; but he was of the seed of the serpent from a spiritual point of view. She is referring to Seth as belonging to that seed of the woman mentioned in the mother promise; and she has already seen that the seed of the serpent would crush the heel of the Seed of the woman, Christ. She did not see it as clearly as we do; but she did see this sharp distinction that there is in the human race. She did see a clear shadow of the enmity between church and world, that will be horrifyingly great in the days of the antichrist.

Because of these things that we read of Eve, rather than of Adam, some claim that Adam was not of the seed of the woman, was not a believer, and that in this first family, even before children were born, there are both of these two seeds. And that is why God speaks of the seed of the woman rather than of the man. This seems to be true from what we read in the New Testament. Thus in I Corinthians 15:22: "For as in Adam all die."

However, the sacrifice of Abel, and even the offering of Cain, makes it plain that Adam had taught them the truth concerning man's fall, and their calling to bring sacrifices and offerings as works of faith in God and in His promises. Adam did not teach Cain to come with the kind of offering that he brought. We do not read of one act of Adam that gives undeniable evidence that he was an unbeliever. Besides, God covered Adam as well as Eve with a coat of skin realized by shedding of blood.

There is here in Genesis 4 a striking shadow of what we find already in the world today, and will be accentuated in the day of the antichrist. There in Cain's act

of killing of Abel we have a shadow of the amazingly widespread persecutions of the seed of the woman; but let us not overlook the fact that the very dangerous and universal spread of false doctrines already had its shadow there in Cain's offering and bold reply to God. Cain introduced into this world idolatry and heresy.

Cain was taught that there is a God. But here already we see a haughty breaking of the first commandment in God's law. Cain had a god other than the almighty, sovereign, holy God who created all things, and upon whom we depend for every breath of life. Idolatry was there; and it produced false doctrines in an attempt to defend this idolatry. Cain formed his own ideas about God. Yes, he was trying to please his god; but he did not have Jehovah in mind. He had formed his own ideas about God, even as today all the false doctrines are men's ideas about Jehovah, the I AM!

Take note also of the fact that Cain introduced the false doctrine of salvation by works. He wanted nothing to do with salvation by grace. Abel came with an offering that revealed his faith in God's work of saving His people by the shedding of blood in His grace. Abel came with an offering to thank God for the gift of salvation, of salvation as a one hundred percent gift. Cain came to seek a blessing by his works. And when God asked him whether he would not be accepted, if he did well, it became plain that his offering was an insult to God and called for punishment. Cain was going to *give* God something, instead of fleeing to God to *receive* a blessing. Cain was going to buy blessings. He came with fruit of the ground that he raised, not having before his consciousness the fact that God gave him that fruit. No, he

was going to give God something. It was not an act of thankfulness but of seeking more pleasure for his flesh. And when he killed Abel he clearly revealed that he hated God, and that if he could, he would kill God! For Abel represented God as one of those whom He had chosen in Christ, and as one of those whom He had brought forth by a spiritual rebirth.

Here we have such a clear shadow of the cross of Christ, and a fulfillment of the mother promise that the seed of the serpent would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. Yes, the seed of the serpent killed Christ and did not simply crush His heel in the literal sense. But the idea is that although the church will suffer greatly at the hand of the seed of the serpent, they will not be kept from reaching the glory that God has promised us in Christ. Christ would rise from the dead. His elect children would be sorely persecuted and walk through this life in a very painful way. But when Christ returns, that bruised heel will be healed perfectly; and they will walk in a far more wonderful way in the new Jerusalem than Adam and Eve did in the garden of Eden.

Now we must not accept and teach our children the human idea that God caused the smoke of Abel's offering to go straight

up to heaven, as it is so often pictured in Bible story books; and that Cain's was blown down next to his altar and at his feet. That picture will surely show quite a change of attitude on God's part. But it would be far more Scriptural to see it as it happened on Mt. Carmel, when God did not touch the offering of Baal and his worshipers, but did send down fire to consume Elijah's offering. We are not even sure how much skill man had in that day to ignite wood and burn sacrifices. And would Cain really burn fruit of the ground? Is that perhaps the right picture — that Abel set his offering on fire, while Cain simply placed it on an altar?

There was without a doubt some visible sign that God had respect to Abel's and not to Cain's offerings. And that word translated as respect means to look at. God would not look at Cain's. Somehow He made it clear that He looked with satisfaction at Abel's and not at Cain's. And Cain was aware of the respect God had for Abel's and not for his own offering. Next time, the Lord willing, we will have to look more closely at this; but here too we have a shadow of things to come. God is speaking here to us as well as to Cain and to Abel. □

Take the time to read and study the Standard Bearer. It is an excellent source of devotional reading material for your daily use.

Walking in the Light

Prof. Herman Hanko

Homosexuality (4)

One passage in Scripture more than any other speaks of the terrible sin of homosexuality. To this passage we wish to call attention. It is found in Romans 1:18-32. Because of its importance we quote the entire passage here. I fear that if I do not quote it here, the reader will not take the time to look it up in his Bible and read it carefully.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth

of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedience to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

This remarkable passage of Scripture has been often misinterpreted, and has, in fact, been interpreted in such a way that it speaks of God's gracious restraint of sin. How one can find such a teaching in the passage is hard to imagine, but no less a theologian than Dr. A. Kuyper explained it in that way.

Clearly, the passage is teaching the church at Rome concerning the great moral depravity into which the Roman Empire had fallen in the days in which the apostle lived. He is speaking of the great sins which were committed outside the sphere of the gospel among the heathen who had never had any contact with the gospel nor heard its message. He is doing this in order that he may demonstrate the great wonder of the gospel which is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (vs. 16). That gospel is the great power that it is, even to save from such degradation as characterized ancient Rome, because "therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (vs. 17).

The theme of this section beginning in vs. 18 is expressed in the very first statement: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." That is the dominating thought which controls the whole passage.

These ungodly and unrighteous men hold the truth in unrighteousness. They have a knowledge of that truth because it is clearly showed to them in all the things that are made. The heathen know that God is God

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and that He alone must be served. But they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. And that suppression of the truth manifests itself in all their idolatry, for "they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (vs. 23). They "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (vs. 25).

Because of this terrible sin, God gave them over to the sins of homosexuality so that they dishonour their own bodies between themselves (vs. 24) and even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. But the men did the same. They left the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, and men with men worked that which is unseemly (vss. 26, 27).

The sin of homosexuality is here described as being a particular judgment of God upon these wicked. That is a perspective that is not often mentioned. God *gave them over* to this sin; God brought them into this sin; and He did so because of their idolatry. He hated their idolatry and punished them for it by giving them over to homosexuality. That ought to give any defender of any form of homosexuality pause. Scripture here depicts it not only as a repulsive and vile abomination, but specifically speaks of it as a punishment of God.

After all, God punishes sin with sin. He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children even unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. Sin leads to sin. One sin leads to many sins. "Lesser" sins lead to "greater" sins. But all because God punishes the sinner with worse sins and more terrible sins.

Idolatry is punished with homosexuality. Homosexuality is a manifestation of the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness (vs. 18). It is impossible to justify homosexuality when we receive Scripture's description of it as punishment for sin.

This does not mean, however, that men and women were dragged into homosexuality by God against their will. Of course not. God never works that way. God gave them up *through the lusts of their own hearts*. They were wicked and depraved. They lusted in their hearts. They indulged in every form of vice and fornication. And through the instrumentality of their own evil hearts and the lusts residing there, God gave them up to this great sin. They are responsible. They changed the natural use into that which is against nature. They burned in their lust one toward another. They did not want to retain God in all their thoughts. And in their burning lust, they sought sexual gratification, men with men and women with women.

It is striking that this is all against nature (vss. 26, 27). That makes the sin so terrible. The reference is, of course, to the creation ordinance. God originally created man and woman. He created them for each other. He married them and instituted the great and blessed covenant relation of marriage. He made man for woman within that relationship so that they could be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. But sinful man degrades that great creation ordinance. He commits fornication and adultery not only, but he even goes against nature. It is not enough that man has sexual relations with women other than his wife. It is not enough that women vent their sexual lusts by intercourse with men who are not their

husbands. It is not enough that divorce and remarriage flourish in direct contradiction to the law of God. All this, though terrible, is still in harmony with nature — a man and a woman. But lust consumes in ever increasing measure so that "against nature" men with men work that which is unseemly, and women change the natural use into that which is against nature.

That is Scripture's description of the sin. It is the bottom of immorality, the dregs of lust, the ultimate depravity in sexual relations, a groveling in the deepest filth of sin, a squirming in the sewage of total debauchery.

* * * * *

We must now return to the question with which we began these articles: Is AIDS God's judgment against the sin of homosexuality?

Those who argue that it is not argue from different viewpoints. The outright liberal will not concede that homosexuality is a sin at all; and because it is not sin it is not punished. The more religious person will perhaps argue that homosexuals are not punished for their sins because God is a God of infinite love who loves all men and has compassion on them. Punishment is anger, and that is foreign to God's nature. Others argue that AIDS cannot be a punishment for sin because innocent people also contact AIDS either through innocent contact with a carrier or through polluted blood. How can innocent people contact this dreaded disease if it is punishment?

We must be sure that in all this we take the Biblical teachings concerning God's judgment to heart. There can then be no question about it at all that all sickness and disease, all suffering and death, all trouble and woe are God's just punishment against

sin which came into the world through the fall of Adam and Eve and came upon all men because of their accountability which they share with Adam. No one who has any acquaintance with Scripture will deny this.

Nor can anyone deny that the judgments which come upon this world in the form of "natural" disasters are God's judgments upon a wicked world which speak of Christ's return in judgment when the world and all in it shall be destroyed. Even Zion is redeemed through judgment.

It is equally true that specific sins have specific consequences which are the hand of God's judgment. Drunkenness results in diseases of the liver and destruction of the brain. Fornication results in venereal diseases of increasingly virulent form which destroy the body and mind of the sinner. Why then is it so difficult to believe that AIDS is a particular judgment upon a particular sin? That it arose in the homosexual community and that it is still found primarily there surely indicates the truth of this.

But that leaves the question: How is it that the "innocent" also suffer these diseases? The answer is not hard to find. This is a question which does not relate to homosexuality only; it is a question which one must face when one sees the horrors visited upon children through sexual abuse by parents; when one witnesses the ravaged lives of children brought up in the homes of drunks; when one sees the effects of syphilis on newly-born children. Let those who raise the question of "innocent" victims explain all these things.

But in a broader context, the simple fact is that God's judgments come upon all. Tornados do not bypass the homes of the righteous. Floods do not swirl a distance away from the homes of the elect. Famine does not leave

the wicked starving while the people of God are provided with plenty to eat. Sickness and disease are not the inheritance only of those who have rejected Christ; you will find also God's people in the hospital.

Some general comments must be made about this.

For one thing, God always judges organically. That is, nations, peoples, races, tribes, families, etc. are judged together. All Israel suffered defeat at Ai when Achan hid treasures he had stolen from Jericho. The whole nation went into captivity when Judah forsook God, even though among them could be found Daniel and his three friends. There is a federal responsibility by which God even visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.

For another thing, we must never confuse blessings and curses with mere things. This is the Achilles' heel of common grace. Common grace finds God's favor and love in rain and sunshine. But even the most ardent proponent of this doctrine flinches at the thought that famine and drought are curses in themselves. The whole philosophy leads to impossible conclusions.

The fact is that, while God's people must surely share in the judgments which come upon the ungodly, nevertheless, all things work together for their good, for they are called according to God's purpose. Disease, suffering, pain, illness, drought, famine, pestilence, tornados — all the judgments of God serve the purpose of the salvation of His people. Sometimes these judgments are God's chastening hand beneath which we are called to humble ourselves. In love to His people, God chastens in order to correct. And in wonderful grace God uses all these evils for the good of His saints — even as He

uses prosperity and riches for the ultimate destruction of the wicked.

Hence, there is hope and promise. Homosexuality is not the one unforgivable sin. It is a sin present in the evil nature of all of us. It is there, whether we will acknowledge it or not. And the child of God, knowing something of the vast potential for evil resident in his own sinful flesh, acknowledges that he too is a homosexual by nature. The sin is not beyond the capacity of his own sinful flesh. The evil is not foreign to his depravity. It is there in all its stark horror.

But there is forgiveness for our evil natures in the blood of the Son of God shed on the cross. And there is forgiveness there in that cross for the sin of homosexuality as well. All sins for all God's people are forgiven by that great gift of God's free and sovereign grace in the death of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

When the child of God humbles himself and flees for refuge to the cross, fully aware of his own utter sinfulness, he finds not only forgiveness and pardon, pure and complete, but he finds also grace and power to overcome all the sins of his nature. Trusting in that cross, he has the mighty, conquering strength of Christ within him to overcome every lust of the flesh, every tendency of his evil nature, and every evil within — not his power, his strength, but the power of the blood of atonement.

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16). □

Decency and Order

Rev. Ronald Cammenga

Ministerial Resignation

"Inasmuch, as a minister of the Word, once lawfully called as described above, is bound to the service of the church for life, he is not allowed to enter upon a secular vocation except for such weighty reasons as shall receive the approval of the classis."

-Church Order, Article 12.

This article speaks of the possibility of a minister of the gospel leaving the office of the ministry. It is to be distinguished from articles dealing with similar matters. Article 10 deals with a minister leaving one congregation for another. Article 11 deals with dismissal from service in a particular congregation. Article 12, now, deals with a minister who leaves the service of the church in order to pursue some earthly vocation. The subject is ministerial resignation. Article 13 will deal with yet another situation — emeritation, honorable retirement from service in the ministry.

The fundamental principle that underlies Article 12 is that a minister once lawfully called is

bound to the service of the church for life. There is a close connection here to Article 11, the preceding article. The underlying principle of Article 11, the principle on which the duty of the congregation for the support of its minister rests, is that the work of the ministry is full-time. In the present article the further principle is set forth that, besides being a full-time labor, the work of the ministry is a life-long calling.

Article 12 states that once lawfully called a minister is bound for life "to the service of the church." To the service of the church means to the service of the church *as a whole*. By his installation in a particular congregation, a minister is bound to the service of that congregation for as long as he remains the minister of that congregation. But besides this special bond to a particular congregation, he is also bound to the service of the whole church *for life*.

THE MINISTRY, A LIFE CALLING

The call to the ministry of the gospel is a call for life. The priests and Levites of the Old Testament were bound to the service of the temple all their life. Many examples can be cited from Scripture of men who functioned in their offices for life: David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, the Apostles, Paul, Timothy, Titus, and others.

Not only by example but by express teaching the Scriptures indicate that the call to the ministry is for life. This certainly is the clear implication of Jesus' call to Peter in John 21:15-19 to feed Jesus' sheep. In I Corinthians 9:16, 17 the apostle says that necessity is laid upon him to preach the gospel, and woe to him if there ever comes a time when he does not preach the gospel. The apostle's injunctions to Timothy in II Timothy 4:1-5 certainly presuppose that Timothy's calling to the ministry is for life. Romans 11:29 teaches that "... the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

That the call to the ministry is a life-long calling has always been the position of the Reformed churches. The following synodical declarations bear that out.

Since ministers are bound to their ministry for life, they are not allowed to give themselves to a secular vocation or to forsake their ministry unless they have no congregation to serve. (Synod of Dordrecht, 1578).

A minister of the Word having been lawfully called is bound to the Church of Christ for life, so that he, as long as the congregation which he serves exists, may not leave his office nor enter upon any other life-calling without the judgment of the particular synod. (Synod of Middelburg, 1581).

Rev. Cammenga is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Loveland, Colorado.

Since a minister of the Word once lawfully called . . . is bound to the service of the church for life, he is not allowed to enter a secular occupation except for great and weighty reasons of which the classis shall take note and judge. (Synod of 's Gravenhage, 1586).

The Synod of Leiden, 1592, reprimanded a minister who had joined the army on the grounds that the call to the ministry is for life. The Synod of Groningen, 1644, declared that a minister who had resigned the ministry for political office was unworthy of the office of the ministry of the gospel. Rev. G.M. Ophoff writes:

The conclusion is warranted that the conviction of our fathers was: A minister actually called of God is called for life and binds himself to the service (of the church) for the rest of his days. Such a one may and will not abandon his office in the interest of some secular work. He doing so, is one who, though lawfully called by the church, was not actually called by God. He is therefore unworthy of the office. (Standard Bearer, Vol. 9, p. 488.)

The Christian Reformed Church has made a radical revision of Article 12. It has revised the article in such a way as to remove the teaching of the article that a minister "is bound to the service of the church for life." Article 14b of the *Church Order* (revised) of the Christian Reformed Church reads:

A minister of the Word, once lawfully called, may not forsake his office. He may, however, be released from office to enter upon a non-ministerial vocation for such weighty reasons as shall receive the approval of the classis with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies.

The report of the synodical study committee of the Christian Reformed Church that proposed the revision of Article 12 reads in part:

We know of no biblical warrant for requiring that the ministry of the Word be 'for life,' whereas the offices of elder and deacon are not. A second reason is that there are numerous Christian occupations that can be well served by a person with theological training and ministerial experience, but that are not ecclesiastical in nature and are not directly related to the purpose and primary task of the ministry of the Word. Let us be clear about this matter! Just because a (former) minister of the Word is able to do a job does not automatically make that job either ecclesiastical or directly related to the purpose and primary task of the ministerial office.

As a matter of fact, in frequent instances we think it would be appropriate and even helpful if a minister of the Word could honorably and without prejudice set aside his ordination for a specific time (such as two years minimum, five years maximum) while he engage(s) in an occupation that (does) not satisfy the requirements of Articles 11-13 as proposed. Essentially such action is no different than in the case of elders and deacons who conclude a term of service on the consistory, only to be re-elected and installed at a later date. When the other assignment is completed, the (former) minister could then follow the appropriate steps for returning to a ministerial vocation. (Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 479-480).

This is a radical departure from the historic Reformed position that the call to the ministry is a call for life! So serious is this departure that, in my estimation, it represents the abandoning of an important Biblical truth concerning the office of the ministry of the gospel. Damage has been done to the office! The office has been slighted!

THE PROHIBITION OF ARTICLE 12

The article prohibits a minister of the Word from entering a secular vocation. By "secular vocation" is not meant a worldly or carnal occupation. What is meant is any non-religious work,

work not belonging to the official ministry of the gospel.

Two significant items of translation are worth noting. First, the English "secular vocation" is a rather free translation of the Dutch "een andere staat des levens," that is, "another state of life." Second, although both the Dutch and the English state that the minister "may not" or "is not allowed" or "is not permitted" to enter a secular vocation, the original Latin states that it "is not possible" for one who has been lawfully called to the ministry to leave the ministry for a secular vocation. A lawfully called minister CANNOT enter a secular vocation, because he is called to the ministry for life. That is stronger than "may not" or "is not permitted." It is really an impossibility.

What is a secular vocation? W. Heyns, in his *Handbook For Elders And Deacons*, states the following:

In general it can be said that a Minister has entered upon a secular vocation, incompatible with the Ministry: a) when he busies himself with secular activities to such an extent that he can do no justice to his ministerial duties, thus making his holy and glorious office a matter of secondary consideration. The Ministry of the Word, our Fathers said, claims the whole man and all of his time and strength. b) when the activities to which he devotes himself in that manner are of such a nature that they 'are not in the interest of the Churches in general, or not of a spiritual character, and not related to the calling to preach the gospel.' (Holland Synod of Leeuwarden, 1920, Art. 105.) (Handbook, p. 101).

THE EXCEPTION OF ARTICLE 12

Article 12 provides for an exception: ". . . except for such weighty reasons as shall receive the approval of the classis."

Such weighty reasons would NOT include: the desire to escape the rigors of the work of the ministry; the desire to escape problems, whether in the consistory or congregation; the desire for a higher income than the ministry affords; the desire to escape suspension and deposition from office.

There are especially two weighty reasons for resignation of office.

The first weighty reason for resigning the ministry for a secular vocation would be the failure to receive a call after dismissal according to Article 11. If after a definite period of time after dismissal a man does not receive a call, he really has no choice but to resign from the ministry according to Article 12.

The second weighty reason for resigning the ministry is the conviction on the part of the minister that, although he has been called to office by the church, he has not been called by God. Rev. Ophoff writes:

The minister actually called by God is bound to the service of the church for life. The sole reason why he should be allowed to abandon the service (of the ministry) is his declaration to the effect that the con-

viction has crept over his soul that he, though lawfully called by the church, was not actually called of God. (Standard Bearer, Vol. 9, p. 489).

Again he writes:

Thus the only reason a minister could be allowed to abandon his office, is his conviction that he was not actually called by God to this ministry. A conviction of this kind will be present in the soul nearly always in conjunction with other emotions and perceptions from which it may be said to spring. The minister perceives that he is totally unfit for the service. He may lack the boldness to preach the Word so that he finds himself facing his flock from Sabbath to Sabbath in great agony of mind. Though he possesses sufficient knowledge and natural ability, he may deem himself incapable of edifying his flock. His love for the service may have grown cold. His heart may not be in his work. So the conviction creeps over his soul that he is not in the place where he (should be) and should leave the ministry. In the event the conviction cannot be shaken, so that by it the minister is completely undone, such weighty reasons as can receive the approval of the Classis are present. A minister so harassed will eventually conclude, and rightfully so, that he was not called of God. He should be allowed to enter upon a secular vocation. (Standard Bearer, Vol. 9, p. 489).

Even this exception, however, must be approved by the classis: "... except for such weighty reasons as shall receive the approval of classis."

Resignation from office tendered by a minister to his consistory, must receive not only the approval of the consistory, but also of the classis. Originally this article included the words "... and the synodical delegates." It would have been well if this had been retained. Any future revision of the *Church Order* should re-insert this reference to the approval of the synodical delegates *ad examina*.

Anyone who persists in resigning from office in spite of the disapproval of his consistory and classis, or who refuses to gain this approval before resigning, is worthy of suspension and deposition from office. The grounds of such suspension and deposition would be "faithless desertion of office," *Church Order*, Articles 79 and 80. This would preclude the possibility of resignation according to Article 12.

It should be added that a consistory whose minister has been granted resignation from office according to Article 12 should notify the various churches of the denomination of this fact. □

Contribution

Prof. Herman Hanko

Retirement of an Organist

It was a long time ago, in my college days as a matter of fact. Those responsible for finding some leaders for Singspirations were bemoaning the difficulty of

getting someone to lead the singing. With the brashness of youth and the ignorance that comes from only a passing acquaintance with the intricacies of music, I

casually remarked that a song leader's task could not be all that difficult, that, in fact, anyone should be able to do it. Before I realized what had happened, I

was responsible for leading the next Singspiration. That which salvaged the Singspiration from disaster was the steady and calm hands of Sybil Engelsma on the organ in the old Hope Church building. That was my first acquaintance with her organ playing, and I fervently expressed to her my thanks after the trying evening was over.

Since then I have heard her playing often and with great appreciation. The 6½ years I was pastor in Hope and the 20 years I have been a member were years in which Sybil's presence at the organ was something to look forward to.

Organists, without a great deal of appreciation and without much recognition, have become an important part of our worship services. Before the service begins, the responsibility for putting the congregation in the proper frame of mind and heart to worship the Lord falls upon them. In congregational singing the success or failure of singing as worship falls in large measure upon their skilled hands. It is ironic, I think, that the most successful organists are those who are scarcely noticed. When one is not conscious of the organ, but has been guided by the swelling sounds of this mighty instrument into singing from the heart, one sings to the accompaniment of a good organist. Sybil was such an organist.

Her choice of music before the service was not the mighty chorales of Bach, nor the intricate music of profoundly gifted musicians; it was the simple and familiar music which the saints knew and loved which, without notice, entered the heart and prepared one for the worship of God. In accompanying our singing, she never called attention to herself or to her skill on the instrument; but was deeply aware of the calling simply to guide

God's people as they lifted their voices in the glorious riches of the singing of the Psalms. This was her gift, and for this we express our appreciation for over fifty years of faithful service. She's retiring, now, from her work as organist. Worship in Hope Church will never be quite the same. The familiar figure of Sybil at the organ is part of our heritage. We are thankful to her and to her completely unassuming way of helping us in our worship of God. May she have the assurance in her heart that the Lord looked with favor on the singing in Hope Church because of her faithful labors. □



Sybil Engelsma

Book Review

GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE, by Herman Hanko (Reformed Free Publishing Association, 236 pp.; \$9.95, paper). Reviewed by the Editor.

This is a book to be read for pleasure and profit. This covenant theologian, professor of theology at the Protestant Reformed Theological Seminary, gives us a thorough exposition of the truth of the covenant. This is no small gift, for, as the author declares:

It is by no means an exaggeration to say that God's covenant is the key to the interpretation of the whole of God's Word. It is a truth written large on every page of Holy Writ. It is a truth in the light of which the whole of the Scriptures must be interpreted. It is the central teaching of all that God has said in His infallible Word. (p. 229)

Throughout, there is practical application to the life and experience of the member of the covenant, convinced as Hanko is that "it (the covenant) is the greatest possible comfort and hope for the child of God as he

wends his weary way in the pilgrimage of this life" (p. 229). The approach is historical; beginning with the covenant life of God Himself, the book treats the covenant in its historical revelation — the covenant with Adam; the covenant with Noah; etc. Not only should those espousing dispensationalism give this presentation of covenant theology a hearing, but also those holding to covenant theology in the Reformed and Presbyterian denominations ought to acquaint themselves with the doctrine (and life) of the covenant as this doctrine (and life) have been developed in the Protestant Reformed Churches. To refer only to one aspect of the truth of the covenant, the covenant with Noah will be seen in an entirely different light than is the case generally in Reformed and Presbyterian circles — and a glorious light at that! Hanko and the Reformed Free Publishing Association are to be thanked for this valuable contribution to Reformed literature. □

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

February 15, 1989

CALLS

Even though news about trios, calls, acceptances and/or declines is generally "old" before it gets into print, we will pass it on anyway.

Rev. Houck, one of our churches' home missionaries, has declined the call he received from the Peace P.R.C. in Lynwood, Illinois. And the South Holland congregation has formed a trio of the Revs. Kamps, Slopsema, and Terpstra.

CONGREGATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

On every Monday evening of January, except the 1st, a group of between 120 and 140 men from the West Michigan area met in the auditorium of our South-west P.R.C. in Grandville, Michigan to hear Prof. Decker speak on the office of elder.

Each "class" followed the same general format. Prof. Decker would introduce a specific aspect of the office of elder ranging from qualifications for the office to information dealing with oversight over the minister and the preaching, to family visitation. Then after the lecture the floor was opened to questions from the audience. Prof. Decker taught each class with a combination of practical insight and humor that made the time go by all too quickly. You also might be pleased to know that all four of these classes have been recorded on video cassette, and I am assuming that these will be available sometime soon to any who couldn't get there for those meetings. I think these tapes would be a welcome addition to any of our church's libraries.

On Wednesday evenings, beginning February 1, the Grandville P.R. Church Extension Committee began sponsoring a Creation Seminar. A cordial welcome was extended to all in the community to attend. The meetings were held in the Fellowship Hall of the Cook Funeral Home in Grandville.

Mr. Robert Brower presented a travelogue entitled "Canada — Sunrise to Sunset" on Saturday, January 21, at the Grandville High School Auditorium. Proceeds were for the 1989 Young People's Convention. This event was sponsored by the Young People's societies of our Hope P.R.C. in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

The Council of our Hudsonville P.R.C. in Hudsonville, Michigan received a report from its building committee that installation of air conditioning in just the auditorium of their church would require an expense of between \$62,000 and \$67,000. In light of this high cost, the council decided not to pursue the matter further. I just can't help but wonder why these decisions about air conditioning are always easier to make in January than in August.

Hudsonville's Young Adults sponsored a ski trip to Traverse City, Michigan on January 20 and 21.

At a congregational meeting held back in December, the saints in our Hull P.R.C. in Hull, Iowa passed a proposal to labor towards the building of a new church.

I couldn't help but notice that a lot of our churches in the state of Michigan had made plans to hold church sliding parties. Byron Center, Kalamazoo, Hudsonville, and the Young People's Fed. Board all set dates in January. Members were encouraged to bring along toboggans, inner-tubes, sleds, and snowmobiles. Unfortunately there wasn't much snow last month, which reminds us that man may make his plans, but without God's will he can do nothing. God is still in control.

The Church Extension Committee of our Lynden P.R.C. in Lynden, Washington asked their

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

congregation this question: "As we leave God's house, do we *know* what the Word has said to us, or, would we perhaps like to hear those same words again?"

To answer that question the committee has made available for each family a booklet that contains a list of all the sermons given by their pastor, Rev. Haak, while in Lynden.

The elders of Lynden also distributed a questionnaire to the congregation regarding the different options available concerning financing of their new church.

MISSION ACTIVITIES

The mission in Norristown, PA was granted approval to organize as a P.R. congregation at the last meeting of Classis East. They planned to waste no time, and set the date of Friday, January 27 for their organization.

Rev. C. Hanco sent me a note that was intended to inform our readers that the location of the P.R. church services in Bradenton, Florida has moved. They are now being held in the Bradenton Academy, 6210 17th Ave. West. This is just north of the Blake hospital.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

One final item I want to squeeze into this issue. Mr. Brian Dykstra, 5th grade teacher at our Hope P.R. Christian School in Walker, Michigan, writes in the January issue of the *Hope High-lights* that 23 fifth graders launched 23 helium-filled balloons recently. Attached to the balloon is a postcard with the school's address on it. If someone finds that balloon all he has to do is drop the card in the mail tell-

ing where he found it. Nine postcards were returned. This year's distance champion came back from Glandorf, Ohio, a distance of about 150 miles. The card was found in a soybean field. The farmer did not just supply the requested information, instead he enclosed the card in an envelope with a letter which described the farm and also extended an invitation to visit.

The all-time distance champion was launched last year. The balloon traveled about 300 miles and was found in a suburb of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Hamilton is on the western point of Lake Ontario. Students and teachers alike were all quite surprised that a little balloon could travel that far. □

NOTICE!!!

Heritage Christian School is seeking an additional teacher for the intermediate grades for the 1989-'90 school year. Those interested may call Mr. Gerald Kuiper at (616) 669-5427, or may write or call him at school.

Heritage Christian School
4900 40th Avenue
Hudsonville, MI 49426
(616) 669-1773

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in South Holland, Illinois, on Wednesday, March 2, 1989, at 8:30 a.m., the Lord willing. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of South Holland's Consistory.

-Rev. R. Hanco, Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!!

All students enrolled in the Protestant Reformed Seminary, who will be in need of financial assistance for the coming school year, must contact the Student Aid Committee before its next meeting, scheduled for March 27, 1989. Such contact should be made with the S.A.C. secretary, Larry Meulenberg, (616) 453-8466 at least 1 week prior to that date.

ATTENTION TEACHERS!!!

Hope Christian School of Redlands, CA is seeking to add a teacher to its staff beginning the 1989-90 school year. Teaching assignment would be either grades K and 1, or 2nd and 4th. Those interested may call Ed Karsemeyer (Principal), at school (714-793-1504) or at home (714-793-7166), or Mike Gritters (Secretary of School Board), at (714-793-4439). Applications or resumes should be sent to Hope Christian School, 1309 E. Brockton, Redlands, CA 92374.

ATTENTION TEACHERS!!!

The South Holland Protestant Reformed Christian School is seeking applications for a teaching position at the elementary grade level beginning the 1989/90 school year. Direct all inquiries to:

Lamm Lubbers, Administrator
16511 South Park Avenue
South Holland, IL 60473
(312) 339-6585

or

James Lanting, Board Secy.
16230 Louis Avenue
South Holland, IL 60473
(312) 596-5093