

**A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine**

THE STANDARD BEARER

SPECIAL ISSUE: MISSIONS

The Protestant Reformed Churches believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the church, to preach the blessed Gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, it is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said churches to carry out this calling according to the measure of our God-given ability.

from the "Preamble" to
the Constitution of the Domestic
Mission Committee

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March 15, 1989

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Inside this issue . . .

A "special issue" this is . . . on the subject of Missions.

If you look to find in it a setting forth of the "principles" of mission work, as they are maintained by the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, you'll not be disappointed. If, besides, you'd like to learn something about the practical aspects of our denominational mission endeavors, the pages which follow will provide that as well. Too, various of the writers address the matter of how individual congregations must be involved in the work of evangelism.

Now, if that were the extent of it, if that were all there is to mission work, there would probably be few of us who would find the reading of this issue to be any kind of real threat to our comfort level. But there is more. The work of "missions" is not only a corporate, but also an *individual* responsibility. What is it, after all, that is necessary in order to have "a truly mission-minded church"? Ponder this: "Mission work . . . must be constantly part of our life as Christians." And, "Each member of the church must be zealous to testify of the truth . . ."

Is "mission work" just something done in Jamaica . . . or by Rev. Houck . . . or through activities of an evangelism committee? Ah, no — it involves you . . . and me. May the Spirit use the pages of this Special Issue to motivate us, as individuals and as churches, to greater "zeal and devotion to the work of evangelism."

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 24, 1989, D.V., our parents and grandparents, JOE AND GWEN VAN KAMPEN, will celebrate their 40th anniversary.

We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the blessing of God-fearing parents and for the loving guidance they have given us.

We pray that the Lord will continue to go with them and bless them each day.

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." (Psalm 146:5)

Dan and Mary Van Kampen (Michael, Andrea), Bruce and Cherie Jabaay (Julie, Richard, Brian, Lisa), Larry and

Pat Dutmer (Jodie, Betsy, Ross), Steve and Cynthia Van Kampen, Joe Van Kampen, Mark and Cindy Ophoff (David, Kristin)

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

March 30th, 1989, is the day when we celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. ADRIAN LENTING.

We thank our covenant God for our parents who faithfully guided, loved, and instructed us in the fear of the Lord.

We as children appreciate Christian parents and pray that the Lord our God may continue to bless and keep them in His care.

THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August. Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc. Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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Managing Editor: Prof. Robert D. Decker
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EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
4949 Ivanrest
Grandville, Michigan 49418
CHURCH NEWS EDITOR
Mr. Ben Wigger
6597 - 40th Ave.
Hudsonville, Michigan 49426

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BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Mr. H. Vander Wal
c/o Protestant Reformed Church
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, MI 49516
PH: (616) 243-2953

NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
c/o Protestant Reformed Church
B. Van Herk
66 Fraser St.
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NOTICE!!!

Rev. M. Kamps will have an informative and timely message on the topic: "Scripture, Science, and Creation." The lecture will be held March 30, 1989, at 8:00 P.M. at the First Protestant Reformed Church, 2800 Michigan, NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Meditation
Rev. James Slopsema

The Gospel of the Kingdom Preached to All the World

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. Matthew 24:14

Jesus is instructing His disciples concerning the signs of His coming and the end of the world.

There shall be wars and rumors of wars. Nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There shall also be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. The church shall be hated of all nations for Christ's sake. Her members shall be delivered up to be afflicted and shall even be killed. There will be false Christs and false prophets, deceiving many.

And now there is also this sign. The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations.

This sign of the preaching of the gospel is unique from all the other signs Jesus has mentioned thus far. Notice that when Jesus mentions wars and rumors of war, He adds that the end is not yet. And when Jesus speaks of famines, pestilences and earth-

quakes in divers places, He indicates that this is only the beginning of sorrows.

But now when Jesus speaks of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, He adds that then shall the end come. This sets the preaching of the gospel apart as the chief sign of Jesus' coming, to which we must also pay very close attention in these latter days.

* * * * *

Jesus speaks of the gospel of the kingdom. The kingdom here is the great kingdom of God and of heaven. This kingdom was pictured by the Old Testament kingdom of Israel in Canaan with its temple and throne in Jerusalem. The foundation of this kingdom was laid when Jesus laid His life down at the cross as an atonement for sin.

This kingdom was established when Jesus ascended into heaven. At that time God exalted Jesus to His own right hand, crowning Him with power and great glory. In that power Jesus brought to pass the great kingdom. The kingdom is not yet complete, of course. It will be completed when Jesus comes again at the end of the ages. But the kingdom is already now an existing reality in heaven.

There is one more thing we ought to understand about the

kingdom at this point. This kingdom is a kingdom of fabulous wealth. Its riches, however, are not the riches of silver and gold or natural resources. Its riches are the glorious riches of salvation Christ has earned at the cross for all His people.

Jesus speaks about the gospel of this kingdom.

The word "gospel" simply means "good news, glad tidings." The gospel of the kingdom is therefore the good news about the kingdom. It's the good news that the kingdom has come, that in the kingdom is to be found the salvation of God in Jesus Christ, that this salvation is a free gift of God to all and everyone who believes in Jesus Christ

This is good news, indeed!

* * * * *

This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations.

The word "preach" is a very interesting and important word. It means "to herald." A herald was an official message-bearer of the king, recognizable by his special dress. He represented the king and spoke officially for the king. When the king desired to send a communication to the various realms of his dominion, he did so through his heralds. Because the king spoke through

Rev. Slopsema is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Walker, Michigan.

his heralds, the word of the herald had the force and authority of the king's word and must be heeded.

In like manner must we understand the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus is the king of the kingdom. It is Jesus' desire, as king, to make known to mankind the good news of the kingdom and its great salvation. Therefore, Jesus has appointed various men as His heralds to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom on His behalf.

The first heralds were the apostles of the New Testament church. To them Jesus revealed the fulness of the gospel of the kingdom and sent them out to proclaim it on His behalf. With great care Jesus also recorded the fulness of this gospel infallibly (inerrantly) in the New Testament Scriptures by divine inspiration.

Also today Jesus has His heralds who proclaim the gospel of the kingdom as recorded in the Scriptures. They are the ministers of the gospel duly called and commissioned by Jesus through the Christian church.

Now Jesus makes a very important prophecy about the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations.

Up until this time in history the gospel of the kingdom had come to just one nation, the Jews. God proclaimed to them, and them alone, the gospel of the coming kingdom.

But that, says Jesus, is about to change. For the gospel of the kingdom (not just what will take place but also what has already taken place) will be preached to all the world. The gospel will be proclaimed to every nation under

heaven so that the witness of the kingdom will eventually be everywhere.

Jesus can make this prediction, of course, because He is the king of the kingdom, Who will send out His heralds throughout the world. And we have seen this prophecy come true in history. The gospel of the kingdom began in the time of the apostles in Jerusalem. From there it spread to Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Through the labors especially of the apostle Paul the gospel was brought to Asia, Greece, Rome, and even Spain. Throughout the centuries the gospel has continued to spread in a westward direction so that today the gospel is being preached in the whole world as a witness to all nations.

* * * * *

Jesus proclaims that when the gospel of the kingdom is preached to all the world, then the end shall come.

The end refers, first of all, to the end of the world. History and the world as we know it will end one day. The end will come when Jesus returns from heaven to judge the living and the dead. At that time Jesus will destroy this present creation along with the ungodly. And from its ruins He will make a new heavens and new earth.

That end, says Jesus, will come, when the gospel of the kingdom is preached to all the world!

That means that the end of the world can not be all that far away anymore. For in especially the last 100 years the gospel has come to all the nations. You will search in vain today for a nation to which the gospel of the kingdom has and is not being proclaimed.

But the end of which Jesus speaks also refers to the attainment of a goal. We often speak of end in the sense of goal or

purpose. That's also the idea here. God has a goal or purpose in history. That goal is the gathering of His church.

Eternally God has chosen to Himself a church in Jesus Christ. From all eternity God has known and loved each member of this church. In love He has also ordained each member to eternal life.

Now the one goal God has in all of history is to gather this church unto Himself. What is the gathering of the church? The gathering of the church is the work of God to bring His people one by one to faith and salvation in Jesus Christ. This is the one great work of God throughout all history. All that God has created and all that He brings to pass in history is designed to serve the purpose of this great work of God.

Now when the church has been fully gathered, the end or goal of God in history will be accomplished. And then Christ will also come again from heaven to bring an end to this present creation. For this present world and its history will have served its purpose.

Now Jesus indicates here that all this will take place when the gospel is preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations. When the gospel has been preached to all the nations, then the goal of God in history (the gathering of the church) will be accomplished. And then Christ will also bring an end to everything.

We must understand that these two things are not just coincidental. It's not just a matter of coincidence that the goal of history in the gathering of the church will be reached at the same time that the gospel is preached to all the world. Rather, the one is God's means to accomplish the other.

Bear in mind that it is primarily through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom that God in Christ gathers His church. Through the preaching God brings His people one by one to faith in Jesus Christ and to the salvation of the kingdom that is theirs in Christ. And so over the years as the preaching of the gospel makes its way throughout the world, the end of God to gather His church is reached.

And then Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead and to make an end of this present world.

This also explains why the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom can serve as a sign of Jesus' coming and of the end of the world. For it is through the preaching of the gospel that Christ paves the way for His coming and the end of all things.

This implies a very important calling for the church to preach the gospel.

The prophecy Jesus makes here of the gospel being preached to all the world was made by Jesus to His disciples on the very week of His crucifixion and death. In harmony with this prophecy the risen Lord returned to these same disciples and charged them that they must go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

This great commission came to the apostles as representatives of the church of the new dispensation. The church is called to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

This calling the church accomplishes primarily through her ministers and missionaries. But this is a work that must involve

the whole church with all her members. The members of the church must support the preaching of the gospel financially, through her prayers, and certainly with a godly witness of their own.

That church (or denomination of churches) that takes this calling seriously and strives to preach the gospel wherever the Lord gives an open door will have the great privilege of being used by God to accomplish His greatest work in history, the gathering of His church.

Pray earnestly that our churches also may be faithful to this calling and be used by God to gather His church not only from among our own generations but also from those outside the household of faith. □

Editorially speaking. . .

The Protestant Reformed Churches have a denominational budget for 1989 of more than \$200,000 for domestic missions. This represents roughly one third of the total budget. Each family is paying \$110 in 1989 for domestic missions in the synodical assessment. In addition, every church takes special collections for home missions; money is budgeted synodically for foreign missions; and some congregations fund their own local evangelism work. The PRC are deeply involved in missions.

Members of these churches (and all our readers), we trust, will be interested in the examination of PRC missions to which this issue of *The Standard Bearer* is devoted, including mission-theory; the workings of the denominational committees; reflections on missions by an 80-year old veteran of the work; and much more. We think that you will enjoy, and benefit from, this "mission-issue." □ -DJE

Editorial

Prof. David Engelsma

Can a Reformed Church Do Missions?

Missions is the church's work of preaching the gospel to those outside the congregation in order to bring the elect to Christ. The word itself, deriving from the Latin, means "sending," with reference to Christ's sending of His church into all the world, to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Thus, He accomplishes His purpose of making disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19).

Men have charged against the Protestant Reformed Churches that they either do not believe missions to be the calling of the church or that they are unable to perform the labor of missions. This canard dies hard. Not long ago, the minister of a Reformed church in the south suburbs of Chicago devoted the Sunday evening sermon to an exposé of the PRC. Predictably, the conclusion that would render these churches forever odious to Reformed folk was, "They do not believe in missions."

The charge is patently false. However one may judge the practice of the PRC, it is incontrovertible that these churches both believe missions to be the duty of the church and consider themselves called by Christ to engage in missions. Nor would one have to strain himself to do the research necessary to discover this fact. For this is the public, official confession of the

PRC. The preamble of the "Constitution of the Mission Committee" declares that the PRC "believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ . . . to preach the blessed Gospel to all creatures . . . it is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said churches to carry out this calling . . ." Their "Form of Ordination of Missionaries" states that the churches believe that Christ "has ordained an office and has called men, to carry the message of salvation to all peoples . . ." It becomes plain from this constitution and this form that the PRC regard themselves as the object of the mandate of Christ in Matthew 28:18ff., the "great commission," for both the constitution and the form make this missionary-mandate the basis of the mission activity engaged in by the churches. Every missionary installed in office in the PRC is charged, explicitly, with the command of Matthew 28: "Go then, beloved brother, and teach all nations . . ."

The charge that the PRC are hostile to missions is simply a variation of the hoary charge that has always been lodged against the Reformed faith, namely, that it has no place or use for urgent, promiscuous preaching on account of its doctrine of double predestination. In the 16th century, members of the Re-

formed churches in the Netherlands who had come to believe that God loves and desires the salvation of all men without exception made the very same charge against the Reformed faith. The Reformed churches carefully refuted the charge. The Canons of Dordt open with the confession of the necessity of unrestricted preaching — the necessity of *missions*!

And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings, to whom he will and what time he pleaseth; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ . . . (1/3).

The perfect and lucid harmony between the doctrine of predestination and an aggressive exercise of missions is indicated by Missionary Paul in II Timothy 1:10: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." It is sketched at the beginning of the Reformed "Form of Ordination of Missionaries." God has elected a church out of all nations. This church must be gathered by the Son of God. He gathers it by means of the blessed gospel proclaimed by His church. Without this gospel, there is no gathering, no faith, and no salvation. Therefore: missions.

In the doctrine of predestination, the Reformed churches are not saddled with a hindrance to missions, but rather possess the basis for missions.

What becomes more and more evident today is that only a sound Reformed church is able to carry on genuine missions — missions defined by the Bible and commanded by Christ. The question that any survey of current mission theory and practice compels one to raise is not, "Can a *Reformed* church do missions?" but, "Can *un-Reformed* churches do missions?" This is true in several respects, among them the presuppositions of missions; the message of missions; the agent of missions; and the end, or goal, of missions. A word about each of these is in order.

First, it is the presupposition of the Reformed church that the truth of missions is determined by Scripture. What this work is and how it is to be done is not for the church to decide, much less some expert, but is revealed for all times in the Bible. How much of present-day mission theory and practice would be rejected out of hand, if it had to justify itself on the basis of Scripture! Then it is the mission-thinking of the Reformed church, drawn from Scripture, that God's purpose with missions is the salvation of some (the elect), not all. This enables the church to resist the temptation to adapt the message so that it wins the approval of all, or even of many. This accommodation of the gospel to modern man or to specific cultures is widely practiced by those who suppose that God desires to save all without exception, or who suppose that the purpose of missions is church-growth. It is also the church's understanding of missions, that by this work Christ delivers sinners from the spiritual misery of the guilt and power of sin, with

the fear of death that goes with sin. It is not the nature of missions that it delivers the materially deprived from their physical oppression, as is the widespread notion of liberation theology and of the social gospel in its modern dress. This makes all the difference in the world as to what message the church brings, or even whether it brings a message at all. A great deal of what passes for missions today consists of nothing else than material relief. Once and for all, in John 6, Jesus declined the invitation to be the social savior of humanity.

The message that the Reformed church brings on the mission field is the good tidings of gracious salvation from sin, and thus from death, in the cross and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. It includes the call to repent and believe. It promises eternal life to every one who believes, threatening damnation to every unbeliever. This is the message that King Jesus gives to His ambassadors; and this is the message that He uses to dethrone Satan and to enthrone Himself in the hearts of men and women. The mission-message is not advice, how to be happy and successful; is not some strategy for setting this age right politically and socially; is not the call of the oppressed of this world to arms and revolution; is not a siren-song wooing people to the mysterious experiences of "Holy Spirit baptism."

Neither is the message a demand upon the sinner to perform some work by which he must earn, or accomplish, his own salvation, whether that be the meritorious works of paganism and Roman Catholicism or the decision of the supposed free will of much of Protestant evangelicalism and fundamentalism. All those in the bondage of self-salvation are themselves proper objects of (Reformed) missions,

no matter how energetic they are in proselytizing others. "Turn from these idols of man's worth and powers to the living God!"

This is the message that Christ Himself proclaims by the agency of His church. The Reformed church shows herself faithful to Biblical missions in the matter of the agent of missions. The agent is the church, the *instituted* church. The agent is not evangelistic societies or para-ecclesiastical mission-organizations. They have neither the authority nor the power to do missions. Christ gave the mandate to the instituted church when He commissioned the apostles in Matthew 28:18ff. and in Mark 16:15ff. The church at Antioch sent out the missionaries, Barnabas and Saul (Paul), according to Acts 13:1ff. The striking feature is that the Holy Spirit, the great Agent and Power of missions on behalf of Christ, chooses to work through the church institute. He will not inaugurate and conduct New Testament missions as a "spiritual" enterprise apart from the institution of the church. He will not move the missionaries to engage in their work as "free lancers," independent from the church (except when it comes to financial support). But the Holy Spirit says to the church, with her office-bearers, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (v. 2). The church is the sole agent of missions because to the church, and to the church only, is given the office of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, particularly the preaching of the gospel, by which heaven is opened to believers and closed against unbelievers (cf. Heid. Cat., Q. 84). Knowing herself to be Christ's agent, every congregation, like Paul, ought to be able to say, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly (calling)" (Acts 26:19).

The Reformed church does missions by the preaching of the gospel. The agency is preaching. "Preach the gospel to every creature," Jesus commands in Mark 16:15. "How shall they hear (Jesus Christ) without a preacher?" the apostle asks in Romans 10:14, with reference to the saving of sinners in the great work of missions. The agency is not "praxis," i.e., deeds of help to the poor. The agency is not mere silent solidarity with the suffering of the oppressed. The agency is not fascinating tricks, and more often, the empty promise of tricks, whether healing, or exorcism, or some other pretended miracle, by self-styled power evangelists and charismatics. The agency is not engaging speeches of psychological wisdom that enable guilty sinners who feel bad about themselves to become guilty sinners who feel good about themselves. God's agency of salvation in the world, in the twentieth century as in the first, is neither signs nor wisdom, but the folly and weakness of the preaching of Christ crucified (cf. I Cor. 1:17ff.).

Preaching requires ordained preachers, men set apart by the church as "missionary ministers of the Word," as the "Form of Ordination of Missionaries" puts it. Not every Christian is a missionary. Not every Tom, Dick, and Harry (and now, every Jane, Sue, and Sally) who fancies himself (or herself) a missionary in fact proclaims the Word so that the living voice of Christ itself is heard by sinners, who then call upon the Lord for salvation. The missionary must be sent by Christ through the church. "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:15) Gifted men with a zeal for God's glory and for the gathering of Christ's church ought to consider whether God calls them specifically to missions. In her seminary, the church ought to make definite provision for training these men specifically for missions.

The end, or goal, of missions, by which the Reformed church proves herself obedient to the will of her Lord, is the (spiritual) separation of the converts from the world in a disciplined and holy life. An essential aspect of this

life is lively membership in a true church. It is an integral part of the missionary-mandate that the church teach the disciples to observe all things that Jesus has commanded, such things are pure worship; prayer; giving to the poor; fleeing fornication; honoring marriage; godly rearing of children; honest business practices; and all that belongs to the way of righteousness. Reformed missions does not count as converts, nor allow men to count themselves as converts, whose lives are not made holy, but who go on in their old ways of conformity to this world. The evidence of repentance is works worthy of repentance. Only those who continue in Christ's words are His disciples. The ultimate goal of missions is the glory of God; and God is glorified, not by multitudes of carnal, nominal church members, but by men and women who sorrow over sin and who delight in living according to His will in all good works.

Can a Reformed church do missions? Indeed!

Can any body else? □ -DJE

Letters

Letters

I would like to take advantage of the introductory offer of a full year's subscription to *The Standard Bearer* for \$6.00. I have enclosed a list of names and addresses of certain individuals I would like to send the magazine to . . . God's Word is awesome . . . As His children, we are given the duty to make this most

precious and glorious truth known. I know that adding these subscriptions is a small thing, but it is my prayer that the truth printed on these pages of *The Standard Bearer* may cause others to seek out this truth. Our prayers are with you in this work of grace.

Mrs. Randy Poortinga
Dyer, IN

Response

All our readers can help in extending the witness to the Reformed faith and life — God's own truth. Give introductory, gift subscriptions to *The SB* to relatives, friends, and acquaintances who might be interested to receive the magazine. For these gift subscriptions, the cost will be merely \$6.00. If each present subscriber adds only one new subscription, our circulation will jump to almost 4,000. If each adds nine new subscriptions, as Mrs. Poortinga did, our circulation will close in on 20,000. We could desire this for the sake of the witness to the truth. Even more, we fervently covet your prayers. □ —Ed.

The Offer of the Gospel and the Mandate for Missions

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Mark 16:15, 16

To the evangelical world of our day Calvinism seems necessarily to stand at cross purposes with the mission mandate of the church. If people are unconditionally chosen and necessarily saved, why should anyone do mission work? God will do it all. He doesn't need us. Why should we try?

When then we go a step further and deny that the gospel should be offered, that is even more disconcerting. If you can't as much as offer salvation to people, what is there left? The Protestant Reformed reputation as a church that doesn't believe in missions may be mistaken, but it certainly is widespread; and it is well that we should clarify our position on this point.

To begin with, we have to understand the ramifications of the word "offer."

At the time of the Reformation Latin was the language of theology, and the word *offero* had a simple, basic meaning. We find it in our Latin dictionary yet, "to bring before, to exhibit, to obtrude."⁴ That was what Calvin meant with it; and that was what that great international company of theologians who gathered at the Synod of Dordt understood as well. So it appeared in their Canons, as we read in Head III, IV: Art. 9, "It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ, offered therein" And when we examine the overall context of the Canons, we learn precisely what that meant, II: 5, "Moreover, the promise of the gospel . . . together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends the gospel." And again in III, IV:11, "But when God accomplishes his good pleasure in the elect . . . he . . . causes the gospel to be externally preached to them"

These men saw the gospel as a message of truth given to them by revelation from God, a very special blessing, a hidden treasure now revealed, a pearl to be valued above everything else. With this message God comes and makes Himself known to us, reveals as much of His greatness

as we can endure, and thereby draws us into communion with Him. That is its power; and out of it arises the strength of the Christian life. But with it comes a responsibility.

We as children of God are told by the Scriptures, even as we are inwardly moved by the Spirit, to take this word which has worked so wonderfully within us, and to proclaim it into all the world. Our calling is to *exhibit it, to set it before everyone to whom God brings us in life, or, in the Canons' own words, "the gospel . . . ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends"* This is God's command; and, even while using us as messengers, it remains His work. He knows to whom He will have the gospel brought; in His providence He provides the opportunity to bring it; and His word holds within itself the power to accomplish the purpose to which He sends it. It will find those whom God desires, speak to them, ascertain and prepare their hearts, and draw them into fellowship with Him; even while others by that same word are offended, hardened, and repelled. God will have His will done, often in ways far beyond what we can comprehend; and it is simply our privilege to serve as

Rev. Woudenberg is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

His agents, His ambassadors, in bringing that word.

Calvin understood this; and his little town of 15,000 people sent out missionaries by the scores. Unceasingly they went, some into inconceivable dangers, some to almost certain death, and some as far away as the distant shores of Brazil. Their calling they knew. God had given His word; they were to bring it as precisely as they could, and it would accomplish what God willed. There was nothing for them to change, nothing to adapt, and certainly nothing to add. God's word is to be brought as it is, and nothing else.

Even as they were doing that, however, another viewpoint was coming to the fore. It had its roots and its mentality in the *humanism* which filled the Universities. In many ways it seemed closely related to the Reformation and served it. Humanistic scholars, having rediscovered the ancient world, restored study in the original languages of Scripture, recovered and republished its early manuscripts, and gave good directions as to how the text of Scripture can best be interpreted and understood; but at heart there was a difference.

In their fascination with ancient civilizations, the scholars of humanism had come to the conclusion that it wasn't so much *what* the ancient writers said that mattered as *how* they said it; and they put their effort into trying to recapture the secret of their rhetorical and dialectical styles. Those ancient poets and philosophers had been effective, they concluded, because they had known how to use words. They could speak well; they could hold the attention of the people; and they could persuade them how to live. That was the important thing.

The consequence was, however, that these humanists also began to take a different view of the Christianity in which they lived. No longer did its doctrines appear to be a primary concern. In fact, these doctrines didn't actually seem to be that different from what the Greeks had concluded through their reason; or, for that matter, what any good scholar can discern almost intuitively. In turn, truth itself is not that definite, if not often variable, and even contradictory to the human mind. But the crucial thing is not doctrine but practice. Theology is best defined as "the science of living well";² and its first problem, how to express Christianity in a way that the lives of people will be affected. If people can be shown persuasively the value of good living, and convinced to alter their lives accordingly, that is what counts.

Beneath this all, of course, was one basic presupposition, that of the freedom of the human will. They were all convinced, following the route of philosophers through the ages, that this was a principle that must never be relinquished. To every person must be left final control over his own life and will; and the only thing any one else can do, even if He be God, is with good and convincing words to influence him how to live it.

The main line reformers — Luther, Calvin, Beza, etc. — recognized this for what it was, and would have nothing of it. But there were others in the Reformed churches who were attracted; and they were only too ready to bring this viewpoint in. Beginning in Germany and France it spread, through the lowlands, into England, and finally to the colonies of the new world. James Arminius, a precocious young Amsterdam preacher, was one of them; he wanted something more

attractive and practical than what he felt he had learned in Beza's Genevan Academy. Nor was he alone; many, even of those who remained theologically more sound than he, began to focus their attention on practice in life as the primary thing, and the motivating of people their chief concern.

It isn't our purpose here to trace this through historically; but we can see the effect by looking at the word "offer" once again, particularly as it is now used in modern English. A whole new connotation has arisen around it, as we find it defined in a present day dictionary: "*an undertaking to do an act or give something on condition that the party to whom the proposal is made do some specified act or make a return promise.*"³ No longer is an "offer" a simple exhibition or presentation to others; it has become a means of rhetorical force to move people to change. But always the supposition is there, they have the final control; and they have to be satisfied. Something attractive, something alluring to them, must be *offered* if they are to be drawn into modifying their ways.

And the result is not hard to see, especially as it is evidenced in modern evangelical circles. Doctrine — the teaching of the Bible — is not of great concern. It can be used if it will serve a purpose. But the question again isn't *what*, but *how*; how can the gospel — whose content can be taken for granted — be *offered* in such a way that it will be attractive? That is the question, for it is the crucial link in bringing men to salvation. God is stable, He will do His part, but people have to be satisfied if they are to work along. That's the crux of the matter, regardless even of how it may reflect upon God.

To this we object.

It's all just too presumptuous. Man isn't in control of his life, regardless of what he may think. His sin is a bondage which he cannot break; and we aren't clever enough to lure him to do it. We may catch his attention for a moment; but that doesn't give a new heart. Only one power is

able to change the soul and save it, that pointed out by Paul in Romans 1:16, 17, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth: to the Jew first, and also the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed*

from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." And the setting forth of that gospel is our only mission mandate. □

1. *Classic Latin Dictionary*. Follett Publishing Co., Chicago, 1952.
2. Graves, Frank P., *Peter Ramus and the Educational Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*. MacMillan, New York, 1912, p. 185.
3. *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. G. & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, MS, 1970.

Zeal and Devotion to the Work of Evangelism

Rev. Arie denHartog

Are we as faithful and zealous as we ought to be in the work of evangelism? It is always good to ask ourselves that question. We have sometimes been criticized for lack of interest in missions. Over the years we have become very sensitive to this criticism. Some of that criticism could easily be proven false. But at the same time even such criticism ought to cause us to examine ourselves. It is after all a very serious matter to be faithful to this great calling of the Lord. We can be thankful to the Lord that in recent years our churches have been very much engaged in the work of evangelism and we have seen that work greatly blessed of the Lord. May we by God's grace continue our involvement in this work even in the face of a serious shortage of ministers in our churches.

Rev. denHartog is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Randolph, Wisconsin.

We have also been criticized for our commitment to the truth of the absolute sovereignty of God. Some of our critics have accused us of going to unbiblical extremes in our adherence to this truth. We have been judged and maligned by many, especially because of our condemnation of the unbiblical and unreformed notion of the well-meant offer of the gospel. Our critics maintain that unless one can offer the gospel freely to all and sundry it is impossible to do evangelism, or at least our work of evangelism will be greatly hindered. The error of this position is demonstrated elsewhere in this issue of the *Standard Bearer* as well as in many other writings that have come from our churches.

Positively we give thanks to God that He has given us the heritage of the truth of His Word. We believe that the doctrine of the Reformed Faith which exalts the grace of God is the gospel in its purest form. We hold this truth and all that it implies unashamedly and without compromise. For this we have only God to thank.

We believe that the Reformed Faith gives us the greatest reason and incentive to be zealous in the work of missions. Rather than hinder the work of missions it is the only gospel that can offer hope to the totally depraved sinner who is by nature dead in trespasses and sins. It is possible to adhere wholeheartedly to the doctrine of the Reformed Faith and to be zealous for evangelism. The absolute reason for this is of course that we know and believe the Reformed Faith to be the truth of the Word of God. Those who have rashly criticized the Reformed Faith for lagging behind historically in missionary zeal have obviously forgotten the great Protestant Reformation. The Reformation was after all the greatest missionary endeavor ever undertaken by the church since the time of the apostles. It was manifestly the wonderful work of God. That work was accomplished by great leaders raised up by God who were wholly committed to the truth that later came to be known as the Reformed Faith. Furthermore, the history of the church testifies

to the fact that many of the greatest missionaries of all time were those who loved and preached the doctrines of the Reformed Faith without compromise. So zealous for the work of missions were many of these that they suffered great persecution and joined the ranks of the glorious martyrs. We must carry on that tradition by the grace of God. Though certainly this is not the main reason for doing missions, it is well for us as Reformed Churches to prove before the world and for the glory of God that wholehearted commitment to the Reformed Faith makes us zealous and active in the work of missions.

But, of course, orthodoxy alone does not insure a zeal for mission work. It must be said that there have been times when the Reformed churches have been too concerned with themselves and not sufficiently concerned for the salvation of those outside the church. Whether we have been more guilty than others is debatable. It is nevertheless an ugly thing if a church that has such a glorious heritage as we have refuses to proclaim the truth of God outside of her own membership or is too lethargic or complacent to do this. In fact, one of the great reasons God has entrusted His wonderful Word of truth to us is so that we might publish it to others. We must steadfastly guard against the great evil of lack of zeal in missions, for that would be as serious as holding to false doctrines.

Evangelism is one of the great God-given tasks of the church. The Reformed church knows that it is not the only task of the church. The church of Jesus Christ has the calling to maintain sound doctrine and defend that doctrine against all the attacks of heretics inspired by the evil one seeking to overthrow the founda-

tion of the church. The church must be the pillar and ground of the truth. Many are the exhortations in scripture to the church that she maintain sound doctrine. The Reformed church also understands her calling to preach faithfully the Word every Lord's day for the edification of her members so that those members might always be brought to maturity and unity of the faith and not be tossed to and fro by the winds of false doctrine (see Ephesians 4). The Reformed church understands the great and urgent obligation she has to nurture the youth of the covenant in her midst. She spends much time and energy on this because she believes that the Lord is pleased to gather His church in the line of continued generations. It would be foolish and unbiblical to say that any of these great tasks of the church are more important than another, or that any of these may be neglected at the expense of another.

Along with all the other tasks of the church we must promote zealously the work of missions. The church has much work to do in the world, enough to keep the faithful church very busy at all times. Throughout history, in the Lord's providence, it has been necessary for the church sometimes to concentrate her labors more on one area of her task than another. So for example during times of the greatest attacks of false doctrine and apostasy in the church much of the energy and time of the church has to be spent on defending the faith lest the devil overthrow the church. A church that does this ought not to be criticized, for surely this is necessary and pleasing to the Lord. But even during such times the church may not neglect her calling to do mission work. In fact, properly during the times of the church's fiercest conflicts

against the lie and false doctrine she is often the most zealous in mission work. We must be faithful as the Lord gives us the opportunity.

The greatest reason why we must be faithful and zealous in the work of missions is of course obedience to our Lord's great commission recorded in Matthew 28:20. Though Jesus gave this commission first of all to His eleven disciples, it is also the great commission to the church of the whole New Testament time until the day of the return of our Lord. This commission was given by the Lord to the church after He had fully accomplished her salvation on the cross and triumphed for her over death and hell in His resurrection. This Lord is now the exalted one to whom God has given all power and authority in heaven and earth. The work of evangelism is the work of the exalted Lord to gather His church which He has chosen from before the foundations of the world out of all nations and peoples of the earth. The purpose of evangelism is the unspeakably glorious one of gathering the church of Jesus Christ which will be with the Lord forever in the new heavens and earth. Christ has empowered His church according to His promise with the gift of the Holy Spirit to fulfill His great commission (Acts 1:8). Christ is pleased to perform the work of evangelism through His church and by means of the preaching of the gospel.

The sovereign Lord is in need of no particular church for the accomplishment of His great purpose. If one is unfaithful He will raise up another in its place. It is sure that none of His elect will ever be lost. As Reformed Christians we must never imagine however that salvation by sovereign grace alone excludes the need of the preaching of the

Word. It belongs to the Reformed Faith always to emphasize the great urgency of the preaching of the Word. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" Christ gathers His church through the preaching. The church must therefore be zealous and faithful to call and support and send the preacher of the gospel.

The work of evangelism includes both the gathering of those who have gone astray and the calling of the heathen into the sphere of the church. There are those who deny that the work of missions includes gathering the remnant of God's saints out of the apostatizing church. But these forget that this has always been part of the Lord's commission. With great compassion the Lord sent out His disciples first of all to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to gather and comfort those who were in great distress because of their being as sheep without a true shepherd. All through the history of the church this has been part of the great task of evangelism. We must continue to do this type of evangelism. It is genuine evangelism pleasing to the Lord and for the welfare of the Lord's own. Especially when we see today that even the historically sound Reformed and Presbyterian churches are fast becoming apostate this form of evangelism becomes increasingly urgent and necessary. But also evangelism involves preaching the gospel to the unsaved in our own land and even in all the nations of the world. The task of evangelism is a momentous and great one which no church may ever neglect.

The work of evangelism is a great and difficult work. Salvation is not accomplished by the great efforts of man or by great strategies for world evangelism devised by men. It is accomplished through the faithful

preaching of the gospel by the faithful church of Jesus Christ. The work of evangelism requires a tremendous amount of sacrifice on the part of the church and those who are called to be missionaries. We have only to remember the history of missions to be impressed by this. Remember the great hardships and persecutions of the apostle Paul and all those who followed after him. Remember how many have given their very lives to accomplish this great work. What a terrible shame if we in the age of ease and luxury would refuse to make even by comparison small sacrifices and endure small hardships. The work of evangelism requires great boldness of faith and courage. The work of evangelism requires on the part of the church a willingness to become all things to all men so that we might by all means save some. All of these things are worthy of much greater consideration.

The whole church must be involved in the great work of evangelism if we are to be a church faithful to our Lord's commission. Preachers and missionaries must themselves be examples of zeal and devotion to this work. Not all are called to be preachers and missionaries. As Reformed churches we maintain the requirement of an official and well-trained ministry for the work of evangelism. But all the members of the church must also be zealously and actively involved in the work of missions. The preaching must constantly exhort and admonish the members of the church in this regard. All the members of the church must be involved in this work through supporting the official ministry of the church with constant and earnest prayers and through sacrificial giving. Besides this, the members of the church must do all in their power to promote the work of missions in the church

and see to it that there is a proper environment of love and concern in the church for the thriving of missionary zeal. The members of the church must promote the work of missions by themselves living holy lives worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ strikingly different from the world. The members of the church must always be ready to give to every man the reason of their hope with meekness and fear. The members of the church must promote the work of missions by good works in the neighborhood and by always looking for opportunities to reveal the mercy of Christ outside of the church. The members of the church must support this work through gracious hospitality to those who visit the church. Mission work is not only engaged in at the time of special meetings for this purpose in our church. It must be constantly part of our life as Christians. Each member of the church must be zealous to testify of the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ whenever he has opportunity. All of this is necessary to have a truly mission-minded church.

As Reformed Christians we believe wholeheartedly in the truth that God saves His people by sovereign grace alone. This is our only hope in the work of missions. We must constantly pray for this grace of God. We must rely upon this grace alone. This grace must give us great boldness and zeal. This truth is the only and absolute assurance that the work of missions will be truly successful. The final and ultimate purpose of all evangelism is the glory of the name of God through the proclamation of His truth unto all the world and the salvation of His people. A greater reason for us to be zealous and faithful in this work is inconceivable for the Reformed church. □

Rev. Steven Key

Teamwork in Missions

"The Protestant Reformed Churches believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the church, to preach the blessed Gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, it is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said churches to carry out this calling according to the measure of our God-given ability."

So reads the opening paragraph of the Constitution of the Mission Committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches. And with that conviction ten men serve on this committee, this writer included. The makeup of the Mission Committee is five ministers and five elders, all of whom are elected to three-year terms by the annual Synod. Although the work of missions is the calling of every local congregation, in a denominational affiliation it is a work of mutual concern. Teamwork is necessary. And, therefore, as an expression of their unity as the body of Christ and their mutual calling, the churches labor together.

That mutual labor comes to expression in many ways.

First of all, the necessary teamwork for the work of missions is seen in the sending of ministers to preach the Word on the mission field. In obedience to God, the church which was in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, according to Acts 11:22ff. In Acts 13, the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel outside the realm of their own congregation. So we send men according to the calling God has given us. Even though as churches we currently have a shortage of pastors, we may not neglect the call Christ gave us to preach the gospel to all creatures. That involves going to those outside the realm of our Protestant Reformed churches. And, consequently, that means a sacrificial contribution to this work of missions by the number of churches who are without pastors and who otherwise might have the services of one of those who serve on the mission field.

There are also those congregations which are directly involved in the oversight of particular fields of labor. Most recently in our own churches the congregations in Redlands, California and South Holland, Illinois, as well as Wyckoff, New Jersey, and First Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, have had oversight of particular fields of mission labor. In expression of our mutual calling to preach the gospel, their councils — elders and deacons — work

very closely with the missionary and the Mission Committee.

But there are other expressions of that teamwork that are sometimes forgotten for what they are. All the churches in the Protestant Reformed denomination contribute financially to the work of missions. The budget request adopted by Synod 1988 for the work of home missions, including the work in Jamaica, was \$202,000.00. It is evident that God has given us much work as churches. For a small denomination of 26 churches, that is a substantial amount of money. But we must thank God not only that He provides for our financial needs, but also that He gives us such an opportunity to labor in the midst of His vineyard.

Teamwork is also seen in a willingness of a consistory and congregation to allow its pastor to serve on the Mission Committee. Not only does such service involve a considerable amount of time and labor, but oftentimes a certain amount of travel as well — travel which necessarily affects the congregation for even a brief period.

Sacrifices? Unquestionably — to varying degrees. But all these aspects of the work of missions are necessary and indeed must be viewed a privilege for all who contribute and who are involved. After all, the words of David in I Chronicles 29:14 should be our own confession: "Who am I, and what is my people, that we

Rev. Key is pastor of Southeast Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."

The work of the Mission Committee is "to regulate and supervise all mission activity of the churches in common as prescribed by Synod" (Constitution). Although this involves several duties, the bulk of our labors as Mission Committee is focused in two areas: 1) advising a calling church with regard to all matters concerning their particular field of denominational mission labor; and 2) to find possible fields.

Up until the past few months, the work of the Mission Committee has been concentrated primarily in specific fields of labor — Jamaica; Norristown, Pennsylvania (a suburb of Philadelphia); and northwest Chicago. That concentration of labor has rapidly changed. God has shown us positive fruit upon the preaching of the Word in these fields. The joyous result has been the establishment of an organized congregation in Norristown and the anticipated organization of a Protestant Reformed congregation in the northwest Chicago area.

But, we still are faced with the call to preach the gospel to all creatures. For that reason, the Mission Committee has concentrated much more heavily on investigation and development of fields where we might have the possibility of preaching the Word. Here also the Lord has given us much. The Mission Committee has a large number of contacts throughout the United States. These have been established in a number of ways, again indicating the unified effort in our denomination.

Many contacts have come through our various writings. Some have come through the efforts and labors of several Protestant Reformed congregations in

Evangelism Committees and Societies. There have been contacts established through radio broadcasts, both by the Reformed Witness Hour and the sermon broadcasts of some of our congregations. Furthermore, the world-wide broadcasting of Family Radio, based in Oakland, CA, has given air time to the sermons of several of our ministers, which has also brought response. All of these things show that the Lord is giving us many opportunities.

Two areas currently demanding more extensive exploratory work are Bradenton, Florida and Alameda, California. At the request of the Kalamazoo consistory, the Mission Committee sent Rev. Steven Houck to Bradenton to investigate the work that is taking place there under the auspices of the Kalamazoo consistory. Further work is being done currently toward the possible development of a field of labor there, particularly with some permanent residents in the Bradenton-Venice areas.

Since this past October, our churches have had opportunity to work with 30-35 families and a number of individuals in the Bay Area of California. For several months now, at the request of this group, the Mission Committee has sent ministers to preach the Word. These brothers and sisters, many of whom are rather new converts to the faith, have eagerly received the preaching of the Word as did the Bereans "with all readiness of mind," searching the Scriptures daily, whether that which they hear is true. Although we know not what future work we may have there, certainly the Lord has provided us an exciting opportunity to proclaim the gospel.

Furthermore, the Mission Committee, with Missionary-Pastor Houck, is working with the council of the Loveland, Colorado,

Protestant Reformed Church as their church extension committee does preliminary work in the Denver area, and with the Lynden, Washington, Protestant Reformed Church as they also labor in the area of evangelism.

In summary, the Lord has blessed us richly, committing to us the riches of the gospel. He has committed to us the calling to preach the Word in season and out of season, from the pulpit and from house to house. As churches we have been used by God to sow some good seeds. The testimony of many people is that they have been fed by pure preaching such as they never have heard before. Such proclamation of God's Word never returns void. And so we labor, seeing that the fields are white for harvest. May God grant the increase, to the testimony of His sovereign grace and the glory of His own name. □

The Tree

Gnarled, twisted, writhing snake,
Snow-shod 'neath a winter sky,
Putting on the feathery flake,
Only then to lay it bye.

Standing bleak and bare, alone —
Leaves have drifted to the ground;
Cheerful, chirping birds have
flown;
The howling wind's the only
sound.

Stalwart, staunch, and strong it
stands
'Neath the vaulted roof of sky.
Fearless of cruel winter's hands;
It will live again, although it die.
May we too stand straight and
sure,
Even 'neath death's troubled sky,
Knowing that by faith secure
We shall live, although we die.

James Jonker
(from *Beacon Lights*, by permission)

Missions and the Calling Church

Rev. Kenneth Koole

As the church of Christ we are at war.

No, I am not speaking of disagreements that arise between consistories and committees over mission policy.

The church of Christ is called to war against the strongholds of Satan, "Casting down . . . every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (II Cor. 10:5). One aspect of that warfare is missions.

In this warfare there is the defensive side of doctrine and a holy walk. Missions is the offensive side. By it the church invades the territory Satan calls his own, namely, hearts under his control, and seeks through prayer and preaching to lay claim to those hearts and lives in the name of the crown-rights of Christ Jesus. And wherever elect hearts are found, Christ, through missions, gains the victory, and the kingdom of Christ is established at a new outpost. No wonder Satan hates missions and a people zealous for it. Let us then persist in the campaign, not simply to vex Satan, but to lay claim to the hearts of those whom Christ is pleased to save, convert, and restore.

For our churches to carry out their part in this warfare under the rule of Christ, we must draw up strategy — the proper strategy for the best use of our admittedly limited resources, strategy based on Scripture. When Synods, Mission Committees, and consistories meet and make decisions concerning mission work, this is what they are doing, making decisions on how best to deploy our resources in the present campaign. These meetings are councils of war. Sound strategy must be devised. We must be as effective and efficient (which is not the same as "economical") as we can be.

Now, I do not care to run the figure being used to death, but permit me to make two further points.

First, we, in the carrying out of our mission calling, must remember who the enemy is (not Synod, or the M.C., or the consistory, but the Devil), and that we are fighting a common enemy, lest we become our own worst enemy.

Second, in Councils of War there is always frank discussion (and often disagreement) over strategy and tactics. It is best that these different perspectives be frankly stated for the appraisal of all before decisions are made. This is healthy, necessary, and beneficial. Also in missions.

But we stress it is a discussion between allies, allies who have

the same objective, the overthrow of the tyranny of the common enemy, and a common commitment of love to the cause of our great Captain, Christ Jesus. In this atmosphere the discussions are to be carried out. Then a brotherly spirit will always prevail.

Anyone who has been reading the ACTS of the PRC the last fifteen years or so, will know that the issue of jurisdiction in missions has been a matter of no little difference of opinion in our circles. This is not peculiar to us. Disagreement over this issue has perplexed (I am inclined to say "bedeviled") Presbyterian and Reformed churches for centuries. (Cf. J.L. Shaver, *THE POLITY OF THE CHURCH*, vol. 2, pp. 197-8.) What's the answer?

First, in this work of missions the local congregation is to be involved through its consistory. This ought to be beyond dispute. How, apart from the call by a local congregation, is a man going to become a missionary? His office is always in a congregation, at least in Reformed church polity. He is a minister with a special task, namely, carrying out the great commission, "Go ye out into all the world . . ." But that is not simply *his* task; that is the task of the church of Christ. The missionary is but the means by which the members of the church institute fulfill their calling.

Rev. Koole is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California.

Acts 13:1-4 is powerful in this regard. The Holy Spirit instructed the church at Antioch to separate Paul and Barnabas unto missions, laying hands upon them. And Paul, mind you, was an apostle. It's significant that Paul reported back to the church at Antioch as well, at the end of his journey's, presenting his reports for their consideration.

There can be no question that the local congregation is to be involved in her Lord's mission work. The question is to what extent her authority goes.

Second, in any denomination of churches there is a recognized need for a mission board. This is not an inherent, divinely appointed right however. The local congregation can do mission work without involving any sister-congregations or even Synod. No mission committee may embark on its own work and contact its own missionary.

But the use of a mission committee is a matter of practical need and wisdom. There is the matter of finances. There is the matter of co-ordinating responses to contacts received, etc.

To have a mission committee then is wise, and even a matter of charity. Otherwise, only the large congregations, which have sufficient wealth to afford the cost of a missionary, would be involved. The small congregations, by and large, would be excluded. Synodical involvement through its mission committees permits, at least to a degree, all the sister churches to fulfill part of their Christ-given mandate. What congregation would want to exclude smaller sister congregations from involvement in this great work? To a degree a synodically-governed mission committee assists in this common involvement.

This wonderful principle does not, however, answer all the questions. What does "regulation

by a mission committee" mean? Does it mean that a congregation calls its missionary and then like Hannah of old turns its "Samuel" over to the M.C., there to serve the Lord forever under its "priestly" legislation? This is possible. Whether it is Biblical and Reformed is another matter altogether.

In 1977 our churches (in response to a protest by a concerned brother, who loved missions dearly, but who feared that the autonomy of the local consistory was being slighted) sought to resolve the issue both of consistorial oversight and denominational involvement by means of a new mission constitution. The protest was made in 1975. A study committee responded in 1976. Another committee drew up the constitution, which was adopted in 1977.

The study committee made some excellent points, quoting from some solid sources. (Cf. Acts 1976, pp. 115-126.) We will quote a few pertinent segments that indicate how important direct involvement of a calling church in the labors of its missionary is. *It is, of course, perfectly all right that the denomination appoints a mission board to aid the local churches in many respects: to coordinate the work. But those boards must be very careful that they do not take the place of the local church, that they must simply serve the purpose of helping the local church in their labors. (H. Hoeksema, "The Principles of Missions," p. 25)*

Commenting on the relationship between the missionary and the calling church, Monsma and Van Dellen wrote: *But Article 51 does not nullify the rights and duties of particular Churches And the relationship between the calling Church and the Minister (missionary - K.K.) concerned, in case he accepts the call, should be more than merely "official." We should not merely seek to satisfy "the letter of the law." The*

relationship between congregation and Minister should ever be real, vital, and active. Sham and mere form in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical are killing. (C.O. Commentary, p. 218-9)

In his "Introduction To The Science Of Missions," Dr. J.H. Bavinck points out that this is a matter of great practical benefit to the vitality of missions itself. *There has been considerable strife concerning this principle (namely, the involvement of the local congregation — K.K.), but in our judgment the principle has been rightly maintained. That the work of missions should be conducted by the local church is not only sound in theory, but it is also preferable on practical grounds (emphasis mine — K.K.). It is much easier to quicken love of missions in a relatively small group that has taken the responsibility of a very particular, concrete objective, than it is to inspire a larger group of churches to a large and therefore rather vague task. It goes without saying that it is necessary for local churches to work closely together and to consult each other on all important issues.*

It is evident that our Synod felt the weight of this perspective. A new mission constitution was adopted. Whether the constitution does full justice to the jurisdiction of a consistory re its missionary is subject to debate. But from the point of view of consistorial involvement, and hence congregational interest in the labor of its missionary, no one can deny that the present arrangement is a great improvement over what was done heretofore.

For missions to flourish in our circles, nothing is so important as fervent prayer by the saints for the task assigned. How often did not Paul beseech the saints to pray for him in his mission labors. Nobody takes a keener interest in the work of a missionary than his calling church. This interest, which is also the spur to fervent prayer for the prosperity

of the work, is served not by taking decision-making power away from a consistory, but by safe guarding it. Take this away and you foster apathy amongst the "grass roots."

But, regardless whether there is perfect agreement on mission policy at the moment, the work must not cease. The Devil waits

for no man. He is always promoting his own cause. We must be always promoting Christ's in as "offensive" a manner as possible. □

Personal Involvement in Mission Work

Rev. Ronald VanOverloop

The church of Jesus Christ has the mandate to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). This calling is fulfilled by the instituted church through its office-bearers. But this does not leave the individual church members sitting on their hands. They too have responsibilities in this regard.

The "mission" efforts of the individual members fall into two categories of witnessing: general and specific.

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In general, every believer has a responsibility to maintain the spiritual health of the local congregation of which he is a member. That is because there is a very definite and close relationship between the Lord's adding to a church and the spiritual condition of that congregation. The church to which the Lord adds members normally possesses a healthy spiritual condition.

Because every member plays a role in this spiritual condition, it is necessary that each member actively and zealously give of himself and herself to the spiritual health of the local church.

Negatively, God cannot be expected to bless the mission efforts of a church which is not maintaining the truth and whose membership is divided with strife. Positively, the Lord added daily the ones whom He was saving to a church which has three spiritual characteristics (Acts 2:42-47). First, the church at Jerusalem steadfastly maintained the truth as taught them by the apostles. Secondly, there was a beautiful harmony and love among the membership. And thirdly, all of their activities were characterized by fear of Jehovah.

Therefore, the individual member must do whatever he can to see to it that these three characteristics are found in his church. First, he must know, love, and defend the truth of God's Word. There must be a lively interest in the Word of God and an eager and expectant (not reluctant) coming together for the preaching and study of God's

Word. Also each individual member must consciously resist the constant pressures to corrupt the fellowship of the saints. There must be genuine love and appreciation for each of the other members of the local church. And the individual members must prayerfully seek and maintain a sincere love for God and for His truth. Without the fear of God, the maintenance of doctrine is dead orthodoxy and formalism. With every member contributing to such spiritual health, each is involved in the witness the congregation has in the community.

In addition, every individual member contributes to the mission effort of his church by living godly in whatever station and calling he has in this life. This godly life and speech of the individual believers is the greatest and most effective witness to those outside of the church. There is no substitute for holiness of life; for actions speak louder than words. Every believer must be conscious of the fact that he is always witnessing.

A local congregation can advertise its services and special events, but advertisements are often seen through glasses. The

Rev. VanOverloop is a missionary-pastor of the Protestant Reformed Churches, in Northwest Chicago, Illinois.

glasses consist of the witness the church members have established within the community. Rightly or wrongly, many declines to advertised invitations have been given on the basis of the poor conduct of individual church members. It does not hurt (maybe it might) to examine your life through the eyes of those around you.

God will not be mocked: what one sows, he reaps! What a church sows by its life and conduct both within its own fellowship and in the local community, it also reaps! The Lord usually adds daily the ones He is saving to a congregation which has good spiritual health.

This is the general responsibility of the church member.

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The specific responsibility of individual church members toward missions is the verbal expression of their faith to others.

This involves praying for and financially supporting the mission efforts of the denomination and local congregation. It involves being friendly to visitors at the worship services of one's church (The silence and averted looks which sometimes surround a visitor could speak more loudly than the best sermon.) It involves using the God-given opportunities to speak to acquaintances or strangers, whether it be giving an answer to someone who asks a reason for your hope, or speaking an appropriate word (1 Peter 3:15).

This witnessing is the *responsibility* and *privilege* of every Christian. It is not just the super-christian or the officebearer or the extroverted saint who can witness.

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Most instructive is Colossians 4:5, 6: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with

salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Living in the world (cf. John 17:15) saints come into contact with those outside of the church and outside of Christ. This text forbids an attitude of no interest or of unconcern towards those without, and positively it requires a walk *toward* them. This implies a most important requirement for proper witnessing, viz., listening. One must not leap into every discussion, answer immediately every question, or take an adamant stand at the outset (Prov. 29:11). Asking the right questions helps one to listen and to discover where the "outsider" is at spiritually and ecclesiastically. Consider how Jesus walked *toward* the Samaritan woman (John 4). An appropriate witness requires knowledge of the outsider's level of understanding of Scriptural and Reformed principles and terminology. Jesus knew what His hearers were able to hear, and spoke accordingly (cf. Mark 4:33, 34).

Paul urges the Colossians, in walking toward those that are without, to redeem the time, i.e., to take advantage of the opportunities when they present themselves, for they might never come their way again.

Also, Paul tells the Colossians that they did not have the right to select those to whom they would witness, for they must know how to answer EVERY man. This means that one must be sufficiently well acquainted with the Reformed faith and with the Scriptures (specific Biblical proof is an absolute necessity) so he can answer anyone.

Further, the Colossians and we are told to have gracious speech, i.e., speech which reveals God's grace: not abusive or vindictive, but "speaking the truth in love." Such gracious speech is to be *always*, i.e., when speaking about the weather or about salvation.

The individual church member has plenty of motivation to witness.

The supreme motivation is the glorification of God. The God of the Scriptures Who saves unto Himself a people in Jesus Christ is worthy of all praise and honor. Jesus lived and worked so God would be glorified (John 12:28; 1 Cor. 15:28). Those who know what it is to be saved by sovereign grace delight to see their God's perfections manifested and praised. If the glorification of God is not the driving force behind our desire to witness, then we are out of harmony with the plan of salvation (Rom. 11:36; Rev. 4:11).

Another important motivating force is the grateful experience of salvation in Jesus Christ. This occasioned David's teaching transgressors about God's ways (Psalm 51:13). The knowledge of undeserved deliverance from the horrible slavery of sin by the wonder of God's grace alone constrains one to want others to glory in God's ways and to be brought into the participation and enjoyment of God's grace.

Another motivation is a conviction of and zeal for the truth. The personal experience of salvation causes one to be eager to learn the truths of Scripture which present the God Who saves and His work of salvation. In turn, the truth grips the believer and leads him humbly to adore Him Whom the truths present. Then the truth is exciting. And then the believer desires to share the precious truth which he has found.

And the believer is motivated to witness by his obedience to the second, great commandment, namely love of his neighbor. This love, at the very least, is a concern for the neighbor's eternal state. Because the responsibility to witness and to love our neighbor is based (not on God's

decree according to which He sovereignly loves only some, but) on God's command, the Christian may not be segregating in his love. Like the good Samaritan he will do whatever he can for everyone whom God is pleased to place in his path.

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The believer finds Biblical solutions to his hesitancy to witness.

If there is a lack of desire to witness, then one needs a strong dose of preaching on justification by faith. Nothing softens the cold heart of the Christian more than hearing again about unmerited mercy.

If he is afraid because of any weaknesses he perceives in himself, the believer must remember how God answered others who were hesitant and full of excuses. God reminded them that it is He Who makes the tongue (Exodus 4:11) and told them not to be ashamed of the gospel (1 Timothy 1:8).

If one has seen disappointing results from past witnessing, then he must consider a few things. First, while he knows that the gospel is unavoidably offensive to the unbeliever, he must make sure that it was not his person or personality which offends.

Secondly, he must remember that God, unlike the world, measures success, not in terms of numbers, but in terms of faithfulness. The believer sees himself only as an unprofitable steward who must be faithful unto death (Luke 17:10).

Thirdly, the one who witnesses must subscribe to the two virtues of a farmer: patience and expectation. The farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it. Also the Christian must remember that his only responsibility is to sow the seed and that it is not within the realm of his ability to bring forth

fruit. Thankfully he can leave that to the Lord of the harvest. On the other hand, the one who prayerfully witnesses can be very expectant about the possibility of positive fruit, because with God all things are possible. John Calvin writes, "We are too apt to conclude that our attempts at reclaiming the ungodly are vain and ineffectual. We forget that God is able to crown our attempts with success." Patient and prayerful expectation must characterize the believer as he waits upon the Lord.

The same encouragement the church has for its missions, the individual believer can have for his witnessing. First, Jesus is Lord, with all power in heaven and on earth to accomplish all His good pleasure. And this almighty Lord is with His people unto the end of this world.

May each individual church member be encouraged to be zealous in his witnessing, both generally and specifically. □

Mission Work in Singapore

Rev. Lau Chin Kwee

I feel honored to be asked to write this article for the *Standard Bearer*, a magazine from the high-standard articles of which I have personally benefited much. I hope this article will not in any way tarnish the good image of the magazine.

Rev. Lau is pastor of the First Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore.

I was originally asked to write on a wider topic, namely, "Mission Work in Singapore and Malaysia"; but I have chosen to write on a narrower one, the "Mission Work in Singapore", as I felt inadequate to comment in any detail on the mission work in Malaysia. There are mission works done in Malaysia by other churches, but our churches have yet to launch our own. We do

have contact with some Christians in Malaysia. Some of them are keen on the Reformed Faith, but as yet there is nothing concrete for us to start any labor there.

My approach in this article will be, first, to give a general view of the factors that are affecting the home mission of our churches. Then I shall try to show how these factors shape the

mission tasks we have in hand and how we are faring in these tasks. Finally, I hope to share with you the vision we have for our churches in the future.

The founding of Modern Singapore to be a trading port by Sir Stanford Raffles of the East India Company in 1819 was a master-stroke in trade strategy to command the southern entrance of the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Sunda — the two Straits through which most trading vessels between the Far East and the West had to pass in those days. Since then many sophisticated methods of transportation and communication have been developed, and yet Singapore remains a very important link between the Far East and the West. Today, many people still pass through this little island. Many international conferences are held here. Regional headquarters of many multi-national corporations are here as well. In a situation like this, inevitably our faith would be spoken of throughout the whole world, like that of the Roman Christians. What privilege! What honour! What responsibility! What grace and help needed!

Most of our forebears came from different lands to join the natives, the Malays, of the land. They were adventurous people who sought greener pastures for their earthly lives. They brought along with them their religious beliefs: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Shintoism, Judaism, Christianity, et cetera. They spoke different languages and dialects and had their own peculiar cultures. The goal of our political leaders is that the citizens may unite "regardless of race, language or religion to build a democratic society based on justice and equality so as to achieve happiness, prosperity and progress for our nation." The differences in culture, language, and

belief are to be respected on this island. As can be expected, Christianity comes in different sizes, shapes, shades, and colors. All major denominations are here in Singapore, including the late-comers like the Evangelical Reformed and the Reformed Baptist. We also have our share of troubles from the cults like Jehovah's Witnesses, the Children of God, and the Mormons. Some of the cults, like the first two mentioned above, are banned in Singapore because of their extreme and immoral beliefs. Others are practising legally here. The Pentecostals have been here many years. In recent years the Charismatics have been spreading extensively, affecting many churches. Besides these there are many independent, non-aligned churches on this island. Then there are also the many para-church organizations like the Youth For Christ, the Campus Crusade, the Navigators, and the various Missionary Societies and Fellowships.

On this small island of 571.6 sq. km. we have to do our mission work among peoples so diverse as described above. The mission activities of the church must not be done independently of the very life of the church. They should flow out of its very life as our Lord taught us in Acts 1:8 when He commanded His Apostles to "be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The message of mission must be the same Gospel which the sending church adheres to. No amount of social, political, economic, and racial differences can warrant the change of the essence of the Gospel. We must know, teach, and proclaim the essence of the Gospel according to the milieu of our society, first of all to the people closest to us, and then direct its radiation and

influences to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Our calling towards the Christian churches and groups in Singapore is to set before them the truth which God has entrusted to us in the Scriptures as it is set forth in our confession of the Three Forms of Unity. Most, if not all, of these churches and groups are ignorant of the historic creeds of the church. Many mistakenly consider the creeds as having extra-biblical authority over the church. They fail to see the importance of having a written confession of what they believe the Bible to teach. No church can bear witness for Christ without a confession, and no church can effectively pass down her confession to future generations without the confession written down in one form or another. No church can benefit from her forefathers more than to study carefully what they had painfully and carefully set down for her in their creeds. One of our main tasks for Christians outside of our churches is to introduce them to the historic creeds and show them how these creeds are biblically based. It is a fundamental error to despise the faith of our fathers if we believe that God is preserving His truth in this world through the centuries and that the church is the pillar and ground (or the place of declaration and defense) of it.

Every year in late October we sponsor two lectures to propagate the Reformed Faith in celebration of the Great Reformation. This is indeed something quite new in this part of the world. The Lord through these lectures has brought in not a few people to the knowledge of the Reformed Faith. Some of these people have even taken steps to join our churches to support the spread of the Reformed Faith. It is also normally in these meetings that much good Re-

formed literature and books are distributed and sold. We have also reprinted some good tracts which we received from the Protestant Reformed Churches for our local distribution. The publication of the Pillar and Ground of Truth also helps to spread the Reformed Faith here. Our church also operates a book ministry in which good Reformed books are sold at a good discount. Throughout the years there are not a few who came from other churches to buy these books.

To reach out to the people who are outside our faith, we have "Gospel Meetings" throughout the year, organized by the various societies within the church. These are meetings in which the Gospel is presented in terms which the non-Christians will find it easier to understand. The Youth Fellowship and the Adult Fellowship will at times organize such meetings and invite their non-Christian friends to attend. During special seasons of the year, such as Good Friday and Christmas, the church as a whole organizes such meetings which are often translated into Mandarin or one of the Chinese dialects. A brother well versed in the appropriate language will be asked to give the translation. We

even invite our parents and relatives who are non-English speaking to attend the meetings. Although most, if not all, young people in Singapore are able to converse in the English language, there are still the older generations, like our parents and grandparents, who cannot speak or understand the language. We have to reach out to these people as well with the Gospel. Most of these people are also illiterate, and therefore the only means to reach them is through the lively preaching of God's Word. Written materials are of no use to them.

Besides the above formal gospel meetings, some of us would organize "tracing sessions" in which a group of church members would go to a certain area armed with Christian literature for distribution. Where there are people interested in talking more about the Christian religion, these members try to introduce Christianity to them and invite them to church. We have experienced cases of people being brought to our church in this way.

Singapore is a unique place for the spread of the Gospel in the Southeast Asian region. This is true not only because it has a unique geographical position and

the available modern facilities most suitable for such a task, but also because its citizens are people who can be more easily received by the neighboring countries than someone from the West. Our calling is to be firmly grounded in the truth of God's Word ourselves, set up a good Reformed Theological School for the training of workers for the regions around us, and to translate good Reformed literature into the various languages around us. Our political leaders are molding the country into an Information Center for this part of the world. The infrastructure for a successful center is being built. It would be most foolish for the church not to take advantage of this situation to spread the truth far and wide. This is what we can see the Lord has for us in the future. But how this is going to work out exactly we do not know. We are too small by ourselves to do anything substantial in the near future. We share this with you in the hope that you will catch the same vision for the Lord's work here in Asia. Do pray for us as we seek to do His holy will here.

May His Name be magnified and glorified through all these. Amen. □

Reflections of a Former Missionary

Rev. George Lubbers

Rev. Lubbers is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

I am indebted to the committee in charge of arranging for a special feature on "Missions," for thinking to request me to write some "reflections."

It is now some sixteen years

ago that Mrs. Lubbers and I left the last mission field where we might serve, to wit, Jamaica. In the kind providence of God we had served also as a missionary of our churches for some nine

years in the States. We first became missionaries in January of 1955, some 35 years ago. To be sure we have often reflected on the goodness of the Lord upon us during the years which we spent on these two mission fields.

Ever and ever the bottom line in all these reflections is: what God was willing to perform by weakest means, and: what *He has wrought!* There are no mighty deeds to recount except the mighty deeds of God in His power of the Gospel! Indeed, all flesh is grass, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever. This is the Word which we were called to preach.

Certainly the details of these years of labors I am not able to relate. Should I remember them they would be too many to reflect upon in this little contribution with limited space. We can only call your attention to facets and viewpoints of the work as I recall them. Lest this become merely some musings of an octogenarian, I will strive to emphasize a few points in reference to the mandate of Scripture for a missionary.

In the first place, an ordained missionary is and remains a minister of the Word of the Gospel. He is what is expressed in the Latin title: *Verbi Dei Minister*. He is a servant of the Word. He obeys the Word by carefully studying the Scriptures, by equally painstakingly building his sermons, and finally, in prayerful dependence upon the Lord and the guidance of the Spirit, *preaching* them.

The one central truth that must ever be in the mind of the messenger of God is that the increase of the Gospel is not in his own power. That will keep a true servant of God both humble and strong. He will know his place, not walking in sinful pride, but ever remaining strong in the con-

sciousness that Paul planted, Apollos watered, but that the increase is of God (1 Cor. 3:5). This will also make for the proper evaluation of the minister by those who hear him. Thus they learn not to listen for persuasive words of wisdom. They will ever anew experience the work of the Spirit and the power of the Gospel. Also on the mission field the clarion sound must be unmistakably that they are hearing the testimony of God, which He gives concerning His Son.

Surely the *sina qua non* must be that a missionary resolves ever anew to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified!

This does not mean that he limits his preaching in every sermon to the theme of Christ's crucifixion in an exclusive sense, but that he can say, "Behold, I am free from the blood of you all, for I shrank not from declaring unto you the full counsel of God" (Acts 20:26, 27). When a missionary preaches on John 3:16, "... that whosoever believeth on him should not perish," he must faithfully preach that faith is the gift of God, merited for us on the Cross, together with all the other benefits bestowed upon us in sovereignly free grace.

Even on the mission field the preaching should be election preaching. At the time of the conflict in our churches in 1953 one of the members, who soon left our denomination, said to me, "Rev. Lubbers, I cannot any longer listen to your sermons. You always preach 'election.'" When I rejoined that I had never expressly and explicitly preached or lectured on the subject in his hearing, he replied, "That is true, but I hear the gospel of sovereign election in every sermon." I was mightily pleased with his rejoinder. I had not shrunk from preaching the full counsel of God! And thus it must be emphatically

also on the mission field, whether here in the States or on the island of Jamaica in the preaching from the pulpit, or in the small "seminary" in which I taught Reformed doctrine, using the Heidelberg Catechism as the textbook for the students!

I remember distinctly that while in Loveland, Colorado I prepared some questions and answers for the entire adult class, and called attention to the indisputable fact that the Canons of Dordt did not present a new and unknown teaching, but that even in Question and Answer 1, already you can see explicitly and/or by implication the five articles of the Remonstrants gained. The fruit was that Loveland and also others joined our churches in the full conviction that the Protestant Reformed Churches stood foursquare on the teaching of the Heidelberger, and what is more, that the full counsel of God was summed up in the Canons under Five heads of Doctrine.

The aforesaid underlines very strongly another matter which the missionary must ever keep in mind in his preaching and teaching. It is that also on the mission field the truth holds: Known unto God are all His works from everlasting! Thus saith the Lord who maketh these things known from of old (Acts 15:16 ff. and Amos 9:11; Isaiah 45:21).

Empowered by this rock-bottom conviction, the missionary preaches the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God, without anxious questioning concerning the outcome. He knows that he is always triumphant, and rides in the victory parade of Him who sitteth on the white horse, going forth conquering and to conquer. Arminian preachers merely compute their fruit of the preaching in the greater number, and that, too, ascribing the honor to the

preacher, the preacher who is sent as the ambassador of Christ. True, a good preacher tries faithfully and prayerfully to live up to the word of exhortation given him at the time of his ordination, which reads, "be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, and carefully preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching . . . be an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in faith, in purity . . . Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee . . . Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest to all. Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee" (II Tim. 4:2 and I Tim. 4:12b and 16).

Then there will surely be fruit upon the preaching in God's own way and time. Such was the fatherly advice which our beloved Rev. Herman Hoeksema wrote me when I was deeply discouraged in one of my congregations. I saved that letter, now already for over fifty years, and have repeated it to other of my colleagues in their times of anxious questionings.

Perhaps it may not be out of place to relate here an incident which proved the efficacy of God's grace in the preaching. I refer to the time of a midweek service at "Cross-Roads" in the western mountains of Jamaica. I preached with power on the words of Jesus recorded in John 4:14: ". . . but the water that I

shall give shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life." I preached this standing before a crude table upon which stood a lantern to light in the darkness. I could not see my audience very well, but I heard an occasional sound of agreement. I pointed out that the Samaritan woman came to fetch water from the well-known and ancient well of Jacob, but when she was called to repentance by the one four-word command, "Go call your husband," her entire life in all its sinfulness was revealed to her, and she ran with great joy to call her fellow-Samaritans, saying, "Come see a man, which told me all things that ever I did." This truth struck home in the hearts of these women in Jamaica, who likewise had lived a sordid and sinful life. At the close of the service, when all was quiet under the star studded heavens, one of the hearers lifted up her voice and in beautiful notes sang, "Jesus gave her water that was not from the well . . . She went away singing, and came back bringing others for the water . . ." Yes, her water pitcher stood beside Jacob's well forgotten. And I am pleased to relate that the entire group present that night joined in with the songstress and sang with lilting voices in the night, "Yes, Jesus gave the water that was not in the well."

I learned a song that night which I and Mrs. Lubbers never forgot!

I believe that God in heaven heard this beautiful singing even as did the angels who ever behold the face of their Father in heaven. You must know that as I

left that "roadside service" I glanced to the south and I saw the "southern cross" clear and meaningful as I had not for a long time looked at the stars.

And I reflected on the faithfulness of God. I thought of the beautiful reassuring words of Jehovah recorded in Jeremiah 31:37: ". . . Thus saith the LORD: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel from being a nation before me forever!"

Yes, the final outcome of any preacher's work and preaching, as to the permanent and everlasting fruit, is really known only to God. The one thing which the preacher must be concerned about is whether he has preached the full counsel of God, and that he is free from the blood of those who heard him!

Many, many anecdotes could be related of situations in the labors of a missionary. Thirteen years is a long time to recount. Looking back I can and do say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7, 8). □