

THE STANDARD BEARER

A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine



Hull Protestant Reformed Church
(site of PRC Synod 1989)

Vol. 65, No. 17
June 1, 1989

Contents

June 1, 1989

Meditation — Rev. James D. Slopsema JESUS: THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE	387
EDITORIALLY SPEAKING . . . — Prof. David J. Engelsma	389
Editorial — Prof. David J. Engelsma ON SYNOD AND SYNODS	389
LETTERS	391
Contribution — Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema CAUTION, GO SLOWLY (AS TO CHANGING CLASSICAL BOUNDARIES)	392
Walking in the Light — Prof. Herman C. Hanko LYING (1)	395
Church and State — Mr. James Lanting COURT AFFIRMS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION TO LABOR UNIONS	397
Bible Study Guide — Rev. Jason L. Korterling I AND II SAMUEL — THE BEGINNINGS OF THE KINGDOM	400
Guided Into All Truth — Rev. Charles J. Terpstra AUGUSTINE AND THE PELAGIAN HERESY (2)	402
BOOK REVIEWS	404
NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES — Mr. Benjamin Wigger	406

Inside this issue . . .

Our readers will very likely not be at all surprised by an assertion in one of the articles in this issue that the Protestant Reformed Churches are among a dwindling number of denominations who remain firm in their insistence that "membership in the body of Christ and membership in godless labor unions are incompatible." We are well aware, too, as the writer of that article reminds us, that some of our people have had to pay dearly for that conviction — either because certain attractive job opportunities were unavailable to them for it, or because they actually lost their jobs when they refused to join the unions after a takeover at their place of employment.

But would a statement like this, ". . . it is now abundantly clear that, for the present anyway, a Christian cannot be forced to abandon his employment or occupational preference because of compulsory union membership demands," make us sit up and take notice? What do we know about Section 19 of the National Labor Relations Act (1980)? . . . or about the Supreme Court decision in *International Association of Machinists v. Boeing Co.* (1988)? The writer correctly contends that "Reformed Christians should aggressively assert all the rights and liberties we still enjoy as citizens." But in order to *assert* them we must *know* them. Mr. James Lanting, whose byline identifies him as a practicing attorney in Illinois, is making it his business to keep abreast of laws and decisions that affect in one way or another the church of Christ. Watch for more regular contributions to these pages, from Mr. Lanting, in "Church and State." □

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

Editor-in-chief: Prof. David J. Engelsma
Managing Editor: Prof. Robert D. Decker
Editors' Assistant: Mr. Don Doezeema

DEPARTMENT EDITORS

Rev. Ronald Cammenga, Prof. Robert Decker, Rev. Arie den Hartog, Rev. Russell Dykstra, Rev. Barry Gritters, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Ronald Hanko, Rev. John Heys, Rev. Jason Korterling, Rev. George Lubbers, Rev. James Slopsema, Rev. Charles Terpstra, Rev. Gise VanBaren, Mr. Benjamin Wigger.

EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
4949 Ivanrest
Grandville, Michigan 49418

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger
6597 - 40th Ave.
Hudsonville, Michigan 49426

EDITORIAL POLICY

Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten, and must be signed. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

REPRINT POLICY

Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided: a) that such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) that proper acknowledgement is made; c) that a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Mr. H. Vander Wal
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, MI
49516

NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
c/o Protestant Reformed
Church
B. Van Herk
66 Fraser St.
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

PH: (616) 243-2953

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY

Subscription price, \$12.00 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

ADVERTISING POLICY

The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st and the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

BOUND VOLUMES

The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

16mm microfilm, 35mm microfilm and 105mm microfiche, and article copies are available through University Microfilms International.

Meditation

Rev. James Slopsema

Jesus: The Way, the Truth, and the Life

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

—John 14:6

Jesus and His disciples have finished the last Passover supper and are on the way to Gethsemane where Jesus knows He will be arrested.

Jesus informs His disciples that very shortly now He will depart from them. But they must not be troubled, for He is going to His Father's house of many mansions to prepare a place for them. And if He prepares a place for them, He will come again and receive them unto Himself, that where He is there they may be also.

Jesus reminds His disciples of the fact that they know where He is going and they know the way.

Thomas, speaking for the disciples, informs Jesus that they really don't know where Jesus is going. Nor do they know the way.

Jesus responds by telling His disciples that He is the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Him.

The disciples don't know where Jesus is going? He is going to the Father. The disciples don't

know the way to the Father? He is the way. And this is further explained in that Jesus is also the truth and the life.

* * * * *

Jesus proclaims that He is the way.

The question may arise: Jesus is the way to what? to whom?

The answer lies in what Jesus has just said. He informed His disciples that He was about to depart from them and go to His Father's house of many mansions.

Father's house of many mansions is one of the most beautiful terms the Bible uses to describe heaven. It views heaven as God's home. In this heavenly home God lives and dwells with His dear children, whom He has eternally chosen unto Himself and subsequently redeemed in the blood of Jesus Christ. In this heavenly home there are many mansions or dwelling places: one for each of God's dear children. In this heavenly home the children of God find complete joy and bliss under the care of their heavenly Father.

On that background Jesus proclaims that He is the way. No man comes to the Father but by Him. Quite obviously, when Jesus speaks of Himself as the way, He means that He is the way to the Father and to the Father's house of many mansions.

Notice, Jesus says, "I am the way." He means that He per-

sonally is the way to the Father.

Jesus is the way to the Father, first, in that He makes the way to the Father. When Jesus says that no man comes to the Father but by Him, the implication is that the way to the Father is closed. The way to the Father is closed because of our sin. Sin makes it impossible to enter into Father's house of many mansions. Sin alienates God from man, barring man from God's loving care and fellowship. Jesus is the way in that He makes a way to the Father and His fellowship. Jesus does this through His death and resurrection, to which Jesus was at this time approaching and through which He would overcome the power of sin.

Jesus is the way, secondly, in that He personally takes us to the Father. Jesus doesn't merely open up a way to the Father and then leave us to follow that way the best we can. Then none of us would ever come to the Father. If we will attain the Father's house of many mansions, Jesus must carry us there along the way He has made. This Jesus does through the power of His death and resurrection. And in this manner Jesus is the way.

But notice, that Jesus is *the* way. To that Jesus adds, "No man comes to the Father, but by me."

There are not many ways to the Father. We must not imagine that we are confronted with a

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

number of options. We can come to the Father by way of our own works and merits. And then there are the works and merits of other saints who have gone on before us. And then there is the way that Jesus makes through His death and resurrection.

No! There is only one way to the Father, and that is Jesus. The way to the Father is closed because of sin. Jesus must take you to the Father in the power of His death and resurrection or you do not reach the Father.

* * * * *

Jesus adds by way of explanation that He is also the truth and the life.

Jesus is the truth. Jesus is the truth, first, because He is God. Truth is that which is real. Truth is reality. The one great reality of all life is God. He is the one reality with Whom we must deal every day. God is truth.

And Jesus is truth exactly because He is God, the eternal Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit.

But Jesus is the truth, secondly, in that He is the revelation of God. God reveals Himself to man that man may know Him as the great reality of life. And when God reveals Himself, He reveals the truth about Himself.

God reveals Himself in the highest sense of Jesus. Jesus emphasizes this to His disciples when He says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Jesus made known the Father through the prophets and apostles. He also revealed the Father through His teaching and preaching while here on the earth in our flesh. But perhaps most significantly Jesus revealed the Father through His own person and work as it centered in His suffering and death on the cross. Through Jesus' atoning sacrifice God was revealed in all

His glorious virtues as the Savior of His people.

Being the revelation of God Jesus is the truth.

But finally, Jesus is the truth in that He is the source of all truth in us. We have just seen that Jesus is truth in that He reveals to us the truth and realities of God objectively. But Jesus is the truth also in that He enters into the hearts and lives of His people and irresistibly moves them to embrace the truth. And by leading us to embrace the truth, we are led to embrace God Himself.

Jesus is also the life.

Also here Jesus is the life in that He is God. God is triune. And there is to be found among the three persons of the Godhead a most blessed fellowship and friendship. This is the essence of life. God is therefore a living God. And Jesus is the life exactly because He is the Son of God, Who eternally partakes of the life of the triune God.

But Jesus is the life also as the Mediator of God. Through His death on the cross Jesus earned for Himself and His people a most glorious heavenly life. This life consists of a most blessed fellowship and friendship with the living God. Those who possess this life are taken up into the very life of God Himself. This life Jesus received through His own resurrection on the third day. Also from this point of view Jesus is the life.

But finally, Jesus is the life in that He is the source of life in us. The life that Jesus received at His own resurrection He shares with all His people. Sharing in this life the people of God are caught up in the very life of God, enjoying His fellowship and friendship.

Jesus accomplishes this great work of salvation as the truth. As the truth Jesus has not only revealed the truth to us objectively in the Scriptures, but He

also proclaims this truth through the preaching. And through the preaching of the truth we are called irresistibly out of the darkness of unbelief into the light of life and salvation.

And so it is that Jesus as the truth and the life brings us to God the Father. No, we are not brought to the Father's house of many mansions immediately. That awaits the end of our earthly pilgrimage. Nonetheless, we are brought to the Father in a very real way also in this life. For we are brought into the bliss of His fellowship and friendship. And we then look forward to the day when we will be able to enter into His house of many mansions to enjoy perfectly what we have now only in part.

* * * * *

Many seek (so they say) to come to the Father.

However, many seek to come to the Father another way than the way of Jesus. Some will approach the Father by the way of their own good works. Others will approach the Father by the way of the good works of others who have passed on to glory before them. Many, for example, would come to the Father by way of what the virgin Mary has done.

These all shall fail. For no man comes to the Father but by Jesus. He is the way, the truth, and the life. Apart from Jesus the way to the Father is closed.

We see then our calling.

When Jesus as the truth calls you by the Word to the truth, believe and embrace the truth as it is in Him alone.

And, clinging to Jesus in faith, live the new life which is to be found only in Him. In Jesus' power serve the Father in love. Then you will find a wonderful life of friendship and fellowship with the Father, in this life and in a life yet to come. □

Editorially speaking. . .

In this issue, we take note of the meeting of the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches the second week of June. The editorial reviews the agenda of Synod. One of the items on the agenda, the overture of Southeast, Grand Rapids that Synod restructure the denomination in three classes, would significantly affect denominational life in the PRC. In response to our request, Professor H.C. Hoeksema gives

his analysis of this overture, and offers his advice.

Our hope is that this information concerning the activities of our broadest ecclesiastical assembly enables the members of the PRC (and others who have these churches on their hearts) to pray for the Synod more knowledgeably and encourages the saints of the PRC to continue to participate actively in the life of the denomination. -DJE

In Book III of his book, *On the Trinity*, Augustine declares that he prefers the labor of reading to the labor of writing and that he joyfully "would give my pen a holiday." These are the heartfelt sentiments of the entire staff of *The SB* about the first of June each year. Therefore, the magazine is published only once a month in June, July, and August. We give our pens (and word processors) a holiday. Now to the labor of reading! -DJE □

Editorial

On Synod and Synods

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet this year in Hull, Iowa at the invitation of the Hull church. Synod will convene on Tuesday, June 13. The Rev. Gise Van Baren, president of the synod of 1988, will preach at the special worship service of the Hull congregation the evening before the convening of synod. We intend to print this sermon in the August 1 issue of *The Standard Bearer* with a report of the doings and decisions of synod. Missing from synod in his capacity as advisor as he has been only very rarely over the past thirty years will be Professor H. C. Hoeksema, who is

gravely ill with cancer. Synod will receive his request for emeritation.

The membership of the PRC are interested in the agenda of their synods, as they ought to be. With the cooperation of the Rev. Meindert Joostens, stated clerk of synod, who made available to me the materials for synod prior to their publication for the consistories, here follows a survey of some of the more significant matters that must be dealt with by synod, 1989.

The Theological School Committee reports that the churches can anticipate two full-time students in the seminary in the

fall of 1989. One will be a third-year seminarian; the other will begin his first year. Several college students who plan to attend seminary after graduation will be taking certain pre-seminary courses from our professors. The T.S.C. is making proposals to synod that affect our present pre-seminary department. One is that a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university be required for admission to the seminary. Another is that, although some pre-seminary courses will still be offered, reference in the seminary catalog to a pre-seminary program or division be deleted. A ground for

the latter proposal is that synod highlight the primary work of the seminary, namely, providing seminary training for future ministers.

A recommendation of the Contact Committee concerning the training of men for the ministry in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia bears on the work of our seminary:

... that the synod of 1989 be advised to instruct the T.S.C. to offer its services to the students of the EPC; that the T.S.C. be instructed in conjunction with the faculty to make arrangements with the EPC to provide special instruction for them in their own distinctives

In addition to a report of some investigation of Ghana as a possible field of labor, the Foreign Mission Committee (made up of ministers and elders in the north-west Iowa and southwest Minnesota area) is bringing an overture to synod to change the constitutions of both the domestic and the foreign mission committees so that the areas of mission work are divided along geographical lines. The overture recommends distinguishing missions as church extension work, domestic missions, and foreign missions. Church extension work would be the work of a congregation in its own area. Domestic missions is defined as work in "the native continent." Foreign missions becomes work done in a foreign country. The effect of the overture would be to give the F.M.C. more to do. The present constitution limits the F.M.C. to work that "gathers into His church those who in their generations have not belonged to the covenant." The overture speaks of "a more equal distribution of labor." It has the approval also of the (domestic) Mission Committee.

The Mission Committee has several weighty recommendations. Regarding Jamaica, the

M.C. proposes that synod approve working in Jamaica in the future with a minimum of two men in the field. One of these will be a minister who will be called to replace Missionary Wilbur Bruinsma, who has accepted a call to a pastorate in the States and who will be leaving the field this summer. The M.C. recommends that the second man be a layman until a second missionary (minister) can be obtained. As the M.C. notes in its report, this recommendation requires that synod take into consideration previous decisions that the second worker on the Jamaica field be a minister. The M.C. advises that future work in Jamaica, while continuing with the present churches, turn to the larger cities on the island.

The M.C. is asking synod that it be authorized to make Bradenton, Florida a denominational mission field and to appoint a church to call a missionary to work in Bradenton full-time. A member of the M.C. is presenting a minority report to synod, opposing the M.C.'s recommendation concerning Bradenton.

A sizable group in Alameda, California is requesting of the PRC that a missionary-pastor be loaned them for two years and that an affiliate relationship be established with the PRC. At the time of this writing, the recommendation of the M.C. to synod is not available.

The M.C. is making two proposals regarding personnel. It is asking synod to create the position of "missionary-at-large" and to call a minister to this position. This missionary "will serve the cause of denominational home missions in North America apart from a specific field. This missionary will be in addition to other missionaries who are called to specific fields." It is also requesting a "permanent secretary" of the M.C. on account of the in-

creasing load of the clerical work of the committee.

The Committee for Contact with Other Churches informs synod that the Norristown, Pennsylvania church has released her pastor, the Rev. Ken Hanks, to work for six to nine months among the Covenant Reformed Fellowship in Larne, Northern Ireland. The Rev. Hanks and his family plan to leave for Northern Ireland sometime in July, 1989, the Lord willing. Norristown is willing to pay the salary of their minister while he is loaned to the Larne group.

The Contact Committee brings to synod with its approval the request of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Burnie, Tasmania that the PRC supply her with a preacher after the return of Professor H. C. Hoeksema to the United States. The request includes the commitment of the Burnie church to underwrite the expenses connected with such ministerial supply. The Contact Committee also presents synod with a detailed schedule of the program for the conference with sister churches that is to be held in Grand Rapids in 1990.

Classis East is forwarding to synod an overture from Southeast church that requests synod "to approve a reorganization of classical boundaries to a three-classis church structure." This would result in a Classis Grand Rapids, a Classis Central, and a Classis West. The grounds are that there are enough congregations to make this feasible; that such a structure gives better balance to synod; that it allows for broader representation at synod; that it lessens the work of the annual church visitation; and that it would save money in travelling on church work. Classis East approved the concept, but disapproved the form of the actual restructuring suggested by

Southeast. We have asked Professor H. C. Hoeksema to comment on this overture. His analysis appears elsewhere in this issue.

Synod will consider several overtures. South Holland asks synod to discontinue the practice of reading the entire synodical agenda aloud at synod. Lynden requests that the form of ordination of elders and deacons be changed to eliding the words, "And, ye poor, be poor in spirit, and deport yourselves respectfully towards your benefactors," through the quotation from Ephesians 4. Lynden also wants the first question of the form for public confession of faith changed by the insertion of the name of Jesus Christ, so that the question ends, "... true and complete doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ." A member is over-turing synod to recommend to all the churches to make two changes in the form in which we confess the Apostles Creed: "quick" is to be changed to "liv-

ing"; and "Holy Ghost" is to be changed to "Holy Spirit."

Those in charge of these statistics report the happy news that the denomination continues to grow numerically. We are fifty-seven families larger today than we were a year ago. Our total membership is 1,323 families.

Synod is important to every member of the PRC. By definition, its business consists of "ecclesiastical matters," i.e., matters that belong to the life and labor of Christ's church in the world. Synod's decisions are binding upon all the churches in the denomination. What especially commends the synod to our prayers is that it expresses the unity of the church. Synod is not the church. The local congregation is the church. But as the assembly of elders delegated by all the congregations of the PRC, through the classes, synod manifests the precious unity of the church of Christ. Our unity is not merely organizational. It is not spurious. For as the delegates

will declare in the always moving ceremony at the beginning of synod, "of all the marks by which the true church distinguishes itself from all human societies, the confession of the truth must be mentioned in the first place." And the PRC, in the mercy of God, can declare in all good conscience before God, that they are united in the truth. The delegates to synod will declare from the heart that they believe all the articles and expressions of doctrine of the Reformed creeds to be the true expression of their faith. The confessions are the three forms of our unity. In this unity the synod will do the work of the churches for the glory of God and for the churches' good. In this unity is strength for promoting the cause of the Reformed faith at home and abroad.

May the Lord Jesus, the head of the church, give wisdom to the delegates and advisors and bless the synod of the PRC, 1989.
-DJE □

Letters

Thank you for your fine contribution to the Reformed witness with *The Standard Bearer*. I appreciate the diversity that there is even within the Reformed faith. Because of the diversity we often take exception to that which we read. I believe that the answer to "May the Deserted Believer Remarry?" (April 15, 1989) missed the mark. The thrust of the article was that although the deserted believer may not be in bondage to the one who deserted him/her, he is still bound to such a person. In

other words he/she is not free to divorce or to remarry.

It is true that the word used in I Corinthians 7:15 (*douloō*) is the stronger word indicating bondage or slavery. It comes from the same root word for slave (*doulos*). But that does not exclude the idea that a deserted believer is set free from the bonds or bondage of marriage. In fact the immediate context dictates such a view. In the verses just prior, Paul counsels his readers that, in a marriage situation, if an unbelieving partner is

willing to live with the believing partner then the believer must not divorce his/her spouse. Then verse 15 begins with the word "but." In other words, "In contrast" to this situation where the partner should not divorce his mate, now when the believer has been deserted, divorce is a possibility, in order that he/she may not be under bondage.

This also happens to be the viewpoint of John Calvin in his commentary of I Corinthians. Speaking of this verse he says, "This is the second department of

his statement, in which he sets at liberty a believing husband, who is prepared to dwell with an unbelieving wife, but is rejected by her . . ." No doubt the authors of the Westminster Confession of Faith were influenced by John Calvin's statement.

So although there may be some room for diversity of interpretations on this passage, considering the context and the solid exegesis of the past it seems likely that Paul is setting at liberty (as Calvin says) the believing partner. This would mean that the believer is free to remarry or else he would not have been truly set at liberty.

(Rev.) Roger Gelwicks
Ft. Wayne, IN

Response

I Corinthians 7:15 reads: "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."

The words, "is not under bondage," do not describe, and cannot describe, the marriage-bond, as though the apostle wrote that the deserted believer is no longer married. Marriage is not "bondage" (slavery). Marriage is a "bond" (connection). What the words, "is not under bondage," do refer to, I explained in the April 15, 1989 issue of *The SB*, and will not repeat here.

That Paul is not giving the deserted believer a right to divorce his or her mate is also evident from the fact that no action on the part of the believer is either stated or alluded to. The believer takes no action whatever. He merely "lets the unbeliever depart."

The interpretation that finds a ground for remarriage in I Corinthians 7:15 is contradicted by verse 39 of the same chapter, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom

she will . . ." The deserting mate is not dead. Therefore, the believer is still bound to her husband. She is not at liberty to remarry.

The interpretation that finds a ground for divorce in the text is contradicted by Matthew 5:32: "whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery . . ." There is one ground, and one only, for Biblical divorce: fornication.

Scripture's clear teaching that marriage is a life-long, unbreakable bond compels us, regretfully, to differ with Calvin on the matter of the right of remarriage while the original mate yet lives.

The scandalous prevalence of divorce and remarriage in Protestant churches in our day — destructive of covenant homes and children, shameful before a watching world, and dishonoring to God — is additional motivation to maintain the Biblical norm, without compromise. -DJE □

Contribution

Prof. Homer Hoeksema

Caution, Go Slowly (As To Changing Classical Boundaries)

Is it time to grow up as a denomination?

The Consistory of Southeast Church, Grand Rapids, thinks so. And so, too, does Classis East, though apparently with some reservations.

Prof. Hoeksema is professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

I am also inclined to agree, though also with some reservations, as I hope to make plain.

Coming to our 1989 Synod is an overture from Southeast to reorganize our churches into a 3-classis structure. For this overture the following grounds are offered: "1. There are enough congregations in the denomination to make such a structure feasible (sic). 2. Such a structure gives a better balance to a synodical

gathering, by providing representatives from two uninvolved classes to contribute to the discussion and decision of controversial matters decided in the other classis. 3. A three-classis structure would allow a broader representation at Synod. a. This brings more men from different geographical areas closer to the common work of the denomination. b. Such broader representation could provide the advantage

of increasing denominational consciousness in the common labors of the denomination. 4. Church visitation would be much less strenuous, involving much less travel for the church visitors. (There were two sub-points added here, which I have omitted to save space. HCH) 5. Such a structure would probably result in cost savings for travel, with most of the savings seen in the 'Central Classis.'" This part of the overture was approved in principle by Classis East.

The second part of the overture is a proposal for the new classical constituency. Rather than quote the whole outline, let me explain that it proposes to create a Classis Central by taking Kalamazoo, Michigan, Wyckoff, New Jersey, and Norristown, Pennsylvania away from Classis East, and by taking Houston, Texas, Randolph, Wisconsin, Pella, Iowa, South Holland, Illinois, Peace (Lynwood, Illinois), the future Northwest Chicago (This is written prior to any word here in Tasmania about its organization.) away from Classis West. This proposed alignment was not approved by Classis East.

The third part of Southeast's overture was a proposal to change the rules of Synod so that from each classis there will be three ministers and three elders instead of the present four. Classis East decided not to express itself re the matter of the number of delegates to Synod on the ground that "Synod itself must change or alter its own rules." This ground is rather surprising to me. After all, the fixing of classical boundaries and the constituting of new classes are also matters for synodical determination (cf. Article VI of our corporate by-laws). Besides, what Classis East cites as a ground surely does not preclude an overture from an individual, a consistory, or a classis.

A Bit of History

This is not the first time that the matter of a realignment of the classes has come up in the history of our churches.

Southeast's overture makes reference to an overture in 1958 and a decision in 1959 in which an earlier proposal to have three classes was rejected.

Before that time, of course, the classical boundaries were actually shifted in the period following the schism of 1953. From 1940, when we first had a synod, to 1953 the boundary between Classis East and Classis West was the Mississippi River. Through the schism, however, Classis West was numerically devastated. Immediately after the schism Classis West was left with the churches of Doon, Edgerton, Hull, Lynden, and Redlands. At the time of the Synod of 1954 it was impossible to send a full ministerial delegation: for there were only three ministers in the entire classis — the Rev. H. H. Kuiper (Redlands), the Rev. H. Veldman (Edgerton), and myself (Doon). Hence, in that period the eastern boundary of Classis West was shifted to the eastern boundary of the State of Illinois, so that the churches of Oak Lawn, Randolph, and South Holland were added to Classis West to make it a viable classis. And there the boundary has remained ever since, though the constituency of both Classis East and Classis West has changed and grown very much since those dark days.

I may also point out in this connection that the Southeast overture in its second ground points out only one problem which sometimes arises from a two-classis system. In the 1951-'53 period we had a situation in which we were faced with a synodical and denominational matter, the Declaration of Principles. And the two classes, East and West, were at almost total

loggerheads on this issue. A three (or more) classis system would also be helpful in such a situation.

Some Evaluation And Suggestions

In my opinion the overture (with the decisions of Classis East) deserves some careful attention. It must be fleshed out and revamped somewhat. But I believe synod should do this, and then refer it to the two classes and to the churches for consideration and comment, so that a final decision can be made at the Synod of 1990, D.V.

However, I have a few suggestions for consideration.

In the first place, the question is not so much whether there are "enough congregations" to make a change feasible. If it is a matter of mere numbers, it is easy to see that with 27 congregations we can easily have three classes of nine churches each. But the question is whether those 27 congregations are of such a *geographical distribution* as to make the change feasible. The plan proposed by Southeast does a bit of gerrymandering to make it appear feasible. And Classis East has proposed no substitute plan. Any proposal adopted by Synod and sent to the churches for consideration will have to include a good plan.

In the second place, I wish to stress that if a change is made, the Synod must define *new geographical boundaries* between the classes. The Southeast overture speaks of "classical boundaries" in its first point. But in part "B" it seems to forget this and to create a Classis Central without regard to geographical boundaries but on the basis of convenient and economical air travel. Besides, it certainly makes neither geographic nor economic sense to send Kalamazoo off to a proposed Classis Central when it is only 50 miles from Grand

Rapids. No, Synod must propose new geographical boundaries, submit these to the churches for consideration, and then make a final decision in 1990.

In the third place, it seems to me that the Southeast overture pays little attention to the question whether a realignment would be good for the classes, but gives most of its attention to the benefits for our synods. A point is made about easing the work of church visitation. But the work of church visitation could very well be eased by appointing more church visitors in each classis, something that is certainly allowed by the Church Order. But would a realignment be better for the classes? That question should be considered. There are probably arguments both for and against on that question. The classes would tend to be smaller and able to labor more efficiently. Churches of a given area tend to be similar in character and to have similar problems. Somewhat less travel might be involved, given the right realignment. But let synod and the classes and churches consider this question.

In the fourth place, I doubt very much whether any great financial savings would be involved in a realignment of whatever description. Neither, however, do I think that the costs will be so much greater as to constitute a fundamental consideration. Money should not be a deciding factor.

Finally, I believe that with a three-classis structure we should definitely *not* reduce the size of synodical delegations. With three classes, we could have a synod of 24 delegates. To reduce this to 18 delegates would largely defeat one of the purposes of the overture, it seems to me.

Some Suggestions For New Boundaries

Keeping the preceding comments in mind, a three-classis arrangement might be as follows:

Classis Rocky Mountain:

1. Eastern boundaries: the east boundaries of: the Province of Alberta, the States of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas.

2. Constituency: Isabel, South Dakota; Houston, Texas; Loveland, Colorado; Edmonton, Alberta; Lacombe, Alberta; Lynden, Washington; Redlands, California. (7 congregations)

Classis Midwest:

1. Eastern boundaries: the east boundaries of: the Province of Saskatchewan, the States of Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana.

2. Constituency: Randolph, Wisconsin; South Holland, Peace, Bethel, Illinois; Edgerton, Minnesota; Doon, Hull, Pella, Iowa. (8 congregations)

Classis East:

1. Eastern boundary: the Atlantic Ocean.

2. Constituency: First, Southeast, Southwest, Byron Center, Hope, Grand Rapids; Grandville, Faith (Jenison), Hudsonville, Holland, Kalamazoo, Wyckoff (New Jersey), Norristown (Pennsylvania). (12 congregations)

Now the obvious flaw in the above alignment is that Classis East remains unchanged and is overwhelmingly larger than the other two. An alternative might be to divide Classis East, and thus have a 4-classis alignment, with six synodical delegates from each classis. Such an alignment could be as follows:

Classis Western Michigan:

1. Boundaries: the east boundaries of Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia; all of Michigan west of Byron Center Avenue extended north and south; all of the Province of Ontario.

2. Constituency: Holland, Hudsonville, Faith, Grandville, Hope, Southwest. (6 congregations)

Classis East:

1. Boundaries: all of Michigan east of Byron Center Avenue extended; the remaining provinces of Canada, the east boundaries of Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia.

2. Constituency: Byron Center, First (Grand Rapids), Southeast, Kalamazoo, Norristown (Pennsylvania), Wyckoff (New Jersey). (6 congregations)

The obvious flaw of this plan is that these two classes would be rather small. But we could be optimistic and expect that both will grow in numbers of congregations.

One more suggestion: the ideal would be to have a home missionary in every classis. □

God Gathers

God spoke and said to those who thronged his throne,
"Who will go forth to give my child birth?"

And Life replied, "As a gift from thee alone,
I will go down and make him on the earth."

God spoke again and said, "My child's lost;
Who will find and bring him back to me?"

And Grace replied "Since Christ has paid the cost
I will save and draw him close to thee."

God spoke and said, "My child's place is made;
I want him taken to his mansion bright.

Death, bring him here." And
Death obeyed,
And tore the trembling child from dark to light.

From time's beginning to its end,
God makes
His Church, defends, preserves, to glory takes.

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

Walking in the Light

Prof. Herman Hanko

Lying (1)

The problem of lying has always been a subject of discussion and a source of disagreement in the church. This is not because Scripture is not clear on the fact that lying is wrong; even the person who has but a passing acquaintance with Scripture knows that the lie is condemned as being contrary to the will of God and unacceptable in the life of the sanctified child of God. The problem really arises out of the fact that Scripture itself records instances of lying which are not specifically condemned on the pages of Holy Writ; and this seems to suggest that, under certain circumstances, lying can be acceptable.

That lying is a problem of no little importance is evident from the fact that even among unbelievers attention is paid to this growing characteristic of modern life. A couple of years ago, in its February 23, 1987 issue, *U.S. News & World Report* devoted a feature article of eight pages to this subject under the title, "A Nation of Liars?" The subtitle read: "Government officials dissemble. Scientists falsify research. Workers alter career credentials to get jobs. What's going on here? The answer, a growing number of social critics fear, is an alarming decline in basic honesty."

To the list of lies which *U.S. News & World Report* mentions could, of course, be added many more instances of lying. People lie in their income tax returns. Students lie in their applications for financial aid. Companies lie in their commercials aired over TV and radio. Doctors lie to their patients. Welfare recipients lie to social agencies. Criminals lie to judges, courts, and probation authorities. Lawyers lie in their defense of criminals in the courts. Students cheat on tests, exams, and homework. The list could go on and on. *U.S. News & World Report* even suggests the possibility that the prevalence of lying is rooted deeply in the changing social fabric of the country. Where once basic honesty was accepted and a man's word could, generally speaking, be relied on, the shift from education in moral values and the breakdown of family life have resulted in a nation of liars who are willing to lie for reasons of cowardice, self-advancement, and the desire to defame their neighbors. The lie has now been accepted as a normal part of life and little thought is given to it any longer, except that people have become cynical about everything they hear from government, big business, employers, and their fellow men.

In this respect also the child of God is called to live the life of the antithesis and "speak the

truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15, 25).

But even in the Christian's calling to speak the truth, problems arise. Does not God's Word itself approve of lies under certain circumstances? Scripture tells us that Rahab lied to the police when they came to her house looking for the spies (Joshua 2:3-6), and Scripture calls her a woman of faith (Hebrews 11:31, James 2:25). The midwives lied to the servants of Pharaoh to save the male children of the Israelites, but were blessed by God (Exodus 1:17-21). The woman of Bahurim lied to the servants of Absalom when Jonathan and Ahimaaz were hid in the well of their farm as they were carrying a message of Hushai to David, a message which was instrumental in saving David's life (II Samuel 17:20).

These instances of Scripture are often cited to prove the point that, under certain circumstances, a lie is not only justifiable, but also pleasing in God's sight. And, following this line of reasoning, it is argued that circumstances must dictate when we tell the truth and when we are permitted to lie. For example, in times of war, lying is not wrong. When the Netherlands was occupied by the Nazis, many Dutch hid Jews and downed allied pilots in their homes and lied to storm troopers who came to their doors looking for these escapees. Spies are, in the very nature of their work, required to live a lie — just as the

Prof. Hanko is professor of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

spies did who searched the land of Canaan prior to the conquest. This same line of reasoning is used to justify lying to a desperately ill patient if the knowledge of the seriousness of the illness would make the patient worse. It is used to justify lying to the authorities in government if the goal is the protection of the innocent. Ministers lie to the government if their churches are being used to hide illegal aliens, and this is done in the name of a higher justice which seeks the welfare of the oppressed and downtrodden. Pro-life people lie to government officials when their campaigns against abortion result in the bombing of abortion clinics. A higher standard of right and wrong requires us to lie under certain instances. A noble end justifies a wrong means to attain it.

This idea can, of course, be carried to various extremes. I remember reading in a book some time ago that the circumstances indeed had to dictate whether or not a person was actually telling a lie. The author used two illustrations. One was the illustration of a Dutch family which hid a downed airman in a closet in the house. When the Gestapo came to inquire whether a certain downed airman was in the home of this family, the father answered with a firm No. This, according to the author, was the truth because not a downed airman was hiding in the closet, but a quivering, fear-filled mass of cells. The other illustration was of a farmer who was watching his fields wither and die because of a severe drought. A visitor and the farmer were surveying the fields when rain began to fall, although it was a rather light drizzle. When the visitor commented on the fact that it was raining, the farmer responded with an emphatic No. The farmer was telling the truth

because the drizzle would do his crops no good, and, in relation to these crops, dying for lack of moisture, no rain was falling for the moisture was insufficient to do his crops any good. In such a way circumstances determine whether a statement is a lie or the truth.

In order to sort out these things, there are a few truths in Scripture which we must briefly mention.

The first of these is that God Himself is Truth. That is, He is Truth in Himself. God is Truth in Himself because truth is that which corresponds with reality, and God is Himself not only the highest Reality, but the only Reality. He is the eternal God Who alone has existence in Himself and the fountain and source of His existence within His own divine being.

Because He created all things as the revelation of Himself, created reality reveals this truth which is in God. Adam was formed in God's image so that He could know the truth of creation, know it as the truth of God, and speak that truth as God's prophet. For Adam truth was whatever conformed to the reality of God's revelation of Himself in the creation.

The lie originates with Satan. He came into Paradise to tempt Eve and he used the lie to persuade Eve to disobey God. He contradicted God's Word and accused God of lying when he said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4, 5). When Eve accepted this lie of Satan, she became a party in the lie and chose to stand with Satan in calling God a liar. This is why Jesus later accused the Pharisees: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will

do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). For this reason our Heidelberg Catechism tells us that the ninth commandment enjoins us to "avoid all sorts of lies and deceit, as the proper works of the devil" (Q. & A. 112).

The point is that the lie has now become the normal and only possible conduct of the sinner. It is in his very nature to lie. In fact, he can, apart from grace, do nothing but lie. He denies reality as it exists in creation as God's revelation for He denies God Himself. And he hates the truth as it is in Christ and revealed in the Scriptures. How clear this is to parents, for example, in the spiritual instruction of their children. It soon becomes evident to parents that lying comes naturally to children. They do not have to be taught to lie. They do not have to be given special instruction in the art of lying. They know how to lie without being told. Almost from the first moment they are able to communicate, they lie. To teach them to tell the truth is the difficult thing. Every effort must be bent to do this, and yet parents often feel as if they are running against a stone wall, for to tell the truth goes contrary to the entire nature of a child. To teach a child to tell the truth is like forcing a plant to grow towards the ground rather than towards the sun.

Christ is the revelation of the truth as it is in God. He even says of Himself: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6); and John says of Christ that "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). As the revelation of the truth, He is the revela-

tion of God as the God Who saves His people. Thus, through Him, the sanctified believer is given the spiritual power to tell the truth. Jesus prays, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). This surely means that Christ enables His people to know and love the truth as it is in Him and given to us in Scripture; i.e., to know the truth as a body of doctrine which is given to the church. But it also means that that same truth sanctifies, so that God's people are enabled to speak that truth, to speak so that all they say is in harmony with reality.

Scripture often equates darkness with the lie and light with the truth. The world lives in the darkness of the lie. God's people are the light of the world and are enabled to shine in this dark world as a light because the light of the truth shines through them. The truth which they confess and speak is that great light shining in a very dark place.

A brief survey of what Scripture has to say about lying will convince us that lying is always wrong.

Already in the law given by Moses, lying was condemned: "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another" (Leviticus 19:11). Proverbs speaks often of lying. In chapter 12:22 Solomon says, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight." In 24:28 we read: "Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause: and deceive not with thy lips." In 12:19 the truth and the lie are contrasted: "A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame." And in 12:19: "The lip of truth shall be established forever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment." The relation between lying and the breaking of the ninth commandment is clearly set forth in 14:5, 15: "A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies. A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies."

In chapter 6:16-19 lying is said to be one of seven sins which the Lord hates.

God's anger against lying is often expressed in Scripture. In Psalm 5:6, the Psalmist says, "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing (lies): the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man." God Himself speaks through the Psalmist in 119:63: "I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love." And the Psalmist prays, "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue" (Psalm 120:2). Ananias and Sapphira were killed because of their lies (Acts 5:3-5). And, again, in Proverbs, God says: "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish" (19:9).

From all this it is clear that Scripture forbids lying without any exception and lying ought to have no place in the life of God's people. God's fierce anger rests upon the liar, for He hates all forms of lying. The truth alone must always be found in the mouths of God's people. □

Church and State

Mr. James Lanting

Court Affirms Conscientious Objection to Labor Unions

The organized labor movement in this country has always been characterized by rebellion, violence, greed, and extortion.

Mr. Lanting, a member of South Holland Protestant Reformed Church, is a practicing attorney.

Union corruption has been highlighted recently because of the federal government's suit against the notorious Teamster's union. Using federal racketeering laws, the U.S. attorney general's office sought to wrest control of the 1.6 million-member union from Mafia

domination and place control of Teamster assets and elections in the hands of a court-appointed trustee.

Federal prosecutors claimed the suit was the culmination of 30 years of effort by the government to break the "devil's pact"

the Teamster leadership had made with the Mafia. Government documents filed in the case alleged the Teamsters had been dominated by organized crime through a "campaign of fear" that included 20 murders, scores of bombings, beatings, bribes, extortion, and theft. Twenty-six reputed mobsters were named as co-defendants. Government documents also noted that five of the Teamsters' recent presidents (including James "Jimmy" Hoffa, Roy Williams, and Jackie Presser) were all indicted for federal felonies. (Sadly, the government has recently settled this suit after gaining few meaningful concessions from the union.)

A Scandal. Such corruption and violence are not, of course, restricted to the Teamsters; all large labor unions today are infected with the same or similar evils. It is, therefore, nothing less than scandalous that most evangelical denominations suffer their communicant members to join, pay membership dues, and otherwise support these sordid and anti-Christian organizations.

This was not always the case. Historically, many Reformed and Presbyterian denominations condemned and forbade union membership. But today, tragically enough, almost all evangelical churches have capitulated to "pew pressure" and tolerate union membership. Curiously, these timorous churches do not argue that Christian union members aren't corporately responsible for the interminable union corruption and rebellion. Rather, they weakly suggest that, after all, this is an imperfect and fallen world where prohibition of union membership would result in unreasonable hardship and essentially preclude or exclude Christians from many union-controlled occupations.

Costly Convictions. A few denominations, however, including the Protestant Reformed Churches, have consistently and resolutely insisted that membership in the body of Christ and membership in godless labor unions are incompatible. And this conviction has been terribly costly for some. Many fathers of large families, enjoying jobs with seniority built upon decades of diligent work, lost it all when they refused to join and support the "brotherhood" after union takeovers in their shops and factories. Countless others were forced to avoid attractive occupational preferences because these trades were tightly controlled by unions requiring membership and allegiance as a condition of apprenticeship.

It has become increasingly clear, however, that these hardships are no longer necessary, at least for the present. Recent federal laws and court decisions have firmly established that an employee holding sincere religious beliefs opposing union membership must be exempted from joining and paying dues to a labor union.

Exemption under the NLRA.

In 1980, Congress enacted Section 19 of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). This law states that no worker may be forced to join or pay dues to a labor union if he is a member of a church "which has historically held conscientious objections to joining or financially supporting labor organizations" (see box). Such a conscientious objector is, however, required to pay the equivalent of union dues to an approved charity.

The sad irony is, however, that this very powerful "right to work" provision in the federal law is useless to many evangelical Christians. This is because when this law was passed in 1980, their churches and denomi-

nations no longer embraced "conscientious objections" to labor unions, a necessary requirement for this exemption. Thus, although members of churches who have "historically held" objections to labor unions are protected, the members of many evangelical denominations were unfortunately outside the purview of this important law.

Exemption under the Civil Rights Act. But what about these conscientious objectors who do not belong to churches which traditionally oppose union membership? A recent Supreme Court ruling has affirmed the right of a worker to withhold union dues, *even though her church did not share her religious convictions* (*Intern. Ass'n. of Machinists v. Boeing Co.*, 1988).

Thomasine Nichols, an employee of the Boeing Co.'s "closed shop" in Seattle, refused on religious grounds to pay dues to the Machinist & Aerospace Workers Union. The union sued her and Boeing, arguing that Nichols should be fired for violating the "closed shop" agreement. Nichols was a member of Bethel Temple, a Seattle church which permitted parishioners to join and support labor unions. She could not, therefore, appeal to Section 19 of the NLRA.

Boeing and Nichols, however, asserted protection under *another* federal law — the "religious accommodation" provisions of the 1972 amendment to the Civil Rights Act which require employers to take reasonable steps to accommodate their employees' religious beliefs (see box). Nichols had offered to contribute to a charity a monthly sum equivalent to union dues and demanded that Boeing accommodate her personal religious views that the Bible forbids membership in and support of labor unions.

The union countered, however, that the NLRA requirement that the worker belong to a church that traditionally opposed labor unions superseded the broader "religious accommodation" provisions of the Civil Rights Act. The union also contended that employer/union accommodation of such personal religious convictions violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Finally, the union argued that non-payment of union dues by religious objectors would work an "undue hardship" on the unions.

The Supreme Court disagreed. Affirming Nichols' right to withhold her union dues because of religious convictions, the Court ruled that membership in a church that "historically opposed" labor unions is not a requirement under the "religious accommodation" provisions of the unrelated Civil Rights Act. The Court also rejected the union's argument that this constituted the establishment of religion. Finally, the Court ruled

that nothing less than "widespread refusal" to pay dues would work undue hardship on the unions.

The Right to Work. One of the most valuable and important rights of a citizen is his right to work. Compulsory union membership has robbed many sensitive Christians of this fundamental right in the past. But it is now abundantly clear that, for the present anyway, a Christian cannot be forced to abandon his employment or occupational preference because of compulsory union membership demands.

In summary, under Section 19 of the NLRA, a worker who has membership in a church which has "historically held conscientious objection" to labor unions is exempt from union membership and dues. But more importantly, at least for evangelical Christians who belong to denominations who have abandoned their objections to unions, the "religious accommodation" provision of the much broader Civil Rights Act

also requires all employers and unions to exempt workers who sincerely hold personal religious convictions opposing unions. Under both laws, the conscientious objector must contribute a sum equal to union dues to an agreed charity.

It is remarkable that the apostle Paul often took advantage of the liberties and rights afforded him as a Roman citizen. We contemporary evangelical Reformed Christians should likewise aggressively assert all the rights and liberties we still enjoy as citizens. One such important freedom deserving our attention is the right to work free from the avaricious impositions of labor unions in this country. □

Strength, Fortress, Refuge

Dear Refuge of my weary soul,
On thee, when sorrows rise,
On thee, when waves of trouble
roll,
My fainting hope relies.

To thee I tell each rising grief,
For thou alone canst heal;
Thy word can bring a sweet relief
For every pain I feel.

But oh, when gloomy doubts
prevail,
I fear to call thee mine;
The springs of comfort seem to fail,
And all my hopes decline.

Yet, gracious God, where shall I
flee?

Thou art my only trust;
And still my soul would cleave to
thee,
Though prostrate in the dust.

Thy mercy-seat is open still,
Here let my soul retreat,
With humble hope attend thy will,
And wait beneath thy feet.

—Anne Steele
S.B. April 15, 1928

Federal Laws Exempt Union Objectors

Two unrelated federal laws now exempt religious conscientious objectors from supporting labor unions. See text above for an explanation of these laws which provide in pertinent part:

Section 19 of the NLRA

"Any employee who is a member of and adheres to established and traditional tenets or teachings of a bona fide religion, body, or sect which has historically held conscientious objections to joining or financially supporting labor organizations shall not be required to join or financially support any labor organization as a condition of employment; except that such employee may be required . . . to pay sums equal to such dues and initiation fees to a nonreligious, nonlabor organization charitable fund . . ." 29 U.S.C. Section 169.

Title VII, Civil Rights Act

"The term 'religion' includes all aspects of religious observance and practice, as well as belief, unless an employer demonstrates that he is unable to reasonably accommodate to an employee's or prospective employee's religious observance or practice without undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business." 42 U.S.C. Section 2000e (j).

Bible Study Guide

Rev. Jason Kortering

I and II Samuel — The Beginnings of the Kingdom

We now turn our attention to the next book in the section of the Old Testament designated as "The Former Prophets." For this reason we do not treat Ruth now, but will take that up in connection with the section designated as "The Writings." The Former Prophets include Joshua, Judges, both books of Samuel, and both of Kings.

NAME-AUTHOR-DATE

You may notice that in our King James Bibles there is inserted under the title, "The First Book of Samuel," the words, "otherwise called the First Book of the Kings." The reason for this insertion is that in the Septuagint Bible (O.T. Hebrew translated into Greek), the books of I and II Samuel and I and II Kings are called I, II, III, IV Book of Kingdoms; and they are called I, II, III, IV Book of Kings in the Latin Vulgate. The earliest Hebrew Bibles used Samuel and Kings which our King James follows.

The two books under present consideration, I and II Samuel, are called that because of the prominence that Samuel has in the events recorded. The historical events mentioned in these books span a period of time

from Samuel through David, approximately 125 years, from 1140 B.C. to 1015 B.C. Obviously, Samuel did not live during this entire period. Rather, he forms the important link between the period of the judges and the kings. He was the one who wrestled with the consequences of evil that accompanied the judges and had to deal with Israel's request to have a king, "like the other nations had." He was the one who anointed both Saul and David to fill that important office in Israel.

According to Jewish tradition, Samuel was the author of these books. That he wrote some of the material is a possibility, but it is obvious that he could not have written all. A few things enter into consideration on this point. Since it spans a period of history far beyond the average life span of any one man, the author must be someone other than Samuel. Keil and Delitzsch in their Commentary suggest,

With regard to the origin of the books of Samuel, all that can be maintained with certainty is, that they were not written till after the division of the kingdom under Solomon's successor. This is evident from the remark in I Sam. 27:6, that, "Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day". For although David was king over the tribe of Judah alone for seven years, it was not till after the falling away of the

ten tribes from the house of David that there were really, "kings of Judah". On the other hand, nothing can be inferred with certainty respecting the date of composition, either from the distinction drawn between Israel and Judah in I Sam. 11:8, 17:52, 18:16, II Sam. 3:10, 24:1 which evidently existed as early as the time of David, as we may see from II Sam. 2:9, 10, 5:1-5, 19:41, 20:2; or from the formula, "to this day" which we find in I Sam. 5:5, 6:18, 30:25, II Sam. 4:3, 6:18, 18:18, since the duration of the facts to which it is applied is altogether unknown; or lastly from such passages as I Sam. 9:9, II Sam. 13:18, where explanations are given of expressions and customs belonging to the times of Saul and David, as it is quite possible that they may have been altogether changed by the time of Solomon. In general, the contents and style of the books point to the earliest times after the division of the kingdom; since we find no allusions whatever to the decay of the kingdoms which afterwards took place.

In all likelihood, Samuel and others wrote down important facts which became the source material for the author to use. We may draw this conclusion from II Chronicles 29:29: "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and

Rev. Kortering is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Grandville, Michigan.

his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries."

As we have emphasized before, the importance of knowing the author and exact circumstances of writing are not crucial to us in our accepting the Divine Authorship. If the Holy Spirit considered it important for us to know who wrote what, He would have made that known. The emphasis must not be on man, but upon God, Who has given us His Word through human agency.

PURPOSE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

We can begin by pointing out that these books have historical value, that is, they convey to us details of a period of history that spans the end of the period of the judges and includes the lifetime of Samuel, Saul, and David. The unity of this historical account demonstrates that the notion of higher criticism that there are different authors at different periods of time is wrong. This is historical accounting at its best. We read these books with interest and learn much about the characters that are mentioned, the times in which they lived, the political and social upheaval involved. We learn more about the sad spiritual conditions of the time of judges and how this ends in the moral decadence of the house of Eli.

The purpose of these books, however, is not understood on this level alone. This is sacred writing, its contents are the Holy Bible. God is speaking to us in these pages, and we do well to ask, what is God saying to us?

The critical issue in this history is the theocracy. This term describes God's rule over Israel. He was their king. When God raised up Samuel, Samuel instituted the proper worship of Jehovah in the tabernacle at Shiloh. Once more he called the

people to turn from idol gods and follow the true God, Jehovah. God was recognized as God. However, the opposition persisted. He had to deal with Eli and his evil sons. He had to deal with the influence of the idol gods and the presence of the Philistines. Another indication of the depravity of the people was when they requested a king, "like the other nations have." There was no doubt but that the nation was in complete disarray. There was a critical lack of leadership. From a natural point of view, Israel could surely use a good king to guide them in victory over their enemies and to organize their public life. Why was there confusion and disarray? Was it because God was unable to function as a king? The answer is obvious: God was faithful, but the people did not want Him to be their king. The real issue was the spiritual condition of Israel. They had rejected God and followed after the idol gods of the nations that surrounded them and dwelt among them.

In dealing with such a request for a king, Samuel shows his real spiritual fervor. He was appalled, he was hurt. Yes, he associated his own leadership with Jehovah. He took it personally, and recognized that rejection of Jehovah was rejection of Samuel. God reminded him that Israel's rejection of Jehovah God was the real issue. The people had shown beyond a shadow of doubt that they were not worthy of Jehovah as their king. When they asked for another king, "like the other nations," they expressed it boldly before God and His prophet.

The astounding thing is that God granted their request. True, it was accompanied with warnings that such a king would hurt them, he would take their children and their possessions and abuse them. This became

real in the history of their first king, Saul, and in many subsequent ones. What God is doing in this history is meeting Israel on the level of their understanding. He is dealing with them as wayward children. He says, all right, you want a king, you will have one and you will have to learn the lessons of life the hard way. But, there is more. God will turn this for good. He will give them a greater understanding of the theocracy in giving them a real king. He will put "His King" upon His holy hill in Zion. Ultimately, God is teaching Israel and us through this history, that Christ, the King, is the only hope of Israel. The rule of God can be maintained upon a sinful people only in Jesus Christ their King.

To accomplish this, God gave them David and Solomon, the great types of Jesus Christ. Jehovah still is THE King, He is the sovereign God, Creator and Lord over all men, especially over His people. He administers His kingdom through His Son, Jesus Christ. Israel received this Son in the person of David and Solomon. As God, He turns their evil request for good for the sake of the gospel.

New Subscribers! You can receive the Standard Bearer for the first year for half price, \$6.00!

THE MAIN DIVISIONS OF THESE BOOKS

We entitled this article, *The Beginnings of the Kingdom*. This applies here, because the two books of Samuel deal with the transition from the judges to the kings. God will give them a king, but it will come in the way of gradual transition. Samuel must anoint not only Saul, but also

David; and David is not complete without Solomon. Hence these two books deal with the *beginnings* of the kingdom.

We will follow in our outline the three main divisions that cover these two books. These divisions simply follow the leading characters involved. In chapters 1-12 we see that in Samuel the theocracy is given its

proper place; in chapters 13-31 we have an accounting of the history of the kingdom of Israel under the rule of Saul; and in II Samuel chapters 1-24 we have the history of David's rule as king. There are many details of history that we will have to group together in order to keep this outline reasonably brief. □

Guided Into All Truth

Rev. Charles Terpstra

Augustine and the Pelagian Heresy (2)

In our last segment we ended by considering briefly the heresy of the British monk Pelagius. We noted that the heart of his error was the denial of man's need for the sovereign work of God's grace in saving him. According to Pelagius natural man has God's gift of free-will and that was all he needed. By directing his will in the right way the natural man could make himself good in the eyes of God and do the good God required of him. He was not a dead sinner who depended on an efficacious operation of God in the heart.

It was on account of this outright attack on God's grace that Augustine, the great bishop of Hippo, took to holy arms. As soon as the strange breezes of doctrine from the Pelagian camp blew into North Africa, this ardent servant of the Lord took up

the sword of the Spirit in sermons, treatises, and personal letters — even though at the time he was busily engaged in another controversy, that against the Donatists. Augustine sensed at once the error of Pelagius and its danger to the church, and knew that it needed immediate attention. He was to devote the next twenty years of his life to the attention of this heresy.

THE SPIRIT'S PREPARATION OF AUGUSTINE

It is not difficult to find out why Augustine rose to contend with this heresy so quickly and vigorously. This was due to the fact that the Spirit of truth had prepared him for the defense and development of the "theology of grace" in an extraordinary way. In the first place, the Spirit prepared Augustine *naturally* for this task. Augustine was a man of brilliant mind and possessed outstanding gifts in logic and speech. He was trained in the art of rhetoric (speaking and writing), and in the early part of his life

entered this career, teaching it in the cities of Tagaste, Carthage, Rome, and Milan. These natural skills and training the Spirit put to use for the cause of the gospel against the Pelagian heresy.

Augustine was able to grasp the error of Pelagius and expose it clearly in speech and writing because the Spirit had equipped him with these natural abilities. Augustine's literary output during the Pelagian controversy alone is astounding — ten major treatises — in addition to countless sermons and letters!

But in the second place, the Spirit also prepared Augustine *spiritually* for his task. We have reference to his difficult journey to conversion. The road to becoming bishop in the church was anything but normal and smooth for Augustine. Born in A.D. 354 to a God-fearing mother, Monica, but a God-less father, Patricius, Augustine was as a child taught the Christian faith and practice by the example and word of his pious mother.

Rev. Terpstra is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.

But during the period of his formal education outside the home Augustine gradually strayed from his Christian up-bringing and fell deeply into the vain philosophies and wicked lifestyle of the world. For a time his life was a spiritual roller-coaster, as he dabbled in Manichaeism, skepticism, Neoplatonism, and immorality, and yet found no joy and peace in any of these. Finally, in Milan, through the influence of the godly bishop Ambrose and in answer to his mother's prayers, Augustine was delivered from his bondage to sin and shown the light of truth by the Spirit. Consequently, he was catechized and then baptized on Easter Sunday in A.D. 387. He then went on to the city of Hippo, where he was ordained presbyter in A.D. 391, and five years later became bishop, in which position he continued until his death in 430.

It was in this way that Augustine was spiritually prepared to confront the Pelagian error. From his own life he knew well the depths of man's depravity and the wickedness of the human heart. But he had also tasted the power of God's grace, and knew that it was this alone — not his free-will — that had saved his soul from eternal ruin. When, therefore, Pelagius came out with his novelties, Augustine knew Pelagius was wrong because of the knowledge of his own sin and his own personal experience of the saving work of God's grace.

There is one thing more that should be noted concerning the Spirit's preparation of Augustine for the Pelagian controversy. That is that Augustine was led into an unswerving submission to and a deep understanding of the holy Scriptures. This too came about through Augustine's pre-conversion experience. When he fell in with the sect of the Manichees, he adopted their

critical approach to the Bible. But after a time he discovered the folly of their method and instead came to understand that the Bible had to be handled and received as the very Word of God. This had the effect of giving him a deep devotion to the Scriptures. Even before his conversion Augustine applied himself to a careful study of God's Word. But when through his conversion the light of truth fell upon his heart, he gave himself wholeheartedly to the study of the Scriptures. Hence, by the time the controversy broke out he was well-equipped to wield the Sword of the Spirit. With skillful exposition of the Word he exposed the lie of Pelagius and stated the truth of God.

AUGUSTINE'S WORK AGAINST THE PELAGIANS

The first point at which Augustine confronted the attack of Pelagius was on the doctrine of sin. This necessarily had to be the starting point. If Pelagius was right that man came into the world without original sin, but rather spiritually neutral with the power to do the good if he chose to do so, then Augustine would have to concede that the grace of God was not necessary; man could save himself. If, on the other hand, man was a sinner, born guilty and with a corrupt nature, then clearly man needed the grace of God to be saved and to do the good.

It was this latter that Augustine found to be the truth of Scripture. Repeatedly in his writings against the Pelagians he begins by pointing out that their fundamental error is a denial of sin and its effect on mankind. Hence, in his very first work against the Pelagians, "On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and On the Baptism of Infants" (A.D. 412), Augustine set out to prove the doctrine of original sin. He did this by arguing on the

basis of the baptism of infants. In contrast to the Pelagians who said that infants needed baptism only for consecration to God and not as a washing from sin, Augustine taught that infants need this washing precisely because of original sin. Pointing to Romans 5:12, he said that all infants have derived sin and death from Adam by natural descent, not by imitation. Therefore they have need of the Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. That, according to him, is what baptism implies. Thus he writes:

Now, seeing that they (i.e., the Pelagians -CJT) admit the necessity of baptizing infants, . . . they cannot avoid the further concession, that infants require the same benefits of the Mediator, in order that, being washed by the sacrament . . . , they might be reconciled to God, and so live in Him, be saved, and delivered, and redeemed, and enlightened. But from what, if not from death, and the vices, and guilt, and thralldom, and darkness of sin? And, inasmuch as they do not commit any sin in the tender age of infancy by their actual transgression, original sin only is left, The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, vol. V (all references in this article are from this volume -CJT), p. 30.

This truth of original sin Augustine also demonstrated clearly in a later work entitled "On the Grace of Christ, and On Original Sin" (A.D. 418). There he wrote:

Now, whoever maintains that human nature at any period required not the second Adam for its physician, because it was not corrupted in the first Adam, is convicted as an enemy to the grace of God How happens it, then, that the human nature, which first existed, is praised by these men as being so far less tainted with evil manners? How is it that they overlook the fact that men were even then sunk in so many intolerable sins, that, . . . the whole world was in God's just judgment destroyed by the flood . . . ? From the moment, then, when "by one man sinned entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death

passed upon all men, in whom all sinned", the entire mass of our nature was ruined beyond doubt, and fell into the possession of its destroyer, p. 249.

This meant that Pelagius' doctrine of the power of that natural man's free-will was a fabrication. Augustine showed that, while man had indeed been created with the gift of free-will such that he could choose to do and did do the good, in the Fall he lost this, and consequently all men since then have been born without this. Augustine did not deny that man acted freely; but he proved from Scripture that truth concerning the will of men that Luther later set forth against Erasmus, namely, that the will of the natural man is bound to sin and sin only; it has no ability to will or do the good. Accordingly, Augustine stated in his work "On the Spirit and the Letter" (A.D. 412):

A man's free-will, indeed, avails for nothing except to sin, if he knows not the way of truth; and even after his duty and his proper aim shall

begin to become known to him, unless he also takes delight in and feels love for it, he neither does his duty, nor sets about it, nor lives rightly, p. 85.

Having established the Scriptural teaching on the doctrine of sin, Augustine set the stage for the truth concerning the grace of God which alone restores the sinner and enables him to do what is pleasing to God. It was at this point that Augustine was most powerfully on the defensive and on the offensive. In treating the doctrine of God's sovereign grace he was above all concerned for the truth of God and the glory of His name. To deny the grace of God as the Pelagians did was for Augustine a most grievous offense. In one of his treatises he wrote:

For there are some persons who presume so much upon the free determination of the human will, as to suppose that it need not sin, and that we require no divine assistance Now how hurtful, and how pernicious and contrary to our salvation in Christ, and how violently adverse

to the religion itself in which we are instructed, and to the piety whereby we worship God . . . , "On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins", p. 44.

In another treatise Augustine was even more forceful:

For if natural capacity, by help of free will, is in itself sufficient both for discovering how one ought to live, and also for leading a holy life, then "Christ died in vain" Why also may I not myself exclaim? — nay, I will exclaim, and chide them with a Christian's sorrow, — "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by nature; ye are fallen from grace" "On Nature and Grace", p. 137.

God's sovereign grace — that was the theme defended and developed by Augustine in this controversy. This was his chief concern and reason for battling Pelagius and his followers. To him, only that faith which held to God's grace was the catholic Christian faith. Exactly what the "Doctor of grace" taught concerning this cardinal truth will have to wait until our next article. □

Book Reviews

THE INCARNATION, by Gordon H. Clark; The Trinity Foundation, 1988; 91 pp. plus appendixes; \$8.95 (Reviewed by the Editor)

This is a disturbing, and even distressing, book. Gordon H. Clark, renowned champion of Presbyterian orthodoxy, challenges the church's traditional and creedal doctrine of the incarnation, that Jesus is one person and that this person is the divine person of the eternal Son

of God. Clark argues that Jesus cannot be a real man like us unless He is a human person. Jesus, therefore, is both a divine person and a human person. John W. Robbins accurately expresses Clark's teaching in the concluding paragraph (written by Robbins because Clark died before completing the book), when he states:

Jesus Christ was and is both God and man, a divine person and a

human person. To deny either is to fall into error. (p. 78)

Clark is quite willing to criticize both the ecumenical and the Presbyterian creeds, which teach that Jesus has two natures in the unity of the one divine person. The manner of his criticism is cavalier. Having charged a "fatal flaw in the Chalcedonian Symbol," Clark tells us that "its bishop-authors did not explain, and probably did not themselves know the meanings

of 'rational soul,' 'consubstantial,' 'nature,' 'subsistence,' and above all 'person'" (p. 15). He treats the Westminster divines in similar fashion. Writing about the Westminster Confession's doctrine of God's infinity (Clark denies that God is infinite: "the Bible definitely says he is not," p. 60), Clark remarks that these "theologians . . . were not mathematicians and did not know what they were talking about" (p. 58). I am not so sure that the fathers at Chalcedon were such dummies regarding the person and natures of Christ, or that the divines of Westminster, mathematicians or not, were such ignoramuses concerning the infinity of the being of God. I am even less sure that the Spirit of Christ failed to lead the church into all the truth of the person and natures of Christ at Chalcedon, or into the truth of the infinity of the being of God at Dordt and Westminster.

A formidable logician, Clark nevertheless permits himself the logical fallacy of "poisoning the well" at the crucial point in his argument. As he is about to state his conclusion, that Jesus is a human person, Clark not only wards off the charge of Nestorianism (the heresy that Christ is two persons, condemned by the church at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431 and rejected in the orthodox statement of the incarnation by the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451), but also ascribes any such criticism of his, Clark's, doctrine to "unfriendly critics": "Some unfriendly critics will instantly brand the following defense of Christ's humanity as the heresy of Nestorianism" (p. 75). I am a friendly critic. But Clark's doctrine is the boldest, most advanced Nestorianism, suffering, fatally, from the weaknesses because of which the church rejected Nestorianism — its failure to unite the two

natures of the Savior and its inability to unify the work of redemption.

As though it clinches his argument that Christ is also a human person, Clark repeatedly raises the question, "Who suffered and died in the suffering and death of Jesus?" "On the cross Jesus said, 'I thirst.' No trinitarian Person could have said this because the Three Persons are pure incorporeal spirits . . . Who then, or what, thirsted on the cross?" (p. 73). "Let us then take it for granted that God cannot die. Now, if Christ be one divine person, no person was crucified and died. What then died on the cross?" (p. 69) Clark supposes that Chalcedonian orthodoxy has no answer to this question. Clark is mistaken. The answer is, "The person of the eternal Son of God suffered and died in the human nature." This is the wonder of the passion of Jesus Christ. This is also the reason why that suffering is of infinite worth and value, as the Canons of Dordt teach in II/3, 4. On the answer of Clark and Nestorius, that it was the human person of Jesus that suffered, the divine person was not involved, in which case the humanity of Jesus could never have endured the suffering of the infinite wrath of God. Also, even if the human person of Jesus did manage the suffering, that suffering does not have the worth that is necessary to satisfy the justice of God.

Clark also proposes his own, novel, and very peculiar definition of the term that is fundamental to trinitarian and incarnational doctrine, the term "person":

we shall define person as a composite of truths. A bit more exactly . . . the definition must be a composite of propositions (p. 54).

As three persons, God then is three composites of propositions. On this definition, it is not ob-

vious to me that a compound English sentence is not a person. Besides, since the word "composite" has as its basic meaning 'made up of parts,' Clark's definition seems to carry with it a challenge to the doctrine of the simplicity of God (the teaching that God's Being is not made up of parts).

Preachers and teachers in Reformed circles may well be reminded that the doctrine of the incarnation, like the related doctrine of the trinity, is being re-examined today, not only by the liberal left, but also by the conservative right. The point at which the traditional doctrine is being challenged is that of the full, real humanity of Jesus. This challenge calls for vigorous defense of the creedal doctrine of the church, as well as renewed study of the Scripture's teaching concerning the wonder of the Word's becoming flesh. □

REFORMING FUNDAMENTALISM: FULLER SEMINARY AND THE NEW EVANGELICALISM, by George M. Marsden (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 333 pp.; \$19.95, hardcover). Reviewed by the Editor.

This book is a fascinating history of Fuller Theological Seminary (in California) and at the same time of neo (new) - evangelicalism. As historian Marsden puts it, he uses "Fuller as a window through which to focus my study of recent evangelicalism and fundamentalism" (p. viii). Marsden traces the history of Fuller from its founding in 1947 by Charles E. Fuller (evangelist on "The Old Fashioned Revival Hour"), Harold J. Ockenga, Wilbur Smith, Carl Henry, Harold Lindsell, and others through its struggle in the 1960s over inerrancy (Fuller surrendered inerrancy) to its present status as a "mega-seminary." The

disclosure of the behind-the-scenes maneuverings of the main players is interesting enough (the reader sometimes has the feeling that he is guilty of invasion of privacy), but the significant issues played out by Fuller and the new evangelicalism over the past 40 years are more interesting still: the relationship of evangelicals to modern culture and liberal theological thought; the relationship of evangelicalism to fundamentalism; the relationship of evangelicalism to historic Presbyterianism as represented by Machen; the doctrine of Scripture; and even the question of the relationship of a seminary to the instituted church (Fuller is a completely independent school). Curious features emerge. One amusing aspect of the early movement was the tactic of the founders of Fuller to "put out a fleece" as they expressed it, referring to Gideon's seeking a sign from the Lord. Proceeding

with some proposed course of action depended upon a favorable sign in their lives. One surprising aspect of the movement in its early days was the notion of a group that included such thoroughly un-calvinistic men as Billy Graham that they were representing and carrying on the cause of the noble champion of Presbyterianism, J.G. Machen. The upshot of the story is that the new evangelicalism (and Fuller Seminary) is doctrinally, spiritually, and ecclesiastically bankrupt. Creedally impoverished to begin with, it has now abandoned the basic doctrine of the inspiration of Holy Scripture; it has sold out to the culture of this world, and is swept with every wind of doctrine; and there is no regard for the church institute. Given the influence of Fuller and of the new evangelicalism, however, this work is must reading. □

Clinging To Jesus

Close to Thee, my blessed Savior,
Keep me walking day by day;
Let me feel Thy presence with me,
Be my refuge all the way.

—S.B. May 1, 1928

Thy Will Is Mine

Dear Lord I cannot see
Where Thou art leading me!
I cannot tell if thorns or roses
strew the way;
My future is concealed;
Thou hast not yet revealed
Thy will in me, nor do I for the
knowledge pray.

What streams I have to cross
Of sorrow, pain or loss
Are not for me to fear — I shall not
be dismayed;

Content if Thou my Guide,
Art ever near my side,
That I may hear Thee whisper:
"Child, be not afraid."

—S.B. June 1, 1928

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

June 1, 1989

MINISTERIAL CALLS

Our Peace P.R.C. in Lynwood, IL formed a new trio: the Reverends W. Bekkering, B. Gritters, and G. Van Baren. From that three-some, Peace extended a call to Rev. Gritters.

The congregation of our Faith P.R.C. in Jenison, MI also met in April to call a pastor from the trio of the Revs. R. Dykstra, J.

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

Slopsema, and R. Van Overloop. From that group of three, Faith called Rev. J. Slopsema to come over and help them.

Rev. C. Haak, pastor of the Lynden, WA P.R.C. received and subsequently declined the call to serve as home missionary to the island of Jamaica. Rev. Haak also declined the call he had received from the Hope P.R.C. in Isabel, SD.

This also seems like a good place to insert some news about Rev. Bruinsma and his family. Current plans are for Rev. Bruin-

sma and family to arrive at the Kent County Airport on July 3. Rev. Bruinsma writes to the Holland, MI congregation that they have been shipping back a lot of their things with all the guests who have visited them recently. The house is looking pretty empty. So they definitely are on the homeward stretch. Rev. Bruinsma is also scheduled to preach a "farewell sermon" in First P.R.C. in Grand Rapids, MI in the evening service of July 16. Rev. Bruinsma and family will be on vacation until about

August 1 when, the Lord willing, he will begin his labors in our Holland P.R.C.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

On Sunday, April 23, the Faith P.R. Choral Society of our Faith Church in Jenison, MI presented their Spring Concert entitled "Hymns Triumphant." This was a choral suite based on forty-two traditional hymns. These hymns were presented in unifying medleys, relating each to a thought perfectly expressed in "The Lord's Prayer." In addition to being accompanied by the traditional organ, the choir was joined by several young people who played the Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Trumpet, French Horn, and a Tenor Saxophone. It made for an enjoyable evening.

In mid-April the congregation of our Grandville P.R.C. in Grandville, MI voted to go ahead and begin the actual building of their sanctuary. Grandville's building will be erected in three phases. The first phase consists of an auditorium and some classrooms. By the time you read this, the project should be well under way.

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of the First P.R.C. in Grand Rapids, MI was scheduled to hold a Spring Outing in mid-May. They planned a hayride, followed by a brat roast and a sing-a-long around the bonfire. When I saw that word "brat," I thought of brat as in unruly child. I think they meant brat as in bratwurst, a sausage of veal and pork.

If you live around Grand Rapids, MI, you are encouraged to turn on your radio Sunday mornings at 8:45 on WMAX, 1400 AM and listen to 15 minutes of fine Christian music sponsored by our Faith Church Evangelism Committee.

On Thursday, April 27, the Young People's Society of the

Southeast P.R.C. in Grand Rapids, MI sponsored their annual Potluck Supper.

On Saturday, April 8, the congregation of our Trinity P.R.C. in Houston, TX held a work bee. There was a lot of work to be done around the church and the bulletin in Trinity called for all the help they could get.

CONGREGATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The theme of this year's Young People's Convention, sponsored by the young people of our Hope Church in Walker, MI, is "Contentment."

The Reformed Witness Committee in Iowa sponsored a Spring Lecture, held this year on April 28 in the Edgerton P.R.C. in Edgerton, MN. Rev. De Vries spoke on "Man's Dominion over this Earth, or, Whatever Happened to the Cultural Mandate?"

A Women's League Meeting was held on April 21 in the Hull P.R.C. in Hull, IA. Rev. Moore spoke on the topic "The Signs of the Times: How it Affects the Women of the Church."

The Federation Board of our churches' young people sponsored a hamburger fry on Saturday, April 27 at Covenant Chr. High in Walker, MI. Softball and basketball started at 2:00 P.M. with supper at 5:30.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The Hope P.R. Christian School in Walker, MI has what they call a Song-of-the-week program. On each weekly school note there is a psalter number to be learned for that week. On the last school note of March, there was a note that, for the second time, Hope had worked their way through all 150 Psalms.

The Covenant Chr. High Band, the Central Wisconsin Chr. High Band, and a Junior High massed band from Adams, Heritage, and Hope, performed in concert on April 25 at Covenant.

Final thought lifted from the Southeast P.R.C. bulletin.

"It is far easier to write a book of apostates in this age than a book of martyrs." □

—John Trapp

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

We thank God for our parents, FRED AND MARION ONDERSMA, as they celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 21, 1989. Also, we thank God for these years they have had together and for the love and instruction they have provided.

You are invited to help us celebrate at an open house, the Lord willing, on Saturday, June 24, 1989, at Southwest Protestant Reformed Church from 3 to 5 P.M.

"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations." (Psalm 89:1)

Robert and Kaye Moelker
Gary and Rose Moelker
Larry and Judy Meulenberg
15 grandchildren
5 great-grandchildren

ATTENTION TEACHERS!!!

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

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 10, 1989, the Lord willing, MR. AND MRS. THEODORE LOOYENGA will

celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the Christian instruction and love they have given us through these years.

"If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall sit upon thy

throne for evermore." (Psalm 132:12)

Joe and Mary Brummel
Pat Sperry
Larry and Kathy Looyenga
Bob and Kathy Looyenga
Randy and Lindy Looyenga
Greg and Nancy Feenstra
Doug Looyenga
Mark and Sara Looyenga
Karen Looyenga
21 grandchildren

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 16, 1989, we celebrate the 45th wedding anniversary of our dear parents, GERRIT AND ELEANORE BOL. As we look back over the years our family has had together, we gratefully acknowledge the work of the Lord through them in our lives. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children." (Psalm 90:16). Truly the beauty of the Lord our God has been upon us all our days and through these faithful servants, we, and now our children have learned His praise.

David and Barbara Bol
Kristin, Matthew, Kara
Mark and Ruthellen Hoeksema
Stephen, Michael, Sarah, Philip
John Patrick and Priscilla Mac Graw
Molly, Daniel, Megan
Jonathan and Barbara Bol
Nathaniel, Audra, Adam

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 26, 1989, our beloved parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. ROBERT MOELKER will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. We rejoice with them and are thankful to God for their covenant instruction and constant Christian love. We pray that God will continue to bless them and strengthen them in the years ahead.

"The Lord shall reign forever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord." (Psalm 146:10)

Henry and Arlene Westhuis
Henry, Katy, Robby
Russ and Amy Zwak
Kelly, Kurty

The Ruling Elder

CONFERENCE ON THE OFFICE OF ELDER JUNE 22-24, 1989 — LOVELAND, COLORADO

SPEAKER: Prof. Robert D. Decker, Professor of New Testament and Practical Theology, Protestant Reformed Seminary.

LOCATION: Loveland Protestant Reformed Church
705 East 57th Street, Loveland, CO

TOPICS: The office of elder generally, qualifications, family visitation, oversight of the congregation, oversight of fellow officebearers, sick-visiting, etc.

SCHEDULE: Thursday, June 22, 7:30 PM.
Friday, June 23, 7:30 PM.
Saturday, June 24, 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM.
• All speeches will be followed by a question period.
• A dinner meal will be served between the speeches on Saturday.
• There is no cost for attending; however, a free-will offering will be taken to defray expenses.

INVITED: Everyone who is interested in the subject is cordially invited. A special invitation is extended to present and retired officebearers and ministers.

INFORMATION: For further information, including information regarding lodging and recreational facilities, contact: Rev. Ron Cammenga
709 E. 57th Street
Loveland, CO 80537
Phone: (303) 667-1347