

**A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine**

THE STANDARD BEARER

Instruction of the Children in Calvin's Geneva

At noon on Sundays all citizens and inhabitants shall take or send their children to catechism . . . A particular form of instruction is to be composed for them and, besides the teaching which is to be given them, they are to be questioned about what has been said to see whether it has been well understood and remembered. When a child has been sufficiently instructed to pass on from the catechism, he shall solemnly recite the sum of what is contained in it, and he shall do this as a profession of his Christianity in the presence of the church.

Before this has been done, no child is to be admitted as a communicant to the supper, and parents are to be cautioned not to bring them before the time, for it is very perilous both for the children and for their fathers to present them without good and sufficient instruction

Furthermore, their fathers are to send them or see that they are taken . . . Those who contravene this order shall be called before the Company of elders

—*Ecclesiastical Ordinances of the
Church in Geneva, 1541*

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Every article in this "special issue" of the S.B. relates, in one way or another, to the life of children and young people, and to the all-important task of rearing the seed of the covenant in the fear of Jehovah. Writers this time include not only ministers but also lay people — a grandparent, a teacher, a college student. We thank them for their contribution toward making this issue very special indeed.

The highlight of the year, in the "society" life of many of our young people, is surely the summer Convention. Hope Church (G.R.) was privileged this year to host it. Pictured above is the Steering Committee.

Front row: Mike Moelker, Doug Kuiper, Steve Lotterman

Back row: Doug Kooienga, Bruce Klammer, Sharon Huizinga, Karen Hanco, Chris VanDenTop

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

Meditation

Rev. James D. Slopsema

The Promise to Us and Our Children

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. —Acts 2:39

It was Pentecost.

And Jesus had poured out the Holy Spirit on the few faithful He had left behind. There had been the sound as of a mighty rushing wind, cloven tongues as of fire, and last of all the gift of speaking in tongues.

To the crowd gathered in amazement Peter explained what they had seen and heard. This is that which had been spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . .

Peter went on to explain that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the crowd had recently slain, God had raised up and exalted at His own right hand. And having received the promise of the Holy Spirit, Jesus had shed forth this, which they had seen and heard.

In response many in the crowd were pricked in their hearts. Their question to Peter and the disciples was urgent: Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Peter charged them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you

shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

This last statement of Peter was really a summary of what God had spoken through the prophet Joel, which Peter had already quoted in his sermon. This summary of the prophecy of Joel was given by Peter as a reason. The crowd must repent and be baptized. Upon such repentance they could expect the gift of the Holy Spirit. For, as the prophet Joel had indicated, the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The same applies to us as well. We must repent. And upon repentance we may expect the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Not only to us, but also to our children. For the promise is unto us, and to our children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

* * * * *

The promise.

Through the prophet Joel God had promised to pour out the Spirit upon all flesh.

The work of the Spirit is essential for our salvation. When we think of salvation, we tend to concentrate our attention on Christ's death on the cross. For through His atoning death Christ earned salvation.

However, of equal importance in salvation is the work of the Spirit. For it is through the Spirit that God applies to us the blessings of salvation that are ours in Christ. It is through the Spirit that we enjoy the forgiveness of sins, the power of the new life, the hope of life eternal . . .

Through Joel God had promised that in the last days He would pour out the Spirit upon all flesh.

Certainly the Spirit was operative in the salvation of God's people in the Old Testament. However, the saints of old possessed the Spirit and the salvation of God only in small measure. This was due to the fact that Christ had not as yet come. We must understand that the work of the Spirit depends on the atonement of sin. In the Old Testament, however, the atonement had not yet been accomplished. It had been promised. And on the strength of that promise the Holy Spirit worked salvation in the hearts of God's people in the Old Testament. But only in small measure.

Through the prophet Joel God promised that one day He would pour out the Spirit. There would be a gushing forth of the Spirit so that the church would enjoy the Spirit and His salvation in full measure.

This promise concerning the Spirit was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, as Peter pointed out in His sermon to the crowd. And it was of this promise that Peter

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

now also spoke — the promise concerning the gift of the Spirit and salvation.

* * * * *

The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

This is really a summary of what God had said through the prophet Joel. Through the prophet God had proclaimed that the Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh. For most of the Old Testament era salvation had been for the Jews only. One day, however, God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh, i.e., on every tribe, tongue, and nation.

And God had indicated through Joel that the gift of the Spirit would not be limited by any natural considerations. For the Spirit would come upon sons and daughters, old men and young men, male slaves and female slaves. No one would be excluded from the gift of the Spirit because of race, nationality, age, social standing, sex, etc.

There was, however, one very important limitation God made in all this when He spoke through the prophet Joel. The Spirit would be poured out only upon the remnant whom the Lord would call.

All this Peter now summarized for the crowd on Pentecost. The promise is to you, i.e., the crowd of Jews who were pricked in their hearts. And the promise is to your children. Remember, Joel had spoken of sons and daughters.

And the promise is to all that are afar off, i.e., to the Gentiles. Remember, Joel had spoken of all flesh.

And then there is the qualifier — even as many as the Lord your God shall call. The calling to which both Joel and Peter (in his summary of Joel) referred is the effective call of God to repentance and faith.

In a certain, outward sense God calls all who hear the gospel. This is the call Peter proclaimed to the crowd on Pentecost. He charged them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. This is the call to which Jesus referred in His often repeated statement, "Many are called but few are chosen."

As this last statement of Jesus suggests, the call of the gospel is effective only in the elect of God. And it becomes effective through the inner working of the Holy Spirit. For when the elect hear the call to repentance, they are irresistibly led by the Spirit to turn to Jesus Christ with godly sorrow and to cling to Him with true faith, so that they rely upon Jesus for all their salvation.

And it is to those who are called in this sense that the promise comes. The promise is not to all who hear the gospel, so that the realization of the promise is conditioned somehow on man's work and man's choice. God promises the gift of the Holy Spirit and salvation by the Spirit to those whom He has sovereignly called to genuine repentance of faith.

Consequently, Peter promised the gift of the Holy Spirit only to those who repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

* * * * *

Those whom God calls to faith and salvation in Jesus Christ are generally found in families.

This brings us to the realities of the covenant.

God's covenant is not only with believers but also with their children. For that reason God gives to believing parents elect children whom He will call to

faith and salvation in Jesus Christ. This certainly is not true of all children of believing parents. Born into the line of the covenant are not just Jacobs, but also Esaus. Yet, believing parents have the assurance that their covenant God will, indeed, give to them elect children, whom He will sovereignly call to faith and salvation in Jesus Christ.

And so the promise is to believers and their children . . . even as many as the Lord God shall call.

What an incentive this is for believing parents. It serves as an incentive not only to bring forth children but also to train them up in the fear of the Lord. Because God's promise is also to their children, even as many as the Lord shall call, parents know that their work is not in vain. They may labor in the expectation of seeing the fruits of the Spirit in the lives of their children.

This also presents a challenge to our children and young people. Do not be lulled into a false security by your outward place in the church and by your baptism.

The promise of the Spirit and salvation is to those whom God sovereignly calls to genuine repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. God's promise of salvation is not to those who revel in their sin, continue in sin, lead others into sin. For such like there is only the wrath of God. The promise of God is for those only who have come through the call of God to hate their sins and who turn to Jesus Christ to find forgiveness and the power to live a godly life.

Repent, therefore, and turn to Jesus Christ.

This is your calling before God day by day.

And in the power of the Spirit, which is promised to all who truly repent, live in godliness to the glory of God and the enjoyment of your own soul. □

Editorially speaking . . .

This special issue of *The Standard Bearer* is devoted to the subject of the children and young people of the church. They are in our hearts, not only because of the natural ties of flesh and blood, but also because of the covenant of God established with believers and their children.

The rule concerning catechizing children in Calvin's Geneva that appears on the cover is taken from *The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, tr. by P.E. Hughes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966). The quotation indicates Calvin's rejection of child-communion, as well as his insistence on the indoctrination of the children of the covenant.

The list of recommended books for the children and young people was compiled, at our request, by Gary Van Der Schaaf. Most, if not all, of the books are available from him at Family Book Services, 826 Edna St., Grand Rapids, MI 49507.

We hope that the children and young people read at least some of the articles. Besides asking parents to encourage this, we are printing extra copies of this issue and are asking elders in every Protestant Reformed Church to distribute copies selectively to older young people in the congregation after the morning service on September 10.

If you find this issue useful for friends or relatives who do not yet subscribe to *The SB*, copies can be ordered from our Business Manager at \$1 per copy. We continue to ask our readers' help in spreading the witness of *The SB* and increasing the subscription list.

Your comments on the issue, or on particular articles (or on an aspect of the subject that we overlooked), are welcome in our "Letters" column.

God bless the PRC with young men who are stalwart in the truth and with young women who are beautiful with holiness! □ -DJE

Editorial

"Feed My Lambs!" — Command to Catechize

One of the most powerful instruments in the Protestant Reformed Churches for the salvation of souls and the coming of the Kingdom of God is catechism. To their children and young people, the churches give sound, systematic, intensive, and thorough instruction in the truth of Holy Scripture — the history, the doctrine, and the commandments. They begin with the

children at the age of five or six and continue until they are in their late teens or early twenties. The program is structured so as to correspond to the spiritual and intellectual abilities of the child at different stages of his or her development and so as to give each child a thorough religious education.

Three times, the child is taken through the history of the entire

Bible in successively more advanced courses. Building on the child's knowledge of Biblical history, the churches teach the child of thirteen through sixteen the Heidelberg Catechism. This is followed by instruction in the essentials of Reformed doctrine after the pattern of the Belgic Confession. The older young people and young adults often study the Word in an advanced

doctrines class, using another of the creeds or special material prepared by the pastor. Every church should offer such a class for this age-group; and every young person should avail himself or herself of the class.

Much of the instruction uses the time-tested question-and-answer method.

By the time he or she is eighteen years old, every child has broad and deep knowledge of the Reformed faith, unless he or she sat in class like the wicked hearers in the parable of the sower from whose hearts the devil immediately snatched the Word "lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12).

This is the noble tradition of the church from the beginning. Writing on creeds and their role in the church, John H. Leith notes that the early church prepared adult converts for baptism by "catechetical lectures" in the faith of the church. "The faith was authoritatively delivered . . . to him in the form of a creed. The catechumen then learned the creed and rendered it back as his own." Increasingly, the church made use of the question-and-answer method (*Creeds of the Churches*, pp. 7, 8). The notion that the church should not indoctrinate the children of believers, the aversion to the question-and-answer method and to "rote memorization," and the hope that ignorant young people "get saved" as teen-agers by a dramatic conversion experience are all part of the incredible folly of churches today that do not even know the church's tradition.

The Protestant Reformation depended heavily upon catechisms, particularly for the teaching of the children. Martin Luther drew up "The Small Catechism" for children. At the very beginning of his ministry in Geneva (1536), John Calvin wrote the "Catechism of the Church of

Geneva," primarily, as he himself stated, "to see that children should be duly instructed in the Christian religion." Our own Heidelberg Catechism is a Reformation catechism, intended, among other ends, for teaching children the Reformed faith.

But the instruction of the children is commanded the church by God in Holy Scripture. Jehovah charged Abraham, in his capacity as father to be sure, but also as teacher of the covenant community, to "command his children . . . after him" (Gen. 18:19). The risen Jesus assigns Peter, apostle and elder in the New Testament church, his solemn duty: "Feed My Lambs" (John 21:15).

The obedience of the PRC to God's command comes out in the adopted questions used at the annual church visitation. In a four-fold way the churches examine themselves concerning the labor of catechizing the young. The full consistory is asked whether it sees to the conducting of the classes, the materials that are used, and the attendance. Elders and deacons are questioned whether the minister teaches the classes. Minister and deacons are asked whether the elders supervise the classes and help in teaching when necessary. And a vital question to the full consistory asks about the fruit of catechizing, namely, the children's seeking admission to the Lord's Supper. This question, of course, presupposes true faith in the children.

As this last question brings out, Reformed churches have a deep concern for catechism because they recognize that catechism is the means of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the great covenantal work and blessing that God promises to elect children of believers at baptism. By means of the catechism classes, the Spirit leads the children to public con-

fession of faith and, in this way, to the holy Supper of the Lord. He does this by giving them faith, repentance, and daily conversion. Catechism does great and glorious things! It brings little children to spiritual maturity, so that as men (real men of God!) and as women (real Christian women!) they are capable in mind, will, and emotions to do the good works by which they are called to glorify God and serve the church.

Catechism is the instrument by which the Spirit of holiness makes children godly, purified not only from rebellion, fornication, and drunkenness, but also from the idols and false messiahs of the cults, false churches, and heresies. Walking in this piety, they enjoy the friendship of God and the assurance of salvation. Pastors may never forget this practical purpose of their teaching the children! Herman Hoeksema reminds us of this purpose in his seminary notes on "Catechetics":

This instruction should not only be doctrinal, but also spiritual and practical. The purpose of this instruction must not be lost sight of, i.e., to lead the children of the covenant to the conscious confession of faith. The instruction, therefore, should be adapted unto this purpose. It should show to the children of the covenant the way in which they may expect the assurance of faith and of their personal part in the salvation of God in Christ; and it should encourage and admonish them to walk in that way (p. 38).

The faith, holiness, spirituality, and experience of the friendship with God that the church so ardently desires for her children come as God's gift through the teaching of the Word, and no otherwise. Not in mystical experiences, not in voices directly from heaven, not in strange operations of the "Spirit" apart from doctrine, not in emotional decisions for Christ under the

"ministry" of some vagrant "evangelist," but in the hearing of the Word from childhood is to be hoped the realizing of God's covenant with the children of believers.

If this is the importance of catechism — means of faith!, the pastor must teach the classes. Teaching catechism is the second duty mentioned in the "call-letter." The refusal of Reformed pastors today to teach the catechism classes is not due to their enormous busyness in the Word and in prayer, but rather to their neglect of God's covenant and, in many cases, to sheer laziness. Shepherds refuse to feed the lambs! And if they think that a silly, little "children's sermon" for a few minutes on Sunday morning satisfies the Great Shepherd, they are in for the surprise of their lives.

Sufficient time must be devoted to this work. No class should be shorter than forty-five minutes. Fifteen minutes are easily taken up by prayer, singing, and recitation. The half-hour that remains is the bare minimum for a good Bible-story and answering questions with which the little children are full (which surely must be the most delightful work that Christ privileges the Reformed pastor to perform). For older children, classes should be a full hour.

Consistories should strenuously resist all efforts to shorten the season. Thirty classes, which is the rule among us, do not take up a full eight months. In my seminary class notes on "Catechetics" (now yellowing) appears this quotation from Professor Herman Hoeksema:

Besides, in many of our churches, the duration of catechism is far too short, viz., little more than half a year. It should run from September through May.

For the church to delay the beginning of her instruction of

the children until they are twelve or fourteen years old is foolish, if it is not disobedience to Christ. The best years for impressing the Word upon their souls are past by then. Besides, Jesus did not say, "Feed My young bucks, and My young ewes," but, "Feed My lambs."

Parents, send your children to catechism! They are the church's children too. The church has a right to them that hour of the week set aside for catechism. Send them prepared. When they come home, make sure that they listened and that they behaved. And pray that God will bless the teaching.

Pastors, teach catechism! Teach with authority. Indoc-trinate. Hand down to the children the faith of the church as it has come to us. Teach with urgency and passion. Before you are God's dear, blood-bought sons and daughters. By your teaching, you save them. Teach the truth. Leave the puppets, movies, and religious comic strips at home, in the trash can. But bring the Word of God — the living, mighty, wonder-working Word of God. Preach the stories to the little ones. Preach them as the true, factual history that they are. How a minister dares to tell five and six year-old baptized children that God really did not create the world in six days by His Word; that there never was an Adam and an Eve; that the story of the serpent and the forbidden fruit is a fairy tale, like "Little Red Riding Hood"; and that the flood (if there was one at all) was just a big puddle in the valley between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, amazes me. That parents dutifully entrust their children to such ministers amazes me still more. It would terrify me. Is no one afraid anymore to come into the presence of Jesus the Judge with the blood of the lambs on his hands? Teach

the older children sound doctrine, the doctrine contained in the ecumenical creeds and in the Reformed confessions. And as you teach, and sometimes weep over the seeming lack of fruit — the disinterest, the unspirituality, the unholiness, pray. Then, you may teach with confidence. God will honor His Word. God will keep His covenant. Whether sooner or later, He will produce the fruit of faith and obedience. In the end, it will be true for you what we sing from Psalm 126:

*The sower bearing precious seed
May weep as in his toil he grieves,
But he shall come again with joy
In harvest time with golden sheaves.*

Elders, supervise catechism! Make sure the pastor does this work well. Does he take it seriously? Does he prepare? Does he cover the material? Is he teaching the truth? Does he make the class interesting? Elders can inquire about this also on family visitation.

Children and young people, attend catechism faithfully and with willing hearts! Prepare! Listen! Go to catechism as though it were Jesus Christ Who calls you to come. Hear the instruction as though it were God Who is teaching you.

It is. □

—DJE

A Steadfast Heart

Oh keep me steadfast! Earthly tones

Fall sweetly on my ear,
And while I pause to list to them
Thy voice I cannot hear.

Oh keep me steadfast! Human smiles

Delude my childish heart;
While rapt in them how easily
From Thee I can depart.

—S.B. Oct. 1, 1927

The Home: Heartbeat of the Covenant

Mr. Ron Koole

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 4). This verse certainly states the goal of all instruction and covenant rearing. To find young people who love the truth, confess it with their mouth publicly in the church, and give evidence of it in a godly walk of life in the midst of the world is a source of great joy not only to parents but also to pastors, teachers, and older members of the church. We know that this is possible only by the electing grace of God and the fruit of the Spirit in the hearts of covenant children. But we also understand, and Scripture is clear on this, that God uses means, weak and foolish in the eyes of men, to work faith and godliness in the hearts and lives of His own. The demands of the covenant obligate Christian parents to instruct and bring up the children God has placed in their care. This training is a full time, all encompassing, serious obligation (Deut. 6:6-9, Eph. 6:4). Members of the church cannot expect to experience the joy in III John 4 mentioned above if they do not carry out their God-given calling to train their children in the fear of the Lord.

Wherever one turns in the Scripture to passages that deal specifically with instruction of children, one finds that the responsibility falls first of all squarely on the shoulders of parents, and especially fathers. The home is the heartbeat of the covenant of grace and the promise of God to continue His covenant in our generations. It is covenant parents who bring their children to church to receive the spiritual food and drink they know their children need. It is parents who send their children to the Christian school to be instructed in all aspects of God's creation in the light of Holy Scripture. There is no institution that can take the place of the home, and there is no influence as effective and telling as the influence of the home.

There is a real danger here for us as parents. The danger is that we begin to think that we fulfill our responsibility in covenant rearing simply by seeing to it that our children go to church to hear the truth of the Word preached, and send our children to the Christian school to have them taught under God-fearing school teachers. We are quite willing to feed and clothe our children and care for their bodily wants and needs but leave their spiritual needs to proper church and school instruction. Sadly mistaken is this notion, but I fear that it is many times alive with us today.

The school is the extension of the home. It cannot and must not attempt to replace the home. Teachers in the school in a very real way instruct products of the home and church. Let me say a few things about these "products" in their very early years. Most of the child's values and attitudes are developed before the child attends a day of kindergarten. These will be developed by the training of us parents by example (good or bad), the spiritual climate of our home (godly or ungodly), and by direct spiritual instruction (or lack of it). The emphasis today is on earlier instruction in numbers and letters. The pre-school boom is alive in our society. As a teacher I am concerned that children are intellectually ready for school; but as a Christian school teacher I wish for a child who has from his earliest years been taught sound spiritual values and has developed a godly attitude. Really only when this foundation is set is the child ready to attend the Christian school and will that intellectual training be beneficial in his development. Remember that Proverbs teaches that the fear of the Lord is the beginning not only of wisdom but also of knowledge.

Let me cite a couple specific values that are so crucial in these early years and need development throughout childhood. First and foremost is the teaching of reverence and respect for God

Mr. Koole is administrator/teacher in the Loveland Prot. Ref. School in Colorado, and the father of six young children.

and sacred things. The child must see that by our example in the home. The things of God and His kingdom causes must be first in our life. Are they in your home? We need to hear this also in the preaching in church. Not long ago our pastor preached on the reverence of God, from Isaiah 28:9-10. This teaching is given according to the child's development, "those drawn from the breasts," and given repetitively, "line upon line, here a little and there a little." You see, when a child comes to school with reverence for God, then he respects those God has placed in authority over him, his teachers. He can understand and respect authority in government and the state (civics). He will respect the creation of that God (science) and his relation and calling toward the earth (geography). He will be interested in the carrying out of the counsel of that God (history and Bible) and he will appreciate God's creative order of all things (math and language). In a word, that child who is taught respect, reverence, and the fear of God is ready for school.

A second attitude and value is love—love for God, of course, but also now love for one another. I Corinthians 13 clearly teaches the importance of this spiritual gift. All other learning and gifts are nothing without this one. We as parents surely must teach it by our example in the home. We must teach our children God's great love for us, and we must show from examples in the Bible what true love is. We then demand that our children live in love toward one another. In a school setting, surely, one can see the benefits and effects of children who have been taught this. They respect one another's persons and bear one another's burdens. They learn to let others be first, and they don't mock or laugh at one another. We as

teachers must demand this loving behavior of our students and so help covenant homes rear their children. The teachers who stand in your place had better be loving examples here. Once again, a child who has been taught his calling to love is ready for school.

In an interesting book entitled *Baptism and Christian Education*, Samuel Miller writes the following about developing godliness in early youth:

"On the one hand, when the early youth of children is passed without proper instruction in divine things, it is difficult to measure or conceive the thick darkness which generally covers their minds, . . . When men grow old in ignorance as well as in sin, they are surrounded with a double barrier against the entrance of heavenly light. On the other hand, when seed of truth and duty are early and faithfully sown in the minds of youth, though they may long lie buried, there is a strong ground of hope that they will eventually spring up and bring forth a rich harvest. Who can estimate, then, the cruelty, the awful guilt, of those (whether parents or pastors) who neglect that which is so closely connected not only with present happiness, but with the everlasting welfare of every youth committed to their care?" (pg. 143-144)

You see, the school as well as the home and church must be concerned not only about the present life of the child but also about his everlasting welfare. Please, parents, don't let the church and school be more concerned about this than you are.

One of the strengths I see in the covenant youth whom I have taught is that they know the truth. They have no doubts about the doctrine of creation or of sovereign predestination. They know that Arminianism is wrong and that common grace is the lie. I know that this strength can be attributed to the sound preaching of the Word of God in our churches and the systematic cate-

chetical instruction our children receive. The home, too, is active here in teaching the children the catechism and reinforcing these truths.

As great as this strength of knowing the truth and being able to identify the lie is (in worldly textbooks, for example) there is something lacking here. What is lacking is the ability to be able to turn to the Bible and prove the truth and expose the lie. I know that all of us struggle here, but I think that if we would use more repetition and specific application of passages, we would be better equipped also to be a witness to those who ask us concerning our faith. We must be able to "prove all things, hold(ing) fast to that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21).

A second weakness in this area is the lack of vitality with which our children are willing to discuss the truth. I hear ministers and Young People's Society leaders complain that creating discussion is like pulling teeth. The same is true in school many times.

Discussion on George Washington's battle strategies or some literary character's actions can bring hands galore, but analyzing things in the light of the Bible seems to close minds. Why? Is it because we're not talking about spiritual things when we are sitting, walking, lying, and rising in our homes (Deut. 6:7)? We need to speak and discuss openly with our children the light of the Word in all areas of life. I think this is an area in which the school can greatly build on foundations laid in the home and church.

In a book entitled *A Christian Pedagogy*, written by Edward W.A. Koehler, the author writes this:

"Whoever wishes to raise a crop of vegetables must not only keep his garden free from weeds, but must also sow good seed and water it and nurse the tiny plants till they grow

strong and ripen unto the harvest. It is even so in the training of children." (page 223)

The point that Koehler is warning against is one-sided instruction. This instruction is characterized by the word "NO" and the phrase "thou shalt not" as if the negative will in itself reap positive fruit. But active service to God is fostered by putting on the new man and not only by curbing the old man of sin (Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 3:12-14). When asked in school to list specific sins that are evident of the old man, students can fill pages. Asked to do the same with the desired fruits of the new man, students struggle to list any at all. One wonders why. I don't mean to minimize knowledge of sin, but education must be constructive. The good seeds must be watered and the tiny plants nursed. The goal is the man of God who is thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Children must learn to avoid evil, but they also and primarily must be taught to do the good. Our discipline of them must reflect that too. It has

the positive goal of godliness in the child's life. We must remember that the Scriptures are profitable not only for correction but also for instruction in righteousness (I Tim. 3:15-17).

An important aspect of Scripture's instruction in righteousness is the teaching that each child of God is part of a large body which is the church of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 12). How much of our correction in the home and school results from a neglect of this truth? I fear that we often begin to glorify the American ideal of rugged individualism. We can easily do this by acquiring the things of this world that we want and desire, and never show expressions of love and kindness to those who have needs (physical and spiritual). When children see father and mother and family living in luxury, and the church and Kingdom causes begging for support, they are being taught a value of which we ought to be ashamed. It should not be surprising then that our children grow up to be selfish and self-centered.

These things amount to practical Christianity. To *know* the truth is not enough. One is called to *live* the truth. Christian instruction must build positive values, cultivate Christian virtues and godly habits, as well as mold Christian character. It must be a striving for the command of God in I Peter 1:16 where we read "Be ye holy; for I am holy." We as parents and teachers need to be more like the pious Waldenses, whom historians tell us were in the habit of using every hour they could rescue from labor and sleep in gaining religious knowledge themselves and imparting it to their children.

I guess I have found it easier to see weaknesses than strengths. I think that is because I know my own weaknesses as a parent and teacher and can see so much room for spiritual growth and improvement.

May we as pastors, teachers, and parents be diligent in bringing the children to Christ through His Word. And in this way may God give us the blessed joy of seeing our children (young people) walking in truth. □

To the Utmost of Your Power

Mr. Edwin Gritters

Mr. Gritters is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California. He has six children and nineteen grandchildren, and has served often as elder in the church.

Probably the greatest obligations in the lives of most Christian couples are making a livelihood, homemaking, and rearing children. Regrettably, we probably approach these tasks in just that priority, too! Regrettably, I say, because life's busyness so easily warps our perspective when it comes to raising the

covenant seed. How many of us have not said, in retrospect, our children having grown up and left the home, "Would to God that I had more faithfully redeemed the time while my children were under my wing, those critical years in their spiritual growth and development!" How hard we labor to

feed our children, to clothe them to perfection, and to shower them with an abundance of earthly possessions!

But—is that what we promised we would give them? When we stood before God's people with this child in our arms, we were asked simply and clearly, "Do you know that this child is sanctified in Christ; that the doctrine of the scriptures, and our confessions, and of this Christian Church is the perfect doctrine of salvation, and therefore, you must instruct them, or cause them to be instructed therein, to the *utmost* of your power?" And we said, "Yes! We do. We will." What a promise! What a responsibility! What a commitment — a commitment we carry with us from our children's infancy to adulthood.

But how quickly the years race by; and, before we know it, our bumper sticker says, "Happiness is being a grandparent!" A grandparent? How often do we as parents exhibit such enthusiasm and reflect with the Psalmist, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord. Happy is the man whose quiver is full of them. They are like olive plants about thy table." Children are and should be our pride and joy, but we must always remember they are God's children. In the same way that God deals with us — His children — so we must firmly, and in love, educate the children He entrusts to our care.

It is to this same end that the Lord has called faithful ministers and teachers to assist us in this awesome but wonderful task. They too, in their special callings, share the commitment to "piously and religiously educate . . ."

How can our church and our schools be most effective in helping us to rear our children? Let's consider three aspects. To the Commitment we addressed above, I would add two more:

Cooperation, and Communication.

Cooperation — working together toward a common goal — is vital. If you take a child by the hand and pull him to the left, and I take him by the other hand and pull him to the right, he will not only suffer physical and mental distress — he will go exactly nowhere? (An over-simplification, no doubt.) Our children must see that in love we are all pulling in the same direction. And that is best demonstrated by good communications. This, too, begins at home. (Has Mother indeed said you shall start on your homework right now? Well, I'm figuring on taking you to play ball for a while!) Such "conflict" should be resolved before it comes to expression before our children. Young people must also see evidence of unity between parents and teachers. We cannot imply to our children that in case of a disagreement with their teachers, we will stand behind the child. We may do so to spite the teacher, but in so doing we only diminish the effectiveness of the teacher-student relationship; and, in the end, the child suffers. Why should we hinder those we have hired to assist us?

I have heard parents say to teachers, "If my child disobeys, just give him a good whack, and when he gets home, he'll get one from me, too!" A bit of a hyperbole, maybe, but when a child knows that his parents respect — in fact, *demand* — the exercise of our ministers' and teachers' rightful authority and discipline, such a child will probably seldom require more than a mild admonition or rebuke.

It is so important that our children *know* that we are communicating with their teachers, too. Join and attend your PTA-PTF. Take full advantage of parent-teacher conferences. Discuss with your children the

fact that you will be meeting with their teachers. And the following morning you can report back: "Son (or daughter), we talked to your teachers and they say you're doing a good job. Arithmetic seems to be your hardest subject, so we promised your math teacher we'll work with you on it." Now your child is thinking, "Dad and Mom talked to my teachers. Dad and Mom *both* talked to my teachers. Dad had an important committee meeting last night, but he asked to arrive a half hour late so he could attend my parent-teachers conference. Wow! He must really be interested in how I'm doing."

But then we must follow up on our good intentions, too. We don't help our children with their homework just to please our teachers (though they certainly appreciate it). It is for our children's growth and well-being.

What about catechism? Do we sometimes send our children to school on the morning of catechism day ill-prepared for their catechism class that afternoon? Our teachers can recognize them; they are the children busily poring over their catechism books during the last study period rightfully devoted to reading, writing, and arithmetic. Our pastors can spot them, too. They are the ones taking a last minute peek at their questions while the minister is taking the roll call and the "collection." What a poor reflection on us parents if we fail to do our part as our teachers and ministers strive to do their task. Their task? *My* children — *my* task! *God's* children — *my* responsibility!

But — I am so weak. I, like my children, am conceived and born in sin. As we said at the outset, we so easily lose sight of our commitment because we become so absorbed in material things. (I work long hours, so my evenings are for relaxing. When I have a

day off, I devote it to recreation. I earned it, and no one's going to deprive me of it!) That attitude is reflected in our children, too. What reason have we to conclude that our children will be different from us? Does a bitter fountain bring forth sweet . . . ? And so, intentionally or unintentionally, we shift the burden to others.

Teachers, do you sometimes feel you are the only ones who care? Are you sometimes tempted to say to yourself, "If they don't care, why should I?" I'm sure you, too, must pray for strength and must daily remind yourselves of your commitment. Why did you become a teacher? You certainly didn't do it to "make a killing." (You probably barely make a "living"). You did it because you felt a calling and a desire to be instrumental in the growth and development of the covenant youth. If you, too, by God's grace, can keep your eye on your commitment, you will be given strength to pick up where some of us in our weakness leave off. I wish I could remember a "Teacher's Prayer" I read some 40 years ago. It was something like this:

*"My Lord, I do not ask to stand
As lord or king of high degree.
I only ask that, hand in hand,
A child and I may come to Thee.
To teach a tender voice to pray,
Two childish eyes Thy will to see;
Two feet to guide in Thine own Way,
This, fervently, I ask of Thee."*

Ministers of the Word, do you sometimes feel discouraged? Would you sometimes, in despair, murmur with Elijah, "and I, even I only, am left"? Thinking back, though, did your professors in seminary ever tell you your task would be an easy one? At one time you probably wondered how you would ever be able to produce an average of three sermons, speeches, lectures, or articles per week. Now, you may

find that is not even the most difficult part of your calling. You, too, must deal with all our weaknesses and those of our children, as well as with those you may find in yourself as a parent or in your family. Nevertheless, you are exhorted to "feed His sheep, taking the oversight of them not by constraint — but willingly." (I know, that's easy for me to say.) But — don't lose sight — there are still the "seven thousand." Don't feel it unbecoming of your office to share your burdens with other parents and your teachers. You are a shepherd of the flock, but, under Christ, you also are a member of that flock. And, as such, you can be a strong influence on our young people, too. Show an interest in their jobs, their problems, their leisure time, their societies, the efforts they put forth in making our societies and Young People's Conventions a success. It may be nothing more than a kindly word, a casual recognition, at an appropriate moment.

Let me close with a final thought for all of us, our teachers and ministers as well, in our role as parents. Rev. VanBaren had an article in a recent *Standard Bearer* dealing with the extremely high cost of Christian education. I believe that it is only good stewardship on our part that we get full value by fully utilizing the resources of church and school, faithful ministers and teachers, which the Lord has so graciously provided us. If we are to obtain optimum benefit from our teachers and ministers, we as parents cannot be slack in our efforts.

And, yes — happiness is being a grandparent! As such, we too must share in the rearing of our children's children — financially, physically, and exemplary. Be assured, the Lord will certainly reward the work of a faithful servant — whether parent, grand-

parent, minister, or teacher. Then together we can re-echo the baptismal prayer of thanksgiving — "that God may always be pleased to govern these baptized children . . . that they may be piously and religiously educated . . . acknowledge thy fatherly goodness . . . live in all righteousness . . . manfully fight against and overcome sin . . . to the end that they may eternally praise and magnify Thee and Thy Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost, the one and only true God!" □

RECOMMENDED READING

(continued from page 478)

Grow in Grace

Sinclair Ferguson. Banner of Truth. Fall '89

The Shadow of the Cross: Studies in Self-Denial

Walter Chantry. Banner of Truth. 4.95p

No Holiness, No Heaven

Richard Alderson. Banner of Truth. 4.95p

Living the Christian Life (booklet)

A.N. Martin. Banner of Truth. 1.00p

Importance of the Local Church (booklet)

Daniel Wray. Banner of Truth. 1.00p

Authority

D.M. Lloyd-Jones. Banner of Truth. 4.45p □

The Young Person's Struggle for Holiness

Miss Shari Huizinga

The name "Christian" implies a very important responsibility. As Christians, we have a responsibility to lead a sanctified life. In other words, we are called to lead a life free from sin and worldly lusts. This calling is explicitly stated in Titus 2:11, 12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" It must be our desire to put aside all sinful pleasures so that we can present our lives as a living sacrifice before God.

Fulfilling the mandate set forth by the apostle in Titus 2 is difficult. We are by nature sinful creatures who delight in the pleasures of the world. Leading a sanctified life is a responsibility with which all Christians struggle. Although Christians of all ages experience difficulty in their attempt to lead a holy life, it is especially difficult for Christian young people. Young people generally do not possess a clear understanding of who they are and what their place in life is. They have the knowledge but not the confidence to stand up for what they know is right.

Because of this fact they are easily swayed by pressure from peers to engage in sinful activities. These activities in which they often engage are a detriment to their living a sanctified life.

Because of their vulnerability to peer pressure, high school students are especially susceptible to temptation. It is in high school where the young person's struggle to lead a sanctified life intensifies. The pressure from peers is great in any high school, but it is especially so in a small school such as Covenant Christian, the high school that many Protestant Reformed young people attend. Young people are pressured by "friends" to participate in activities which have no place in a sanctified life. One temptation which young people struggle with is the movie. The theater is the world's accepted and revered form of entertainment. It is as much a part of American life as baseball or apple pie. It is also fast becoming an accepted form of entertainment among our own young people. Therefore it is difficult for any young person to resist the taunts and the pressure from friends who would lead their classmates into sin.

Closely related to the problem of the theater is the VCR. Compared to the theater the VCR seems harmless. After all, material shown on the VCR can be monitored and viewed in the privacy of the home. It is its

presumed innocence which makes the VCR so tempting and therefore so dangerous. The VCR is very accessible to young people. Many families own one. It is much easier for the young person who refuses to sit in the theater to sit in the family room of his home and watch a movie on the VCR. Once again, the world's technology makes it very difficult for the young person to resist temptation and to persist in his attempt to lead a sanctified life.

In addition to the temptations provided by the theater and the VCR, temptation also lies in the music of the world. For several reasons, this would seem to be the most difficult temptation for young people to overcome. First of all, music is an integral part of human life. It surrounds the young person no matter where he goes. Its presence in the home is manifested by the stereo. Its presence in the car is evident by the radio. Stores, restaurants, doctors' offices, and office buildings all play worldly music over their loud speakers. It is this very pervasiveness which makes it so very difficult for the young person to resist the temptation of the world's music.

In addition to the temptations of the entertainment industry are those temptations which involve dangerous substances. Many young people struggle not only with movies, VCR's, and worldly music but also with cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs. Once again

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peer pressure plays a role in the struggle experienced by young people to lead a sanctified life. Most young people who smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol do so to be accepted by peers — not because they enjoy doing so. It is not easy for a young person to ignore the taunts of “friends” and to refuse a cigarette or a drink. It is sometimes easier to ignore one’s conscience than to ignore the taunting of others. Leading a sanctified life is not easy.

If the struggle to lead a sanctified life was intense in high school, the problem becomes more acute after high school. The young person who enters the world as an employee or a student finds the struggle to lead a holy life even more difficult than before. He must now learn to deal with new freedoms and the struggles which they entail. In college, as well as in the work place, the young person is surrounded by a multitude of people from a variety of religious backgrounds. Some are Christians but many are not. Gradually, these new acquaintances have an influence upon the young person. They begin to make subtle demands upon him. They suggest that he question the values and priorities which he grew up with and that he reevaluate them. They encourage him to establish standards, priorities, and values that are more in step with the times. They make it increasingly difficult for the young person to maintain his distinctly Protestant Reformed world-life view. These new “friends” with their worldly influence increase the bitter agony of the young person’s struggle to lead a sanctified life.

Another problem which many young people face in their struggle to lead a sanctified life involves dating. It is becoming more and more common for young people, both high school students and graduates, to date

outside of the church. This is a potentially dangerous situation. Usually, people outside of our churches do not share the same religious beliefs as we do. Young people who do not have the same religious sensibilities as we do often have the freedom to attend movies, to dance at parties, and to listen to secular music. Young people who date outside of their church often experience conflict. Often their association with people outside their church becomes an obstacle to their leading a sanctified life.

Obviously, fulfilling the mandate presented in Titus 2:11, 12 is not an easy task. It is clear that the Reformed young person who attempts to lead a sanctified life in today’s world faces intense and bitter struggles. The young person’s life is fraught with temptations which he must struggle with and overcome. Oftentimes, it seems that the responsibility to lead a holy life is one which cannot be fulfilled. With God’s help, however, the responsibility is not too difficult to bear. The young Christian must say with the writer of Psalm 121:1, “I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” The calling to be holy is one which can and must be fulfilled.

There are several things a young Christian can do to achieve the goal of a sanctified life. With God’s help, these efforts can bear much fruit.

Know the Truth

The young person must know the truth. He must also be confident in this knowledge. He will then find it much easier to ignore the pressure of “friends” and to resist doing what is wrong.

Remove Yourself From Temptation

In order to resist temptation, remove yourself from it. When friends call, set specific plans. It’s

much easier to give in to the temptation to attend a movie or to go to a party when one has no specific direction.

Seek Godly Friends

When one associates with people of the world it becomes much easier to fall into sin. It is imperative, therefore, that young people seek relationships with fellow Christians. Godly friends, who share the desire to live a sanctified life, will support each other in their responsibility.

View Your Family As a Means of Support

Members of a Christian family share a special bond. They share the desire as well as the responsibility to lead a sanctified life. By sharing this responsibility, they also provide support for one another. Young people must view their families as a terrific source of strength and support. They must realize that they can turn to their families when they are tempted to fall into sin.

Without the Bible and prayer, the young person cannot possibly succeed in his attempt to live a sanctified life. Both are an invaluable means of aid in the constant struggle. The young person must follow the command Christ utters in Luke 22:40: “. . . Pray that ye enter not into temptation.” The temptations are great as well as constant; but through prayer and God’s word the young person will find the strength to win the struggle against these temptations. □

*Give a gift of
the Standard
Bearer to a
friend or loved
one today.*

Rev. Russell J. Dykstra

Our Chief Joy

If I do not remember thee,
Then let my tongue from
utterance cease,
If any earthly joy to me
Be dear as Zion's joy and
peace.

(Psalter #379, from Psalm 137.)

Beloved young people, how important to you is Zion, your church, with all that is especially for you, i.e., society, retreats, and conventions? Have you ever sung these words — I mean, really sung them from the heart? Strong desires are expressed in this inspired song. In Psalm 137 this is written: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." Think of how many hand-skills you have developed — eating, writing, perhaps the playing of a musical instrument, or athletic skills, not to mention the skills you learned for your job. Could you ever seriously wish to forget all these skills just because you forgot Jerusalem, that is, the church? Or could you ask that, from the moment you forgot the church, you would be unable to speak another word? That is a remarkable request to make to the Sovereign God.

But what does it mean to remember the church? At the least it would mean to think about the church, to be mindful of her needs, and to pray for her.

But the psalmist further explains this "remembering" with these words: "if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Now if we would understand "chief joy" to mean that the church is our greatest joy, that the church fills us with more gladness than anything on this earth, this would be a rather bold statement. Then the church (Sunday worship services, catechism, societies, conventions, communion of the saints) is more important to us than our houses and cars, our times of relaxation and play, our jobs, our families, and our very lives. The church is our chief joy.

But "chief" here means more than just greatest; it is chief in the sense of principal or head. Think of it this way. What the body is to the head, our whole life is to our chief (head) joy. The body serves the head and is nothing without the head. Likewise all the people, events, possessions, and joys of this earth exist only for the sake of our chief joy. They all serve to help us seek our chief joy, and apart from our chief joy they cannot give joy at all.

That the church is and must be our chief joy should be quite plain from Scripture. The church is our spiritual mother in whom we are begotten. She feeds and nourishes us in all the years of our earthly pilgrimage. She cares for our souls with guidance and correction. The preaching of the Word, which is the revelation of the God of our salvation and the

power of God unto salvation, has been given only to the church. You can find the lively preaching nowhere else. Thus, since this Word is the content and the sustenance of the believer's joy, he seeks it with all his being. Only in the church can he find his salvation clearly described. Only there is the chief means of strengthening his faith. There in the divine worship services and in the company of saints he experiences the greatest joy in his salvation. This is a significant point. All this is obtained in the church alone! No wonder then that Jerusalem is the chief joy of the believer.

What does this have to do with young people's societies, retreats, and conventions? First, we distinguish societies from the worship services and catechism classes. Christ calls to the worship services and to catechism in order that He might speak to all believers through the preaching, and to the "lambs" of the flock in a special way through catechetical instruction. Societies are different. They are not specifically required by Scripture, for Christ does not officially speak to us in society, even when an ordained minister leads.

Why then do we have societies and related activities? Societies, it seems to me, grow (or should grow) spontaneously out of the church as a response to the official preaching and teaching of the church. They are not imposed upon believers by a higher

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authority. Rather, societies are proposed, organized, and maintained by interested church members. This is one major problem with many young people's societies, namely, that too many young people feel almost no responsibility towards maintaining their society. To such, Young People's Society is a fixture in the church imposed by others. It was there as long as they can remember; it will be there indefinitely, regardless of what young people put into it. This attitude is wrong! "Young People's" is *your* society and your responsibility. Societies, then, are concrete expressions of a threefold response to the preaching: 1) a zeal for the truth; 2) a desire to grow in the knowledge of the truth; 3) a love for the saints.

In the first place, filled with a zeal for the truth which he has *heard*, the young believer looks for opportunities to *talk* about these precious truths. Societies are one such opportunity, and a precious one for young people since peer pressure makes it hard to bring up spiritual matters with friends in a casual setting.

Secondly, societies express the desire to grow in the truth. One who attends society is confessing an inadequate knowledge of Scripture. Desiring to learn more, the church member attends a society where the saints can discuss the Word in a systematic way. By means of both preparation and discussion, difficult passages become clear, obscure truths become familiar. Especially here the old saying is so true, "You get out of society what you put into it." Zero preparation plus zero enthusiasm plus zero participation equals zero spiritual benefits. Actually, that is not quite correct, the result is rather a negative spiritual effect, including a more callous attitude toward the truth, a greater distaste for studying the Scrip-

tures, and a dampening effect on others, not to mention acute boredom.

The opposite is also true. Preparation, enthusiasm, and participation yield tremendous benefits. I have personally led discussions where the young people inspired *me*. In other groups, even my enthusiasm for discussing God's Word was buried by the apathy of the young people. When all is said and done, it is up to you, young people (especially the older ones), to make your societies work. Will your weekly meetings be an unbearably dull hour that drags on for an eternity, or an incredibly quick hour that leaves behind the urge to come back next week for more?

Finally, societies grow up as an expression of Christian love for the saints. It is a fact of life that we enjoy being with those who are like us and with whom we share many common interests and possessions. Our fellow Protestant Reformed young people fit this description perfectly. Oh, perhaps this does not always seem true from the outward viewpoint of personality or shared earthly interests. The young people from the world may have personalities more compatible with ours or interests closer to ours in some things. But spiritually the young people in your congregation should be closest to you. (If this is not the case, then either you or the rest of the society is living contrary to the Scriptures in walk and/or confession.) This spiritual unity breeds a love for the fellow saints and a desire to be with them. Societies fill this desire.

Whether or not this is true for us depends on the priorities in our lives. Another way of saying it is, What is our chief joy? If our chief joy is found in school (whether in sports, social life, or preparation for a good paying

job), then society will be of little significance. We will not need it; our lives are full enough. If our chief joy is in possessions — cars, clothes, and stereos — society can do nothing to help us gain these. And in fact, retreats and conventions hinder us because they cost money and we lose hours at work. If the chief joy is in the pleasures of this world, society is out, for it stands opposed to these.

Only when our chief joy is the church of Christ will the society be a significant part of our lives, as it should be. Psalm 137 makes this very clear. For, on the one hand, since this is the *inspired* song of a believer, God reveals that this must be *our* song as well. ("... If any earthly job to me be dear as Zion's joy and peace.") And on the other hand, these words came from a believer in *Babylon* (a type of the ungodly world about us today), when Babylon was encouraging the Old Testament church to forget about Zion, to loosen up and enjoy life in Babylon. The saints refused. So must we. Beloved young people, let us be sure that Zion is our chief joy. A vibrant, enjoyable, and profitable society life is sure to follow. □

Every day I grieve Thy spirit,
Wound the heart that broke for
me,
Yet in Thy great love and mercy
Cast me not away from Thee.
Help me live as Thou wouldst
have me;
Cleanse me, Lord, and keep me
pure;
Give me grace and strength that
safely
To the end I may endure.
—S.B. Sept. 1, 1928

Rev. Jason L. Kortering

Confessing Faith

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PUBLIC CONFESSION OF FAITH

One of the greatest treasures that God gives to the church on earth is her youth. The reason is obvious: youthful energy and expectancy brought under the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit accomplishes great things. The aged saints breathe a bit easier when they are reassured that God will preserve His church for another generation. Parents quietly thank the Lord when they see their children take on the responsibilities of the covenant. Children look up to those who stand up for what they believe and put it into practice.

As with every venture of faith, making confession of faith has its vexing aspects. The heart of the issue is, are our young people sincere when they make public confession of faith? Oh, we ask, how can we be sure that our young people really mean what they say when they answer the three questions proposed at public confession when they stand before God and His church?

It is important that we constantly examine the significance of such an act in order that we as young people, parents, and church may accomplish what God will have for us in this event.

WHAT IS FAITH?

We should have before us a clear understanding of what we mean by faith. Faith is distinguished from unbelief. Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." It is that union with Jesus Christ as He Himself expressed, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). Our Heidelberg Catechism speaks of it as being ingrafted into Christ (Q. 20). Through this union with Christ, His life passes into us and we become active in our faith.

The Bible makes a distinction between objective and subjective faith. By objective we mean the teachings of the Bible. In Jude 3 we read, "Beloved, when I gave diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for *the faith* which was once delivered unto the saints." By subjective faith we mean the acceptance of these facts and the application of them to ourselves. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3). The answer to the Philippian Jailer's question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (Acts 16:30, 31). When we are united to Jesus by faith, we express agreement with the Word

of God and humbly respond in obedience.

Though this distinction is valid, we must not *separate* the two elements, as if one can have objective faith without subjective faith, as if one can believe the facts of the Bible without personally confessing sin and receiving Jesus as Savior. They go together. Hence Paul could say of the Ephesian church, "I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you." James adds, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17).

WHAT IS CONFESSING FAITH?

The word to confess means to say the same thing. God speaks to us and we say the same thing back to Him. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1:10). Or we can think of the words of Romans 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

When our youth make confession of their faith, they join the entire church by expressing agreement with God as He speaks to us through His Word.

This includes both the objective and subjective elements of faith. If we keep this in mind, we will understand why the questions for public confession of faith are formulated as they are.

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

Often times, attempts are made to introduce a subjective element into the questions of public confession of faith. Complaints are expressed that they only address the doctrine and not the personal aspect of faith. "1. Do you acknowledge the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation? 2. Have you resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine, to reject all heresies repugnant thereto and to lead a new, godly life? 3. Will you submit to church government . . . ?" If we realize that our Reformed fathers approach the doctrine, not as abstract facts, but more correctly as the content of faith which is both objective and subjective, then the problem is removed. The doctrine of God, of Jesus, of salvation, of the church, etc. is not abstract. A truly Reformed church does not teach her youth simply to believe that a sovereign God exists, but she teaches them that such a sovereign God is *our* God. The doctrine of Jesus does not simply concern the humanity and deity of Jesus, but that He is Savior, our Savior. The doctrine is not simply that we believe a church of Christ exists, but that I am a member of that church by faith and shall remain forever such a living member. Proof of this is seen when the reference is made to "the Articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian church." Such reference is not simply to the Apostles' Creed, but to the Three Forms of Unity. In all three confessions the doctrine is not taught simply objectively without applying it to the one who confesses that truth. If we acknowledge that doctrine, then the foundation is laid to lead a new, godly life and to submit to church government. No

one who simply agrees with the objective doctrine of the church has the ability to lead a godly life. That can only be done by one who has a personal relationship of faith with Jesus as His Savior and Lord.

PUBLIC CONFESSION OF FAITH

There are two stages in making public confession of faith: the examination before the consistory, and the public agreement expressed during the worship service. Both aspects are important and must be carefully understood if we are to benefit from this activity. Here, too, it is best to view these two stages as inseparably connected, as one event with two parts.

The examination before the consistory concerns both aspects of the faith of each young person: their knowledge of the doctrine objectively, as well as their own salvation. The abilities of young people vary, as is true also of the adults of the congregation. The question that concerns the elders is, does this person know "the doctrine as taught here in this Christian church" so as to enable him to know why he belongs to this particular church (this includes the distinctives of the Reformed Faith), and so as to equip him with the tools to grow under the preaching of the gospel? Since this examination must also include the subjective element, the formulation of the questions is important. It is not proper to open some catechism book and read questions and expect "canned" answers. If we do that we will convey to our youth that confession of faith is simply a graduation from catechism class, an oral exam. Questions about God must draw out their personal response to that God. Questions about Jesus must include their own relationship to Him and their own confession of sin. To do this properly, each

young person should have some time with the consistory individually. Parts of the examination may be with a group present, but there should be time for individual evaluation. If a larger number of young people desire to make such confession of faith, it is worthwhile to set aside an entire evening for this examination.

Our youth and the entire congregation will know that, when a young person expresses agreement with "the doctrine taught in this Christian church," such agreement is not limited to the objective facts, but those facts are personally believed.

The *public* confession is the real confession. Examination by the consistory simply opens the door for this main event. By this act, our youth do not "join the church"; for at baptism we already confess, "as members of his church ought to be baptized." We must not give the impression to our young people that they are not members and therefore do not have the obligation as members of the church until they make confession of faith. They are immature members who are being nurtured in faith with a view to their own personal maturity. God is faithful to His covenant. The babe that was presented for baptism has now come forth in order to assume the full benefits of the covenant, participation at the Lord's Table. This is accompanied with a public expression of agreement, a promise. The answer to the three questions is viewed as a sacred trust. When we make public confession of faith we speak the same thing with God, and before God and His church. This makes it a sacred obligation and blessing. Adherence to the doctrine and government of the church places us in the safety of the Lord Jesus as He rules through His church.

PROPER PREPARATION

This aspect of the subject is broad and involved. For our purposes in this article we simply want to make this point: preparation includes home, school, and church. They stand and fall together. The home is basic to all three.

In all three spheres, doctrine and godliness must be taught as one whole. We fail our youth if we separate doctrine from personal, subjective faith. Anything less will produce intellectual giants with hearts of stone.

May our youth stand before us upon the public confession of their faith and say, "I believe,

therefore have I spoken."

P.S. I am happy to learn that the *Beacon Lights* is in the process of publishing, *The Implications of Public Confession*, by Abraham Kuyper. Our youth do well to read this book carefully and, if we have pre-confession classes, to incorporate its contents into the material used. □

Prof. Robert D. Decker

Lord, What Wilt Thou Have Me To Do?

This has to be one of the most important questions you need to ask and to which you must find the answer. God calls us to work and He calls each of us to a specific task. This is true whether we be called to dig ditches or preach the gospel; whether we be called to marry and bear children and keep house, or teach in the Christian School. It simply is not true that only ministers and perhaps Christian School teachers have a calling from God while all other Christians just have jobs. God calls us to our work.

This means that we must know exactly what God wants us to do with our lives. What purpose does God have for me? To what occupation does God call me? What is God's will for my life? You must give answer to these questions.

But how do I know and how can I learn what God wants me to do with my life? How does God reveal His will concerning our calling in life? God will not do that in some mysterious way. God will not somehow whisper in your ear saying, "This is what you must do with your life." But God does indeed reveal to each of us what He would have us do. God reveals this in His Word. Very simply put, if you want to know what God wills for your life's work, you must look for the answer in the Bible. And as you meditate upon and search the Holy Scriptures for the answer you must pray fervently that God will guide you to make the correct decision concerning your life's task.

The Bible has a great deal to say about work. We usually think of Sabbath observance in connection with the Fourth Commandment. While the Fourth Commandment is indeed about Sabbath observance, it is a commandment that covers all of our daily living. It is really a commandment about the way we are

to keep God's commandments every day of the week. God tells us, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." But God also says in this commandment, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." And God adds that "the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work . . ." We must work six days and rest from those labors on the sabbath. Why? Because that is the way God worked. God blessed and hallowed the sabbath day and commands us to keep it holy because ". . . in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day" (Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

It is true of course that when man fell into sin God cursed the ground and therefore man works in the sweat of his brow. But Jesus also redeemed us from that aspect of the curse through His death on the cross. And because God raised Him from the dead you and I are called to abound always in the work of the Lord in the confidence that our labor is

Prof. Decker is professor of Practical Theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

never in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58).

This means that our work is a gift from God. It is a privilege. But the Bible also teaches that our work is a commandment and a duty which we must perform in obedience to the will of God and to His praise.

All of this brings us back to our original question: what does God want me to do with my life? In the light of Holy Scripture there are at least five considerations involved in making a decision in harmony with God's will. These are: 1) There are occupations in which a Christian may not be involved. 2) We need to consider the gifts God has given us. 3) We need to consider our desires. 4) We must face the question: does God open the way for me? and 5) We must consider where the greatest needs are in God's church and Kingdom.

There are those occupations which you may rule out because no Christian ought to be involved in them. Those which would make it impossible for you to observe the Lord's Day (except for legitimate works of mercy or necessity) fall into this category. Any occupation which involves disobedience to the Word of God is obviously not for the Christian.

Crucial to making the correct choice of vocation is the consideration of the gifts you have received from God. Every Christian has been blessed with gifts and abilities which God calls him or her to use for the benefit and blessing of the church (Romans 12:6). Has God blessed you with intellectual abilities, communication skills, and a love for your fellow saints? Just maybe this means you ought to consider the ministry. Have you been blessed with an aptitude for the sciences? This may mean that God wants you to serve Him in the field of medicine, as a nurse or doctor or some other health-care worker.

Has God blessed you with a strong body? Has he given you a love for His beautiful creation? Perhaps the Lord is calling you to the farm. Ask yourself the question: "with what gifts and abilities has the Lord blessed me?" And then, ask: "How can I best use these gifts in the service of my fellow-saints and in the service of my God?" You may be sure that God does not call you to a work which He has not given you the abilities to perform. God gives to each of us the gifts necessary to do the work to which He calls us.

In this connection be sure to seek the advice and counsel of your godly father and mother. They bore you and reared you. They watched you mature from a helpless infant to a mature young man or woman. They know you better than you may think! God gave them to you and you to them exactly in order that they might help and guide you also to seek that calling which God has in mind for you. Seek also the advice of your Christian School teachers. These too know you better than you may think! God gave you a pastor and elders to guide you along your pilgrimage. Ask them to help you. They will be more than pleased to give you godly counsel in the matter of your vocation. Scripture calls us to seek the advice of our parents, teachers, and officebearers when it says, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth (pays attention to and accepts) unto counsel (advice) is wise" (Proverbs 12:15).

Consider too your desires. Sometimes because of our sinful natures our desires are impure and wrong. These of course we must put away from us by God's grace. But consider your desires. To what do you aspire? Do you have a strong desire to help people in need? Has God graced you with more than the usual compassion and sympathy for

your fellow-saints? Does this mean He calls you to serve Him as a minister, as a nurse, as a Christian doctor? Do any of these appeal to you? The Bible says, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4).

Having ruled out those occupations in which a Christian may not be involved, and having considered the gifts and abilities with which God has blessed you and the desires and aspirations which the Lord has put into your heart, you must now face this question: "Does God open the way for me?" Does God make it possible for you to pursue this or that career? If the way is open, this too is an indication that God is calling you to this work. Certainly you may conclude God does not call you to a vocation for which He does not open the way.

Finally, assuming all of the above, you must consider where the greatest needs are in God's church and kingdom. God has blessed our churches and people with many children of the Covenant. God has blessed us with the means in many of our communities to establish covenant Christian schools. At the moment of this writing there is a *severe* shortage of teachers for those schools. At a time when mothers with young children (even pre-school children) are forced to teach, and when older veterans in the teaching profession are forced to postpone well-deserved retirement, no one can deny that the need for teachers is great indeed! Perhaps you are blessed with an aptitude for math and aspire to serve God as an accountant. Ask yourself where is the greatest need? In the accounting profession? In education? Perhaps God calls you to teach math in the light of Holy Scripture in one of our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools.

God has blessed our denomina-

tion with numerical growth. By His grace three new congregations were organized in the past year. Some of the larger congregations are at the point where they are thinking of organizing daughter churches or calling a second pastor. God has opened many doors in missions. Two missionaries are needed in Jamaica; there are opportunities for church extension work in North America; and there is a need for ministers in Australia and Northern Ireland. There are several churches without pastors. Several of our ministers (including one of our professors) will, D.V., reach retirement age within the next few years. One of our retired ministers is no longer able to preach because of illness. God recently took to glory one of

our professors. Perhaps you have intellectual abilities, you enjoy reading and studying, and you have gifts of communication. With those gifts and abilities you are thinking of college and law school (an honorable profession indeed). Is the greatest need in the law profession? . . . or in the ministry of the gospel? Over one hundred years ago the great Southern Presbyterian preacher-theologian, R.L. Dabney wrote the following and what he says is still true today:

Go where we may, we see more merchants than can find customers, more physicians than have patients, more lawyers than clients. Society has enough of them — too many. But . . . to carry the gospel to every one of the 800 million of pagans on our globe, the church needs a hundred times as many ministers. Now,

*what young Christian, qualified to preach, who asks in the spirit of the true convert "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" can say in view of these facts, that God and his fellow men have more need of him at the bar, behind the counter, or in the physician's calling, than in the pulpit? If he cannot, let him beware how he neglects the prayerful examination of the duty of preaching, at the peril of the wrath of his Saviour."** (emphasis Dabney's)

As you prayerfully and in the light of the Bible consider your gifts, desires, and the needs of God's church and kingdom, may God give you grace to choose that vocation to which He calls you. □

*R.L. Dabney, *Discussions Evangelical and Theological* (Banner of Truth edition), v. 2, 1967, p. 41. (quoted by Sinclair Ferguson in his book, *Discovering God's Will*, Banner of Truth, 1984, pp. 84-85.)

Mr. Gary VanDerSchaaf

Recommended Reading

History/Biography

On Fire For God: The Story of John Hus

Victor Budgen. Evangelical Press. 14.95p

God's Outlaw: The Story of William Tyndale

Brian Edwards. Evangelical Press. 11.95p

Evangelical Doctor: The Story of John Wycliffe

Douglas Wood. Evangelical Press. 11.95p

Such a Candle: The Story of Hugh Latimer

Douglas Wood. Evangelical Press. 11.95p

Luther and His Katie

Dolina MacLuish. Christian Focus. 4.50p

Here I Stand — The Life of Martin Luther

Roland Bainton. Abingdon. 4.95p

By Their Blood: Christian Martyrs of the 20th Century

James Hefley. Baker Book House. 14.95p

The Men Behind the KJV

Gustavus Paine. Baker Book House. 6.95p

God Made Them Great

John Tallach. Banner of Truth. 6.95p

The Shall Be Mine

John Tallach. Banner of Truth. 6.95p

Contemporary Issues

Shall We Dance?

Brian Edwards. Evangelical Press. 6.95p

Pop Goes the Gospel.

Revised Edition

John Blanchard. Evangelical Press. 6.95p

The Role Relationships of Men and Women

George W. Knight. Evangelical Press. 6.95

The Genesis Flood

J.C. Whitcomb & Henry Morris. Baker Book House. 10.95p

Whom Shall I Marry?

Dorothy Voshell. Presbyterian & Reformed. 6.95p

Abortion & the Christian

John Davis. Presbyterian & Reformed. 6.95p

All the Way Home: A Christian Looks at Feminism

Mary Pride. Crossway. 12.95p

Dating, Sex, & Friendship
Joyce Huggett. IVP. 6.95p
Confronting the New Age
Douglas Groothuis. IVP. 7.95p
The Lure of the Cults & New Religions
Ronald Enroth. IVP. 6.95p

Christian Living
Discovering God's Will
Sinclair Ferguson. Banner of Truth. 4.95p
The Practice of Godliness
Jerry Bridges. Navpress. 4.50p
The Pursuit of Holiness
Jerry Bridges. Navpress. 4.50p

The Young Christian
Matthew Henry. Christian Focus Publications. 3.95p
Learning to be Happy (Abridged of the Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment)
Jeremiah Burroughs. Evangelical Press. 4.95p

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News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

September 1, 1989

DENOMINATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

On July 17 of this year, the Lord took unto Himself Prof. H.C. Hoeksema after he suffered for a brief time with cancer.

For some forty years Prof. Hoeksema preached and taught the gospel of sovereign grace. He faithfully served as a minister of the gospel and was a strong leader and teacher of theology in our churches, as well as editor of this magazine. In accordance with his wishes, the family mourned his passing in a private family funeral.

Then, on July 20, a memorial service, entitled *Soli Deo Gloria*, was held in the sanctuary of our Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, MI. Those who filled the auditorium that night gathered not to mourn, but to rejoice, to rejoice not in what Prof. Hoeksema had accomplished

throughout his life, but to rejoice in our sovereign God and His wisdom and will.

Tears were shed that night, but there was no feeling of being overburdened with sorrow. There was indeed a sense of joy that Prof. Hoeksema had been delivered from the church militant to the church triumphant in glory. It was a night of celebration.

Prof. R. Decker led the audience in opening prayer, in the singing from the Psalter, and in the reading from scripture.

Prof. Hoeksema and his family had expressed their desire that the message for this service be based on Psalm 48:14: "For this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death."

Prof. Decker went on to show us that the verse serves as a tremendous comfort. It tells us that God's church can not be destroyed. God is God forever, and He has established His church and not man. Prof. Decker also challenged us to keep up our covenantal responsibility to tell the generation following that this God is also their God. And he encouraged us

by calling our attention to the fact that God is also our guide. He guides us both through His word and the preaching of that Word by His faithful servants.

The service was closed with the singing of Prof. Hoeksema's favorite Psalter number, number 163, after which Rev. J. Kortering closed with prayer.

After the singing of the Doxology, the audience was asked to remain standing while Mrs. Mary Velthouse, Prof. Hoeksema's niece, played the Hallelujah Chorus on the organ.

We extend our sympathy to Mrs. Hoeksema and her family. May they find consolation in the promise of God and in the hope of final resurrection.

Rev. Robert Harbach celebrated his 75th birthday on July 27. Rev. Harbach is confined to his home, suffering from Parkinson's disease, which causes him almost constant pain. And Rev. George Lubbers celebrated his 80th birthday on August 6. A letter, or just a card, to these men would mean so much. It would certainly cheer the hearts of these faithful servants of Christ who have for many years served our denomination both as

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

ministers and as missionaries. Rev. Harbach's address is 3409 Goodman, Wyoming, MI 49509, and Rev. Lubbers is 2074 Cranbrook Dr., NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

The P.R. Sunday School Association sponsored an evening of fellowship on June 22. A speech by Rev. J. Heys and an opportunity to meet with the teachers and the editor of "Our Guide" was planned at Faith Church in Jenison, MI. Parents and interested friends as well as all Sunday School teachers were cordially invited to attend.

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Council of our South Holland P.R.C. in South Holland, IL planned a farewell program on June 20 for their former missionary, Rev. R. Van Overloop, who had faithfully served as their missionary for the past ten years. A short program was planned. During the program a collection was taken and given to Rev. Van Overloop as a token of their appreciation for his faithful work.

In early July a congregational meeting was held in the Lynden P.R.C. in Lynden, WA. The consistory's proposal to build a new church building on their existing property was approved by the congregation.

MINISTERIAL CALLS

Rev. G. Van Baren has declined the call to Peace P.R.C. in Lynwood, IL. Rev. R. Hanco has declined the call to Isabel, S.D. and Rev. A. den Hartog has declined the call to serve as missionary to the island of Jamaica.

Rev. J. Kortering is considering a call from our congregation in Pella, Iowa.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

On June 6 all the men of the congregation of the Immanuel P.R.C. in Lacombe, AB were urged to attend a meeting, the purpose of which was to form a school society. The committee

appointed at the last meeting presented a constitution for discussion and adoption, following which a society was to be organized, the Lord willing. □

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Society of the Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Ken Kuiper and family in the loss of Eunice's father, PROF. H.C. HOEKSEMA.

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

Rev. Barry Gritters, Pres.
Julie Dykstra, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary-Martha Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, Calif. expresses its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Thys Feenstra, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Feenstra, Mr. and Mrs. John Feenstra, Mr. and Mrs. Don Feenstra, Mr. and Mrs. Everett Van Voorthuysen, and grandchildren in the death of their husband, father, and grandfather, MR. THYS FEENSTRA.

Our prayer is that God will be their comfort in their sorrow.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8)

Rev. Kenneth Koole, Pres.
Anna Mae Meelker, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 9, 1989, our parents, MR. AND MRS. DONALD KNOPER, will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary with an open house at First Church from 2 to 4 P.M.

We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for the many happy years He has given them to each other and to us their

children and grandchildren. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them with good health and all spiritual blessings.

Dave and Donna Vander Kodde
John and Deb Knoper
Bob and Linda Lenting
Mike and Cheryl Atman
Kurt and Deb Van Overloop
and 11 grandchildren

SEMINARY CONVOCATION

The Protestant Reformed Seminary will conduct its annual Convocation Service at 8 PM on September 6, in Byron Center Church.

Topic: "The Task of the PRC in Their Seminary."

Our new professor, the Rev. David J. Engelsma, will be our speaker this year. There will be opportunity for fellowship over coffee after the meeting.

All friends of our Protestant Reformed Churches and Seminary are welcome to attend this happy occasion.

NOTICE!!!

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Doon, Iowa, on Wednesday, September 6, 1989, at 8:30 a.m., the Lord willing. All delegates in need of lodging or transportation from the airport should notify the Clerk of South Holland's Consistory.

Rev. R. Hanco, Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!!

The Fall meeting of The League of Eastern Men's and Ladies' Societies will be held, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, September 26, 1989, at 8:00 PM at the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Prof. David Engelsma will speak on the topic "Is good self-esteem important for a Christian and how is it developed?" All members and others interested in this topic are urged to attend.

Reka Sietstra, vice-secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Pella Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to the children and grandchildren in the death of our beloved brother and adult Bible Class member MR. JACOB S. DE VRIES on July 28, 1989.

"Thou shalt guide me by thy council and afterwards receive me to glory." (Ps. 73:24)

Carl VanDonselaar, vice-pres.
Andrew DeNooy, clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Redlands Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to its fellow office bearers: Elder John Feenstra, Elder E. Van Voorhysen, and Deacon Steve Feenstra and their families, in the loss of their father, father-in-law, and grandfather THYS FEENSTRA on July 21, 1989.

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

Rev. K. Koole, Pres.
Otto Gastra, Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 26, 1989, the Lord willing, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents MR. AND MRS. ADRIAN GRIFFIOEN will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary. An open house is being planned for September 16, 1989 at First Church of Grand Rapids, MI from 2 to 5 PM. We are thankful to our heavenly Father for giving us God-fearing

parents, and for the love and Christian instruction they have given us through these years.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." (Ps. 103:17)

Their grateful children:

Tom and Ardyth Heyboer
Arie and Ann Griffioen
John and Ginger Huizinga
Denny and Sharon Gleason
17 grandchildren
24 great-grandchildren

ANNOUNCEMENT

Attention R.F.P.A. Association Members, Friends, and Supporters of the Standard Bearer.

Reserve Thursday, September 21, to attend the Association's Annual Meeting at 8:00 PM in Southwest Church. Speaker: Editor-in-Chief Prof. David J. Engelsma. Topic: "The Standard Bearer: Holding the Traditions." Special numbers, and presentation of a plaque to retired Business Manager, Henry J. VanderWal, and refreshments. Election of three new board members from the following brethren: Vern Casemier, Leon Kamps, Gary Nienhuis, Neal Pastoor, Alvin Rau, and John Veltman. A beneficial evening for all in attendance.

Peter Koole, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of PROF. H.C. HOEKSEMA.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (I Thess. 4:16).

The Evangelical Reformed
Church of Singapore

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 26, 1989, our parents, MR. AND MRS. ROBERT PASTOOR celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, rejoice with them and give thanks to our heavenly Father for the years they have shared with each other and their family. It is our constant prayer that God will continue to bless them in the years to come.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." (Ps. 103:17, 18)

Doug and JoAnn Pastoor
Nicole, Eric
Jim and Jane Pastoor
David, Kevin, Steven
Dan and Lori Pastoor
Brad, Nathan, Bryan, Jonathan
Larry and Pam VanPutten
Laura, Lisa
Steve Pastoor
Tom Pastoor

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

We express our sincere love and sympathy to Mrs. H.C. Hoeksema, our Bible teacher, in the loss of her beloved husband, PROF. H.C. HOEKSEMA whose wisdom was often brought to us through her.

"Behold God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." (Isaiah 12:2)

Hudsonville Wednesday Morning
Women's Bible Study