

**A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine**

THE STANDARD BEARER

Among the Dutch Reformed it has become a (tired) joke that the main course at Sunday dinner is “roast preacher.” The joke is not funny. How unfunny it really is will become evident if our sons’ sons (and daughters’ daughters) have no pastors and teachers!

See “The Task of the PRC
with Their Seminary” — page 77

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In This Issue . . .

"The best way to get a better minister . . . is to pray for the one you have."

The point of that little proverb, no doubt, is that there are sometimes other ways, not so well motivated, that come to mind. And that gives point to the concern expressed by our editor, as it appears on the cover.

The cover quote was lifted from the editorial, which constitutes the first of the three installments in which Prof. Engelsma's speech at our seminary's convocation ceremony will be published. In that speech, not surprisingly, the professor drew the attention of his audience to the critical shortage, not only of ministers in our churches, but also currently of students in our seminary. That ought, he said, to inspire us to self-examination — self-examination, i.e., by the seminary, by the churches, by our homes . . . and by each of us personally.

"By each of us personally?" But what do I have to do with a shortage of ministers and of students? Plenty, according to the professor.

What is our attitude toward our own pastors? How mindful are we of the fact that they are soldiers "in the trenches on the front line in the fiercest war of all"? If we are unmindful; if, in the face of their faithfulness, we do not demonstrate our appreciation, or, worse yet, are inclined to be critical; if we make life for them the more difficult . . . then we are the losers. How is that? Listen to John Calvin, in his commentary on Hebrews 13:17: ". . . if they (the pastors) have their minds restrained by grief or weariness, though they may be sincere and faithful, they will yet become disheartened and careless, for vigor in acting will fail at the same time with their cheerfulness." The preaching, in other words, suffers . . . and then we do too. "Let us then remember," Calvin continues, "that we are suffering the punishment of our own perverseness, whenever the pastors grow cold in their duty, or are less diligent than they ought to be."

Even worse, of course, is no pastor at all. Read again the cover copy . . . and then "The Task of the PRC with Their Seminary." □ -D.D.

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Meditation

Rev. James Slopsema

Giving Thanks to God

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:

To show forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night Psalm 92:1, 2

Soon we will celebrate Thanksgiving Day.

What does Thanksgiving Day mean to you? A day off from work and school? A day of feasting and festivities? Let's make sure that in the midst of all our festivities we don't forget to give thanks to God. And let's not overlook the fact that we must give thanks to God, not just one day of the year, but every day.

This matter of thanksgiving raises several questions: For what ought we to thank God? How ought we to express our thanks to God? Why ought we to give thanks to God?

The answers to these questions are furnished by the Psalmist.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: to show forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night

The Psalmist speaks of giving thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness and His faithfulness.

Lovingkindness is a very graphic word used to describe God's mercy for His people. God's lovingkindness is God's love for His people in distress. Oh, how God loves His people. That's especially true when they are in trouble. His heart goes out to them. And in His love He shows them kindness, great kindness, in delivering them out of their troubles and sorrows.

Closely connected to God's lovingkindness, we must speak of God's covenant. God has graciously established His covenant of love and friendship with His people. In that covenant He promises them many wonderful things. God's faithfulness is His faithfulness to His covenant and His covenant people.

God had shown to Israel His lovingkindness and faithfulness. In fulfillment of His covenant promises to their father Abraham, God brought Israel out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. And there God blessed Israel. He made Canaan to be for them a land flowing with milk and honey. There Israel enjoyed the fatness of the land.

But that's not all. These material blessings were only an outward sign of a higher, spiritual blessing. For in Canaan God dwelt with Israel in covenant friendship and fellowship around the tabernacle and later the tem-

ple. In Canaan Israel enjoyed God's friendship and fellowship and the blessings of salvation.

Threatening to destroy all this, however, were the ungodly nations surrounding Israel. Again and again, often with superior military might, Israel's enemies sought to take the land of promise away from Israel and to destroy the covenant Israel enjoyed with the LORD their God.

But again and again the LORD defended and preserved Israel, often through astonishing miracles, so that Israel continued to enjoy the blessings of God's covenant.

This is the lovingkindness and faithfulness of which the Psalmist speaks. The Psalmist celebrates this manifestation of God's lovingkindness and faithfulness in the rest of the Psalm. In verses 4-9 he speaks of the terrible destruction of Israel's enemies at that hand of the Lord. In verses 10-15 he rejoices in the great blessings of God to Israel.

And it was for this lovingkindness and faithfulness of the LORD that Israel gave thanks. This Psalm was sung on the Sabbath Day by the congregation of Israel at the Temple after the return of Israel from the Babylonian captivity. And as Israel sang this Psalm she expressed her thanks to God for His lovingkindness and faithfulness.

* * * * *
We also enjoy the same lovingkindness and faithfulness of God.

For God has also established His covenant of grace with us.

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

Gone is the earthly Canaan with its physical bounties. Gone also is the earthly temple. But the essence of the covenant remains to this day. In fact, through the coming of Jesus the covenant of God has entered into a new phase. What before were only types and pictures have given way to the realities.

In that covenant we find great blessings. We enjoy the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. We are born again to a new life. We have the hope of a better life yet to come . . .

Even the material abundance we have and enjoy in our present day is a blessing. Certainly material abundance is not a blessing in and of itself. For when God gives abundance to the wicked, it is for their greater damnation. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, while we are still on the earth, we need food and drink, clothing and shelter. We need this not only to survive on the earth but also to serve God as His covenant people. And so our covenant God also gives us material gifts. In fact, He has given the church of our land great abundance.

Furthermore, God has preserved us in His covenant. The powers of darkness still attempt to destroy the church and to rob her of her covenant blessings. Through false doctrine, through the pleasures of sin, and even through the afflictions that God sends upon us, the Devil seeks to turn us away from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. When that fails, the Devil moves the world against the church in persecution. If possible, he would remove the church from off the face of the earth. But always God defends and preserves His church, safe and secure, within His covenant.

This is the lovingkindness and faithfulness of God.

And for that we must give thanks.

Many concentrate their attention on Thanksgiving Day on the physical bounty the Lord has given.

Let us rather concentrate on the great covenant blessings that God has bestowed upon us and our children in His lovingkindness and faithfulness.

* * * * *

But how do we show thanks to our covenant God for His great blessings?

The answer is found in the very word "thanksgiving." The word used by the Psalmist has the basic meaning of pointing out. We give thanks to God for His lovingkindness and faithfulness by pointing them out. We point them out to God as well as to our fellow man.

The Psalmist spells this out more in detail when he speaks of singing praises to the name of God. He also speaks of showing forth God's lovingkindness and faithfulness upon an instrument of ten strings, upon the psaltery and upon the harp.

Summing this all up we may say that we give thanks to God by showing forth His lovingkindness and faithfulness. How many are the blessings God has showered upon us in His lovingkindness and faithfulness! Show forth these blessings. Enumerate them. Spell them out. Speak of them. And, having done so, praise God for them.

We are to do this in our prayers that find their way to the throne of God's grace. We are to do this in our conversation with one another in the household of faith as we exercise the communion of the saints. We are to do this as part of our witness and testimony to the world.

And, above all, we must do this in singing. The Psalmist especially has in mind giving thanks through song. Listen again to the Psalmist. He speaks of singing praises to the name of

God, of showing forth God's lovingkindness and faithfulness upon an instrument of ten strings, upon the psaltery and upon the harp.

Do you sing the praises of God?

I think that the praises of God do not fill the covenant home of our day nearly as much as in times past. The Psalmist speaks of showing forth God's lovingkindness through song every morning, and God's faithfulness every night. Let's not overlook this important part of thanksgiving.

* * * * *

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises to His name.

There are a number of ways in which singing God's praises could be good.

It could be good because it is right.

It could be good because it is enjoyable and pleasant.

But when the Psalmist proclaims the goodness of singing God's praises in thanksgiving, he has in mind especially that it is beneficial. For the Psalmist speaks of *showing forth* the lovingkindness of God. The Psalmist chose this word carefully and purposefully. It's a word which includes the idea of celebrating with a joyful mood.

This suggests that when we show forth the lovingkindness of God and His faithfulness in song, we are led to celebrate God's wonderful blessings. The praise of God in song lifts us up. It fills us with the joys of our salvation and great rejoicing.

What a powerful tool is the gift of singing. Sing the songs of the world and it has a deadening influence on your spiritual life. Sing the praises of God with a thankful heart and it will lift you up to heavenly joys.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD! □

The Task of the PRC with Their Seminary

In a sermon on II Timothy 2:2, John Calvin remarked that our sons' sons must also hear the truth long after we are gone. Therefore, the church must always be training men in her seminary.

In this passage of Scripture, the aged apostle, who says of himself in chapter 4 of II Timothy that his course as a preacher of the gospel is finished, expresses his desire that the Word of God shall be taught after his departure. He commands the younger minister, Timothy, to intrust the sacred deposit of Truth to other men: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

This is a mandate that calls for and undergirds our seminary.

It is a mandate to the church. Each congregation, represented by her consistory, is responsible for this. Because no consistory is able to fulfil the responsibility on its own, and because the unity of the denomination forbids a congregation's "going it alone" in the matter of seminary training, the churches discharge this mandate in a denominational seminary. But it is the church that is at work in the seminary. Our Reformed "Form for the Installation of Professors of Theology" (hereafter, FIPT) states that it is "the church (which has a) divine mission . . . to study theology . . . and further to advance what is in

direct connection with this study," with explicit reference to the seminary and its labor. Writing on the doctrine of the church in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Herman Hoeksema says, "to teach ministers belongs to the *potestas docendi* (power of teaching) of the church" (my emphasis — DJE).

Our seminary is and ought to be a church-school, established, maintained, and governed by the churches. The reason is not so much to assure the orthodoxy of the school, for denominational seminaries can apostatize as well as independent seminaries, but because the authority and power to do the work of the seminary are not given by Christ to the professors, but to the church.

This involvement of the churches also tends to keep the seminary to its rightful task.

That task is the training of qualified men to be able Reformed ministers of the Word of God. The purpose of the PRC with their seminary is the preparation of men to be Reformed pastors in the congregations, or missionaries who bring the gospel to those without for the gathering of churches. The seminary has one, central, all-controlling goal: producing men who can preach and who can take heed to the flock in counseling and in discipling. Since preaching is the sound exposition of the Word of God, and since counseling and disciplining are

the wise application of the Word to the life of the congregation, the goal of the seminary is men of whom it is true, as the apostle puts it in II Timothy 2:15, that they "rightly divide the word of truth."

The congregations must have "pastors and teachers." This is the will of the ascended Christ Himself, as Ephesians 4:11 makes plain. This is also the will of our churches. The seminary exists because the PRC share the desire that moved the Scottish Reformer, John Knox, to utter as his dying prayer the petition, "Lord, give pastors to Thy Kirk."

Everything in the seminary serves this goal. By regulation, the churches choose men to teach who have themselves been pastors. The churches would bypass the professional theologian — the man with a Th D from a prestigious university — who had never served a charge. The thinking of the churches is that the professional theologian would produce more professional theologians, which the church does not need, whereas men who have themselves served the churches as pastors will devote themselves to training men for the pastoral ministry, than which the churches have no greater need.

The entire curriculum is drawn up with the pastor in mind. Each subject has a place in the curriculum because it is useful for

the work of the pastor or of the missionary.

The apostle charges Timothy, and in him the church, to commit what he had heard from Paul to men "who shall be able to teach others also," that is, to train men to be pastors of the churches. "Teaching others" is simply the job-description of the minister of the Word of God. Based on this, the FIPT charges the professors "with the task of instructing and establishing in the knowledge of God's Word, the students who hope once to minister in His Church."

This makes the seminary and its work important. I have never believed, and I do not now believe, that the position of professor of theology (the office that Article 2 of the Church Order of Dordt distinguishes as one of four offices in the Reformed Church) is the highest and worthiest office in the church, particularly in comparison with the office of pastor. No office is higher than that of the pastor! No work is more useful for great ends; "so great things are effected by it," the Reformed "Form of Ordination of the Ministers of God's Word" says, adding, "how highly necessary it is for man's salvation."

Of faithful pastors the prophet says, "They that be teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3). The apostle commends the pastoral (and missionary) office with his rhetorical questions in Romans 10:14ff.: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

The office of pastor is necessary for the salvation of the elect church. And this is because the living Jesus Himself speaks

by means of this office. The sheep hear the voice of the Great Shepherd when faithful under-shepherds "teach others also."

No office is more difficult than that of the pastor. Paul refers to it in II Timothy 2 as a warfare. The pastor is a soldier in the trenches on the front line in the fiercest war of all, in which the souls of men and the glory of Jesus Christ are at stake. Commenting on II Corinthians 10:4, Calvin writes:

The life of a Christian, it is true, is a perpetual warfare, for whoever gives himself to the service of God will have no truce from Satan at any time, but will be harassed with incessant disquietude. It becomes, however, ministers of the word and pastors to be standardbearers, going before the others; and, certainly, there are none that Satan harasses more, that are more severely assaulted, or that sustain more numerous or more dreadful onsets. As a good soldier of Jesus Christ, the pastor must "endure hardness" (II Tim. 2:3). In the gospel, he is always exposed to suffering trouble, sometimes even as an evil doer. When Paul wrote II Timothy, he was a prisoner (2:9), anticipating martyrdom, as he indicates in 4:6: "I am now ready to be poured out as a drink-offering."

I may add, especially now that I am no longer a pastor, that no office is more honorable than that of the pastor, so that the saints should highly esteem their minister. The present shortage of seminarians is cause for fervent prayer, and rightly so. Potential lack of ministers is a grievous need; and it is God in Jesus Christ Who, as Lord of the harvest, sends forth laborers into His harvest. The shortage should also become the occasion for self-examination, whether Christ's withholding of aspirants for the ministry is due to some fault in ourselves. The self-examination should be conducted by the

seminary itself, by the churches, by our homes, and by each of us personally.

One sin for which we do well to check is the refusal to honor our pastors. The calling of the congregation is "to esteem the ministers . . . very highly for their work's sake, and (to) be at peace with them without murmuring, strife or contention, as much as possible" (Belgic Confession, Article 31). A spirit of suspicion and the practice of harsh criticism and public, if prudently guarded, accusation without any regard for Scripture's warning, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (I Tim. 5:19), will not only make thoughtful young men (the kind of young men we want and need!) hesitate to seek the ministry, but will also provoke Him Who gives pastors and teachers to withhold this precious gift from such ungrateful people. Among the Dutch Reformed it has become a (tired) joke that the main course at Sunday dinner is "roast preacher." The joke is not funny. How unfunny it really is will become evident if our sons' sons (and daughters' daughters) have no pastors and teachers!

The office of pastor is a glorious work! Just for this reason, the task of the churches with their seminary, to prepare such workmen for the churches, is an important task.

Next issue: The necessity of seminary-training. □ -DJE

Theological School

OF THE
PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES

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SEMINARY NEWSLETTER

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

November 1, 1989

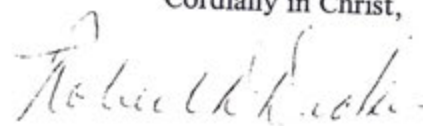
By the time you read this we will be nearing the end of the first semester. Our students at this point in the semester are anticipating their semester examinations and working hard on their term papers and research projects. Mr. Mitchell Dick is in his third year of studies and Mr. Leonard Holstege is in his first year. In addition, there are eight young men from our churches enrolled in pre-seminary programs at various colleges and universities. This means that in the near future our enrollment at the seminary will be significantly increased. Remember these brothers in your prayers as they study to prepare themselves for the ministry of the gospel in our churches.

The professors, in addition to their teaching assignments, are busy preaching in the area churches, writing articles for our *Theological Journal*, leading Bible Study societies, and teaching catechism classes. Prof. Engelsma travelled to our Lynden, Washington Church to give a Reformation Day lecture and preach. Prof. Decker gave a Reformation Day lecture in Randolph, Wisconsin.

Our library continues to expand. Not only are we buying books as needed, but recently have received a number of books as gifts. We are grateful to the family of the late Prof. H.C. Hoeksema for donating most of the professor's library to the seminary. Among these volumes were several very old and valuable books. Rev. Robert Harbach has also graciously donated a significant number of his books and papers to the library. Among the treasures from this latter collection are a number of letters written by Arthur W. Pink to Rev. Harbach. Rev. Harbach carried on personal correspondence with Pink during the years 1938 to 1949. These letters will be preserved in the archives of our churches. Donations to our library will be gratefully received. It will also interest you to know that Peter deKlerk, recently retired theological librarian at Calvin Seminary, is doing a complete evaluation of our library.

The Theological School Committee and the faculty are working on two projects of note: an internship program and an endowment fund for our seminary. Please remember us in your prayers and may God bless you richly.

Cordially in Christ,



Prof. Robert D. Decker

In His Fear
Rev. Arie denHartog

Jesus and Our Little Children

I was deeply impressed with this subject in connection with a recent study of mine in preparation for a chapel talk at the Christian grade school. How wonderful was our Lord's dealing with little children. From the gospel accounts we get the impression that children were often in the audience of the Lord Jesus. The Lord was pleased with this. He took great interest in these children and dealt with them in tenderest affection. He sometimes used children to illustrate great truths of His kingdom. Jesus teaches us that unless we are converted and become as little children we cannot even enter the kingdom of heaven. The Lord's dealing with little children reveals the sovereignty of His love for His own and the wonder of His grace according to which He includes them in His kingdom. We as covenant parents can take great comfort from the way that Jesus dealt with little children. We can use the Bible stories that tell of Jesus' dealing with little children to instruct and comfort our smallest children.

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

One of the several accounts in which we read of Jesus and little children is found in Matthew 19:13-15. In this beautiful story the inspired gospel writer tells of an instance in the history of our Lord's life on earth when parents were bringing their little children to Jesus. Jesus received these children and took them into His arms and embraced them and blessed them. What a beautiful picture is painted for us here. The fathers and mothers bringing their children to Jesus in this story were not heathen and ungodly parents. They were believing and godly mothers and fathers of Israel. They themselves first believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior of His people. They did not yet fully understand all the implications of this, for the Spirit of Christ was not yet poured out. Nevertheless they brought their children to Jesus because they sought for their children the salvation that is in Jesus. Their bringing of their children to the Lord was on their part a spiritual act of faith. We do not read in this account that these children were sick and were therefore brought to the Lord for healing. They were brought to the Lord that He might lay His hands on them and bless them. These parents had no superstitious notion about a magical power that was in the hands of Jesus. They believed that Jesus as the Son of God had the power to bestow upon

children the blessings of salvation. They believed that when Jesus pronounced a blessing on someone He actually conferred that blessing upon them.

The children that were brought were small children. Matthew uses a word that is a general designation of children. Luke in his parallel account uses a word that means, literally, small infants, newborn babes. These children did not come to the Lord on their own. They were brought by their fathers and mothers. Some were probably old enough to be led by the hand. Others were so small that they had to be carried by their parents. While perhaps some of the older of these children had some understanding of what it meant to come to Jesus, none of them as yet had a mature understanding of this. Some, because they were infants, had no understanding at all.

Jesus received these children with tenderest love. This was not merely a humanitarian love for little children on the part of Jesus. We cannot derive from this story the idea of the general love of Jesus for all little children. This was a particular love of Jesus for the child of believing parents. That love was an amazing wonder. These children were those who were conceived and born in sin like all our children are. Yet they were received by the Holy Son of God. Jesus spoke of these children as

already belonging to His kingdom. He said concerning them, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Some have interpreted the last part of this statement to mean only that these children in their natural characteristics exemplified what must be spiritually true of all those who come to Jesus and seek to enter His kingdom, whether young or old. We must come to Jesus in humility, recognizing our great need and dependence on Him. We must come to Him with child-like faith and trust, without questions, receiving from Him the blessings of salvation. There is truth in this, of course. That is the main point of Jesus in another beautiful account of His dealing with children which is recorded in Matthew 18. But Jesus says more than this in Matthew 19. He says that these children and those like them are already in His kingdom. The kingdom belongs to them. He has in His wonderful grace included them in His kingdom. The blessings of salvation which are exclusively for the citizens of that kingdom rightly belong to these little children. All this is true even though these children are so small that most of them cannot as yet exercise conscious faith in Jesus.

Matthew 19 has through the history of the church been used as support for the practice of infant baptism in the church. The reasoning is that if Jesus could receive and bless these little children and speak of them as belonging to His kingdom, then it is proper that they receive the sign of baptism, the sign which speaks of the blessings of belonging to Jesus and of being made partaker of His salvation. In connection with this teaching, our form for infant baptism makes this amazing statement: "And

although our young children do not understand these things, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism, for as they are without their knowledge, partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received unto grace in Christ." Those who would exclude the children of believing parents from baptism are guilty of the same error for which Jesus in Matthew 19 rebukes His disciples.

Jesus receives little children because of the wonder of His grace. He does not have to wait until these children can come to Him with conscious faith in Him. The grace of the Son of God is before the faith of His people. In fact, our faith is only the fruit of the grace of God in us. Jesus receives His own, long before they receive Him. This truth is not contradicted by the fact that some children, who are in infancy brought to Jesus by their parents, later when they grow up despise Jesus and forsake Him. We believe that the sovereign predestination of God runs through the line of the generations of our children. Jesus as the Son of God deals with the children of believers in an organic way. He does this both with children and with adults. Also among those who profess faith as adults and are baptized as adults there are those who later in life reveal themselves to be reprobate concerning the faith. All of this does not in any way negate the wonder of the fact that we as believing parents may bring our children to Jesus.

Jesus has great concern for the salvation of our children. There are other accounts besides the one cited above that reveal this. Jesus rebuked His disciples very sharply when they sought to hinder the godly parents from bringing their children to Him. The disciples really thought that Jesus could not be bothered by

little children. Jesus was in their eyes "too great" for this. He was too busy for this. There were more important concerns that He had to attend to than to be distracted with children. Parents ought not to trouble the Lord with bringing their children to Him. But how very wrong these disciples of the Lord were. Therefore they had to be rebuked. In Matthew 18 Jesus speaks of the great seriousness of the sin of hindering children from coming to Him and of casting a stumbling block in their way. Jesus says that it were better for such a one, before he would have committed such a great sin, to have had a millstone to be hanged about his neck and to be cast into the depth of the sea. The seriousness of the judgment which Jesus pronounces upon those who offend little children is born out of His great love for these children and His concern for their salvation. Jesus further illustrates this love, and the love which also His Father has for the little ones, when He says that the angels of these little ones constantly behold the face of His Father. So precious are these little ones in the sight of God that He has given His angels charge over them to care for them. It is therefore proper that the Son of God while on earth should reveal such wonderful love and concern for children. And we as believing parents must have that same love and concern.

All of these things are very great. What comfort is implied in all of this for us as covenant parents. There is nothing on earth that is so dear to us as our children. And that is the way it should be. We must love our children with the love of the Lord. In that love we must seek always to bring our children to the Lord. But also bringing our children to Jesus is a great and serious responsibility.

It is possible even for parents to hinder their own children from coming to the Lord. It is possible for parents to imagine that bringing children to the Lord is not an urgent matter. It is possible for parents also to cast all sorts of stumbling blocks in the way of their children. They sometimes do this by the example of their own life when they themselves live in worldliness and ungodliness. When parents do this they will bring on themselves the heavy judgment of God.

As godly parents we must follow the beautiful example of the fathers and mothers of Jesus' day who brought their little children to Him. We must bring our children to church to be baptized. We must labor to the ut-

most of our power to instruct our children in our Christian homes. We must strive to raise our children in the sphere of the church, faithfully sending them to catechism classes and teaching them to listen carefully to the preaching of the Word in church. We must teach our children both by precept and the godly example of our life always to come to Jesus.

We know that our children are conceived and born in sin. We are profoundly conscious of our own need of salvation, and we earnestly desire that salvation also for our children. Therefore we seek by all means to bring them to the Savior. We carry them when they are young. We lead them by the hand when they get a bit older. As soon as

our children begin to understand, we teach our children the greatness of their sin and their great need of the Savior. We teach our children of the wondrous, sovereign grace and love of Jesus for His own. We cause our children again and again to sit at the feet of Jesus. We tell them all the wonderful works of Jesus and the promises which He made to those who believe in Him. We show by our own eagerness and joy what a blessing it is to come to Jesus and to belong to His church and kingdom.

As believing parents we can do all this with the confident and joyful assurance that our blessed Lord and Savior will receive and bless our children as citizens of His kingdom. □

Contribution

Mr. John Hilton

Concerning the P.R. "Form" of Public Confession of Faith

This article was originally intended by the author for the "Letters" column. Because of its length and worth, we publish it as a contribution. For the benefit of all our readers, we give the "form" referred to by Mr. Hilton, the questions asked at the ceremony of public confession of faith in the Protestant Reformed Churches, in full:

PUBLIC CONFESSION OF FAITH

(Before or after the sermon, the minister requests those who intend to make public confession of their faith to arise and to reply to the following questions:)

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, and in case you should be delinquent (which may God graciously forbid) to church discipline?*

Answer. Yes.

Mr. Hilton is principal and a teacher at the Free Christian School of Edgerton, Minnesota.

—Ed.

I appreciate Rev. J. Kortering's article in your September 1, 1989 issue entitled "Confessing Faith." It explained the meaning of our confession of faith before the

congregation very well. I was aroused, however, to respond to the article, because it touched upon the matter of our form for the public confession of faith, and attempts that have been made to modify it.

From 1977 to 1981 our churches were involved in attempts to draw up a broader form for our public confession of faith (see Art. 84, Acts of Synod 1977; Art. 45, Acts of Synod 1978; Art. 30, Acts of Synod 1979; Art. 36, Acts of Synod 1980; and Art. 16, Acts of Synod 1981). This attempt originated from a request by the Lynden consistory in 1977.

This work apparently was dropped because of many difficulties that arose, and in July of 1988 Lynden consistory dropped its original request.

A new overture was sent to Classis West in September, 1988, however, requesting that the first question of our form be altered in the following manner: that "doctrine of salvation" be changed to "doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ." It is my understanding that this overture was denied by classis and later by synod on the grounds that this change was an effort to introduce into the form a subjective element that was unnecessary. (Rev. Kortering's article also addressed the issue of the proper balance between subjective and objective faith, and how we should properly understand this balance as it relates to the activity of making public confession of faith.) Based on the previous difficulties our churches encountered in trying to draw up a broader form, I can understand why classis and synod rejected Lynden's latest request, labeling it an attempt to introduce a subjective element into the questions of public confession of faith. But I think further explanation is necessary on this point.

As a former elder at Lynden, I participated in formulating the overture to Classis West in September, 1988; and I believe it should be said immediately that the point of that overture was not to introduce a "subjective" element into our form. I believe we are all strongly united in believing that recitations of personal conversion experiences, stresses on our "accepting" Christ, and other subjective aspects of Christianity commonly found in other circles should not be highly regarded among us.

The reason for Lynden's overture was twofold, as I see it. First, it was to make the Name of Jesus Christ evident, since it is strikingly absent from our form; and secondly, it was to make sure that the precious Name of the Savior be more *publicly* acknowledged in the church assembly where the public confession is to be made, and not to be relegated only to the consistory room where the young people are first examined.

As support for the request I would quote Acts 4:12 as just one proof for the importance of the Name of Jesus Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Peter here is stressing that it is by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that the impotent man stood whole before them. The power of salvation associated with that name must be fully proclaimed and appreciated publicly.)

Even though, as Rev. Kortering mentioned in his article, it is understood that everyone who makes public confession of faith has previously been *privately* examined by his consistory, to draw out his personal response and relationship to his God and Savior, public confession of faith is a *public* assertion that one

belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, especially as He has been taught among us in our particular doctrines. It must be publicly evident that our young people are followers of Jesus Christ in the midst of the world, that they are not ashamed to be associated with His Name, and that they are willing to suffer for His sake, as that Name arouses the scorn and the indignation of the ungodly world.

To add the words "in Jesus Christ" may be a rather weak way to accomplish the purpose stated above, but at least it seems a step in the right direction.

It may be objected that since everyone knows all about Jesus Christ already, and since it is obvious to all that salvation in Jesus Christ is assumed, it is unnecessary to add these words to our form. But any time that there is an appropriate opportunity to acknowledge in a proper way our utter dependence upon Him for all of our salvation, and we fail or refuse to do so, we commit a certain type of denial of Him.

All our life long we are called to confess the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives. How much more especially should His precious Name shine forth at our public confession of faith. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32, 33).

When my oldest daughter made her public confession of faith, I found myself unexpectedly sad and disappointed when the questions of our form were read.

The thought struck me that the words were somehow powerless. Without the Name of Jesus Christ in the words, it seemed that she was being asked to remain faithful to a particular doctrine and a particular church, while the Life-Giver of that church and doctrine

was not mentioned. "There is no salvation," I thought, "apart from that blessed, essential Name. How lifeless a form!"

I hope I have not spoken unwisely about these things. But I feel deeply about this issue. I hope that some day the Name of Jesus Christ will at least be some-

where included in the questions which are asked our young people. I believe it is important that this be done, not to become more subjective, but to be more obedient to our God Who has enjoined us to do all things in the Name of our Savior (Col. 3:17). □

All Around Us

Prof. Robert Decker

Could Sodom and Gomorrah Have Been Worse?

Religious Liberty in Jeopardy A Christian Reformed Alliance

Could Sodom And Gomorrah Have Been Worse?

Recently a member of one of our congregations sent me a letter from the president (Beverly LaHaye) of an organization called, Concerned Women for America. The letter warns the reader about a sex education program currently being used in the public schools of Los Angeles. The letter, excerpts of which follow, is self-explanatory.

According to Valley Magazine, when Elizabeth Ramas, age 16, arrived in her fourth-period class on February 24, 1988, prepared to take a history test, the test was postponed and her 11th-grade class was ushered into the library.

Virginia Uribe, a lesbian teacher, proceeded to tell students that she practices "safe sex", that it is ok for them to have sexual feelings for other people of the same sex and that, based on research, 10 percent of them are probably gay.

Dear Concerned Friend,

You have just been introduced to a Los Angeles, California Unified School District program entitled "Project 10."

When I first heard of this pro-homosexual sex education program, I became very angry.

And when my husband Tim and I obtained one of the books that has been used in this program entitled One Teenager in 10: Testimony by Gay and Lesbian Youth, we became more angry — and even embarrassed.

I have included a copy of some of this sex education material as contained in the "Project 10" program.

But I warn you . . .

. . . this material is offensive and embarrassing — but remember, it has been given to some children in our public schools.

Please do not let your children read these excerpts . . . "Project 10" has as its stated goals the following:

1. Preventing drop-out before

graduation among lesbian and gay youth.

2. Providing campuses that are free of physical violence and verbal abuse toward sexual minorities.

3. Providing intervention in alcohol and substance abuse among lesbian and gay teenagers.

4. Increasing self-esteem among lesbian and gay teenagers by presenting educational images and role models that are positive in nature.

5. Having accurate information on lesbians and gays included throughout the curriculum.

6. Seeing that information on AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases reaches all students, teachers, parents and administrators.

7. Reducing discrimination against lesbians and gay men by providing information and demystifying homosexuality.

8. Bringing issues of lesbian and gay youth to the attention of educators and the general public.

This is incredible! And from the information I have seen — many states now have goals similar to these. (Note that I said similar . . . "Project 10" by name is so offensive that many promoters of "Project 10" goals use other names in their various school districts.)

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

My friend, as a parent . . . and as a Christian . . . this "Project 10" material is shocking and offensive. And it makes me afraid for our children's future.

How soon will "Project 10" or similar programs spread across the country into every school system? . . .

"Shocking" and "offensive" are hardly strong enough to describe the materials Mrs. LaHaye enclosed with her letter. We could not possibly print these things in *The Standard Bearer*. There are definitions of sex, sexual intercourse, and oral sex. Homosexual sex is described and condoned, as is pre-marital sex.

"Project 10" is based on anti-Christian secular humanism, a spokesman for which wrote:

The freethinking child's education must start at a very early age so that by the time the child reaches school or even kindergarten his or her horizons are already so broad they can never be contained, confused, or intimidated by the narrow Christian world in which we live. (The Humanist, Sept./Oct. 1989)

Could Sodom and Gomorrah, which God destroyed with fire and brimstone (Genesis 19), have been worse than this? How long will it be before God destroys heaven and earth and creates the new heaven and earth in which righteousness shall dwell? (II Peter 3:10-13). □

Religious Liberty in Jeopardy

The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), an association of many evangelical denominations in this country, plus thirteen other religious groups, joined together to support Sen. William Armstrong's (R., Colorado) Religious Liberty and Academic Freedom Amendment.

. . . Armstrong wants religious-affiliated schools to be exempt from compliance with the homosexual orientation section of the D. C. Human Rights Act. The act, which

protects D. C. residents from discrimination regardless of sexual orientation, requires Catholic Georgetown University to not only recognize a lifestyle it considers sinful, but to fund gay-rights groups on campus like it would any other type of club. The dispute goes beyond the politically charged issue of homosexuality and raises the basic question of whether the government can force a religious group to subsidize practices that are diametrically opposed to its fundamental beliefs. Dugan theorized: "Should Hebrew Union College be forced to subsidize a Campus Crusade For Christ group?" He added that such a possibility would be as "absurd" as forcing predominantly black Howard University in D. C. to fund a campus chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. (National and International Religion Report, October 9, 1989)

Laws such as these certainly do allow the government to force a religious group such as our own Christian Schools to subsidize practices which are diametrically opposed to our fundamental beliefs. It is not difficult to see how, right here in America, the forces of evil can attack the church and the cause of God. What we shall face in the future only the Lord knows. What we know is that His grace will be sufficient for whatever trials we shall face. □

A Christian Reformed Alliance

In the state church in the Netherlands, *De Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*, there is a sizable group of conservative congregations which have banded together to assist one another in holding the distinctives of the Reformed Faith. They are a sort of church within the church. They publish their own religious magazine called *de Waarheidsvriend*, ("The Truth's Friend").

Apparently there is a movement afoot among some of the Christian Reformed Churches in

Canada to form a similar alliance within the CRC. The magazine *Christian Renewal* carried the first of a series of articles by Richard Stienstra in which he explains what such an alliance should be and what it hopes to accomplish (October 9, 1989 issue). Stienstra writes:

Thus in these articles I will seek to spell out my concern about the direction of the Christian Reformed Church, particularly highlighting that, in my view, it is leaving the reformed pathway of our forefathers. I will also attempt to show as clearly as I know that the proposed alliance is not divisive nor schismatic, but an honorable, reformed answer to the revisionist, man-centered pattern of the development of the denomination.

We certainly sympathize with our concerned brothers and sisters in the CRC. We want to be of help to them as well. Certainly we deplore and take no delight in the direction in which the CRC is going. We also understand that schism is a terrible, censurable sin and secession is a terribly serious undertaking. But, we do not agree that an alliance, a sort of church within the church, is a "reformed answer to the revisionist, man-centered pattern of the development of the denomination." Luther, Calvin, *et. al.* did not form an alliance within the church that had left "the pathway of our forefathers." De Cock, Van Raalte, and the others did not form an alliance within the Hervormde Kerk in 1834, and neither did Abraham Kuyper in 1886. Church Reformation does not come out of alliances. It comes by grace in the hearts of servants of God who are willing to say with Luther, "Here I stand, I can do naught else, God help me!" □

A Cloud of Witnesses

Prof. Herman Hanko

Justin Martyr — Convert from Heathendom

Introduction

When the Son of God gathers His church by His Word and Spirit He brings individual elect saints to the fellowship of the church in different ways. Some are born and raised within the covenant, drink the truths of the Scriptures with their mother's milk, so to speak. Some are brought into the fellowship of the church from darkest heathendom through a sudden turning from the darkness of idolatry to the light of the gospel. Some live for years on the periphery of the church, attending only infrequently a church where only the faintest glimmerings of the gospel are heard, but who come to conversion and faith gradually through a long period of time, even though they had some acquaintance with the gospel from childhood. Some walk a long and difficult spiritual pilgrimage as they travel through the strange teachings of some sect; then through the all but sectarian teachings of Pentecostalism; then through rampant Arminianism; only finally to emerge into the light of the truth of sovereign grace. God leads His own to the fellowship of the church in sometimes strange and wonderful ways.

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

In the early history of the church of Jesus Christ, even during the apostolic period, the same principle was true. The church of that ancient day was composed of Jews who had been brought up in the Old Testament Scriptures, but who were brought to faith in Christ by the same wonder of salvation which saved the Gentiles. Some were proselytes, Gentile converts to the Jewish religion, but who also were finally brought into the fellowship of the church through the sovereign work of the Spirit of Christ. But especially in the day when first the gospel was preached throughout the Mediterranean world, the majority in the church were converts from paganism and heathendom. But even then, the conversion wrought by God was not always one of a moment of sudden bursting of the light of salvation into the darkness of unbelief; it was sometimes, even in heathendom, a sojourn, a journey long and arduous, that finally brought peace and salvation.

This is the story of one such convert from paganism: the church father, Justin Martyr.

His Conversion

Justin's surname was not really "Martyr." He received that name because he died a martyr's death. But this is not quite the point of this story, as important as it is that he sealed his confession with his blood.

Justin was actually born in Samaria, although for many years he had almost no acquaintance with the Jewish religion or with the Christian faith. He was born of a Greek father by the name of Priscus, who with his wife was sent by the Roman emperor Vespasian, along with a rather large number of Roman citizens, to settle in Flavia Neopolis, a town formerly known in Bible times as Shechem. His birth date is somewhere around the turn of the century — A.D. 100. It seems as if this colony of Roman citizens was a rather close-knit community, and contact with the surrounding people was unusual. A.D. 100 is, however, about 30 years after the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Titus, and very few Jews were left in the area.

Justin was an unusually brilliant student. At a fairly young age he began journeys throughout the empire in search of teachings which would satisfy him. He tells us of these years in his own words.

Already as a teenager he experienced deep longings in his soul which were impossible to satisfy, but which centered in the question of man's relation to God. What is man's relation to God? How is it established? What must one expect from it? The questions would not down. They troubled him deeply, and the answers seemed to him more im-

portant than anything else. He would spend his life if necessary searching out the answers to these questions.

Justin understood, after his conversion, that these questions and this deep unsatisfied longing for something he knew not what, was the work of Christ in his soul. It is doubtful that God ever brings anyone to salvation and the knowledge of Christ without creating in him a deep longing, an unsatisfied thirst, a hunger for something which one does not have. Augustine, perhaps three centuries later, put it this way in his *Confessions*: "My soul can find no rest until it rest in Thee." This longing, finally, is born out of the knowledge of sin and the hopelessness and emptiness of one's life because of the hopelessness of sin. Salvation is faith in Christ; but only the empty sinner needs Christ; only the thirsty sinner drinks at The Fountain of Living Waters; only the hungry sinner eats The Bread of Life; only the laboring and heavy laden come to Christ to find rest for their souls. It is the general rule of the Holy Spirit to bring to faith in Christ by sovereignly showing the sinner the need of Christ.

That Justin had this deep longing is not strange. That it was a part of his life for ever so many years before peace came is a remarkable providence of God.

Justin traveled widely throughout the empire in order to find those teachings which would satisfy his soul. The polytheism (the worship of many gods) of paganism seemed to him foolish and absurd in the extreme and not something to satisfy the soul. He tells us of these years of wandering — wandering from land to land, but wandering spiritually as well.

He went to the Stoics — a school of philosophy concerned mainly with ethics. They told him that questions about a man's rela-

tion to God were relatively unimportant and he ought not to be bothered by them, at least not at first. But for Justin they were the only important thing.

He went to the Peripatetics — a school of teachers who traveled about to spread their teachings. After about three days with Justin, one such teacher would not continue his teaching until he had assurance from Justin that he would pay his tuition. It was Justin's position that if the teacher were more interested in money than in teaching, he could have nothing to say which would ease the ache in his soul.

He went to the Pythagoreans — an ancient school of philosophy which told him that they could not help him until he mastered music, astronomy, and geometry, for the truth could be learned only through a mastery of these subjects.

Then he discovered that ancient school of Greek philosophy called Platonism. He tells us about it:

(Here I shall) soon have the intuition of God, for is not this the aim of Platonic philosophy?

Under the influence of this notion it occurred to me that I would withdraw to some solitary place, far from the turmoil of the world, and there, in perfect self-collection, give myself to my own contemplations. I chose a spot by the sea-side.

He was probably at Ephesus at this time, a city of Asia Minor near the sea, but near also a church of Christ established by Paul. While giving himself over to his meditations by the seaside, an old man met him and began a conversation with him. The old man was a Christian. Justin argued vehemently with the old man in the defense of his pet philosophy and received very little argument in return. But finally the old man curtly cut him off: "You are a mere dealer in words, but no lover of action and truth; your aim is not to be a practiser

of good, but a clever disputant, a cunning sophist." And when finally Justin put the question to the old man: "Where then is truth?" the old man replied, "Search the Scriptures and pray that the gates of light may be opened to thee, for none can perceive and comprehend these things except God and His Christ grant them understanding."

We are sometimes not only ashamed to witness to others of the truth, but we readily excuse our failure to witness by an appeal to the superior knowledge of those with whom we dispute. It remains, however, a striking fact of the church in the immediate post-apostolic years that the rapid spread of the gospel throughout the whole Mediterranean world was through the faithful witness of the people of God. There were few if any missionaries in those days after the great missionary labors of Paul. Only faithful and often uneducated people of God, testifying of the truth and manifesting in their lives the joy of salvation, were the means God used to spread the church throughout the known world. Here we have an instance of that — the learned Justin, brought to his knees in sorrow for sin, by a humble and childlike old man on the seaside near Ephesus.

The importance of the influence of Christian witnessing is evident in another aspect of Justin's conversion. He tells in one of his later writings that some of the unrest that stirred in his soul before his conversation with this old man was the unflinching faith of Christians who were tortured for their faith and put to death because they confessed Christ. He had witnessed such public spectacles from time to time, and had been deeply impressed by the stalwart courage of young girls and old men. He secretly wondered what kind of strength was theirs to be faithful

under such circumstances. This witness too was important.

The power of salvation is not the power of eloquent defense of the faith; it is the power of God — even when He is pleased to use human means. Justin became a faithful servant of Christ and valiant defender of the faith.

His Life As A Christian

After Justin became a Christian and was joined to the church of Christ, he spent his time traveling around the empire writing and teaching.

Schools in those days were not like schools today. A gifted and learned man (and sometimes un-gifted and stupid men) would stop in a certain town or city and begin teaching. If his instruction was considered worthwhile enough, he would soon gather some students around him who would then study under him. If he was an exceptionally able man, he might even establish a fairly permanent school that would be continued by his pupils beyond his own life.

It was something like this that Justin made his life's work. He would not, however, attempt to establish any kind of a permanent school; he was rather interested in using his knowledge and ability to speak of the Christian faith and teach others the truths of God's Word. Many times when the opportunity presented itself he would engage in public debates with defenders of pagan religions and philosophies; and this practice of his finally led to his martyrdom.

In the meantime he also did a great deal of writing. Some of his writings have survived the ravages of time and are available today. He was one of the very first of the defenders of Christianity who used his writing ability to answer the critics. In fact, so effective were his writings that he became known in later times

as an apologist — i.e., one who defended the faith.

Some brief survey of his writings will give you a bit of an idea of what he did.

He attacked paganism head on by showing the utter absurdity and stupidity of worshipping twelve or fifteen gods. He made an emphatic point of it that paganism could not possibly be a religion that was true when it brought forth horrible immoralities — the Roman Empire in these days was dying from a moral rot that was eating at its vitals and that condoned every horrible sin under heaven.

Pagans, growing ever more wary and fearful of Christianity as it spread through the world and gained converts in every walk of life, began to attack it viciously. Christians were accused of atheism for refusing to worship Caesar. They were accused of treason because they spoke of a King greater than Caesar. Strangely enough, they were accused of cannibalism because they claimed, in their celebration of the Lord's Supper, to be eating the body of the Lord and drinking His blood. They were accused of immorality because they held "love feasts" which were intended to express the communion of the saints and give material help to the poor, but which were interpreted as immoral orgies. All these foolish and wild charges Justin took the time to answer carefully and patiently.

But he also set about proving the truth of the Christian religion. He did this in especially two ways: 1) he pointed to the Old Testament prophets and how their prophecies were exactly fulfilled in the work and death of Christ. This was a striking argument, and one which our own Belgic Confession uses in Article V in defense of the authority of Scripture. 2) Probably chiefly

because the New Testament Scriptures, so recently written, were not widely known, he appealed to miracles as being proofs of the authentic character of the Christian faith — a purpose for which the Lord gave the power of miracles in the early church.

I suppose, however, that in one respect at least Justin would be considered a heretic by today's standards. It is not, I think, right to call him a heretic; for the church knew so little of the truth in the infancy of her New Testament existence. And sometimes mistakes were made through ignorance which the church in later years would never make — at least one would think so. He believed, having come out of paganism himself, that the pagan philosophers possessed the germ of the truth in their hearts, which germ of the truth was Christ Himself, the logos of John 1. And because these men possessed this germ of the truth, it was possible, Justin believed, that the best of them were saved without faith in Christ. This germ of truth came to expression in their philosophies.

This was wrong. Yet there are those in our day who call themselves Reformed who teach the same thing.

His Martyrdom

Justin has become known as Justin Martyr. It was not his given surname. He received it by a church who held the memory of his martyrdom in reverence.

In the course of his travels Justin came twice to Rome. The second time he so enraged a pagan philosopher that this opponent set about making plans to have Justin killed. He could not get the best of Justin in debate; he determined to have him killed. And so he reported Justin to the authorities as being a Christian guilty of all sorts of

awful crimes. Justin was summoned before the magistrates and tried. One can still read the record of his trial in "The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs." It is the kind of record that stirs the blood of the child of God. The faithfulness and courage which Justin showed is sometimes overwhelming to us who know not what suffering for Christ's sake is.

But the story, written so long ago, ends like this: "Rusticus the perfect (magistrate) pronounced sentence, saying, 'Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to yield to the command of the emperor be scourged, and led away to suffer the punishment of decapitation, according to the laws.' The holy martyrs having glorified God, and

having gone forth to the accustomed place, were beheaded, and perfected their testimony in the confession of the Saviour. And some of the faithful having secretly removed their bodies, laid them in a suitable place, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ having wrought along with them, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." □

Guest Article

Rev. Steven Houck

A Reformed Look at the New Age Movement (3)

In our last article we began to evaluate the New Age Movement by considering the movement's view of God. In this article we will finish our evaluation of their beliefs and practices and also consider ways in which we can avoid the errors of this wicked movement.

The New Age Movement is not only dead wrong about God but also about man. Man is not God. In no sense is man God. Moreover, man will never be God. The very thought is blasphemous. Nor is the natural man good. He does not have within himself divine power. Of himself he has no power at all. If man looks to himself for the solutions to his problems, he will find nothing but sin, wickedness, and rebellion against God. Man's big problem is not ignorance of his divinity, but the fact that he is a sinner. The destiny of the natural man is not the consciousness of being one

with God, but separation from God. If the New Age people do not repent of their terrible sins and turn in faith to the true God, they will suffer under the wrath of an angry God forever.

Even though God created man in the image of God — righteous, holy, and full of the knowledge of God — in Adam we all sinned against God and lost that image. The image of God was turned into the image of the devil. Man became corrupt on the inside. His very nature became wicked. The Prophet declares, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

As a result, apart from regeneration, man is not good, but evil. All his words, deeds, and even his thoughts are sin. The apostle declares, "... There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God . . . there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12). All the seek-

ing of the New Age people after this divine energy is not a seeking after the true God. No one of himself seeks after God. No one can.

Since the New Age Movement is wrong about God and man, it should not surprise us that they are wrong about salvation. Man's salvation is not a coming to an awareness of the fact that he is God. Salvation is not a change of consciousness or an awakening experience. All the meditation in the world will not save a single soul. Neither will music, drugs, mysticism, exercise, mind over matter, or the occult bring salvation. No spirit, extraterrestrial being, sage, monk, or enlightened one can help you find God.

Salvation is not the recognition that you are God, but it is an intimate fellowship with the personal God. It is not becoming God, but a partaking of His eternal covenant life. It is walking with God and talking with Him. Salvation is enjoying God's love and blessing and living with Him

Rev. Houck is a home-missionary of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

in His eternal kingdom. Thus we read of God's people, "... Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (II Cor. 6:16).

Because we are all sinners, salvation can take place only by means of a reconciliation through the blood of Christ. We who have forsaken God and rebelled against Him, must be brought back to Him. The guilt of our sins must be forgiven. We need to be regenerated so that we love God, trust Him, and seek to keep His commandments. That is why God sent His only begotten Son into this world. Christ took upon Himself the sin of all of His people and went to the cross in order to bear the horrible wrath of God against us. Christ, therefore, is not just another spiritual leader, as the New Age people say. He is the Savior of His people. We read in II Corinthians 5:19, 21, "... God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ... For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Salvation is not found in man or in humanity in general. It is not of man's works or will. The Scriptures say, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). Salvation is the sovereign work of God's grace alone.

All of this implies that in spite of the claims of the New Age Movement there is a difference between right and wrong. There is a moral standard which all men are responsible to obey. We may not live any way we want. The permissive, liberated life style of the New Age Movement is not acceptable to God. The true God is a righteous God. He

is a God who loves righteousness and hates sin. The Psalmist says, "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works ... The Lord preserveth all them that love him but all the wicked will he destroy" (Ps. 145:17, 20).

God has set down an absolute standard of righteousness for man — His law, the ten commandments. Because all men are creatures of God, they owe to God perfect obedience and service. Not that obedience to the law is the way of salvation. It is not. Nevertheless, it is God's requirement for all men. Moreover, those who are saved by God's grace seek to keep his commandments out of love and thanksgiving for their salvation. Jesus says to us, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Finally the New Age Movement is wrong in its involvement with the occult and spiritism. The Bible makes it very clear that we are to have nothing to do with spirits, witches, and the occult. We read in Deuteronomy 18:9-12, "There shall not be found among you any ... that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

Divination, sorcery, witchcraft, and spiritism are abominations to the Lord. It was because of these things that God drove the Canaanites out of the land. Certainly that means that we are to have nothing to do with them. We must be very careful about it too, for the television is full of this. Many of these wicked things are found in seemingly innocent children's programs.

The New Age Movement is wrong in its worship of spirits, goddesses, and other gods. It is wrong in its worship of self as God. The Bible teaches us that we are to worship and serve God alone. The very first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). Our trust must be in the true God. It is He in Whom we must find our joy, comfort, and peace. He is our only hope of life everlasting. All that we are and all that we have must be dedicated to the service of Him alone. Our whole life must revolve around Him. He must be our life and our love.

All of this makes it clear that the Scriptures condemn the New Age Movement. We may have nothing to do either with its beliefs or with its practices.

The New Age Movement is such a destructive movement that in conclusion I want to suggest ways in which we can avoid the errors of this wicked movement.

First, we must be very careful to avoid the subjectivism of this movement. Everything about the New Age Movement is subjective. It has lost objective reality. Nothing is what it seems. That is because its knowledge is based upon human experience — man's feelings, emotions, dreams, imagination. Even the seeming outside sources, the channeled spirit beings, all come through the human mind and mouth. The source of knowledge for the New Age people is the divine within. It is you yourself. That is so true that they can cut themselves off from everything else and make their own reality.

We must have nothing to do with such subjectivism. There is nothing in the natural man but sin. Man's subjective thinking and feeling will never lead him to the truth. If you want truth, you must go to the God of all truth who is

Himself the Truth. He has given to us a very objective standard of the Truth — Holy Scripture. Jesus says, "Thy word is Truth . . ." (John 17:17). In the Bible we have everything that we need to know about God, man, salvation and reality. It is there in black and white — God's written revelation of Himself. It is objective Truth. Therefore, we must take care to learn and believe the doctrines of the Scriptures. Jesus says, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Knowing the truth of God's Word is what frees us from sin and every false and evil way.

In the second place we can avoid the errors of this wicked movement by trying the spirits. The Holy Spirit says, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

We must be realistic about the age in which we live. We live in a time of many false prophets. It is the time of a great falling away

in the church. The world is filled with error. Everywhere we turn there is some prophet, preacher, guru, or sage who says that he has the truth and seeks to enlighten us.

Therefore, try the spirits. See whether or not they are of God. Don't believe what they say, just because they say that they have the truth. Test their word with the Word of God. Test not only their religious beliefs and practices, but test also their politics, science, psychology, medicine, and all else. For even though the religious philosophy of the New Age Movement may not be on the surface, in all these areas it is there underneath, waiting to get you after you have let down your guard.

In the third place let us avoid the errors of this wicked movement by resisting the emphasis upon and exaltation of self.

In the New Age Movement all the emphasis is put upon self. It is ironic but true. Their fundamental point is, "All is one. There is no self." Yet from a practical point of view, the bot-

tom line for them is nothing but self. Their world revolves around self.

We must not get caught up in that sinful emphasis. That is wicked. On the one hand we are to crucify self — kill it. We must be humble rather than proud. We must see that of ourselves we are sinners who are worthless. On the other hand we must glory in God and His greatness. The purpose and emphasis of our life must be to exalt Him. Our calling is to obey the words of the Psalmist who says, "Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods" (Ps. 96:3-4).

If you would like to learn more about this movement, I recommend the following books: 1) *Understanding the New Age*, by Russell Chandler, 2) *Unmasking the New Age*, by Douglas Groot-huis, and 3) *America: The Sorcerer's New Apprentice*, by Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon. □

Book Reviews

Agatha Lubbers is administrator of Covenant Christian High School, Walker, Michigan. Among her duties is the teaching of a class on the cults.

ANOTHER GOSPEL, Alternative Religions and the New Age Movement, by Ruth A. Tucker. Grand Rapids, Academie Books, Zondervan Publication, 1989. pp. 1-462. \$19.95. (cloth) (Reviewed by Agatha Lubbers.)

The attractively jacketed ANOTHER GOSPEL is not just one more book on the subject of cults and alternative religions joining the plethora of books sold by religious bookstores in our

country. Although the subject is the same, this book has unique qualities that make it a valuable addition to this genre of books. The author, Ruth Tucker, has taught seminary and college classes on the subject of cults. The author's firsthand acquaintance with members of the cults and her wide reading in the works of those who have organized alternative religions and of those who have left the

cultic groups make the book a carefully researched addition to this type of literature.

The Preface cites the research of Jerald and Sandra Tanner, former members and opponents of the Mormon movement. Authors of eight books on Mormonism, the Tanners are best known for the book *Mormonism — Shadow or Reality*. Raymond Franz, James Penton, and the Bittings, all having previously been members of the Jehovah's Witness movement, have made valuable contributions regarding the Jehovah's Witnesses. Heather and Gary Bitting are authors of *The Orwellian World of Jehovah's Witnesses*, a critique of the movement. *Mary Baker Eddy: An Interpretive Biography of the Founder of Christian Science* by Julius Silberger is cited as a book excelling in research on Christian Science. Deborah Berg Davis, daughter of the founder of the Children of God movement, is credited for her expose of the sexual immorality of the Children of God movement in *The Children of God*, 1984, Zondervan.

Detailed endnotes for each chapter and a comprehensive bibliography make the book an excellent source of information on the subject of cults. Although I prefer footnotes rather than endnotes, the writer in a twenty-five page Endnote section indicates the wide range of sources Ruth Tucker used to write this book. The twenty-two page bibliography includes all the major works on each of the fourteen major alternative religions discussed. Anyone wishing to research the subject of cults will find these sources to be of inestimable value. The book includes three appendices. Appendix A offers brief summaries on lesser-known cultic movements — movements that either have not gained the attention of the wider

press or have lost their one-time highly visible image. Appendix B includes the beliefs of some of the major cults. Appendix C is an attempt to state briefly the major tenets of orthodox Christianity.

Included are informative black and white illustrations, interesting photos of past and present leaders of the cults, and photos of buildings used as centers of operation. Most books written about the cults do not include photos and illustrations but these photos and pictures add a meaningful and helpful dimension to the book.

In my estimate the book could be used as a textbook in a course on the cults. It would also be an excellent resource for church groups studying the cults. It should be purchased as a reference tool for all church libraries.

Ruth Tucker relates her method of research in the Preface, p. 9. "Although this book is not one that contains personal reflections, much of the material is presented in the light of my own discussions and interviews with members of alternative religions and the New Age Movement. I have also had the privilege of having members of such religions as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Way International, the Hare Krishnas, Baha'i, and the New Age Movement speak to the seminary and college classes I teach on this subject."

All the major cults and alternative religions that populate the religious scene in the U.S.A. are included in this study. Immediate and direct contact with the religious movements under consideration is part of the author's method of research and investigation. She writes in the Preface, p. 9-10 as follows: "... I have had the opportunity to tour the United States, visiting cult centers and interviewing members at key

locations, including the Christian Science headquarters in Boston; the Watchtower complex in Brooklyn; the Unification Seminary in Barrytown, New York and the Unification headquarters in New York City; the Hare Krishna commune in Philadelphia and the Golden Temple in West Virginia; the Baha'i Temple in Wilmette, Illinois; the compound of Rajneesh in Antelope, Oregon; the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena; the Mormon Temple and tabernacle in Salt Lake City; the Unity School of Practical Christianity in Lee's Summit, Missouri; the Reorganized Church of Latter-Day Saints in Independence, Missouri; the Way International in New Knoxville, Ohio; and Scientology centers in both Los Angeles and Clearwater, Florida."

In addition to the analyses of the heterodox theories developed and believed by these religious groups and their leaders, the author writes fascinating biographies of the founders and key members of each movement. She includes her own interpretations of the facts, rather than giving a mere litany of facts and beliefs. In the description of Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, Ruth Tucker writes, p. 118, "The primary reason for his tarnished reputation is that he was married to a woman who was unwilling to tolerate the role that was generally accorded to and accepted by women at the turn of the century, and she later became his harshest critic."

The writer earned her Ph.D. at Northern Illinois University and has taught alternative religions at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Most recently she lectured as Visiting Professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. She dedicated the book to her son Carlton. She recognizes him as

the one who encouraged and challenged her on this project from beginning to end. She writes in the Preface, p. 10, "... it is my hope that the reader on completing this volume will have grasped the essence of these movements and will be stimulated to dig deeper into this fascinating subject."

The subtitle of *ANOTHER GOSPEL* specifically mentions the New Age Movement as an important aspect of this book. Chapter 15 "The New Age Movement: The Occult Made Respectable" is a somewhat repetitive and tedious but thorough-going study of the variety of influences of the New Age Movement (NAM). The ideology of the NAM is traced by the author to historical predecessors like spiritualism and the theosophy of the "immensely fat, often foul-mouthed Madame Blavatsky." The chapter includes a discussion of the conspiracy theories of Constance Cumbeys, who authored the controversial and sensational book, *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*, and the book by Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980's*. Channeling, inner voices, inner space, visualization, reincarnation, and crystals form a large part of the chapter on the NAM. The chapter includes analyses and descriptions of best selling books such as *Out on a Limb*, by movie star Shirley MacLaine, and the 1982 \$200,000 advertisement campaign by Benjamin Creme, the Scottish writer, who proclaimed a New Age Messiah prepared to install "a new world government and new world religion." The NAM is viewed by the writer as a revival of the pagan religions and tribal spiritism evident in the popularity of shamanism; i.e. the witch doctor or medicine man. Astrology and the activities of Ronald and Nancy Reagan are

treated as a significant aspect of the NAM. The NAM is also discussed in terms of self-actualization and self-improvement training programs, i.e., the World Institute of Scientological Enterprises (WISE) sponsored by Scientology.

No greater blasphemy could have been uttered by a New Ager than that attributed to Neville Rowe, who spoke before large audiences which bought entry fees to hear his "truth" (blasphemy) for earthlings: "... you are God. You are, each and everyone, part of the Second Coming."

In her assessment and final evaluation Ruth Tucker quotes an article by Brooks Alexander who quotes Carl A. Raschke of the University of Denver, thus: "The New Age is the most powerful social force in the country today" (p. 351). The assessment includes an arresting statement by Dostoevsky, "... anything is permissible if there is no God. But anything is also permissible if everything is God. There is no way of making any distinction between good and evil" (p. 352).

Ruth Tucker quotes Isaiah 47:13 and says that the sentence from Scripture, "'Each of them goes on in his error, there is not one that can save you,' can correctly sum up the biblical warning against the New Age Movement and all the alternative religions claiming to worship the true God" (p. 353).

Ruth Tucker's final comments show her disagreement with the analysis of Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon in their best-selling book *The Seduction of Christianity*. She disagrees with the analysis of Hunt and McMahon concerning the NAM influence in the ideas of men like Paul Yonggi Cho, Robert Schuller, and Richard Foster.

Although the critique of Hunt and McMahon may seem severe,

the truth is that the NAM has influenced a broad spectrum of the religious and social scene in the U.S. and abroad. Tucker, herself, has identified the NAM as anti-Christian and pagan. Robert Schuller's message on an Amway motivational tape ascribes power to almighty man, not to God. "You don't know what power you have within you . . . You make the world into anything you choose. You can make your world into whatever you like it to be."

The NAM is humanism. It is neo-modernism. Karl Barth's delightful description of 19th century Modernism can be applied to all NAM ideology. "They thought they were saying GOD when they were only saying MAN very loudly." □

COVENANTS: GOD'S WAY WITH HIS PEOPLE, by O.

Palmer Robertson; Great Commission Publications, 1987; 130 pp., no price (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

In his book, "The Christ of the Covenants," Dr. Robertson has given a much more extensive treatment of the doctrine of God's covenant of grace than in this short volume. This book is intended, apparently, to be a short survey of some aspects of the doctrine to be used for personal study or Society discussion. Each chapter ends with questions for review and for discussion.

The author defines God's covenant of grace as "a bond in blood sovereignly administered" (p. 11). Insofar as he treats various aspects of the covenant, he does so from the historical point of view; i.e., as God gradually revealed the riches of His covenant throughout the Old Testament, and as that covenant culminated in Christ.

Although the book is very short, his treatment of the covenant is generally sound. Robert-

son emphasizes the truth of particular grace (p. 32), although at the same time he speaks of government through common grace as being instituted at the time of the flood. He describes the covenant as a bond, but does not develop that idea at all. He talks of the unilateral character of the covenant, but does not set this forth over against many who would make it bilateral. In general, while the book serves to introduce one to the basic ideas of the covenant, it is brief to the point of being superficial. Nevertheless, it can well serve as an introduction to this great truth of God's salvation for those who have no prior acquaintance with the doctrine. And this is probably the author's intent.

There is one historical error in the book on page 92. The author writes: "Until the capture of Jerusalem David had ruled from Hebron, deep in the interior of the southern tribes. This arrangement had developed naturally since David was a descendant of Jacob's wife Rachel, the matriarch of the southern tribes." Genesis 29:35, Ruth 4:17-22 and other chronologies of Scripture tell us that Judah was descended from Leah and that David came from the tribe of Judah. Nor was Rachel the matriarch of the southern tribes because Simeon, located south of Judah, was from Leah, and Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were part of the northern kingdom and the trans-Jordan part of Israel.

The author attempts to apply this doctrine to the personal life of the people of God. □

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS: AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

by Francis Foulkes.
Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989. 189 pp, \$7.95 (paper). Reviewed by Prof. R. D. Decker.

This commentary is part of the revised set of commentaries, Tynedale New Testament Commentaries, first published by Eerdmans in the 1960's. It is written in paragraph form with little reference to the Greek. The style makes for easy reading. All of this means that this brief commentary can be used by lay persons as well as those who can handle the Greek.

The verse-by-verse explanation is preceded by an introduction of some fifty pages.

In his exposition of chapter 1:4 (p. 55) Foulkes writes, "It involves a paradox that the New Testament does not seek to resolve, and that our finite minds cannot fathom. Paul emphasizes both the sovereign purpose of God and our free will. He took the gospel of grace and offered it to all." His exposition here is simply in error. In his interpretation of chapter 2:1-2 (pp. 76-77) Foulkes is right on target. The question is, however, how can a spiritually dead person exercise his "free will" and accept an "offer of the gospel?"

On the other hand, Foulkes has some excellent commentary on chapter 6:5-9, where Paul speaks of the master - slave relationship.

Recommended, but with reservation. □

Letters

Appreciation and a Gift

It is a blessing to receive a Reformed magazine that stands on the doctrines of the Bible and of the Reformation. We are happy to be able to give this magazine as a gift to our family and friends. We look forward to receiving each issue . . . Enclosed is a gift to help out with publishing the magazine.

Tony and Melinda La Count
James and Margaret Laning
Waipahu, Hawaii □

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News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

November 15, 1989

First, a note of interest from our Seminary.

Soon after returning from their labors in Burnie, Tasmania to their home in Grand Rapids in May, Prof. and Mrs. Hoeksema decided to give a FAX machine as a memorial gift to the seminary. The machine was subsequently installed and has been used already for the transmission of documents both across the sea and within our own country. The seminary is willing to provide FAX service for official business of our churches (and even for some things not quite so "official"). To send messages from the machine, just drop in at the seminary during regular business hours. To send messages to the machine, call the seminary at [(616) 531-1490] and ask for their FAX number. The charge for sending documents will be limited to cost only.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Friends of Adams Street P.R. Christian School in Grand Rapids, MI have found much to be thankful for this Fall. The renovation of Adams is going extremely well. It has been many years since the excitement level has been this high. The renewed enthusiasm is evident in teachers, students, parents, and supporters alike. They all feel truly blessed by God in the efforts to improve the education of these covenant children by bringing Adams into the 1990's.

Adams scheduled a special open house from 4-7 PM on Saturday, October 21. Friends were invited to inspect the building and grounds and to ask questions. The renovation committee guaranteed that those attending the open house would come away absolutely amazed with what \$290,000.00 will still accomplish when the cause is good and the determination high.

On Saturday, September 30, there was an open house at the Hull P.R. Christian School. The school was open from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM. All parents and supporters were also invited to stay for supper afterwards and a time of fellowship following.

Dr. Schultze, of Calvin College, author of "TV . . . Manna from Hollywood," spoke on the effects of TV on Christian families, at the October 12 meeting of the Heritage P.T.A. at Heritage Christian School in Hudsonville, MI.

Dr. Schultze stressed two things that we as parents must do with regard to TV. First, we must limit the amount of time spent in front of it; and second, we must set standards for what we watch. All there that night will have to agree that Dr. Schultze did make an impression, whether you agreed with all his comments or not.

Bible commentaries, books, doctor and dental services, 20 rounds of golf, a Lake Erie fishing trip, piano-tuning, a dessert-a-month, and snow-plowing services were just a few of the items available for bidding on at the Covenant Christian High Auction held at Covenant in Walker, MI on Saturday, October 14. This event took a huge amount of work by the committee, who did an excellent job. From all reports the event was a tremendous success. Proceeds were to benefit the building program.

Rev. Slopesma was the featured speaker at the Fall P.T.A. meeting of the Hope P.R. Christian School in Walker, MI. Rev. Slopesma spoke on "Discipline in the Classroom."

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Consistory of the First P.R.C. in Holland is looking into the purchase of a new organ for their sanctuary. On October 10 a demonstration of an Allen Organ was given to help the congregation decide.

The members of our South Holland P.R.C. in South Holland,

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

IL have decided to combine the Men's, Ladies', and Mr. and Mrs. Societies to form one Adult Bible Study open to all members of the congregation. In addition to their pastor, Rev. G. Lanting and Mr. J. Lanting will be leading discussion groups.

First P.R.C. in Grand Rapids sponsored a Sr. Citizen Fall Bus Color Tour. This tour spent a complete day, including lunch and afternoon coffee, touring the West-Michigan area, taking in all the wonderful Fall colors, which should make us realize how great a Creator we have.

MINISTERIAL CALLS

The Hope P.R.C. in Redlands, CA formed a trio of Pastors A. den Hartog, R. Dykstra, and J. Kortering. From this group they extended a call to Rev. A. den Hartog.

Rev. R. Hanko has declined the call he received from the Peace P.R.C. in Lynwood, IL. As a result of that decline, the Consistory formed a new trio of Pastors A. den Hartog, J. Kortering, and S. Key. From this group of three, the congregation extended a call to Rev. den Hartog. □

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory and the congregation of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church express their heartfelt sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Andy Brummel and Andrea in the loss of their son and brother, STEVEN JOHN BRUMMEL. May this family continue to experience the comfort of God's Word and Spirit, finding that God is their Rock and their Refuge in the midst of their sorrow.

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." (Psalm 61:2)

Rev. M. DeVries, Pres.
Allen Hendriks, Clerk

(Edgerton, MN)

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Session and Congregation of the Protestant Reformed Church of New Zealand express their sympathy to Mrs. Corry Vooy, Keith and Mary Vooy, Hillary and Laurence, Tony Vooy, Timothy and Yolanda Geuze, Corry-Ann and Jacob, whose husband, father, father-in-law, and grandfather (Opa), MR. ANTHONY JACOB VOOYS, was taken by the Lord to his heavenly home on October 19, 1989. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. 5:1)

Rev. R. Miersma, Pres.
B. vanHerk, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Editorial Committee and Staff of *The Standard Bearer* and the Board of The Reformed Free Publishing Association extend their sympathy to the Editor-in-chief of *The Standard Bearer*, Prof. David J. Engelsma, his wife and family in the death of Mrs. Engelsma's stepfather, MR. MARTIN WUSTMAN. "Our only comfort in life and in death is that we are not our own, but belong body and soul to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ." (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day I)

Prof. Robert D. Decker, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church extend our Christian sympathy to Fred Alphenaar and family in the death of his wife, BERTHA ALPHENAAR.

May they be comforted by the words of our Lord when He said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25)

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg, President
Mr. Melvin A. VanDyk, Clerk

(Kalamazoo, MI)

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the Protestant Reformed Church in South Holland, IL extends its Christian sympathy to Elder Raymond Bruinsma and to Deacon James Bruinsma and their families in the death of their mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother, MRS. ANNA MOREHOUSE on August 15, 1989.

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

Rev. Charles Terpstra, President
Mr. Gil G. VanBaren, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The faculty, staff, and students of the Protestant Reformed Seminary extend their sympathy to Prof. and Mrs. David J. Engelsma and family in the death of Mrs. Engelsma's stepfather, MR. MARTIN WUSTMAN. May their comfort be that: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." (Psalm 116:15)

Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rector